



Peer-to-Peer Identification Programme

Field Report

Empowering survivors of human trafficking to identify others who have been exploited among their peers is the purpose behind the SISA Peer-to-Peer Identification training programme. The training equipped 4 caring souls, to reach out to their peers with a motivation to 'help them out of shock.' Their commitment to the hours of training resulted in a confidence to step out and find other women who continue to live in fear.

Peer-to-Peer identification is a valuable tool in the effort of bridging women in need to available and reliable support systems. Due to lack of trust and the presence of fear, many vulnerable women choose not to disclose their difficult situations when speaking to front line workers, like social workers or health care providers. The unfortunate consequence is that no one knows about their situation and will therefore not get access to the support that is available for them. Peers play a unique role in filling this gap. Their own experience enables them to connect to unidentified survivors in a unique way. They become a person of trust and in doing so, they are able to connect women with urgent and undisclosed needs to support organizations that can help.

Through the Peer-to-Peer training programme, participants grew in understanding their role as a peer. They discovered their strengths, identified their weaknesses, and worked to implement strategies in how to reach out to yet unidentified survivors accordingly. Patience for example is warm and very outgoing, Gloria however is reserved and does not use many words.¹ Collectively, they were able to create an outreach strategy that fit to all of their personalities.

Through a workshop, the peers created an invitation flyer for a 'drop-in to talk' meeting and strategized an outreach plan to meet newcomers arriving in the local refugee camps. After the Covid-19 pandemic restricted all non-resident entries into the refugee camps, the peers adapted their outreach strategy to connect with refugees outside of the camps in the context of their local community.

¹ Not their real names

Whether it was at the train station or in a grocery store, the peers took initiative in reaching out to women they would cross paths with in their daily lives.

In the training, peers learned to recognize signs of trauma. They could identify sleeplessness, sorrow, stress, or anxiety. They learned how to compassionately connect with a woman who was showing these signs and start a discussion that would ultimately disclose if there was a genuine need. As part of the programme, peers met for supervision regularly. During supervision, solutions were found for questions and problems the newly identified survivors face.

Since the beginning of the outreach segment of the programme, 4 peers identified 12 women as survivors of trafficking and showed them the way to our counselling Centre. These newly identified survivors have been living in Germany for over 2 years, and never felt free to open up to front-line workers about their exploitation.

Our experience in the implementation of this programme confirmed that many women affected by Human Trafficking remain unidentified and equipping survivors to seek out and assist vulnerable women among their peers is an effective tool.

*Written by Magda Kierner and Rawan Shrum
(The Justice Project e.V, August 2021)*

