



Access, Support and Coordination Programme: A Collaborative Approach to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking

Evaluation Report

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Project Name	Access, Support and Coordination (ASC) Programme: A Collaborative Approach to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking #00127692
Project Type	PX - Protection and Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants
Duration	02 July 2021 to 28 September 2024 (incl. No-Cost Extension)
Budget	USD 2,600,000.00
Donor	Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MMPTF)
Partnering United Nations Organizations (PUNOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Organization for Migration (IOM) Trinidad and Tobago • United Nations Children's Fund Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area (UNICEF ECA) • United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Programme Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of National Security (MNS) • Ministry of Labour (MoL) • Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) • Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT) • Families in Action (FiA) • Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago (FPATT) • The Catholic Commission for Social Justice (CCSJ)/Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR) • Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society (TTRCS) • The Heroes Foundation
Primary Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victims of Trafficking (VoTs)/Survivors of Trafficking (SoTs); • Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC); • Vulnerable Migrants; • National Authorities (i.e., including programme partners); • Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
Evaluation Type	Final External Evaluation
Evaluation Team	Mr. Silviu Kondan and Ms. Rowena Symss – <i>Kondan & Symss Consultancy Inc.</i>

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific (Study)
AMMR	Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees
ASC	Access, Support and Coordination (Programme)
BCP	Border Crossing Point
CARICOM	The Caribbean Community
CATT	Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
CFS	Child Friendly Space
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTU	Counter Trafficking Unit
FiA	Families in Action
FPATT	Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
GoRTT	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JPSC	Joint Programme Steering Committee
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MMPTF	Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MNS	Ministry of National Security
MSDFS	Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NTFATIP	National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons
NCE	No-Cost Extension
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PCWG	Protection Coordination Working Group
PUNOs	Partnering United Nations Organizations
RMF	Results Monitoring Framework
RMRP	Refugee and Migrant Response Plan
RMWG	Refugees and Migrants Working Group
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SICA	Central American Integration System
SoM	Smuggling of Migrants
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SoT	Survivor of Trafficking
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
TiP	Trafficking in Persons
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training-of-Trainers

TTRCS	Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society
TTVSOLNET	Trinidad and Tobago Venezuelan Solidarity Network
UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN MSDF	United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework
UN MSDCF	United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF ECA	United Nations Children's Fund Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VoT	Victim of Trafficking
WCDCV	Working Committee for the Delivery of Care for Victims

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the final external evaluation (November 2024 - February 2025) of the “Access, Support and Coordination Programme: A Collaborative Approach to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking” (ASC) Programme. The evaluation assessed the achievement of the programme’s intended results, evaluated the sustainability of its actions and provided strategic recommendations for future initiatives that focus on strengthening the capacities of national and community-based partners in Trinidad and Tobago to effectively respond to the needs of victims of trafficking/survivors of trafficking (VoTs/SoTs) and unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).

The evaluators employed a mixed-method approach that integrated primary data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions, as well as secondary data, external publications, strategic recommendations and guidelines. The evaluation approach also drew upon programme documentation to gain insight into the programme’s implementation, objectives and achievements. Limitations of this methodology included a lack of endline beneficiary interview data (i.e., primary data collection through the evaluation with VoTs/SoTs and vulnerable migrants). Given the limitations, evaluation interviews were conducted mainly with management and institutional beneficiary staff, rather than directly with endline beneficiaries.

The primary objective of the ASC Programme was to enhance the protection, resilience, and well-being of vulnerable migrants through modernized and integrated national and community-based systems. The evaluation identified 32 key findings about the ASC Programme’s performance towards meeting its proposed results and targets, success factors, barriers, and solutions, as well as lessons learned and good practices regarding national coordination efforts to assist VoTs/SoTs and UASC in Trinidad and Tobago. The summaries of key findings, organized across the evaluation criteria categories are captured in [Section 4: Conclusions](#).

The final section of the report offers 14 recommendations intended to enhance relevant actors’ planning methodologies and implementation processes in combatting trafficking in persons (TiP) and gender-based violence (GBV) and promoting child protection. The six high priority recommendations focus on:

- Strengthening exit and continuity planning to prevent service disruptions for vulnerable migrants following programme closure;
- Promoting the institutional integration of key deliverables;
- Strengthening human resourcing and reporting capacity for future consortium-style programmes among implementing partners;
- Institutionalizing the Training Plan and training of trainers model in workforce development, and supporting career progression within relevant government agencies;
- Promoting the use of research products for advocacy, framework development and future programming proposals;
- Strengthening and expand interventions to address ongoing structural and systematic gaps identified through the ASC programme and by secondary research.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report captures the key findings obtained through the final external evaluation of the “Access, Support and Coordination Programme: A Collaborative Approach to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking” (ASC) programme. The evaluation is produced for the IOM, UNICEF and UNFPA implementing teams (i.e., PUNOs), the programme donor (i.e., MMPTF), as well as programme partners. The evaluation was conducted between November 2024 - February 2025, covering the full duration of the programme (i.e., July 2021 to September 2024), with consideration for updated targets and the programme’s three-month no-cost extension (NCE).

The primary objective of the final external evaluation is to assess the achievement of the programme’s intended results, evaluate the sustainability of its actions and provide strategic recommendations for future initiatives that focus on strengthening the capacities of national and community-based partners in Trinidad and Tobago to effectively respond to the needs of VoTs/SoTs and UASC. Moreover, the evaluation seeks to offer insights into the effectiveness of the ASC programme to provide key stakeholders with a thorough understanding of the good practices identified during implementation. Produced findings, lessons learned and recognized good practices will subsequently be used to inform future management responses led by the PUNOs and their national and regional partners.

Furthermore, the evaluation provides MMPTF with an overall analysis of the programme’s impact and complementarity with other migration-related initiatives, thereby noting how the design and administration of the multi-stakeholder pooled fund has directly contributed to partnership-building – i.e., particularly under the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) *Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration*.¹

The evaluation incorporated standardised evaluation criteria developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) and the MMPTF Operational Manual, adopting a mixed method research approach. More specifically, the evaluation captures the following areas:

- Early indication of **impact** and examples of medium and long-term outcomes generated through the programme;
- The continued **relevance** of results for its beneficiaries and partners;
- The internal and external **coherence** of the programme to optimize synergies and prevent duplication (incl. PUNO-related national, regional, and/or global strategies, including the new regional *United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework* (UN MSDCF));
- The **effectiveness** and **efficiency** across the planning, implementation and management of the programme;
- The **sustainability** of the programme’s results, as well as critical areas for future interventions to better combat TiP;
- The incorporation and consideration of cross-cutting themes, such as *principles and approaches to human rights, gender and child responsive/sensitive interventions*, “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society”.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

¹ The evaluation of the programme’s impact was based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria definition. This evaluation was conducted at the end of the programme, and as such, examines early indicators of impact, and impacts to date. The evaluation of longer-term realized impacts, due to the timing of the evaluation, was limited. The evaluation of impact included as part of the evaluation does not constitute an “impact evaluation”, which relies on a different methodology that often includes data collection from control and treatment groups.

The issue of trafficking in persons (TiP) has gained prominence in Trinidad and Tobago over the last decade, particularly as studies have provided detailed information on migratory patterns, organized criminal networks and the experiences of SoTs/VoTs. For example, a [2013 study published by the African, Caribbean and Pacific \(ACP\) Migration Project](#) (implemented by IOM) found that 71 per cent of victims of trafficking (VoTs) identified and surveyed had experienced sexual exploitation, while 23 per cent had been subjected to forced labour. The majority of the VoTs surveyed came from Venezuela, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

Moreover, the 2022 [Situational Assessment](#) study, launched under the ASC Programme, classified Trinidad and Tobago as both a destination and transit country for trafficking, particularly due to its proximity to Venezuela, its precarious borders and unofficial border crossing points (BCPs). To a smaller extent, Trinidad and Tobago is also identified as a source country for TiP, with reported cases of missing persons, particularly UASC. It is also worth noting that while women and girls are the primary victims, male VoTs/SoTs have been reported. Interestingly, some respondents to the Situational Assessment reported encountering VoTs/SoTs who were unaware that they had been trafficked. This lack of awareness may stem from their unfamiliarity with their rights and relevant laws, making it difficult for them to recognize their situation as one of exploitation.

To address the various challenges outlined, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) has made notable progress in combating TiP and smuggling of migrants (SoM). For example, in 2007, national authorities ratified the [UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and Supplementing Protocols](#), and in 2013, incorporated relevant provisions into the [Trafficking in Persons Act](#) (TiP Act). The TiP Act (No. 14 of 2011), which was operationalized in 2013, is the primary legislative framework to combat TiP in the country. This act established the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) and the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP), which includes representation from a list of key government ministries.

The TiP Act mandates the CTU to conduct criminal investigations related to human trafficking, while the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) is responsible for providing direct support to VoTs/SoTs such as housing, education, medical care and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for victims. The NTFATIP is responsible for developing national policies and action plans focused on the identification and assistance to victims, prosecution of traffickers, and partnerships with various stakeholders, including international organizations and NGOs. These efforts are part of a coordinated strategy to combat TiP and are supported by a suite of complementary legislation, such as the *Immigration Act*, *Sexual Offences Act*, *Proceeds of Crime Act* and the *Children's Act*.

Moreover, in 2020, [MSDFS further strengthened its support mechanisms by creating the Working Committee for the Delivery of Care for VoTs \(WCDCV\)](#) in alignment with its strategic goals (2018-2022) and the TiP Act. The WCDCV reports to both the Permanent Secretary of MSDFS and the NTFATIP, ensuring a coordinated approach to delivering care and protection to VoTs.

In 2021, the WCDCV introduced the *National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2021-2023: From Awareness to Action*. This plan focuses on three core pillars: *Prevention*, *Protection* and *Prosecution*. Its goals include increasing public awareness, improving victim support services, and enhancing the legal and regulatory framework for prosecuting traffickers. The plan was designed to address the main gaps in anti-trafficking efforts, building capacity within both governmental and NGOs/CSOs.

Although Trinidad and Tobago has made significant progress in combating TiP by establishing appropriate national frameworks in line with key international conventions, the country has yet to ratify several notable conventions that complement efforts to combat TiP. These include the [Slavery Convention](#) (1926) and the [UN Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others](#) (1949), [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography](#) (2000) and the [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (1999).

Furthermore, the economic, social and political crisis in Venezuela, the COVID-19 pandemic and broader changing migratory patterns have increased the protection risks for irregular migrants, especially as TiP and SoM cases have risen in the country. Challenges include inadequate placement and shelter facilities for adult and child VoTs/SoTs, medical care, psychological support, education, legal assistance, reintegration services, a shortage of bilingual staff, unclear referral mechanisms and safety concerns for victims.

In 2024, Trinidad and Tobago improved its ranking to a Tier 2 country in the [United States Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report](#), having previously been listed on the Tier 2 Watchlist for three consecutive years. This upgrade reflects the government's significant progress toward meeting minimum anti-trafficking standards. Importantly, the ASC programme's design sought to address various key recommendations noted in previous reports, including supporting efforts to improve victim identification screening, referral mechanisms and access to protection and assistance for vulnerable individuals. Overall, the 2024 TIP Report notes the following key advancements:

- Increased investigations and prosecutions, in addition to the enactment of legislation to expedite legal processes by removing the lengthy preliminary inquiry phase that delayed the prosecution of trafficking cases.
- Strengthening of judicial and police resources dedicated to anti-trafficking, with increased personnel and training.
- First-ever conviction of a trafficker, resulting in a significant prison sentence.
- Progress on building a transitional shelter and a fifth housing unit for trafficking victims, alongside improved facilities for the CTU, enhancing victim interviews and security.
- Issuance of ministerial permits granting legal status and work opportunities to two trafficking victims.
- Finalization and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and victim care protocols, as well as increased funding for anti-trafficking measures.

It is worth mentioning, however, that the report also highlights several key areas for ongoing improvements (see *Sustainability Section* for detailed analysis of ongoing challenges):

- Corruption and official complicity in trafficking crimes within the police and national security services remain a serious issue, hampering law enforcement efforts.
- Inadequate action to address alleged official complicity in trafficking, particularly in immigration detention centers, resulted in re-trafficking of victims.
- Insufficient screening of migrant workers likely led to the penalization and deportation of trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked.

Given the challenges and constraints related to combatting TiP in the context of Trinidad and Tobago, with particular attention to the impacts resulting from the crisis in Venezuela, the MMPTF funded the ASC Programme. The MMPTF serves as a pooled fund to support implementation of the GCM, in recognition of the necessity of international cooperation for enhanced migration governance. Under Thematic Area 2 the MMPTF seeks to support initiatives that focus on "Protecting the human rights, safety and well-being of migrants, including through addressing drivers and mitigating situations of vulnerability in migration". The ASC Programme, through its goal to enhance the well-being, resilience and

protection of migrants, including those vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse, aligns with this thematic area and associated GCM objectives, using a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

As mentioned, the Joint ASC Programme aims to strengthen the capacities of national and community-based partners in Trinidad and Tobago to effectively respond to the needs of VoTs/SoTs. The programme focuses on three main pillars:

- *Access*: enhancing the **ability of national and community-based actors to reach and support** VoTs/SoTs.
- *Support*: **providing comprehensive care and empowerment** for VoTs/SoTs, focusing on their well-being and resilience.
- *Coordination*: Improving the **cooperation and coordination among governmental, civil society, and community-based organizations** to better protect vulnerable migrants, particularly women, children and VoTs/SoTs.

The programme's primary objective is **to enhance the protection, resilience, and well-being of vulnerable migrants through modernized and integrated national and community-based systems.**

The ASC Programme's design emphasizes strong partnerships with both the government and civil society, reflecting the GCM "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" principles (see *Relevance and Coherence Sections*), while strengthening the capacity and cooperation of all actors involved. The ASC Programme's objective is organized around three primary outcomes:

- ***Strengthened National and Community-based Systems***: Protection systems demonstrate improved capacity to screen, identify, assist, and reintegrate VoTs/SoTs and UASC.
- ***Increased Collaboration***: Greater cooperation among government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), and UN agencies to coordinate effectively, mitigate risks, identify solutions, and address xenophobia, discrimination, and exploitation.
- ***Comprehensive Support for Survivors***: VoTs/SoTs and UASC receive holistic, victim-centred, and trauma-informed interventions from government, CSOs, and UN agencies, aiding their recovery and reintegration.

To achieve the outcomes, the PUNOs envisaged the achievement of four key output areas:

- ***Improved Knowledge and Application***: National and community-based protection systems enhance their knowledge to screen, identify, assist, and reintegrate survivors of trafficking and UASC.
- ***Development of Knowledge Products and Tools***: Evidence-based programming and coordination are supported through newly developed knowledge products and tools.
- ***Increased Awareness***: Advocacy efforts increase awareness around xenophobia, TiP, MHPSS, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), discrimination and exploitation.
- ***Increased Access to Services***: VoTs/SoTs and UASC gain improved access to comprehensive services, including SRH, MHPSS, accommodation, direct assistance and livelihood and vocational training opportunities.

Accordingly, the Programme's theory of change states:

- IF national protection systems are capacitated to better screen, identify assist and re/integrate survivors of trafficking and UASC;
- IF non-governmental and community-based organisations are strengthened to prevent, identify, refer and support them;
- IF there is increased coordination in mitigating risks, identifying solutions, tackling xenophobia, monitoring, and providing direct assistance to survivors of trafficking;

- AND IF there is increased psychosocial support and options for economic empowerment of survivors of trafficking and those at risk, including their participation in trafficking prevention and response.
- THEN survivors of trafficking regardless of ethnic origin, nationality, gender or age, will have access to comprehensive and integrated survivor-centred specialised services and support. This can best be achieved through coordinated efforts by national protection systems and community-based organisations with the support of the United Nations.
- BECAUSE there will be strong collaboration among UN Agencies, Ministries and partners, Government and stakeholder buy-in and ownership, an enabling environment for joint local-migrant collaboration and efforts to change community norms and practices will be supported and not undermined.

Implementation Outline:

Each PUNO had a direct role in supporting the outlined outcomes and outputs of the ASC Programme:

As the convening agency, IOM was considered well positioned to facilitate the logistics of the ASC Programme due to its longstanding role in facilitating regional cooperation and migration governance in the Caribbean. For example, since 2016, IOM has organized the Caribbean Migration Consultations, which led to the establishment of the Caribbean Regional Counter-trafficking Network, involving both victim-protection and law-enforcement contingents to combat TiP. With increased Venezuelan migrant flows, IOM, in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in 2018 established a Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela.

Moreover, the IOM Country Office in Trinidad and Tobago has provided short-term support to victims through various emergency projects and global funding. Alongside national authorities (e.g., CTU under the Ministry of National Security (MNS) and the Ministry of Labour (MoL)), IOM will work closely with Families in Action (FiA).

UNICEF ECA builds on its long-standing presence in Trinidad and Tobago (since 1976) and its expanded role since 2018 in responding to the Venezuelan migration crisis. The ASC Programme leverages UNICEF's efforts in child protection, education, including early childhood development (including MHPSS support) and social protection particularly focusing on alternative care options for unaccompanied, separated, and trafficked children and GBV risk-mitigation measures through child-friendly spaces for out-of-school migrant children. UNICEF's primary implementing partners in the programme include the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT), the Catholic Commission for Social Justice/Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (CCSJ/AMMR), the Heroes Foundation and the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society (TTRCS).

In Trinidad and Tobago, UNFPA has been instrumental in developing gender-based violence (GBV) SOPs and referral pathways for migrants and refugees at risk of or experiencing GBV or in need of SRH services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA also launched the formal development of a national GBV referral pathway and case management system. Its further work in life skills and parenting involves building the capacity of migrant women and adolescents to navigate the local environment safely, ensuring their protection. Under the ASC Programme, UNFPA's main implementing partner for these efforts is Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago (FPATT), including the five clinics it operates and the mobile outreach programme.

The Joint Programme Steering Committee (JPSC) was envisaged as the key management and coordination mechanism for the ASC Programme. It was meant to be comprised of representatives from IOM, UNICEF, UNFPA and relevant national and community-based partners. However, due to administrative hurdles noted in the evaluation report, the JPSC was re-modelled through ongoing meetings between the PUNOs and their respective partners.

Human Rights, Gender and Vulnerable Populations:

Based on the mandates of each individual PUNO, the ASC Programme was designed to be committed to ensuring that the protection of vulnerable migrants, including VoTs/SoTs, UASC, and others at risk, is central to all interventions. This is grounded in international human rights law, including the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which guarantee the dignity, safety, and rights of all persons, regardless of their migration status.

Moreover, the PUNOs placed a strong emphasis on gender-sensitive approaches to migration management, particularly in addressing the specific risks faced by women and children in migration contexts. Women and girls are often at heightened risk of GBV, exploitation and TiP, and the programme ensures that national authorities and front-line actors are equipped to address these vulnerabilities.

Programme results:

As of the fall and winter progress reporting periods, the ASC Programme achieved several key accomplishments:

- Two government-owned shelters in Trinidad upgraded, offering safe, dignified care for SoTs, enabling continued recovery and reintegration.
- Conducted comprehensive assessments to identify gaps, resulting in a national Training Needs Assessment and Training Plan addressing training needs for national authorities. This led to training for 873 government and civil society stakeholders, significantly enhancing their ability to identify, assist and manage cases of trafficking. Moreover, 19 participants completed training-of-trainers sessions, equipping local facilitators with skills to provide ongoing training, enhancing sustainability.
- Supported 1,929 children (1,015 girls) with mental health services, 1,147 children (675 girls) with case management and provided community interventions to 2,937 individuals (1,679 women) addressing GBV and exploitation risks.
 - Provided integrated services to 328 VoTs/SoTs and at-risk individuals, covering food, shelter, mental health, vocational training, sexual and reproductive health and life-skills programming.
 - Provided 871 counselling sessions to 189 VoTs/SoTs and vulnerable individuals, with positive feedback highlighting improvements in anxiety and stress management.
 - Offered training in English language, cosmetology arts and micro-entrepreneurship to 67 participants, significantly improving their employment prospects and self-confidence.
 - Supported 139 VoTs/SoTs with food, non-food items, medical care and transition planning; accommodated 81 survivors in newly refurbished government shelters.
 - 392+ children in need of care and protection (including UASC and Child VoTs/SoTs) were supported through case management at national and community levels, coordinated by the CATT in collaboration with CCSJ.
 - Joint strategies between PUNOs and the National Police Service supported families with children found begging on the streets.
- Developed a comprehensive referral and resource map in collaboration with the CTU, facilitating streamlined services delivery.

- Referral pathways and SOPs for alternative care of UASC and Child Friendly Spaces were formalized and updated.
- Introduced the first digital Case Management System in the English-speaking Caribbean, enhancing victim care and interagency coordination through real-time updates and data security.
- Implemented major events such as the "Walk Against Trafficking in Persons," engaging over 800 participants, and hosted art exhibitions and spoken word competitions to raise public awareness.

Alignment to Relevant International and National Frameworks

The ASC Programme's initial design and scope of work aligned directly with two key priority areas of the [UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework in Caribbean](#) (UN MSDF) 2017-2021. First, the programme supported "An Inclusive, Equitable, and Prosperous Caribbean", which acknowledges the differing experiences of poverty and economic growth between women, men, boys and girls. Secondly, it complemented "A Safe, Cohesive, and Just Caribbean", addressing the root causes of crime, violence and insecurity.

Currently, the ASC Programme aligns directly with the [UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the English and Dutch Speaking Caribbean](#) (UN MSDCF) 2022-2026. Specifically, the ASC Programme supports Outcome 7: *Regional and national laws, policies, systems, and institutions improve access to justice and promote peace, social cohesion, and security*, which highlights inter-agency coordination as a priority as:

"[...] political situations and extreme conditions in some countries both within and outside of the Caribbean region persist, the issues of irregular migration and smuggling of migrants, including refugees, asylum seekers and victims of trafficking in persons, remain a challenge."

Furthermore, the ASC Programme aligns directly with the governing frameworks of each PUNO. For example, it directly aligns with the [IOM Strategy for the Caribbean 2023-2026: Migration for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean](#). This strategy focuses on three pillars: enhancing *resilience*, managing *mobility* and improving the *governance* of migration in the region. These pillars are aligned with the global IOM Strategic Vision, which guides IOM's broader approach across its various regions of operations, including Central and North America and the Caribbean. Moreover, the IOM Strategy for the Caribbean has been designed to integrate migration governance fully within the UN system-wide support for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is aligned with the UN MSDCF which aims to transform the Caribbean into a region where "people choose to live and can reach their full potential".

The ASC Programme also directly aligns with the [UNICEF Eastern Caribbean 2022-2026 Multi-Country Programme](#) (MCPD). The MCPD seeks to promote the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025, the Gender Action Plan 2022–2025, as well as several other frameworks in the Eastern Caribbean region. The MCPD focuses on inclusive education, child protection and social policy, with cross-cutting themes addressing regional challenges such as climate change and disaster risk reduction. The vision of the MCPD is to create an Eastern Caribbean where "all children achieve quality educational outcomes and live in protective, safe environments free from poverty, violence, exploitation and abuse". A key element of the programme is its focus on removing legal, administrative, and financial barriers that prevent the integration of migrant children into national systems, with UNICEF continuing to provide direct support in collaboration with stakeholders.

Similarly, the [UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (Regional Programme) focuses on supporting national efforts to "build back better" while advancing the SDGs and the 1994 [International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action](#). Guided by the Montevideo Consensus, the programme emphasizes

“leaving no one behind” and addressing intersectionality, with the goal of achieving the three transformative results: “ending unmet needs for family planning, ending preventable maternal deaths and ending gender-based violence and harmful practices”. The regional programme will focus on six common outputs, adapted for the Latin American and Caribbean context, and aligned with the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025. These outputs include policy and accountability; quality of care and services; gender and social norms; population change and data; humanitarian action and bodily autonomy and integrity.

At the international level, the ASC Programme aligns with several key GCM Objectives and SDG Targets:

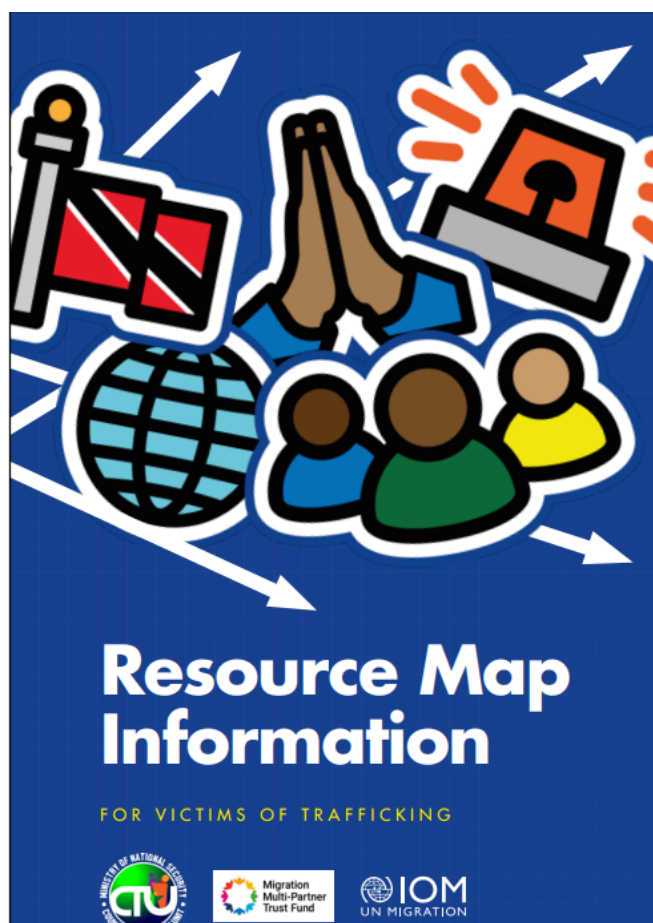
Primary GCM Objectives:

- Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration.
- Objective 10: Prevent, combat, and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration.
- Objective 12: Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral.
- Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Relevant SDG Targets:

- SDG 3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, including family planning, information, and education, and integrate reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.
- SDG 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other forms of violence in public and private spheres.
- SDG 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, in line with the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action and the [Beijing Platform for Action](#).
- SDG 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2025.
- SDG 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe, secure working environments for all workers, particularly migrant workers, women migrants, and those in precarious employment.
- SDG 10.7: Facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
- SDG 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children.
- SDG 16.3: Promote the rule of law at national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

At the national level, the ASC Programme aligns with [Trinidad and Tobago's Vision 2030 National Development Strategy](#), particularly Theme I, Goal 2, which seeks to “improve the delivery of social services to vulnerable groups”, and Theme II, Goal 2, which focuses on “modernizing public management systems through improved human resources and technology”. The ASC Programme also supports the goals of the [MSDFS Strategic Plan 2018-2023](#), which aims to build resilience and reduce poverty, inequality and vulnerability – noting particularly vulnerable groups, such as “persons with disabilities, street dwellers, deportees, ex-prisoners, refugees, asylum seekers, human trafficking victims, migrants and substance abusers”.



2.0 EVALUATION SCOPE, METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

2.1 EVALUATION SCOPE AND PURPOSE

As noted in the *Introduction Section*, the primary objective of the final external evaluation is to assess the achievement of the programme's intended results, evaluate the sustainability of its actions and provide strategic recommendations for future initiatives. More specifically, this evaluation report:

- Provides an **analysis of the ASC Programme's performance** towards meeting its proposed results and targets, including an analysis of the Programme's impact to date, in consideration of cross-cutting themes, such as the incorporation of principles and approaches to human rights, gender and child responsive/sensitive interventions, "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society".
- Identifies what the **success factors, barriers and solutions** were towards programme implementation.
- Documents **lessons learned and emerging goods practices** regarding national coordination efforts to assist VoTs/SoTs/UASC in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Provides **key and practical recommendations to the PUNOs as well as ASC partners** (national authorities, in particular) for the continued management and implementation of activities related to the ASC's scope and in promoting the impact and sustainability of benefits achieved under the programme.

The evaluation process spanned approximately four months (December 2024 – February 2025), and included a field visit to Trinidad and Tobago in January 2025 to gather data/input from key stakeholders. The evaluation covered the Programme's result areas in accordance with its focus on strengthening national and community-based protection systems to screen, identify, assist, and reintegrate VoTs/SoTs and UASC; increasing cooperation among government agencies, CSOs, and UN agencies to coordinate effectively, mitigate risks, identify solutions, and address xenophobia, discrimination, and exploitation; and support toward providing comprehensive Support for VoTs/SoTs. The evaluation included results implemented across Trinidad and Tobago.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation framework was based on standard OECD-DAC criteria areas and cross-cutting themes, as well as the MMPTF Operations Manual (see *Table 1*). As previously noted, the evaluation of impact, included as part of the evaluation, does not constitute an "impact evaluation", which relies on a different methodology that often includes data collection from control and treatment groups. The evaluation of the programme's impact was based on the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria definition. In addition, this evaluation was conducted at the end of the programme, and as such, examines early indicators of impact, and impacts to date. The evaluation of longer-term realized impacts, due to the timing of the evaluation, was limited.

The evaluators employed a mixed-method approach that integrated data from a variety of sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis.² Relevant secondary data and external publications supported the evaluation by providing contextual information on regional and thematic issues, helping evaluators to frame findings within a broader scope of TiP trends. Furthermore, the evaluators considered strategic recommendations and guidelines, leveraging established global and regional frameworks such as the SDGs and GCM.

Primary data collection involved key informant in-person and remote interviews and focus group discussions with the implementing teams as well as governmental and non-governmental partners (see *Table 2*). These sessions enabled evaluators to collect qualitative insights from stakeholders, which were critical for understanding programme results and identifying areas for improvement.

