

Support to people affected by population displacement and trafficking in human beings in Belarus

Final evaluation 21-23 November 2017

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1. Background

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious problems in Europe. Most cases in Europe are defined as labour trafficking relating to the construction industry, cleaning companies, the tourism industry and other areas of work. There are also cases of individuals being exploited sexually. The situation is opposite in Belarus – the majority of cases are related to the sexual exploitation. Due to its location between the CIS and European Union, Belarus is a regular transit route for irregular migrants moving westward. Such geographical position, as well as presence of an open border with Russia increases quantity of Belarusian citizens, becoming victims of human trafficking (VoTs). Belarus is a source and transit country regarding women, men and children subject to sexual exploitation and forced labor trafficking.

According to the official statistics, since 2000, a total of 10,508 crimes in the human anti-trafficking field and associated were detected (including pedophilia since 2012), 680 of them with the involvement of minors. Most cases are related to sexual exploitation (4,909), some cases are related to labor exploitation (625) and trafficking of human organs (three cases). A total of 5,537 victims of human trafficking (VoT) have been identified in Belarus in 2002-2017, 680 out of whom are minors (12.3 percent out of the total number of victims). In 2012 the “Law on combating trafficking in human beings” was adopted. The Law determines responsibilities of the Government and takes measures to provide services for VoTs, establishes National rapporteur for human trafficking problems. The Law was amended in December 2014 to fully correspond to the international standards in the sphere of human trafficking combatting.

The Republic of Belarus was one of the first countries, among CIS member-states, proceeded large-scale activities to tackle trafficking in persons. Belarus initiated with the full support of the UN Member States the provisions regarding the necessity of the implementation of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons to the important documents and decisions of the main UN bodies, in particular, the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC, UN Human Rights Council, UN Commission on the Status of Women, UN Commission on Population and Development, UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as well as the 6th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (October 2012). Since March 2014 Belarus has become a full party to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Convention requires national coordination measures, awareness raising, measures in order to identify and support victims and a "recovery and reflection period" during which trafficked persons will not be expelled from the receiving state.

Belarusian women are trafficked mostly for sexual exploitation to EU countries (Germany, Poland, Czech Republic), Cyprus, Turkey, the Middle East (Israel, UAE), and some regions in Russia (mainly Moscow and Moscow oblast). The majority of men are trafficked to the Russian Federation for labour exploitation. The ratio of identified women and men was about 60 : 40 throughout 2005-2011, with a gradual increase of the number of identified men observed in 2011-2015, the ratio now is about 35:65. All signs however indicate that the scope of the problem of trafficking of adult men could be far larger than current data indicate.

The armed conflict in the southern-eastern regions of Ukraine, in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, has triggered a massive movement of the civilians in search of refuge and security to other parts of Ukraine and beyond, into neighbouring Belarus and the Russian Federation, which now host the majority of displaced from eastern Ukraine. Belarus is a practical destination due to its location and cultural affinity. According to UNHCR, Belarus has received about 150,000 migrants from Ukraine. At the same time, Belarus has so far failed to engage the international community in the name of supporting Ukrainian refugees. Many of the displaced ukrainians are at risk to be trafficked in Belarus. Belarus Red Cross opened a volunteer-run telephone helpline with a short number 201. The Ukrainians can call and receive information about accommodation, job and legal issues. Some were complaining on unfair job conditions. The Red Cross volunteers were able to identify two VoTs, who were further referred to IOM for support.

Since January 2015, A total of 15,516 children and youth-at-risk, aged 7-35, living in towns and villages benefited from micro-projects and peer education sessions. At least 40,241 representatives of local communities (parents, townspeople, teachers and friends of volunteers, representatives of the target group) were reached with indirect or general information about human trafficking. Project activities were carried out by 828 young volunteers. 256 VoTs and refugees were receiving reintegration assistance Belarus RC branches and headquarters. 341 volunteers and staff were trained on activities to combat human trafficking. The total funding provided by Icelandic Red Cross and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland in January 2015 – December 2017 was CHF 264,507.

