



## Training Program Evaluation Report

### The Missing Link: Effective Cooperation Between Relevant Actors for Preventing Human Trafficking Among Vulnerable Youth

#### 1. Introduction

The training programme part of the project “*The Missing Link: Effective Cooperation Between Relevant Actors for Preventing Human Trafficking Among Vulnerable Youth*,” coordinated by the Association for Liberty and Equality of Gender - A.L.E.G. with the support of the British Embassy, took place in Cluj between 6–8 October 2025. The purpose of the training was to strengthen the capacity of professionals from the public child protection system and collaborating NGOs.

The program used workshops and interactive activities to improve participants’ skills in preventing human trafficking and exploitation, delivered by experienced trainers from Romania (A.L.E.G. Association, eLiberare Association) and the United Kingdom (Barnardo’s).

#### Training Objectives

- Increasing awareness and understanding of human trafficking among youth workers.
- Providing practical tools and methodologies for preventing trafficking and exploitation.
- Encouraging collaboration and knowledge exchange among different actors involved in child protection.

#### Needs Assessment

Prior to the training, a detailed needs assessment was conducted with youth workers from DGASPC Cluj. Their input informed the design of the training curriculum, addressing specific gaps in knowledge and skills.

#### Participants

A total of 44 participants completed the training program. Participants included youth workers and specialists from various DGASPC centers with responsibilities for prevention and intervention, as well as one center working directly with survivors of human trafficking:

- Cluj County General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPC): 43
- Relevant NGOs from Cluj County: 1

#### Gender distribution

The participant group consisted of 41 women and 3 men, a distribution that closely reflects the current gender composition of the social assistance and child protection sectors. These fields are traditionally female-dominated, particularly in roles related to care, support, and direct work with vulnerable populations.



## 2. Training Structure and Agenda

The three-day training covered various aspects of preventing and responding to human trafficking. Each day was structured to build on learning from the previous day, combining lectures, discussions, and practical activities.

The needs assessment of DGASPC Cluj staff contributed to the curriculum design. Topics requested by participants included prevention methods, victim identification, and effective intervention techniques, all of which were integrated into the training agenda.

### Day 1 Sessions:

- A.L.E.G. – Introductions, Project & Partners and Participants
- Defining and recognizing / identifying human trafficking
- What human trafficking “looks like” in Romania & what it “looks like” in the United Kingdom
- Understanding human trafficking in the context of gender-based violence and intersecting inequalities
- Recognizing / identifying trafficking (signs), vulnerable groups, and needs  
Recruitment and control

### Day 2 Sessions

- Human rights–based and victim-centered approach
- Existing referral / reporting mechanisms and systems
- Consequences and risks of human trafficking
- Online safety. Prevention – exchange of good practices
- Hope in human trafficking cases
- Stories of survivors of human trafficking

### Day 3 Sessions

- Attitudes & myths about human trafficking and victims/survivors
- Profiles of the victim – perpetrator – helper
- Protective factors & how we respond
- Recommendations. Next steps. Conclusions. Questions and answers

## 3. Evaluation Methodology

### 3.1 Pre- and Post-Training Questionnaires

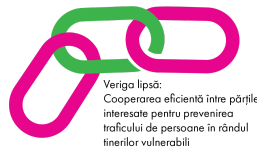
Participants completed identical sets of ten questions before and after the training to measure changes in knowledge and awareness. These questionnaires covered key areas such as understanding forms of trafficking, recognizing victims, identifying traffickers, and reporting mechanisms.

Responses were anonymized and tracked using unique codes to maintain confidentiality while allowing individual progress analysis.

- Pre-training questionnaires: 44 completed



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- Post-training questionnaires: 34 completed

## Summary analysis of pre- and post-training questionnaire responses

As part of the impact evaluation of the training on preventing exploitation and combating human trafficking among vulnerable youth, a comparative analysis was conducted between participants' responses before (pre) and after (post) the three-day training. The analysis highlights a significant improvement in knowledge levels, understanding of the phenomenon, and awareness of professional roles in prevention and intervention.

Pre-training responses indicate that most participants had general knowledge of human trafficking, mainly mentioning well-known forms such as sexual exploitation, forced begging, labor exploitation, or child trafficking. In many cases, answers were brief and general, without clear differentiation between types of exploitation or reference to the mechanisms through which they occur. Some participants also associated human trafficking with related phenomena such as drug use or drug trafficking, suggesting partial and sometimes confused understanding of the concept.

