IMPACT:
Center against Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence in Conflict



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Preface

2025 was again a year of impact in the field of trafficking in human beings (THB) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

In 2025 we invested in particular in education and research, including through our annual Summer Schools on THB and CRSV and by developing guidelines on preventing online sexual exploitation of vulnerable children as well as on working with survivors of CRSV in a survivor-centred manner. In addition, we conducted novel research on forced marriage as a form of human trafficking.

We continued to publish our *Journal on Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, with a special issue on the nexus between asylum seeking/refugee status, CRSV and human trafficking, and to apply and look for funding possibilities on the nexus between THB, CRSV and sexual terrorism and meaningful partnerships.

Finally, we continue to put value in making an impact in the lives of young professionals as well as survivors of CRSV or THB directly, by making sure that part of our proceeds are also given to them.

Enjoy the read!

Best wishes,





Dr. Anne-Marie de Brouwer

Dr. Eefje de Volder

I Who we are

1. *Impact's vision and mission*

Since 2017 IMPACT: Center Against Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence in Conflict works as an independent and trusted expertise center. Our vision is a world in which people live together respectfully and understand that we are dependent on each other to create a better world, a world free of violence. A world in which human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence no longer take place by addressing and looking at these crimes separately and in combination.

Our mission is to positively contribute (IMPACT) to preventing and addressing human trafficking and conflict- related sexual violence, and therewith we play a part in advancing a world free of human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence.

We undertake this work based on a common passion for the topics human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence, a commitment to make a contribution to a better world where people have heart for each other.

IMPACT thus stands for making a positive contribution to preventing and addressing human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence. IMPACT is the criterion that we test against to decide whether the proposed activities match the identity and core mission of IMPACT.

2. *Impact's ambitions*

In 2022, IMPACT's policy plan 2022-2025 was adopted by the board, which is therefore still applicable for 2025. It sets out the focus of IMPACT's work for a meaningful and unique contribution to the field.

Prioritisation of activities: in this period IMPACT focuses primarily on research and education, and secondarily on empowerment projects. Before starting new projects, IMPACT will check whether it can carry out a project based on the impact-criterion, its importance and how financially beneficial it is.

Systemic approach: IMPACT works from a systemic approach. IMPACT does so by:

- Increasing knowledge and creating awareness (being recognised and acknowledged as a centre of expertise on these themes).
- Generating strategic impact (lobbying, adjusting legislation, etc).
- Contributing to improving the circumstances of victims/survivors and their families (effective access to facilities/rights), with an eye for a perpetrator perspective as well.

Geographic focus: although IMPACT has a global focus in its mission, in this period IMPACT focuses primarily on Europe and Africa.

Content focus: What makes IMPACT unique is the nexus between trafficking in human beings (THB) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV): a niche within the field. For this period, in addition to the individual projects on THB or CRSV, IMPACT would like to focus on a number of areas in which IMPACT believes it can make a difference. In doing so, IMPACT focuses on systemic change (impact on multiple levels).

Focus areas: IMPACT focusses on the following areas:

- The nexus between THB and CRSV in the general sense (more attention for this in education and the public debate).
- The nexus between THB and CRSV in international crimes (enslavement/slave trade/forced marriage/sexual slavery).
- The nexus between THB, CRSV and terrorism ('sexual terrorism').
- Continued provision of expertise in dealing with the individual crimes, with specific attention to the role of victims/survivors, awareness and prevention.

In 2025, the IMPACT team and board have been working towards developing a new policy plan for 2026-2030.

3. IMPACT Team

In 2025 dr. mr. Anne-Marie de Brouwer and dr. mr. Eefje de Volder continued their work as Impact's co-directors. The board members of Impact - Alette Smeulers (Chair), Ingrid Straet (Secretary) and Suzanne Hoff (Treasurer) - also continued their work. In this year, Zsófia Bagó (intern) and Lia Kleuskens (consultant) worked with us on forced marriage and THB, the nexus between CRSV and THB, and parental awareness of online risks for sexual exploitation.



