

Gender-based Violence Programme

Italy – Refugee and Migrant Response

November 2019

Focus on Phase II of the programme *Action Against Gender-Based Violence Affecting Refugee and Migrant Women and Children in Greece, Italy, Serbia and Bulgaria*, October 2018 – September 2019

Situation Analysis

According to the data from Italy's Ministry of Interior, there were 96,862 refugees in the reception system as of October 2019, of whom 6,566 were unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), 92% boys and 8% girls. There are persistent challenges in the governance of protection and social inclusion for refugee and migrant children, despite progressive laws. These include a highly fragmented system with limited accountability and monitoring, with disparities in terms of the quality of services and care across regions, to deal with vulnerable children, including UASC and survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Reports indicate that nearly all women and adolescent girls who have taken the central Mediterranean route to Italy have survived sexual violence.¹

Many have also endured child marriage, domestic violence and female genital mutilation, as well as trafficking. A report from the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)² finds that men and boys are also subjected to high levels of sexual violence during the journey, particularly in Libya as the main transit country before Italy. Once in Italy, refugee and migrant girls, boys, women and men who have already been through harmful experiences face, once again, a heightened risk of sexual exploitation. Yet few seek support. According to the results of a poll on GBV via UNICEF's online platform U-Report³ on the Move, around 20 per cent of respondents say they would not seek medical or psychological support if they experienced sexual violence, opting to deal with it alone.

Strategy

UNICEF continues to enhance the range and accessibility of GBV prevention, mitigation and response services for refugee and migrant children in Italy, in particular adolescent girls and boys. It contributes to the strengthening of a sustainable child protection system through service provision, knowledge generation, evidence-based advocacy and capacity development of frontline workers. UNICEF aims to address the fragmented nature of the GBV response system in three priority regions that have limited services: Calabria, Latium and Sicily.

The strategy reflects the two-pronged approach adopted by UNICEF in Europe, which combines support for services with the strengthening and implementation of laws and policies that prevent and respond to GBV.


This approach is based on UNICEF's [GBViE Theory of Change](#)⁴, which supports better access to quality services, mitigates the likelihood of GBV, and aims to create an enabling environment for sustainable prevention and response strategies.


Achievements

As of September 2019, UNICEF and partners had reached 514 individuals (147 women, 114 men, 148 boys and 105 girls) with GBV prevention and response services implemented through outreach within

reception facilities and informal settlements, as well as specialized service points in Palermo and Rome. Partners also focus on implementing GBV related life skills, including '[Boys on the Move](#)'.

KEY POPULATION FIGURES⁵


96,862 migrants and refugees in the reception system in Italy 

6,566 are unaccompanied and separated children 

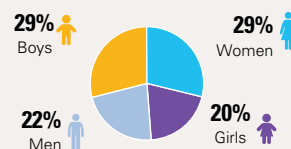
8% Girls  **92%** Boys 


KEY RESULTS AT A GLANCE⁶

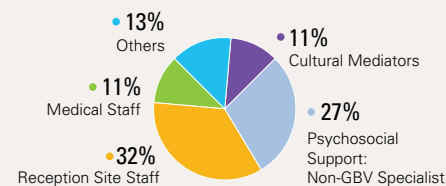
(10/2018 – 09/2019)


514 GBV survivors or people at risk accessed services 

TARGET 200
REACHED 514



751 frontline workers trained 




85% of polled participants 


report having a high or very high understanding of GBV following UNICEF training

3,190 U-Report subscribers, reached with [GBV related information](#) 

Curriculum on GBV for Linguistic and Cultural mediators piloted with the WRC.

UNICEF-BPRM⁷ Partners

Ombudsperson of Palermo UNFPA 

Medicines du Monde, Intersos, Penc Center for Ethnopsychology, Women's Refugee Commission 

UNICEF and UNFPA have adapted the Boys on the Move initiative with revised life-skills materials that aim to prevent gender-based violence while facilitating disclosure and materials for the older adolescents that account for most UASC. GBV-related issues and in particular information on sexual violence, have also been integrated into [U-Report on the Move](#) reaching 3,190 subscribers (see 'In Focus').