Following the training, post-questionnaire responses demonstrate a clear improvement both quantitatively and qualitatively. Participants use more specific and diverse terminology, clearly identify forms of human trafficking, and explicitly distinguish between sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, forced begging, child trafficking, and organ trafficking. In addition, frequent references appear to recruitment and control methods, including emotional manipulation, false promises, financial dependence, and the use of the online environment—elements that were rarely or not at all mentioned in the initial questionnaires.

Another important aspect highlighted by the post-analysis is increased awareness of the specific vulnerabilities of institutionalized youth or those at risk. Participants demonstrate a better understanding of how the lack of support networks, a history of abuse, the need for belonging, or lack of information can increase exposure to trafficking and exploitation. Responses also reflect a clearer assumption of professional responsibility in identifying risk signs, preventing exploitation, and referring cases to reporting and support mechanisms.

## Qualitative Feedback

Participants repeatedly mentioned that the most valuable elements were concrete examples, case studies, and applied explanations, which facilitated the transfer of theoretical information into real working contexts. Clarifications regarding early signs of human trafficking and discussions about appropriate intervention for vulnerable youth were particularly appreciated. The practical and interactive approach was perceived as directly relevant to participants' professional activities.

The analysis also highlights some limitations and additional needs identified by participants. Some expressed a desire for more time allocated to discussions and in-depth exploration of situations specific to institutional environments, as well as access to additional working materials for later use. These observations indicate strong interest in the topic and a desire to continue the learning process.

## Training Usefulness



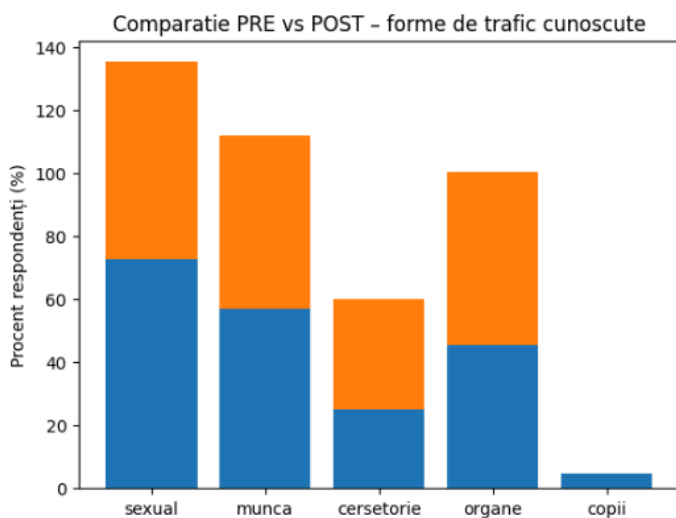
Overall, the pre–post questionnaire results confirm that the training had a significant positive impact on participants, contributing to strengthened knowledge, clarification of key concepts related to human trafficking, and enhanced professional capacity to act preventively. The observed changes in the content and depth of responses demonstrate not only the acquisition of new information but also a shift in perspective regarding the phenomenon and professional responsibility in protecting vulnerable youth.

## Quantitative Data Analysis

Statistical comparisons were conducted between pre- and post-training questionnaire results to quantify improvements across various dimensions, including knowledge of trafficking forms, understanding of victim profiles, and awareness of reporting mechanisms.

## 4. Key Findings

### 4.1 Awareness of Forms of Trafficking



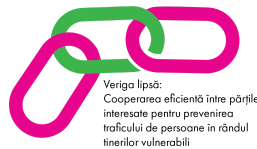
An increase in awareness was observed regarding forced begging and organ trafficking. A slight decrease was noted in references to sexual exploitation, likely due to redistribution of responses toward other trafficking forms. Child trafficking continues to be mentioned at a very low rate, highlighting the need for intensified information on this topic. Overall, post-questionnaire results indicate diversified knowledge and a broader understanding of the phenomenon beyond a single form of trafficking.

### 4.2 Understanding of Victim Profiles

Awareness of the diversity of victim profiles increased significantly. While initially (pre-training) the concept of “victim” was mainly associated with young women or children, by the end of the training participants demonstrated a more nuanced understanding, including men, migrants, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and individuals from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

### 4.3 Recruitment Methods

A significant improvement was observed in understanding recruitment mechanisms. While pre-training participants described recruitment in general terms (false promises, the internet), post-training responses reflect a deeper understanding of recruitment as a complex grooming process based on emotional manipulation, building false trust, and exploiting personal vulnerabilities, especially online.