The evaluators adhered to appropriate data confidentiality and privacy practices to protect the stakeholders involved in the evaluation process (e.g., the *United Nations Evaluation Group Evaluation Standards and Codes of Conduct*). Interviewee and respondent input were kept confidential for the purposes of this evaluation and any identifying data was appropriately and permanently deleted upon the completion of the evaluation.

Table 1: OECD-DAC Standard Evaluation Criteria Areas and Evaluation Indicators

Evaluation Indicators
<p>Relevance and Cross-cutting Themes</p> <p><i>Extent to which the project's objectives and intended results remain valid as originally planned and are suitable to the priorities of various stakeholders (incl. governmental stakeholders, non-governmental beneficiaries and vulnerable migrants).</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrated consideration of relevant stakeholder context and needs in programme design and implementation (incl. needs of beneficiaries) 2. Consistency of the programme design with intended outcomes and objectives (incl. donor requirements) 3. Examples of ways equity, gender pluralism and human rights-related principles were considered and incorporated into the design of the programme and adhered to throughout implementation
<p>Coherence</p> <p><i>Compatibility of the intervention with other projects, programmes and/or interventions in the geographic region, across sectors or within government institutions.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Quality of scoping review in programme planning stages (internal and external coherence) 5. Demonstrated alignment to applicable international and regional norms and frameworks 6. Extent to which there was cooperation, collaboration and coordination amongst various actors
<p>Efficiency</p> <p><i>Extent to which the project delivers results in an economic and timely way (i.e., how resources translated into outputs), with consideration of project planning, implementation and management.</i></p>

² The evaluators cross-referenced the gathered data against the proposed criteria and each of the respective evaluation indicators included in the evaluation matrix. Moreover, the evaluation approach drew upon programme documentation, such as progress reports, concept notes and proposals, deliverables and publications, primary data from endline beneficiaries as part of programme implementation and strategic documents to gain insight into the programme's implementation, objectives and achievements.

7. Demonstrated successes in programme management and consideration of areas for improvement 8. Adherence to schedule and planned budget/resource allocations 9. Quality and validity of MEAL tools and processes
Effectiveness <i>Extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and its results according to the project design.</i> 10. Achievement of outlined targets for planned results 11. Perceptions of satisfaction and accessibility of outputs 12. Identification of facilitators and hinderances to effectiveness
Impact <i>Any long-term positive and negative changes, or potential changes, produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended (i.e., how the intervention affects outcomes for stakeholders).</i> 13. Perceptions/demonstration of long-lasting results 14. Evidence of adoption of best practices, knowledge, standards and tools promoted through programme
Sustainability <i>Extent to which the net benefits of the project will continue or are likely to continue.</i> 15. Demonstrated incorporation of sustainability measures 16. Perceived adaptability and longevity of benefits 17. Consideration for scalability and replicability across future interventions

Sampling

Purposeful (non-random) sampling was used to select informants from beneficiary institutions. The selection of participating interviewees and respondents was informed by PUNO staff using an evaluation contact register. In total, 28 individuals participated in the evaluation process through interviews across selected stakeholder groups. Interviewees included PUNO staff members, representatives from partnering non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and CSOs, and government representatives from beneficiary agencies (see *Table 2*).

The chosen sampling approach was the most suitable for this summative evaluation, as intentional and targeted participant selection is essential for gathering specific information required. Purposeful sampling allowed the PUNOs to strategically select individuals or elements based on predefined criteria, such as their involvement and level of engagement in the programme, as well as ensuring a diverse array of perspectives. This ensured that the selected sample was highly relevant to the evaluation objectives, particularly given the tight timeline. Additionally, the evaluators supplemented this approach by drawing from primary data collected by the PUNOs and partnering institutions during programme implementation (e.g., training survey data).

Table 2: List of Informants to the Evaluation

Type of Contact (Programme Staff, Partner, Beneficiary)	Organization/Institution/Agency
IOM Staff	PUNO Staff
IOM Staff – 7 Staff Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Manager • Officer in Charge / Project Officer • Resource Management Officer (x2) • Senior Project Assistant (x2) • Migrant Protection Assistant 	
UNICEF Staff – 1 Staff Member	
UNFPA Staff – 1 Staff Member	
CTU Staff – 6 Staff Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director • Deputy Director • Authorized Officer - TTDF Liaison • Head of Investigation • Senior Legal Advisor • Corporate Communications Officer 	Counter-Trafficking Unit, Ministry of National Security
MOL Staff - Chief Labour Inspector	Ministry of Labour
FiA Staff – 2 Staff Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive Officer • Project Lead- Parenting Education & Special Projects / Empowerment and Coaching Facilitator 	Families in Action
CEDAW Staff – Founder/Convener	CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago
Amethyst Staff - IDC Facilitator	Amethyst School of Martial Arts and Security Training Academy
Heroes Development Foundation Staff - CEO	Heroes Development Foundation
AMMR / CCSJ Staff – Programme Coordinator	Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants & Refugees - Catholic Commission for Social Justice
FPATT Staff – 2 Staff Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinic Coordinator • Project Officer 	Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago
CATT Staff – 2 Staff Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager • Case Management Officer 	Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago
Other Informants – 2 Staff Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former CTU Director • Former IOM Staff – Administrative Assistant 	Other

2.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The implementation of the evaluation methodology faced some limitations, which were identified early on, with mitigation strategies proposed for the PUNO's consideration. A key limitation included a lack of endline beneficiary interview data (i.e., VoTs/SoTs and vulnerable migrants), as evaluation interviews were conducted mainly with management and institutional beneficiary staff, rather than directly with endline beneficiaries. There was also an absence of in-depth qualitative data collected from endline beneficiaries pertaining to their experiences accessing direct assistance, which could have enriched insights into programme's impact on endline beneficiaries.

The evaluators recognize that data collection cannot necessarily be prioritized when providing shorter term assistance, particularly with vulnerable groups (e.g., VoTs/SoTs and UASC) for reasons such as their safety, security, difficulties in facilitating contact with beneficiaries (e.g., for those who have returned to their country of origin, changed addresses, or have changed contact information) and where there have been notable time lapses since assistance was provided. Moreover, the evaluators are aware that security protocols to protect endline beneficiaries who are part of vulnerable groups (i.e., VoTs/SoTs, UASC, migrants in irregular situations), prevent access for primary data collection for the evaluation, as was the case with the ASC programme.

In addition, though access to primary beneficiary data was not included as part of primary data collection conducted under the evaluation, consultation processes with endline beneficiaries were conducted during planning and implementation phases of the Programme by the PUNOs. This data was referenced by the evaluators to support data triangulation in assessing Programme results.

Another limitation was the number of informants representing each one of the PUNOs. This is because the number of activities and partnerships for IOM and UNICEF were significantly higher than for UNFPA. This limitation was anticipated as the design of the ASC Programme accounted for variance in the consortium implementation targets and number of activities.

3.0 FINDINGS

3.1 RELEVANCE AND CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

The evaluators assessed the extent to which the ASC programme's design addressed the systematic, structural and operational needs and priorities of the various stakeholder groups. This assessment included extensive consultations with various informants to determine whether the programme design was sufficiently attuned to the needs and priorities across the targeted institutions, agencies and NGOs. This also took into account the specific needs of endline beneficiaries (i.e., VoTs/SoTs, UASC and vulnerable migrants) based on research and feedback gathered by the PUNOs. Lastly, the evaluators assessed the extent to which the programme's design and implementation approach incorporated considerations related to cross-cutting themes, such as the promotion of gender mainstreaming, equity and human rights, where applicable.

RELEVANCE & CROSS-CUTTING THEMES INDICATORS
Demonstrated consideration of relevant beneficiary context and needs in programme design and implementation (incl. needs of beneficiaries)
Consistency of the programme design with intended outcomes and objectives
Examples of ways equity, gender pluralism and human rights-related principles were considered and incorporated into the design of the programme and adhered to throughout implementation

Demonstrated consideration of relevant stakeholder context and needs in programme design and implementation (incl. needs of beneficiaries)

Key Finding 1: The evaluators found that the programme design and implementation approach were well aligned to the needs of beneficiary institutions/agencies as well as endline beneficiaries. The PUNO teams successfully identified and targeted key challenges associated with inter-agency coordination as well as access to services and supports for VoTs/SoTs, UASC and vulnerable migrants. The thorough needs assessment processes and consultations with stakeholder groups contributed notably to the programme's relevance, ensuring that the design of ASC activities was evidence-based and well-informed.

As noted in the *Introduction Section*, the programme encompassed three primary outcomes:

- National and community-based protection systems demonstrate improved knowledge to screen, identify, assist and re/integrate survivors of trafficking and UASC;
- Increased collaboration among government, NGOs/CSOs and UN Agencies to effectively coordinate, mitigate risks, identify solutions and tackle xenophobia, discrimination and exploitation;
- Government, NGOs/CSOs and UN Agencies provide increased mental health and psychosocial support, direct assistance, services options for empowerment of SoTs and those at risk, including supporting their participation in trafficking prevention and response.

To develop this scope, the programme team was effective at leveraging existing data/research on the needs of institutional actors (i.e., GoRTT agencies and NGOs/CSOs) and endline beneficiaries as part of needs assessment processes. Doing so ensured that the programme was relevant to the challenges and barriers experienced by target

groups. Data was drawn from various sources including the United States TIP Reports; the *Situational Assessment Report*, the *Training Needs Assessment* as well as scoped review of beneficiary needs based on collected migrant data. This also included UN databases and reports, among others.^{3,4,5,6,7} Collectively, the research outlined the following commonalities that drove the PUNOs to structure their activities:

- Funding shortages to provide comprehensive and safe care for VoTs/SoTs
- Lack of effective strategies, legislation and policy on TiP and UASC
- Limited capacities for victim identification and screening, investigation and prosecution
- Shortage of professional staff and available training for frontline countertrafficking actors
- Lack of public awareness on trafficking
- Unclear and unstructured inter-agency coordination, referral mechanisms and a lack of SOPs
- Victim safety concerns (e.g., eliminating criminalization and facilitating access to rights)
- Lack of bilingual staff and services
- Lack of trust in national authorities
- Inadequate placement facilities for children and legal guardianship
- Difficulties with and obtaining access to identification documents

Moreover, broader gaps were identified regarding direct services and assistance – i.e., accommodations, safe shelter, medical/health care, MHPSS, integration in formal education and training, legal assistance, protection/safety, interpretation and reintegration supports – as well as labour market integration, freedom of movement and access to legal identity documentation.

Needs assessment processes also factored in contextual challenges to ensure that the programme's activities would be relevant, highlighting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and migration influxes resulting from the economic crisis in Venezuela, and the heightened risk of trafficking.⁸ However, interviewed IOM staff (n=3) noted that there was a lack of overall empirical data at the national level that is regularly updated and promoted by national actors.

The PUNO team was able to further reinforce the knowledge base used to inform the programme's design and implementation through **ongoing consultations with participating GoRTT agencies and NGOs/CSOs where prominent challenges and needs were shared**. Moreover, the PUNOs drew learnings from previous experience operating in Trinidad and Tobago as well as their participation in national and regional coordination and oversight platforms (e.g., see *Coherence Section* for more detail on: Protection Coordination Working Group under the Refugee and Migrant Response Platform, which feeds into the Refugees and Migrants Working Group; UNICEF-led Child Protection Working Group, etc.). Data gathered over the course of programme implementation through informal feedback and M&E tools, such as interviews and post-training surveys, were used as guiding resources as well.

³ US Department of State. 2020. Trafficking in Persons Report 20th Edition. Available [here](#).

⁴ IOM. 2022. Situational Assessment: An Analysis of The Victim Care Environment to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago. Available [here](#).

⁵ IOM. 2019. Trinidad and Tobago — Monitoring Venezuelan Citizens Presence, Round 2. Available [here](#).

⁶ IOM. 2020. Trinidad and Tobago — Monitoring Venezuelan Citizens Presence, Round 3. Available [here](#).

⁷ UASC registered with UNHCR as of February 2021 (specific source not included in project document)

⁸ IOM. 2022. Situational Assessment: An Analysis of The Victim Care Environment to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago. Available [here](#).

Other key demonstrations of participatory co-design/consultations implemented during programme include:

Institutional Beneficiary Consultations

- Regular coordination meetings were held with the CTU during the initial phases of programme implementation. **These meetings, conducted monthly, allowed for discussions on medium- and high-risk trafficking cases and the optimization of service delivery for VoTs/SoTs.** This collaboration led to the development of the formal referral mechanism, which included a Referral Map, Terms of Reference, a Referral Directory, and a Resource Map specifically tailored for VoTs/SoTs.
- Recognizing the need to strengthen collaboration among actors supporting VoTs/SoTs, **the programme organized a stakeholder engagement event in February 2024, which served as a platform for government agencies, civil society, and international organizations to connect/reconnect.** This led to a stakeholder workshop in March 2024, attended by over 50 representatives from various organizations. The workshop reinforced the importance of the referral mechanism and clarified stakeholder roles in victim care. The final Referral Mechanism, formally adopted in September 2024, was the product of collaboration among 16 organizations, including NGOs, faith-based organizations, government partners, and international agencies.
- **The case management system was iteratively tested and refined through weekly consultations** with stakeholders, ensuring its effectiveness in victim care and case tracking.

Endline Beneficiary Consultations

- **The digitized three-year psychosocial programme curriculum, developed by The Heroes Foundation, was based on direct consultations with host and migrant children and families** to ensure that it aligned with their needs and interests related to integration and the development of social and emotional life skills and learning for children. These consultations also played a key role in securing community support for programme co-delivery.
- **Migrants and communities affected by migration were actively involved in shaping ASC initiatives through participatory community consultations and by incorporating migrant volunteers into community outreach activities.** Their participation through these channels informed outputs like the 2022 Situational Analysis and Training Needs Assessment; these outputs relied on direct SoT engagement, ensuring their lived experiences informed programme implementation.
- **Feedback-driven vocational training was designed with input from VoTs/SoTs, ensuring that training content addressed their real-life challenges.**
- VoTs/SoTs were directly engaged in programme design through the beneficiary needs assessments and transition plans. **Individualized needs assessments, transition plans, and treatment plans were developed with active VoT/SoT participation, ensuring that interventions were tailored to their expressed needs and aspirations.** This participatory approach was also reinforced through feedback provided during vocational training programs, better equipping VoT/SoT with the skills necessary for self-reliance and reintegration into society.
- Programme interventions involving children were developed based on consultations with child beneficiaries (e.g., consultations with host and migrant children and families to support the development of the digitized 3-year psychosocial programme and for relevant MHPSS components). **Interactive sessions and tailored interviews enabled children to express their views,** shaping programme responses that prioritized their unique needs and preferences.

An evaluation interviewee summarized the thoroughness demonstrated in gathering information, for their team's respective activities, and was found to be reflected across the programme by the evaluators:

*"With influx of Venezuelan migrants into Trinidad and Tobago, we provided health services and social work case management, even before ASC. We coordinated with others to determine service provision (access employment, medical needs, family supports like day care, etc.). **A key component of the programme was that there would be a migrant community liaison who was responsible for gathering data/understanding the needs of migrants.** Beneficiaries shared what their challenges were - legal rights, nutrition, young pregnancies and associated financial needs, psychological needs, GBV and self-defence. We took this feedback through the entirety of the project period and adapted accordingly. We also had consultations with experts in the field who had experience/were actively supporting migrants."* – FPATT Representative

The evaluators would like to highlight that all evaluation interviewees (n=26/26) confirmed that ASC was relevant to the needs of the respective beneficiary groups they worked with under the programme. Interviewed implementing team representatives provided specific details on the gaps they aimed to address, justifying the design and implementation of selected activities:

*"Prior to the case management system, **there was no central system to actually track and process cases.** The [GoRTT] had documents and records but it wasn't streamlined. There was also limited clarity in roles, responsibilities and processes. We needed to ensure that this was in place to make sure that the referral mechanism could operate effectively."* – IOM Staff

*"We were on the TIP watchlist three years in a row. **ASC definitely aligned well with our needs. IOM was the most important partner for the CTU because they actually understood the field and provided a lot of support to the CTU, considering the change in staff.** Their team led a lot of TiP training for CTU and helped them support SoTs. The training was designed to cover foundational aspects of TiP and for frontline work with SoTs. This training was very important because internally seconded officers had no background in TiP and it allowed them to learn how to identify and screen SoTs. The Referral Map was also very useful because we didn't have any finalized procedures, and our lack of SOPs was a notable gap. The Referral Map was extremely helpful because it gave their unit a layout of who to contact for what and what the processes were. Before ASC the State provided housing for minors but there was no housing for adult SoTs."* – CTU Representative

*"The GoRTT provides acute emergency care, SRH care, and maternal care for these migrants but nothing beyond this. **We were aiming to fill this gap. Under this project, we focused on social integration of migrants by offering supports, such as MHPSS by certified psychologists in Trinidad and Tobago.** Migrants also received referrals and got first aid training that offered certification for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers based on certification requirements in Trinidad and Tobago. We also implemented 8 classes with 4 sessions each in Spanish on safety training, legal support, sexual health, etc."* – FPATT Representative

*"**Direct intervention with children was needed because the CATT did not have the specialized services required for working with children [VoTs/SoTs].** Through the project, we worked with FIA to meet the needs of these children. The CATT wasn't really aware of needs of children SoTs, and how to work with CTU to identify and meet these needs. UNICEF covered cost of a bilingual case management officer to address these needs, including language needs, and her role was then formally built into the Children Authority structure."* – CATT Representative

Key Finding 2: The PUNOs worked alongside the most relevant actors from national institutions and NGOs/CSOs to support the ASC programme's implementation, thereby promoting both a broader “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approaches. GoRTT agencies and CSOs were selected based on their mandates and appropriate experience in the field, allowing for enhanced coordination to address identified needs.

When designing the programme, the PUNOs were able to identify the most appropriate, and subsequently work alongside, line GoRTT institutions. CSO implementing partners were similarly selected based on mandate, and because of previous experience working with the PUNOs (see Table 3). Each PUNO had internal partner selection and agreement protocols (implementing partnership agreements or programme cooperation agreements) that were adhered to, to support partnerships with these organisations. All CSOs were also approved by the CTU. Though these NGO/CSO implementing partners do not have exclusive mandates to work with VoTs/SoTs, their purviews of work were highly relevant for the activities they led with endline beneficiaries.

Based on the implemented consultative planning processes, the PUNOs incorporated participation from the following set of key national authority partners and CSOs in the programme design.

Table 3. National authorities and CSOs who participated in the ASC Programme.

Institution	Relevant Responsibilities
Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) – Ministry of National Security	The CTU is responsible for the identification, screening, and protection of victims of trafficking, ensuring that individuals affected by TiP receive appropriate support and legal recognition.
Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS)	MSDFS is responsible for providing social protection services to vulnerable populations, including SoTs. Its mandate includes facilitating access to temporary shelter, psychosocial support, financial assistance, and reintegration services to support survivors in rebuilding their lives.
Ministry of Labour (MoL)	As the entity responsible for promoting fair labour practices and enforcing labour laws, the MoL plays a key role in addressing exploitative labour conditions that may be linked to trafficking in persons, particularly in cases of forced labour.
Attorney General and Legal Affairs (AGLA)	AGLA ensures that national anti-trafficking efforts align with legal frameworks and international commitments. The institution plays a critical role in shaping legislation, policies, and legal protections for victims of trafficking.
Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT)	As a specialized agency dedicated to the protection and care of children, the Authority provides essential support to migrant children in need of protection, including UASC and SoTs. Its mandate includes preventing and responding to cases of child exploitation, abuse, and neglect.
The Heroes Foundation	The Heroes Foundation works to empower at-risk youth and provide them with opportunities for personal and professional development. Under ASC, their team focused on psychosocial programming for youth, informed through participatory consultations.

Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society (TTRCS)	The TTRCS provides humanitarian aid, emergency response, and psychosocial support to vulnerable populations. For ASC, TTRCS supported cash interventions for UASC and child-headed households.
Archdiocesan Ministry for Migrants and Refugees (AMMR)	As part of the Catholic Church's social outreach, AMMR offers direct assistance, advocacy, and protection to migrants, refugees, and survivors of trafficking. The ministry provides access to legal aid, emergency relief, and safe spaces, ensuring that individuals at risk receive comprehensive support in alignment with humanitarian principles. Under the programme, AMMR implemented child friendly spaces supporting access to MHPSS, GBV risk mitigation, child protection and informal education. AMMR also worked with CATT to support trafficked UASC through community child protection networks and case management.
Families in Action (FIA)	FIA specializes in psychosocial support, counselling, and crisis intervention for individuals and families affected by trauma, including survivors of trafficking. The organization plays a key role in mental health and reintegration services, helping individuals/families rebuild their lives through counselling, skills development, and community support. FIA implemented MHPSS and vocational skills training, equipping SoTs with tools for self-reliance and resilience, through ASC. Their expertise in mental health also enriched capacity-building sessions for TiP stakeholders.
Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago (FPATT)	FPATT provides sexual and reproductive health services, education, and advocacy, particularly for women and girls. The organization ensures access to health screenings, contraception, and trauma-informed care, helping individuals regain control over their reproductive health and well-being. In alignment with their scope of work, FPATT delivered critical services in sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence prevention, and counselling for SoTs and at-risk populations through the programme.

Consistency of the programme design with intended outcomes and objectives

Key Finding 3: The ASC Theory of Change was found to be well-structured and comprehensive, serving as a valuable tool to support programme planning and alignment between programme result levels. To improve the Theory of Change's clarity and reference as a management tool, the evaluators recommend strengthening the articulation of assumptions to explicitly include relevant legal and policy frameworks, specifying result-chain rationale and enhancing the sustainability of integration/re-integration for survivors.

The programme's Theory of Change (ToC) captured in the programme concept note is a well-structured framework that outlines the key risks, assumptions, outputs and expected outcomes. It effectively captures the need for institutional capacity-building, multi-stakeholder coordination, victim-centred support and prevention efforts to enhance national responses to TiP. More specifically, the ToC is particularly strong in its multi-level approach, which integrates:

- Institutional strengthening (government agencies and protection systems)
- Community-based engagement (non-governmental organizations and civil society)
- Direct survivor support (psychosocial assistance and economic empowerment)

- Prevention strategies (risk mitigation, tackling xenophobia, and changing social norms)

By addressing these interdependent components/variables, the ToC suggests that survivors can access a comprehensive and integrated support system. The inclusion of victim-centred strategies, such as peer-to-peer support, advocacy mechanisms and economic reintegration efforts, reinforces a commitment to ensuring that survivors play an active role in shaping and benefiting from the programme. Additionally, the ToC effectively integrates risk awareness, acknowledging potential challenges such as political shifts, financial constraints, cultural pushback and economic instability.

There are areas where the ToC could be further refined to enhance clarity to better convey anticipated impact(s) and sustainability. **One key aspect that could be strengthened is the articulation of assumptions. While the ToC highlights the importance of government buy-in, inter-agency collaboration and an enabling environment for community engagement, it would benefit from greater specificity regarding how/if legal and policy frameworks have a substantial influence on TiP and VoT/SoT/UASC assistance.** Ensuring that anti-trafficking laws are effectively enforced, referral systems are well-coordinated through national frameworks and funding mechanisms are sustained through earmarked internal budgetary allocations is crucial for sustaining the long-term benefits of the programme. (see *Sustainability Section*). Additionally, while data management and case management systems are acknowledged, including a more explicit assumption about the need for a functional and responsive referral network of service providers to effectively support enhanced data management and case management systems would strengthen the logical flow of interventions leading to improved access to services.

Another area for refinement is the link between outputs and the overall outcome. The ToC effectively outlines key outputs, such as enhanced capacity of national protection systems, strengthened community-based organizations, improved coordination and expanded survivor support services. However, it could more explicitly state how these outputs translate into systemic improvements in survivor care. **For instance, specifying that capacity-building efforts will lead to more effective coordination of referrals, improved legal protections and a more efficient administrative process for VoTs/SoTs would help clarify the connection between the output and its anticipated impact.**

Additionally, the relationship between increased coordination and risk mitigation should be further detailed—specifically, **how inter-agency collaboration directly reduces vulnerabilities, prevents re-victimization and ensures effective protection mechanisms.**

The ToC also places significant emphasis on economic empowerment and survivor reintegration, which is a critical component of long-term recovery for survivors of trafficking. The inclusion of livelihood support, life skills development and job placement efforts are valuable, but the framework could go further in **specifying how these efforts will be sustained beyond the programme's duration.** Lastly, including strategies for partners to monitor the effectiveness of these activities over time—such as tracking survivor employment rates, income stability and/or business success—would help promote a more systematic way of assessing if interventions effectively meet survivor needs and contribute to sustainable reintegration.

The aforementioned adjustments to the ToC can be made by introducing desk review of evidence that suggests the connection between these forms of activities and longer-term improvements to quality of life and integration, as well as promoting results-based management M&E systems for partners with capacity for longer-term operational responsibility (i.e., CTU and the National Task Force).

Key Finding 4: The programme team was effective in ensuring that the ASC programme aligned with context-based needs and priorities at the national level. Working alongside key stakeholders such as national institutions (e.g., Attorney General and Legal Affairs) and experienced NGOs/CSOs were notable contributors to alignment regarding legislation and policy frameworks. The expertise of implementing teams (PUNOs, CSOs and GoRTT agencies) and the collaborative approach adopted under the programme further facilitated relevance to the national context over time as it applied to activities and outputs.

During programme planning stages the PUNOs identified several key national frameworks and relevant structures upon which the programme design would be based. This included consideration of the following, as documented by the programme team:

- GoRTT ratification of the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and Supplementing Protocols;⁹
- Trinidad and Tobago Trafficking in Person Act (2013), that established the CTU and National Task Force Against TiP; mandated the CTU to lead criminal investigations on TiP; and assigned provision of direct services for SoTs to the MSDSF;¹⁰
- Working Committee for the Delivery of Care for VoTs (WCDCV), established by MSDSF, in line with its strategic goals for the period 2018-2022, and the TiP Act, with reporting functions to the Permanent Secretary of MSDSF and to the NTFATIP;¹¹
- National Plan of Action Against Trafficking Persons 2021-2023 to enhance Prevention, Protection and Prosecution developed by the WCDCV;¹²
- MSDSF Strategic Plan 2018-2023 (Goals 1 and 3) focused on resilience for all and the reduction and prevention of poverty, inequality and vulnerability;¹³
- Vision 2030 National Development Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago (Vision 2030) under Theme I, Goal 2 of which seeks to advance improvement in the delivery of Social Services to better serve the needs of vulnerable groups and Theme 2, Goal 2 that espouses the modernization of public management systems through enhanced human resources, processes and technology;¹⁴
- United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UNMSDF) in the Caribbean 2017-2021 and associated country implementation plans, under Priority Areas:
 - 1: An Inclusive, Equitable and Prosperous Caribbean (emphasizes access to services, protection and economic opportunities)
 - 2: A Healthy Caribbean (promoted universal access to health services)
 - 3: A Safe, Cohesive, and Just Caribbean (promotes equitable access to justice, protection and safety);¹⁵

⁹ United Nations Treaty Collections. 12. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. New York, 15 November 2000. Available [here](#).

¹⁰ UNODC. Database of Legislation, Trinidad and Tobago Trafficking in Persons Act. Available [here](#).

¹¹ US Department of State. 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report: Trinidad and Tobago. Available [here](#).

¹² Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund. 2021. Access, Support and Coordination (ASC) Programme: A Collaborative Approach to Support Survivors of Human Trafficking Trinidad and Tobago Joint Programme Document. Available [here](#).

¹³ MSDSF. MSDSF Strategic Plan (2018-2023). Available [here](#).

¹⁴ Ministry of Planning and Development. Vision 2030. Available [here](#).

¹⁵ United Nations in the Caribbean. 2017. United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework in the Caribbean 2017-2021. Available [here](#).

- The United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNMSDCF) 2022-2026 government commitments on “Economic resilience and shared prosperity”; “Equality and well-being”; and “Peace, safety, justice, and the rule of law;”¹⁶
- and MMPTF guiding principles on national ownership, partnership, coherence, risk management and funding for results.¹⁷

The evaluators found numerous examples of how the PUNOs reflected the goals of these frameworks into the Programme’s design and implementation. One example of how the Programme incorporated alignment with these national frameworks includes the refurbishment of shelters for VoTs/SoTs, and direct service provision for VoTs/SoTs and vulnerable migrants (including UASC). The Trinidad and Tobago Trafficking in Person Act, the MSDFS Strategic Plan 2018-2023, and the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking Persons 2021-2023 outline the provision of protection and shelter for VoTs/SoTs as a priority and responsibility for the MSDFS. In addition, the referral and resource map, the digital case management system, and SOPs produced under the programme align with goals captured in multiple frameworks, such as the MMPTF guiding principles and goals of the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking Persons 2021-2023, Vision 2030 National Development Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago, and the UNMSDF in the Caribbean 2017-2021 to enhance service provision through stronger and more effective collaboration and coordination between government agencies, and CSOs. The produced referral map and SOPs include structured pathways to enable improved coordination among relevant government and non-government agencies involved in service provision for VoTs/SoTs and UASC, promoting a “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approach. Another strong example is the vocational training provided to VoTs/SoTs and vulnerable migrants under the ASC programme; by supporting their economic integration, the Programme’s design supports progress toward goals in frameworks like the MSDFS Strategic Plan 2018-2023, UNMSCF 2017-2021 and UNMSDCF 2022-2026, on addressing reduction and prevention of poverty and vulnerability.