UNICEF and partners, particularly Médecins du Monde (Mdm) trained 751 front line workers and other relevant stakeholders. In all, 85 per cent reported that it has given them a high or very high understanding of GBV. UNICEF and Mdm have also finalised data collection related to GBV service mapping in Calabria, Rome and Sicily, with teams now reviewing the available information and creating referral pathways.

UNICEF has provided in-country support for a WRC [research](#) on sexual violence against migrant and asylum-seeking men and boys. UNICEF supported the dissemination of the research in Italy, hosting a roundtable in March 2019, promoting its recommendations with government, and co-developing an [adolescent friendly summary](#). In line with its findings, UNICEF is working with the WRC to develop a dedicated curriculum for interpreters and cultural mediators, which has been piloted in Italy.

Continued integration of a GBV perspective into child protection programming has included a study visit and roundtable in Palermo for 30 experts on GBV and Guardianship from Italy, Bulgaria, Greece, the Netherlands and Serbia, who exchanged experiences and met guardians and former UASC.

"I learned to put aside my preconceptions and instead pay attention to the personal history of the victim and especially never judge" – Training participant



'Boys on the Move' is a life skills programme for unaccompanied adolescent male migrants and refugees, originally developed by UNFPA and adapted to the Italian context with UNICEF. It provides potentially life-saving information and build the competencies of boys and young men experiencing changing and challenging circumstances. Boys on the move is delivered over sessions, each one addressing issues boys face during their migration journeys.

In Focus – Integration of gender-based violence into U-Report on the Move

[U-Report on the Move](#) is a user-friendly, cost-effective and anonymous digital platform that allows young migrants and refugees to speak out on issues that matter to them. In Italy, as of October 2019, the platform reaches 3,190 subscribers, 86 per cent of them aged 15 to 24 (8 per cent female, 92 per cent male).

The strategic integration of GBV related issues within the U-Report platform was initiated through an optional poll, given the sensitivity of the topic, with U-Ambassadors helping to create the poll questions. Of the respondents only about half said they would ask for professional help in cases of sexual

violence, around 20 per cent would try to deal with the issue on their own, 31 per cent of girls and 13 per cent of boys would confide in friends or family, and 6 per cent of girls and 15 per cent of boys would ignore the problem. The answers to this brief poll confirmed a clear need to engage refugee and migrant young people on GBV-related issues. Before the poll, [youth-led material](#)⁸ reached over 1000 views on facebook. After the poll and on a regular basis, information on sexual violence was disseminated through the platform, as well as information on how to access services, with a growing focus on issues relevant to women and girls. [Key messages](#)⁹ on sexual violence

were distributed to 3,190 users through the messaging app. One key element of the platform is the U-Partner's tool. U-Reporters can reach out through the Facebook Messenger channel to U-Report on the Move and, thanks to a label system, emerging cases are transferred automatically to experts to support on specific issues, including GBV. To promote gender equality and further engage girls, specific activities were promoted during [International Women Day](#),¹⁰ generating over 7,000 views on the platform. Most recently during the International Day of the Girl, the platform attracted 2,000 views and hosted a 'take over'¹¹ led by a young woman sharing her thoughts and concerns.

Endnotes

¹ UNICEF Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe Humanitarian Situation Report # 31.

² To know more about the Women's Refugee Commission report, visit <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/images/zdocs/Libya-Italy-Report-03-2019.pdf>

³ To know more about U-Report visit <https://onthemove.ureport.in/>

⁴ To access the GBViE Theory of Change visit [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Full_report_with_cover_UNICEF_Multi-country_GBViE_Evaluation\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Full_report_with_cover_UNICEF_Multi-country_GBViE_Evaluation(1).pdf)

⁵ http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_31-10-2019.pdf ; <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Pagine/Dati-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati.aspx>

⁶ All data are drawn from UNICEF's regular Monitoring and Evaluation System.

⁷ Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=293487981321861>

⁹ https://www.facebook.com/pg/UreportOnTheMove/photos/?tab=album&album_id=806380239760266

¹⁰ https://www.facebook.com/pg/UreportOnTheMove/photos/?tab=album&album_id=680511185680506

¹¹ <https://www.ublogonthemove.org/post/la-bellezza-nel-mio-genere>