



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence
against women and girls



16 Essentials for quality multisectoral service provision to women migrant workers subject to violence

“**Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (2018-2022)**” is part of the multi-year EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls. The programme is implemented by the ILO and UN Women, in collaboration with UNODC, and aims to reduce women migrant workers’ vulnerabilities to violence and trafficking and increase their access to coordinated and responsive quality services.

This brief identifies 16 essentials that need to be in place to ensure a coordinated quality response to violence against women migrant workers.¹ This brief is primarily meant for service providers to women migrant workers in countries of destination. Where applicable, the brief will elaborate on the roles of service providers in countries of origin (pre-departure of women migrant workers or upon return).



Photo: UN Women/Younghwa Choi

Overall

- 1. Language:** Provide both written and verbal communication of all essential services in the native language of the survivor. When verbal interpretation is offered, use a professional interpreter to ensure full comprehension of the information provided.
- 2. Interpretation:** Make both men and women interpreters available. Train interpreters to provide interpretation services to victims/survivors using language that is culturally sensitive, refrains from victim blaming and reflects an understanding of violence against women and migration (including trafficking, when appropriate) in line with survivor centered approach. Interpreters must respect confidentiality and should not be people in direct power relations with the survivor.
- 3. Cultural Sensitivity:** Train service providers (health, justice and policing, social services) on culturally appropriate service provision to address the many psychological, physical, and social care needs of migrant women, especially those who are subject to intimate partner or domestic violence and sexual violence.
- 4. Confidentiality:** To avoid stigmatization upon their return, when linking victims/survivors to services in their home communities be careful to keep information about their circumstances restricted to their immediate support system (friends and family), following the principle of only sharing information with the victim/survivors’ consent.
- 5. Data Collection:** Enable disaggregation of data by country of origin, sex and gender identity, and type of violence experienced. Identify responsibility for annual reporting and put in place confidentiality processes. It is not necessary to record information about migrant status as this could put the survivor at risk of deportation or other serious consequences.
- 6. Accessibility and Availability of Services:** Provide services in convenient places (markets or any other locations migrant women gather) and at convenient times such as weekends or after work taking into account care responsibilities. Provide hotlines or other communication methods in multiple languages of survivors.
- 7. Appropriate Support Person:** Offer survivors a support person to help reduce the stress and discomfort that can arise from dealing with unfamiliar services.

1. The 16 Essentials are based on the [Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence](#) – a joint tool developed globally by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNODC and UNDP that identifies a core set of principles of care and services provided by the health, social services, police and justice sectors, and coordination actors to guide multisectoral response to violence against women (VAW). All of the core set of principles of care and services apply to women migrant workers. The 16 Essentials focus specifically on key areas for additional focus to ensure quality essential services to women migrant workers that have been subject to VAW.

Coordination

- 8. International Coordination:** Promote linkages between sending and receiving countries through regional, multilateral and/or bilateral agreements, as well as with relevant embassies, or UN agencies, as appropriate, to ensure essential services are available and coordinated in the destination country and upon return to the home country.
- 9. Cross-Sectoral Coordination:** Establish linkages among service providers that work with victims/survivors of violence against women and trafficking and with women migrant workers to ensure essential services are available, accessible and coordinated.

Health

- 10. Health Information:** Make information on health-care services (whether these are provided free of charge, medico-legal examination, urgent health care, sexual and reproductive health care) available in places migrant women are likely to be, including housing, markets, and places of employment. Use language understood by migrant women and inform them in advance of any negative implications related to accessing health services such as mandatory police reporting of undocumented migrants. Share with victims/survivors information regarding safe alternatives (e.g. services provided by NGOs).

Police and Justice

- 11. Legal Support:** Offer legal support to all victims/survivors of violence against women. Support includes providing information on collection of overdue wages and assisting with legal documentation. Provide and secure remedies at the workplace and related to civil, criminal and labour legislation including remedies to address violence. Continue offering support in finalizing ongoing legal processes in the destination country even if the woman returns to her home country.
- 12. Legal Options/Implications:** Victims/Survivors should be aware of legal options, justice processes, such as the process of filing a complaint, and if there are any differences for non-resident women. Inform survivors in advance if there are any negative legal implications for them if they report violence.



Photo: UN Women/Panya Janjira

Social Services

- 13. Service Provider Knowledge:** Service providers must have professional knowledge about how to respond appropriately to women migrants who have experienced violence. This includes an understanding of women's fears around her migration status and how to provide appropriate care and reassurance when women report this violence. Service providers require an understanding of the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination women face based on their migratory status, country of origin, religion, race, sexual orientation or gender identity, occupation and other factors, and, therefore, of the heightened risk of violence that marginalized women face.
- 14. Psycho-Social Support and Counselling:** Migrant women are very often separated from their traditional support systems (e.g. family, friends). Part of providing basic psychosocial support is to make referrals to support groups and to help survivors build support networks where they live. Pay attention to risks to migrant women based on gender, cultural and social norms that support violence, possible community stigmatization and issues around confidentiality including when they return back home.
- 15. Shelter/Safety:** Given that women migrant workers that are victims/survivors of violence are separated from supportive family and friends at home, it is critical to provide immediate access to safe, free and secure accommodation to themselves and their children. It is important to remember that perpetrators can also be part of a 'migrant community' so seeking help locally is not always a viable option.
- 16. Economic Support:** Provide temporary economic support to victims/survivors for basic needs and accommodation and to support access to services ensuring the dignity of the women migrant is always upheld and economic support does not render the victim/survivor vulnerable to further violence, harassment and abuse.

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