Evaluation interviewees (n=2) from PUNO programme teams shared that **they also worked with implementing local agencies and institutions such as the CTU, the CATT and the Attorney General and Legal Affairs to ensure that the activities aligned with national legal and policy frameworks (incl. international obligations).** Furthermore, the PUNOs through previous experience working in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as NGOs/CSOs involved in direct services like FPATT, are aware of and operate within existing legal frameworks, policies and guidelines that dictate the nature of their services.

“There are policies in place related to reproductive health services, refugee and migrant groups, clinical management of rape and intimate partner violence, and GBV guidelines, among others that we and our partners adhere to.” – UNICEF Staff Member

“When it comes to sexual and reproductive health, pro-choice is still controversial even within government. We are working with the MSDFS to stay within existing limitations when it comes to service provision.” – FPATT Representative

Service providers, such as FPATT and FiA were also proactive in ensuring that activities were adaptable, based on the needs of target groups:

¹⁶ United Nations in the Caribbean. 2023. United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework: The English and Dutch Speaking Caribbean 2022-2026. Available [here](#).

¹⁷ MMPTF. 2024. Start-Up Fund for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Terms of Reference. Available [here](#).

*“Activities were adjusted based on the communities we were working with. We had FPATT officers assigned to specific communities. For example, when it came to community engagement and outreach, **we considered what sources of information were actually used across different contexts**. For example, if certain communities didn’t use social media, we would focus more heavily on doing in-person outreach and print materials to advertise sessions. We also held follow up sessions and outreach activities with communities to make sure that they were aware of what they were signing up for.”*

– FPATT Representative

“Nothing really came up that they weren’t expecting and would have required us to adapt plans significantly because we already had experience working with the migrant populations prior to this project, and had measures in place to address relevant challenges faced by migrants. For example, we knew going to in-person MHPSS sessions can be a challenge so we make sure we have online MHPSS as an option. For vocational training, we had already designed the programme to ensure that it would accommodate most people’s availability, like making sure there are evening sessions to accommodate work schedules.” FIA Representative

Lastly, interviewed PUNO staff and CSO representatives (n=5) shared that there was an influx of migrants from Venezuela during the implementation period. However, this did not require any notable adaptations to the programme’s design.

Examples of ways equity, gender pluralism and human rights-related principles were considered and incorporated into the design of the programme and adhered to throughout implementation

Key Finding 5: By design, the PUNOs were required to demonstrate incorporation of human rights-based approaches, and gender- and child-responsive approaches, in alignment with MMPTF priorities and requirements. The ASC Programme demonstrated a strong commitment to human rights, gender-responsive and child-sensitive approaches. Examples include the integration of victim-centred, rights-based service delivery and implementing strict data protection and shelter security protocols to safeguard VoTs/SoTs. The programme also adopted gender-responsive activities, such as providing dignity kits, organizing safe migration awareness sessions and providing financial literacy training for women and girls to regain economic independence. Child-sensitive approaches were reflected in age-appropriate case management, trauma-informed interviews and the establishment of safe spaces for psychosocial and legal support. However, attention should also be placed on ensuring service continuity, particularly for children and UASC, beyond programme closure.

Alignment with MMPTF priorities and requirements on human rights, gender and child-sensitivity

As part of the programme’s eligibility for the MMPTF, the PUNOs were required to include key elements related to human rights, gender and child-sensitivity.¹⁸ Under the human rights marker outlined in the MMPTF Operations Manual, ASC qualified and was approved for marker score B, indicating a “Significant contribution to realization of human rights”. This requires that the design fulfils at least three of the six human rights marker elements:

1. The Joint Programme is explicitly grounded in the enjoyment or fulfilment of human rights (or lack thereof).
2. The normative framework and/or the outcomes from treaty bodies/UPR or special procedures are used to inform the Joint Programme.
3. The Joint Programme targets patterns of discrimination, inequality or marginalization.
4. References to ‘rights holders’ and/or ‘duty bearers’ with respective responsibilities and entitlements.

¹⁸ MMPTF. 2024. Operations Manual. Available [here](#).

5. Participation and meaningful engagement of various stakeholder including the beneficiary groups/rights holders incorporated into the Joint Programme.
6. Issues identified through a thorough human rights analysis, including from a gender perspective, and addressed through capacity development.¹⁹

The PUNOs also had to demonstrate how a human-rights based approach would be built into the programme cycle, adhering to the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.²⁰

For the gender marker, ASC was approved for marker B, applicable to “Projects that significantly contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment”. The Fund reviews programme proposals against specific criteria for each designated marker score, pertaining to:

- Needs assessment and problem analysis;
- Target populations;
- Expected results and the Theory of Change;
- Results monitoring;
- Budget allocation (20% – 75% allocated to gender equality and women’s empowerment for marker B); and
- Risk analysis.²¹

Lastly, ASC was approved for child-sensitivity marker score B, “Joint Programmes that significantly contribute to advancing children’s rights and meeting children’s needs”. All MMPTF proposals, regardless of marker score, must meet requirements associated with Child Rights Impact Assessments, Safeguarding and Disaggregation of Data. In addition, each proposal must fulfil criteria specific to the programme’s marker score on:

- Budget (20 – 75% allocated towards advancing children’s rights and meeting children’s needs for marker score B);
- Meaningful engagement of children;
- Staff training;
- And Theory of Change and expected results.²²

Accordingly, the programme team systematically incorporated human rights, gender responsiveness, child sensitivity, equity and a victim-centred approach into its design and implementation. These cross-cutting principles have strengthened victim-centred services, institutional frameworks and prevention mechanisms, aligning with international obligations and national priorities. **Moreover, the programme’s approach reflects the commitments outlined in relevant frameworks such as UNICEF’s Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNFPA’s Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies and several GCM Objectives.**^{23,24,25}

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ MMPTF. 2024. Operations Manual. Available [here](#).

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ UNICEF. 2020. Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. Available [here](#).

²⁴ UNFPA. 2015. Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence in Emergencies. Available [here](#).

²⁵ Objective 1: Promoting evidence-based policies; Objective 2: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration; Objective 3: Provide accurate and timely information; Objective 6: Access to Justice for Migrants; Objective 7: Address and respond to vulnerabilities in migration; Objective 10: Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons; Objective 15: Access to Basic Services for Migrants; Objective 17 Eliminating discrimination; Objective 23: Strengthening International Cooperation and Global Partnerships for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. United Nations General Assembly. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Available [here](#).

Human Rights-Based Approach

Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the ASC Programme embedded a human rights perspective in design and implementation. The Programme has prioritized dignity, autonomy and survivor agency, ensuring that interventions are tailored to the lived experiences of survivors.

As previously discussed, a key component of this approach has been victim-centred consultation and decision-making, which included:

- Individualized needs assessments and transition plans were developed with the active participation of VoTs/SoTs.
- VoTs/SoTs were directly engaged in the Situational and Training Needs Assessment to inform programme design.
- VoTs/SoTs informed the structure and content of vocational training.
- Data protection principles and practices were employed, appropriate for working with VoTs/SoTs. For example, shelter security was kept highly classified to ensure the safety of VoTs/SoTs (e.g., limited number of stakeholders are actually allowed to know the shelter layout). There are also strict authorization processes in place to limit the number of individuals who have access to data on VoTs/SoTs.
- All NGOs/CSO partners were referred and approved by the CTU and vetted by the PUNOs. When it came to the individual activities, anyone that worked on any components involving VoTs/SoTs (e.g., trainings) were vetted as well.
- NGOs/CSOs considered accessibility concerns and comfort levels for their direct activities through registration processes, asking questions about their comfort levels and concerns and adjusted activities accordingly (e.g., if people preferred to join online or in person).
- The programme's multi-stakeholder approach promoted equitable access to services and enhanced accountability by incorporating a whole of society approach, contributing to a rights-based national response to trafficking.

Gender-Responsive Approaches

TiP disproportionately impacts women and girls, exposing them to gender-based violence, exploitation and economic vulnerabilities. **Recognizing these disparities, the ASC Programme integrated gender-responsive strategies in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and UNFPA's GBV Minimum Standards.** Key demonstrations of gender-responsive measures included:

Protection and Prevention Measures

- Newly identified VoTs/SoTs received comprehensive information kits, including guidance on human rights, labour rights, emergency support, COVID-19 preparedness and disaster response, with a particular focus on the vulnerabilities faced by women and girls.
- Women were provided with dignity kits containing essential personal hygiene items to address gender-specific health and dignity needs.
- Educational sessions on safe migration pathways were conducted to reduce the risk of trafficking for women seeking employment opportunities, ensuring that they had access to accurate information on their rights, risks, and protective resources.

Life Skills Training for Empowerment

Gender-responsive training sessions were tailored to build resilience, promote self-sufficiency, and support social integration within host communities, that focused on:

- Communication and negotiation skills to enhance personal and professional agency.
- Trauma recovery, self-care and self-esteem building to address psychological impacts of trafficking.
- Financial literacy training, including budgeting and money management, to enhance survivors' economic independence.
- Sexual and reproductive health education, including information on gender dynamics, sexuality, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), ensuring survivors could make informed decisions about their health.

Child-Sensitive Approaches

The ASC programme incorporated child-sensitive principles in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocols on the Sale of Children and Child Trafficking, and UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Migration Crises, ensuring that interventions prioritized child protection, participation, and well-being. This included:

Age-Appropriate Interventions:

- Child-sensitive interviews, case assessments and psychosocial sessions were conducted, ensuring that children's voices and preferences were incorporated into support plans.
- Minors are not interviewed without presence of a legal guardian. IOM only stepped in in the absence of a guardian when the children "aged out" (i.e., they turned 18 years old).
- The programme ensured that children had access to tailored protection mechanisms, reinforcing their right to be heard and protected.

Child-Friendly Spaces and Support Systems:

- Safe spaces were established where children could access age-appropriate psychosocial support, legal aid, and education services.
- The programme strengthened referral mechanisms for UASC, ensuring they had access to more comprehensive care, family reunification services and community-based protection frameworks.

Capacity Building for Stakeholders on Child Protection:

- Law enforcement, social service providers and frontline workers received specialized training on trauma-informed care, safeguarding procedures and best practices for engaging child VoTs/SoTs. This training ensured that child-sensitive policies and protections were effectively implemented across institutions.
- Trainings were also offered for operational aspects of identifying child VoT/SoTs such as the age assessment training to support frontline workers in age determination.

One evaluation CSO informant shared that there were challenges in accessing children who were not attending school or child friendly spaces, because of the large number of these children in Trinidad and Tobago. **They stated that these children, who are less likely to participate, and other children who are not necessarily enrolled as the legislative amendment was only made in 2024, are more likely to experience or be at risk of sexual assault or violence. As such, these children can "fall through the cracks."** A recommendation that resulted from this conversation was for the implementing teams to continue building on existing outreach strategies that would allow teams to more effectively reach larger numbers of these children, or hard-to-reach populations in general, as part of similar initiatives in the future. Doing so would enable increased access to services and supports for those who could constitute the most vulnerable populations.

Furthermore, some evaluation informants (n=4) from government agencies, NGOs/CSOs and PUNO staff noted that there was limited continuity planning for services (MHPSS and alternative care opportunities) targeting children/UASC, in preparation for the programme's end. This is due to ongoing challenges in Trinidad and Tobago regarding the lack of available service providers and capacities among existing service providers. In addition, PUNO staff shared that there is a lack of vocational training opportunities for UASC.

General risks regarding the discontinuation of services can include exposure to previously existing risks (incl. trafficking) following reliance on services for protection, shelter, medical care, and psychosocial support; the potential for distress, anxiety, and uncertainty among children, many of whom have already experienced trauma; loss of access to case management, legal representation, and/or family reunification efforts, leaving them in limbo; and interrupted stability or progress toward long-term care, in which abrupt discontinuation can lead to institutional failures, forcing children into unsafe or informal arrangements.²⁶

Though there was no evidence of these harms being realized for children supported through the programme (the evaluation methodology did not include primary data collection from endline beneficiaries, including children or their caregivers), this risk highlights the **need for appropriate exit planning for these types of programme activities** (see *Sustainability Section*).

Regarding data protocols and processes, the PUNOs were effective in ensuring that disaggregated data was collected, including factors such as age, gender and geography where applicable. For example, almost all indicators and targets reported included breakdowns by gender for VoTs/SoTs and UASC under Outcome 3; the gender of training participants, across trainings for CSOs and government agencies was tracked; and more detailed M&E disaggregation was followed for specific activities:

“We disaggregate data based on humanitarian performance indicators - gender, age, ability/disability, among others. For the child friendly spaces, we also tried to capture data on children with disabilities and neurodivergent children. We also use child-friendly approaches for capturing data. This means we don't use normal surveys; we use pictures more so to account for different literacy levels. There was also data collected from parents.” – UNICEF Staff Member

In addition, the PUNOs also led monitoring and evaluation (M&E) sessions with NGOs/CSOs to emphasize importance of appropriate data collection and processes (see *Efficiency Section*). However, two CSO teams reported that they had challenges with data collection and monitoring because of internal capacity limitations. This may indicate a need for adjusted M&E protocols or processes that effectively balance CSO capacity limitations against data collection requirements.

3.2 COHERENCE

Coherence, as outlined by the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria standards, refers to the fit of an intervention to its applied context, in consideration of other relevant interventions. Generally, interventions should not be duplicative and should capitalize on opportunities for coordination, collaboration and complementarity by design.

²⁶ ICRC. 2004. Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children. Available [here](#).

Coherence includes both internal and external coherence. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution (in this case, assessing the programmatic areas of both the PUNO consortium and implementing partners). External coherence assesses the degree to which there is complementarity and coordination with interventions led by other institutions in the same context, including to avoid duplication. Moreover, the evaluators also examined the degree to which the intervention articulated and promoted its alignment with relevant international and regional frameworks, guidelines, norms and standards.

COHERENCE EVALUATION INDICATORS
Quality of scoping review in planning stages and quality of needs assessment (including both internal coherence and external coherence)
Demonstrated alignment to applicable international and regional frameworks, guidelines, norms and standards
Demonstrated successes in supporting collaboration and cooperation amongst actors

Quality of scoping review in planning stages and quality of needs assessment (including both internal coherence and external coherence)

The ASC Programme was designed to align with existing national, regional and international interventions to combat TiP and to provide support to vulnerable migrants, including UACS, VoTs/SoTs and those affected by GBV. As noted in the *Relevance Section*, a thorough scoping review was conducted in the planning stages, which informed the programme's design and ensured that it addressed critical gaps while building upon complementary interventions. The quality of the needs assessment was evident in its internal and external coherence, demonstrating strong alignment with national and ongoing regional cooperation mechanisms.

To assess the value-add of these efforts, the evaluators conducted an in-depth analysis of programme activities and consulted key stakeholders. **The findings indicate that 100 per cent of applicable informants (n=24) confirmed that strong synergies were established, either by using ASC as a foundation for other initiatives or by strategically building upon existing programmes.**

All but one informant (n=23/24) found that there were no significant indicators of duplication. The sole exception noted that some training content overlapped with prior sessions organized for national authority personnel. However, the informant also emphasized that such repetition was necessary, as refresher courses are essential for reinforcing key competencies.

Regional Synergies and Institutional Collaboration

*As a substantial number of synergies were brought up throughout the evaluation, the reader should note that various examples are shared throughout the entire *Coherence Section* — not exclusively in this sub-section.

Key Finding 6: The ASC Programme strategically strengthened inter-agency collaboration at both national and regional levels by leveraging established platforms such as the Refugees and Migrants Working Group under the Regional Inter-Agency Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela. It also reinforced regional counter-trafficking efforts through the Caribbean Community's (CARICOM's) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security awareness-raising

campaigns across the region. Additionally, ASC as a model of best practices is promoted by beneficiaries through regional participation, including at the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour.

A key pillar of the ASC Programme was its ability to strengthen inter-agency collaboration at both national and regional levels. The programme capitalized on established platforms such as the Caribbean Migration Consultations and the Refugees and Migrants Working Group (RMWG) under the Regional Inter-Agency Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), demonstrating both internal and external coherence.²⁷

Between 2016 and 2022, IOM and UNHCR facilitated regional cooperation and information exchange through the Caribbean Migration Consultations, which led to the formation of the first Caribbean Network to Fight Human Trafficking.²⁸

IOM has also worked closely with other agencies at the regional level to support efforts to combat TiP — this includes with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under some activities of the CariSECURE 1.0 Programme, which sought to increase statistical capacity-building to report on crime and violence across the region.^{29,30} These platforms supported IOM's broader knowledge on TiP related efforts in the broader region, shaping an understanding of common challenges and specific area where the ASC Programme was well suited to address these challenges.

Additionally, as Venezuelan migration flows increased, the R4V platform was formed. The R4V is a platform comprising over 200 organizations (including UN agencies, civil society, religious organizations and NGOs, among others) that coordinate their efforts under the Venezuelan Refugee and Migrant Response Plan in 17 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean. At the national level, IOM co-chairs the RMWG in Trinidad and Tobago.³¹ This platform facilitated ongoing collaboration among IOM, UNFPA and UNICEF, particularly under the 2022 Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) for Trinidad and Tobago, allowing a coordinated and collectively approach to identifying data trends, assessing national capacity gaps and formulating a response to broader migration needs. Specifically, the 2022 RMRP prioritized three themes that are directly connected to the objective(s) of ASC:

- Prevent, mitigate and respond to protection risks faced by refugees and migrants from Venezuela
- Provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable refugees, migrants and members of the host community
- Increase the resilience of displaced Venezuelans through opportunities that promote inclusion and integration

As an added value of the R4V platform's national presence, PUNOs shared key aspects of the ASC Programme in various forums, including the quarterly “humanitarian breakfast series”. These high-level events, co-hosted by IOM, UNICEF, other UN agencies and foreign missions (e.g., United States Ambassador), serve as a space for national authorities, NGOs, IOs/INGOs and foreign missions to discuss humanitarian priorities and also supports advocacy, resource mobilization and coordination efforts of the platform, as it relates to Trinidad and Tobago. In 2024, IOM and UNHCR's session focused

²⁷ Please note that the Caribbean Migration Consultations has largely been inactive since 2022. However, the participation of IOM on this platform helped informed regional trends and challenges related to migration.

²⁸ IOM. 2018. First Caribbean Network to Fight Human Trafficking Meets in Trinidad and Tobago. Available [here](#).

²⁹ UNEG. 2023. CARISECURE 1.0 Final Evaluation. Available [here](#).

³⁰ IOM. 2022. International Partners Unite with Caribbean Governments to support Counter Trafficking efforts. Available [here](#).

³¹ UNNM. R4V. Available [here](#).

on TiP involved seventy-two participants.³² The success of ASC was highlighted at these sessions, which has heightened diplomatic engagement, leading embassy and consulate focal points to directly contact IOM and the CTU for further coordination and promotion of updates relating to TiP.

At the regional level, ASC also contributed to CARICOM-led awareness-raising efforts on TiP. Following capacity-building initiatives in 2023 targeting both national and CARICOM's Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS) personnel, **ASC also supported the design and dissemination of multilingual awareness-raising materials in Spanish, English and French.** These materials were distributed at ports of entry and exit across over 20 CARICOM and Central American Integration System (SICA) countries, reinforcing a broader regional approach to counter-trafficking. Moreover, the engagement between IOM and CARICOM IMPACS continues, whereby both actors alongside the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are developing a coordinated action plan to combat migrant smuggling, marking a key milestone in the development and promotion of the regional “*Counter Trafficking Strategy*”.³³

The evaluators also point out that **national authorities involved in ASC actively promoted their engagement through other regional platforms.** For example, the Ministry of Labour participates in the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour—a coalition of 31 countries and stakeholders committed to eliminating child labour, which receives technical assistance from the International Labour Organization (ILO).³⁴ Through this platform, MoL representatives shared best practices developed under ASC while learning from similar international examples.

Internal Coherence and Linkages to Other National Initiatives

Key Finding 7: The ASC Programme demonstrated strong internal coherence by strategically aligning programme activities with previous PUNO initiatives that focused on enhancing survivor protection, case management and institutional capacity-building. Most importantly it built upon the previous consortium-led Spotlight Initiative by transitioning key services and integrating lessons learned/knowledge from its implementation; this included sustaining the GBV hotline, integrating the bi-lingual mobile app for multilingual survivor support and expanding the developed case management systems (e.g., CPIMS+ and GBV Case Management System). There are also synergies between the ASC Programme and the IOM-USAID Heal Empower Rise Counter Trafficking in Persons (HER CTIP) project and the SafeHER StrongHER TogetHER initiative. Lastly, the ASC's case management development for the CTU is currently being digitalized with additional UNDP support, while the ASC built upon the SOPs originally developed by UNODC as part of the overall national referral map.

The ASC Programme demonstrated strong internal UN-based coherence by strategically aligning with the Spotlight Initiative, a European Union-UN partnership aimed at combating GBV. Spotlight was led by the five UN agencies which implemented the programme: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization. Two additional UN agencies — UNHCR and ILO — also supported the project's rollout.

³² UNHCR. 2024 Fact Sheet: Trinidad and Tobago. Available [here](#).

³³ IOM. 2024. CARICOM IMPACS and UN Agencies Launch Collaborative Action Plan to Combat Migrant Smuggling in the Caribbean. Available [here](#).

³⁴ ILO. N.D. Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour. Available [here](#).

The evaluators note that the transition of key services/activities that were concluding in Trinidad and Tobago under Spotlight's national efforts to ASC ensured the continuity of strategic mechanisms/supports.³⁵ For example, the GBV hotline, was transferred as an allocated budget line as part of ASC to maintain accessibility to survivor referrals despite budget constraints. The programme also incorporated the bi-lingual mobile app, which provides access to information on survivor services across health, justice and social protection sectors.

The ASC Programme also expanded case management mechanisms and referral protocols, building upon national systems previously supported under Spotlight. For example, UNICEF had established the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+/Primer) and supported the development of a National Inter-agency Protocol for Child Abuse Prevention and Management, while UNFPA had developed an upgraded GBV Case Management System, modelled after the system used in Antigua and Barbuda. ASC built off of the lessons learned identified in these developments and ultimately strengthened these systems by ensuring their integration into broader referral mechanisms, further enhancing survivor-centred service provision.

Moreover, ASC leveraged lessons learned from previous projects, such as the Collaborative HIV Adolescents Mental Health Programme (CHAMP), implemented under Spotlight. FPATT, a key ASC implementing partner, had participated in CHAMP and developed a culturally tailored manual on sexual health. Under ASC, FPATT integrated elements of this manual into their training materials, ensuring that service providers had access to a robust, evidence-based curriculum.

At the national level, ASC significantly strengthened the CTU by providing targeted support in areas that could be expanded/advanced. For example, the programme rolled out the CTU's new case management system, which will be officially operationalized vis-à-vis additional resourcing from UNDP. According to informants (n=3), UNDP is helping integrate IOM's case management system into the finalized digital platform through the procurement of servers that can be institutionally managed. UNDP is also assisting the CTU with the construction of an audio-visual room for confidential interviews, as part of efforts to improve the screening/identification of VoTs/SoTs.

The evaluators identified another synergy with the Heal Empower Rise Counter Trafficking in Persons (HER CTIP) initiative, an IOM-implemented and USAID-funded project aimed at improving survivor support services. HER CTIP's scope of work focused on shelter management and caregiver training, whereas ASC worked on broader institutional strengthening. However, given that both projects had similar longer-term objectives, IOM strategically used HER CTIP funds to furnish and outfit shelters that were refurbished under ASC, ensuring that the facilities met the required standards for survivor protection.

Informants (n=12) also shared that the ASC Programme directly identified and documented the pool/register of approved service providers supporting VoTs/SoTs in the country. **The deliverables under the programme collated and bridged the full scope of partners/actors that PUNOs have identified and worked with. Similarly, the ASC Programme expanded and reinforced referral pathways that were previously outlined but not necessarily operationalized.** For example, previously, UNODC had developed an SOP focused on investigative/prosecution procedures and child protection. ASC built upon this foundation by creating the broader national referral map, which adopted the SOP but also expanded across the 4Ps: *Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Partnerships*.

At the same time, UNODC continues to provide trainings on online child protection in the country –e.g., under the UNODC project “*Strengthening Trinidad and Tobago's Capacities to Effectively Prevent and Counter Online Child Sexual Abuse*”

³⁵ Spotlight Initiative. 2023. Spotlight Initiative transitions to new phase in Trinidad and Tobago. Available [here](#).

and Exploitation and Related Crimes” (OCSEA T&T) personnel from the national Police Service, the Forensic Science Centre and the Office of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs were recently trained on combatting digital sexual abuse and exploitation.³⁶

Similarly, given the “*Child-Friendly Spaces*” model employed and promoted by UNICEF in the country, the ASC Programme had a significant component on Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) that aimed to act as a gender-based violence risk mitigation measure providing early identification and referral for protection risks, psychosocial support, informal education and integration services to children. Therefore, under the ASC Programme, partners continued to promote this model (e.g., AMMR), which continues to be sustainable to this day through a Child Friendly Space Network comprising of 11 organisations supporting 15 CFS throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

While the scope of work is slightly different across these various initiatives, the evaluators note that there are clear lines of communication amongst the UN agencies and therefore, continued support is offered to national authorities in more nuanced/specific areas of TiP, child protection and GBV.

The ASC Programme also drew insights from other IOM-led projects, such as the SafeHER StrongHER TogetHER initiative, which focused on social cohesion and trauma-informed support for migrants and host communities. **One of ASC’s consultants had previously engaged in this project and used its best practices to design ASC’s training curricula.** As a result, ASC incorporated a practical component into law enforcement training, including mock exercises on case processing and courtroom procedures.

Risk of Duplication

Key Finding 8: The ASC Programme effectively complemented existing national and civil society efforts by strategically identifying service gaps and integrating activities into established frameworks. The programme ensured alignment with national systems (incl. through inter-agency working groups and bodies) and leveraged existing data to expand services where critical needs were identified. Importantly, the design of ASC was built on the experience and knowledge of all three PUNOs — each having had access to considerable information on institutional and service provision gaps as well as access to large networks of actors.

Firstly, through a comprehensive stakeholder analysis, the PUNOs identified governmental agencies, civil society actors, NGOs and IOs/INGOs with complementary mandates, ensuring that subsequent ASC Programme activities and deliverables were well-integrated into existing national structures.

One example of this strategic gap-filling approach was in the area of child protection. **Informants (n=5) highlighted that while there is a national framework of Children’s Legislation—including the Children’s Act, the Community Residency & Foster Care Acts, and the legislation for the establishment of CATT—there was no direct clause addressing UASC.** To address this gap, the ASC Programme worked to first take stock/reference of major gaps/challenges by launching research-related activities, and subsequently through the development of the SOP for alternative care of UASC which guided an alternative care programme including enhancing the national foster care system and the establishment of a specialised team to handle migrant children cases within the CATT structure. These efforts built upon UNICEF’s

³⁶ UNODC. 2024. Training On Child Protection System Core Technology in Trinidad and Tobago. Available [here](#).

longstanding engagement in the country and leveraged insights from historical partnerships to ensure a holistic response at the intersection of child protection and migration.

Similarly, at the outset of the ASC Programme, few actors outside of the CTU focused specifically on TiP. IOM was the primary lead agency in case management and service provision for VoTs/SoTs. However, as the number of VoTs substantially increased due to migratory patterns from Venezuela, the existing level of resources was unsustainable. **As a result, the ASC Programme played a critical role in expanding services to fill key gaps that the CTU alone could not address. As TiP became a growing thematic priority, partnering agencies (e.g., FiA) were able to employ their comparative advantages in specific gap areas that required additional support to complement what had already been established.**

To minimize duplication and enhance coordination, the ASC Programme worked closely with national committees and inter-agency mechanisms. For example, direct collaboration with the MSDFS was valuable, as the Ministry plays a central role in delivering social assistance and case management support for vulnerable populations, including VoTs/SoTs. The MSDFS also chairs the WCDCV, which brings together key agencies, including the CTU, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, CATT, MoL, the Child Protection Unit and Victim and Witness Support Units of the Police Service, FiA, Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts and the Office of the Prime Minister – Gender and Child Affairs. Similarly, UNICEF were also able to identify key synergies and promote ongoing partnership/ecosystem work vis-a-vis their longstanding leadership in the Children on the move: Child Protection Working Group and the Education Working Group. Both of these Working Groups comprise UN agencies such as UNHCR and IOM, international organisations such as PADF, IFRC, government ministries/bodies including the Office of the Prime Minister – Gender & Child Affairs Division, Children’s Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, Counter Trafficking Unit, Ministry of Education, over 11 civil society organisations including the Catholic Education Board of Management.^{37,38}

Through the active convening of WCDCV, the Child Protection and Education Working Groups, NTFATIP as well as the CTU as an inter-agency body, national authorities are able to provide detailed notes on how the activities/deliverables under the ASC Programme (as well as other interventions) complemented national systems or were at risk of duplicating them.

*“There are two major working groups for the protection of migrant children that we regularly participate in: the Child Protection Working Group and the Education Working Group. **These have been operating over the last 4-5 years and continue to operate.** Migrant and refugee children were previously not allowed to enrol in school. **Following advocacy, which we contributed to with the support of PUNOs under ASC and through these groups, they are now allowed to enrol.**”* - Partner informant

Demonstrating the ASC Programme’s ability to pivot and ensure that the thematic areas remained relevant, the ASC Programme also incorporated the MoL as a key partner/beneficiary. The Ministry plays an essential role in strengthening labour rights protections for migrants, particularly through its Labour Inspectorate Unit, which oversees labour exploitation cases and workplace rights enforcement. Recognizing the increasing vulnerabilities of migrants in informal and high-risk employment sectors, the ASC Programme provided trainings and participation of key personnel from the Ministry to ensure that cases of forced labour or labour exploitation were understood by all actors, directly complementing the Ministry’s mandate.

³⁷ Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs. 2023. Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs Meets with the Trinidad and Tobago Education Working Group. Available [here](#).