Anne-Marie de Brouwer



Eefje de Volder


Alette Smeulers


Ingrid Straet


Suzanne Hoff

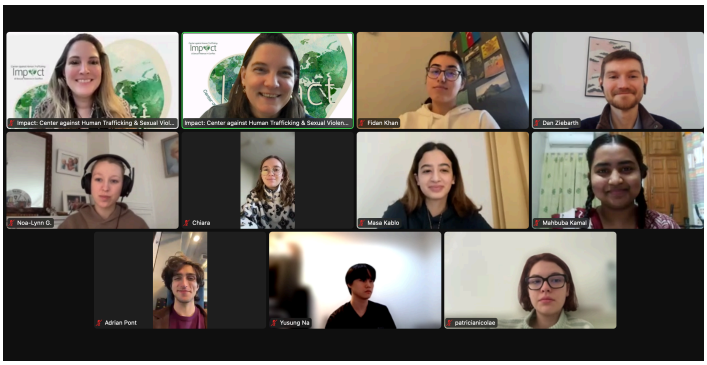
II What we have done

1. *Increased focus on the nexus between THB and CRSV in education*

We aim to have an increased focus on the nexus between THB and CRSV in education, with the following objectives:
- *Identify what is currently available;*
- *Offer summer and winter schools for university students;*
- *Develop and offer education for high school students;*
- *Develop and offer e-learning for students and professionals;*
- *Develop courses as a fixed part of a university curriculum;*
- *Theme specific workshops with other NGOs for professionals;*
- *THB and CRSV related programs for study trips for foreign students.*

In 2025, due to an ongoing increase in interest in the nexus between THB and CRSV amongst students and professionals we continued to teach - in addition to the individual crimes - about the nexus in our course offerings: during the in person **Summer Schools** in June-July 2025 (in collaboration with Tilburg University), the Summer School in July 2025 in person in Maastricht (in collaboration with Maastricht University), and the **course on Sexual and Gender-based Crimes** at Strathmore Law School (Kenya) in October-November 2025.




Impact: Center against Human Trafficking & Sexual Vio...
Impact: Center against Human Trafficking & Sexual Violen...
Fidan Khan
Dan Zisbarth
Noa-Lynn G.
Chiara
Mese Kabio
Mahbuba Kamal
Adrian Pont
Yusung Na
patricianicolae


observant
Independent weekly
of Maastricht University
Social Media







Podcast series Coffee and Justice
In 2025 we actually started recording the podcast Coffee and Justice, with one focussing on CRSV and the other on THB (together with students from the Outreaching Honors Program and the summer school participants of Tilburg University). We recorded our first sessions with students only, after which we also invited guest speakers (a clinical psychologist and a person who has experienced human trafficking) to share their insights.

We, furthermore, on an invitational basis, provided **guest lectures** on one of the crimes and the nexus. Finally we also shared our expertise by **supervising master theses** for students at the University of Amsterdam for the master "Nederlands Strafrecht" (Dutch Criminal Law) and International and Transnational Criminal Law.

We have come to realise that not all objectives mentioned above can realistically be achieved at once. In 2026, we will continue to offer (and update) our Winter and Summer Courses to students and professionals, whereby we aim to increase the number of participating students by reaching out to universities to incorporate our courses into their offerings, which some universities have started doing by 2025. In addition, we will look into possibilities to expand on the development of a podcast series, which will also be used in teaching.

2. *Clarifying the nexus between THB and CRSV in international criminal law*

Objectives:
We aim to contribute to the clarification of the nexus between THB and CRSV in international criminal law by:
- *Clarifying the legal definitions amongst others by large-scale (legal) research in which the definitions in international crimes are clarified, from a survivor centric approach (with elaboration of certain case studies);*
- *Ensuring that this clarification of legal definitions is translated into the national context.*
- *Recognising what has been done to victims (fair labelling);*

- Developing empowerment projects for victims in the national context (in collaboration with local partners).



In 2024, we finalized **a report** commissioned by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramilla Patten, and her Team of Experts, on the Nexus between Human Trafficking and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), with a particular focus on Ukraine. This work significantly advanced the understanding of the link between trafficking in human beings and CRSV in international criminal law. The report clarified key legal definitions and their application in national criminal law, explored prosecutorial challenges and opportunities, and provided guidance on ensuring accurate legal classification when prosecuting these crimes at the national level. In May 2025 we **presented the report** in Brussels at an event hosted by the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UN Team of Experts, and was meant for policy makers and prosecutors working on these crimes. The report will be shortened for publication in 2026.