Indicator	PRE	POST	Evoluție
Menționare online / social media	56%	83%	▲ +27%
Metoda Loverboy	29%	67%	▲ +38%
Grooming (explicit)	6%	57%	▲ +51%
Manipulare emoțională	19%	63%	▲ +44%
Răspunsuri structurate, explicative	31%	78%	▲ +47%
Înțelegerea racolării ca proces	22%	70%	▲ +48%

#### 4.4 What Do Young People Need to Be Protected from Exploitation and Human Trafficking? / How Can Young People Be Protected?

The training led to a major shift in perspective. While pre-training responses focused mainly on general information and identifying emotional or material deficits, post-training participants emphasized an integrated, preventive approach including emotional and relational education, critical thinking development, recognition of grooming mechanisms, family and institutional involvement, and access to counseling and specialized support.

Indicator	PRE	POST	Evoluție
Informare / educație	65%	81%	▲ +16%
Educație emoțională & relațională	22%	62%	▲ +40%
Consiliere psihologică	27%	57%	▲ +30%
Gândire critică / recunoaștere riscuri	14%	51%	▲ +37%
Indicatori de grooming	0–5%	45%	▲ +40%
Familie / persoane de referință	33%	49%	▲ +16%
Abordare sistemică (instituții, legislație)	10%	38%	▲ +28%
Răspunsuri clare, aplicative	36%	79%	▲ +43%

#### 4.5 Risks Faced by

##### Girls



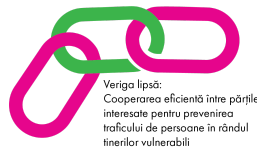
The workshop significantly increased awareness of risks faced by girls. Initially focused mainly on sexual exploitation and physical violence, participants later identified psychological and social risks such as grooming, emotional manipulation, involvement in crime, unwanted pregnancies, and long-term effects. Perception shifted from listing concrete dangers to understanding complex exploitation processes and vulnerability factors.

Indicator	PRE	POST	Evoluție
Exploatare sexuală / trafic sexual	78%	91%	▲ +13%
Viol / abuz sexual	45%	80%	▲ +35%
Trafic de persoane / organe	51%	61%	▲ +10%
Muncă forțată / servitute	31%	52%	▲ +21%
Grooming / manipulare emoțională	0%	46%	▲ +46%
Riscuri psihologice / sociale	10%	33%	▲ +23%
Abuz fizic / violență fizică	43%	41%	▼ -2% (menținut constant)

## Boys

The workshop also improved awareness of risks faced by boys. Initially perceived mainly in terms of labor exploitation and trafficking, post-training responses included involvement in criminal activity, drug use and trafficking, psychological risks, and child pornography, indicating a more realistic and comprehensive view of boys' vulnerabilities.

Indicator	PRE	POST	Evoluție
Exploatare prin muncă / munca forțată	71%	87%	▲ +16%
Trafic de persoane / organe	55%	61%	▲ +6%
Exploatare sexuală	47%	54%	▲ +7%
Implicare în infracționalitate	20%	50%	▲ +30%
Droguri / trafic droguri	29%	46%	▲ +17%
Abuz fizic / violență fizică	43%	41%	▼ -2% (aproximativ constant)
Riscuri psihologice / sociale	16%	37%	▲ +21%
Pornografie / exploatare sexuală infantilă	0%	26%	▲ +26%



## Girls vs. Boys – Comparative Perspective

- Girls are more exposed to sexual exploitation and emotional manipulation, mainly due to emotional needs, lack of affection, and psychological vulnerability.
- Boys are more exposed to labor exploitation, economic trafficking, and criminal involvement, driven by material needs, social pressure, and lack of guidance or a trusted adult.
- For both genders, trauma, psychosocial risks, and long-term effects result from exposure to risky environments and lack of family and institutional protection.

By the end of the training, participants understood that exposure to risks is a complex process caused by individual factors (emotional vulnerability or material needs), environmental factors (lack of education, risky peer groups), and structural factors (lack of institutional protection, access to exploitation).

### 4. 6 Causes of Vulnerability and Risk Indicators

The training showed that vulnerability to trafficking is not determined by a single factor, but by the interaction of emotional needs, poverty, lack of education, and deficient family or social environments. After training, participants understood that concrete risk signs can be observed and interpreted for prevention: isolation, behavioral changes, possession of unjustified goods, frequent absences, and relationships with inappropriate individuals. Prevention thus depends on both identifying vulnerability and recognizing warning signs.

