

# Cultural agents promoting and targeting interventions against violence and enslavement (captive)

Just/2015/ RDAP/AG/VICT/9243

Welcome, on behalf of the CAPTIVE project



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# Agenda overview

- 9:30-11:30      International video conference
- 11:30-12:15      Dr Ravi Thiara *Minoritised women and sexual violence: disclosure and responses*
- 12:45-1:15      Dr Simon Goodman *Refugees' accounts of sexual violence*
- 12:45-1:15      Lunch and networking

# Experiences of sexual and gender-based violence among migrant women in 6 European countries

Dr Lorna O'Doherty

Violence Prevention, Resilience and Justice Group,

Centre for Advances in Behavioural Science

**Coventry University, United Kingdom**



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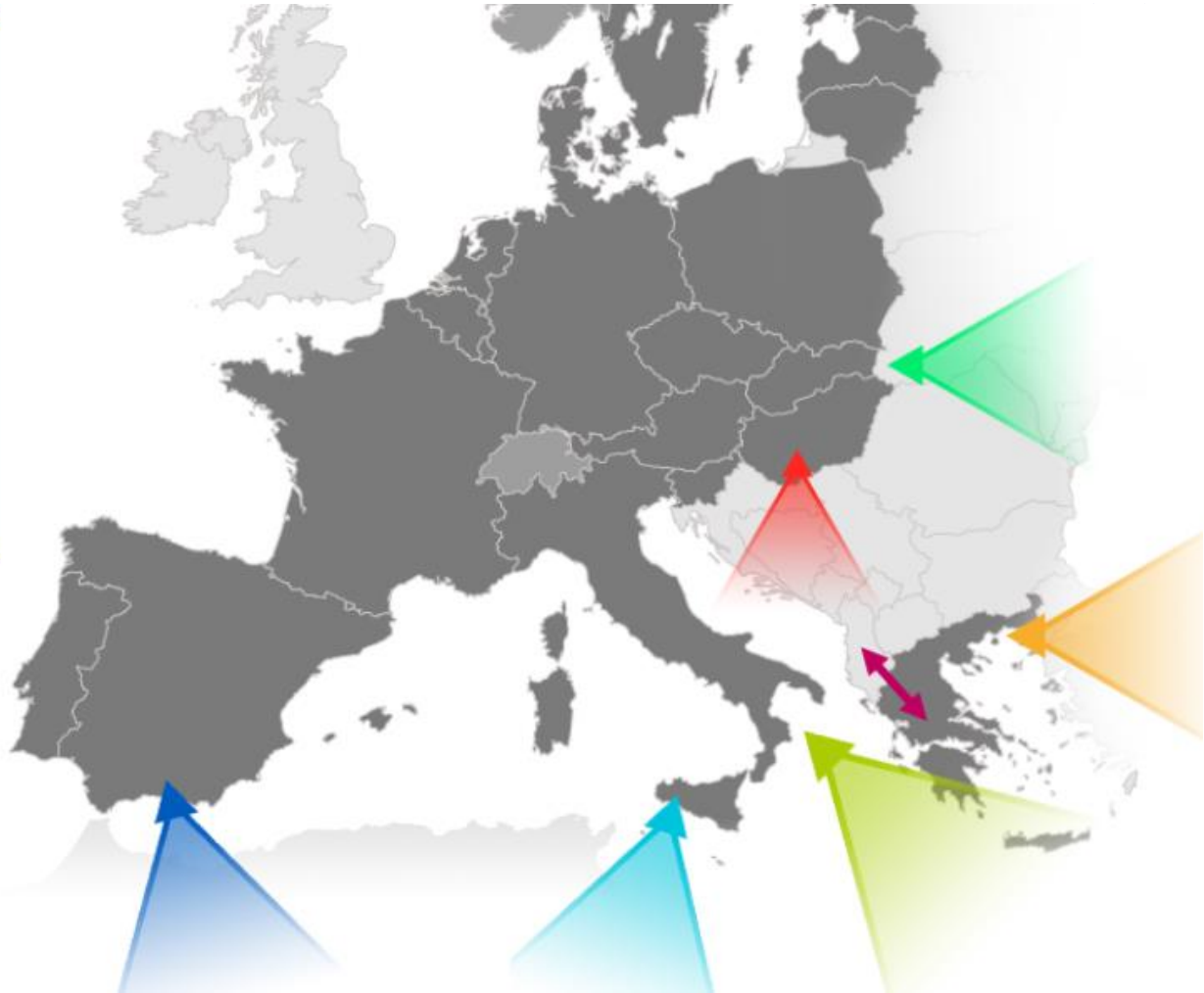
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## Main migratory routes into the EU / land & sea

