



NATIONAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

ANNUAL REPORT 1 January–31 December 2020

The assistance system turns 15

Statistics from the past 15 years and, of course, the latest statistics

More and more people experience human trafficking in Finland



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FOREWORD:

15 YEARS OF ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Finland has a duty to identify and assist victims of human trafficking. The obligation is based on international, European and national legislation.

Under Finnish law, the victims of human trafficking have been defined a special status as recipients of services in accordance with the international obligations. The victim has a special right to assistance and support.

The Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking was established 15 years ago to answer for the realisation of these rights.

When the assistance system started its operation, it was run by only one employee, and, in the early years, only a handful of clients were admitted to the system each year.

During the last few years, the annual number of new clients taken on has risen to hundreds. During its 15 years of operation, the assistance system has provided help and assistance to a total of more than 1,250 trafficking victims and hundreds of children dependent on them. Today, the assistance system already has 10 employees.

Over the years, the assistance system has also become a centre of knowledge that offers daily counselling and guidance not only to victims of human trafficking but also to other authorities, third-sector operators and ordinary citizens. The assistance system trains people on how to identify human trafficking and to act with trafficking victims.

After all, we first need to identify the victims of human trafficking before we can provide them with comprehensive help and assistance. This is, of course, important for the victim and sometimes also for the people close to him or her, but it is of importance also with a view to

crime prevention. If trafficking in human beings and trafficking victims are not identified, it allows the crime of human trafficking to flourish and grow freely. Internationally, it is already one of the most productive forms of crime.

For the victims personally, it is important that they get an opportunity to understand their situation as a whole and to understand the complex dynamics that lead to people being coerced to do things against their own will. The victim needs assistance in various forms, which needs to be provided taking account of the safety of the victim and people close to him or her and the various phases of potential criminal proceedings. This is an entity that requires multidisciplinary and expert cooperation from the stakeholders providing support and assistance to the victim.

Naturally, the assistance system team does not work alone or in a vacuum. All the authorities and organisations that participate in the provision of help and assistance to the trafficking victims and combating the crime of trafficking in human beings do extremely important work.

Page 11 shows the various stakeholders who identify human trafficking and trafficking victims and refer them to the assistance system. Without their enormous contribution – most of which does not even show in the assistance system statistics – we would not be able to identify and help victims of human trafficking on a scale that is currently possible.

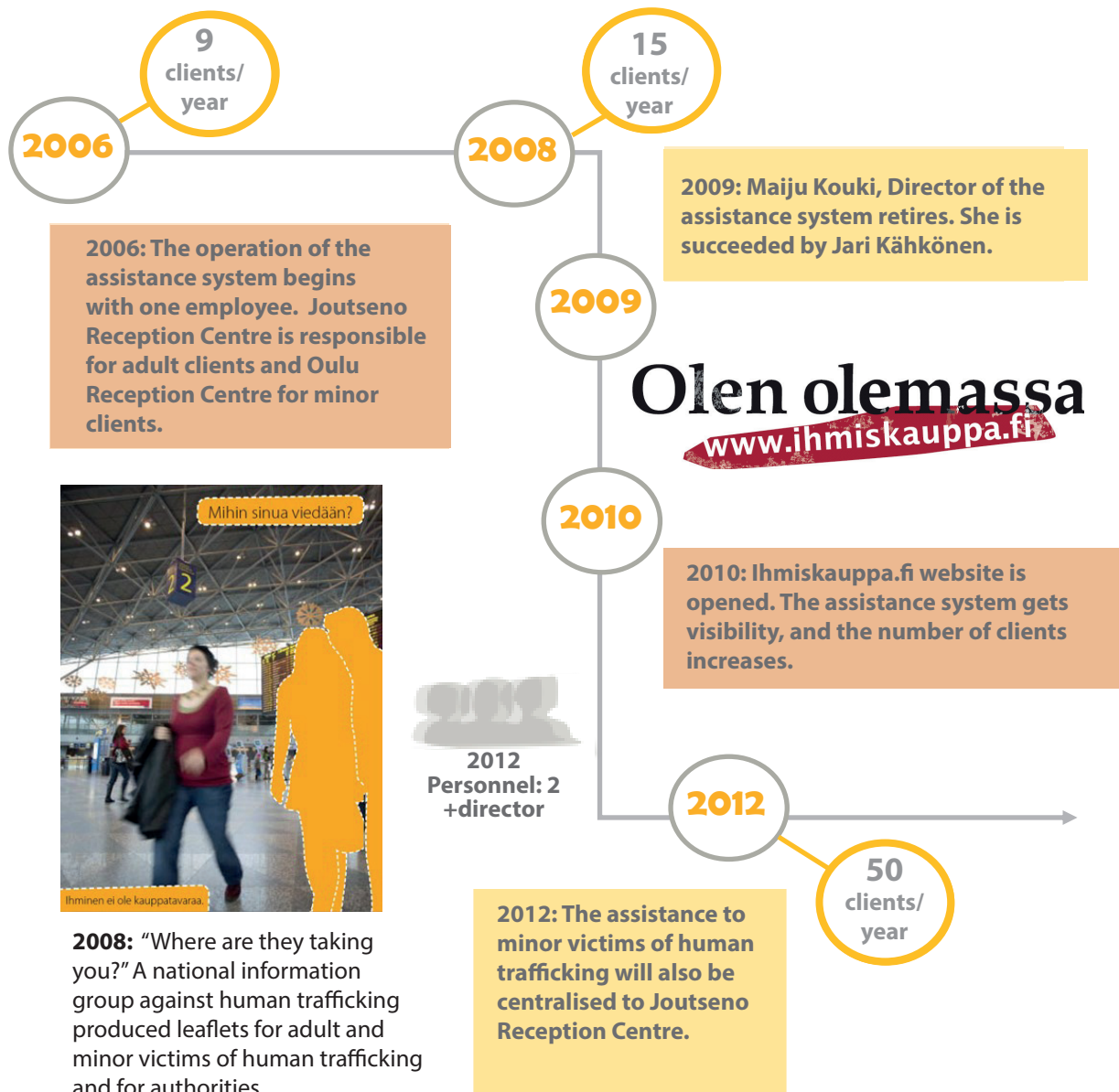
We have achieved a lot through collaboration.

And we will achieve even more in the future.



15 YEARS OF ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The assistance system for victims of human trafficking was established in 2006. In 15 years, the assistance system has grown from a micro-authority with one employee to a national centre of knowledge that helps several hundreds of trafficking victims every year.



* Only the employees doing full-time customer work and the director of the reception centre have been included in the number of personnel.