³⁸ UNICEF. 2024. UNICEF calls for family reunification of migrant children in Latin America and the Caribbean. Available [here](#).

Beyond national authorities, the ASC Programme leveraged partnerships with key CSOs and NGOs to strengthen and expand existing service provision, rather than to duplicate what is available. For example, UNFPA's implementing partner, FPATT provided SRH services through a 24-hour helpline and mobile clinic, expanding VoTs/SoTs' access to essential healthcare that was unavailable elsewhere. Furthermore, UNICEF's partner, CCSJ/AMMR, a well-established faith-based organization, played a critical role in operating child friendly spaces, conducting MHPSS interventions, case management of UASC and families at-risk, humanitarian community outreach, enhancing community-based child protection mechanisms and direct service provision to migrant communities, particularly Venezuelan migrants. This added significant value because of CCSJ/AMMR's broad network and connection to endline beneficiaries in various parishes. Similarly, IOM's partner, FiA, is a local organization that specializes in providing MHPSS and vocational training to those at risk of violence and exploitation. FiA's area of work was seen as a "good fit" for the ASC Programme, as the organization had extensive experience providing equitable services and could expand the scope of already offered services to include the ASC targeted beneficiary persons.

Key Finding 9: While some overlap was observed in MHPSS, English language learnings and training content, the high demand for these services outweighed concerns of duplication. However, improved coordination mechanisms, such as a centralized tracking system overseen by either national authorities or UN agencies, could further enhance efficiency and reduce training fatigue among participants in the future.

Despite the strong coordination efforts, informants identified areas of overlap.

While some minor cases of duplication were noted by informants when it came to MHPSS and English language sessions, informants (n=5) emphasized that the demand for these services far exceeded the available supply, making duplication a negligible concern. In the case of MHPSS services there are very few bilingual practitioners in the ecosystem of service provision, meaning that even with some overlap, there remained an unmet need in terms of offering trauma-informed MHPSS to those who did not speak English.

Another area where overlap was noted was in training content. For instance, informants (n=3) identified instances where different agencies conducted similar training sessions which also included a detailed inspection of national legislations and policies, leading to some content repetition. However, it was widely acknowledged that personnel require frequent refreshers to reinforce these learnings.

Nonetheless, stakeholders suggested that a coordinating mechanism — possibly managed at the CTU or WCDCV level — could be introduced to track training agendas across participating agencies as a means to ultimately minimize redundancy. Additionally, improved communication between UN agencies working in adjacent areas (e.g., TiP, VoT/SoT/UASC protection) could further promote joint training implementation and reduce the risk of duplicating content. For example, if future trainings are planned by UNODC, UNDP, UNHCR or IOM, better coordination vis-à-vis their existing UN agency platforms would ensure that sessions are complementary rather than duplicative.

Demonstrated alignment to applicable international and regional frameworks, guidelines, norms and standards

Key Finding 10: The ASC Programme demonstrated strong alignment with international and regional frameworks, reinforcing global commitments to combat TiP and enhance migrant protection. The programme was structured in accordance with the 4P approach, the GCM and SDGs as well as several human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. Moreover, the ASC

Programme represents a strong model for joint programming under the UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. However, there are opportunities to further promote these examples of alignment and to support partners and organizational beneficiaries in demonstrating how their work contributes to broader collective impact efforts. Coherence with international commitments also supported alignment with MMPTF priorities, including GCM objectives targeted under Thematic Area 2 of the Fund.

The ASC Programme demonstrated strong coherence with key international and regional legal and non-binding frameworks, reinforcing its strategic alignment with global and regional efforts to combat TiP, promote case appropriate services and enhance migrant protection. **The evaluation found that programme teams made positive efforts to engage government agencies in ensuring that ASC was implemented in accordance with these international obligations and regional strategic priorities — including through their inclusion in training content as well as through explicit note of their importance in project documentation.**

At the international level, the ASC Programme was structured in alignment with several key frameworks:

- **The 3P Approach (Prevention, Protection and Prosecution):** The ASC Programme focused on the areas of prevention and protection, as outlined in the United Nations Global Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons. While prosecution was beyond its scope, the programme complemented law enforcement efforts by strengthening victim protection services and building the capacity of relevant institutions to prevent re-trafficking. Moreover, the ASC Programme directly incorporated the newest “**fourth P**”: strengthening partnership to achieve these ends.
- **Human Rights Treaties and Commitments:** The programme’s design and implementation were rooted in the human rights obligations outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and key international treaties ratified by Trinidad and Tobago, including:
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
 - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD);
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol;
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography;
 - Slavery Convention (1926);
 - UN Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949);
 - and UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Supplementary Protocols.

As an example, the evaluators have pointed out that the programme’s implementation included a child-sensitive approach in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Acknowledging the heightened vulnerabilities of children to exploitation and abuse, ASC ensured that child protection efforts were embedded throughout its interventions. These efforts included ensuring the best interests of the child were prioritized in all decisions, integrating child-friendly approaches into service provision and engaging children and caregivers in feedback monitoring.

The ASC Programme was also structured to align with key objectives of the **GCM** and the **SDGs**:

- **GCM Objectives Addressed:**

- Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration
- Objective 10: Prevent, combat, and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration
- Objective 12: Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral
- Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.
- Relevant SDG Targets:
 - SDG 3.7: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, information, and education.
 - SDG 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking, sexual exploitation, and other abuses.
 - SDG 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, as agreed in international commitments.
 - SDG 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery, and eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2025.
 - SDG 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe working environments, particularly for migrant workers and women migrants.
 - SDG 10.7: facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.
 - SDG 16.2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children.
 - SDG 16.3: Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all.

The Programme's coherence with GCM and SDG objectives and targets, also supported alignment with the MMPTF, Thematic Area 2: "Protecting the human rights, safety and wellbeing of migrants, including through addressing drivers and mitigating situations of vulnerability in migration, which programme falls under." The MMPTF was developed in response to the GCM as a start-up fund to support Member States in their implementation of the GCM, and in support of SDG 10.7, "facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies." Thematic Area 2 of the Fund includes specific focus on six GCM objectives, of which ASC programme supports contributions toward GCM objectives 7, 12, and 23.³⁹

United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

The evaluators suggest that the ASC Programme aligns directly with the MSDCF 2022-2026, as highlighted in the Introduction and Relevance Sections of this evaluation report. It serves as a strong example of a joint UN agency initiative, contributing to all four MSDCF key contribution areas:

1. *Economic resilience and shared prosperity*
2. *Equality and well-being*
3. *Resilience to climate change and shocks, and sustainable natural resource management*
4. *Peace, safety, justice, and the rule of law*

³⁹ MMPTF. 2024. Start-Up Fund for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Terms of Reference. Available [here](#).

In addition to this broad alignment, the ASC Programme is directly linked to Outcome 7, which focuses on improving regional and national laws, policies, systems, and institutions to enhance access to justice, promote peace, social cohesion, and security—a priority that underscores the importance of inter-agency coordination.

As will be further detailed in the recommendations, the evaluators identified an opportunity to further highlight and position the ASC Programme as a successful model within the MSDCF framework. This alignment is recognized in the programme proposal and by certain PUNO informants, yet it is not consistently emphasized elsewhere. Strengthening this connection—particularly by aligning with specific MSDCF outcome areas and their associated ToCs—would provide a clearer path to demonstrating how this programme, in addition to other interventions, contributes to broader collective impact.

Additionally, Chapter 3 of the MSDCF: *Cooperation Framework Implementation Plan* outlines the responsibilities of key actors in achieving these outcomes. It specifically notes that:

"The governments and UN entities signatory to this document are accountable for the CF and its achievement on behalf of the intended beneficiaries, as part of the regional MSDCF Joint Steering Committee."

Furthermore, at the country level:

"The existing six UN Country Teams (UNCTs), together with their respective host governments (organized in national joint steering committees), will steer the implementation of the Country Implementation Plans, derived from the MSDCF, supported, as appropriate, by country-level Programme Management Teams. Results groups could be established as deemed appropriate by each UNCT/UNST."

Given this structure, further positioning of the ASC Programme within the MSDCF framework—both in terms of its contribution to specific outcome areas and its alignment with regional accountability structures—would strengthen its visibility, replicability and strategic value as a cohesive, multi-UN agency intervention.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office was involved in supporting the ASC Programme in a few ways. Firstly, the Office provided advisory support in the development and review of the ASC proposal. Another review was conducted upon programme launch to ensure coherence across UN-related implementation areas (incl. MSDCF reporting). Moreover, the Office regularly showcased the work of ASC Programme (i.e., noting a positive model of a joint UN projects).⁴⁰ For example, at the closing ceremony:

"United Nations Resident Coordinator, Joanna Kazana, acknowledged the amazing work of the Counter Trafficking Unit and other Partners and stressed that "while the legal framework was in place, the effectiveness of anti-trafficking legislation depends on its consistent implementation and consistent law enforcement." She further noted that "colleagues at IOM and other agencies are working to implement comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures to guide the treatment of survivors of trafficking, ensuring that there is a uniform approach across the different sectors of law enforcement, social services, health and community-based initiatives." She encouraged all the project partners present to continue the important work initiated by the ASC Programme."

Moreover, the Resident Coordinator's Office as a coordination body helped promote advocacy components under the ASC Programme. For example, the Office represented the call to action from UNICEF, IOM and UNHCR for national

⁴⁰ UN in Trinidad and Tobago. 2024. Multistakeholder Programme Concludes After Supporting Over 100 Victims of Human Trafficking. Available [here](#).

authorities, including through the Education Working Group (see sub-section below) to use the SDGs as a framework for equal access to education for all – including migrant children.⁴¹

To a similar degree, the alignment with international and regional frameworks, more broadly, could be highlighted in future interventions. While these frameworks were well-documented in training content, beneficiaries and national authorities noted challenges in operationalizing these commitments. **Although government institutions and civil society actors recognized the importance of referencing these frameworks—particularly in advocacy engagements—they often struggled to articulate how their specific work aligned with these obligations.**

To address this, stakeholders highlighted the need for ongoing practical guidance on integrating these frameworks into their day-to-day work. For NGOs/CSOs, specifically, there was interest on how to frame their initiatives within these commitments when advocating for policy changes, funding and/or programmatic support.

Demonstrated successes in supporting collaboration and cooperation amongst actors

The ASC Programme was designed to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration, leveraging the strengths of each PUNO, while reinforcing inter-agency coordination among government institutions, civil society actors and NGOs. Informants highlighted the effectiveness of ASC in improving coordination, between UN agencies, NGOs/CSOs and national authorities, while also acknowledging areas for future improvements in knowledge-sharing and formalized coordination mechanisms. Overall, a majority — 72 per cent — of informants (n=18/25) regarded cooperation, collaboration and coordination under the ASC Programme as fully successful, while 28 per cent found it partially successful (n=7/25), and no respondents reported an absence of cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

Key Finding 11: The ASC Programme successfully fostered multi-stakeholder collaboration by leveraging the comparative advantages of each PUNO and expanding service delivery mechanisms for VoTs/SoTs and vulnerable migrants through partnership-building. Furthermore, the programme strengthened government engagement by integrating national authorities into structured coordination mechanisms, leading to the development of the Victim Care Referral Mechanism and increased collaboration between law enforcement and social service providers. Additionally, ASC increased the awareness amongst institutional actors of the important role of smaller NGOs and CSOs, such as La Casita, in national anti-trafficking efforts. Strengthened diplomatic coordination with regional embassies also improved case follow-ups and legal documentation processes for VoTs and UASC.

Comparative Advantage of PUNOs and Their Roles

As was noted previously, each PUNO played a distinct role, with responsibilities aligned to their comparative advantages, ensuring a structured and well-coordinated approach to programme implementation.

IOM served as the lead convening agency, drawing on its expertise in migration governance, victim protection and regional cooperation. It was primarily responsible for case management/referral pathways, shelter support and capacity-building for frontline actors. IOM played a pivotal role in inter-agency coordination, ensuring alignment with national frameworks such as the TiP Act and the Caribbean Migration Consultations. The

⁴¹ UNICEF. 2024. From displacement to learning: Refugee students enter national education system. Available [here](#).

programme also aligned with the *IOM Strategy for the Caribbean (2023-2026)*, which emphasizes enhancing resilience, managing mobility and improving migration governance in the region.

IOM worked closely with key government partners, including the CTU (i.e., Ministry of National Security), the MSDFS and MoL. **Additionally, it engaged local non-governmental actors for service provision, such as FiA.**

UNICEF, as the lead agency for child protection, focused on reducing violence against children and supporting UASC by strengthening case management systems, referral pathways and access to essential services including informal education. Through its partnership with CATT, UNICEF enhanced care and case management for migrant children in need of care and protection including UASC and child VoTs. Through its partnership with CSOs, CCSJ/AMMR, Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society and The Heroes Foundation, UNICEF supported a network of child-friendly spaces, community outreach, cash interventions to support alternative care arrangements for UASC and psychosocial support interventions. The programme aligned with *UNICEF's Eastern Caribbean 2022-2026 Multi-Country Programme*, which prioritizes child protection, inclusive education and social policy advancements ensuring a protective environment for children in the region.

UNFPA, with its expertise in sexual and reproductive health and rights and GBV response, provided specialized services for VoTs, particularly women and girls. The programme integrated medical, psychological and social support into case management, aligning with *UNFPA's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 for Latin America and the Caribbean*, which prioritizes GBV prevention and access to sexual and reproductive health services for vulnerable populations.

UNFPA's main implementing partner was the FPATT, which provided sexual and reproductive health services, counselling and medical support. While UNFPA received comparatively lower funding, informants noted that this was aligned with the programme's needs. However, future consortium programming may benefit from expanding UNFPA's role, given the built knowledge and experience through ASC.

Strengths of the ASC Partnership Model

One of the key successes of the ASC Programme was its ability to engage national authorities in a structured, "*whole-of-government*" approach. **Line ministries and government agencies actively participated in the programme's needs assessments and training gap analyses, which shaped the design of activities and ensured alignment with national priorities. This process helped identify service gaps and strengthened institutional responses.** For example, a major success of the ASC Programme was the development of the Victim Care Referral Mechanism, which provides a comprehensive framework for inter-agency coordination in victim care and support. The mechanism, managed by the CTU, can better facilitate timely and specialized victim-centred support across government agencies, NGOs/CSOs, and international partners.

According to informants (n=12), prior to the ASC Programme, NGOs/CSOs as well as PUNOs had limited engagement with CTU or the Ministry of National Security. The programme helped bridge these gaps, facilitating stronger relationships among all actors, which in turn improved inter-agency collaboration. One tangible example of this was the increased engagement of national police forces in child protection responses, such as requests for specialized strategies to support families with children at risk of exploitation.

NGOs and smaller community-based organizations were underutilized in victim assistance and reporting mechanisms. The ASC Programme helped address this by integrating trusted local actors into case referrals, training and victim support services, enhancing community-based protection responses. For instance, CSOs such as La Casita, became key partners in identifying and assisting VoTs, leading to more effective case development and improved prosecution outcomes.

"NGOs are trusted by migrant communities, and so it is important to engage with them. La Casita and CCHR are well trusted – so it was important that IOM brought them into the engagement of the referral map, in the participation of events, etc. This has allowed us to increase our own reporting details. In fact, info from the NGOs has led to better case development leading to prosecution." - National authority informant

Additionally, according to informants (n=6) the ASC Programme strengthened diplomatic coordination with embassies from Venezuela, Colombia and the Dominican Republic, facilitating greater information-sharing on TiP cases and improving correspondence when it comes to facilitating access to obtaining legal identity documents.

"[The personnel who attended the trainings] are better equipped to work with migrants to identify indicators of trafficking, particularly for internationals. Our engagement in the programme has also led to increased contact with the Venezuelan embassy, as well investigative agencies like the Child Protection Unit, etc." - National authority informant

Challenges and Areas for Improvement in Partnerships

Key Finding 12: While the ASC Programme successfully strengthened multi-stakeholder collaboration, gaps remained in inter-agency coordination and in the sustainability of CSO/NGO involvement. Informants have shared that non-governmental actors continue to operate in silos, underscoring the need for a fully established Victim Care Referral Group to oversee and monitor the Referral Mechanism, and to promote collaborative anti-TiP efforts more broadly. Moreover, implementing partners, particularly smaller NGOs and CSOs, had fewer opportunities for cross-organizational engagement throughout the programme timeframe, an area that can be highlighted and improved in future consortium-style interventions.

While the programme's referral mapping process helped identify the various actors/services available, informants (n=5) shared that many agencies continued to operate in silos. They emphasized the ongoing national need for a more structured, inter-agency framework, particularly through the full implementation of the Referral Mechanism vis-à-vis the establishment of the Victim Care Referral Group.

Furthermore, the evaluators would like to point out that while the ASC Programme successfully convened the PUNOs together, implementing partners—including smaller NGOs and CSOs—were less frequently brought together through formal cross-organizational activities/forums. Informants (n=12) suggested that the lack of planned opportunities for cross-organizational engagement between implementing partners limited knowledge-sharing and coordination opportunities. To address this, informants recommended:

- Regular joint meetings among implementing partners to foster collaboration and align activities with national strategies.
- Structured lessons-learned sessions to ensure that best practices are institutionalized across all partners.
- Increased engagement opportunities with national authorities to connect smaller actors with broader national-level anti-TiP, child protection and GBV response efforts.

One informant emphasized the importance of these efforts, stating:

"It would have been good to have partners come together on a monthly or bimonthly basis to actually look at the overall project and identify opportunities for collaboration. Over 2.5 years of involvement, they were not really connected in this way, and it would have been helpful for future coordination."

3.3 EFFICIENCY

Efficiency in the context of the evaluation of the ASC Programme was centred on the overall approach to programme management and the ability of stakeholders to implement activities successfully in alignment with the initial proposed schedule, budget and scope. This assessment aimed to examine how efficiently the implementing teams converted various inputs (i.e., resources such as funds, expertise, networks and other assets) into tangible results.

EFFICIENCY INDICATORS
Demonstrated successes in project phases and consideration of areas for improvement (e.g., management and coordination)
Extent of variance from planned budget/resource allocations
Quality and validity of M&E tools and practices

Overall, the ASC Programme achieved significant success in project planning, implementation and overall management, effectively utilizing resources to deliver results on time, within budget and with a scope that remained largely in line with initial projections. Informants widely commended the leadership and professionalism of the PUNO teams, with 100 per cent of stakeholders (n=28) highlighting the effectiveness of coordination, adaptability and responsiveness.

Throughout implementation, the programme demonstrated strategic resource allocation and adaptive management, ensuring that outputs were delivered efficiently while maintaining cost-effectiveness. The ability of the programme teams to balance scope, time, and budget while making necessary adjustments to suit beneficiaries' needs contributed to the programme's overall success. The evaluation also found that proactive engagement with government stakeholders, continuous monitoring, and a risk management approach helped mitigate potential bottlenecks, ensuring uninterrupted service delivery.

Demonstrated successes in project management and consideration of areas for improvement

Successes in Programme Management

Key Finding 13: The ASC Programme was widely considered efficient due to its strategic programme management practices, which balanced scope, time and budget while maintaining high stakeholder engagement and quality of deliverables. The programme team demonstrated strong leadership, ensuring the timely delivery of outputs while fostering inter-agency coordination and adaptability to emerging challenges. Other key considerations include:

- The ASC Programme effectively employed adaptive management strategies, including frequent coordination meetings, real-time risk assessments and flexible line budgeting, allowing for quick decision-making and course corrections in response to shifting priorities and external disruptions.
- A structured communication framework for the PUNO team members, with monthly coordination meetings and *ad hoc* problem-solving sessions, facilitated effective collaboration.
- Strong engagement and buy-in from national authorities enabled both streamlined service delivery and interest in working in partnership to support institutional coordination.

The ASC Programme maintained regular coordination meetings across the three PUNOs, which included monthly check-ins and *ad hoc* meetings as required. According to informants (n=6), these coordination mechanisms enabled proactive problem-solving and allowed for rapid adaptation to emerging challenges.

For partner organizations, the UN staff's availability and on-the-ground presence was instrumental in maintaining efficient communication and ensuring context-specific responsiveness. One partner informant shared that having UN staff embedded in local contexts improved cultural sensitivity and programmatic efficiency:

"They were just a phone call away. The fact that these organizations had staff on the ground made a huge difference in terms of understanding the context and local sensitivities, which really helped the programme succeed."

Despite challenges related to ongoing emergencies (e.g., natural disaster) and shifting political circumstances, PUNOs remained flexible in managing budgets and activity updates, allowing for quick decision-making and course correction as necessary. The evaluators point out that the team's ability to bypass bureaucratic hurdles—such as complex budgetary or political approval processes—ensured that progress was not stalled by administrative inefficiencies.

Another key factor in the programme's effective and timely implementation was the strong level of trust between PUNOs and government agencies. This trust allowed for smooth implementation, even in the absence of formal Cabinet approval at the start of the programme.

"Support from government partners was also crucial to the programme's level of success. Their trust in PUNOs to implement and willingness to share key information really helped this project." - PUNO informant

Informants (n=6) shared that national authority partners trusted the PUNOs to implement the programme effectively and were willing to share critical information, enabling rapid decision-making and adaptation. For example, engagement with the CTU, line ministries and CATT facilitated swift roll-out of activities, ensuring that services reached beneficiaries without unnecessary delays.⁴² PUNOs' strong contextual understanding and technical expertise also guided implementing partners in optimizing activity execution. One informant noted that IOM provided detailed guidance on how funding could be used most effectively, ensuring that organizations maximized the benefits before the programme concluded:

⁴² The ASC Programme also conducted monthly coordination meetings with national authorities and implementing agencies, including the CTU, to review medium- and high-risk cases and strategize on service delivery improvements for SoTs. These discussions led to the development of a formalized Referral Mechanism for SoTs, which included the Referral Map, detailed Terms of Reference, Referral Directory and the Resource Map tailored to SoTs.

"IOM made sure we understood how to use the funding efficiently and what made the most sense given the project timeline. They stayed involved throughout implementation, offering technical guidance on project management and procurement, ensuring smooth execution."

Meanwhile, informants (n=4) shared that the PUNOs allowed trusted local actors to lead activities independently **minimized bureaucratic delays**. Informants acknowledged that UN bureaucratic requirements often pose challenges to rapid implementation, but the ASC Programme effectively balanced oversight with flexibility, enabling more responsive service delivery for smaller NGOs.

"Different PUNOs allowed NGOs to own their projects – it came from a grassroots approach rather than top-down. They gave us guidance and avenues to help perform what they were seeking to do. But we led things – and we built our approach together." - Partner informant

Another notable strength of the programme was its iterative approach to programme management, which allowed for flexibility in adapting to emerging needs. **Stakeholders emphasized that the donor - MMPTF, was highly responsive and open to adjustments, which enabled PUNOs to apply an adaptive approach.**

"One thing we loved about MMPTF was that they gave us freedom to implement. Their requirements were not as strict as other donors, which made the partnership flow much more smoothly – allowing us to achieve much more than we would've imagined if we had to follow things exactly as initially designed. A lot has changed over the years and we went through a lot of external risks, but we managed with the flexibility of the donor." PUNO informant(s)

The programme also responded to shifting trends in service needs. For example, FIA reported that while post-traumatic stress disorder was the most common mental health issue among beneficiaries, other conditions such as anxiety, depression and trauma of abuse were also prevalent. A rise in domestic violence cases was recorded between January and September 2024 (35 cases), requiring adjustments in service provision. **To mitigate barriers to service access and to address these alarming findings, the programme expanded MHPSS services to include persons at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation, leading to a significant increase in service uptake.** Additionally, a Mental Health Training was conducted in September 2024, to further reinforce the importance of this key area to other national authorities who were not integrated in the initial plans (e.g., Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs).

Another successful adaptive measure was the implementation of *Transition Plans* for screened and referred SoTs. IOM promoted the **Transition Plans to reduce dependence on assistance and promote long-term integration strategies, including education and employment planning.** This emerged based on ongoing observations of the negative outcomes that could be posed through the ASC Programme.

"Assistance timeline being documented with VoTs was helpful for allowing them to better plan for self-sufficiency. There was also a lot of follow-up and support (e.g., support with developing resumes)." - PUNO informant

Lastly, the PUNO staff had a strong risk management approach, demonstrating strong capacity to identify challenges and implement mitigation strategies. The risk management plan included in the programme proposal assessed potential risks across political, financial, economic and emergency-related dimensions, assigning risk levels based on likelihood and impact. Key mitigation measures included:

- Establishment of a Programme Steering Committee to strengthen national ownership.
- Joint advocacy and communication efforts to navigate migration sensitivities.

- Resource mobilization strategies to streamline processes and maximize efficiency.
- Contingency planning for economic shocks, cultural pushback and national emergencies.

However, one notable challenge that was not fully accounted for in initial planning was **wavering political commitment, particularly in securing Cabinet approval to initiate programme activities**. Delays in approvals created bottlenecks, requiring the ASC team to adapt by engaging directly with the CTU and line ministries to advance key activities without formal approval. For future programmes, stakeholders suggested incorporating:

- Early engagement with senior ministerial officials to expedite buy-in.
- A contingency framework to navigate governmental approval processes more effectively.
- Proactive strategies to address bureaucratic delays, ensuring that critical activities remain on track despite shifting political dynamics.

Another risk consideration was the need to re-engage new senior-level personnel, particularly within the CTU, following significant leadership changes. **Frequent turnover at key agencies posed challenges for maintaining continuity, however, IOM was able to manage this with additional supports offered for onboarding and guidance on the ASC Programme.**

Areas for Programme Management Improvement

Key Finding 14: While the ASC Programme is relatively efficient, several areas for improvement in programme management were identified, particularly regarding inter-agency coordination (different processes across the PUNOs), strategic oversight (absence of a Steering Committee), senior government engagement (lines of communication) and capacity constraints among smaller implementing partners.

One of the primary management challenges identified by the evaluators was the **lack of standardization in administrative and operational processes across PUNOs**. While IOM and UNICEF shared relatively similar approval systems and project management structures, UNFPA had distinct internal procedures, which at times resulted in differences in change management and human resource management processes. This occasionally led to delays in approvals, funding reallocations and reporting, creating minor administrative bottlenecks. This was also confounded by the variance in staffing across each of the PUNOs.

Stakeholders suggested that the development of a MoU between PUNOs would be optimal in future consortium-style interventions as a pre-agreed framework for approvals, reporting, modifications and for expectations given human resourcing.

“The approval process, platforms and systems are not the same between the UN bodies. As such, change management processes can be more time-consuming for some of the UN partners, so it would be best to have approaches to change management sorted in advance.” - PUNO informant

Another notable gap was the **absence of an overarching Steering Committee, which was originally envisioned but never fully operationalized due to significant delays with Cabinet approval** (further discussed in the next sub-section). Without a centralized mechanism for strategic oversight, communication between different partners varied, with each PUNO agency receiving updates from their signed partners separately rather than through a consolidated coordination process. **This lack of high-level coordination meant that while activities were implemented successfully at the operational level, there was no structured consensus mechanism for strategic adjustments or discussion on future**

areas of work. Future programming should ensure that such governance mechanisms are in place to maintain alignment between all actors and improve overall strategic direction.

*"It would have been helpful to have an overarching steering committee for the project. PUNOs were getting individual communication about different activities—**having this mainstreamed through a steering committee would have made things more efficient and easier when it comes to visibility and promotion.**" - PUNO informant*

One informant highlighted a minor challenge related to internal and external communication within a government agency, where misalignment between PUNO focal staff and senior leadership led to occasional disconnects in decision-making. For example, in one case, training selection processes were initiated at a lower level without prior consultation or approval from the responsible senior official, leading to temporary confusion among staff. While instances like this were not widespread, they underscore the importance of ensuring clear communication channels and structured decision-making processes by PUNO staff with the most appropriate focal points in government agencies responsible for internal decision making.

Another area requiring attention is the capacity constraints among smaller implementing partners. While the programme successfully engaged local NGOs and CSOs, many of these organizations faced limitations in human resources, technical expertise, and logistical support, particularly when executing large-scale activities. This was especially evident in initiatives such as national awareness campaigns and training sessions, which required more substantial organizational capacity. Some informants highlighted that coordinating and executing events/forums with large numbers of participants placed a strain on internal capacity, whereby all staff needed to allocate their time to ensure that everything ran smoothly. This pulled staff time away from other operational activities. Indeed, while the ASC Programme demonstrated flexibility in allowing local actors to lead activities, **future initiatives should scale activities appropriately to the capacities of local partners or provide additional logistical and staffing support when necessary.**

Adherence to schedule and planned budget/resource allocations

Key Finding 15: The ASC Programme successfully adhered to its planned timeline and budget, demonstrating strong financial management and adaptability despite external challenges, though staffing constraints and approval delays posed some implementation hurdles. While the programme delivered all scheduled activities within the original timeframe, a three-month no-cost extension was required to finalize key components, such as the digital case management system and shelter refurbishment. Financial controls ensured full utilization of resources without over- or under-spending, and budget reallocations allowed for flexibility in addressing real-time needs. However, staff workloads were identified as a particular challenge, especially for IOM frontline service providers and project managers, indicating the need for additional human resource allocation in future programming.

Time Management

The ASC Programme largely adhered to its timeline, with only minor delays attributed to external factors such as government approval processes, leadership transitions within key agencies and pandemic-related disruptions. By the end of February 2025, the evaluators confirmed that the programme successfully delivered all scheduled activities within the original programme timeframe, with adjustments only made through a three-month no-cost extension (NCE) to accommodate outstanding deliverables.

Moreover, most implementing partners reported no significant delays, and the overall timeline was considered adequate, particularly with the approved extension allowing for the originally envisioned three-year duration. This additional time was necessary to navigate bureaucratic challenges while ensuring that programme activities were fully executed without compromising quality or efficiency.