- ▶ Western African route
  - ▶ Western Mediterranean route
  - ▶ Central Mediterranean route
  - ▶ Apulia and Calabria route
  - ▶ Circular route from Albania to Greece
  - ▶ Western Balkan route
  - ▶ Eastern Mediterranean route
  - ▶ Eastern Borders route
- Schengen area
- Schengen associate countries

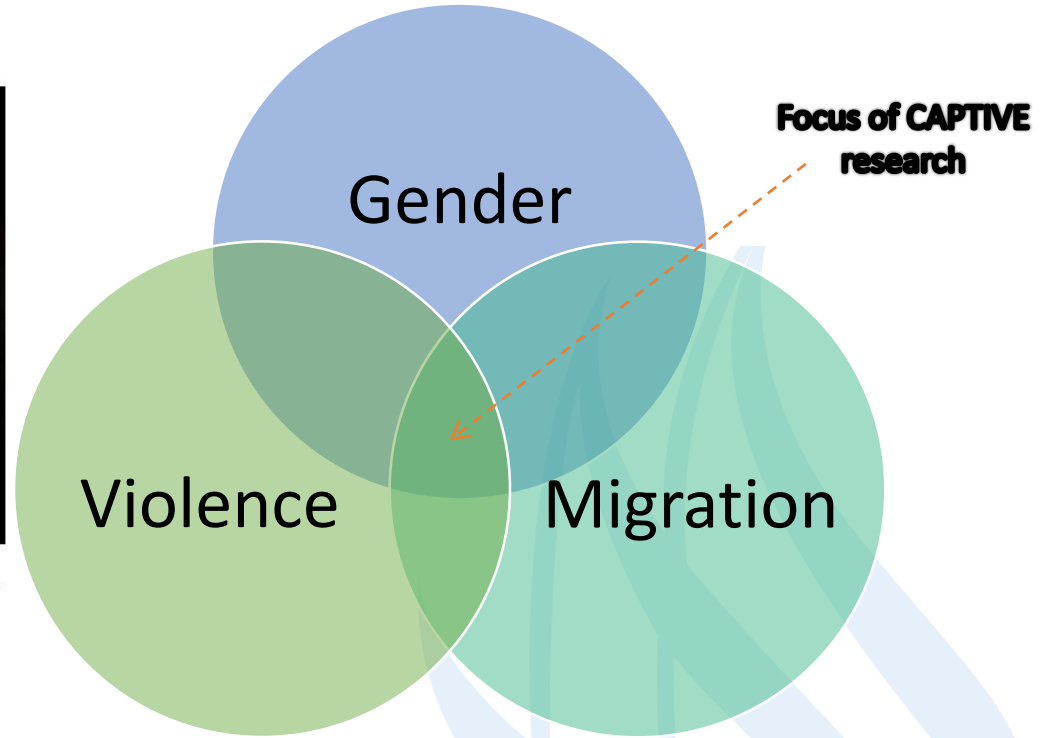


# Rohingya girls as young as 12 compelled to marry just to get food

Allocation of food rations by household means refugees fleeing persecution in Myanmar are marrying off children as young as 12 to create new family circles



**i** This 14-year-old girl, who arrived in Bangladesh just over a year ago after fleeing military violence in Rakhine state, is betrothed. Her father says rice rations are not enough to feed a family of 10. Photograph: Antolín Avezuela