Belarus RC is a national with international and local experience in planning and implementing social programmes. It is the only civil society organization which is present in all regions of the country and plays an important role in communities. It is a nation-wide volunteering agency with a network of 8 regional (including Minsk City and Railway organizations), 158 district/town/railway branches and 8,378 primary units (grass-root organizations). BRC is well experienced in involving citizens in social activities and supports volunteer groups in developing their own community-based initiatives. BRC unites 1,223,573 members, 171 visiting nurses and 16,935 volunteers.

Belarus RC aims at assisting the most vulnerable population groups, such as elderly, people living alone, people that lost ability to serve themselves, families with many children, single-parent and incomplete families, families with low incomes, people with limited abilities, people affected by emergency and crisis situations, homeless, ex-prisoners, people living with socially dangerous diseases, people with mental illnesses and others. Among Belarus RC target groups are youth, communities and population in general.

The main objective of the project “Support to people affected by population displacement and trafficking in human beings in Belarus” was to support people affected by population displacement and trafficking in human beings in Belarus by building capacity of BRC and involving civil society and authorities. The specific objective covered awareness raising, support and re-integration of displaced people and victims of trafficking and abuse with strengthening capacities of and cooperation between target groups, Red Cross and relevant state and non-state actors.

2. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this final review was to analyze and comment on the project progress in 2015-2017 and review the process of implementation of the project. The review could see how the project was progressing, document lessons learnt, achievements and challenges, and provided recommendations and ideas to take forward to future possible similar projects. The review covered a period from January 2015 through to October 2017. The geographical coverage of the review included meetings in Minsk, Mogilev and Vitebsk, Belarus. The final product is a shared responsibility of Belarus RC, IRC and IFRC. The review report will be shared with Belarus RC, IRC and IFRC who in turn will take the responsibility of disseminating the outcomes to relevant interested partners.

Key review issues are to:

- Review the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the project.
- Explore to what extent the project was able to achieve its objectives to date and progress towards achieving results.
- Identify key risks and challenges.
- Provide lessons learned and recommendations for the future possible anti-trafficking activities.

3. Team composition and evaluation methodology

The evaluation mission timeframe was from 21 to 23 November 2017. The assessment was done by IFRC programme coordinator of Minsk office supported by project team from Belarus RC and covered the period from January 2015 to end of October 2017. A series of round table meetings was organized in Minsk, Vitebsk and Mogilev. The evaluation used a consultative and participative approach and was

conducted using a plenary discussion, presentations and group work approach. The meetings involved both internal (Red Cross staff and volunteers) and external partners (representatives of the Ministry of Interior, prosecution agency, department on ideological work, committee on labour and social protection, department of education). A meeting with the VoTs was organized in Vitebsk.

Prior to the mission, a list of evaluation questions was prepared by IFRC ROE, reviewed and approved by IFRC Belarus and translated into Russian language to facilitate the discussions.

In total, there were 47 participants present during the meetings within the evaluation. For the list of participants, please refer to Annex 1.

4. Key findings

a) Appropriateness/Relevance

The participants of the meetings noted that the project of Belarus Red Cross, implemented with the support of IFRC, Icelandic Red Cross and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, is highly relevant for Belarus and the current situation with the human trafficking in the country. Most of the cases concern trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation, though in cases of labour exploitation it is extremely difficult to prove the crime and confirm the status of the VoT. According to the newest trends, the recruitment of the VoTs is done via internet, upon that the number of minors trafficked goes up. The risk-groups are mainly located in the remote areas. Awareness-raising campaigns within the project mainly targeted risk groups in the remote areas and re-integration assistance was provided for returning citizens and already identified VoTs in Belarus.

The project addressed the issues of human trafficking with consideration to the current situation. Micro-projects with children and youth as a primary target group were implemented. All the participants of small projects highlighted that the project contributed to the raising awareness of young people. Some of the micro-projects were dedicated to safety of children in the Internet. A unique small-project was implemented by the State Border Control Institute – young specialists on border control were additionally trained on identification of the VoTs and on prevention of human trafficking.