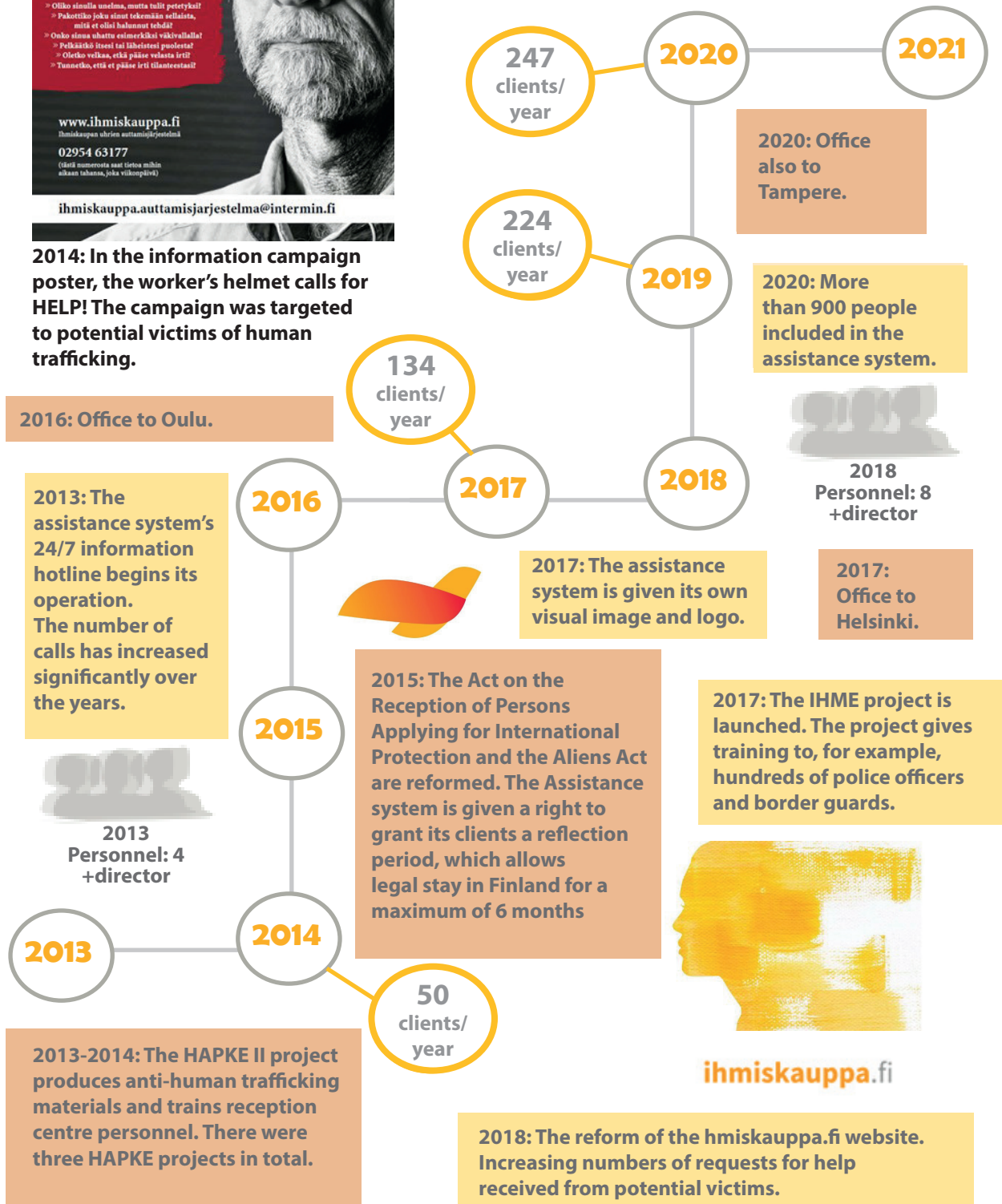


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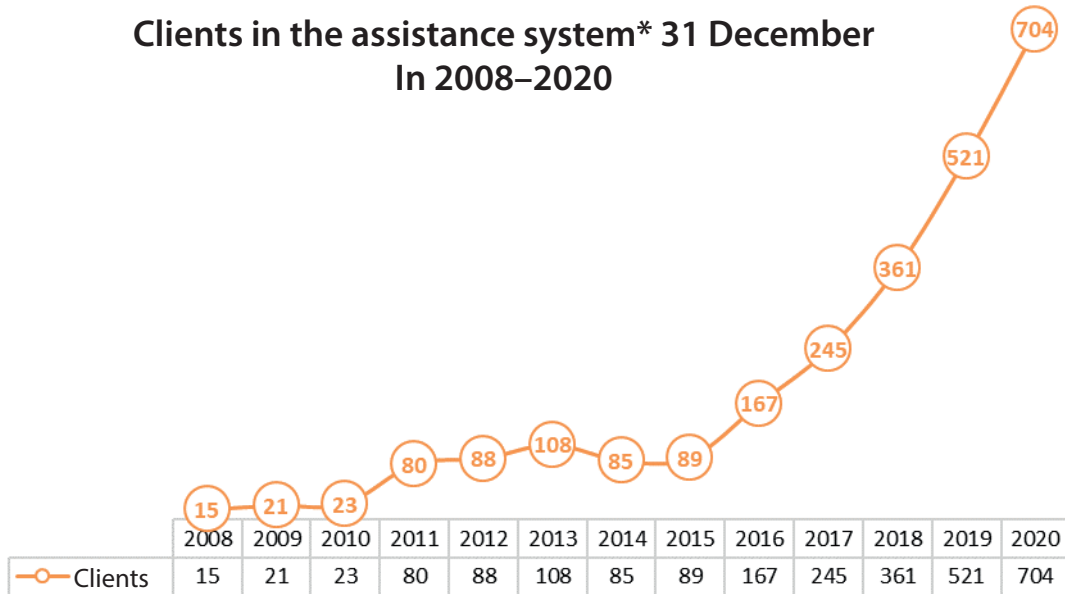
2014: In the information campaign poster, the worker's helmet calls for HELP! The campaign was targeted to potential victims of human trafficking.



2019: The poster campaign targeted to those encountering human trafficking in their work encouraged people to identify hidden criminality. In the photo, part of a poster.

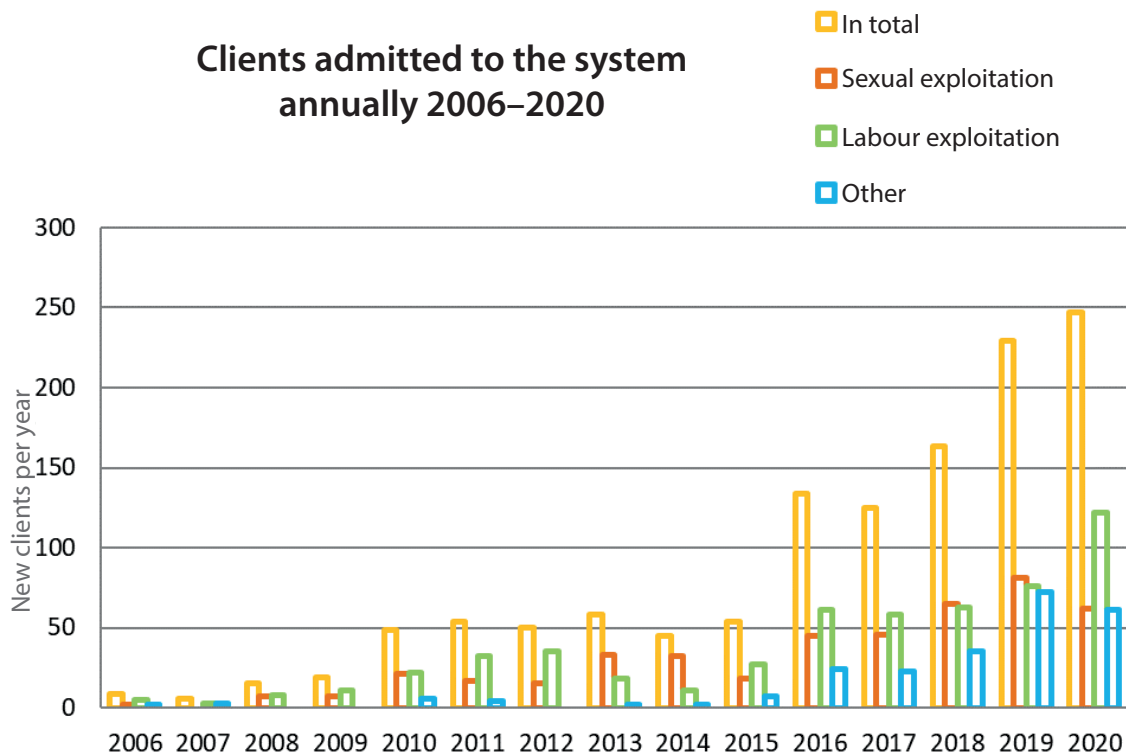


Clients in the assistance system* 31 December In 2008–2020

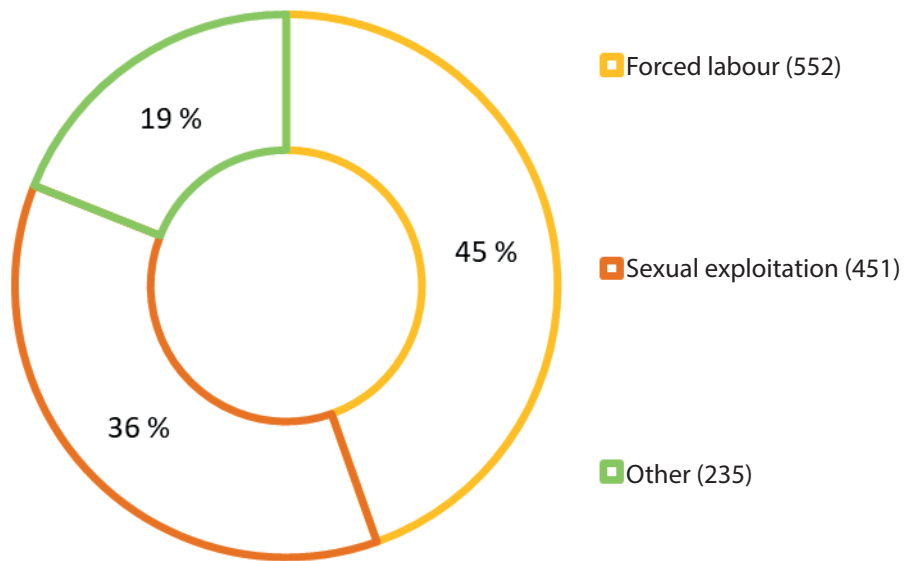


*Statistics on the total number of clients have only been collected since 2008. Furthermore, the statistics do not show the clients' children, as they were not included in statistics before 2016. In total, the assistance system has helped 1,257 potential victims of human trafficking and several hundreds of children dependent on them.

Clients admitted to the system annually 2006–2020

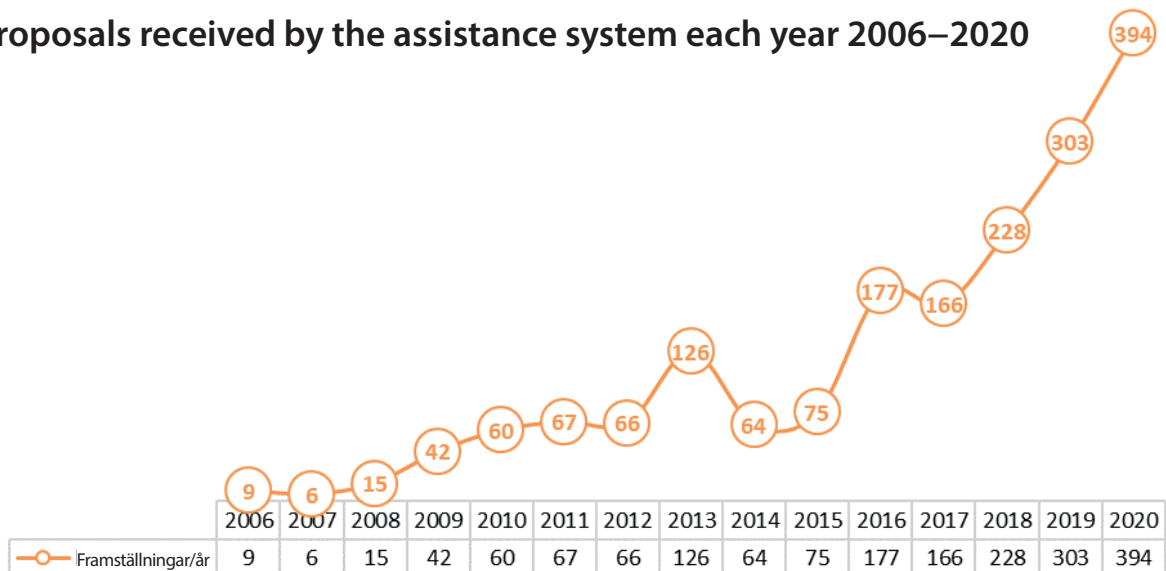


Purpose of exploitation: all clients 2006–2020



In the early years, there were so few cases of human trafficking related to forced labour and sexual exploitation that they were counted under the exploitation category "others". Since 2016, the share of forced marriages in particular has grown substantially. At the same time, we have also learned to identify less-known forms of human trafficking, such as coercing people to forced criminal activity or forced begging.

