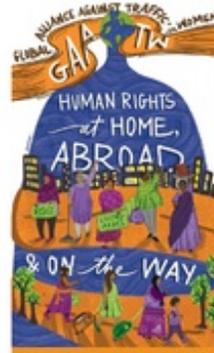




Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women

e-Bulletin

October 2022



Dear friends,

Subscribe to this e-bulletin!

Warm greetings from GAATW International Secretariat!

We hope this finds you well and not too busy. The opening up of international borders has made it possible to attend meetings once again and in the past several months we were busy organising several convenings for project partners. Following a consultation with our research partners from Europe and Southeast Asia in May, we held Women Workers Forums with colleagues from South and Southeast Asia in July and August. We also visited the work areas of our partners in India and Sri Lanka and travelled to Geneva with several members for meetings with UN delegations ahead of their countries' Universal Periodic Reviews. In-person meetings have reconfirmed our feelings about the limitations of virtual interactions. However, we've also learnt that certain discussions can be held virtually and given the rising cost of fuel we must think carefully before planning each trip.

Conversations with women workers and community organisers in the two sub-regional forums strengthened our belief in grassroots organising. We also realised that there is a need to work closely with community workers and enhance their capacity to do their work better. Community workers and organisers are invaluable for social justice movements and given timely support and encouragement, they can play a strong role in strengthening frontline activism. Women Workers Forum is currently a core programme of GAATW that has been operational in twelve countries. Twenty partners are working with women workers in a number of sectors to facilitate their learning agendas and strengthen organising among them. The programme aims to foster cross-sectoral learning, inter-movement dialogues, and solidarity across borders.

We also supported some of our members and partners in South Asia to launch [a campaign](#) to highlight the contribution of women migrant workers to their families and to the countries of origin and destination. Over the next several months, they will work in the communities and with policy makers to bring about attitudinal and policy changes.

As we enter the last quarter of the year, we are happy to note that the Secretariat team is gaining strength. We have just posted a vacancy announcement for a Programme Officer Alliance Strengthening. We hope to continue our work with a full team in the coming months.

You can read more about all these issues and more in the next sections. As always, we welcome your feedback and inputs for future issues at [borislav@gaatw.org](mailto:borislav@gaatw.org).

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## Vacancy at GAATW-IS

The GAATW International Secretariat in Bangkok is recruiting for the position Programme Officer Alliance Strengthening. S/he will lead the engagement of the Secretariat with

Alliance members, specifically in the areas of communications, capacity-strengthening, and peer learning, and promote members' work across GAATW's audiences.

### Tasks and responsibilities:

- Review and assess applications for membership
- Follow political and social developments across members' regions and countries and share relevant analyses and opportunities with members
- Lead the organisation of regional or global members' meetings, peer learning, and bilateral exchanges
- Highlight members' work through different written or audio-visual materials
- Ensure that members' contexts, target groups, and political priorities are reflected in the Secretariat's workplans
- Contribute to the quarterly e-bulletin and prepare an e-bulletin in Spanish
- Translate or edit GAATW's English-language communications into Spanish
- Represent GAATW at regional and international events, as necessary
- Contribute to other work of the Secretariat, as necessary.

Deadline for applications is 15 November. For more information and how to apply, visit [the announcement on our website](#)

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## News from the GAATW International Secretariat



### New research report: Socioeconomic inclusion of migrant and trafficked women in South America

Migrant women's experiences of social inclusion and access to the labour market are shaped by their gender, ethnicity, and migration status according to our new research report *'I spent many days on the road but I made it here': Socioeconomic inclusion of migrant and trafficked women in South America*. The women's migration journeys and experiences were fraught with challenges and

uncertainties, yet these also illustrate their courage and resilience in trying to improve their lives. The report is based on research in Argentina, Peru, Colombia, Brazil, and Uruguay. Read more [here](#).



### New issue of *Anti-Trafficking Review* 'Migration, Sexuality, and Gender Identity'

The [new special issue](#) of *Anti-Trafficking Review*, with guest editor Svati P. Shah, explores the experiences of LGBTI+ people with migration, asylum, informal labour, exploitation, and community-building away from home. It centres LGBTI+ people as actors in the context of migration and examines the ways in which diverse sexuality and gender identities influence people's experiences of legal legibility and recognition in their migratory journeys. Geographically, the articles cover the Philippines, India, Russia,

Kenya, South Africa, Greece, the UK, Brazil, Jamaica, and the US. Read more about the issue [here](#).