The project was implemented in line with the key legal documents, priorities, policies and international commitments of the Government of the Republic of Belarus in its efforts to combat human trafficking and give the appropriate support and protection to the actual VoTs. Belarus RC is a partner of the state in raising awareness, identifying the VoTs and providing reintegration to the VoTs. Belarus RC participates in the referral system and is member of multi-disciplinary committees on combating human trafficking in all six regions of the country.

By addressing the re-integration needs of VoTs, awareness building and advocacy, the project supports the attaining of Strategic Aim 3 of the IFRC's Strategy 2020: "promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace". The project is also in line with the 2007 Declaration 'Together for Humanity' which lists human trafficking as one of the humanitarian concerns generated by international migration; the IFRC Migration Policy (2009), which states that there are circumstances that expose migrants to heightened and acute risks to their physical integrity, including human trafficking; the 2011 IC Resolution 3 on *Migration: ensuring access, dignity, respect for diversity and social inclusion*, which calls upon States, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the IFRC and the ICRC to build partnerships which strengthen the humanitarian assistance and protection activities for persons negatively affected by migration; the Florence Call for Action (9th European Conference 2014) which refers to effective cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, with a priority given to ensuring humanitarian protection of migrants and tackling human trafficking; the 2015 Movement coordinated response plan to meet the humanitarian needs of vulnerable migrants in the Mediterranean and neighbouring regions. The project also contributes carrying out the responsibilities of Belarus RC after signing the Joint pledge: responding to human trafficking of migrants in Europe at the 32nd IC 2015.

The project also contributes to the work and strategy of the European Anti-trafficking Network, composed of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Europe Region and established among others with the purpose to strengthen and promote the exchange of experiences, information and best practices among RCRC National Societies and with other stakeholders.

b) Effectiveness

The project objectives and indicators were achieved as planned. A total of 15,516 children and youth-at-risk, aged 7-35, living in towns and villages benefited from micro-projects and peer education sessions. At least 40,241 representatives of local communities (parents, townspeople, teachers and friends of volunteers, representatives of the target group) were reached with indirect or general information about human trafficking. Project activities were carried out by 828 young volunteers. 256 VoTs and refugees were receiving reintegration assistance Belarus RC branches and headquarters. 341 volunteers and staff were trained on activities to combat human trafficking. With the project orientation to the remote areas the reintegration work became more decentralized (both, for prevention and reintegration). The participants of the discussions noted that in the districts the project is more demanded than in the regional centre because of lack of funds, information and activities in the remote areas.

Reintegration. Belarus RC staff as well as representatives of the local authorities mentioned that with the new regulations on identification of the VoTs the number of the identified VoTs decreased. But the work on providing support continues. The reintegration assistance consists of psychological support (individual work with the VoT, group work with several VoTs, work with the families of the VoTs), social support (food and hygiene kits, clothes and shoes), medical assistance, legal assistance, job training (including support in purchase of the instruments needed for a new job) and restoring family links. The psychologist and social worker develop individual reintegration plans for each VoT. Gender is considered at all stages of reintegration. The psychologists are experienced and both, male and female VoTs are comfortable to talk to them and develop trustworthy relations. The psychologists mentioned that it is easier to work with women, because almost in all cases men shrink into themselves. Various techniques are used to make the VoTs feel better and recover: active listening, art-therapy, fairy-tale therapy, music therapy, etc.

Cooperation. Belarus RC has a well-developed long-term cooperation with both local authorities and civil society actors. The cooperation contributed to timely and efficient delivery of services to the VoTs and made it possible to organize large-scale awareness-raising activities. The interagency level of cooperation is guaranteed by the Memoranda of Understanding, signed in each regional centre of Belarus. The MoU is signed by regional executive committees, committees on labour and social protection, regional educational departments, regional health departments, regional departments of the Ministry of Interior, regional prosecutor's offices, regional courts, regional investigation committees, border committees, regional associations of lawyers, regional branches of Belarus RC, NGOs who are present in the region, IOM. The signatories to the MoU meet 3-4 times a year to discuss the challenges they face in the field of human trafficking, to discuss the best practices or to do the management of concrete cases. The existing referral system is supported by the MoUs as well. The organizations-participants of the MoU share information about assistance provided by Red Cross with the VoTs and people at risk. Because of MoUs and well-established cooperation, Belarus RC has access to various target groups (VoTs, youth, working youth, children in orphanages, etc.).