Aspect	PRE	POST	Observații
Cauze principale	Sărăcie, lipsa educației, nevoi emoționale	Vulnerabilități combinate: emoționale, financiare, sociale	Participanții au înțeles că nu există o singură cauză, ci o combinație complexă
Rolul familiei	Lipsa suportului familial	Lipsa adultului de referință, abuz în familie, instituționalizare	Rolul protecției familiale și instituționale este esențial
Recunoașterea semnelor	Nu era clar	Schimbări comportamentale, semne fizice, posesia de bunuri nejustificate, izolare, absențe	Capacitatea de identificare a riscului s-a îmbunătățit semnificativ
Factorii psihologici	Naivitate, imaturitate	Vulnerabilitate emoțională, labilitate, dorința de validare, stima de sine scăzută	Conștientizarea manipulării psihologice este esențială pentru prevenție

### 4. 7 Who Can Report a Suspicion of Human Trafficking

After the three days of training, a significant improvement was observed in participants' understanding of who can report suspected trafficking. The percentage indicating "anyone" increased from 86% to 96%, while recognition of the role of professionals and institutions

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increased from 8% to 26%. These results show a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of shared responsibility between citizens and institutions.

#### 4.8 Reporting Mechanisms

The training significantly improved awareness of reporting mechanisms. Notable increases were recorded in recognition of multiple channels:

- 112: 62% → 72%
- ANITP: 18% → 62%
- DGASPC: 14% → 43%
- NGOs: 8% → 30%
- Written/in-person reporting: 10% → 55%

Participants corrected the perception that only the police are responsible, better integrating the roles of ANITP, DIICOT/Prosecutor's Office (38%), 119 – Child Helpline (45%), DGASPC, and NGOs.

#### 4.9 Myths Reconsidered

The training helped dismantle common myths about human trafficking:

- Anyone can be a victim; age, gender, education, or social status do not provide protection.
- Traffickers are not always strangers and may be known individuals using psychological manipulation.
- Online exposure and seemingly safe social environments can be risky.
- Victims are not to blame; control may be limited due to psychological and social constraints.

After training, participants offered more nuanced responses:

- Victims can be girls, boys, youth from educated or stable families.
- Traffickers may be trusted or close individuals.
- Psychological manipulation and the “loverboy” method are common recruitment strategies.
- Online and social media exposure presents real risks.
- Victims are not responsible for their exploitation.
- Human trafficking exists in Romania; it is not only an international phenomenon.

Aspect	PRE	POST	Observații
Cine poate fi victimă	Fete, tinere, persoane sărace	Orice sex, vârstă, statut social	Mitul că doar anumite persoane sunt vulnerabile a fost eliminat
Cine sunt traficanții	Străini, clanuri, vizibil violenți	Pot fi apropiați, persoane de încredere	Se recunoaște manipularea psihologică și abordarea subtilă
Locul/mediu de racolare	Stradă, alte țări	Online, social media, medii considerate sigure	Mitul că traficul este doar extern sau vizibil a fost corectat
Responsabilitate	Victima are vină	Vinovați sunt traficanții	Eliminarea mitului „victimă și-a dorit” situația
Posibilitatea de evitare/evadare	Victima poate ieși oricând	Victima poate fi blocată prin manipulare, șantaj, amenințări	Mitul despre ieșirea ușoară a victimei a fost demontat



#### 4.10 *What Information Would Participants Pass On and Why*

Responses show that information and preventive education are essential in preventing trafficking. Participants emphasized the importance of knowing risk indicators, vulnerability signs, and recruitment methods, as well as vigilance in observing behavioral or physical changes in youth. They highlighted that anyone can report suspicions to institutions and specialized NGOs, and that social responsibility and empathy toward victims are crucial. Overall, responses reflect increased capacity to act as promoters of awareness, vigilance, and protection of vulnerable persons.

### 5. Training Program Feedback Analysis (Logistics)

#### 5.1 General Evaluation

Participants gave very high ratings across most criteria:

- Location: very high average score, mostly 5
- Meals and coffee breaks: high scores, with few 2–3 ratings
- Topics covered: highly appreciated, mostly 5
- Session duration: appreciated, though some felt time was insufficient for certain topics
- Materials and resources: very well rated, mostly 5

5.2 Overall satisfaction was very high, indicating a well-structured and engaging program. The training program was considered useful, well-structured, and interactive, effectively enhancing participants' awareness and skills in preventing human trafficking. Key suggestions for improvement include extending the training duration, incorporating more practical exercises, and customizing certain modules for specific professional groups.