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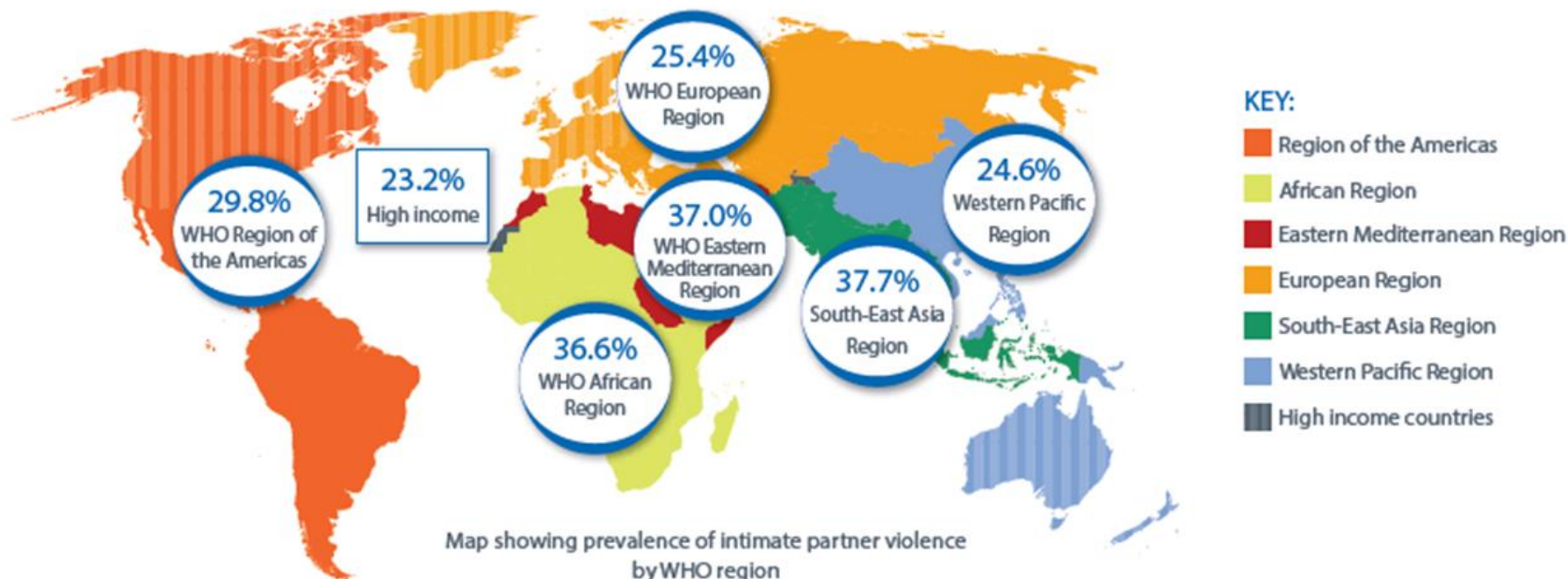
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## PREVALENCE →

# 1 in 3 women

throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner



## Countries of origin include 'high risk' global locations



**i** A girl from Kavumu in DRC who was abducted from her home and raped. Since 2013, 49 young children in the town have been raped. Photographs: Ruth Maclean for the Guardian

Peterman et al. (2011) American Journal of Public Health

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# Purpose of the research and synthesis

- Each partner in Malta, Spain, France, Germany, Italy and the UK undertook an analysis of the experiences of female migrant survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in that country
- Findings from across the 6 settings were synthesised with the aim of developing a collective voice for migrant women who have survived GBV and to examine intersections between GBV and migration across the lifespan and around the junctures of pre-migration, over the course of the journey itself and in post-migration settings, through the lens of intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989)



# Methods: national studies

- Participants: women 18 years+ who identified as migrant, refugee or asylum seeking person or as born overseas; were survivors of any form of GBV; and were currently residing in one of the six countries
- Identified through (i) community organisations that support migrant women survivors, including shelters, (ii) migrant reception centres and (iii) snowballing through community members
- Interviews were conducted in first language of partner country, in English or using an interpreter
- It was explained to women that we were hoping to gain a better understanding of women's experiences of getting help in the destination country for experiences of violence in their lives