It was noted by the local authorities that Belarus RC is a reliable partner with the highly qualified staff; the psychologists know how to work with men, women and children. The psychological support provided by Belarus RC is highly valued by the police, prosecutors, investigation committees and court – the psychologists of Belarus RC ensure the emotional stability of the VoTs during identification, investigation and court procedures. Besides they noted that with more and more cases of children trafficked, it is invaluable to have the experience of RC in interviewing and providing support to children. In general, the level of cooperation of local authorities with Belarus Red Cross in combatting human trafficking can be assessed as high. The local authorities see the identification of the existing VoTs and

prevention as the main priorities in combatting human trafficking now – and both activities are done by the RC. Still, they understand that RC is the only organization which still cares for the VoTs after the criminal case is solved and criminal is in prison. Through cooperation in human trafficking the local authorities value Belarus RC as a partner and continue to cooperate in other spheres of work.

Awareness raising. The project was based on the previously developed techniques of raising awareness and involved mainly implementation of volunteer initiatives (micro-projects), peer education sessions, work with the mass media and public actions and campaigns. The implementation of the micro-projects allowed volunteer groups to assess the needs of the particular district and implement the activities they decided were important for the target groups they selected. The mechanism of micro-initiatives required finding local partners for the initiatives implementation, which was successfully done by all the volunteer groups. Belarus RC in its turn provided the volunteers with small funds for each project, relevant training, information, leaflets, video materials, premises, support, motivation and recognition. There was cooperation between the representatives of different small-projects: the volunteers exchanged information and resources, supported each other, mentored and shared experiences. The trained volunteers applied gained knowledge and skills in re-training of others, leading of volunteer groups and in developing new forms of prevention activities. The quality of the developed micro-projects was high, all the applications followed the developed standard. The projects included active involvement of target groups to the implementation. Highly motivated volunteers continued to implement the micro-projects even after the funding finished. In general, the micro-projects proved to be an effective mechanism of human trafficking prevention, volunteer involvement and participation. Various methods of prevention suggested by Belarus RC (trainings, info-sessions, role-plays, board games, simulations, forum-theatre, “alive libraries”, usage cartoons, movies and fairy-tales) contributed to attraction of new volunteers and motivation of the already existing ones. Volunteers were considered as equal partners, receiving thus additional motivation. Some volunteer groups established good cooperation with the local police departments and organized joint events. All the micro-projects received wide coverage in local media and social media.

Special attention was paid to organizing prevention activities for children. Several volunteer groups developed small theatre plays, songs, games and art competitions. The description of human trafficking threats was adjusted in such a way that the small children could understand all the dangers. By playing during the info-sessions, children develop a better understanding of the problem and will use the acquired “anti-trafficking skills” in real life. While the information about human trafficking was delivered to children (e.g. how to behave on the street, what to do if someone is addressing you), meetings with parents of the same children were organized in parallel to ensure the better quality and coverage of prevention. The activities for children also targeted children with disabilities and juvenile delinquents. Children of all ages received information about safe behaviour in cyber environment.

The development of web-based training ensured better access to information about human trafficking and a possibility to receive relevant information of good quality for those who for various reasons could not participate in Belarus RC awareness-raising activities.

The Belarus RC Strategy 2016-2020 includes *Awareness raising and training of population* as a separate strategic direction, and the standardised trainings on human trafficking prevention within the project contribute to the implementation of the strategic direction.

c) Efficiency

The project was successfully built on and added to the previous experience of combatting human trafficking. The already trained volunteers provided peer support to the new ones. The best practices and best initiatives implemented in the previous years served as an example in the new phase of the project. The project activities were coordinated on the various levels: IFRC, Belarus RC HQ, regional branches, district branches and volunteer groups. The change of project coordinator six month prior to project closure did not lead to complications, as the information was properly handed over and constant

support was provided to the new project coordinator and possibility. Constant monitoring (including financial monitoring) of the project activities and supervision of volunteer groups was organized both on national and regional level. Peer education providers were supported by master-trainers and by fellow volunteers.