Proposals received by the assistance system each year 2006–2020



In 15 years, proposals on admitting a person to the assistance system have been filed on about 1,800 people and their minor children – no separate statistics are collected on proposals concerning the latter. In 2013 and 2016, the cases related to berry pickers recruited from Thailand increased the numbers. At the time, dozens of persons were proposed to the assistance system at the same time.

MORE AND MORE



PEOPLE EXPERIENCE HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FINLAND



The number of people identified as having been coerced to forced labour in Finland has more than doubled from earlier years. Stock photo.

In 2020, more people subjected to exploitation indicating human trafficking were identified in Finland than ever before. This article focuses specifically on exploitation that has taken place in Finland.

Usually, each year more people admitted to the assistance system for victims of human trafficking have fallen victim to trafficking abroad (66–70%) than in Finland (34–30%). However, in 2020 the number of victims exploited in Finland (123 persons) admitted to the services was slightly higher than that of those exploited abroad (121 persons).

Furthermore, three people, who acted as witnesses in the investigation and court proceedings in a suspected case of human trafficking that took place in

Finland, were admitted to the assistance system.

The number of forced labour victims doubled

Most of the people who became clients of the assistance system were persons who were suspected of having been subjected to trafficking related to forced labour in Finland. The number of such people coerced to forced labour admitted as clients was more than twice as high (78 persons) as the year before (33 persons).

Based on the new client relationships, in 2020 the most high-risk fields seemed to include the cleaning, restaurant and construction sectors, seasonal work in agriculture and acting

as a domestic help in a private household.

In some cases, the coercing to forced labour had been done by the person's own spouse.

Forced marriage in Finland

In 23 exploitation cases discovered in Finland, it was estimated that the victim had been forced into marriage.

The marriage had usually begun in the victim's home country and continued in Finland under conditions violating human dignity. At the time the marriage was contracted, the victim had usually been under the age of 18.

Some of the victims have been brought to Finland as a new wife to a person living in Finland, or the

marriage has been contracted in Finland.

The person forced to marry may also have been sent from Finland to abroad to contract a marriage there against his or her will.

Brutal violence

The number of cases of human trafficking related to sexual exploitation identified in Finland did not increase much from earlier years.

15 people were estimated to have been pressured or forced into prostitution or subjected to sexual exploitation indicative of other types of human trafficking.

Five people were estimated to have been subjected to forced criminal activity. Generally, these activities were associated with drug-related crime in some way or another. The victims had typically been subjected to brutal violence the threat of which had possibly been extended to people close to the victim.

Two people were admitted as clients of the assistance system, because they were estimated to have been subjected to trafficking for *benefit fraud* in Finland.

Minor victims in Finland

11 people had fallen victim of exploitation indicating human trafficking in Finland as minors.

Those exploited as minors had been subjected to forced labour, exploitation through prostitution and forced marriage.

In many cases, the exploitation had taken place when the victim had been under the age of 18, but the victim has not dared to talk about it before adulthood.

Who are the victims of human trafficking?

Those exploited in Finland represent 31 different nationalities. People identified as having been subjected to exploitation were most often identified as citizens of Iraq, Finland, Albania, Nepal and Afghanistan.

Almost one third of them had had a residence permit in Finland. 19 of the victims were Finnish citizens or citizens of another EU country and 14 were from countries the citizens of which do not need a visa to stay in Finland.

Minors had fallen victim to forced labour, prostitution and forced marriage in Finland.

It has been estimated that persons residing in Finland without a legal right of residence, or 'undocumented persons', are particularly prone to many forms of exploitation.



Those subjected to forced labour in Finland may have had to work without sufficient personal protective equipment. Stock photo.

In 2020, 22 undocumented persons, who were suspected of having been subjected to exploitation related to human trafficking, were admitted to the Assistance system. They had 11 minor children dependent on them, who, like their guardians, lived in Finland without legal residence.

Slightly under one quarter of the persons exploited in Finland were asylum seekers. In most cases, the persons who had fallen victim had already received one or more negative decisions to

their applications for international protection.

And who referred them to the assistance system

People fallen victim in Finland were most often referred to the assistance system by Victim Support Finland (42), the police (24), mother and child homes and shelters for victims of domestic violence (9), including Monika Multicultural Women's Association (5/9). Legal aid attorneys (8), reception centres (7) and prisons (3) also identify trafficking victims and refer them to assistance.

In 25 cases, person fallen victim to human trafficking sought his or her way to the assistance system themselves.

Municipal and city employees, child welfare services or organisations other than those mentioned above very seldom refer people who have become potential victims of human trafficking in Finland to the assistance system. 🍂

Statistics of new clients who have potentially fallen victim to human trafficking in Finland on pages 16–17.

CLIENT NUMBERS GROWING CONTINUOUSLY



Exploitation in prostitution has devastating effects on the victim. Stock photo.

Yet again, a record number of people suspected of being trafficking victims have been referred to the assistance system. In all, 393 people were proposed to be admitted to or sought their way to the services provided by the assistance system.

The highest number of potential victims were referred to the assistance system by reception centres, but direct contact by the victim has become the second most common way of seeking one's way to the assistance system.

Potential victims of human trafficking contact the organisation especially through the www.ihmiskauppa.fi website and by calling the Assistance system information service.

247 new clients

In 2020, the Assistance system admitted 247 new clients, of whom

123 had fallen victim to exploitation related to human trafficking in Finland and 121 outside Finland.

In addition, the system admitted three persons, who acted as witnesses in the pre-trial investigation and court proceedings of a human trafficking offence case.

10 of the new clients were minors.

The admitted clients also included 50 children whose guardian is a potential trafficking victim admitted to the assistance system.

Those fallen victim abroad have often been exploited in prostitution

In all, 62 victims of trafficking related to sexual exploitation were admitted as clients, of whom 47 had been subjected to exploitation outside Finland. In most cases, they are women exploited in prostitution.

The persons admitted as clients included 122 people exploited in forced labour. In 44 of these cases, the exploitation had taken place outside of Finland, mostly outside the victim's own home country.

In 45 cases, the victim was estimated to have ended up in forced marriage. 22 of the victims had been forced into marriage in their home country, usually as minors. However, they had succeeded in getting out of their marriage, in most cases by fleeing the country. In some cases, the forced marriage may also have involved pimping of the spouse in a weaker position.

In case of 23 of the victims, being forced into marriage was connected to Finland in one way or another.

Victims of other forms of trafficking in human beings, such as trade in human organs and tissues or the use of child soldiers, and persons coerced into criminal activity were also identified and referred to the assistance system.

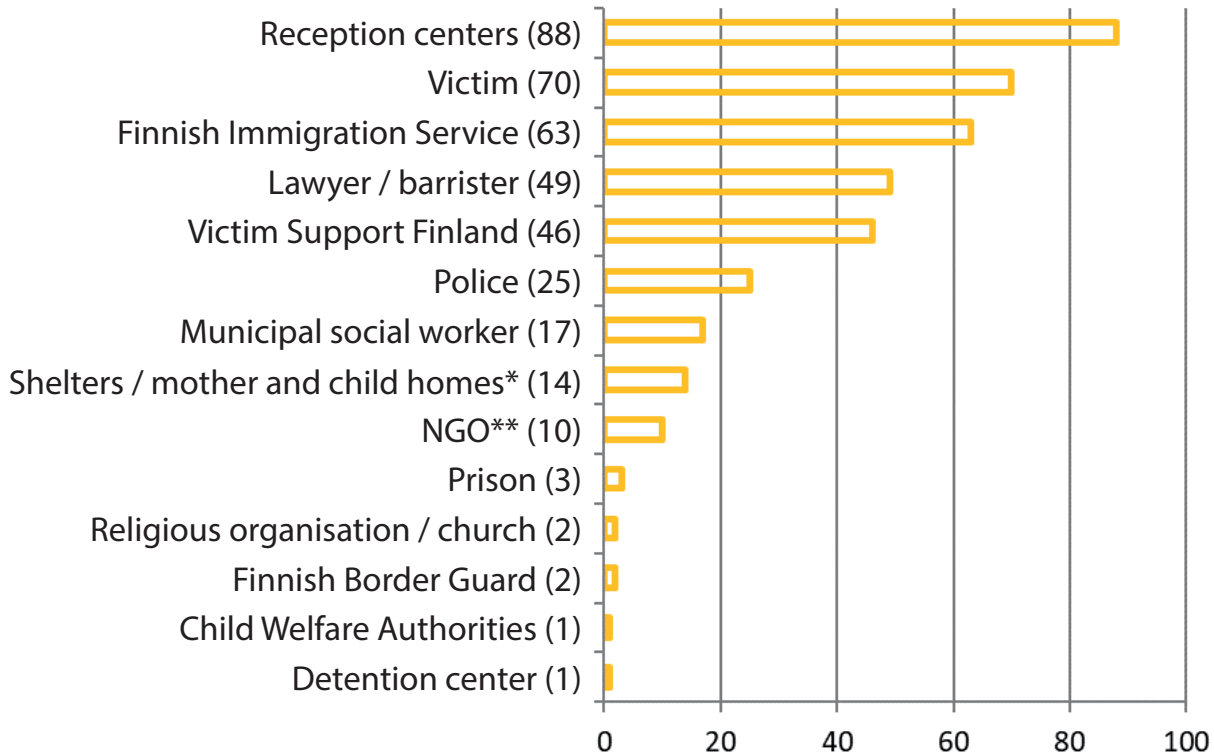
Almost one thousand clients

On 31 December 2020, the assistance system had a total of 916 clients, of which 704 were potential trafficking victims and 212 were minor children dependent on them.