To launch and promote the issue, we organised a webinar on 12 October where the guest editor and several authors spoke about their articles. If you missed the event, you can view the recording [here](#).

Creating learning spaces and



## moving towards change: Southeast Asia meeting of Women Workers Forum

In July, we brought together seven organisations from Indonesia, Cambodia, and Thailand who work with women domestic workers, home-based and other informal workers, sex workers, farmers, and garment workers. Over the course of five days, we discussed their strategies of organising women workers, campaigning for visibility and rights, and visions for change. We also shared documentation methods and skills with each other. Read more [here](#).



## Solidarity with women's rights, migrant rights, and labour rights movements in Europe

In September, we hosted a [workshop](#) on bridging movements and building alliances during the [Transnational Meeting](#) in Sofia organised by LevFem (Bulgaria) and Transnational Social Strike (Italy). This brave and ambitious meeting of more than 130 activists focused on the world's most pressing crises as seen from a European perspective: health and care workers' and migrants' precarious rights (especially refugees and those seeking international protection), Russia's war in Ukraine, the climate crisis, the situation of prisoners, and more. [Read more](#).



## Engagement with the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Brazil, India and the UK

Ahead of the fourth cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Brazil, India and the UK in November 2022, GAATW travelled to Geneva with colleagues from the Voice of Domestic Workers (UK), Southeast and East Asian Centre (UK) and ASBRAD (Brazil) to brief diplomatic missions on the human rights situation in these countries ahead of the UPR process. Colleagues from India could not travel due to visa issues. GAATW team met with diplomats from the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Lithuania, and Canada.

For the UK, we asked states to recommend that the UK amend its visa policies so as to allow migrant workers, particularly domestic workers, to be able to change their employer and renew their visa on the basis of new employment. We also explained to the diplomatic missions that people without immigration status are forced into poverty and to seek informal employment where they are at a high risk of exploitative working conditions. We highlighted how even where a worker meets the definition of victim of trafficking in the UK, the support provided is very minimal.

For Brazil, we had two key recommendations. First, Brazil must urgently enact a new National Action Plan on Trafficking and publish its assessment of the previous one. Since President Bolsonaro took office, there has been no National Action Plan for Trafficking and so there has been a total lack of coordination of anti-trafficking efforts at the federal level, leading to an ineffective and piecemeal approach. Our second recommendation related to the fact that Brazil is failing to apply its obligations under the UN Trafficking Protocol towards children, particularly in cases where children and adolescents are found to be exploited by organised crime groups.

For India, we explained to diplomats that an ambiguity in the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act means that the law fails to distinguish between sexual exploitation and voluntary sex work, which has led to violent raids of places of sex work by the police. We asked diplomats to recommend that India amend the ITPA to clearly distinguish between these

two situations. In relation to the treatment of women migrant workers, we highlighted the discriminatory impact of the ECR category of passport, which disproportionately affects women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and “lower” castes. We explained how these restrictions rather than “protecting” women, force them to seek to migrate through informal and irregular channels, thereby rendering them at a greater risk of abuse and exploitation.



## New report: Building Communities of Resistance: Reflections from grassroots organisations around the world

This report is the result of a collective effort to pause, look inwards, and reflect on the process of transformative change. It collates a series of insights, challenges, and lessons learnt by and with ten grassroots organisations from Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. These organisations work closely with different communities – refugees, LGBTIQ+ people, farmers, domestic workers, girls, adolescents, and others – and engage in movement-building work. Read more [here](#)



## Make women workers visible: South Asia Partners meeting of Women Workers Forum

“Our sweat, our labour, brought you foreign currency! Now we, demand, social security!” said the banners in Bangla, Sinhala, Tamil, Malayalam, and Nepali at the public event on reintegration of women migrant workers in Kathamandu, Nepal. This event provided critical review of the new Nepali guidelines for reintegration of migrant workers and launched a regional campaign in South Asia calling for social protection for women migrant workers. Prior to this, a four-day meeting was held with the participation of the South Asia partners of the Women Workers Forum. Eleven organisations from India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka joined. Addressing issues lying at the intersection of gender, labour and migration, the broad aim of the meeting was to make women workers visible. Read more [here](#).