d) Impact and sustainability

The project achieved a high level of sustainability ensured by:

- High level of project ownership and commitment and support of Belarus RC staff and volunteers to development of awareness raising as a strategic priority of the organization.
- Using existing structure of wide network of district branches maintained under own Belarus RC funds instead of establishment of new structures. The structure, together with the improved capacities of volunteers in managing own initiatives and attracting local partners, as well as with the good understanding between anti-trafficking stakeholders, provides a strong basis for sustaining and further development of combatting human trafficking activities. Experienced staff and volunteers are at place and can ensure both, prevention and reintegration work.
- Applied approaches are a part of ownership: principles of commitment and participation as the starting point for activities, motivation and empowerment of target groups, local authorities' engagement, peer-support, promotion of good practices, training system and demand for own contribution.
- Existing MoUs ensure further involvement of Belarus RC in anti-trafficking activities. The developed trust of the local authorities and their high appreciation of Belarus RC contribute to the sustainability of the anti-trafficking activities.
- Regional Belarus RC branches announce small grants competitions with the funds of the regional organization, which contributes to continuation of implementation of human trafficking prevention activities by volunteer groups.
- Innovative methods of education (including board games and web-based course) attract young volunteers and contribute to further development of awareness raising and peer education.

However, more efforts should be undertaken in relation to financial long-term sustainability in the new projects to ensure that the organization will be able to continue the implementation of same or similar activities without external donors. In particular, substantial funds are needed to continue provision of reintegration to the VoTs.

5. Recommendations / looking ahead

- Belarus RC should continue working in the field of combatting human trafficking. New possibilities of funding are to be explored, especially to provide reintegration to the VoTs.
- Belarus RC should continue exchange of experience with the European Anti-trafficking network, other RC National Societies, state and non-state organizations.
- Constant platform for exchange of ideas and experiences between volunteers who work in the field of human trafficking prevention is to be ensured.
- The already existing methods of prevention are to be maintained and developed.
- To ensure regular update of the existing web-based course.

Thanks

The reviewer would like to thank all the staff and volunteers of the Belarus RC, partner state and non-state organisations who generously participated at the round table meetings and shared their ideas, knowledge and suggestions during the review mission. The reviewer would like to particularly thank Mr Vitaly Tarashkevish and Mr Idael Guerrero, Belarus RC project staff, for arranging all the meetings, making minutes and providing full and complete assistance during the field visits.

Annex 1 – List of participants of the round table meetings 21-23 November, 2017

#	Name	Organization, position
1.	Tatyana Gorelik	Gomel RC, specialist on organizational-methodological work
2.	Galina Golub	Leader of volunteer group, Mozyr
3.	Elena Skoblova	Leader of volunteer group, Zhlobin
4.	Julia Knatko	Belarus RC, Minsk regional branch, youth coordinator
5.	Irina Shahnovich	Leader of volunteer group, Pukhovichi
6.	Irina Shulgan	Belarus RC, Minsk city branch, Pervomaiski district, branch manager
7.	Sergey Sherkiz	Belarus RC, Minsk city branch, Pervomaiski district, chief specialist
8.	Zhanna Ladygina	Belarus RC, Mogilev regional branch, social worker
9.	Marta Sharapova	Leader of volunteer group, Belynichi
10.	Viktoriya Spitsyna	Leader of volunteer group, Shklov
11.	Julia Shepelevich	Leader of volunteer group, Bobruisk
12.	Olga Dovnar	Leader of volunteer group, Mogilev
13.	Viktoriya Kostenkova	Leader of volunteer group, Krichev
14.	Elena Vitkovskaya	Leader of volunteer group, Dubrovno
15.	Valentina Galalyuk	Belarus RC, Vitebsk regional branch, social worker
16.	Anna Ramashevskaya	Leader of volunteer group, Grodno
17.	Olga Kuznetsova	Leader of volunteer group, Minsk
18.	Ivan Osipov	Leader of volunteer group, Minsk
19.	Ekaterina Mashkakova	Volunteer, Vitebsk
20.	Yuri Shishko	Volunteer, Vitebsk
21.	Jamil Daud	Volunteer, Vitebsk
22.	Vitaly Vasiliev	Volunteer, Vitebsk
23.	Agatha Andreeva	Volunteer, Vitebsk
24.	Olga Krylova	Leader of volunteer group, Vitebsk
25.	Diana Senchenko	Belarus RC, Vitebsk regional branch, Psychologist
26.	Oksana Murkevich	Investigation officer, Vitebsk