The NCE request was prompted by delays in obtaining government approvals necessary for certain programme components, particularly the piloting of the case management system and the refurbishment of the shelter for newly identified VoTs/SoTs.⁴³

Additionally, a pricing adjustment of USD \$35,882.79 was made to accommodate the extension, remaining within the existing programme budget and not exceeding the UN Development Group 20 per cent variance threshold. This ensured financial compliance while enabling PUNOs to finalize key deliverables.

A separate delay stemming from leadership transitions within the CTU led to temporary setbacks as new personnel were onboarded. To mitigate these disruptions, PUNOs hosted a formal “meet and greet” session for all government and civil society agencies working with VoTs/SoTs. This event re-established working relationships among key stakeholders and provided a catalyst for renewed engagement on referral mechanisms, ensuring that critical discussions on victim care pathways continued. As a result, the finalization of the referral and resource map experienced only minor delays, allowing for a smooth transition of responsibilities under the new CTU leadership.

As well, adaptations to pandemic related setbacks were made, including shifting certain services online and modifying implementation schedules to accommodate changing restrictions.

Financial and Resource Management

In terms of financial management, the ASC Programme demonstrated strong adherence to budgetary controls, ensuring full utilization of allocated resources without over- or under-spending. By the close of the programme, all remaining funds were absorbed, highlighting the programme’s ability to effectively allocate resources and maintain an appropriate burn rate throughout implementation.⁴⁴

The flexibility of donor guidelines was a significant factor to enable efficient budgeting. The donor allowed for budget reallocations within a set percentage, which provided PUNOs with the ability to adjust funding allocations in response to real-time programme needs. This enabled the programme to remain agile in addressing evolving priorities, reinforcing its adaptive management approach.

Additionally, cost-saving measures were actively implemented throughout the project. The pre-existing relationships with vendors enabled cost-effective procurement, while digitization of case management services and hybrid service delivery approaches (e.g., remote case screenings and voucher distribution) helped reduce operational and travel-related costs.

Moreover, each PUNO managed its budgetary responsibilities in alignment with its role and operational model:

⁴³ As a result, some key initiatives—such as the contract finalization for the digital case management system—were delayed, requiring additional time for development and government-led testing before full operationalization.

⁴⁴ Evaluators noted that strict financial controls were in place, ensuring compliance with donor disbursement protocols and requiring proper documentation for all expenditures. The programme’s steady financial pacing, as reflected in mid-point narrative reporting, indicated that funds were spent at a well-balanced rate, avoiding the common challenge of last-minute spending surges at the end.

- IOM, as the convening agency, bore the primary operational costs associated with planning, coordination, implementation, and monitoring. This included human resources, administrative support, and direct service delivery.
- UNICEF primarily functioned as a technical partner, with the majority of its funds allocated toward partnerships with implementing organizations rather than direct service provision. UNICEF's Child Protection Officer provided oversight, technical support and project management support for child-focused initiatives under the ASC Programme.
- UNFPA, through its GBV Specialist, provided technical support to capacity-building initiatives and facilitated service provision through its implementing partner, FPATT.

While the ASC Programme successfully managed its financial resources, staffing constraints posed challenges to implementation. **Several stakeholders noted that key PUNO personnel were stretched across multiple projects, with some critical staff members working on high caseload numbers.** This was particularly evident in frontline service provision, where IOM staff had to screen up to 20 VoTs/SoTs in a single day, creating significant workload pressures.

Additionally, within IOM, staff downsizing resulted in increased responsibilities for project management personnel without corresponding adjustments in workload distribution. One project manager was responsible for overseeing all implementation and reporting processes without additional support or salary adjustments, placing additional strain on overall programme administration.

For future programming, it will be essential to allocate more resources to reporting, monitoring and human resources, ensuring that programme staff are adequately resourced to manage caseloads without overburdening personnel. Establishing dedicated reporting officers and expanding staff support within implementing partners could enhance long-term programme effectiveness and sustainability.

Quality and Validity of MEAL Tools and Processes

Key Finding 16: The ASC Programme employed robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning mechanisms, ensuring that programme outcomes were effectively tracked, analysed and adjusted as needed. The MEAL processes were well-structured, particularly in reporting to the donor, aligning data collection with programme objectives and integrating lessons learned into future programming. However, challenges were identified, including variations in data collection capacities among implementing partners, the absence of dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation personnel and difficulties in collecting data on direct service delivery due to the transient nature of the beneficiary population.

The ASC Programme maintained efficient and structured donor reporting, with IOM consolidating PUNO submissions for review and approval. The reporting process included two primary reports: a mid-year update (a two-page summary of key achievements) and an annual report detailing progress against targets. **The PUNOs used-donor narrative templates** to standardize submissions, ensuring consistency across agencies. **While the internal coordination and communication with the donor were seamless, there were minor delays in submission deadlines, as reporting needed to first be collected, and then reviewed, across multiple individuals/units.**

A notable success was the alignment of PUNO results frameworks with the overall programme targets, ensuring that data collection met reporting requirements and donor expectations. **The Regional MEAL Unit at IOM provided oversight,**

verifying data accuracy and methodology. However, the primary responsibility for data collection, analysis and reporting remained with the project teams, rather than a dedicated MEAL specialist. This is because there was no initial planning for this form of role on the team. This created additional workload pressures and highlighted the need for dedicated MEAL personnel in future programming. Future programmes would benefit from a dedicated MEAL officer—either a full-time staff member with MEAL responsibilities or a MEAL consultant supporting implementation.

Moreover, PUNOs provided technical support and guidance to implementing partners, ensuring a higher level of quality across data collection processes. Several implementing partners submitted detailed reports outlining key findings and lessons learned, incorporating satisfaction surveys and beneficiary testimonials, which demonstrated the perceived impact of services provided. However, there were cases where PUNO staff had to provide more dedicated support as the implementing partner had a lower capacity to design data collection tools.

Indeed, one lesson learned was the varying levels of MEAL capacity across implementing partners. Some partners had strong data collection systems, while others required additional technical support. This suggests that future programmes should integrate a sensitization session at the project's outset to align MEAL expectations across all partners, ensuring clarity on data collection methods, reporting timelines and participation in evaluations. Additionally, partnership agreements should explicitly outline:

- Reference to the Results Monitoring Framework
- Clear expectations for data collection and reporting
- Timelines for progress reports and monitoring deliverables
- Requirements for participation in the final evaluation

Some activities, particularly direct assistance to individuals, posed broader challenges in data collection. **Service delivery—such as food/NFI, mental health services and/or case management referral—is often a "one-off" time point event, making it difficult to track long-term impact within the RMF structure.** Additionally, the high mobility and vulnerability of beneficiaries, including risks of detention, deportation or relocation, made follow-up assessments complex.

For child protection activities, PUNOs relied on case managers and child-friendly space staff to observe and document outcomes over time. This was necessary to ensure that data collection methods remained ethical, child-sensitive, and non-intrusive, particularly when engaging with vulnerable populations.

Results Monitoring Framework Analysis

Key Finding 17: The ASC Programme's Results Measurement Framework was comprehensive and well-designed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative indicators to track programme implementation and assess capacity-building, service provision and inter-agency coordination. The framework effectively combined participation metrics, such as the number of trained government and community-based actors, with knowledge-based indicators measuring learning retention and application through post-test assessments.

The output-level measures and indicators in the ASC Programme's RMF demonstrate a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to tracking programme implementation. The indicators incorporate both quantitative and qualitative assessments, utilizing a variety of data sources and means of verification, ensuring that progress is systematically tracked and accurately measured.

A key strength of the framework is its balanced use of diverse data collection methods to assess outputs. For example:

- Output Indicator 1.1a measures *the number of government actors trained to screen and identify VoTs/SoTs*, using attendance lists as the primary means of verification. This straightforward approach ensures that the indicator captures actual participation and reach. Similarly, Output Indicator 1.1b extends this measure to community-based actors, acknowledging the critical role of civil society in victim protection.
- Output Indicators 1.1d and 1.1e capture the *percentage of government and community-based actors demonstrating improved knowledge in post-tests*, ensuring that training outcomes go beyond attendance metrics to include knowledge application and competency building.
- Output Indicator 3.1a measures *the percentage of referred survivors accessing psychosocial support*, using beneficiary logs to monitor service uptake.

Similarly, the ASC Programme demonstrates a strong outcome-level measurement approach by incorporating clear, specific and quantifiable indicators to assess the programme's outcomes on national and community-based protection systems, stakeholder collaboration and survivor-centred interventions. For example:

- Outcome Indicator 1a and Outcome 1b both measure *the percentage of training participants indicating in post-tests that they feel able to apply their learned knowledge*, capturing self-assessed confidence levels and serving as an immediate measure of training effectiveness.
- Outcome Indicator 2a assesses *the existence of a formal or informal system(s) for sharing information and coordinating efforts*, verified through meeting minutes, Terms of Reference, and referral pathways.
- Outcome Indicator 3a measures *the percentage of survivors who report that the intervention received met their identified needs*, ensuring that programme activities are aligned with the lived experiences and actual requirements of beneficiaries.

3.4 EFFECTIVENESS

To assess the effectiveness of the ASC programme, the evaluators sought to examine the extent to which the programme achieved its planned overall objective, outcomes, and outputs against set targets. Effectiveness in the context of the evaluation also included the assessment of facilitators and hinderances to effectiveness, and beneficiary satisfaction with programme results.

EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS
Achievement of outlined targets for planned results
Identification of facilitators and hinderances to effectiveness
Perceptions of satisfaction and accessibility of outputs

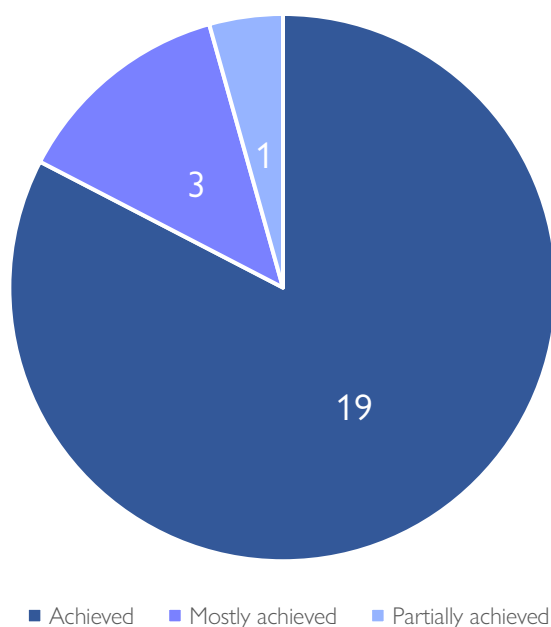
Achievement of outlined targets for planned results

Key Finding 18: The programme team was found to be very effective in achieving planned targets (exceeding many set targets). Four out of 23 targets were not achieved. Among these, three targets were almost completely fulfilled at the time of the evaluation.

In reviewing the results matrix, RMF and other programme documents, the ASC Programme was found to be effective at the time of the final evaluation. Drawing data from the RMF captured in the final narrative report, 19 out of 23 targets were fully achieved (see Figure 1). The remaining four results include the following:

- Output Indicator 1.1c: Number of users trained and registered on inter-agency case management system (target was 50; progress to date is 21)
- Output Indicator 3.1b: Number of referred VoTs receiving direct assistance (target was 150; progress to date is 139)
- Output Indicator 3.1d: Number of referred UASC and VoTs accessing alternative care and short/medium term (target was 240; progress to date is 223)
- Output Indicator 3.1e: Number of referred VoTs participating in livelihood, vocational and empowerment programmes (target was 75; progress to date is 67 enrolled with 40 participants meeting the criteria to graduate from the programme)

Figure 1. Programme result achievement based on planned targets



As most of these targets were almost fully achieved (3/4 remaining targets), the evaluators note that the programme team was highly effective., with **18 out of the 19 completed targets were exceeded.**

Lastly, one target was removed from the initial results matrix under Outcome 1: “percentage of beneficiaries stating their needs were met from government agencies”. Future forward, it would be useful to retain such indicators in the RMF, even if the target is not achieved, as it demonstrates progress toward outcome level results associated with the programme, specific to government-led services (if applicable).

Identification of facilitators and hinderances to effectiveness

Key Finding 19: The ASC Programme effectively adapted to emerging needs, exceeding targets in several areas due to the strategic use of the Training Needs Assessment as well as the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. However, structural barriers, including security restrictions on case management system training, overestimated service uptake targets for in alternative care, accommodation services and vocational trainings and accessibility challenges for direct assistance, hindered full target achievement.

Key facilitators to programme's effectiveness were the findings from the Training Needs Assessment and the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. Output 1 Training targets for government and NGOs/CSOs were significantly exceeded because the Training Needs Assessment highlighted identification and VoTs/SoTs and UASC screening as priority training needs for NGOs/CSOs and government. The demand was higher than initially planned for, contributing to higher-than-expected participation (target was 250 for government actors and 100 for community based actors; cumulative progress was 892 government actors and 238 community actors trained). SoTs/VoTs, children, adolescents and women accessing services through the programme was also higher than anticipated because of the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. The implementing teams were able to expand services to include in-person interventions for GBV services (Output 1) and psychosocial supports (Output 3), leading to higher reach among target populations and exceeding planned targets.

There were also several hinderances to target achievement. This included security protocols for case management system training and the number of VoTs/SoTs and UASC referred for direct assistance and accessing alternative care and short/medium term accommodations. In these cases, targets appeared to be set high. The target of 50 users trained and registered on inter-agency case management system could not be achieved because there were a limited number of staff granted appropriate government access authorization as users for the system. The number of referred VoTs/SoTs for services/supports under Output 3, indicators 3.1b and 3.1d, was also lower than expected.

Lastly, though the enrolment for referred VoTs/SoTs to participate in livelihood, vocational and empowerment programmes was close to reaching the target of 75 (67 enrolled in total) the completion rate of the programme was just under 60 per cent (40 participants met criteria to graduate). The completion target was adjusted to 50, upon feedback from the implementing agencies highlighting the curriculum's intensity. **Future forward, it may be beneficial to adjust similar programmes based on learnings and participant feedback from the first cohort to ensure that any challenges for participants such as time commitments are addressed where possible before organizing additional cohorts.** The programme team did make adjustments to eliminate the internship-style component from the training programme due to lack of available opportunities in the community, after the first cohort. However, programme staff did note that there were still some challenges for participants that they are seeking to address for future trainings.

During the pandemic, the programme team pivoted to online format for the training. Unfortunately, a resulting gap was that some participants did not have access to internet connectivity and/or have computer/digital literacy skills. This was mitigated when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted and the team was able to switch trainings to in-person format, though there were other challenges the team encountered with this format. **Firstly, there were concerns that the in-person format may have deterred elderly individuals and persons with disabilities from participating. In addition, staff mentioned that it is difficult to schedule workshops that do not conflict with work schedules.** The team sought to schedule sessions on evenings and weekends, but some participants worked during the weekend period and could not leave their work.

A PUNO staff member noted that having more funding would help them to accommodate accessibility issues related to livelihood, vocational and empowerment programmes for adult SoTs (e.g., looking at physically accessible locations, and having multiple sessions at different times to better accommodate work schedules). The staff member shared that:

"Being more inclusive for persons with disabilities is an area that our agency is trying our best to build standards for to have more accessible services. This is something we want to explore further in a new phase or project. For example, we want to look into how we can use adaptive technology to include members of the deaf community and blind community."

Perceptions of satisfaction and accessibility of outputs

Key Finding 20: Government actors, NGOs/CSOs and direct beneficiaries reported high levels of satisfaction with ASC programme activities and outcomes, with strong evidence of uptake/usage for various services/programming that was offered.

Based on the evaluation interviews and the review of available programme documents, government and NGO/CSO beneficiaries were very satisfied with the programme activities and results applicable to their teams. All NGO/CSO and government interviewees who responded to interview questions pertaining to levels of satisfaction (n=8/8) shared this perception, clearly describing the effectiveness of ASC outputs.

Interviewed PUNO staff (n=4/4) similarly shared that they received very positive feedback from institutional stakeholders and were informed of their interest to continue collaborating.

Data gathered during the programme's implementation provides strong evidence to indicate the effectiveness of programme results and high levels of satisfaction, across beneficiary groups (this data was not collected directly through the evaluation process but was reported by the PUNOs in Programme documents):

- 94 per cent of interviewed VoTs/SoTs rescued prior to 2024 either never interacted with law enforcement agencies (incl. the CTU) or did not know if they interacted with such agencies. 100 per cent of interviewed VoTs/SoTs, identified after February 2024, indicated that they did have an assigned Case Officer from the CTU and they were very satisfied with the services provided.
- Feedback Surveys were administered to VoTs/SoTs who accessed counselling over the course of the Programme. 150 of 189 beneficiaries (79 per cent) who completed the survey indicated their satisfaction with counselling services.
- 96.5 per cent of surveyed endline beneficiaries felt the interventions met their needs and provided crucial aid when resources were scarce.
- 94 per cent of VoT/SoT survey respondents who participated in the vocational skills training and empowerment programme reported satisfaction with the services received and 91 per cent of respondents indicated increased confidence to pursue economic activities after the programme.
- Of the 139 VoTs/SoTs who received case management services, 82.8 per cent were either "satisfied" or "extremely satisfied" with the support provided by their case worker.
- 91.35 per cent of VoTs/SoTs reported feeling empowered to participating in trafficking prevention and response.
- 84 per cent of identified VoTs/SoTs reported increased access to at least one of the offered specialised services (MHPSS; Accommodation; Direct Assistance).
- 89.6 per cent of identified VoTs/SoTs reported satisfaction in the quality of the offered specialised services (MHPSS; Accommodation; Direct Assistance).
- 93 per cent of government actors demonstrated improved knowledge in post-training questionnaire (trainings provided under Outcome 1)
- 91 per cent of training participants indicating in the post test that they feel able to apply the learned knowledge (training for government and CSOs under Outcome 1)
- 100 per cent of stakeholders shared feedback reporting improved coordination in programme implementation and service delivery (CSO and government stakeholders supported under Outcome 2).

3.5 IMPACT

The assessment of the ASC programme's impact focuses on longer-term benefits and transformative effects resulting from the intervention. Due to the timing of the evaluation, it is too early to comprehensively assess the programme's impact. As such, definitive conclusions regarding the programme's overall impact are not provided in this evaluation. However, early impacts and indications of future impact based on data collected are noted below. The discussion on impact also encompasses various outcomes that have and/or are expected to have the potential to transform systems, attitudes, knowledge, and/or practices for beneficiaries.

IMPACT INDICATORS
Perceptions/demonstration of long-lasting results (including Evidence of adoption of best practices, knowledge, standards and tools promoted through programme)

Perceptions/demonstration of long-lasting results (including Evidence of adoption of best practices, knowledge, standards and tools promoted through programme)

To discuss the programme's impacts, the evaluators considered the primary objective of ASC, “to contribute to an enhanced protection environment for VoTs/SoTs through improved and strengthened national protection systems, including community-based organizations,” and supporting outcomes. The discussion of impact is framed in reference to these programme results.

Key Finding 21: Overall, the programme is expected to have longer term impacts congruent with the programme's objective to improve the protection environment for VoTs/SoTs, by strengthening national systems using a whole-of-society approach. Key factors that support this conclusion are the institutionalization of enhanced knowledge, practices and systems for VoT/SoT case management and referrals and positive indications of improved outcomes for endline beneficiaries.

All evaluation interviewees (n=26/26), who provided feedback on the programme's potential impact, believe that ASC will have a long-lasting impact. Each interviewee shared sound rationale regarding the anticipated impacts of their respective activities and results. This finding was corroborated by data attained through the desk review as well.

Outcome 1: National and community-based protection systems demonstrate improved knowledge to screen, identify, assist and re/integrate survivors of trafficking and UASC

Under Outcome 1, 873 staff from key government and CSOs received training, based on training needs identified through the training needs assessment. The 28 sessions implemented through ASC focused on TiP, victim care, case management, age assessment, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as self-care. The purpose of these programmes was to increase capacities at the national level to screen, identify and support VoTs/SoTs. An additional 19 participants completed Training-of-Trainers (ToT) sessions, to support cascading trainings on TiP and victim care within their organizations.

As noted previously (see section 4.4 Effectiveness) the trainings appeared to be effective based on post-training survey data. 93 per cent of government actors and 93 per cent of community-based actors demonstrated improved knowledge

in post-training questionnaires. In addition, 91 per cent of these participants indicated that they feel able to apply the learned knowledge.

Widespread improvements in individual knowledge/skills among those working directly with VoTs/SoTs and UASC and those indirectly supporting access to services and supports is also expected to contribute to enhanced collective capacities across actors as well. With the expansive number of participants trained and the presence of internal trainers (via the implementation of the ToT model), the programme has supported, and has the potential to continue to support upskilling of various key actors in accordance with best practices (see *Sustainability Section* for more detail). **These actors have to work in coordination so having consistent standards and processes will prove beneficial to facilitate collaborative efforts.**

Overall, these trainings are anticipated to have longer term value because the trainings targeted existing knowledge/skill gaps; the trainings were generally found to be effective in supporting knowledge acquisition; the participants included key representation from government agencies and NGOs/CSOs; the trainings included a large number of these representatives; there is now interest and potential internal capacity to lead trainings future forward; and collectively, this capacity building is supporting consistent approaches across organizations that have to coordinate VoT/SoT and UASC supports and services.

The programme team also reported that the capacity building sessions may have contributed to the identification of **trafficking at the national and regional level.** After the trainings, in-class assessments revealed that 80.5 per cent of participants were able to accurately identify cases of trafficking and outline the act, means and purpose. Following these trainings, a child trafficking ring was discovered in Tobago. Though there is no direct evidence linking the trainings to these successes, the programme team noted that prior to the trainings, there were only two law enforcement officers trained to identify VoTs/SoTs in Tobago. **In addition, 100 VoTs/SoTs were identified in the region through regional coordination efforts after the trainings were completed.** These increases in victim identification serve as an indication that the trainings have contributed to more effective identification, screening and inter-agency coordination.

Moreover, the significant change in interactions or awareness of interactions with law enforcement agencies (including the CTU) reported by interviewed VoTs/SoTs was a notable indicator of improved performance among institutional actors, related to the training content. As previously discussed, 94 per cent of interviewed VoTs/SoTs rescued prior to 2024, either never interacted with law enforcement agencies or did not know if they interacted with such agencies. 100 per cent of interviewed VoTs/SoTs, identified after February 2024, indicated that they did have an assigned Case Officer from the CTU, and they were very satisfied with the services provided.

Though it is not a perception that this improvement was solely the result of the trainings, the evaluators note that it is highly likely that the trainings — by virtue of their effectiveness in supporting relevant knowledge acquisition and expansive coverage (quantity of training participants and representation across multiple government agencies and CSOs) — played a role in changing previous approaches to produce this result.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Ongoing training, in accordance with the Training Plan that was developed under the programme and informed by the Training Needs Assessment will require additional funding. As such, the potential impact for the ToT for the implementation of cascading trainings and additional trainings across identified need areas will hinge on capacities to gather this funding (see section 3.6 Sustainability).

The Case Management System, designed to fall under the purview of the CTU with connection across multiple agencies, is also expected to have impact over time. As the first of its kind in the English-speaking Caribbean, the case management system serves as a potential best practice to support replication across the region. If implemented according to plan, the system is expected to support enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in processing VoTs/SoTs. It can streamline communication, enhance collaboration among stakeholders, and improve the quality of care provided to VoTs/SoTs. By enabling real-time updates, the system ensures a more coordinated and efficient response across agencies (including the prevention of duplicate efforts across actors).

A key feature of the Case Management System is its robust data security and privacy measures, which safeguard sensitive information and restrict access to authorized personnel only. By mitigating the risk of data breaches, the system not only protects victims from further harm but can also reinforce trust in support services. Furthermore, the system facilitates comprehensive case documentation, covering every stage from initial identification to legal proceedings and long-term support. This ensures that victims receive a holistic, needs-based and timely response, while also allowing case managers to track individual risks, interventions and evolving support requirements.⁴⁶

Outcome 2: Increased collaboration among government, CSOs and UN Agencies to effectively coordinate, mitigate risks, identify solutions and tackle xenophobia, discrimination and exploitation

Key results under Outcome 2 for which there are expected impacts include the tools and resources developed to enhanced coordination, victim care and child protection, such as:

- Updated SOPs on Alternative Care for UASC and Child-Friendly Spaces
- Training Needs Assessment
- Situational Analysis
- Terms of Reference on Victim Care
- Referral Mechanism
- Referral Map
- Resource Map
- Referral Directory
- Training Plan
- UASC Needs Assessment
- PSS 3-Year Curriculum

Collectively, these tools are expected to contribute to notably enhanced collaboration and coordination across government and non-government stakeholders because they address highly relevant systemic gaps.

⁴⁶ As is noted in the Sustainability Section: Although the programme has concluded, developers committed to remaining engaged with the CTU to support the system's full functionality. Security clearance is still required for the CTU, through the provision of an independent server. Following this approval, the platform is expected to integrate with GBV and Child Protection systems, ensuring safe and efficient data transfer across critical support networks. To date, 21 staff with the necessary authorisation have been trained on the system's use and management but this training is also expected to expand to include other staff following the security clearance approval. With this added integration, the impact of the system would be further optimized to support GBV and child protection efforts at the national level, in a well-coordinated manner.

The SOP on Alternative Care for UASC is expected to provide clearer, more standardized guidance on the care and protection of UASC, ensuring that all agencies operate under a unified framework. Some elements of these have already been integrated into the National Inter-agency Protocol for Child Abuse Prevention and Management and national foster care systems strengthening. This prevents gaps in service provision and reduces the risk of children being left without appropriate support. Additionally, the Situational Analysis informed, and can be used to continuously inform, decision-making by capturing key trends, risks and service gaps, enabling proactive responses to emerging challenges, while the Training Needs Assessment identified capacity gaps among service providers to ensure that training efforts are tailored to enhance frontline response and promote best practices. Similarly, the UASC Needs Assessment ensures that child protection efforts are evidence-based and responsive to the specific challenges faced by unaccompanied and separated children, guiding policy and programmatic decisions.

The 3-year psychosocial support (PSS) curriculum was designed to provide sustained and meaningful social and emotional learning opportunities for out-of-school migrant children, equipping them with the skills needed to navigate challenges, build resilience, and foster a sense of belonging in their new environments. By offering structured, age-appropriate interventions over an extended period, the curriculum ensures continuous support, helping children process past trauma, develop healthy coping mechanisms, and strengthen their emotional well-being. This long-term approach not only enhances their immediate psychological and social adjustment but also lays the foundation for improved educational outcomes and integration into their host communities, thereby creating a lasting impact on their overall development and future opportunities.

To strengthen victim care and referral pathways, the Terms of Reference on Victim Care established a clear framework for service provision, outlining the roles and responsibilities of key actors in supporting victims. This can be leveraged to better ensure that all stakeholders contribute effectively. The Referral Mechanism, Referral Map, and Referral Directory collectively provide a structured approach to victim identification and assistance, so that VoTs/SoTs can receive timely and appropriate support. These tools streamline inter-agency coordination by mapping out available services and clarifying entry points for protection and assistance. Additionally, the Resource Map strengthens this system by outlining available services and support structures, allowing agencies to optimize resource allocation and minimize duplication of efforts.

As previously discussed, the Training Plan provides a structured approach to capacity development, with the goal of equipping service providers across agencies and organizations with the necessary knowledge and skills to handle cases effectively. If these resources are effectively utilized by institutional beneficiaries, it will lead to more coordinated and victim-centred response and strengthened institutional capacity.

To comprehensively tackle barriers for VoTs/SoTs and UASC related to tackling xenophobia, discrimination, and exploitation, the programme also sought to lead community-based interventions focused on public awareness of trafficking. As is the case with advocacy efforts, it is difficult to prove widespread impact on public awareness levels. However, there were some positive results to indicate that the activities and outputs were successful in attaining high reach. This includes the 90,000 viewers of the video published on protection and supports for VoTs/SoTs; the 3,103 people were reached with awareness activities and community mobilisation interventions on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and GBV; and the 800 participants attending the walk against TiP.

Interviewed CTU representatives (n=6) shared that these efforts were valuable and with continuous advocacy among the community, they anticipate that there will be changed perceptions among community members over time. In the absence

of ongoing support and funding toward such advocacy efforts, these campaigns likely have short-term benefits but will not produce longer term impacts.

Outcome 3: Government, CSOs and UN Agencies provide increased mental health and psychosocial support, direct assistance, services options for empowerment of survivors of trafficking and those at risk, including supporting their participation in trafficking prevention and response.

Key Finding 22: The ASC Programme also directly supported national commitments to counter-trafficking, contributing to Trinidad and Tobago's Tier II upgrade in the United States TiP Report. Investments in shelter refurbishment, case management and inter-agency coordination strengthened institutional response.

Firstly, a key achievement under this outcome was the increased capacity of CATT's capacity to respond to the specific and unique needs of children on the move. This included enhancements in case management practices through the launch of an integrative foster care programme targeting migrant populations, and the establishment of a dedicated special unit staffed with bilingual personnel to address cases involving migrant children, including child VoTs/SoTs. These initiatives strengthened the country's institutional response to child protection and human trafficking, reinforcing national capacity to uphold the rights and dignity of vulnerable children.

The ASC programme also played a pivotal role in improving shelter services and institutional capacity. Two government-owned shelters were refurbished to provide safe, dignified and specialized care for VoTs/SoTs, ensuring they had access to essential services, including legal aid, psychosocial support and reintegration assistance. An IOM staff member shared that this work was pivotal as it likely would have faced challenges moving forward in the absence of the programme, stating, "this program had tangible impacts and significant financial investment from international organisations that enabled work that would've taken the Government 5-10 years to fund, like the shelter refurbishment process."