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## News from GAATW Member Organisations

### Meet our Members



Africa, Asia, Europe,  
LAC, and North America

Learn more about our member organisation's histories, contexts, and current work through interviews conducted by members of the Secretariat

### Meet Our Members

**'Meet our Members'** is a new initiative to highlight the work of GAATW members. We interview member organisations about their history, current context, programmes and activities, challenges and successes. We are publishing a new interview every Wednesday.

Currently, you can read:

[Tackling the systemic issues](#) (Liberty Shared, Hong Kong/Global)

[Breaking down the barriers that prevent migrant and trafficked women from accessing their rights in Austria](#) (LEFÖ, Austria)

[Promoting human rights dialogues in Egypt](#) (FDHRD, Egypt)

[Strengthening sex worker communities across Europe](#) (European Sex Workers Alliance)

[Learning from domestic workers and informal workers in Uganda](#) (Platform for Labour

Action, Uganda)

[Joining forces to protect the rights of migrant and trafficked women in Germany](#) (KOK, Germany)

[Twenty years of supporting im/migrant sex workers in Vancouver](#) (SWAN, Canada)

[Seeking justice for Cambodian migrant workers and survivors of trafficking](#) (LSCW, Cambodia)

[Addressing the needs of migrant and trafficked women in Switzerland-from crisis support to empowerment](#) (FIZ, Switzerland)

## Two GAATW colleagues receive the TIP Hero award



In July, two of our colleagues, Irena Dawid-Olczyk from La Strada Poland and Kateryna Cherepakha from La Strada Ukraine, were awarded the TIP Report Hero award by the US State Department. The award honours individuals around the world who have devoted their lives to the fight against human trafficking. The US State Department also published its latest [Trafficking in Persons report](#), which provides an overview of the human trafficking situation in all countries and makes recommendations for improvements.

We congratulate Irena and Katya and their organisations for this well-deserved recognition! They've been advocating tirelessly for the human rights of victims of trafficking and gender-based violence for more than twenty years. You can read more about their work and achievements on pages 66-67 of [the report](#).

Other GAATW colleagues who have received the award in recent years include [Ivana Radovic from Serbia and Sunita Danuwar from Nepal](#) in 2018 and [Betty Pedraza Lozano](#) from Colombia in 2015.

## How inflation in Mexico is pushing sex workers into destitution

Like other countries, Mexico is facing high inflation, as the consumer price index reached 8.7% in September, the highest level in 22 years. The high prices of goods and services will continue for the rest of the year, according to estimates by the Bank of Mexico.



Inflation of course affects all sections of the working population, but how is it impacting sex workers in particular? Our member [Brigada Callejera](#) held a workshop to understand how sex workers are coping with this financial crisis.

In the workshop, sex workers shared that their economic situation now is even worse than during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Food prices have risen markedly. Eggs, meat, potatoes, limes, tortillas, and other basic products are often impossible to afford. [Read more.](#)

## Protecting Asian victims of trafficking in Europe

La Strada International (LSI) published a new [Report](#) and [Policy Paper](#) on the situation of Asian victims of trafficking in Europe. It is based on desk research and interviews conducted by LSI members La Strada Czech Republic, La Strada Poland, and ADPARE (Romania). The research sheds light on the difficulties in the application of the legal definition of human trafficking, as well as the practical issues involved. On paper, Asian migrant workers are protected against severe forms of labour exploitation and abuse, as the Czech, Polish, and Romanian legal frameworks comply with international and EU legislation relating to the prevention of human trafficking and forced labour. However, in practice, both access to support and access to justice are often lacking. Many Asian migrants in exploitative situations are never identified as (potential) victims of human trafficking and consequently do not receive any of the crucially needed support. Furthermore, these crimes are only scarcely reflected in case law, meaning that the perpetrators of exploitative practices go unpunished.

LSI, together with GAATW and Freedom Collaborative organised a [webinar](#) to increase awareness about these issues. At the webinar, GAATW also shared preliminary findings from our Feminist Participatory Action Research with migrant and trafficked women from Southeast Asia in Europe and upon return from Europe to their countries of origin.