27.	Oleg Gorbachev	Deputy head of the department on combatting human trafficking and drug control, Vitebsk
28.	Elmira Hudoleeva	Leader of volunteer group, Vitebsk
29.	Viktoria Pushkareva	Volunteer, Vitebsk
30.	Angelina Malei	Volunteer, Vitebsk
31.	Vyacheslav Guk	Deputy prosecutor, Vitebsk
32.	Sergei Popov	Belarus RC, Vitebsk regional branch, specialist
33.	Galina Zhelanova	Belarus RC, Vitebsk regional branch, branch manager
34.	Natalia Finevich	Leader of volunteer group, Kirovsk
35.	Galina Pantyusheva	Belarus RC, Mogilev regional branch, Psychologist
36.	Elena Klimenkova	Leader of volunteer group, Mogilev
37.	Viktoria Bessolnova	Deputy head of department of education of the executive committee of Mogilev region
38.	Oksana Pimoshenko	Leader of volunteer group, Shklov
39.	Irina Stolyarova	Specialist of the ideology department of the executive committee of Mogilev region
40.	Andrey Martynovsky	Belarus RC, Mogilev regional branch, branch manager
41.	Natalia Tretyakova	Belarus RC, Mogilev regional branch, financial officer
42.	Alexander Strinadko	Deputy head of the department on labour and social protection, Mogilev region
43.	Irina Vozletskaia	Specialist of the department on labour and social protection, Mogilev region
44.	Elena Fedorinchik	Belarus RC, Mogilev regional branch, specialist
45.	Vitaly Tarashkevish	Belarus RC HQ, project coordinator
46.	Idael Guerrero	Belarus RC HQ, project translator
47.	Ekaterina Leleka	IFRC, Minsk office, programme coordinator

Annex 2 – Evaluation questions

The key (guiding) questions to be answered by the evaluation are as follows:

Relevance:

- How relevant is the project regarding the beneficiary requirements, local context and needs?
- How well was the target group identified?
- How do the beneficiaries view the comprehensiveness of package of services offered to or directed towards them?
- How does the project complement intervention of other actors, most importantly relevant Government departments?

Efficiency

- Has the project progressed as per planned timeline – including preparation, planning, to implementation?
- Can the project objectives be achieved within the overall timeframe?
- Has the project adequately documented, reported and disseminated information on what it is doing/has achieved so far?
- To what extent Belarus RC coordinate with other actors to achieve better results?
- If appropriate how flexible is the project in adapting to changing needs?

Effectiveness

- Were the activities conducted in a planned and timely manner?
- What progress has been made towards achieving the project overall and specific objectives?
- Is the project effective in delivering the expected results?
- Where unforeseen challenges to the implementation of the project handled creatively and effectively?
- Were gender concerns and considerations mainstreamed into the project?

Impact and sustainability

- What are the direct impact prospects of the project at overall objective level, what impacts are already apparent and what impacts appear likely?
- What difference has the project made for/with the planned target groups or other non-targeted groups?
- Did the project take timely measures for mitigating the unplanned negative impacts? What was the result?
- Are any external factors likely to jeopardize the project's direct impact?
- What is the level of ownership of the project by the target groups?
- What are the main factors affecting, either positively or negatively, prospects of sustainability of project outcomes?
- What is the potential for sustaining and continuation of the emerging results and impacts after 2017?

Lessons learned

- What are the lessons learned during this period which can be used to guide the next programme cycle and/or other programmes?
- What best practices emerged from the project implementation? What is the potential and options for replication and knowledge sharing?

- For whom could these lessons have relevance and how do they relate to any innovative aspects of the project?
- Do lessons learned indicate any need for changes in project design in the future to ensure better sustainability?