This refurbishment, alongside other achievements of the programme contributed to Trinidad and Tobago's upgrade to Tier II in the U.S. TiP Report 2024, following three consecutive years on the Tier II Watchlist. The report cited key programme interventions—such as infrastructure improvements, inter-agency coordination enhancements, and specialized service expansion—as critical contributors to the country's improved ranking. This upgrade signified progress in the government's anti-trafficking efforts, demonstrating the programme's tangible impact on national policy and institutional structures to support SoTs.⁴⁷

Key Finding 23: The programme increased access to MHPSS, with 2,938 individuals referred to services. However, gaps in referral pathways for specialized psychiatric care persist, particularly for children needing mental health assessments or long-term treatment. Capacity constraints among service providers may also hinder long term impacts resulting from MHPSS services. The alternative care programme provided short- and medium-term accommodation for 223 UASC and VoTs/SoTs, preventing institutionalization and homelessness, allowing individuals to remain within the community.

Child-Sensitive Programming and Alternative Care Models

⁴⁷ US Department of State. 2024. 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Trinidad and Tobago. Available [here](#).

Recognizing the vulnerabilities of trafficked UASC, the programme prioritized child-sensitive approaches in protection and care services. Mental health and psychosocial support were provided to 1,929 children through individual and group therapy, while 1,147 children benefited from case management services for cases involving neglect, abuse, or trafficking. Additionally, 2,937 children and women were reached through community-based interventions to prevent GBV and sexual exploitation. **Programme staff reported the value of case management services and MHPSS for children and their caregivers and there was clear evidence of demonstrated need.** Namely, these impacts included improved mental health literacy and resource access among migrant families; increased resilience and coping skills in migrant children and parents; and higher engagement in mental health services and ongoing family support. However, there was limited empirical data to substantiate these perceptions beyond programme participation rates and satisfaction levels.

A factor that also affected the impact of this subset of activities was the lack of referral pathways available for situations where learning needs and psychiatric diagnosis/issues were presented. Children with explicit *Diagnostic Statistical Manual* diagnoses were unable to receive psychiatric treatment, or similarly, those in need of an assessment were unable to obtain one. Capacity building training was completed with parents and Child-Friendly Spaces facilitators, but programme staff (n=3) noted that additional training would be required to effectively support their roles in behaviour management, with a focus on migrant children.

To enhance long-term child protection efforts, the UASC alternative care programme fostered improved collaboration among PUNOs, national child protection agencies and law enforcement bodies. This approach emphasized family reunification, alternative care arrangements, and essential service referrals, ensuring that child protection was both rights-based and humanitarian in nature. The initiative was the first of its kind in the Caribbean, as it integrated cash assistance with social protection measures to support vulnerable families caring for UASC. Fifteen families received financial assistance to enable them to provide alternative care for children, contributing to sustainable social protection mechanisms. **This component of the programme is expected to have longer term impacts for the endline beneficiaries as a result of the comprehensive approach to service provision and its alignment with international best practices and guidelines** (see 4.1 Relevance). Furthermore, the results of this work can serve as a case example to scale service delivery in Trinidad and Tobago, and as a pilot case to support similar interventions in the region. However, for impacts at the national or regional level to be realized, additional funding is required.

Provision of Holistic Support Services

Key Finding 24: In many cases, the programme contributed to long-term survivor self-sufficiency, with 54 Transition Plans completed and 45 VoTs/SoTs achieving independence.

The programme adopted a survivor-centred approach to victim care, ensuring that support services addressed both immediate and long-term needs. Between July 2021 and September 2024, 328 VoTs/SoTs and at-risk individuals accessed comprehensive services, including food, accommodation, personal items, MHPSS, vocational skills training, sexual and reproductive health services, and life-skills programming.

Case management services were central to ensuring that VoTs/SoTs received personalized support aligned with their recovery and reintegration goals. Throughout the programme, 139 VoTs/SoTs were assigned Migrant Protection Assistants to facilitate access to direct assistance, service referrals, and legal aid. **Transition planning was a key strategy in promoting long-term self-sufficiency.** In total, 54 VoTs/SoTs had completed their transition plans, with 45 successfully

achieving independence, no longer requiring external aid to meet their basic needs. Although some VoTs/SoTs returned for assistance, the majority have demonstrated sustained self-reliance. For these VoTs/SoTs, the programme is expected to have a long-term impact because it has contributed to them becoming self-reliant and supporting their families. Ultimately, this is a very notable achievement at the individual-level because it supports improved integration outcomes. The remaining nine VoTs/SoTs either returned to their home country or were resettled before completing the transition activities.

Survivor participation in livelihood and empowerment programmes was another critical aspect of this outcome. 67 referred VoTs/SoTs engaged in vocational training and empowerment activities, while 1,258 survivors accessed at least one essential service, including SRH, education, or life-skills training. Additionally, community engagement and social integration efforts saw 2,938 individuals (women, men, boys and girls) referred for psychosocial support, reinforcing the programme's focus on long-term survivor well-being and inclusion. For the vocational training, there are expected individual-level impacts for the 40 participants who graduated from the programme, some of whom were reported to have started small businesses after the programme by an evaluation interviewee. **Regarding the provision of services and community engagement, this could result in longer term impacts for endline beneficiaries, contingent on continued access to services and ongoing community advocacy to support well-being and inclusion.** As such, it is important to note that 84 per cent of vocational training participants did report increased access to livelihood services.

As previously mentioned, evaluation interviewees shared input on the specific impacts they anticipate will result or have resulted from the programme:

"Endline beneficiaries gained access to important services like counselling. For example, some of them were not aware that they could even safely access a doctor. The programme was helpful in terms of getting them access to services." – PUNO Informant

"Yes, there will be impact, especially for the MHPSS component. This is necessary for them to actually feel empowered to use any of the other resources or services they had access to, to actually integrate into society. We saw some positive results over the project period, and they know this will continue. The English classes, vocational skills training, empowerment and coaching, will help them to become more self-sufficient and feel more motivated to get employment." – Partner Informant

"The case management system will allow the Government to track assistance received by SoTs. It also allows them to track data on traffickers. This gives the Government the ability to build an evidence base on TiP. Considering protection and prosecution, where will also be positive long-term impact." – PUNO Informant

"Shelters are now available that will provide a safe space for SoTs for years to come. This is also important for SoTs who return [to Trinidad and Tobago] for prosecution procedures. They are able to have a safe place to be housed while going through this process. The shelter aspect is very important in terms of actually promoting the TiP Act." – National Authority Informant

"We rebuilt relations between CTU and international organizations. We were also able to reduce reliance on external funding when it came to provisions for SoTs because of the results achieved under this programme. This is part of the reason we were on the TIP watchlist. We were also able to re-prioritize advancements at the

national level to combat TiP and ultimately get off the TiP watchlist. The Referral Pathway is highly valuable because it provides future CTU leadership with the process, available services and contacts that need to be followed when working with SoTs.” – National Authority Informant

3.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Since this evaluation was conducted shortly after the close of the ASC Programme, the ability to assess the long-term continuation of benefits is limited. However, the evaluators examined stakeholder perceptions on the likely sustainability of the intervention’s benefits, including evidence that sustainability was integrated into the design and execution of activities. The evaluation also assessed the extent to which beneficiaries demonstrated commitment to sustainability, as well as potential opportunities for scaling or replicating aspects of the ASC model.

Demonstrated incorporation of sustainability measures

While ensuring the long-term sustainability of ASC programme benefits beyond the period of external support was a key concern among stakeholders (see next sub-section), **the evaluators found that deliberate measures were integrated throughout programme implementation to institutionalize, collaborate and embed processes within existing national structures.**

The programme’s overall sustainability measures were aligned with the programme’s original sustainability goals, which prioritized:

- Structural improvements, including the expansion and formalization of referral mechanisms
- Strengthened cooperation between stakeholders
- Institutional adoption of training programmes
- Enhancement of national protection mechanisms for SoTs/VoTs

Overall, the evaluators identified several strategic sustainability measures embedded within the programme, which can be categorized into the following key areas: Institutional Strengthening; Capacity-Building Through Training Initiatives; Research Deliverables as Sustainable Knowledge Resources and Direct Service Provision and Public Awareness.

Institutional Strengthening

Key Finding 25: The ASC Programme significantly strengthened institutional capacities and sustainability by establishing structured referral mechanisms for coordinated victim protection, transitioning comprehensive case management responsibilities from IOM to the national CTU, and reinforcing state ownership through specialized staffing and formalized inter-ministerial cooperation. Additionally, the refurbishment of state-managed, survivor-centred shelters

has filled a critical gap in emergency housing, bolstering infrastructure and enhancing long-term provision of trauma-informed care for victims of trafficking.⁴⁸

Although no formal exit strategy was developed under the ASC Programme, several key deliverables themselves functioned as institutional frameworks that laid the foundation for long-term sustainability/transitioning to local ownership. **These frameworks were not merely standalone outputs but were strategically designed to enable local ownership and facilitate transitioning beyond external support.** Examples include the Referral Map and Terms of Reference, the SOP for alternative care of UASC and the comprehensive Training Plan.

*“The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services began to use the new Manual on Victims of Trafficking for Social Service Providers, which contained guidelines for agencies involved in victim protection. Observers noted all the above SOPs/instructions were regularly being used. The government also hosted a workshop for government agencies, an IO, NGOs, and foreign governments to develop a **Referral Map to Assist Victims of Human Trafficking** to streamline the process for victim assistance, by outlining clear pathways for referral and support services across government and non-governmental agencies.” - United States TiP Report 2024*

Firstly, one of the most significant sustainability measures was the establishment of a Victim Care Referral Mechanism—a structured framework to guide the coordinated response to VoTs/SoTs.

The mechanism is expected to function under the Victim Care Referral Group, chaired by the Directorship of the CTU and co-chaired by IOM. This group will serve as an oversight body to oversee victim protection, streamline referrals and enhance coordination among national and international partners. To institutionalize this process, the Terms of Reference for the Victim Care Referral Mechanism explicitly outlines key procedural elements, including:

- Application and membership processes for organizations wishing to join the referral group, including suspension and termination clauses.
- A standardized referral process, including a consent framework, a pre-approved referral form, and a requirement for receiving agencies to provide feedback within 48 hours.
- Case management protocols, ensuring that referral requests sent to CTU include anonymized demographics, a synopsis of the VoT/SoT's experience, and any available information on perpetrators.
- Financial sustainability considerations, including the recognition that long-term government budget allocation will be necessary to maintain operations.
- Regular review cycles, with a commitment to reviewing and amending the mechanism every two years to ensure its continued relevance.

The accompanying Referral Pathway Document further strengthens institutionalization efforts by providing a visual roadmap for making referrals. This document standardizes decision-making processes by integrating key

⁴⁸ To provide more detail, the ASC Programme contributed to institutional strengthening by embedding sustainable frameworks, formalizing referral mechanisms, transitioning case management responsibilities and ensuring long-term operational capacity for victim services:

- The establishment of the Victim Care Referral Mechanism, with its structured oversight body and standardized referral processes, institutionalized coordination among national and international actors, ensuring a sustained response to VoT/SoT protection.
- The transition of case management responsibilities from IOM to the CTU, alongside the expansion of specialized victim care officers and the handover of the digital case management system, reinforced state ownership of critical service provision. Further sustainability measures included the integration of labour inspectors within CTU and formalized inter-ministerial cooperation between MoL and MoNS.
- The refurbishment of survivor-centred shelters under state management addressed a critical gap in emergency housing, ensuring long-term safe accommodation for VoTs/SoTs and improving both infrastructural and institutional capacity to provide trauma-informed support.

considerations such as language proficiency of the case individuals, CTU screening criteria, age-specific interventions, and indicators of labour exploitation. Moreover, the Referral Group is set to meet biannually, bringing together UN agencies, government counterparts, and CSOs to discuss service provision and emerging challenges in the TiP response.

Another major shift toward sustainability was the transition of case management responsibilities from UN agencies to the CTU. Before the ASC Programme, IOM and other UN agencies were the primary entities managing casework for VoTs/SoTs. Recognizing the long-term limitations of this approach, the programme facilitated capacity-building efforts within CTU to enable a gradual handover of case management functions. As a result, between October 2023 and March 2024, CTU expanded its staffing structure, hiring specialized officers dedicated exclusively to victim care.⁴⁹

Similarly, the PUNOs handed over the digital case management system to CTU. The system, originally developed by IOM in partnership with the third-party contractor, BMAK Business and Technology Consultants INC, is a secure digital platform that enhances case tracking and service coordination. The platform integrates alert notifications, enabling directors and investigators to monitor key case developments in real time. Additionally, referrals to service providers can now be made directly through the system, with built-in chat functionality ensuring timely updates on case progress.

The sustainability of the system is further reinforced by financial commitments from UNDP, which has agreed to support certain maintenance costs/procurement of independent server. Furthermore, the system's supplier has committed to providing continued technical assistance to CTU post-project. By the programme's close, 21 CTU officers had received credentials for the system, with 10 officers completing comprehensive training. Once security clearance is finalized—including the provision of an independent server—CTU plans to ensure interoperability between the TiP case management system and the national GBV and Child Protection systems, creating a centralized platform for managing cases of trafficking, abuse and exploitation.

"Prior to the case management system, there was no central system to actually track and process cases. They had documents/records, but it wasn't streamlined and it was widely considered inefficient. We [ASC team] also needed to ensure that the case management system was a component of ASC so that the referral mechanism could operate effectively. Case management system and referral mechanism development was challenging at first because there was limited clarity in roles, responsibilities and processes. With both components in place, roles and responsibilities of agencies are much clearer, streamlined and there is no duplication in work as well." - PUNO Informant

"CTU taking on a greater role as case management lead and service/assistance provision, is a significant indication of sustainable anti-TiP efforts in the country. [...] This gives the government the ability to build an evidence base on TiP. Looking at protection and prosecution, it can have a positive long-term impact." - PUNO Informant

Beyond structural frameworks and case management enhancements, the ASC Programme also led to tangible improvements in inter-ministerial cooperation. For example, the MoL has now committed to assigning full-time labour inspectors to CTU. This will significantly strengthen the labour and trafficking nexus, ensuring that labour exploitation cases are effectively investigated alongside other TiP-related offenses. Additionally, the MoL and the Ministry of National Security have agreed to jointly conduct anti-TiP awareness campaigns, particularly targeting border communities and businesses operating near BCPs. This commitment signals an institutional shift toward integrating labour rights protections within

⁴⁹ As noted in the Impact Section, prior to 2024, 94 per cent of VoTs reported that they either never interacted with law enforcement agencies or were unaware of any assigned case officer. However, among VoTs identified after February 2024, 100 per cent confirmed having a designated CTU case officer and reported high levels of satisfaction with the services provided.

the broader counter-trafficking framework. Further sustainability measures include data-sharing commitments between MoL and MoNS, enabling enhanced monitoring of high-risk sectors and improved intelligence-sharing on potential trafficking cases.

"There is an ongoing need for closer collaboration between CTU and MoL (particularly labour inspectors who would be assigned full-time to support CTU). Through the newly formed MoU, we want to do joint public campaigns in areas with high numbers of migrants like ports that they may enter through (e.g., outreach sessions, information sharing). We also want to improve practices of sharing data with one another as well." - National Authority Informant

Inter-agency coordination is also evidenced for UNICEF-related components through both the Education Working Group and the Child Protection Working Group, which continue to function pre and post ASC programme to support implementation, coordination and monitoring of protections and rights.

Lastly, as a direct outcome of the ASC Programme, **shelter refurbishment and victim services infrastructure are now fully operational under state management, ensuring the continuity of safe housing and protection services for VoTs/SoTs beyond the programme's duration.** This intervention addressed a critical gap in emergency housing, where limited capacity and inadequate facilities previously posed significant challenges for victim care.

More specifically, ASC Programme refurbished two fully equipped three-bedroom homes, providing safe, dignified, and survivor-centred accommodation for VoTs/SoTs. These shelters were strategically designed to offer both immediate and long-term protection, ensuring that survivors have access to secure housing from the point of identification through the legal and reintegration processes. The shelters were equipped with MHPSS services, case management facilities and livelihood training spaces, aligning with international standards for survivor protection.

Capacity-Building Through Training Initiatives

Key Finding 26: The ASC Programme strengthened institutional and individual capacities through targeted training initiatives, improving stakeholder competency in TiP identification, victim care and case management. The Training of Trainers model and a structured Training Plan supported sustainability by equipping personnel to cascade knowledge within their agencies. While some organizations have integrated these efforts, further institutionalization within government human resource management structures is needed to ensure systematic coordination of trainings.

The ASC Programme made significant strides in strengthening institutional and individual capacities through comprehensive training initiatives, reaching over 900 participants across regional and national government agencies and civil society organizations. As noted, through 28 targeted training sessions, the programme covered critical topics such as TiP, victim care, MHPSS, UASC-specific supports, age assessment, case management, psychological first aid, self-care and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

The inclusion of law enforcement officials, healthcare practitioners, judicial officers and social work professionals ensured that a cross-section of key stakeholders received specialized training to identify and support beneficiaries.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ As noted in the Impact Section, 91 per cent of participants demonstrated an ability to apply their knowledge to screen, identify, and assist SoTs, with an average 15 per cent increase in post-test scores compared to pre-tests. In-class assessments further confirmed that 80.5 per cent of participants accurately identified cases of trafficking and outlined the act, means, and purpose, showcasing improved competency across sectors.

To enhance sustainability, the programme implemented a ToT model, ensuring that trained personnel could cascade knowledge to new recruits and institutionalize training practices within their respective agencies. The ToT initiative was structured in two phases:

- Instructor Development Course – Two cohorts of 37 participants received training on facilitation techniques, equipping them with instructional skills to deliver effective trainings.
- Specialized TiP Training – 19 participants completed advanced ToT sessions focusing on Fundamentals of TiP and Victim Care, with each participant evaluated by IOM and independent certified instructors through group activities and individual presentations.

Recognizing the need for structured and ongoing capacity-building, the ASC Programme also facilitated the development of a Training Plan, finalized in August 2024, to guide future training efforts. This detailed and extensive plan outlines modules for national authorities across key areas such as detection, investigation, case management, victim support, return and readmission and TiP prevention. For non-governmental participants, the plan offers a separate, tailored training curriculum. Overall, it provides a breakdown of the following key areas:

- Lesson plans
- Target audience specifications
- Training duration guidelines
- Interactive, scenario-based exercises
- Case study analysis
- Pre/post-test assessments

While additional funding is required to fully implement the Training Plan, initial ToT sessions ensured immediate sustainability of knowledge transfer. **CATT, FPATT and CTU informants confirmed that they have begun cascading various trainings they participated in internally, demonstrating a commitment to institutionalizing training within their organizations.** However, evaluators could not fully assess whether cascading training efforts were systematically incorporated into human resource management structures, nor whether participation was mandatory or elective for new personnel.

An expert who supported training delivery emphasized the importance of continued engagement, recommending that certified trainers receive ongoing supervision and quality assurance support. This recommendation aligns with the M&E framework for the Training Plan, which proposes that an external agency oversee at least three sessions of new trainers delivering courses.

Beyond structured training, informants highlighted additional informal mechanisms used to ensure knowledge transfer within agencies.

- The MoL integrates TiP knowledge into onboarding for new inspectors, with trained staff mentoring recruits during field inspections.
- FPATT strategically trained refugee community leaders, ensuring that knowledge of TiP risks and victim support pathways is shared directly within vulnerable communities.
- CATT employs a ToT model to retain knowledge within its staff and continues to collaborate with PUNOs to schedule future training sessions for new personnel.
- CTU confirmed that cascading trainings are ongoing, but formal institutionalization within government structures remains an area for improvement.

Key Finding 27: The ASC Programme's research outputs have, and can continue to, strengthen evidence-based policymaking as well as training curricula development. For example, the Training Needs Assessment provides a comprehensive mapping of capacity gaps, guiding future training investments and institutional knowledge retention. The Child Protection Needs Assessment identifies vulnerabilities among UASC, informing service provision and policy reforms to enhance child protection frameworks. The Situational Analysis on Assistance Efforts to Survivors of Human Trafficking can also be used as a tool to shape victim care interventions by identifying gaps in screening, legal aid and inter-agency coordination. These research deliverables continue to serve as essential reference tools for policymakers, ensuring that counter-trafficking and victim protection efforts remain data-driven and responsive to evolving needs.

The ASC Programme's research contributions have significantly strengthened long-term knowledge production and evidence-based policy planning, ensuring that key findings and recommendations remain relevant beyond the project's lifespan. These research outputs have been integrated into national discourse, shared among government stakeholders and used to inform future programming, creating a repository of knowledge that can continue guiding counter-trafficking and victim protection efforts. **Moving forward, ensuring that these findings are systematically reviewed and referenced in national policy development, training curricula and inter-agency coordination efforts will be key to maximizing the sustainability and long-term impact of ASC's research contributions.**

One of the most significant research contributions under the ASC Programme was the Training Needs Assessment, which provided a comprehensive mapping of capacity gaps across key institutions and frontline actors involved in counter-trafficking and victim assistance. The Assessment identified priority training needs among law enforcement, judiciary officials, public prosecutors, healthcare providers and government decision-makers. The findings highlighted that while basic awareness of TiP exists, significant gaps remain in areas such as:

- Victim protection – Frontline responders lacked standardized guidelines and protocols to ensure survivor-centred case management.
- Inter-agency case management – Agencies reported fragmented service coordination, with inconsistent case referral processes and limited information-sharing mechanisms.
- Labour exploitation and online trafficking – While sex trafficking cases were better understood, labour exploitation and digital recruitment of victims were areas with limited awareness and expertise.
- Legal frameworks – The judiciary and law enforcement actors required stronger knowledge of national and international legal frameworks, particularly in prosecuting traffickers and ensuring human rights protections for survivors.
- Mental health support for survivors – A critical gap was identified in psychosocial support services, including specialized training for mental health professionals working with trauma-affected VoTs/SoTs.

The Training Needs Assessment also provided strategic guidance for designing future training programmes, recommending:

- Blended learning models, combining in-person workshops with case-based interactive exercises and virtual learning sessions.
- Progressive training structures, with basic, intermediate, and advanced training modules spanning multiple sessions to allow for long-term knowledge retention.
- Practical role-playing and real-world case study analysis, ensuring participants develop applied skills in identifying, assisting, and referring trafficking victims.

- Specialized training on interpreting services and standardized screening tools, addressing language barriers that prevent victims from accessing assistance.
- Train-the-trainer models, allowing certified participants to continue cascading knowledge within their agencies, promoting institutional sustainability of training initiatives.

Importantly, the Assessment findings remain relevant today and have been incorporated into national training frameworks, making it a living document that can guide future training investments and programme planning.

"Training needs assessment allowed us to know what to first focus on when it came to capacity building across the different agencies. **The findings and recommendations highlighted several areas for both shorter-term and longer-term targeting, which then helped us decide what would be best to include in the foundation training on TIP.**" - PUNO Informant

Another key research deliverable was the Child Protection Needs Assessment for Unaccompanied and Separated Children, conducted by researchers in collaboration with UNICEF, which provided a detailed analysis of the risks faced by UASC and refugee children in Trinidad and Tobago. **The assessment mapped vulnerabilities, service gaps and policy challenges, offering data-driven recommendations to improve child protection mechanisms and service provision.**

The findings emphasized several high-risk factors affecting UASC, including:

- Physical and sexual exploitation – Many minor VoTs experienced extreme violence and abuse, often at the hands of traffickers or exploitative employers.
- High prevalence of neglect – 65 per cent of cases reported to the CATT involved child neglect, resulting from poverty, lack of healthcare access, and barriers to education.
- Increased child endangerment – Many UASC were observed begging for survival, exposing them to trafficking networks, forced labour, and criminal exploitation.
- Vulnerabilities of Warao Indigenous children – The Warao community, an Indigenous Amerindian group, was identified as particularly at risk due to limited access to formal education, healthcare, and social services.

Moreover, the Child Protection Needs Assessment for Unaccompanied and Separated Children provided actionable recommendations, such as:

- Strengthening referral and case management mechanisms to ensure that UASC receive timely protection and intervention.
- Enhancing collaboration between government agencies and NGOs to create a more cohesive child protection framework.
- Expanding access to education and vocational training, particularly for migrant and Indigenous children, to reduce vulnerabilities to exploitation and trafficking.
- Ensuring culturally appropriate interventions, recognizing the unique challenges faced by Indigenous children and designing tailored outreach initiatives.

In 2022, a Situational Assessment on Assistance Efforts to Survivors of Human Trafficking was conducted, with findings officially published in 2023. **This research provided critical insights into gaps in victim care services, referral pathways, and survivor protection mechanisms, directly influencing the activities implemented under the ASC Programme.** Key findings included:

- Inconsistencies in victim screening and case management – There were variations in how different agencies screened and classified potential trafficking victims, leading to inconsistent service provision.

- Limited access to legal aid and mental health support – Survivors, particularly migrants with irregular status, reported difficulties in accessing legal representation, psychosocial support, and long-term assistance.
- Gaps in inter-agency coordination – While several agencies were involved in victim protection, the lack of standardized referral mechanisms led to delays and inefficiencies in service delivery.

This research continues to serve as an essential reference document, guiding future interventions and policy developments related to trafficking prevention, victim protection, and legal frameworks in Trinidad and Tobago (see sub-sections for detailed recommendations).

Direct Service Provision and Public Awareness

Key Finding 28: The ASC Programme effectively combined direct service provision with public awareness efforts, offering critical assistance to VoTs/SoTs, UASC and at-risk migrants while fostering greater societal engagement in anti-trafficking efforts. While measuring the long-term sustainability of these interventions presents challenges due to the transient nature of beneficiaries and difficulties in tracking shifts in public attitudes, their importance in preventing exploitation and strengthening national referral pathways is undeniable.

The ASC Programme provided comprehensive direct assistance to vulnerable groups, including VoTs/SoTs, UASC and at-risk migrants. While many of these services were provided because they presented immediate necessities, the PUNO teams tried to match these efforts with access to long-term support and transition toward self-sufficiency.

Various services include:

- Provision of emergency housing for trafficking survivors.
- Distribution of well-being kits containing hygiene products, clothing, and food.
- Financial assistance for alternative care placements to ensure safe family- and community-based living arrangements for UASC.
- Counselling sessions for SoTs and individuals at risk of exploitation.
- Remote MHPSS support through helplines for crisis intervention.
- Specialized trauma-informed interventions, including art therapy and group therapy.
- Child-friendly spaces integrating psychological support in a safe environment.
- Training in financial literacy, job readiness, and small business development.
- Vocational training programming focused on industries such as cosmetology, entrepreneurship, and English as a Second Language.
- Structured mentorship and guidance to support economic self-sufficiency.
- Case management services to develop individualized care plans for safe reunification or alternative care placement.
- Outreach activities to provide critical information on child protection, health, and access to services for migrant children and families.
- Development of structured transition plans for survivors, outlining steps toward employment, education, and self-reliance.

“For sustainability and long-lasting impact - [we took on] a systems strengthening approach - first building national structures as a foundation, then working with civil society to fill critical gaps until the system itself could adapt to meet the growing needs.” - PUNO Informant

"From a migration perspective it's important to make sure that the needs of migrants are understood. Any resulting projects, programmes, structures, legislation, etc. should be based on these needs and addressed using a whole of society approach (i.e., gov and non-gov actors coming together and working in tandem based on their specialization). Migrants need support in actually navigating services as well because existing systems are highly complicated, when it comes to service provision between gov and non-governmental actors. Current approaches are very heavily focused on stop-gap measures, but this doesn't address gaps in service provision coherence that would allow for sustainable outcomes for migrants that are being supported. There is a need for better planning when it comes to this." - Partner Informant

"For VoTs, transition planning was important because many of them were unemployed and didn't have an idea regarding what skills were needed to gain employment – or where to even get them. Therefore, we tried to build the skill set through the various trainings/activities under ASC. By the beginning of 2024, they had many VoTs now being able to take care of their families – by finding jobs." - PUNO Informant

Beyond direct assistance, the ASC Programme also sought to raise public awareness on TiP and migrant protection, recognizing that shifting social attitudes and increasing knowledge within communities are key to preventing exploitation and strengthening social cohesion, recognizing the need for promoting a “whole-of-society” approach. Public awareness campaigns were designed to inform both migrants and host communities about their rights, available services, and mechanisms for reporting trafficking-related concerns. As previously mentioned, the extent to which this increased public levels of awareness is difficult to evaluate given the nature of awareness raising initiatives (see *Impact section*).

Large-scale community events were organized to engage the public in anti-trafficking efforts, including awareness walks, art exhibitions and educational competitions. **These initiatives provided a platform for survivors to share their experiences, increasing visibility and fostering a sense of solidarity between migrant and host communities.** Social media campaigns complemented these efforts, ensuring that anti-trafficking messages reached a broad audience, with significant engagement recorded through digital platforms (see *Impact Section*).

School outreach programmes were also a key component of public awareness efforts, with initiatives designed to educate students on trafficking risks, gender-based violence and healthy relationship dynamics. Youth-focused programming incorporated interactive elements such as spoken word performances and creative workshops, allowing students to explore these issues in a way that was engaging and relatable. **Teachers and school administrators provided feedback on the positive impact of these initiatives (e.g., Love Languages led by CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago), noting increased awareness and behavioural changes among students who participated.**

Moreover, to enhance access to information, informational kits were distributed to vulnerable and at-risk populations, providing guidance on emergency assistance, health services and legal rights. These materials were translated into multiple languages to ensure accessibility for non-native speakers, with outreach activities conducted in communities with high migrant populations.