## OKUP holds national consultations on sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers in Bangladesh

In August, Ovbashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP) organised a national consultation event 'Building Back Better: Lesson Learnt on Sustainable Reintegration of Bangladeshi Returnee Migrant Workers.' The meeting called for long-term reintegration projects and combining of social and economic support to achieve a sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers. OKUP reiterated that the contribution of migrants to the country's economy in the form of remittances needs to be recognised and appreciated. Anisul Islam Mahmud, chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment spoke of the need to increase incentives to boost remittance inflow. Lawmaker Nazrul Islam said that the budgetary allocation for the welfare of migrants and returnees need to be properly implemented. The government has adopted a 4.27 billion Taka worth of projects to provide financial support to returnees. Shakirul Islam, Chairman of OKUP, pointed out that reintegration is not merely economic support, but should be ensured socially too. This has been elaborated in the [research report](#) on sustainable reintegration published in August.

Previously, on 30 July, OKUP had [organised a consultation](#) on 'Sustainable Economic Reintegration of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers: The Role of Probashi Kalyan Bank', to stress designing and developing migrant-friendly loan schemes for economic reintegration and sustainable livelihoods of migrants and their families. OKUP urged the authorities to ease the access of returnee migrant workers to these loans. These recommendations were based on OKUP's [research report](#) on the role of PKB and disbursement of these loans.

# FLEX, UK publishes report on migrant live-in care workers

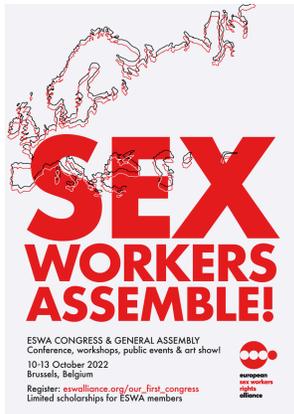
FLEX, UK published a new [report](#) on the vulnerability of migrant live-in care workers in London to modern slavery. The 18-month study used a Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) approach involving live-in care workers as paid peer researchers. Adult social care has been identified by the Director of Labour Market Enforcement in the UK as a high-risk sector for labour exploitation, with live-in and agency care workers believed to be at particular risk. Despite this, the working lives of paid, live-in care workers, many of whom are extremely isolated, have remained largely unexamined.

The report reveals care workers' experiences of exploitation and explores what can be done to mitigate these risks. It ends with recommendations for policy changes to reduce workers' vulnerability, particularly for those with precarious immigration status.



## A virtual resource to challenge stereotypes and myths about human trafficking

Corporación Espacios de Mujer, Colombia launched the [Virtual Travel Suitcase](#), an innovative pedagogical methodology in Spanish that, in an audiovisual way, aims to challenge stereotypes and myths about human trafficking, raising awareness in the community about the importance of combating this serious violation of human rights. [Read more.](#)



## ESWA Congress and Assembly for sex workers

On 10-13 October, the European Sex Workers Rights Alliance organised its first Congress in Brussels. [Congress 2022](#) was a ground-breaking event that aimed to help the sex worker community organise, mobilise, inspire one another and keep the fight for sex worker rights strong.

The Congress had workshops on sex workers' rights, legal frameworks, access to justice, health or digital rights, a public conference, and an event at the European Parliament. Sex workers from across Europe and Central Asia met each other, networked, strategised, and developed their capacities to continue the fight for sex workers' rights. The Congress also included ESWA's first General Assembly of its members. With greater democratic engagement and transparency, it was an opportunity for members to influence ESWA's work for the benefit of all sex workers.

## CHS Alternativo and the Ombudsman present report on actions of public institutions on human trafficking

CHS Alternativo and the Peruvian Ombudsman [presented the VIII Alternative Report](#), a document that analyses the actions of public institutions against human trafficking during the 2020-2021 period.