The total number is significantly higher than at the same time last year, when 676 people were entitled to the assistance system services. 🍷

APPLICATIONS TO THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM 1 January–31 December 2020

Parties who referred victims to the NAS in 2020 - 394 referrals

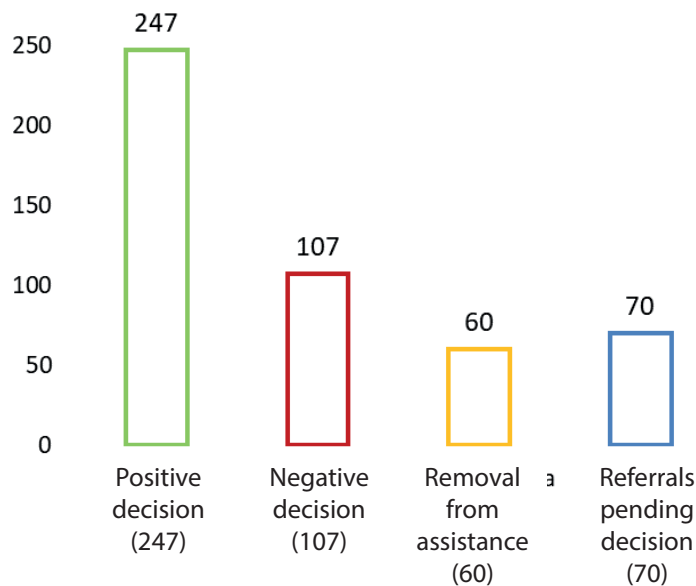


* 6 of the proposals from the Monika Multicultural Women's Association

** organisations: Jomoni ry, Setlementti ry, Suomen Kurdit ry, Turun Valkonauha ry, Turvapaikanhakijoiden tuki ry

DECISIONS MADE BY THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM 1 January–31 December 2020

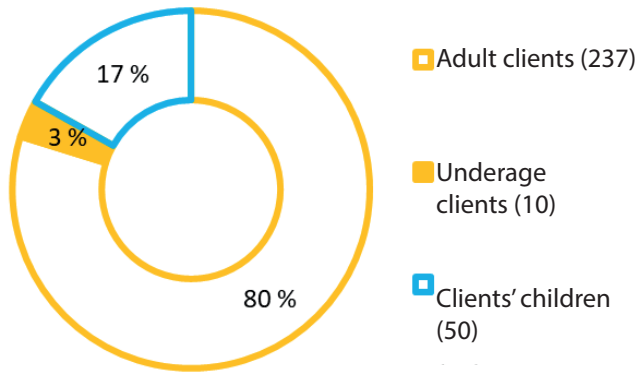
Decisions on entry to and removal from the NAS in 2020*



* in 2020, decisions were also made on 34 proposals/applications received in 2019.

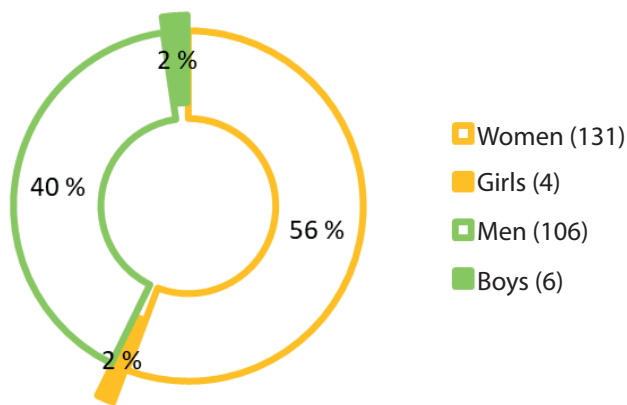
NEW CLIENTS (247) 1 January–31 December 2020

New clients (247 + 50)



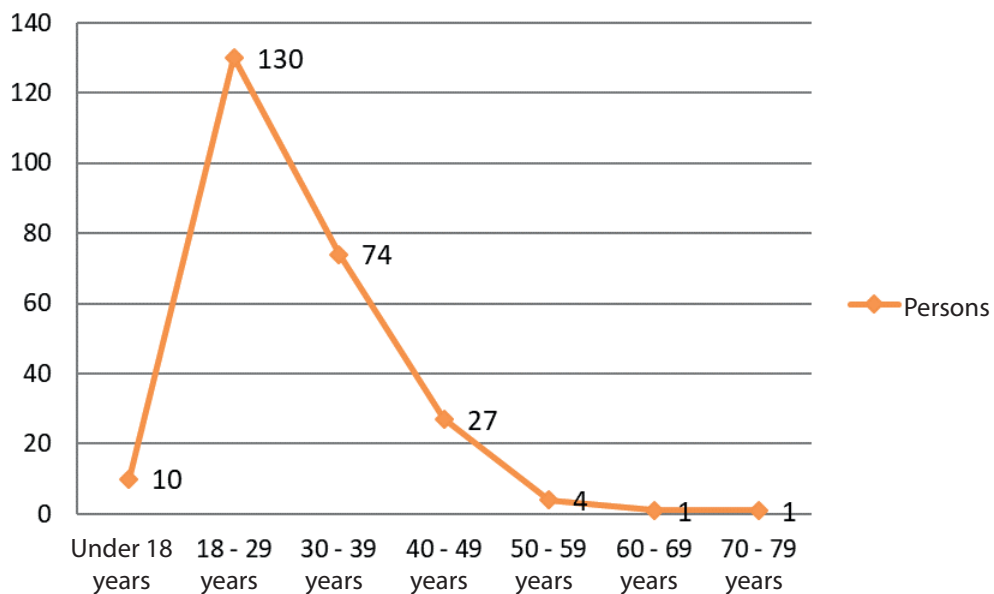
In 2020, a total of 297 people were admitted as clients to the assistance system. The following statistics does not observe the information on the minor children of the potential trafficking victims (50 persons).

Gender distribution: new clients (247)

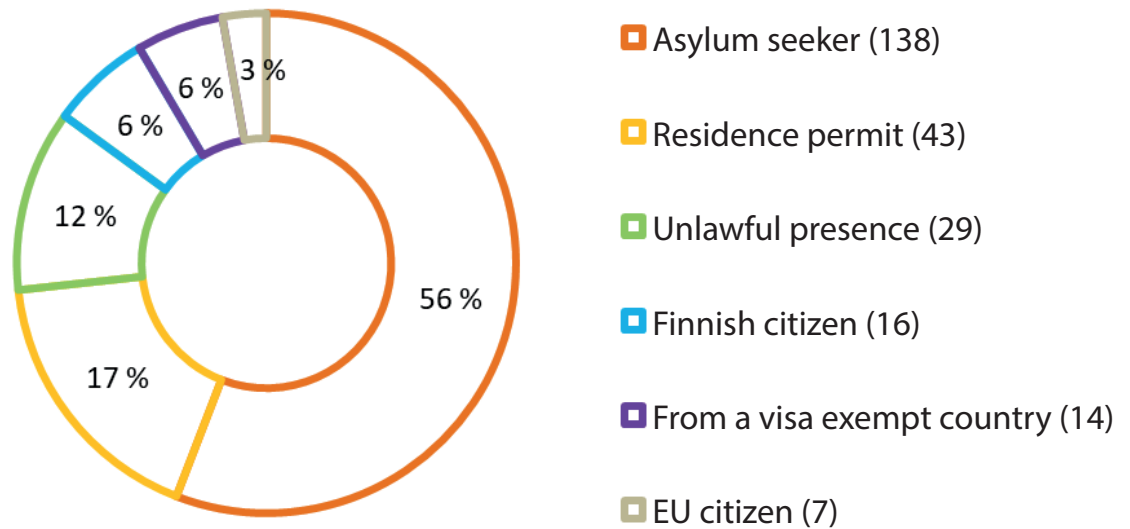


Based on the assistance system statistics, particularly young adults seek help from the system. However, the clients represent all age groups from adolescents to over 70-year-olds.