# Methods: synthesis

- Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) as theoretical framework
- Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), selected to analyse the findings from the 6 primary studies; sufficiently flexible to apply to any theoretical approach whilst at the same time enabling rich, detailed description
- Coded data to overarching 'first-order' categories and identified sub-themes to which we further coded data, retaining those that were dominant (as 'second order' themes)

Country of origin (n=24)	Number of participants (n=49)
Morocco	6 (2 Spain; 1 France; 3 Italy)
Mexico	1 (Spain)
Tanzania	2 (UK)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	4 (3 France; 1 UK)
Pakistan	2 (UK)
Sri Lanka	1 (UK)
Indian	2 (UK)
Uganda	2 (France; UK)
Tunisia	2 (Italy)
Nigeria	10 (Italy)
Cambodia	1 (France)
Cameroon	2 (France)
Turkey	1 (France)
Philippines	1 (Malta)
Montenegro	2 (Germany; Malta)
Benin	1 (France)
Syria	1 (France)
Albania	2 (France)
Angola	1 (France)
Bulgaria	1 (France)
Eritrea	1 (France)
Nigeria	1 (France)
Iran	1 (Germany)
Ivory Coast	1 (France)





I had some stories about how women are respected here, how children are safer, and for me that was a dream. We lived in a world where men are so superior they've got the right to do whatever they want to women and children. For them, we are their properties, they can decide whatever they want

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## ***Violence in the pre-migration context: “this place is not safe for me”***



« I did not know what it was, the excision; one night my grandmother picked me up, I was afraid, I was told nothing, they took all the girls of the village. They took us in a big house; I could hear them screaming. I was afraid, I wanted to run away but they brought down to the ground me, held my arms and my legs, and they cut me. There was very old woman who did not even see what she made, I had a lot of pain and a lot of blood.» F. Ivory Coast (Fra)

« My parents beat me, to treat me [for being] lesbian. They attached me in a backyard, and asked my uncle to re-educate. He came several times to submit me sexually.» J. Uganda (Fra)

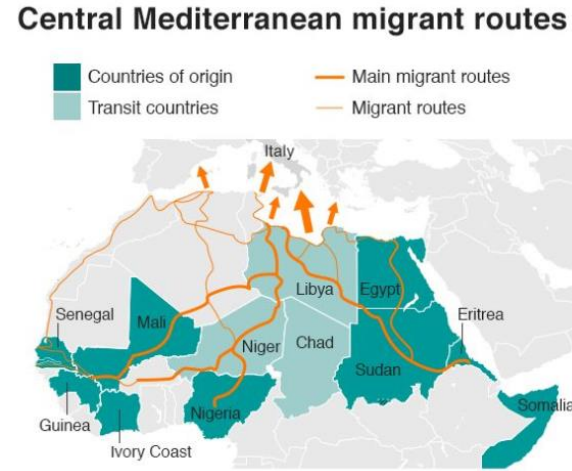
« When they arrested me, they brought me and locked me into a house. We saw nothing, windows were filled, there were just plastic bags and an iron. It stank of death. When I struggled, they burned me with the iron.» H DRC (Fra)



## ***Violence as a feature of the journey: “selling people is normal in Libya”***

- Accounts of physical violence and maltreatment towards migrants, a substantial proportion of which was sexual violence
- Violence particularly prevalent among sub-Saharan women
- Women frequently detained before sailing to Italy. For many, sex work isn't a choice, rather it is imposed by gangs that threaten women with physical violence and deportation if they refuse to comply

« If I had reported him to the police, my family would have been in great danger » B.  
Nigeria (Italy)



## ***Violence in destination settings:*** ***“it is not easy to be a foreign woman here..”***



« I didn't even know what my rights were, and what I can do here, my husband used to say "I can send you back, you're in my control, the law in this country [is such that] when husband calls [brings] a wife here, he can do anything to her and she has no rights" » I. Pakistan (UK)

