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Infographics:

Risks of Violence against Women in the Labour Migration Cycle and Services that Need to be in Place throughout the Migration Cycle

2021



Spotlight Initiative





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Risks of Violence Against Women in the Labour Migration Cycle

Women who migrate for work contribute greatly to stronger societies and economies in both their countries of origin and their countries of destination. For many, the decision to work abroad involves prioritizing their families' welfare over their own personal comfort and desires. Women generally have fewer options than men for regular migration, and are often employed in lower paid, informal sectors with few, if any, labour protections. This unfortunately puts them at a heightened risk of violence, abuse and exploitation, including trafficking at different points of the migration cycle. In addition to gender-based discrimination, women migrant workers are also subject to other multiple, and intersecting, forms of discrimination that limit their access to safe migration, fair recruitment and decent work throughout the migration cycle.

For additional information, see:

- [Violence against Women Migrant Workers, Report of the Secretary-General \(2019\)](#)
- [Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN Region](#)

Stages	Risks
Pre-Departure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Violence at home from an intimate partner (husband, spouse, partner...) or from family members can be a driver for women to migrate. For some girls, migrating is a way to avoid early marriage. ▪ Women may also see migration as a way to be free from traditional roles that restrict their decision-making and autonomy and relegate them to household and/or unpaid work. Challenging these traditional ideas and roles to travel and work independently can be a source of tension and conflict within the family. ▪ Most women migrate to secure an income, escape poverty and build a better future for their themselves and their families. Depending on their social, economic and educational status, many women can face barriers to regular migration pathways which can be expensive, and restrictive. This could be one of the pushing factors for women to migrate through irregular channels, putting them at greater risk of violence during transit and in the destination country. ▪ Pre departure risks of violence could also include- violence, harassment, confinement to training centre during pre-departure orientations ▪ Recruitment agencies have a lot of power over women who depend on them to facilitate the migration process. They often charge high fees, taking funds that have been difficult to accumulate or indebting women before they even begin working.
Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If women do not have legal documents, this increases the risks of violence, abuse and exploitation in transit. If violence does occur during this period, it is challenging for women to seek support or report it for fear of jeopardizing their chances of reaching the destination country and/or of being sent back to their country of origin. For trafficked or smuggled women- during transit, exposure to violence at the hand of smugglers or arduous journey fraught with risks.

Stages	Risks
<p>Transit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relevant authorities responsible for supporting women migrant workers may not have the necessary resources or skills to help them if problems arise and coordination between countries may be weak. Authorities maybe turning a blind eye, knowing the vulnerable position that women migrant workers are in and that systems are not well-equipped to hold perpetrators accountable. ▪ Transit may take weeks or months, exposing women to abuse from other migrants on similar journeys. ▪ There's also the issue of 1) Lack of services and resources for third country nationals OR transit countries not providing services, resources and information to third country nationals, 2) relevant authorities not understanding their international obligations/having resources etc (point is already covered), and 3) WMWs not having access to information about assistance mechanisms while in transit.
<p>Destination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women migrant workers in ASEAN are often in informal, low or semi-skilled employment with low wages and few labour protections (e.g. manufacturing) putting them at greater risk of abuse. Those that live with or near their employer (e.g. domestic and agricultural workers) can be especially at risk. This was particularly visible during the COVID-19 pandemic when migrant domestic workers were locked down with their employers and had little to no contact with family and friends or support services. ▪ Upon arrival, working conditions can be different than what was expected. Women migrant workers may have long working hours, few or no breaks or days off and can be isolated from family, friends and support networks. ▪ The possible negative consequences when they refuse sexual advances, filing a complaint against the employer or reporting abuse can not only increase the risk of violence and make women endure the violence. ▪ Women who report abuse may lose their jobs and income, lose their ability to stay and continue working in the country (particularly when their permit is tied to the employer) and may face retaliation from the employer, causing the individual more harm. ▪ Women who lack documentation and have a precarious migration status can experience increased vulnerability to violence and trafficking. They can also be at increased risks for abuse by state actors (e.g. police officers, customs officials or workers in detention centres) who hold authority over them. With limited legal protection and fears of detention or deportation, women facing abuse may find it challenging to leave the employer or seek help. ▪ Domestic violence can also increase if the family has migrated with the WMW due to stress arising from the changing roles of women and men vis-à-vis the household. ▪ Campsites or employer-provided accommodation which are insecure or which restrict WMWs movements outside of work, may posit a risk of violence from other workers, security guards etc.