New clients (247) by age group

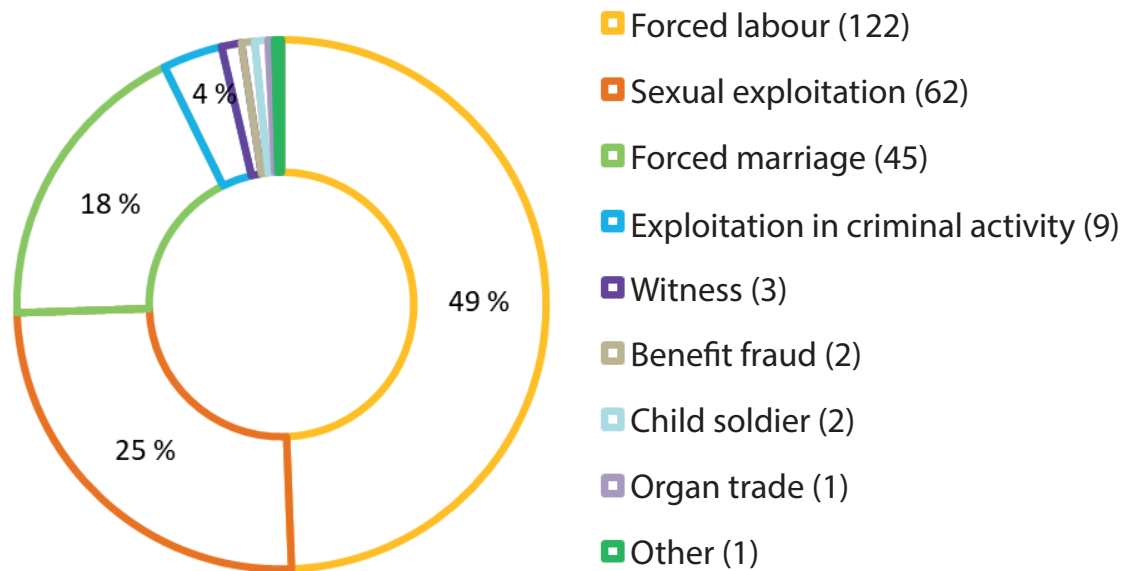


New clients (247) according to residence status



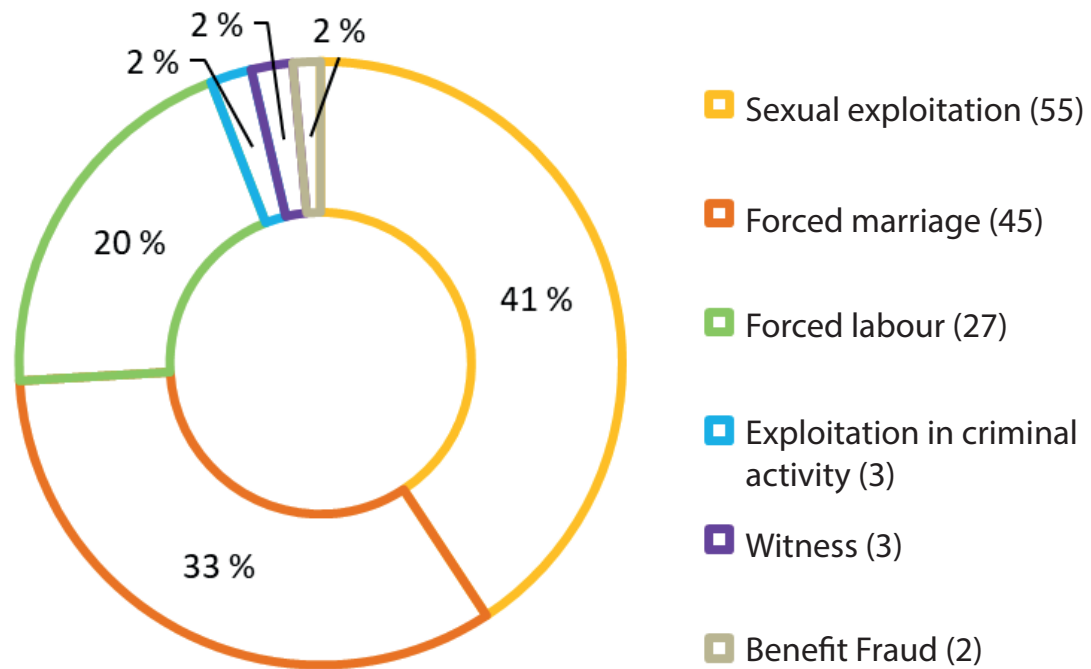
In most of the cases, the potential trafficking victim has had legal residence in Finland. However, people staying in Finland without legal residence, or 'undocumented persons', may avoid seeking assistance in fear of authorities taking measures.

New clients (247) by form of exploitation



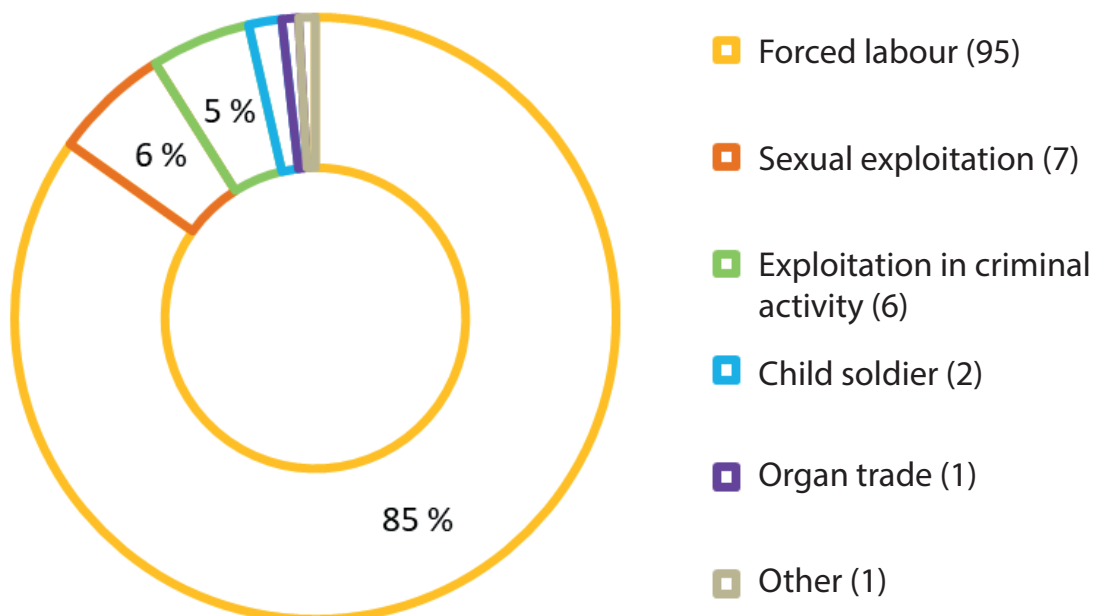
No cases of trade in human organs and tissues or the use as child soldier have been detected in Finland. Exploitation of victims subjected to these forms of human trafficking has taken place outside Finland. Two cases of trafficking for benefit fraud were detected in Finland. You will find more information on trafficking for benefit fraud on the www.ihmiskauppa.fi website.

New clients: women and girls (135) according to form of exploitation

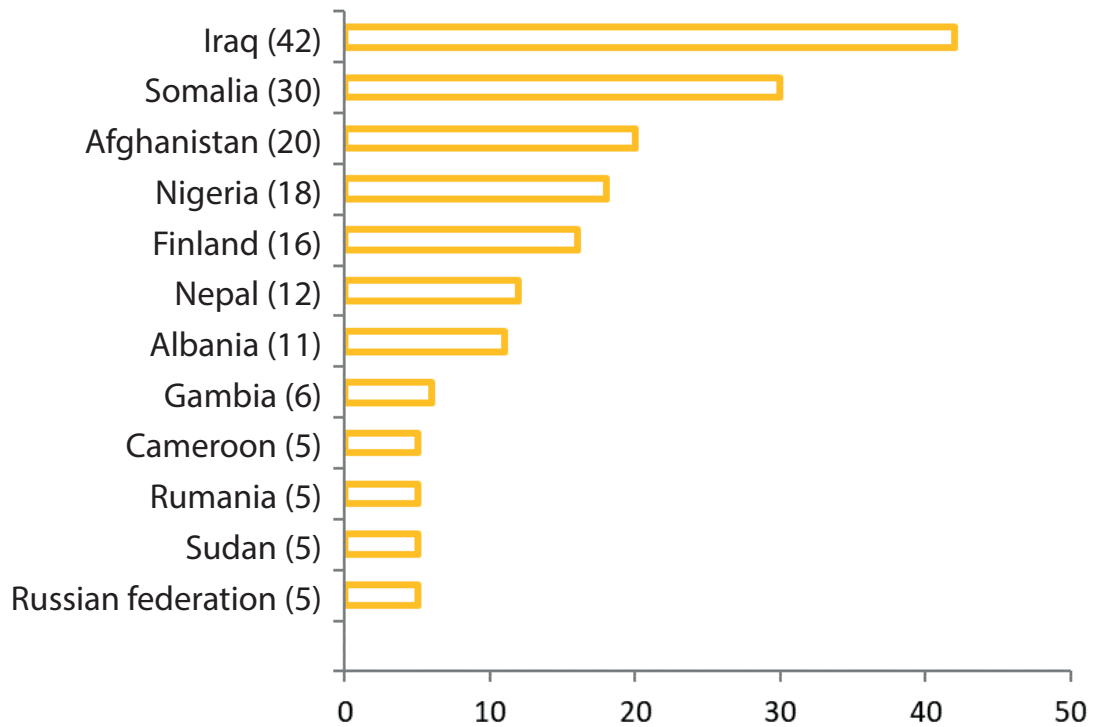


Women and girls have most often fallen victim to trafficking related to sexual exploitation, being pressured or forced into prostitution in particular. Forced marriage may also involve exploitation in prostitution or exploitation comparable to sexual slavery. Women and girls may also be subjected to sexual exploitation in connection with forced labour.