In 2025 we applied for **EU funding**, in cooperation with the T.M.C. Asser Institute, for a project that aims to advance the awareness about the nexus between human trafficking, sexual terrorism and conflict-related sexual violence, particularly focused on enhancing national prosecution and improving access to justice for victims - within the Netherlands and other European countries. Although the funding did not come through, despite a high evaluation, we continue to look for opportunities in this regard and may resubmit next year. Also the application for EU funding on newly added forms of exploitation under the EU human trafficking definition together with La Strada international was, despite having a high score, unsuccessful due to the number of applications that were submitted.



In the Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (JHEC) we dedicated **a Special Issue on *The Nexus between Asylum Seeking/Refugee Status, CRSV and Human Trafficking***, which we realised in cooperation with guest editor Chris Dolan (School for Cross-faculty Studies, University of Warwick). See the cover photo for the contributions included in this Special Issue. Earlier that year we published the regular issue of JHEC with contributions on one or more of the three crimes.

3. *Greater awareness and recognition of sexual terrorism as a separate phenomenon*

We aim to have a greater awareness and recognition of sexual terrorism as a separate phenomenon, with the following objectives in mind:
- Research the nexus between human trafficking, CRSV and terrorism and its prosecution in the national context;
- Research the desirability of sexual terrorism as a separate crime (fair labelling) with specific case studies from a survivor centric approach;
- Develop an educational module on sexual terrorism (e-module or otherwise);
- Give training to professionals;
- Lobby activities in a national context;
- Develop empowerment projects for the victims of sexual terrorism in the national context (in cooperation with local partners).

In 2025, we continued to raise awareness on this topic through **teaching** (e.g. Summer School, Strathmore Law School), but also endeavoured to file for **funding** (see above under 2) so that we can increase our activities with the above objectives in mind.

4. *Provide expertise on combatting CRSV and THB separately, with a specific focus on the role of victims, awareness and prevention*

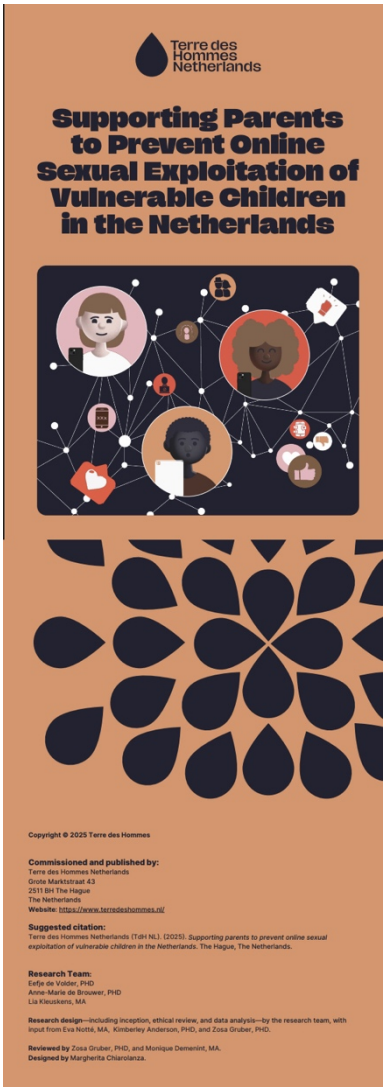
Leverage our expertise on the individual crimes to strengthen our recognition and visibility as a center of expertise on the nexus between them:
- As a center of expertise, making a lasting contribution to tackling the individual crimes (advice, research);
- Focus on empowerment and advocacy activities for victims/survivors;
- Expand 3D project to other countries as well as other forms of sexual violence;
- Empowerment and advocacy at national and international level;
- Research and education on the separate crimes.

We contributed in several ways to tackling the individual crimes. One way has been through contributing by drafting **survivor-centred guidelines when working with CRSV survivors** for the Mukwege Foundation, which will be published in 2026.

Secondly, we conducted research for the TIP Office of the US State Department on the use of the right **terminology** to refer to persons who have experienced CRSV and/or THB (identity first vs. person-first language).

Furthermore, we advised the newly established **Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Serbia** on the methodology for their first report on human trafficking.

In addition, we conducted research - including desk research, interviews, and focus group discussion - with **parents of children from at-risk groups to assess their awareness of online risks**, how they stay informed and educate their children, and what challenges they continue to face. The findings informed Terre des Hommes' campaign on online safety targeted at parents and resulted in the report 'Supporting Parents to Prevent Online Sexual Exploitation of Vulnerable Children in the Netherlands.'





