

ARTICULATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND MIGRATION AND REFUGE:

**Recommendations based on research, trainings with professionals and
participatory workshops with migrated and refugee women**

A project to detect and address gender-based violence in migrant and refugee women from an intersectional gender perspective.

The Transnational project *Building a Safety Net for Migrant to Refugee Women* (2016-2018), in which the SURT Foundation has participated, has approached the reality of migrant and refugee women, and specifically the manifestations of gender-based violence in this context in order to contribute to making visible both the violations of rights and the good practices carried out in this field.

Based on the research, training and empowerment seminars carried out in the framework of the project, some general conclusions and recommendations are presented below.

The beginning of the economic crisis in 2008 gave rise to a new cycle of migration that stabilizes the entry of immigrants due to the reduction of employment opportunities and the stricter entry conditions in Spain. The numbers of migrant women have consistently been slightly higher than those of men. Changes in legislation and migration policies have greatly influenced the waves of immigration in Spain, with frequent changes to the law on the rights and freedoms of foreign citizens in Spain and their integration.

In general terms, legal provisions have gradually limited entry conditions, while remaining discriminatory in terms of denial of citizenship. The downward trend was reversed in 2013 and peaked in 2015, in the context of the refugee and migrant crisis in the Mediterranean.

Gender-based violence in migrant and refugee women

As a result of this refugee crisis in Europe, various **manifestations of gender-based violence against refugee and asylum-seeking women have emerged or become stronger**. The phenomenon takes on such magnitude that several international organizations and institutions have pointed out the **urgency of promoting specific**





political measures aimed at preventing gender-based violence against refugee women.

In 2017, Spain registers the **highest number of applicants for international protection** since the approval of the first asylum law of 1984: **31,120**. Even so, the percentage of people who have received a positive response is almost halved compared to 2016. During the last three years, **the relative presence of women's applications has increased**, being of 21.85% in 2013; in 2014, 31.79%; in 2015, 39.14 percent; arriving in 2016 at 40.32%.

Legal framework

Legal frameworks are kept separate (migration, asylum and refuge on the one hand and gender equality and violence on the other) and with monofocal logics that do not favor the integration of an articulated approach.

On the one hand, the legal system of asylum and refuge and the migration framework is rigid and violates fundamental rights, so **legal and political incidence is essential to produce changes** in this area.

Discrimination against migrant women is exercised especially from the judiciary, for example, if an international protection order is not granted, deportation will be carried out.

In general, the **lack of a gender perspective has been detected in migration and refugee care services**, and in many cases **gender-based violence is not only not identified but normalized** and therefore not acted upon.

On the other hand, the **legal and political framework and the services for dealing with gender-based violence** are solid, but they mostly focus on the area of **intimate-partner relationships**.

A lack of intervention in gender-based violence beyond intimate-partner relationship has been detected, for example, in **sexual violence such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages or trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation**.





Besides, **non-regularized migrants in situations of gender-based violence** in the couple have **limited access to the social benefits** included in the law, for which reason they are excluded by it.

Attention services

Given the increase in the number of people requesting international protection, there has been an **increase in the creation of services and reception shelters** to respond to this situation. However, these are collapsed and in a situation of urgency that hinders the selection of trained professionals for better care of migrated people. Often, professionals are selected based on the languages they know, without taking into account that they integrate an intercultural or intersectional perspective.

Regarding the attention directed to women, this project has placed special emphasis on the following aspects:

- ⊙ Question the role of "victim" of migrated and refugee women.
- ⊙ Break with the stereotype of migrated and refugee women as passive recipients of resources and reproducers of the patriarchal order of their cultures of origin.
- ⊙ Pay special attention to voices and experiences from an empowering perspective: women as resilient protagonists.
- ⊙ Make visible not only the vulnerability but also their survival strategies: how they have overcome traffic and how they have faced exploitation and violence.

Name of the project: *Building a Safety Net for Migrant a Refugee Women*

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