« We, the housekeepers don't have any rights. Because if I don't work, I won't renew my documents and the pressure... you know? The pressure is the first thing. A woman puts up with many things. I was raped at my job and I didn't tell. For surviving, I've borne what nobody can bear" » C. Morocco (Spain)

# Matilda: “my daughter, she is very quiet, she doesn’t laugh, she doesn’t know happiness”





## ***Primary barriers to recognising abuse and seeking help “this is the way life is”***



« When I got married, I don't know how to live with a husband, it was when I was 17. I had an alcoholic husband; he forced me to smoke and drink, if I didn't, he used to pour alcohol in my mouth. I used to cry, he started beating me, and few days later, he brought his girlfriend directly to bedroom at midnight... I felt this is the way life is like. Like, movies, husbands always dominate wives. Even my sister's family too, I used to see the domination, that's what will happen. » E India (UK)

« Before I didn't know what they call DV - I used to think this man was very bad. How can he force me to have sex? He used to say, "if you don't let me, then the angel will come and punish you". I thought, maybe it's true »  
F. Uganda (UK)

## ***A double-edged sword: escape violence but at what cost? “I was so scared, used to cry all the time, and used to think they’ll send me back, it’s easy to do anything to anyone in Pakistan”***



- They are compelled to weigh up the costs of staying with the abuser (e.g. persistent/escalating abuse) and costs of leaving (e.g. losing right to remain in destination country; increase risk of honour-based violence).

« He [husband] knew about the rape, but told me to keep quiet. He didn't want to talk about it. Later, he told me not to go to the police about the rape, I said “I need to do something as it's killing me inside, I reported and he left me. » D India (UK)

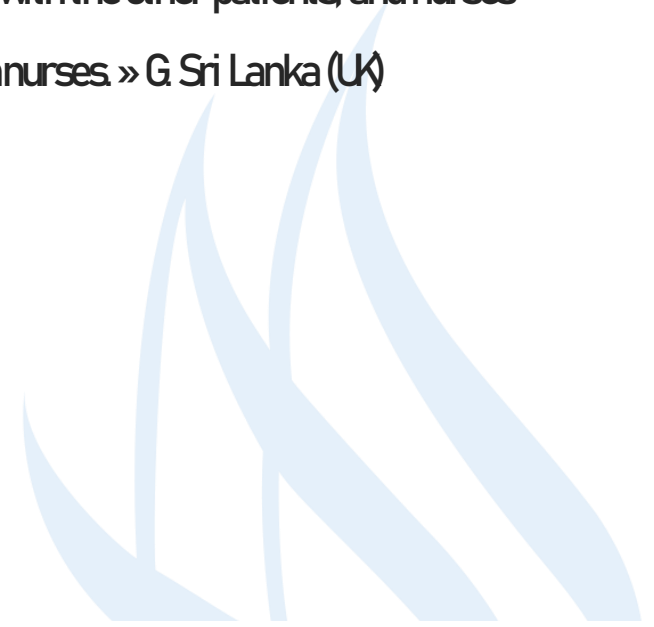
- This problem extends beyond the family/partner context to include work settings:

« I have suffered a lot at work. On one hand, you feel calm because you are legal here but, on the other hand, I have to endure too much to keep my documents in legality. » C. Morocco (Spain).



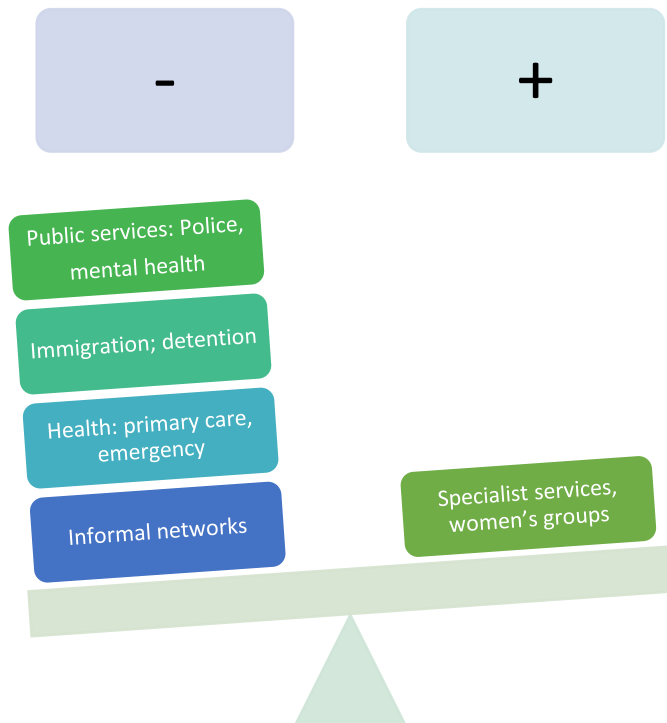
## A collage of diamond-shaped images showing diverse students in various settings: studying, working, and socializing.