Moreover, we have initiated **research on forced marriage as a form of human trafficking**, following its inclusion in the new EU Recast Anti-Trafficking Directive. To understand its current status quo in Europe and what is needed in order for it to be implemented comprehensively. This resulted in the report 'Comparative Analysis of the Legal and Policy Landscape on (Trafficking for the Exploitation of) Forced Marriage Across Europe'.

The results of the report have been shared in multiple fora. We pre-launched the report during the Regional Conference on the Prevention of (Trafficking for the exploitation of) Forced Marriage, which took take place in Skopje, North Macedonia, from 10–12 September 2025 and also shared the insights of the report during a webinar on 16 October 2025 called the "(Trafficking for the Exploitation of) Forced Marriage."



Also, we contributed to understanding **risks of trafficking for posted workers in the agriculture and manufacturing sector in the Netherlands** in the context of the EU INFORIGHTS project, on behalf of La Strada International. During an event of the European Labour Authority (ELA) "Posting of Third Country Nationals Event: ELA Launch of the Posted TCN study and exchanges on protection mechanisms for TCN workers" on 20 March 2025, the risks of trafficking for posted workers were shared.



Finally, **the HUU: project** is still ongoing. The 3D platform offers a virtual reality with islands and stories of victims of CRSV. The partners involved are committed to finalise the platform in 2026. Musea have shown interest in using it as it is a less explicit way to give attention to a sensitive topic.

In 2025, after eight years of service, **Eefje stepped down from the Board of La Strada International (LSI)** upon completing her final term. During LSI's 30th anniversary event in Poland, she was formally thanked for her commitment and contributions to the organisation.



5. *Making an IMPACT*

What continues to drive our work in combating human trafficking (THB) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is the tangible impact we are able to generate through research, education, advocacy and collaboration. Throughout 2025, we have continued to contribute to policy discussions, academic debates and professional practice at both the national and international levels.

Our research has informed policymakers, practitioners and academics, contributing to a better understanding of emerging challenges and legal developments related to THB and CRSV. By participating in expert groups, international conferences and high-level policy dialogues, we have shared evidence-based knowledge and contributed to advancing discussions on issues such as trafficking in human beings, conflict-related sexual violence, enslavement, terrorism and their interlinkages.

Education remains a cornerstone of our work. Through our Summer Schools and other educational activities, we continue to equip students and young professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to address THB, CRSV and international justice challenges. It is encouraging to see many participants pursue further academic research, internships and careers in these fields. Whenever possible, we support them by providing guidance, recommendation letters and internship opportunities, thereby helping to strengthen the next generation of professionals committed to protecting victims' rights and combating exploitation.

In 2025, we also continued to expand the accessibility of our expertise through publications, public engagement activities and digital outreach. By making complex issues more accessible to a broader audience, we aim to increase awareness and stimulate informed public and professional debate.

We also sustained the sponsorship of three male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence through the Mukomeze Foundation, enabling us to make a direct and meaningful contribution to the daily lives of survivors. The sponsorship is tailored to their individual needs: for one survivor it provides support for basic living expenses, for another it enables access to education, and for the third it supports the

establishment of a small business. Through this initiative, we aim not only to promote recovery and resilience but also to contribute to long-term independence and sustainable livelihoods.

Finally, collaboration remains essential to achieving lasting impact. Through our active participation in networks such as SOM, La Strada International, CICC and the CRSV Network Netherlands, we continue to exchange knowledge, strengthen multidisciplinary cooperation and contribute to joint efforts to prevent trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence. Central to all these activities is our commitment to ensuring that the experiences and voices of survivors remain at the heart of research, policy and practice.

6. In the news & publications

Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Regular Issue (2025)(6)(1).

Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Special Issue, The Nexus between Asylum Seeking/Refugee Status, CRSV and Human Trafficking (2025)(6)(2).

Anne-Marie de Brouwer, 'The Fight against Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Linked to Trafficking in Persons for Sexual Exploitation', in: Jean-Christophe Martin and Patrick Weil, *Combating Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Normative Frameworks and Operational Action*, Université Côte d'Azur, pp. 143-155 (2025).

La Strada International and IMPACT: Center against Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence in Conflict, *Comparative analysis of the legal and policy landscape on (trafficking for the exploitation of) forced marriage across Europe - How is forced marriage regulated, criminalised, and enforced, and when does it become human trafficking?*, November 2025 (authors: Zsófia Réka Bagó, Suzanne Hoff, and Eefje de Volder).

