

**The Unity Against Trafficking in Human Beings (UTEH)**

## Round Table Danube Cities Against Human Trafficking: “*Preventing & Combatting Human Trafficking and Exploitation at the Local Level*”

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### Barcelona’s City Council Background

The *Unity Against Trafficking of Humans Beings*, known as “**UTEH**”, starts to operate in January 2017 as a new commitment of **Barcelona’s** City Council. It is the first public service of its kind in a local municipality in Spain and provides attention to women, men and children survivors of trafficking.

In 2006 the local government initiates a comprehensive approach on sexual work, through programs focus on women and women transgender. Inevitably, the professionals detect and attend victims of forced prostitution. Thus, **Barcelona’s** city Council experience and intervention on the phenomenon of Human Trafficking has been developed over the years.

In 2015 the new local government fosters debate and space of cooperation by creating a working table. The *Inter-institutional Working Table* comprises members from public authorities and civil associations both from local to state-level. The results of the cooperative process are the definition of a specialized assistance circuit for Barcelona and the creation of the *Unity Against Trafficking of Humans Beings*.

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The experience of **Barcelona’s** City Council has been developed mainly on sexual exploitation, yet it was necessary to extend the approach to all kind of purposes of exploitation.

The UTEH is nowadays attending women, men, transgender and children survivors of human trafficking by purposes of sexual and labour exploitation. The intervention on two scenarios: An emergency situation, such as police operation or pressing needs and a referral, through generalist or specialized services of local, regional and state-level.

The interdisciplinary team includes psychological, legal and social professional profiles. The goal is to restore human rights and therefore the work is developed through several spheres of **people’s** lives. The UTEH offers: the coverage of basic universal needs, sanitary access, social and psychological attention, host services and legal counselling.

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In addition, if the person decides to exercise the right of a private prosecution they are also offered free legal representation.

This holistic commitment guides the service to work with people recognizing them as unique beings as well as a part of a system. Furthermore, the approach applies also for the impact of the phenomenon of Trafficking in Humans Beings:

***“Human trafficking is a global problem with a local impact,  
so it needs a local work with a global vision”***

## Building networking

To ensure the highest level of attention, a focal point is to promote coordination with experts from specialized organisations in human trafficking, police institutions and generalist services.

The coordination **level implies** contact with key resources at three different levels:

- **Local and interlocal level:** social and medical services, local police GUB, city council public detector service and other local **NGO's** detectors.
- **Regional level:** NGO's with accredited experience, regional police MMEE and Childhood protection services.
- **State-level:** public prosecutor, state police CNP and **NGO's** with accredited experience.

Coordination permeates in a mainstreaming way the attention we offer.

We work together with the resources mentioned above for detected victims or potential victims through **referral, emergency situations or police operations**. A high percentage of the cases that reach us, arrive in an emergency or crisis situation. Consequently, we have verified the need to develop a strong policy in coordination circuits. Regarding to the ordinarily referred cases we work with a **co-reference** system with the different services in order to add the perspective on the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings for a comprehensive intervention. We can also offer punctual counselling on this perspective to different resources.

During the police operation we take part by providing human rights information and the coverage of basic universal needs such as emergency accommodation.

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The city Council of Barcelona has taken the commitment to share the specialized **training on cultural and political topics**. From the Inter-institutional Working Table arise the proposal for a specialized table dedicated to improve the indicators for the detection of victims of trafficking in sexual exploitation. In this project participated public institutions, **NGO's** experts and police services that are actively involved.

The goal of these initiatives is to improve and share knowledge, detection and coordination among services. This networking will have a positive effect on the detection of potential victims and the quality of their attention.

## Points for improvement

- Enhance and create stable channels of coordination with accredited experienced **NGO's**. It allows us to give a unified and consensual attention.
- Enhance and create stable channels of coordination with local, regional and state police services. Working on guaranteeing our intervention from the very beginning of the official identification done by police service in order to avoid the secondary victimization and giving better accompaniment.
- Create new bridges of cooperation with key actors to detect other types of exploitation, such as labour inspection services, prisons and communitarian service of mediation.
- Involve survivors in the prevention, training and awareness tasks to recognize them as implicated actors and become social change agents.
- Guarantee the highest level of detection of potential victims regardless of the service they are getting attention from.
- Improve coordination and networking among the agents involved.
- Provide attention to those even if they **aren't** able to identify themselves as victims of Human Trafficking.