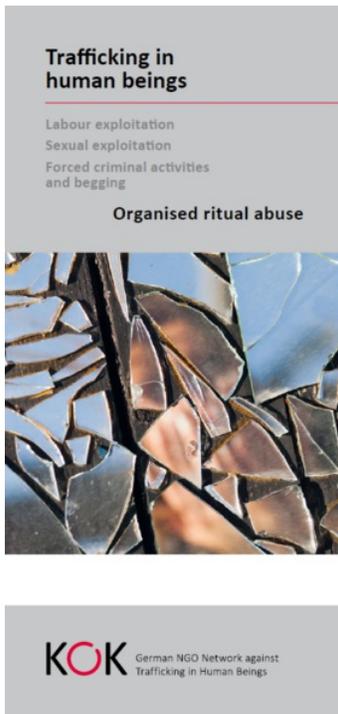
It shows that the budget for combating trafficking has been substantially reduced in the last eight years, reaching just 0.12 Sol per person, which is minimal. "In terms of practicality, this means that the State invests less per person than what a piece of bread currently costs," said the Ombudsman Eliana Revollar Añaños. The document also points out that the COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis have had an impact on human trafficking. Traffickers have innovated in their recruitment methods and have moved to the digital space, through social media networks. In addition, they have taken advantage of the vulnerability of those who have lost their jobs, live in situations of violence, or require urgent economic assistance. [Read more.](#)



## Survey on women’s safety in public spaces in Nepal

WOREC published a short infographic summary of their survey of [violence against women and adolescent girls in the public space](#) in Nepal. Safe public place is a human right which women are denied. The questions of the survey were about the location where survivors experienced violence, their response to the violence, reasons for enduring or keeping silent, family response towards the incidents, and information about the perpetrators.

The findings showed that 40% of the women surveyed faced violence on public transport. 35% tolerated the assault and exhibit no retaliation. 12 % protested at the incident scene, and only 2% said they report the incident to the authorities. Among the reason for enduring silently are stated to be socio-cultural reasons (25%), family pressures (21%), and fear (13%). In terms of family response, 34% said their families are unsupportive, families of 10% of the respondents place restrictions on their movement. 10% are supportive to pursue justice. Among the perpetrators, 12% are teachers, colleagues and friends; 9% are known people and 26% are strangers.



## Information brochure on organised ritual abuse in trafficking

In July, KOK, Germany published an information brochure on organised ritual abuse and trafficking. It is part of a series of short brochures, with previous ones focusing on trafficking for labour exploitation, for sexual exploitation, and for exploitation of begging and criminal acts.

In recent years, several cases related to organised ritual abuse have come into focus for those working on issues of trafficking and exploitation in Germany. Some of the specialised counselling centres for trafficked persons organised by KOK have also had to handle challenging cases of this specific form of violence. However, it has not received enough attention from researchers. The aim of the brochure is to offer brief and basic information on this issue and any aspects in which it overlaps with trafficking in human beings. You can read it [here](#).



## Sex Workers Project’s new guide on ethical research on the sex trades

The Sex Workers Project, New York, shared a [new research guide](#) on conducting ethical research on the sex trades. This was a collaborative effort among SWP staff, interns, and consultants, with additional help from Yale’s Global Health Justice Partnership in the review and editing. The guide lists the promising practices for conducting research on issues that impact sex workers, and includes the insights and expertise of current and former sex workers who are part of the SWP team. It is part of broader efforts to stop the harm done to sex workers in the process of research activities.

Oftentimes, research on the sex trades has ended up harming sex workers, endangering their dignity, rights, bodily autonomy, and their life as well. This guide lists out Dos and Don’ts, for the various steps involved in research projects: 1) determining research

method 2) researching the research/study topic, 2) conducting research, 3) analysing data, and 4) publishing findings.



## TWC2 responds to Singapore's classification as Tier 1 in the TIP report

US Department of State, in its Trafficking in Person Report for 2021, has classified Singapore as [Tier 1](#) and the government as meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. Responding to this report, TWC2 pointed out that even as Singapore has protections against human trafficking, its own law is more limited than the UN TIP protocol. In contrast to the UN Protocol which focuses on empowering victims of trafficking by providing them with "employment, educational and training opportunities", the Prevention of Human Trafficking Act's emphasis is on the "prosecution of traffickers, and it is [weak in its provisions](#) for the protection and support for victims of trafficking...Its protective measures tend to emphasise protection for individuals trafficked into sexual exploitation, rather than other forms of labour exploitation." [Read more.](#)