New clients: men and boys (112) according to form of exploitation

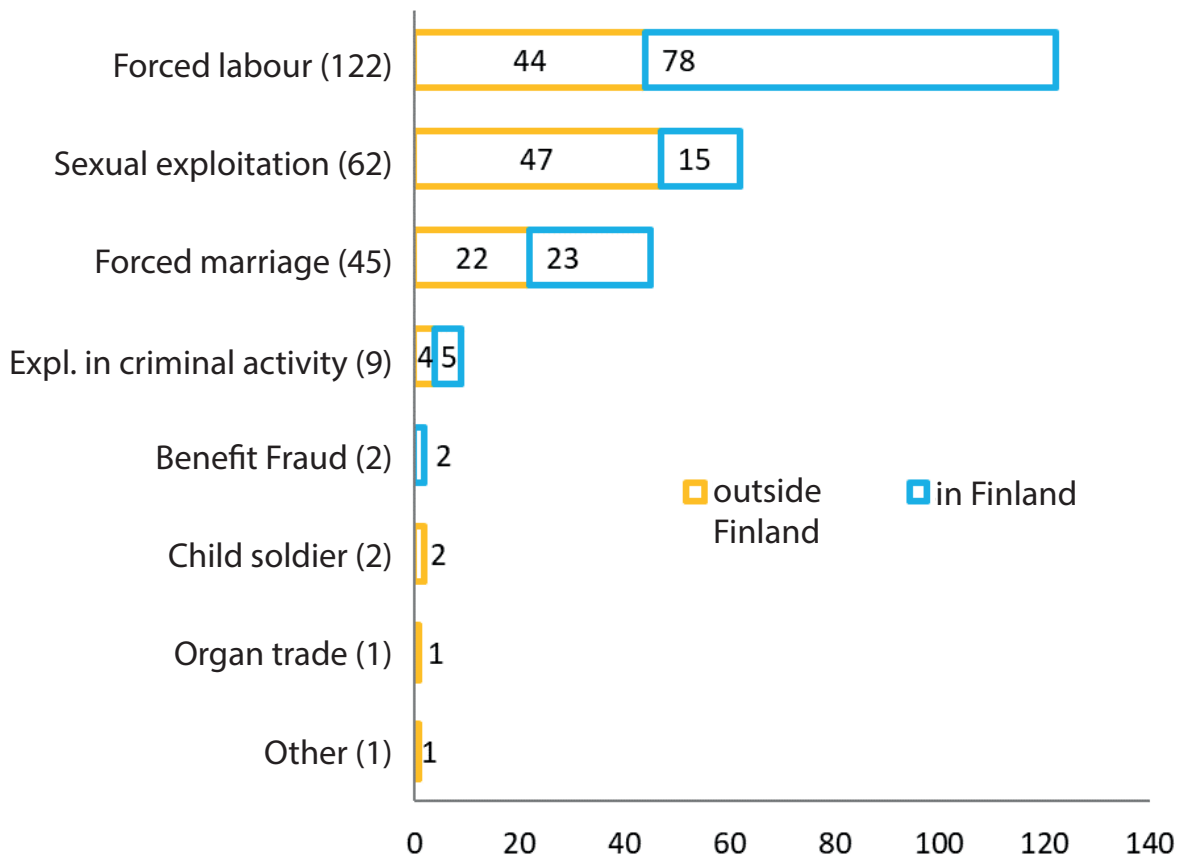


New clients (247): top nationalities



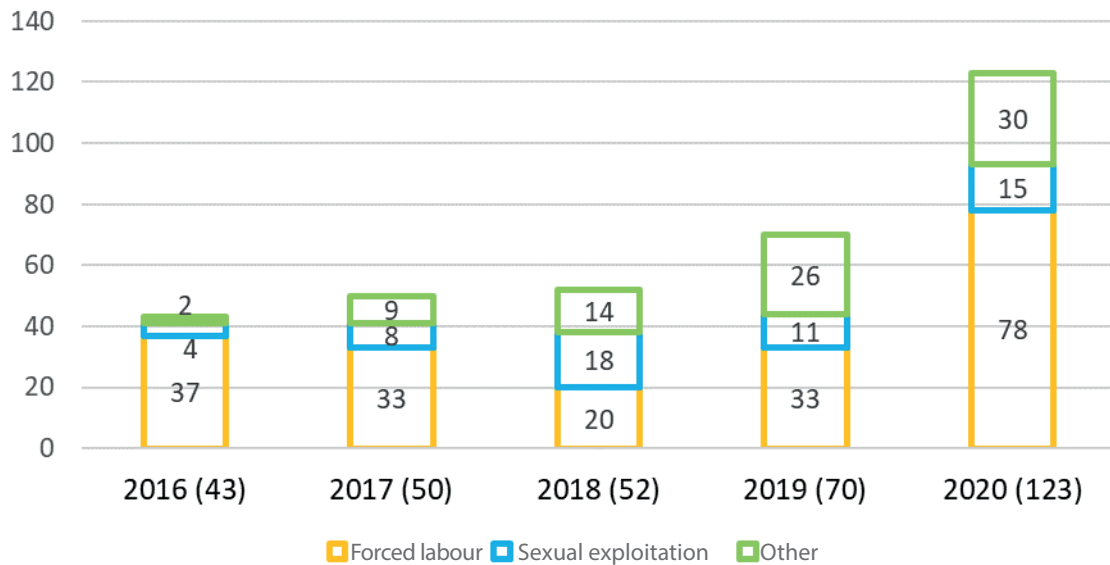
The new clients represented 50 different nationalities (incl. one stateless person). *To ensure the protection of privacy of the clients, the table shows only those nationalities with five or more representatives.

New clients (247) according to place and form of exploitation



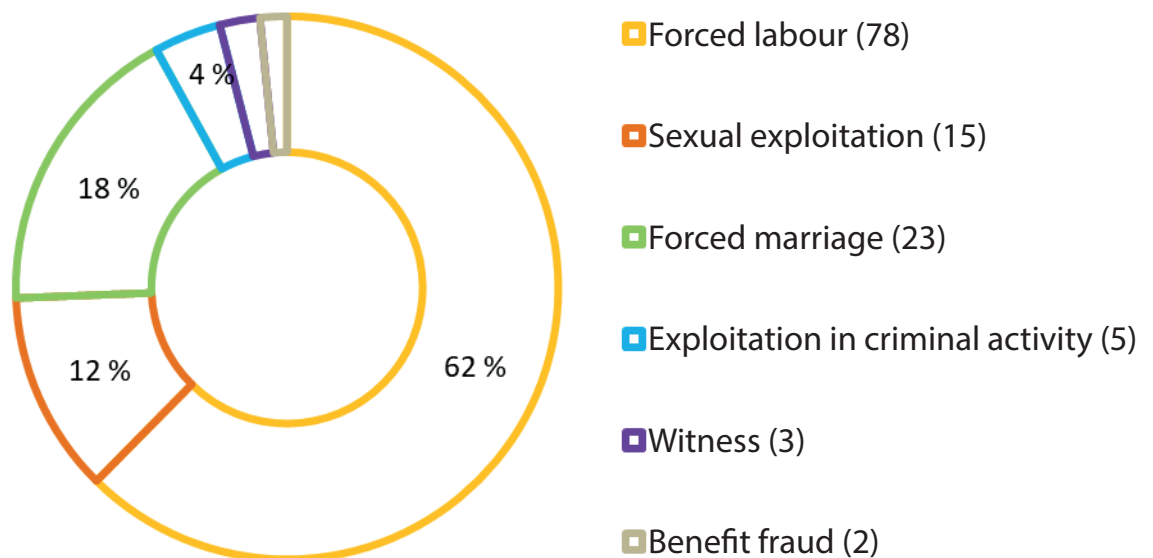
NEW CLIENTS FALLEN VICTIM TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN FINLAND

Annually admitted clients who had been exploited in Finland: 2016 - 2020



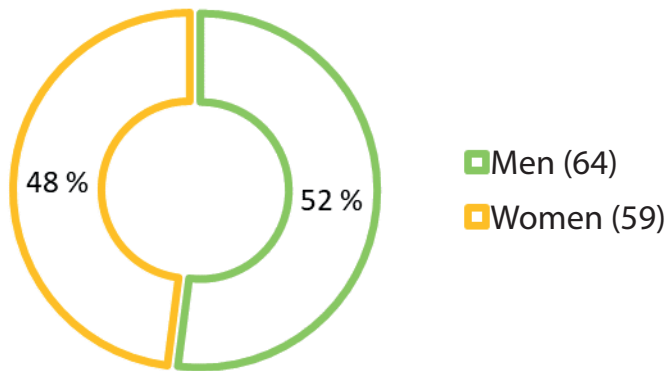
In 2020, a record number of people potentially fallen victim to human trafficking in Finland were admitted as clients of the assistance system. Compared to two years ago, the total number of new clients had more than doubled. Finland has always had the strongest potential to identify trafficking related to forced labour in particular. The ability to identify trafficking related to sexual exploitation remains limited, and it would require investigative actions by pre-trial investigation authorities, for which the police have lacked sufficient resources.

New clients exploited in Finland (123): form of exploitation



In this statistics, the persons acting as witnesses in the investigation and court proceedings of a human trafficking offence case have also been included as clients, even though acting as a witness does not have any exploitative purpose. The witnesses have not fallen victim to human trafficking.

New clients exploited in Finland (123): gender distribution

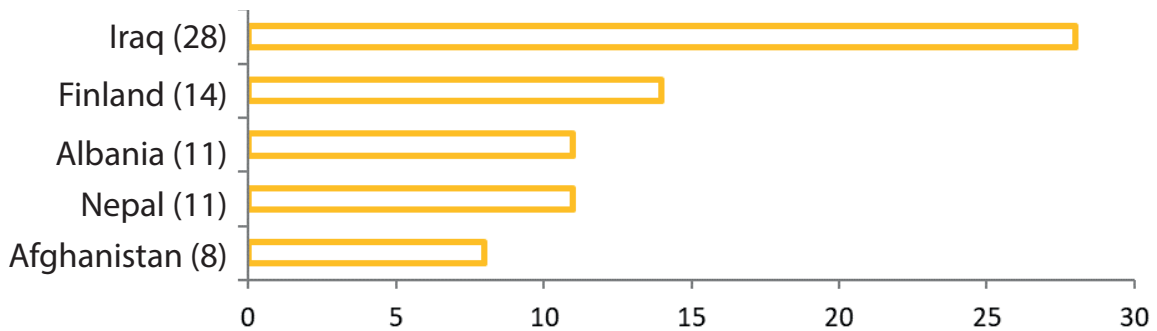


As a rule, people exploited in Finland have also had legal residence in Finland.