Stages	Risks
<p>Destination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Violence may also be perpetrated by duty bearers when women migrant workers may seek services or by other migrant workers. ▪ WMWs may experience xenophobia, stereotyping and discrimination from authorities in destination countries and their complaints not taken seriously; 2) they may be treated from other workers by law (differential treatment – e.g, legal repercussions of pregnancies).
<p>Return and Reintegration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Despite the benefits that women migrant workers provide their families, communities and economies at large, they are often suspected of misconduct or acting inappropriately while abroad. This can result in stigmatization, condescending labels (e.g. that she is ‘promiscuous’, ‘dirty’ or ‘immoral’) and can result in degrading treatment. This can also put her at risk of violence from family and the community. ▪ In the COVID-19 pandemic context, returnee women could be seen as a ‘virus carrier’. Such stigmatization and discrimination are not only unacceptable but dangerous, and it can put women migrant workers at risk of violence. ▪ Women who do experience sexual abuse and/or exploitation during transit or in the country of destination, can be blamed for what has happened to them and can face further abuse from their husbands or in-laws at home. ▪ Women that return with increased skills, money, knowledge and agency are often viewed as challenging traditional power dynamics which can increase the risk of intimate partner violence when the husband or another family member wants to assert his authority and control over her or to ‘put her back in her place’. Also when savings run out, returnee women may experience violence and neglect from family members, especially if they are retired/past the eligible age to migrate abroad.

WOMEN WHO MIGRATE FOR WORK CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO STRONGER ECONOMIES IN BOTH THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND THEIR COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION.

Nevertheless, they may face risks of violence during their migration journey.



PRE-DEPARTURE

WHY DO WOMEN MIGRATE?

RISKS CAN BEGIN AT HOME FROM A HUSBAND OR FAMILY MEMBER



BUILD A BETTER FUTURE for their FAMILIES



ESCAPE POVERTY

SECURE AN INCOME

BE FREE from TRADITIONAL ROLES

ESCAPE ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

AVOID EARLY MARRIAGE

RETURN & REINTEGRATION

STIGMA AGAINST RETURNEE WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



SUSPICION of 'MISCONDUCT' WHILE ABROAD

VIEWS AS "CHALLENGING" TRADITIONAL POWER DYNAMICS

RISKS of VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN in the MIGRATION CYCLE

DESTINATION

WHY DON'T WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS SEEK HELP?



MAY FACE PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

ISOLATED FROM FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND SUPPORT NETWORK



LIMITED ABILITY TO SPEAK THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

FEAR OF DEPORTATION OR DETENTION, MAY FACE RETALIATION FROM EMPLOYERS



TRANSIT

WHAT INCREASES THE RISKS?

Smugglers, brokers and recruitment agencies have a lot of power over women who depend on them to facilitate the migration process



INDEBTING WOMEN

NO LEGAL DOCUMENTS

= INCREASED RISK of VIOLENCE



Read the full brief:



Services for Women Migrant Workers Subject to Violence in the Migration Cycle

Women migrant workers need access to a variety of essential services when they are subject to violence. Some specific services are particularly relevant when responding to the needs of women migrant workers. This chart provides a snapshot of some of the services that need to be in place to ensure a quality response to women migrant workers subject to violence. Service providers in each sector (health sector, legal and justice sector, security sector, social services sector and others) have various roles and responsibilities throughout the migration cycle relevant to their specialized sectors with a strong focus on transit, destination and return and reintegration phases. Labour and migration sectors, along with offices responsible for women’s affairs, also have a strong role throughout the labour migration cycle to advocate for rights. They play a strong role in ensuring necessary information is available to women migrant workers, pre-departure phase and engaging in coordination and referral for women to be able to obtain necessary supports and services during transit, destination and return and reintegration depending on the country context.

