



Exploring the Overlap between Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking:

Addressing the Unique Needs of Human Trafficking-Victims in Women's Shelter Services through International Exchange

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bit.ly/5WCWS-Overlap-Domestic-Violence-Human-Trafficking

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Background & Context

THE NETHERLANDS

SOCIAL & CULTURAL

Freedom to love & marry
No systemic discrimination
Positive relationship with police
Freedom of religion

Economic

Government safety net
Strong welfare system
Affordable healthcare
Career opportunities

Education & Career

Quality education
Encouraged to study & work

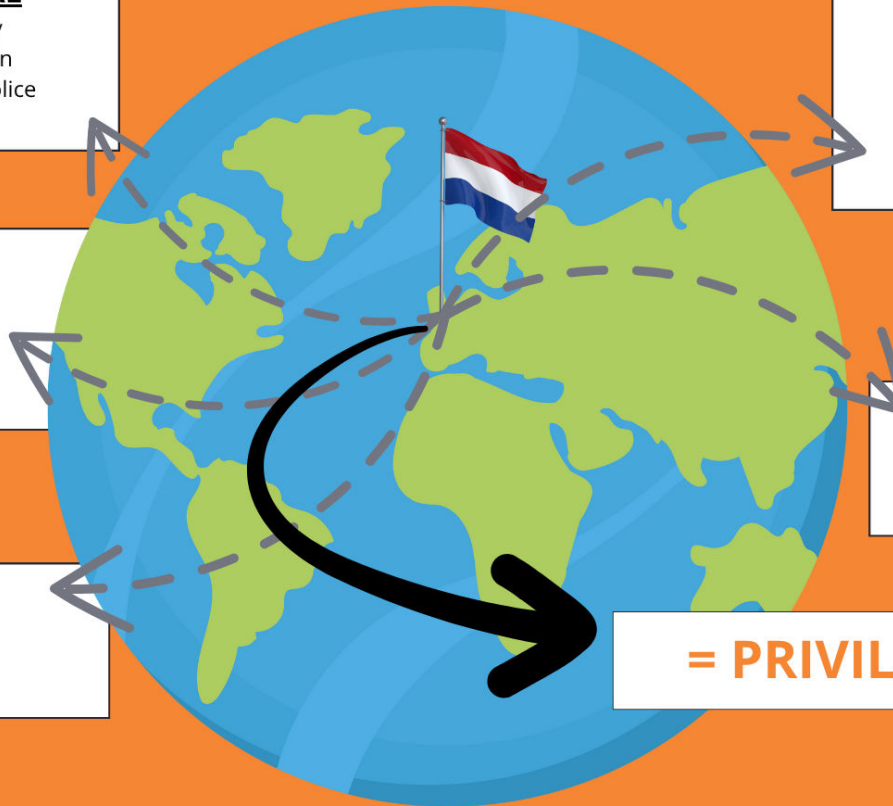
FREEDOM

Democracy & peace
No war or oppression
Equal voting rights
Equal legal rights
Freedom of speech

FREEDOM & SAFETY

Freedom of movement
Personal autonomy
Daily public safety

= PRIVILEGE

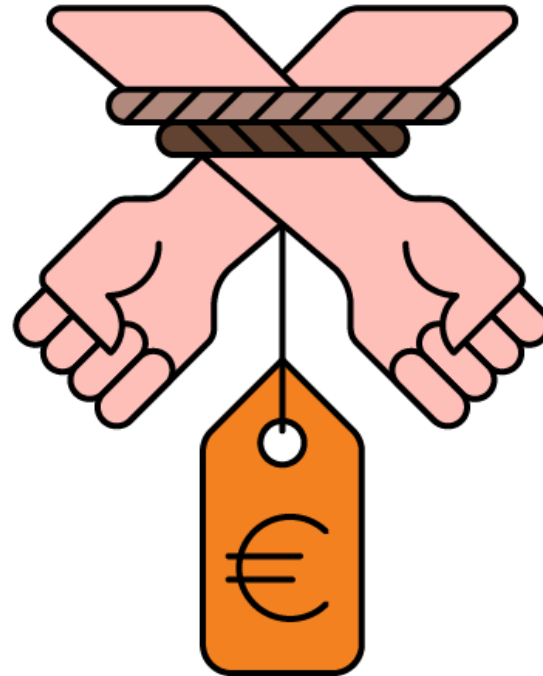






The Dutch Definition of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is when someone is forced, tricked or pressured into working, having sex, or doing other things against their will, for someone else's profit (**money**)





Key Responsibilities

of a Human Trafficking Coordinator in the Netherlands

- **Individual Case Coordination:** Ensure access to shelter, medical care, legal aid, and psychological support and monitoring.
- **Multidisciplinary Collaboration:** Coordinate with police, (social) health care professionals, immigration authorities and local governments.
- **Safety Planning & Risk Assessment:** Monitor safety risks such as re-exploitation, threats or coercion.
- **Training & Awareness:** Educate professionals on how to identify, respond to, and support trafficking victims.

Our strength:

- **Strong and direct communication lines** with professionals in the field.
- **Independent role** with the freedom to think and act outside the box.
- **Background in social work and legal client support.**
- **Commitment to navigating grey areas** — even when care is denied due to exclusion criteria, we build bridges across disciplines and focus on what *is* possible, not what isn't.





Recognizing Trafficking in Domestic Violence cases

Why Correct Identification Matters

- **Requires specific expertise regarding the complexity of human trafficking .**
- Uncovers **crimes beyond domestic abuse** (e.g., forced labor, exploitation).
- (international) **Criminal network may be involved** (rather than 1 person).
- Requires **multi disciplinary approach** from professionals with HT expertise.
- Triggers **anti-trafficking laws** (higher penalties, broader protection).
- Prevents **mislabeling** survivors as offenders or illegal immigrants.
- Avoids **criminalizing** coerced behavior (e.g., theft, sex work).
- **Protection** from retaliation or re-trafficking.
- **Legal aid** (immigration, defense, compensation, documents)
- **Trauma-informed care**, tailored to trafficking trauma.
- **Drug addiction** (created for dependency or to be able to do the work).
- Victims might have **different views** on agency/acceptable standard of living/what they need.





When Domestic Abuse IS Trafficking

Domestic Violence as a Method of Control and Exploitation

Certain dynamics in abusive relationships can indicate trafficking

Common signs:

- **Emotional coercion:** *“If you love me, you’ll do this...”*
- **Isolation:** Cutting off support networks
- **Immigration threats** or passport withholding
- **Financial control:** eg taking all wages
- **Use of children as leverage**
- **Use of violence**
- **Threat of honor-based violence**





Same Story, Different Lens

Exploring Cultural Perspectives on Victimhood Choice





What helps, what hinders?

Let's explore together.

Please share your experiences of when your idea of agency, protection and safety might differ from the person you want to help?





Research (2025)

Shelter Access & Availability after Human Trafficking (NL)

The Numbers

- **5.000 - 7.500** (estimated) victims
- **868** registered victims
- **160** available shelter beds (most intended for specific target groups)

Research Shows

- Professionals organize shelter access ***despite*** the system
- Gaps in accessibility and quality of care
- Number of shelter places = insufficient

Recommendations

- National coordination & referral mechanism
- More shelter capacity, differently organized
- Supra-regional or national funding and organization of shelter capacity





LEARN MORE



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