Measuring the sustainability of direct service provision and public awareness activities presents inherent challenges, largely due to the nature of these interventions. Unlike structural or institutional reforms, which can be assessed based on policy adoption, system integration and long-term government ownership, direct service provision is often centred around immediate needs, making it difficult to track its long-term impact. Many beneficiaries of these services remain in precarious or transient situations. **Migration status, economic instability and risks of re-victimization can complicate**

efforts to assess whether interventions produce sustainable improvements in their lives. Furthermore, the confidential and sensitive nature of these cases makes follow-up challenging, as beneficiaries may move, change contact information, or avoid further engagement due to fear of stigma, legal consequences, or safety concerns.

Public awareness activities face similar tracking challenges, as their impact is often indirect and difficult to quantify over time. While metrics such as the number of individuals reached, engagement levels in community events and an increase in trafficking-related reports can provide short-term indicators of success, the long-term effects of awareness campaigns on public behaviour and institutional responses are more complex to evaluate. Shifting social attitudes and behaviours require continuous reinforcement, and while awareness efforts can lay the groundwork for change, it is difficult to attribute specific outcomes—such as a decrease in trafficking cases or improved community integration of migrants—directly to these interventions.

Despite these limitations in tracking long-term impact, the evaluators note that the direct service provision and public awareness activities were regarded as essential components of a holistic response to TIP and addressing migration-related vulnerabilities. The ability to offer shelter, medical care, psychosocial support and economic opportunities at critical moments can be life-saving and transformational for individuals in crisis. Similarly, public awareness campaigns play a crucial role in shaping the broader environment in which trafficking and exploitation occur. Even if long-term behavioural shifts are difficult to measure, increased public knowledge can lead to improved identification of trafficking cases, stronger community-level engagement and a more supportive environment for survivors.

Perceived adaptability and longevity of benefits

Key Finding 29: The long-term sustainability of ASC Programme outcomes remains uncertain due to financial constraints (44.4 per cent of responses), government commitment challenges (44.4 per cent of responses) and risks of institutional knowledge loss (33.3 per cent of responses). Actors providing critical services, such as healthcare and psychosocial support, are heavily reliant on external funding, with gaps emerging following the programme's conclusion. While ASC strengthened referral and case management mechanisms, national ownership is still uncertain and changes in political leadership could deprioritize ASC benefits. High staff turnover within government institutions, UN agencies and NGOs also threatens the retention of specialized knowledge, with trained officers frequently reassigned and PUNO personnel reaching the end of project-based contracts.

Funding Shortfalls and NGO Reliance on External Support

Concerns about financial sustainability were noted across 44.4 per cent of responses (n=8/18 responses), with many organizations reliant on external funding to maintain services established under ASC.

Specifically, many NGOs/CSOs providing direct services, particularly healthcare, psychosocial support and legal aid, were heavily dependent on programme funding. For example, FPATT's previously free healthcare services for Venezuelan migrants were discontinued due to funding constraints, leaving a significant gap in service provision. Similarly, the sustainability of rental support and housing assistance for VoTs/SoTs, which were critical under ASC, is uncertain without alternative funding sources.

Additionally, economic downturns have impacted government budgets, limiting the potential for state-funded continuity of services. While the ASC Programme developed referral mapping to streamline services for VoTs/SoTs,

many organizations still operate in silos, meaning that knowledge of referral pathways does not always translate into structured partnerships or sustained coordination. **CTU has emphasized that further work is needed to operationalize the Victim Care Referral Group, ensuring a long-term coordination mechanism that is not dependent on external funding.**

Furthermore, informants (n=12) highlighted the need for a future assessment of human resourcing and institutional strengths across service providers. This would help the longer-term monitoring of gaps as well as for opportunities related to joint programming, ensuring that organizations can work together effectively even with limited financial resources. Some informants (n=4) also shared that short-term project cycles limit long-term impact, emphasizing the importance of multi-year programmatic approaches rather than standalone projects that end after two to three years. Without sustained funding, many direct service providers may need to downscale their operations, reducing the availability of essential support for VoTs/SoTs and vulnerable migrants.

Government Commitment and Political Changes

Concerns about government ownership and political will were also noted by 44.4 per cent of responses (n=8/18 responses). A key concern is the lack of dedicated government funding allocations for critical VoT/SoT services, raising questions about the extent to which state authorities are prepared to assume full responsibility for these interventions. **While ASC strengthened institutional capacity, including case management systems and shelter infrastructure, financial sustainability remains uncertain without direct government investment.**

Another risk factor is the potential impact of upcoming elections in Trinidad and Tobago, in April 2025, which could shift policy priorities and affect long-term migration management strategies. Changes in government leadership may lead to a deprioritization of TiP response efforts/actions, particularly if new administrations do not maintain the same level of commitment to calls for addressing human trafficking and migrant protection. **Additionally, delays in ratifying key international conventions relevant to migration governance and victim protection remain a barrier to full policy alignment with international best practices.**⁵¹

Staffing and Institutional Knowledge Retention

High turnover rates within both government institutions and NGOs/CSOs pose a risk to sustaining the knowledge and capacity built through ASC. This concern was raised across 33.3 per cent of responses (n=6/18 responses), who noted that trained officers are frequently reassigned, leading to gaps in expertise and service continuity. Without a structured mechanism for continuous training and refresher courses, much of the capacity-building investment made through ASC may be lost over time. The Training Plan developed under ASC provides a strong foundation, but it requires long-term commitment to implementation and adaptation based on emerging needs.

Limited availability of trained service providers who participated in the programme could also lead to service gaps, particularly in specialized areas such as trauma-informed care, and case management. This issue extends beyond national institutions to international organizations, where many staff are tied to projectized funding cycles. **Several ASC personnel have already reached the end of their contracts, raising concerns about institutional knowledge loss among PUNO teams as well.** One partner informant highlighted the real-life consequences of these gaps, sharing:

⁵¹ See reference list [here](#).

"When the project ended, [CATT] were in a 'rough patch' when it came to service provision for children, and there was a deterioration in their health and well-being. They are having a lot of trouble finding service providers to address the needs of these children. This also inhibited the continuation of investigations into the circumstances of these children and planning for how to manage their cases in the future—whether they stay in Trinidad or return to their home country."

Exit Planning: Strengthening Transition and Sustainability

Key Finding 30: A structured and early exit strategy would have strengthened the ASC Programme's transition and sustainability of activities into local ownership —most importantly, ensuring implementing partners and national authorities were adequately prepared for post-programme continuity. The absence of a clear closeout plan(s) limited preparation time, with informants noting that at least three months' notice and discussion around transitioning out would have facilitated better planning. Establishing a lesson learned forum and embedding exit strategies from the outset of future projects could enhance future interventions to better promote institutional ownership.

While many deliverables under the ASC Programme were designed with sustainability in mind, the evaluators noted that a more structured and formalized exit strategy would have enhanced local ownership and continuity beyond the programme's timeframe.

Developing exit strategies at the outset of a project facilitates a strategic, phased transition that ensures key deliverables are institutionalized, beneficiaries are adequately prepared and contingency plans are in place. In the case of the ASC Programme, several implementing partner informants (n=4) indicated that they were unaware of the programme's exact end date, limiting their ability to plan effectively for a post-programme landscape.

Importantly, exit strategies do not need to focus solely on funding but should also emphasize equipping local institutions, communities and civil society organizations to sustain core activities independently.

While the ASC Programme's closing ceremony was a valuable opportunity for stakeholders to acknowledge achievements and celebrate impact, several informants (n=8) highlighted that more structured annual wrap-up meetings would have been beneficial. These sessions would have provided a space to assess accomplishments, discuss challenges, and extract key lessons learned throughout implementation. Seeing the breadth of partners and their contributions at these events reinforces the collective impact of the programme, fostering stronger partnerships and a greater appreciation for the work accomplished.

Moving forward, a lesson learned forum or structured post-programme reflection process would be an optimal mechanism to consolidate insights and reinforce sustainability measures beyond the programme's timeframe. Such a forum would allow implementing partners and national authorities to assess the effectiveness of various interventions, reflect on activity prioritization, and identify best practices that can be replicated or scaled. Additionally, it would create an opportunity to discuss future regional coordination efforts and explore avenues for continued engagement between stakeholders.

Scalability and Replicability

Key Finding 31: The ASC Programme exhibited strong potential for scalability and replication, with stakeholders identifying key areas for future expansion across PUNOs, national authorities, and CSOs. Recommendations included

enhancing return and reintegration processes through closer coordination with countries of origin—particularly for minors—strengthening prosecution efforts by linking victim protection with legal aid and justice systems, and improving safety protocols for staff handling high-risk trafficking cases. Informants also emphasized the need to bolster the legal authority of labour inspectors, foster cross-country collaboration by drawing on regional best practices from Tier 1 and Tier 2 Caribbean countries, and adapt ASC's institutional frameworks and survivor-centred approaches to other national contexts where trafficking remains a concern.

The evaluators assessed the potential for scaling or replicating aspects of the ASC Programme, considering its demonstrated successes and remaining gaps. Informants reflected on lessons learned and areas requiring continued engagement, highlighting both thematic and operational considerations that could enhance future interventions. Key areas for potential expansion include strengthening prosecution efforts, improving return and reintegration processes for VoTs and UASC, and increasing institutional capacity for TiP response across government and civil society actors. Additionally, informants underscored the importance of addressing risks associated with working on TiP cases, improving access to healthcare and education for migrant populations, and leveraging regional best practices to enhance national anti-trafficking efforts.

One of the key takeaways from the ASC Programme was the importance of expanding focus on prosecution efforts and the intersection between protection and justice. **While the programme successfully strengthened victim support mechanisms, informants (n=12) suggested that future interventions should enhance coordination between protection services and legal frameworks to ensure individuals have access to justice while remaining safeguarded from further harm.** This includes addressing challenges related to securing witness testimony, survivor legal representation, bilingual legal aid and ensuring safe housing options for those engaged in ongoing legal proceedings.

Another critical area for expansion is the return and reintegration process for VoTs/SoTs and UASC. **Informants (n=8) emphasized the need for strengthened coordination with country-of-origin national authorities to improve state care arrangements prior to return.** At present, follow-up efforts are limited once individuals leave Trinidad and Tobago, potentially heightening risks of re-trafficking and further vulnerability/harm. This concern is particularly high for minors, for whom return is generally not recommended due to the difficulty of ensuring a continuum of care in countries of origin. Developing structured reintegration pathways, in collaboration with regional and international actors, could mitigate these risks and improve long-term outcomes for returnees.

"The girls who are SoT and coming from vulnerable situations face compounded challenges when they return to their countries. This is if their vulnerabilities are not addressed. Return is generally not recommended for minors for this reason because there are challenges with ensuring continuity in care in many countries of origin. We just don't have access to knowing what happens with them next." - Partner Informant

In addition, some informants from NGOs/CSOs and government agencies expressed concerns regarding the safety and security of their staff when dealing with high-risk cases due to the connections between trafficking networks and organized crime. This risk extends to trainers and frontline workers, particularly those without a law enforcement background. Future interventions should incorporate enhanced safety protocols and training on risk mitigation for NGO/CSO personnel working in this space.

"One risk we noticed was regarding the safety of trainers or staff who can be targeted because of their leadership in this area. If someone does not have a background in law enforcement, their safety could be a major issue. We

need to remember that NGO personnel need to have understanding of the bigger risk to their safety. If they are not properly supported, NGO personnel could be compromised because trafficking is often connected to criminal networks."
- Partner Informant

Labour exploitation remains a major concern, requiring continued awareness-raising efforts and specialized training for labour inspectors. Informants (n=2) highlighted that labour inspectors, unlike police officers, lack the legal protection and investigative authority needed to handle trafficking cases effectively. At the same time, given the overlap between labour exploitation and forced labour, there is an urgent need to ensure that all frontline individuals are aware of the national legal definitions pertaining to these complex cases and ensure that enforcement bodies have clear mandates and protections when addressing each form of case.

"There is a need to differentiate/better define forced labour (criminal) and labour exploitation because this would allow for more effective division of roles between relevant government agencies like those in CTU. A lot of migrants are economic migrants and are more vulnerable to labour exploitation, while with others, we can identify if they are more likely to fit under the categorization of forced labour. I think that frontline actors need this know-how because migration trends point to increased labour migration to the country." - National Authority Informant

Beyond Trinidad and Tobago, informants expressed strong interest in learning from regional best practices and adapting successful models to improve national anti-trafficking strategies. **Several informants (n=8) indicated interest in studying the approaches of Tier 1-ranked countries in the United States TiP Report, such as The Bahamas, Suriname, and Guyana, to identify key policy or operational differences that contributed to their improved rankings. Additionally, there is an opportunity for collaboration with other Tier 2-ranked Caribbean nations, including Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, to share strategies and coordinate regional responses to TiP.**

Given the shared sociopolitical systems among Caribbean countries, the ASC Programme also has strong potential **for replication in other contexts.** The programme's approach—centering on strengthening institutional frameworks, enhancing victim support services, and fostering cross-sector collaboration—could be adapted to similar national settings where TiP remains a concern. Future iterations of the programme could further incorporate lessons from successful anti-TiP interventions in the region, ensuring that best practices are institutionalized and sustained over time.

Broader Challenges in TiP and Child Protection

Key Finding 32: Drawing from the 2024 TiP Report, the Situational Assessment on Victim Care for Trafficking Survivors and the UNICEF Child Protection Needs Assessment for UASC and Refugee Children, several overarching challenges were also identified – and require longer-term support from all actors involved in combatting TiP and promoting child protection. The findings from these reports underscore the following major considerations for future interventions:

- **Law enforcement and judicial inefficiencies:** TiP cases face prolonged delays, weak evidence collection and lack of victim-witness protections, while corruption within law enforcement can obstruct justice, necessitating specialized response and stronger oversight mechanisms.
- **Inconsistent victim identification and protection:** VoTs/SoTs and UASC can be misidentified as criminals, leading to wrongful detention, highlighting the need for standardized screening protocols amongst law enforcement agencies.

- **Weak legal protections for migrants:** The absence of an overarching national migration policy exposes VoTs/SoTs to involuntary returns and exploitation. Moreover, there is a need for regularisation pathways, stronger labour laws and full implementation of the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking Persons.
- **Limited alternative care options for UASC:** Many migrant children are placed in unregulated informal care arrangements, increasing their vulnerability, making foster care recruitment, formalized extended family care and supervised independent living options as potential alternatives.
- **Inadequate public awareness and prevention efforts:** Traffickers exploit social media for recruitment, yet digital awareness campaigns are limited, requiring sustained multilingual public outreach, school-based education and community engagement strategies.
- **Fragmented data collection and weak coordination:** The absence of centralized and standardized data-sharing mechanisms hinders tracking of TiP cases and victim recovery, necessitating an integrated database, linked case management systems and enhanced multi-sectoral coordination.

Alongside the input shared by informants, the evaluators would also like to highlight secondary findings and recommendations reflecting ongoing challenges and areas for improvements when it comes to addressing TiP and promoting child protection. These derive from the 2024 TiP Report, the Situational Assessment on Victim Care for Trafficking Survivors and the UNICEF Child Protection Needs Assessment for UASC and Refugee Children.

Table 4: Identified Key Findings and Recommendations

Domain	Description and Recommendations
Law Enforcement and Judicial Challenges	<p>Despite progress, law enforcement official complicity and judicial delays remain significant obstacles to effectively prosecuting TiP cases and to protect victims (TiP Report 2024). For example, the judicial process is slow, with cases taking up several years to resolve, leading to survivor disengagement and criminals evading justice. Moreover, victim-witness protections remain weak, and fear of retaliation deters survivors from testifying. Evidentiary challenges also persist, as evidence collection and investigative procedures are inconsistent, leading to case dismissals (Situational Assessment). Recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish specialized courts with dedicated judges and prosecutors to expedite case resolution. • Implement victim-centred investigative approaches to improve evidence collection while minimizing trauma. • Strengthen law enforcement accountability through independent oversight mechanisms to investigate corruption and misconduct. • Introduce whistleblower protections for CSOs/NGOs and journalists reporting official complicity. • Enhance regional cooperation with neighbouring states to track traffickers operating transnationally.
Victim Identification and Protection Measures	<p>Despite improvements in identifying VoTs, many survivors remain undetected or are misidentified as criminals or irregular migrants (TiP Report 2024). Law enforcement screening procedures need improvements, as misidentification can lead to wrongful detention, deportation and re-victimization. VoTs, especially migrants and asylum seekers, often lack access to bilingual legal services, psychological support and safe housing. Shelter availability is limited, and some survivors are placed</p>

	<p>in inappropriate detention facilities, exposing them to further harm (Situational Assessment). Recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardize victim screening protocols across law enforcement, immigration and social services to prevent wrongful detention and ensure access to appropriate protection measures. • Expand trauma-informed and linguistically appropriate victim services, particularly for Venezuelan survivors, ensuring access to bilingual legal aid and psychosocial care. • Increase safe, trauma-informed shelters and ensure victims are housed separately from general detention populations. • Allocate long-term financial and human resources to sustain victim support programmes.
Official Complicity in Trafficking Networks	<p>The involvement of police, immigration and national security officials in TiP networks remains a major barrier to justice (TiP Report 2024). Reports highlight cases of sexual exploitation of detained victims by BCP officers and facilitation of TiP by high-ranking officials, yet no successful prosecutions have taken place. Law enforcement protection of traffickers prevents effective interventions, eroding public trust. Recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressively prosecute corrupt officials and implement zero-tolerance policies for law enforcement involvement in trafficking. • Establish independent oversight mechanisms to monitor law enforcement interactions with vulnerable populations. • Strengthen internal anti-corruption mechanisms within police, immigration, and security agencies to reduce complicity. • Introduce mandatory anti-TiP training for all police and immigration officers, ensuring they comply with ethical standards.
Legal Protections for Migrants and Refugee Children	<p>Trinidad and Tobago lacks a formalized overarching migration policy, leaving migrant and refugee trafficking SoTs at risk of deportation, detention and exploitation (TT TiP Report 2024). Moreover, migrant children face significant barriers to education and healthcare, increasing their vulnerability to forced labour, sexual exploitation and criminal recruitment (UNICEF Child Protection Needs Assessment). Labour trafficking enforcement is also weak, with minimal oversight of informal labour markets, where many migrant workers are exploited. Recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a national migration policy ensuring legal protections for SoTs/VoTs. • Expand education access for migrant and refugee children, with activities to integrate them into formal schooling, vocational training and apprenticeships. • Strengthen labour laws and workplace inspections to combat forced labour, particularly in informal labour markets. • Fully implement the National Action Plan for 2021-2025, with clear benchmarks and regular progress reporting.
Alternative Care and Social Protection for UASC	<p>UASC face inconsistent access to protective care, with many placed in informal, unregulated living arrangements (UNICEF Child Protection Needs Assessment). Foster care options remain limited, and alternative care arrangements often exclude migrant children due to their legal status. Many UASC live with extended family or guardians in informal care, yet these arrangements lack legal</p>

	<p>recognition and oversight, exposing children to neglect, exploitation, or abuse. Recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand foster care recruitment for migrant children, ensuring culturally appropriate placements. • Develop formalized informal care arrangements that recognize extended family caregivers while ensuring child safety. • Establish supervised independent living options for adolescent UASC who prefer autonomy and financial independence. • Strengthen case management services, including bilingual caseworkers, psychologists, and supervisors, to align with international child protection standards.
Public Awareness and Prevention Efforts	<p>There are continued efforts that are needed for public awareness raising, particularly among migrants, youth and informal labour workers. Social media remains a primary recruitment tool for traffickers, yet digital awareness campaigns are still minimal. Limited community engagement in high-risk areas reduces early detection and reporting of TiP cases (TT TiP Report 2024). Recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch sustained, multilingual public awareness campaigns, particularly targeting migrants, low-income communities and at-risk youth. • Utilize social media and digital platforms to counter traffickers' recruitment tactics and provide legal and protection information for migrants. • Integrate anti-trafficking awareness into school curricula, ensuring youth are educated on trafficking risks.
Fragmented Data Collection and Weak Multi-Sectoral Coordination	<p>A lack of centralized and standardized data-sharing mechanisms hinders the tracking of TiP cases, victim recovery and prosecution progress (TT TiP Report 2024). Multiple agencies handle trafficking cases, yet information remains fragmented and varied, making it difficult to track trends (Situational Assessment). Similarly, child protection services lack integrated data systems, limiting evidence-based policymaking (UNICEF Child Protection Needs Assessment). Recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a national integrated database to track TiP cases, victim referrals, and legal proceedings in real-time. • Link case management systems to allow secure, real-time data sharing across agencies. • Conduct longitudinal studies on trafficking interventions to assess their effectiveness and sustainability. • Strengthen cross-sectoral coordination, ensuring information exchange between law enforcement, judicial actors, child protection agencies and NGOs/CSOs.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the findings attained through the evaluation process, organized by OECD-DAC evaluation criteria areas. More detailed information is captured within each respective OECD-DAC section of the evaluation report.

Relevance:

The ASC Programme was highly relevant, as its design and implementation closely aligned with the contextual needs of national institutions, CSOs, and vulnerable populations, including VoTs/SoTs and UASC. A thorough needs assessment process and targeted stakeholder consultations ensured that the programme was evidence-based and tailored to the specific challenges of inter-agency coordination and service access. Moreover, PUNOs collaborated with key national actors based on their mandates and capacities, effectively operationalizing both whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. The ASC ToC was appropriately structured and served as a useful management tool, though evaluators recommended strengthening the articulation of assumptions and sustainability rationale. National relevance was also reinforced through strategic alignment with policy and legal frameworks, and the incorporation of human rights, gender-responsive, and child-sensitive approaches throughout the programme.

Coherence:

The ASC Programme demonstrated strong coherence by aligning with national, regional, and international frameworks and promoting synergy across interventions. Internally, the programme built on previous PUNO-led initiatives, such as the Spotlight Initiative and other counter-trafficking projects, by sustaining key tools like hotlines, mobile apps, and case management systems to enhance victim protection and support. Externally, ASC complemented national systems and leveraged established international and regional platforms for refugee and migrant coordination while reinforcing regional counter-trafficking frameworks through CARICOM and other mechanisms. It also contributed to shared goals under the SDGs, GCM, and relevant international conventions. Importantly, the ASC Programme fostered collaboration among national authorities, CSOs, and international organizations, including through the development of outputs such as the Victim Care Referral Mechanism. However, there are persistent challenges in inter-agency coordination and sustainability of NGO engagement, suggesting the need for more inclusive and structured mechanisms to ensure broader coherence and continuity over time.

Efficiency:

The ASC Programme was implemented efficiently, balancing scope, time, and budget while maintaining high levels of stakeholder engagement and adaptability. Strong programme leadership and structured coordination mechanisms enabled timely output delivery and responsive management. Adaptive strategies, such as real-time risk assessments and flexible budgeting, ensured continued implementation amid emerging challenges. Despite the overall efficiency, areas for improvement were noted in inter-agency coordination, strategic oversight, and capacity constraints, particularly among smaller NGOs. Financially, the programme demonstrated robust management with full budget utilization and a three-month no-cost extension to complete digital case management and shelter upgrades. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) systems were effectively employed, though disparities in partner data collection capacities and lack of dedicated M&E personnel created some limitations. A well-designed Results Measurement Framework supported effective tracking and performance evaluation.

Effectiveness:

The ASC Programme was largely effective in meeting and, in many areas, exceeding its intended outcomes and targets. Out of 23 targets, only four were not fully achieved. Among the remaining targets, three of the four were almost fully achieved. Target shortfalls were mainly linked to lower-than-anticipated referrals of VoTs/SoTs and limited government authorization for user training on case management systems. Nonetheless, the programme's responsiveness to emerging needs—supported by a Training Needs Assessment and the easing of COVID-19 restrictions—enabled significant overachievement of targets in other areas. Stakeholders, including government actors and direct beneficiaries, expressed high satisfaction with the quality and relevance of programme activities and services. Structural barriers such as accessibility limitations and overestimated service uptake targets were identified but did not impede the overall effectiveness of the programme in any notable manner.

Impact:

The ASC Programme contributed to long-term positive changes by strengthening national systems and improving protection environments for VoTs/SoTs. Key impacts included the institutionalization of enhanced case management and referral mechanisms, as well as increased national capacity and commitment to counter-trafficking, evidenced by Trinidad and Tobago's Tier II upgrade in the U.S. TiP Report. The programme also expanded access to essential services, with nearly 3,000 individuals referred for MHPSS and hundreds of UASC and VoTs/SoTs receiving alternative care, which helped prevent institutionalization and homelessness, and promoted social inclusion. Furthermore, the implementation of Transition Plans led to tangible gains in survivor self-sufficiency among 45 VoTs/SoTs. Despite notable achievements, gaps in referral pathways for specialized psychiatric care persist, particularly for children needing mental health assessments or long-term treatment in Trinidad and Tobago.

Sustainability:

The ASC Programme embedded sustainability by institutionalizing referral mechanisms, transitioning responsibilities to national authorities, and strengthening victim service frameworks. Notable measures included the handover of digital case management to the CTU, state-managed shelter refurbishment, and formalized inter-ministerial cooperation. Capacity-building efforts using a ToT model also laid the foundation for sustained knowledge transfer, though deeper integration into government human resource structures is needed. Research outputs, such as needs assessments and situational analyses, continue to support evidence-based policymaking and programming. While these efforts foster long-term engagement, sustainability risks persist due to financial dependency on external funding, potential government deprioritization, and institutional knowledge loss from staff turnover. Future forward, a structured and formalized exit strategy could better support preparedness for programme transition. Nevertheless, ASC demonstrates strong potential for scalability and replication in similar contexts, with stakeholders identifying critical areas for improvement in reintegration, legal coordination, staff safety, labour protection, and regional collaboration.

5.0 LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

The following lessons learned and good practices were identified through the evaluation process, including direct input from evaluation informants and desk review data. These lessons learned and good practices can be used to inform future interventions by the PUNOs, as well as national stakeholders in Trinidad and Tobago.

1. Adaptive Programming is Key to Managing Institutional Change and Bureaucratic Constraints

Lesson Learned: The ASC Programme highlighted that adaptability is essential when implementing joint initiatives in evolving institutional landscapes. Originally, the MSDFS was to lead the piloting of a new case management system and establishment of emergency shelters for VoTs. However, due to internal delays and shifting mandates, these responsibilities were redirected to the Ministry of National Security, which holds the national counter-trafficking mandate and includes the CTU. Despite initial setbacks, the Programme's flexible management approach enabled it to reassess timelines, reassign leadership, and realign delivery mechanisms without compromising quality or outcomes.

Good Practice: Rather than developing a new system from scratch, the ASC Programme strategically linked its case management initiative to an existing GBV system already established under the Office of the Prime Minister. This adaptation not only reduced the timeframe for implementation—given that core infrastructure and frameworks were already in place—but also significantly reduced the projected budget, freeing up funds for critical capacity-building and shelter upgrades. Additionally, continuous technical assistance was provided to MSDFS staff, ensuring institutional continuity despite changes in leadership. Through persistent engagement, evidence-based advocacy, and risk-responsive management, the Programme ensured the continuation of essential services even amidst shifting government priorities. This flexible, systems-aware model is replicable in contexts where mandates and roles across ministries evolve during implementation.

2. Victim-Centred Design Increases Relevance and Strengthens Outcomes

Lesson Learned: Ensuring that beneficiaries have a voice in programme design and implementation significantly improves the relevance, accessibility, and impact of services. Throughout the ASC Programme, continuous engagement with VoTs/SoTs and migrants revealed diverse and evolving needs—including access to information on legal rights, psychosocial care, protection from GBV, and self-defence skills. Monthly coordination meetings with the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) also facilitated review of medium- and high-risk trafficking cases and allowed frontline actors to identify gaps in real-time. However, national-level empirical data on victim needs and trafficking trends remains limited and irregularly updated, posing challenges for broader planning and policy responses.

Good Practice: To ensure responsiveness, a dedicated migrant community liaison was embedded into the Programme by FPATT to gather community-level intelligence and feedback from beneficiaries. Their input directly influenced service adaptation over time, ensuring that programme activities and approach reflected lived realities. For instance, consultations highlighted the need to address young pregnancies and financial vulnerabilities, which subsequently informed new areas of support. The Programme also involved local experts actively working with migrants to ensure technical relevance. By engaging SoTs in shaping interventions and maintaining adaptive service models, the Programme fostered trust, improved uptake of services, and ensured that activities were culturally and contextually appropriate. This participatory and feedback-driven model offers a practical blueprint for inclusive protection programming in diverse environments.

3. Government-Led Implementation Enhances Ownership, Reach, and Sustainability

Lesson Learned: National ownership and visibility significantly improve the reach and sustainability of anti-trafficking initiatives. The ASC Programme's approach to aligning its design and implementation with government strategies from the outset secured early buy-in from key stakeholders, including the CTU and MSDFS. This enabled a smoother operational transition, deeper engagement of public institutions, and a more direct link between Programme outcomes and national plans.

Good Practice: By enabling ministries to lead public engagement initiatives, such as the Walk Against TiP, the Programme supported increased awareness at both community and national levels. The Walk attracted over 800 participants and was promoted using government networks, demonstrating the added value of government leadership in public-facing activities. Furthermore, the co-facilitation of capacity-building sessions by both government and NGO actors provided space for mutual learning and highlighted community- and system-level responses to TiP. The Programme's phased transition to national authorities—including efforts to step back and position government partners as the lead—was supported by technical mentoring and a ToT model. This model contributed to the development of a cohort of certified trainers capable of sustaining community and institutional learning on counter-trafficking. These practices showcase a scalable approach to institutional capacity-building and localization.