Useful resources and tools:

- [16 Essentials for Quality Multisectoral Service Provision to Women Migrant Workers Subject to Violence](#)
- [Service directory for women migrant workers in the ASEAN region](#)
- [Safety planning for violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Stages	Services that need to be in place to support women migrant workers subject to violence
Pre-Departure	<p>Information on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risks of violence in the Migration Cycle. ▪ Protective measures to prevent violence against women during all stages of the migration cycle. ▪ Legal framework for migration, and violence against women (rights) and its implication to women migrant workers in practice. ▪ Mechanisms to seek information, support and services in transit and in the destination country and for linking with services in country of origin. ▪ Information on what to do upon return when a woman has experienced violence during migration ▪ Providing access to information with contacts of embassies, CSOs and other key service providers.
Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mechanisms to seek information, support, and services in her native language or through trained interpreters. ▪ Services similar to services in destination country (please refer to the Destination section below).

Stages	Services that need to be in place to support women migrant workers subject to violence
<p style="text-align: center;">Destination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Written and verbal communication in the native language of the survivor. If interpreters are used, they must be trained on VAW (in line with a survivor-centered approach). ▪ Service providers must have professional knowledge about how to respond appropriately to women migrants who have experienced violence, especially understanding their fears of deportation, differences in culture, the unfamiliarity of different country support mechanisms, separation from family and how to provide appropriate care and reassurance when women report this violence. ▪ Services provided at convenient places (markets or any other locations migrant women gather), and at convenient times such as weekends or after working hours, taking into account care responsibilities. ▪ Legal Options/Implications: Information on legal options, justice processes, such as the process of filing a complaint, and if there are any differences for non-resident women. Inform survivors in advance if there are any negative implications for them if they report. ▪ Legal Support: Provide and support women to secure remedies related to civil, criminal and labour violations, including those for violence. ▪ Health: Information on health-care services (whether they are provided free of charge, medico-legal examination, urgent health care, sexual and reproductive health care) is available in places women are likely to be, including houses markets and places of employment. ▪ Psycho-Social Support and Counseling: Migrant women are often separated from their traditional support system (family, friends). Part of providing basic psychosocial support is to make referrals to support groups and help build support networks where they live. ▪ Safety/Shelter: WMWs experiencing domestic violence, it is critical to provide immediate access to safe, free and secure accommodation (that is not a detention centre). Remember that perpetrators can also be part of the migrant community so ensuring the informed decision-making of the woman, who best knows her context, is critical. ▪ Economic Support: Temporary economic support for basic needs, support for costs to return home (or to charge employers). ▪ Appropriate Support Person: Offer survivors a support person to help reduce stress and discomfort that can arise from dealing with unfamiliar services. If the support person is provided (not selected by victim/survivor), then they should be trained on a survivor-centred approach.
<p style="text-align: center;">Return and Reintegration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information about services for women migrant workers subject to violence should be available to women migrant workers upon their return.