« I felt I was happier in hospital than in my brother's house. I got involved with the other patients, and nurses were coming often to take my blood pressure. I had a good response from nurses. » G. Sri Lanka (UK)





# Service strengths and gaps



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## ***Harmful responses from institutions & organisations***

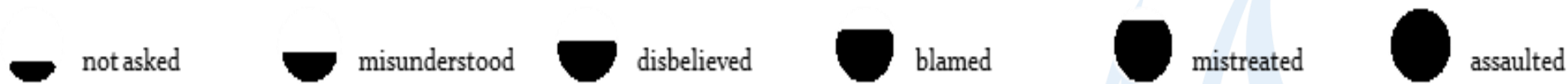


« The social worker said “But your appearance is nice, you don’t look like a battered woman...”

[...] If she doesn’t see you as a victim, she doesn’t help you either listen to you» B Morocco  
(Spain)

« I went to the GP when my difficulties started. He said “Why are you wasting your time and my time? You are fine, there’s nothing wrong with you.” I collapsed so many times at home. I knew it was stress» D India (UK)

# Differentiating inadequate responses to survivors

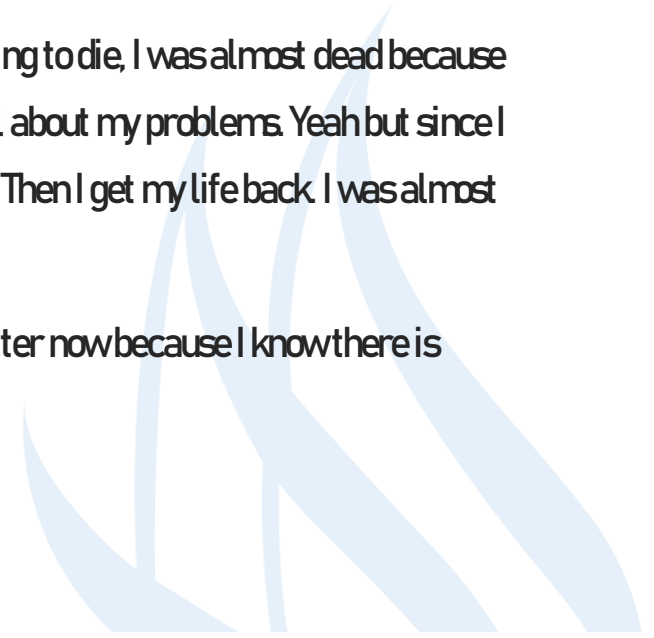


## ***Positive response from 'specialist' SV sector – culturally competent and trauma-informed***



« Since I knew [counsellor], my life changed because I was feeling like I am going to die, I was almost dead because my husband did so many things to me and when I cannot get help, whom to tell about my problems. Yeah but since I knew MI was crying, crying, feeling very down, but she used to encourage me. Then I get my life back I was almost dead. » F. Uganda (UK).