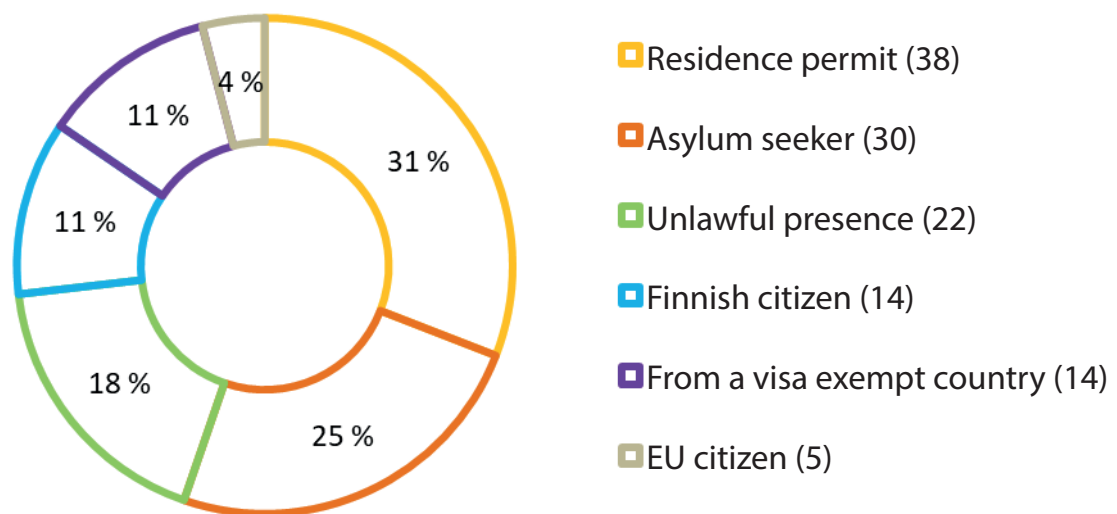
In 22 cases, the connection between exploitation and irregular stay has been clear. Being undocumented has exposed people to exploitation and increased their dependence on the exploiter.

Of those admitted to the assistance system exploited in Finland, one had been a minor on admittance, but a total of 11 persons had fallen victim to exploitation before turning 18.

New clients exploited in Finland (123): top nationalities

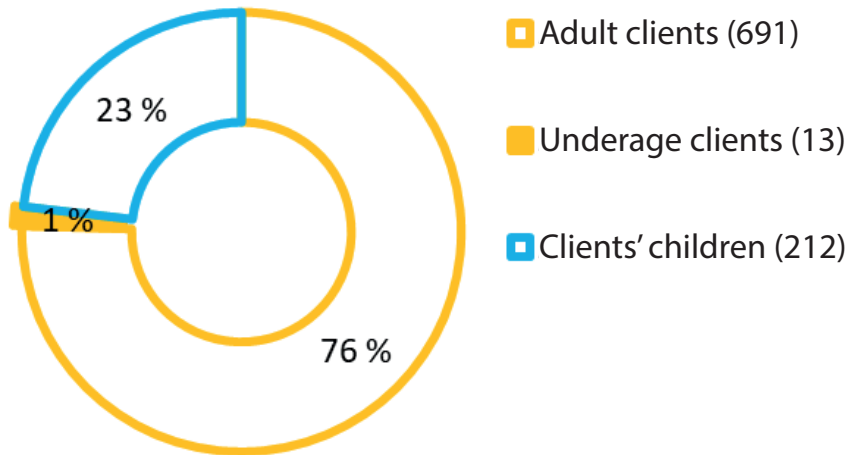


New clients exploited in Finland (123) according to residence status



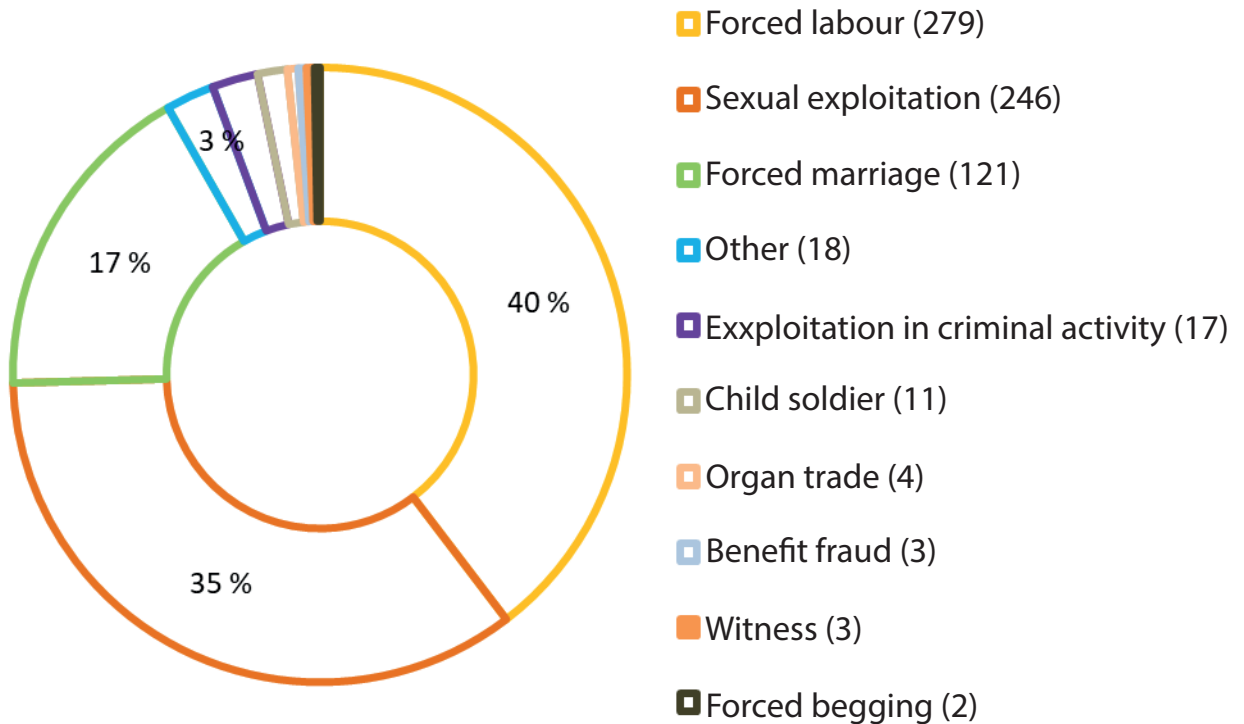
ALL CLIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM 31 DECEMBER 2020

All clients in the NAS on 31.12.2020 (916)



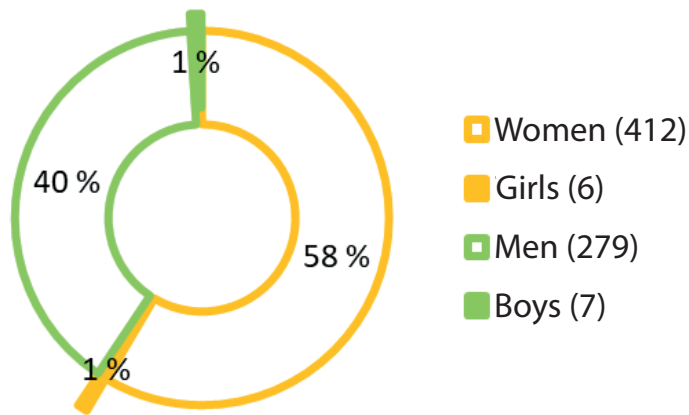
Of the current clients, 57 were admitted to the Assistance system as minors. 13 of them were still under the age of 18 on 31 December 2020.

All clients (704) according to form of exploitation



The share of people coerced into criminal activity and victims of forced marriage of the clients has increased as we have learned to identify these forms of human trafficking.