Stages	Services that need to be in place to support women migrant workers subject to violence
<p style="text-align: center;">Return and Reintegration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service providers in the essential sector (health, social, justice and police) must have professional knowledge about how to respond to women migrants that have experienced VAW including understanding stigma and discrimination. ▪ Legal Options/Implications: Information on legal options, justice processes, if they have returned home including how to link with destination country on completion of any legal processes. This could require international coordination between country of origin and country of destination upon return home. ▪ Psycho-Social Support and Counseling: Attention to the risk to migrant women based on gender, cultural and social norms that support violence, possible community stigmatization, increased risk of intimate partner violence, and issues around confidentiality when they return back home. ▪ Health: Health care providers must be trained to identify, provide care and refer migrant workers that have returned. Health care services are a key entry point for women that have otherwise not sought assistance and support. ▪ Economic support: Upon return women migrant workers who have experienced violence may require support for basic needs, safe accommodation, and support to access basic income generation services such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for skills, livelihoods and money management are also important to reduce economic violence ▪ Working in the community with men and family members to reduce violence against, and stigmatization of, women migrant workers

SERVICES for WOMEN WORKERS SUBJECT to VIOLENCE in the MIGRATION CYCLE

WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS NEED ACCESS TO A VARIETY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES WHEN THEY ARE SUBJECT TO VIOLENCE. SOME SPECIFIC SERVICES ARE PARTICULARLY RELEVANT WHEN RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS.



PRE-DEPARTURE



- INFORMATION ON:**
- Risks of Violence Against Women
 - Protective measures to prevent violence against women
 - Contacts of embassies, Civil Society Organizations and other key service providers

TRANSIT

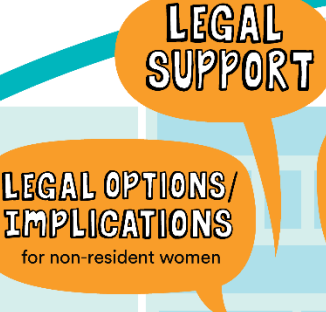
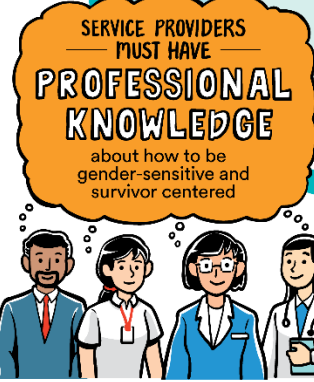
- Legal framework to countries of destination
- Where to seek help in both countries of origin and destinations
- Support for reintegration



- Where to seek information, support, and services
- Services similar to services in destination country

DESTINATION

- WRITTEN & VERBAL COMMUNICATION in VARIOUS LANGUAGES
- LEGAL SUPPORT
- LEGAL OPTIONS/IMPLICATIONS for non-resident women
- FREE & UNIVERSAL HEALTH-CARE SERVICES
- PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT & COUNSELLING
- APPROPRIATE SUPPORT PERSON
- INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES
- PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT & COUNSELLING
- SERVICE PROVIDERS MUST HAVE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE about how to be gender-sensitive and survivor centered
- SERVICES PROVIDED in CONVENIENT PLACES and at times for women who work after normal working hours
- ECONOMIC SUPPORT costs to return home
- SECURE ACCOMMODATION Accessibility to safe, free and secure accommodation or shelter
- UPON RETURN, survivors may require support for safe accommodation, and basic income generation services



RETURN & REINTEGRATION



Risks of Violence against Women in the Migration Cycle and Services that Need to be in Place throughout the Migration Cycle

The Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region programme, is part of the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls by 2030, a global, multi-year initiative between the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN). Safe and Fair focuses on ASEAN countries and is implemented through a partnership between the ILO and UN Women, in collaboration with UNODC, and is delivered at both local and national levels through governments, trade unions, employer organizations, civil society organizations and women's organizations, and at the regional level through ASEAN institutions.

The Spotlight Initiative is the world's largest targeted effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls. Launched with a seed funding commitment of €500 million from the European Union, the Spotlight Initiative represents an unprecedented global effort to invest in gender equality as a precondition and driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As a demonstration fund for action on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Spotlight Initiative is demonstrating that a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality and ending violence can make a transformative difference in the lives of women and girls.

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www.spotlightinitiative.org/safe-and-fair