« Before this service, I was blank. I tried to commit suicide many times, but better now because I know there is someone [from a specialist service] with me. » D. India (UK)



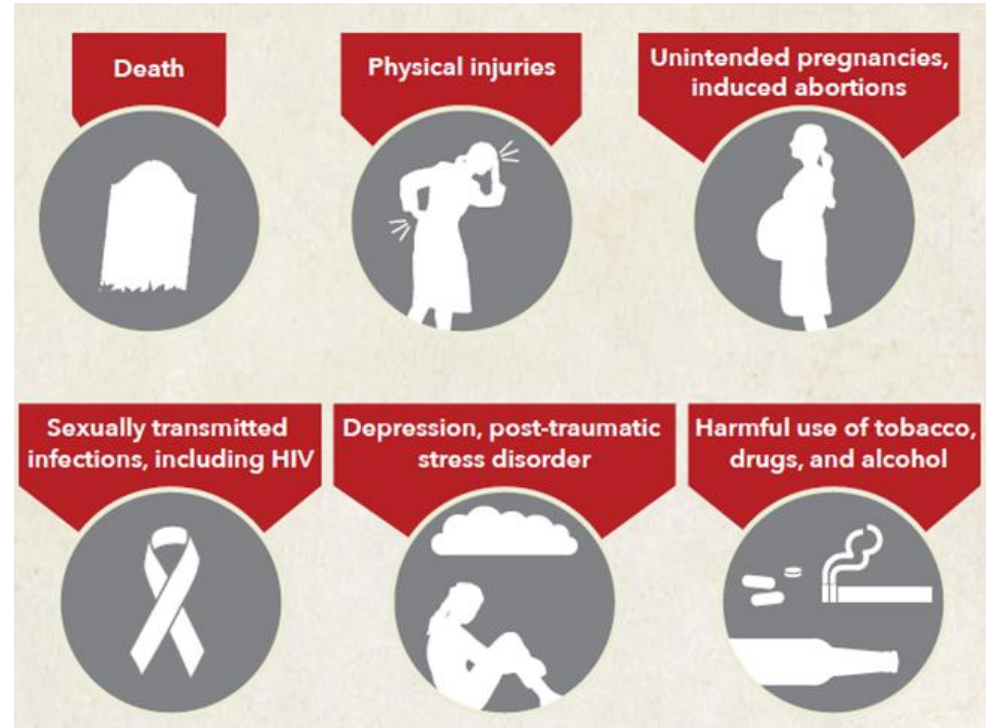


# Key findings & implications from findings in 6 countries

- Migrant women are at increased risk of multiple forms of gender-based violence



- Factors like war/conflict, poverty, and norms about gender, violence and sexuality underpin early exposure to violence (in home countries) and the nature of vulnerability shifts substantially as women enter new geographical, social and cultural spaces and 'became migrant'



- Women from migrant communities are not only at risk of being 'othered' (Grillo, 2013) in the receiving country context; they are also at risk of being 'othered' within their own cultural contexts if they reject or attempt to escape subordination and abuse - *My father used to say "wherever you're married, spend your whole life there, until you die there, my izzat"*.