Terres des Hommes, *Supporting Parents to Prevent Online Sexual Exploitation of Vulnerable Children in the Netherlands* (TdH 2026), researched by Anne-Marie de Brouwer, Eefje de Volder and Lia Kleuskens.

III Where we are going

Goals for 2026

Internal organizational issues:

- *Strengthen and maintain a sustainable financial foundation to support the IMPACT's long-term growth and impact.*
- *Invest in organisational capacity to successfully apply for and manage larger national and international grant opportunities.*
- *Finalise and implement the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, defining IMPACT's priorities and strategic direction for the coming years.*

Communication:

- *Strengthen IMPACT's visibility and recognition as a leading knowledge centre through a consistent online presence, including blogs, expert contributions to articles, and media appearances in radio, newspapers and magazines.*

Projects/content-related:

- *Further develop, finalise and stream our podcast on human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence.*
- *Focus on sustainability of educational programs, developing course offerings for professionals and capacity building on the nexus between human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence for professionals*
- *Invest in projects on sexual terrorism and the nexus between human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence*
- *Resubmit the EU Commission grants, together with Asser Institute and La Strada International*

Annex: Financial Statement and Narrative

Financial Statement 2025			
	Costs (€)		**Revenues (€)**
Personell Costs	101.522,34		
Financial Costs	437,72		
Office Costs	3815,83		
Network and Professional Expenses	1183,19		
IT-costs	1282,28		
Accountant and Administration Costs	1515,90		
Gifts and Donations	2690,00		
Passing on Costs			300,00
Taxes	1044,00		
Purchases Research and Advice	6751,80		
Purchases Education and Awareness	6013,12		
Purchases Training and Capacity Building	0,00		
Purchases Empowerment and Advocacy	0,00		
Revenues Research and Advice			44450,18
Revenues Education and Awareness			61249,10
Revenues Training and Capacity Building			0,00
Revenues Empowerment and Advocacy			13346,44
Revenues Rent Office			1500,00
Revenues Donations			11517,11
TOTAL	**126256,18**		**132362,83**
Balance	*6106,65*		

Financial narrative

In 2025, the personnel costs included such costs as salaries, holiday pay, pension, social security, travel, reimbursements for interns, and professional education and have remained quite similar to the year 2024. Other costs concerned financial costs, office costs, network and professional expenses (including such costs as subscriptions and networking activities), IT-costs, gifts and donations (see below for the amount set aside for our so-called 'empowerment projects'), accountant and administration costs, and taxes. These costs remained, again, quite similar in comparison with the previous year. In 2025 we, however, purchased again research and more education by making, in particular, more use of a research consultant for a research project and IT-support for an educational platform and guest lecturers for our Winter and Summer Schools, respectively.

In 2025, Impact's revenues remained more or less similar for the pillar 'Research and Advice', 'Education and Awareness' and 'Empowerment and Advocacy'. More specifically, in 2025, the revenues Impact received for 'Research and Advice' related to the following projects: Journal of Human Trafficking, Enslavement and Conflict-

Related Sexual Violence; Info Rights; TIP Language Assignment; Mukwege Foundation Practical Guidance Tool Survivor-Centred Approach; and Terre des Hommes online sexual abuse. The revenues received for 'Education and Awareness' related to the annual Winter and Summer Schools on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Human Trafficking at Tilburg University; the Summer School at Maastricht University; ILAB for the Outreaching Honors Program of Tilburg University; guest lectures at different venues; a course on SGBV at Strathmore University; Mobile; assignments for CoMensha; and theses supervision at the University of Amsterdam. Under the pillar 'Empowerment and Advocacy', the Dutch Strategic meeting on Human Trafficking (SOM) was again included. This year again some revenues were received for rent of the Impact office from Bèkske: Rwandan Empowerment Coffee as they made use of part of the office. Revenues from donations increased significantly, in particular because of the generous donation of a funder, the Snatager Foundation.

At IMPACT, an amount of the result is set aside for 'empowerment projects' (€2.690 in 2025). Like in 2024, in 2025, Impact supported the Mukomeze Foundation with an ongoing contribution, in support of three Rwandan children who lost their mothers as a consequence of the genocidal sexual violence committed against them and one male survivor of genocidal sexual violence, in basic needs, education in university and/or setting up their own business. In addition, we supported a student to study at Tilburg University via the "Have a Seat" program.