#### 5.3 Positive Aspects Highlighted

- Useful and comprehensive information and topics
- Practical and interactive activities (role plays, case studies, reflection exercises)
- Increased awareness of human trafficking and improved prevention and reporting skills
- Adequate and comfortable organization and facilities

#### 5.4 Suggestions and Areas for Improvement

- Longer sessions for deeper exploration of topics
- More practical activities and case studies
- More frequent breaks, especially on long training days
- Adaptation of programs for specific professional categories (teachers, specialists)
- More practical exercises on reporting and referral procedures

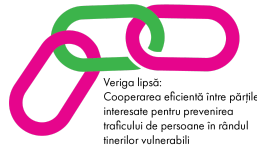
### 6. Analysis of Retained Information

#### Day 1

Participants retained general information and statistics on human trafficking, its forms, and vulnerable groups. Comparing Romanian and UK experiences and reviewing institutions



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involved in prevention and reporting were particularly useful. Emphasis was placed on prevention, victim identification, and knowledge of indicators.  
Feedback: useful for both prevention and workplace application.

## Day 2

Focus on communication with trafficking victims, identifying risk signs, and reporting methods. Practical activities helped participants understand approaches and professional roles. Knowledge on consequences, causes, and institutional collaboration was consolidated.  
Feedback: useful for real-life application.

## Day 3

Focus on victim trauma, needs, protective factors, and the role of helpers. Participants learned about actor typologies (victim, perpetrator, helper) and emotional management. Discussions addressed individualized work, teamwork, and tailored intervention strategies.  
Feedback: emotionally challenging but highly relevant; role plays and case studies supported empathetic and practical understanding.

## 7. Thought / Word of the Day

At the end of each workshop day, participants were invited to share a thought, feeling, or piece of information that they were taking with them after receiving the presented materials and information.

### Day 1: Inspiration and Introspection

Messages and thoughts:

*Attention to needs, Seriousness, New ideas, Inspiration, Novelty, Attention to detail, Practical ideas, Sanity, Personal context, Responsibility, Learning new things, Organization, Involvement, Joy, Surprise, "Thank you very much for existing. I had the honor to listen! To learn and know how to act," "It feels good among your own!"*

Summary:

- Participants experienced *inspiration, curiosity, and appreciation*.
- Central themes: *personal responsibility, involvement, new ideas, and practical learning*.
- Predominant emotions: *joy, surprise, gratitude*.

### Day 2: Professional Impact and Social Relevance

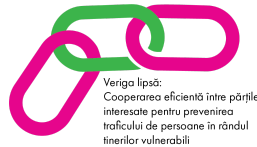
Messages and thoughts:

*Traffic = a formidable enemy – economic, psychological, social; Satisfaction; Hope dies last!; Language matters; New approaches; Hope; Motivation; New opportunities for collaboration; Improved activities in working with trafficking victims; Empathy; Congratulations; Provocative; Hard work; Quality information; Compassion; Dreams; Warmth.*

Summary:



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- Participants felt the challenge of the work and the importance of empathy and innovative approaches.
- Central themes: *professional impact, hope, motivation, collaboration*.
- Predominant emotions: *satisfaction, compassion, inspiration, warmth*.

### Day 3: Collaboration and Collective Action

Messages and thoughts:

*Collaboration, Continuous inspiration, Professionalism, Courage, Trust, Active empathy, Discovery, Creativity, Motivation to act, Social responsibility, Positive change, Clarity, Solidarity, Understanding, Real involvement, Awareness, Gratitude, Team energy, Safety, Hope in action, Appreciation.*

Summary:

- The day strengthened cooperation, solidarity, and practical action.
- Central themes: *collaboration, social responsibility, motivation, continuous inspiration*.
- Predominant emotions: *trust, courage, gratitude, collective energy*.

### 8. General Conclusions

Overall, the training resulted in significant gains in knowledge, understanding, and awareness across all areas. Pre- and post-training responses show greater clarity about roles, responsibilities, and procedures, with participants expressing increased confidence in identifying, reporting, and managing suspected cases. These findings indicate that the program successfully reinforced both individual competence and recognition of the shared responsibility between citizens and institutions, promoting readiness to act appropriately in real-life situations.