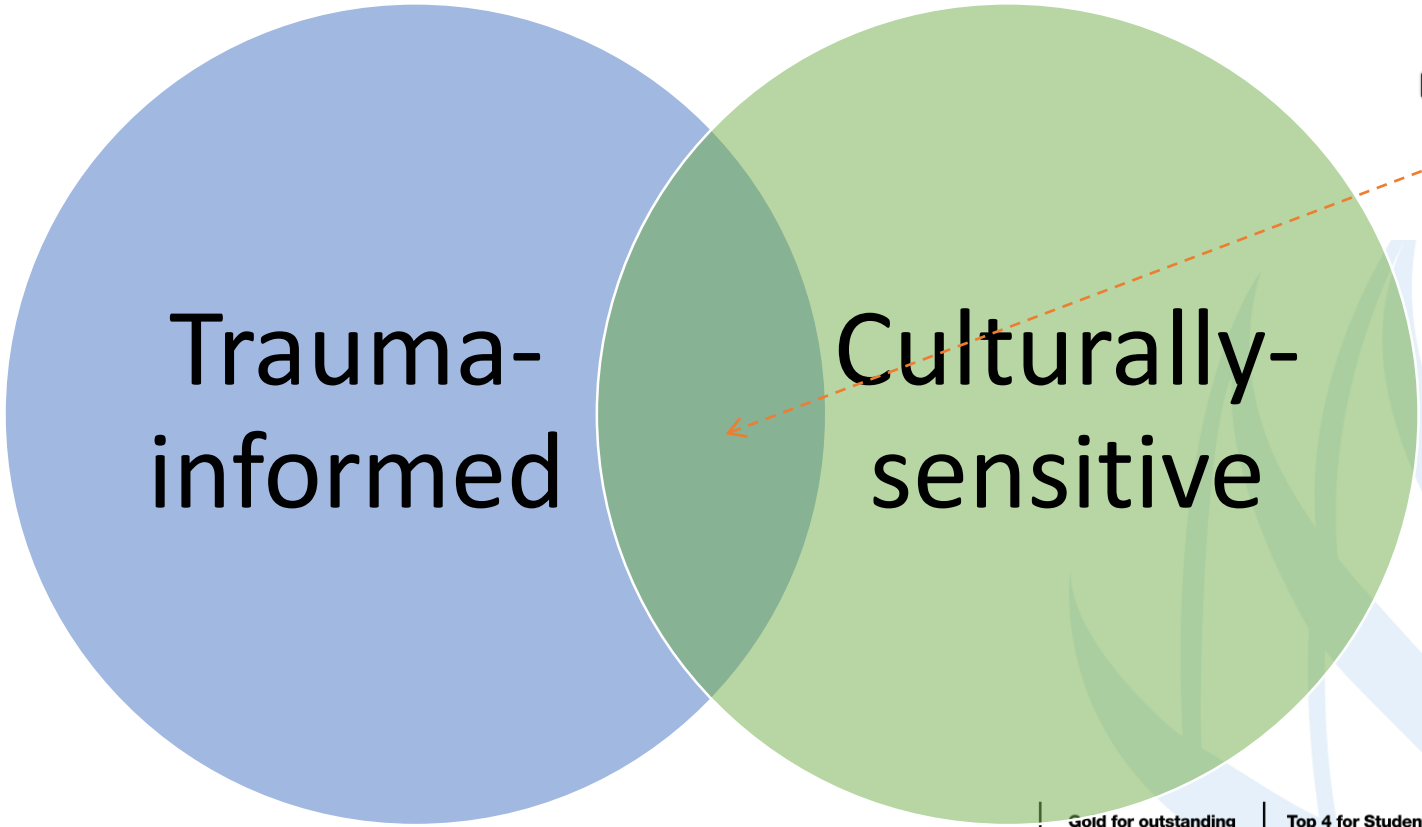


- Intervention strategies need to be responsive to these complex intersections (Crenshaw, 1994) - responses from professionals and organizations, based on inappropriate, non-intersectional contexts, shape and ultimately limit the opportunities for meaningful support and intervention, and recovery
- It is crucial that there is understanding and awareness among frontline professionals and service providers about multi-layered and routinised forms of domination that often converge in these women's lives, and hinder their ability to create alternatives to abusive relationships and the other forms of violence

## Services

- specialist reach, with staff that share language and cultural backgrounds
- capability to respond to disclosure and handle referral safely and sensitively
- cultural competence and confidence to challenge harmful community norms
- access to trained interpreters
- options for migrant/women to exercise choice





A Venn diagram consisting of two overlapping circles. The left circle is blue and contains the text 'Trauma-informed'. The right circle is green and contains the text 'Culturally-sensitive'. The intersection of the two circles is a darker shade of blue and green. An orange dashed arrow points from the text 'Effective response for migrant survivors' to the intersection area.

Trauma-  
informed

Culturally-  
sensitive

**Effective response for  
migrant survivors**

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- There is also a need to maximise the reach of messages to newly-arrived and current migrants. This could include ensuring access to information on risks, rights and services via multiple avenues including immigration and border control agencies; community groups; health, public services and other agencies that have contact with migrants and migrant women
- Early intervention and long-term engagement with survivors and those at risk are crucial.

*I used to feel like a leaf who would fall down  
when the wind would blow....now I feel  
stronger*

**Thank you for listening**