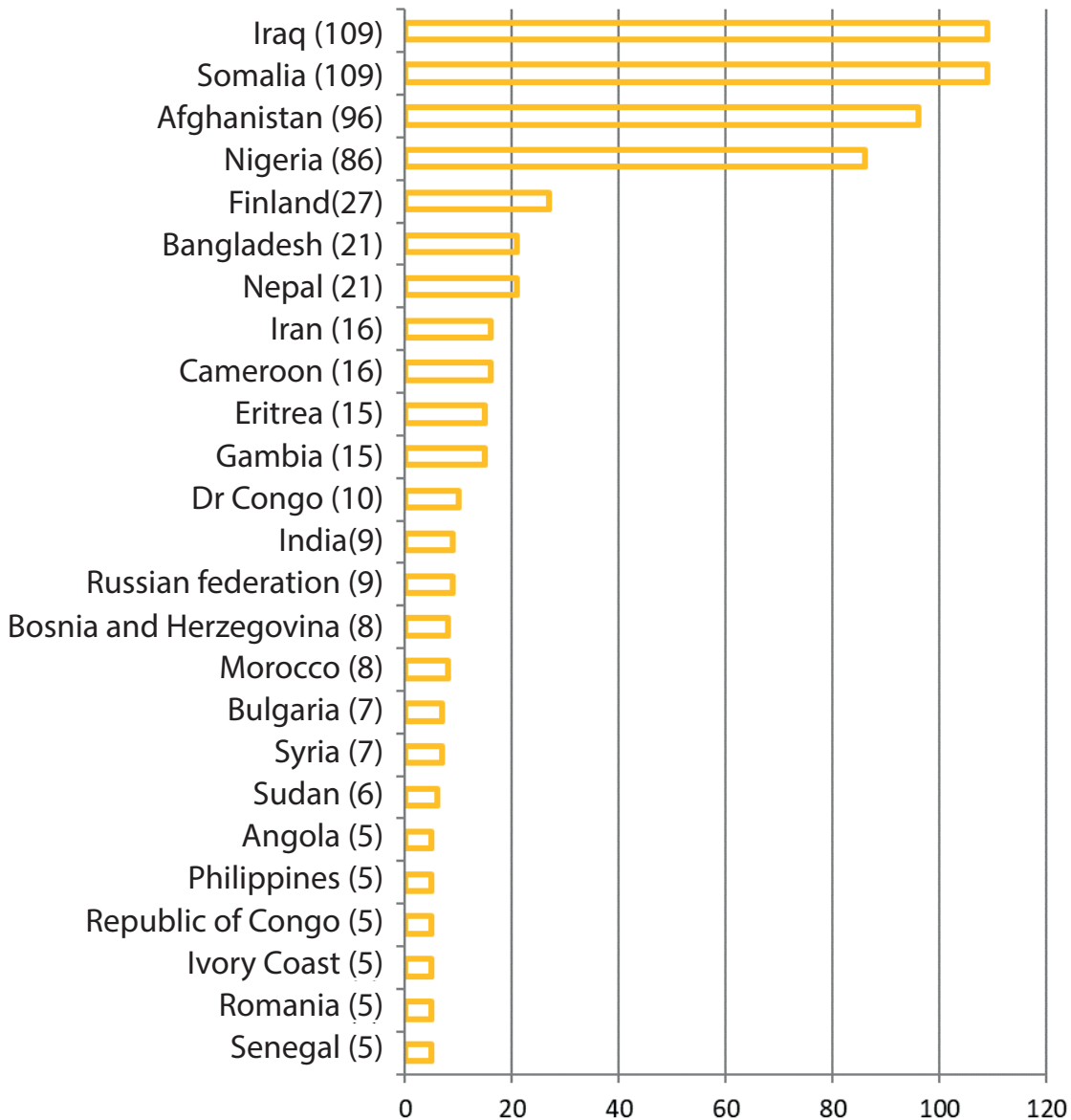
All clients (704): gender distribution



The number of women and girls is significantly higher among the clients than that of men and boys.

The clients represent a total of 64 nationalities. The assistance system publishes information only on the nationalities with five or more representatives among the clients. Three of the clients are of unidentified nationality or they are stateless.

All clients (704): top nationalities



THE IKUT PROJECT STUDIES AND IMPROVES THE WORKING LIFE SKILLS OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS



Vipuvoimaa
EU:lta
2014–2020



Euroopan unioni
Euroopan sosiaalirahasto

The IKUT project has generated interest both among employment actors and enterprises. After the background work carried out in autumn, the spring will be busy. The focus will be on strengthening the working life skills and competences of trafficking victims, and the contacting of companies will continue. What is going on in the project six months after its launch?

The IKUT project, launched by the national assistance system for victims of human trafficking, has continued for six months. Despite the coronavirus situation and its impacts on the activities and scheduling of the project, the project has largely advanced as intended.

Study on the employment services for victims of human trafficking

The study on the labour market situation of the victims of human trafficking and recipients of employment services, being carried out as part of the IKUT project, was launched in autumn 2020.

Based on the background work done, it is clear that there is need for the information being generated in the study. Not much research has been conducted on trafficking victims as recipients of employment services.

The study made as part of the IKUT project seeks answers to, for example, the following questions:

- What kind of support measures related to improving the working life skills and competences are provided to trafficking victims and under what conditions?
- What kind of challenges and/or opportunities are associated with the working and employment of persons fallen victim to human trafficking?
- What kind of support related to the employment and improving of the working life skills and competences can we expect trafficking victims to need?

The study will be carried out in collaboration with HEUNI, the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations. The study will be published in September 2021.



The assistance system and HEUNI are studying what kind of challenges and opportunities are associated with the situation of persons fallen victim to human trafficking. Stock photo.

In addition, it would seem that, for structural reasons, some of the victims have no access to employment services or they fail to seek them.

Companies interested in the fight against human trafficking

In the early stages of the IKUT project, efforts have been made to invest particularly on building contacts to the business world.

Companies have a key role to play with a view to the implementation of the project, since the aim is to activate them to fight against human trafficking. During autumn 2020, the project has been contacting especially large Finnish corporations with a good employer reputation.

Companies consider it important to combat human trafficking.

- Based on the contacting done during autumn alone, we are in the process of launching cooperation

with, for example, the S Group, Tokmanni and Lassila & Tikanoja, says Project Manager Veikko Mäkelä.

To companies, the IKUT project offers support, coaching and training for implementing anti-human trafficking action.

In spring 2021, the project will also organise an online seminar for companies related to human trafficking and corporate social responsibility.

A project worker to support the implementation of job coaching

The intention is to have the job coaching model, being built in the project, fully launched by the end of 2021.

During autumn 2020, the project manager has collaborated with regional and municipal employment actors and NGOs to do some exploratory work to build support for the implementation of coaching activities.

In addition to the exploratory work, on 4 January 2021 the IKUT project hired a project worker, Saija Korkeakangas, tasked with the practical implementation of job coaching. The project worker also plays an important role in supporting the other functions of the project.

- As a professional in fight against human trafficking, Saija is very well informed about the working life needs of the victims. The spring will mean a lot of work for the project, but it will also be extremely interesting, says project Manager Veikko Mäkelä.

The IKUT project is supported by the European Social Fund (ESF). Funding for the project is granted by the Häme Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment. 🍷

Further information on the project,

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@: firstname.lastname@migri.fi

REFLECTION PERIODS GRANTED BY THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

In 2020, 24 of the potential victims of human trafficking were granted a reflection period allowed for the victims of human trafficking, of which 23 were granted by the assistance system and one by the police.

Usually, the duration of the reflection period granted by the assistance system has varied from three to six months.

The reflection period may be granted to a potential trafficking victim staying illegally in Finland. The maximum length of the reflection period is six months, and during this time the victim can legally reside in Finland.

The reflection period gives the victim time to reflect on whether he

or she will engage in cooperation with the authorities in the investigation of a human trafficking offence.

The reflection period gives the client a kind of firewall which allows him or her to report the offence and to apply for a residence permit or asylum.

At the same time, the reflection period gives the victim a firewall that allows him or her to file a police report on the offence he or she has been subjected to and to

file an application for an asylum or residence permit without the fear of an immediate denial of entry or deportation.

During the reflection period, the client may also choose to return to his or her home country. The assistance system also helps its clients return home safely.

The reflection period for victims of human trafficking can be granted by the assistance system for victims of human trafficking or the pre-trial investigation authority. The reflection period is laid down in section 52d of the Aliens Act.

You can read more about the reflection period and official identification of the victims at ihmiskauppa.fi.

OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION BY THE ASSISTANCE SYSTEM

In 2020, the assistance system for victims of human trafficking had time to do the assessments required for the official (or formal) identification as a victim of human trafficking on only 15 of its clients.

It decided to give the identification to 12 of them and one was left without official identification. A client is left without official identification when it has been assessed that he or she has not fallen victim to human trafficking. Such a client is removed from the services given by the assistance system. The identification assessments of two clients are still unfinished.

The assistance system assesses the official identification of its clients when the client has possibly fallen victim to human trafficking abroad, and it has not been possible for the Finnish pre-trial investigation authorities to investigate the crime in Finland.

At first, a person admitted to the assistance system is considered a potential victim of human trafficking. After this, the person can be officially identified as a victim of human trafficking. The official or formal identification can be done by the pre-trial investigation authorities, the Finnish Immigration Service or the assistance system.

Before making a decision on the official identification of the client, the assistance system hears a multidisciplinary group of experts with members from the social services, child welfare and healthcare sectors, the police, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Border Guard, the Finnish Immigration Service and Joutseno Reception Centre. The members of the group of experts carry out their task as acts in office alongside their basic work.

An officially identified trafficking victim can continue to receive

services provided by the assistance system until he or she no longer needs them. If the client cannot be officially identified, he or she will no longer receive assistance system services.

The official identification by the assistance system has no other legal consequences.

Due to the limited resources of the assistance system and the group of experts, it has not been possible to do assessments required for official identification in the extent the number of clients would require. Therefore, on 31 December 2020, there were up to 90 assistance system clients waiting for assessment for official identification.

Still, while waiting for official identification, the client is entitled to the assistance system services and has access to the assistance measures intended for the victims of human trafficking.

ASSISTANCE SYSTEM STAFF

The assistance system for victims of human trafficking has already four offices in different parts of Finland.

Lappeenranta office

At the Lappeenranta office, based in Joutseno Reception Centre, the staff consists of two social counsellors, two senior advisers and one adviser. In addition, one of Joutseno Reception Centre's public health nurses works full time in assistance system duties.

Helsinki office

The Helsinki office operates in the Finnish Immigration Service's premises.

It has two senior advisers and one social worker. As of the beginning

of 2021, a new social counsellor will also start working at the Helsinki office.

Other employees working in Helsinki include the project manager of the IKUT project and the project worker who began in the job at the beginning of 2021.

Tampere office

There is one senior adviser working in the Tampere office.

Oulu office

The Oulu office, based in Heikinharju Reception Centre, Oulu, has one social counsellor.



The assistance system operates throughout Finland, including the Åland Islands. The staff work from the four offices, but, if necessary, all the employees of the assistance system go anywhere in Finland.

In addition to doing client work, the assistance system serves as the centre of knowledge in the identification and assistance of trafficking victims, and participates in training and consultation duties in Finland and abroad. All employees of the assistance system participate in these tasks.

The director of Joutseno Reception Centre acts as the director of the assistance system and he is assisted by a deputy director. The person appointed to the position of the director of Joutseno Reception Centre as of the beginning of 2021 is **Antti Jäppinen**.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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**NATIONAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM
FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

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