## LIBERA Foundation at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Libera Foundation, Chile exhibited together with other organisations against human trafficking in Latin America at a public hearing on access to justice and gender stereotypes before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). Their intervention highlighted that gender stereotypes in the criminal justice system result in widespread impunity for human trafficking and forced labour. This is so because the state actors involved, particularly justice operators, inspectors, judges and security forces, operate under discriminatory prejudices linked to gender, age, national and ethnic origin among others, which have a disproportionate negative impact on women and girls. [Read more.](#)

## Resources

### [Editorial: Thinking with Migration, Sexuality, Gender Identity, and Transactional Sex](#)

*Svati P. Shah*

This article introduces a special issue of Anti-Trafficking Review that bridges the fields of queer, migration, and critical trafficking studies by examining the implications of heightened juridical recognition of sexual orientation and gender identity for debates on migration, sex work, and human trafficking. The issue proceeds from the insight that, as the legibility of queer and trans\* (i.e., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and all non-binary and non-heteronormative forms of sexuality and gender identity) moves forward, it appears to de-emphasise the explicit connections that sexuality- and gender-based social movements have historically drawn between identity, governance, and material survival. In emphasising questions of survival, this issue both recuperates queer and non-cisnormative subjects within debates on transactional sex, and shows how a queer theoretical sensibility can offer new insights for established critiques in the field.

### [A snapshot of social protection measures for undocumented migrants by national and local governments](#)

*PICUM*

This report looks at what international and EU standards say about access to social protection for undocumented migrants, and highlights examples of governmental measures (at the national, regional and local levels) in Belgium, Finland, France, Ireland, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland that include undocumented residents in

social protection measures. While these examples are very limited, governments in these instances have nonetheless recognised that such measures are necessary, feasible and beneficial. Despite an overall context which remains highly restrictive, these examples can indicate potential ways forward for more inclusive social protection systems in Europe, regardless of migration status.

### [A very beautiful but heavy jacket: The experiences of migrant workers with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression in South-East Asia](#)

*Edge Effect for ILO and UN Women*

Among the millions of migrant workers who move between countries in South-East Asia and beyond, little is known about the motivations and experiences of migrant workers who are also LGBTI+. This new report attempts to fill that gap. It draws on surveys and interviews with 147 LGBTI+ migrant workers, exploring their experiences across the migration journey as they travel from countries of origin such as Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam to work in countries of destination in Southeast Asia (especially Thailand), East Asia, and beyond. The report also explores how labour migration policies and practices can acknowledge or address these experiences while protecting and promoting the rights of LGBTI+ migrant workers.

### [Why and how development agencies facilitate labour migration](#)

*Center for Global Development and Mercy Corps*

Development agencies in high-income countries spend a large amount of both official development assistance (ODA) and other forms of financing on migration programming. While most of this spending is aimed at *detering* migration, increasingly more is being focused on *facilitating* migration: to the high-income country itself; within and between low- and middle-income countries; and supporting people on the move and the diaspora. This paper, written by the Center for Global Development and Mercy Corps, and based on interviews with nine development agencies aims to explore why and how development agencies in high-income countries facilitate labour or economic migration.

### [Determinants of Anti-Trafficking Efforts: A report](#)

*British Institute of International and Comparative Law*

BIICL published its report on the 'Determinants of Anti-Trafficking Efforts' project, which looks at the specific factors that have yielded improved political will and capacity in national governments to address trafficking in persons, and which have led to sustained and comprehensive anti-trafficking efforts. This was done through a review of available literature, a quantitative analysis of existing data sets, a series of over 50 interviews with stakeholders at the international and regional level, a global survey with about 200 responses, and 14 case studies. The overall goal of the project is to improve national governments' anti-trafficking efforts.

### [Migrant smuggling: why we need a paradigm shift](#)

*Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)*

PICUM published a briefing paper 'Migrant smuggling: Why we need a paradigm shift'. It seeks to highlight how counter-smuggling policies end up causing more harm to migrants. The paper mentions three ways in which this happens. Policies ignore the fact that one reason why people decide to turn to smugglers is the lack of any opportunities for many people to move and cross borders in a regular manner. An excessively broad definition of smuggling also hinders the provision of normal services to undocumented people, such as transport and housing. The paper ends with recommendations that will help protect the rights of migrants and foster an enabling civic space.



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