4. Inclusion of Community-Based Organizations Enhances Reach and Local Ownership

Lesson Learned: The ASC Programme underscored the critical role of small NGOs and community-based organizations in enhancing victim identification and support mechanisms. Initially, these actors were not consistently engaged in formal referral processes or national policy discussions, which limited the breadth of protection responses. However, as the Programme evolved, their strategic inclusion brought greater reach and contextual understanding to victim support interventions. However, implementing partners—including smaller NGOs and CSOs—were less frequently brought together through formal cross-organizational activities/forums. Informants suggested that the lack of planned opportunities for cross-organizational engagement between implementing partners limited knowledge-sharing and coordination opportunities. To address this, informants recommended:

- Regular joint meetings among implementing partners to foster collaboration and align activities with national strategies.
- Structured lessons-learned sessions to ensure that best practices are institutionalized across all partners.
- Increased engagement opportunities with national authorities to connect smaller actors with broader national-level anti-TiP, child protection and GBV response efforts.

Good Practice: The integration of organizations like La Casita into referral pathways proved especially impactful, where these organizations became key partners in identifying and assisting VoTs/SoTs. These actors, trusted within their communities, successfully identified vulnerable individuals and referred them to appropriate services, contributing to more effective case management and improved prosecution outcomes.

5. Structured Stakeholder Engagement Promotes System Coherence and Role Clarity

Lesson Learned: In contexts where multiple actors operate simultaneously in victim protection, service fragmentation and role confusion can undermine effectiveness. The ASC Programme recognized the need to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue to streamline processes and improve coordination. The absence of a centralized, regularly updated inter-agency roadmap created gaps in shared understanding among service providers. While the programme's referral mapping process helped identify the various actors/services available, informants shared that many agencies continued to operate in silos. They emphasized the ongoing national need for a more structured, inter-agency framework, particularly through the full implementation of the Referral Mechanism vis-à-vis the establishment of the Victim Care Referral Group.

Good Practice: To address challenges with fragmentation, the Programme convened targeted stakeholder engagement sessions that culminated in the creation and adoption of the formal Victim Care Referral Mechanism. For example, the ASC Programme addressed the need for improved collaboration through a stakeholder engagement event in February 2024, which brought together government, CSOs, and international agencies. This was followed by a March 2024 workshop attended by over 50 representatives, which clarified stakeholder roles and reinforced the importance of collaborative efforts. These activities informed the finalization and formal adoption of the Referral Mechanism in September 2024. This collaborative tool was the result of a participatory process involving 16 organizations from across government, civil society, faith-based groups, and international partners. It clarified institutional roles, aligned referral processes, and reinforced inter-agency accountability. Importantly, it demonstrated that co-development of coordination tools not only improves service delivery but also deepens commitment from all actors involved. This approach can serve as a model for similar multi-agency programming contexts, particularly in areas where TiP frameworks are still emerging. Going forward, institutionalizing regular cross-organizational learning sessions and joint planning meetings would further embed this collaborative model and enhance national coordination systems.

6. Flexible Delivery Modalities Increase Access and Participation in Services

Lesson Learned: Persistent low attendance in vocational training and MHPSS sessions among endline beneficiaries highlighted the barriers faced by vulnerable populations in accessing structured services. Feedback from beneficiaries revealed a range of practical challenges, including limited or no access to internet, changing work schedules (particularly during holidays), relocation, health issues, and lack of childcare. These realities constrained engagement despite the relevance of the activities.

Good Practice: The Programme demonstrated responsiveness by adopting a more flexible, participant-centred approach. Daily contact from the Project Officer acted as a reminder and form of encouragement, while a revised asynchronous model allowed individuals to access training content at their convenience. This flexibility not only accommodated those with competing priorities but also reduced attrition among participants. Additionally, the Programme expanded its target group to include vulnerable migrants at risk of abuse and exploitation, recognizing overlapping vulnerabilities. This approach showcases the value of adaptability in programme delivery and the need to design services that account for the lived realities of beneficiaries—especially those in transient or informal work settings.

7. Maintaining Contact with VoTs is Critical for Continuity of Care

Lesson Learned: The PUNOs identified that several newly identified VoTs absconded from assigned state accommodations shortly after placement. A key underlying factor was the difficulty in maintaining communication with victims, whose personal phones had been confiscated for investigative purposes. This prevented case workers from coordinating timely referrals and follow-ups, thereby impacting victims' access to care.

Good Practice: To mitigate this challenge, contact with VoTs was facilitated through landlords or on-site support staff. As a more sustainable solution, the provision of sim cards for newly identified victims was proposed. This would enable case management teams to maintain secure communication throughout the recovery process without compromising investigative procedures. Ensuring reliable communication channels between vulnerable individuals and support services is essential for effective protection programming and can be adopted in other settings where legal protocols restrict direct access to clients.

8. Operationalizing Global Frameworks Requires Ongoing Capacity Strengthening

Lesson Learned: Although the ASC Programme was well aligned with global frameworks such as the 4P approach, the GCM, and the SDGs, national actors reported challenges in translating these commitments into practical action. Despite

recognizing the importance of global treaties and norms, both government and civil society stakeholders expressed difficulty in demonstrating how their day-to-day work supported broader international obligations.

To bridge this gap, ongoing technical assistance and accessible guidance are needed—particularly for CSOs—to help them situate their efforts within global frameworks. Stakeholders indicated that this would improve their ability to advocate for policy reforms, secure funding, and report on results in a way that reflects international standards. Tailored workshops, hands-on policy labs, and simplified mapping tools could support this process and strengthen coherence between local interventions and global commitments.

9. Strategic Governance Enhances Coordination and Oversight

Lesson Learned: While operational coordination was generally strong, the absence of a centralized Steering Committee, which was originally envisioned but never fully operationalized due to significant delays with Cabinet approval, limited increased strategic alignment across partners. Without a centralized mechanism for strategic oversight, communication between different partners varied, with each PUNO agency receiving updates from their signed partners separately rather than through a consolidated coordination process. This lack of high-level coordination meant that while activities were implemented successfully at the operational level, there was no structured consensus mechanism for strategic adjustments or discussion on future areas of work. Future consortium-style initiatives would benefit from early establishment of a high-level governance mechanism to facilitate strategic planning, consensus-building, and adaptive management. This structure could also streamline reporting and stakeholder engagement across agencies.

10. Clear Frameworks Across Consortium Partners Improve Programme Efficiency

Lesson Learned: Differences in internal systems and processes between the PUNOs occasionally led to administrative delays in approvals, reporting, and modifications and for expectations given human resourcing. While IOM and UNICEF shared relatively similar approval systems and project management structures, UNFPA had distinct internal procedures, which at times resulted in differences in change management and human resource management processes. These variations underscore the importance of harmonizing operational expectations from the outset. Stakeholders highlighted the potential value of a consortium-wide MoU to align expectations around project governance, human resources, budget adjustments, and change management. Such agreements can foster efficiency and enhance collaborative implementation.

11. Transition Planning Supports Long-Term Reintegration of Survivors

Good Practice: The ASC Programme emphasized survivor transition planning as a core component of sustainable protection. The creation of individual transition plans supported long-term self-sufficiency and reduced dependency on external assistance among VoTs/SoTs. Plans were developed with active VoT/SoT participation, ensuring that interventions were tailored to their expressed needs and aspirations. This participatory approach better equipped VoT/SoT with the skills necessary for self-reliance and reintegration into society.

By the end of the Programme, 54 transition plans had been completed, with 45 VoTs/SoTs achieving independence. This outcome illustrates the value of structured planning and individualized support, supported by the transition plans, and offers a promising model for integration or reintegration strategies in similar contexts.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Developed through the evaluation process, the following recommendations are intended to enhance relevant actors' planning methodologies and implementation processes in the area of combatting TiP and GBV and promoting child protection. These recommendations seek to offer actionable insights to inform the design, implementation and improvement of future initiatives.

1. Strengthen Exit and Continuity Planning to Prevent Service Disruptions (Priority level: High)

Applicable parties: PUNOs, government institutions (including CATT, MSDSF, NTFATIP and WCDCV) and non-government service providers

Ongoing challenges pertaining to access to services for children/UASC, regarding MHPSS and alternative care are persistent in Trinidad and Tobago. For those who did access services, disruptions can have notable consequences, including increased exposure to trafficking, psychological distress, and a loss of legal and case management support, potentially forcing children into unsafe or informal living arrangements.

Though UNICEF and CATT are pursuing ongoing work in the area of service provision for children/UASC, future programmes may wish to incorporate a structured exit strategy/plan(s) that ensures ongoing access to critical services, where feasible. Doing so could help to mitigate the aforementioned risks, while supporting enhanced local ownership and sustainability planning. To facilitate exit processes, sustainability roadmaps or exit plans should be co-developed with beneficiary institutions, outlining clear post-programme transition strategies that focus on the following key areas:

- *Roles and Responsibilities:* Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the transition. This includes implementing partners, consultants, donors and any other relevant actors. Detail what ongoing supports will be available for implementing partners after the programme ends. This includes advisory support that will be provided by consortium organizations.
- *Continued Objectives and Activities:* Identify the overarching objectives of the transition and determine what key activities need to continue to achieve these objectives. Develop a work plan for these activities, including responsible parties and timelines.
- *Timelines and Expectations:* Establish a detailed timeline for the transition process, outlining key milestones and deadlines. Clearly set expectations for what needs to be achieved at each stage of the exit process.
- *Risk Assessment:* Conduct a thorough assessment of potential risks that could impact the transition. This should cover financial risks, scheduling delays, socio-political risks and any relevant institutional frameworks. Work with beneficiary institutions to develop appropriate strategies to mitigate these risks.
- *Resource Requirements:* Outline the key resources required to sustain the benefits of the project for the foreseeable future, including any internally pre-approved funding and associated processes with timelines. Identify potential donors and other actors that can fund future iterations of the activities. Create profiles for all relevant stakeholders, detailing their roles, responsibilities and/or capabilities.

2. Utilize Feedback Mechanisms to Improve Programme Design for Vocational Training Cohorts (Priority level: Medium)

Applicable parties: PUNOs and non-government service providers involved in vocational training

Participant feedback from the first programme cohort revealed challenges related to time commitments and structural barriers, which led to adjustments such as removing the internship component after the first cohort. However, additional barriers for programme completion seem to persist for participants, that is limiting their capacity to complete the programme, requiring attention in future programming (40 out of 67 participants completed the programme). To enhance

programme accessibility and effectiveness, future iterations should incorporate a robust feedback mechanism that collects participant insights early and consistently throughout implementation. These mechanisms do not need to be cumbersome and time-consuming formalized efforts. An example could include simply having check-ins with participants to learn about their experiences to date during initial sessions. Adjustments should be made to align with participants' schedules to minimize undue burdens, and to ensure that training content remains relevant, practical, and feasible. Additionally, piloting programme components before full-scale implementation can help to identify and address challenges proactively. In doing so, future initiatives would better support ongoing accountability to affected populations, by incorporating the feedback provided by target groups.

3. Address Accessibility Challenges in Training Formats for Inclusive Participation (Priority level: Medium)

Applicable parties: PUNOs and non-government service providers involved in vocational training

The use of online training during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed digital access and literacy gaps among endline beneficiaries, which were later mitigated by the switch to in-person training. However, this transition may have introduced new barriers, particularly for elderly individuals, PWDs, and working participants who were dealing with work scheduling conflicts. To maximize inclusivity in future trainings, programme teams should:

- Ensure physical accessibility at training venues to accommodate PWDs and elderly participants.
- Offer multiple session timings (e.g., morning, evening, and weekend options) to better align with participants' work schedules.
- Explore hybrid training models that combine in-person sessions with accessible digital components, ensuring that participants with limited mobility or work constraints can still engage.
- Invest in adaptive technology to support the inclusion of individuals with hearing or visual impairments, such as sign language interpreters, audio descriptions, and assistive digital tools.

4. Promote Institutional Integration of Key Deliverables (Priority level: High)

Applicable parties: PUNOs, government institutions (including CATT, MSDSF, NTFATIP and WCDCV) and non-government service providers

Institutional strengthening and national ownership are critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the ASC Programme's outcomes. While the programme successfully embedded key frameworks such as the Victim Care Referral Mechanism, Digital Case Management System and Training Plan, ongoing government commitment and resource allocation are required to maintain and expand these systems. The continued engagement of third-party actors, including UN agencies, NGOs/CSOs and training agencies, will be essential in sustaining capacity-building efforts and ensuring a coordinated response to TiP. Additionally, labour trafficking remains a significant area of concern, necessitating stronger inspection mechanisms and legal protections for vulnerable workers. To promote the sustainability of efforts made to-date, the following sub-recommendations should be considered in future programming:

- *Formalizing the Victim Care Referral Mechanism:* The Victim Care Referral Mechanism provides a structured framework for coordinating victim identification, case management and service provision among government agencies and non-state actors. However, ensuring its long-term functionality requires clear governance structures, accountability mechanisms and institutional buy-in.
 - Enforce the mandate of the Victim Care Referral Group to serve as the centralized coordinating body for all victim protection and service provision efforts, with participation from MoNS, MoL, social protection agencies, and key NGOs/CSOs.

- Legislate the Victim Care Referral Mechanism by integrating its Terms of Reference into national counter-trafficking SOPs/regulations, ensuring its formal adoption and long-term operation under the CTU.
 - Ensure financial sustainability by advocating for a dedicated government budget allocation for case referrals, service provider coordination and regular biannual referral mechanism review meetings.
- *Ensuring the Sustainability of the Digital Case Management System:* The digital case management system is a critical tool for tracking VoTs, facilitating case referrals and ensuring service coordination. Its sustainability depends on secure government ownership, institutionalized data governance and long-term technical support.
 - Finalize system integration by ensuring full interoperability between the TiP case management system and national GBV and Child Protection databases, allowing real-time data sharing while maintaining survivor confidentiality.
 - Assign dedicated personnel within CTU to oversee the technical maintenance, data security and system upgrades.
 - Secure long-term financial commitments for system maintenance, exploring government budget allocations, donor support and technical assistance agreements with partners such as UNDP.
 - Establish a governance framework/MoU that mandates standardized data entry and case reporting across government agencies, ensuring accuracy, security and accountability in victim service coordination.
- *Institutionalizing the Training Plan:* Capacity-building efforts must be institutionalized within government structures to prevent knowledge attrition and ensure that trained personnel can consistently apply best practices. While the Training Plan developed under ASC provides a strong foundation, its sustainability requires systematic coordination and structured pathways for training delivery.
 - Mandate the inclusion of the ASC Training Plan within the official human resource career progression processes and curricula of police academies, labour inspectorates, judicial training institutions and social service training programs.
 - Reinforce the ToT model structure within national institutions by formulating a contract with the third-party technical experts as outlined in the Training Plan.
 - Consider the development of an e-learning platform to support continuous training delivery, particularly for law enforcement, social workers and frontline service providers, ensuring access to materials despite staff turnover.
- *Strengthening the Labour Inspectorate to Address TiP:* Labour exploitation is a significant but underreported component of trafficking in Trinidad and Tobago, particularly affecting migrant workers in agriculture, domestic work and informal sectors. Labour inspectors require greater authority, legal protections and investigative training to detect, and address forced labour cases effectively.
 - Align the legal definitions of labour exploitation and forced labour with TiP frameworks to ensure that labour inspectors can identify and refer potential trafficking cases without requiring criminal justice intervention.
 - Expand the mandate of labour inspectors by integrating trafficking risk assessments into workplace inspections, ensuring that forced labour cases are flagged and referred to CTU.
 - Continue to integrate labour inspectors within the CTU, ensuring seamless case management and coordination between labour enforcement bodies, social services and law enforcement agencies.

5. Strengthen Training Coordination to Minimize Overlap and Enhance Complementarity (Priority level: Medium)

Applicable parties: PUNOs, government institutions (including CTU, CATT and MSDSF) and non-government service providers

To maximize training effectiveness and minimize redundancy amongst training participants, future interventions should establish a coordinating mechanism—potentially managed by one of the national inter-agency platforms on TiP, VoT/SoT/UASC protection—to systematically track training agendas across participating agencies. While frequent refresher sessions are necessary for reinforcing key learnings, informants noted that multiple agencies delivered similar training content, including detailed reviews of national legislation and policies, leading to some content overlap. If future capacity-building initiatives are planned by the PUNOs or other UN agencies, e.g., UNODC, UNDP and UNHCR, there may be opportunities for leveraging UN coordination platforms to prevent content repetition and promote joint training delivery, where appropriate.

6. Position the ASC Programme as a Successful and Replicable Model for Counter-Trafficking Across CARICOM (Priority level: Medium)

Applicable parties: MMPTF and PUNOs

The ASC Programme provided a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to strengthening counter-trafficking efforts, improving victim protection mechanisms and enhancing national and regional coordination in Trinidad and Tobago. Its strategic focus on institutional capacity-building, inter-agency coordination and survivor-centred service delivery positioned ASC as more than just an isolated intervention—it became a transformative model demonstrating how integrated counter-trafficking responses can enhance national protection frameworks and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Given its successes, the ASC model has strong potential for adaptation and replication across the CARICOM region. . To operationalize this, the following actions are recommended:

- *Take Stock of Lessons Learned, Achievements and Evaluation Findings to Develop a Strategic Brief:* The PUNO UN Agencies or MMPTF, through ongoing collaborative structures, may wish to develop a lessons learned review/brief of the ASC Programme's implementation. This should include an analysis of key lessons learned, strategic achievements, major milestones and evaluation findings to assess the model's applicability across CARICOM states.
- *Explore the Potential for Replication and Adaptation Across CARICOM Member States:* Given shared challenges as well as identified successes across CARICOM, the PUNOs may wish to explore where and how ASC's core elements—structured referral mechanisms, digital case management, structured capacity-building, direct service provision and public awareness—can be adapted and scaled. This may include identifying structural and design aspects of ASC and including those as new intervention proposals. This may also include engaging CARICOM structures/platforms to position the ASC Programme as a highlighted model.
- *Explore Opportunities for Regional Learning and Joint Programming:* Future-forward, PUNOs may wish to facilitate transnational knowledge exchange among key ASC actors (incl. CTU) through regional training workshops, peer-learning exchanges and study visits to share lessons learned and good practices. It would be beneficial to potentially have explorations for national actors to learn from Tier 1 countries – but also for national actors to share their learnings with other Caribbean countries that could benefit from the advancements in Trinidad and Tobago.

7. Optimize PUNO Coordination and Standardization in Future Consortium-Style Programmes (Priority level: Medium)

Applicable parties: PUNOs

Future consortium-style programmes may wish to prioritize the development of a MoU among PUNOs at the inception of the programme to streamline administrative, financial and human resource management processes. The ASC Programme highlighted inconsistencies in approval systems and change management procedures across PUNOs, leading to occasional delays in reporting, and operational approvals. A pre-agreed MoU would provide a standardized framework for approvals, reporting and financial modifications, ensuring that change management processes are aligned across PUNOs before programme implementation. Additionally, given the variance in staffing structures between agencies, the MoU should include clear expectations for human resourcing commitments, including expectations, responsibility, timelines and access to standardized templates (e.g., when it comes to reporting).

8. Promote Direct Alignment between PUNO and Consortium Interventions within the MSDCF, United Nations Resident Coordinator Office and Relevant International/Regional Frameworks (Priority level: Medium)

Applicable parties: PUNOs

Future UN agency consortium interventions may wish to actively identify ways in which the intervention directly contributes to the MSDCF and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office strategies/mandates to enhance programme visibility and collective impact efforts. While the ASC Programme's contribution to MSDCF outcome areas was recognized in its proposal and by the evaluators, this alignment was not necessarily emphasized nor understood by partners throughout programme implementation. Strengthening this connection—particularly by integrating specific MSDCF outcome areas and their ToC—would provide a clearer demonstration of ASC's collective impact within broader regional frameworks.

Additionally, given the MSDCF Joint Steering Committee's role in overseeing regional UN interventions, embedding the ASC Programme more explicitly within its structure would support long-term sustainability and facilitate its replication across other countries. At the country level, Country Implementation Plans serve as key coordination outlines that could provide a basis for this engagement.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator Office played a key role in advocacy efforts under the ASC Programme, highlighting its successes and calling for continued engagement from national authorities. Building on this momentum, future interventions should formalize this form of collaboration.

Lastly, future programmes may wish to also directly promote the alignment between programme outcomes and standards, guidelines and recommendations outlined in international and regional frameworks. Providing structured guidance on how CSOs and NGOs can consequently align their advocacy and efforts through their partnership with PUNOs is also recommended. For example, this alignment can increase the visibility of partners as well as improve their funding applications and programme designs.

9. Strengthen Human Resourcing and Reporting Capacity in Consortium-Style Programmes (Priority level: High)

Applicable parties: PUNOs

Future consortium-style programmes can better plan for adequate human resource allocation to prevent staff overload. The ASC Programme highlighted challenges in workload distribution, particularly within IOM as the convening PUNO. To

enhance programme administration, future initiatives may wish to allocate additional resources to core administrative areas such as staffing, reporting and monitoring of activities and targets.

A key success of the ASC Programme was the alignment of PUNO results frameworks with targets, ensuring data collection met reporting requirements. However, the absence of a dedicated MEAL specialist placed additional workload pressures on teams, highlighting the need for a full-time MEAL officer or a part-time/temporary consultant to support the design of M&E methodologies and to undertake data collection and analysis. Additionally, while internal coordination with the donor was strong, reporting processes were delayed due to the multi-layered review structure across different units. Streamlining review processes and integrating dedicated MEAL and reporting personnel could improve efficiency and reduce administrative strain.

10. Enhance Capacity Support for Smaller Implementing Partners – Especially with M&E Data Collection and Reporting (Priority level: Medium)

Applicable parties: PUNOs

Future programming should integrate structured capacity assessments and tailored partnership support plans for smaller implementing partners to ensure effective programme delivery. While the ASC Programme successfully engaged local NGOs and CSOs, many faced human resource and logistical constraints, particularly when executing large-scale activities such as awareness campaigns, training sessions and when reporting back to the PUNOs on the outcome of activities. Future initiatives could scale activities appropriately to match partner capacities or provide additional logistical and staffing support to address capacity gaps.

As an example, to address M&E reporting challenges, future programmes may wish to incorporate sessions at the outset to align MEAL expectations, ensuring clarity on reporting timelines, data collection methodologies and evaluation participation. Partnership agreements could also explicitly reference the Results Monitoring Framework and outline data collection and reporting expectations. Additionally, the PUNOs can provide templates or direct support to partners who require assistance with data collection/means of verification. This is especially the case when it relates to reporting and collecting data on one-off service delivery events—such as food/NFI distribution, temporary MHPSS or case management referrals.

11. Institutionalize the Training Plan and ToT Model in Workforce Development and Career Progression (Priority level: High)

Applicable parties: PUNOs, government institutions (including CATT, MSDSF, NTFATIP and WDCDV) and non-government service providers

To ensure the long-term sustainability of training efforts under the ASC Programme, it is essential for national authorities to fully integrate the Training Plan into institutional human resource management structures and career progression pathways. The ToT model has laid the foundation for institutional knowledge transfer, with key stakeholders already cascading training within their organizations. However, to ensure systematic and standardized capacity-building, training must be formally embedded in staff development frameworks across government agencies and non-governmental organizations. This includes making participation in key training modules a requirement for certain frontline staff, law enforcement and case management personnel, ensuring that newly recruited professionals receive the necessary skills to identify, screen, refer and support VoTs, SoTs and UASC. Additionally, establishing a certification mechanism linked to

career progression could incentivize continued learning and professional development in the field of TiP prevention and victim protection.

Further collaboration between training experts and national authorities is recommended to refine and expand the Training Plan, particularly to ensure its applicability for non-governmental personnel involved in victim care, case management and survivor reintegration. Additionally, periodic refresher courses and external quality assurance mechanisms should be introduced over the short-term to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of training delivery.

12. Promote the Use of Research Products for Advocacy, Framework Development and Future Programming Proposals (Priority level: High)

Applicable parties: PUNOs, government institutions (including CATT, MSDSF, NTFATIP and WCDCV) and non-government service providers

The ASC Programme's research outputs have played a critical role in strengthening the evidence base on TiP and child protection in Trinidad and Tobago. To maximize the sustainability and long-term impact of these deliverables, stakeholders should prioritize the systematic use of research findings in defining key issues, shaping national actions and guiding future PUNO interventions.

For example, research insights could be integrated into national anti-trafficking strategies, migration policies and victim protection frameworks to address service gaps and enhance institutional responses. Additionally, findings can serve as advocacy tools to mobilize resources and strengthen multi-sectoral engagement, particularly by developing policy briefs and strategic materials that inform decision-makers on priority areas such as survivor-centred legal aid, specialized shelters and labour protections.

Future programming should also be guided by ASC research findings to ensure alignment with national needs and international best practices. This includes incorporating research insights into project concept notes so that future interventions address critical gaps identified in the ASC Programme.

13. Strengthen and Expand Interventions to Address Ongoing Structural and Systematic Gaps Identified in the ASC Programme and By Secondary Research (Priority level: High)

Applicable parties: PUNOs, government institutions (including CATT, MSDSF, NTFATIP and WCDCV) and non-government service providers

Given the ASC Programme's strong potential for scalability and replication, future efforts should focus on efforts to address the ongoing gaps and challenges that were identified in this evaluation. PUNOs, national authorities and NGOs/CSOs may wish to specifically design interventions that consider the following priority areas:

Enhancing Return and Reintegration Processes

- Strengthen pre-return coordination with country-of-origin authorities to ensure state care arrangements are confirmed before return.
- Develop structured reintegration pathways and or monitoring processes for VoTs/SoTs and UASC, ensuring a continuum of care and access to legal, medical and psychosocial support in their countries of origin.
- Promote alternatives to return, particularly for minors, by strengthening regularization pathways and long-term care solutions.

Strengthening Prosecution Efforts and Legal Protections

- Expand access to survivor-centred legal aid to support VoTs/SoTs in seeking justice while ensuring their safety throughout legal proceedings.
- Improve witness protection measures by providing secure housing options for survivors engaged in court cases.
- Enhance law enforcement-judicial coordination to reduce case backlogs, improve evidence collection and address corruption within the justice system.
- Fully implement the *National Plan of Action Against Trafficking Persons* to align prosecution efforts with international standards.

Ensuring the Safety and Security of TiP Responders

- Develop risk mitigation protocols and safety training for frontline workers, including trainers, CSOs and legal aid providers handling high-risk TiP cases.
- Strengthen police-CSO collaboration to ensure security provisions for those engaging in victim identification, case management and survivor assistance.
- Establish a dedicated reporting mechanism for threats and security concerns faced by TiP responders.

Addressing Labour Exploitation and Strengthening Workforce Protections

- Enhance the legal protections and investigative authority of labour inspectors, ensuring they can effectively identify and prosecute cases of forced labour and labour exploitation.
- Standardize training on criminal and legal definitions related to forced labour and TiP, ensuring alignment across law enforcement and frontline service providers.
- Increase workplace inspections and employer accountability mechanisms to prevent labour exploitation.

Improving Victim Identification and Protection Mechanisms

- Establish standardized screening protocols across law enforcement, immigration and social services to prevent the wrongful detention and criminalization of VoTs/SoTs and UASC.
- Expand safe accommodation and alternative care options for UASC, including formalized extended family care, supervised independent living and foster care recruitment.
- Continue to strengthen inter-agency cooperation on victim referrals to ensure timely access to specialized services.

Advancing Legal Protections for Migrants and VoTs/SoTs

- Develop a national migration policy that incorporates protections for VoTs/SoTs, prevents involuntary returns and provides regularization pathways.
- Strengthen labour laws and enforcement mechanisms to prevent migrant exploitation and ensure fair working conditions.

Expanding Public Awareness and Prevention Efforts

- Launch sustained, multilingual public awareness campaigns using social media, community outreach and school-based education to prevent TiP and exploitation.

Strengthening Data Collection and Multi-Sectoral Coordination

- Improve interoperability between case management systems to enable real-time data sharing across agencies.
- Conduct longitudinal studies on TiP intervention effectiveness to inform evidence-based policymaking and future programme design.

- Enhance cross-sectoral coordination, ensuring effective information exchange between law enforcement, judicial bodies, social services and NGOs/CSOs.

14. Leverage the International Classification Standard for Trafficking in Persons and contribute to the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (Priority level: Medium)

Applicable parties: PUNOs, government institutions (including CATT, MSDSF, NTFATIP and WCDCV) and non-government service providers

To enhance data collection on TiP and ensure alignment with international standards, the GoRTT, CSOs, and UN agencies may wish to adopt systematic, standardized, and secure data-sharing mechanisms that align with the International Classification Standard for Trafficking in Persons (ICS-TIP) and contribute to the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC).^{52,53}

A key step in improving TiP data collection is standardizing data recording and classification in accordance with ICS-TIP guidelines. This requires all agencies involved in victim identification, case management, and service provision to collect and categorize data in a harmonised manner, ensuring comparability, consistency, and reliability across institutions. To facilitate this, structured training should be provided to frontline officers, case managers, and relevant stakeholders on how to classify and input data according to ICS-TIP to minimize reporting discrepancies. Additionally, the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for data collection, categorisation, and reporting will help ensure compliance with ICS-TIP classifications and support more accurate national and regional TiP statistics.

Beyond data standardization, inter-agency coordination and data-sharing mechanisms should be strengthened to improve completeness and accuracy in TiP case records. Establishing formal data-sharing agreements between the CTU, law enforcement agencies, CSOs, and service providers as applicable would ensure a more coordinated approach in tracking TiP cases. The digital case management system represents a positive step forward in this regard, serving as a centralized and secure database, allowing real-time data input and retrieval while safeguarding victim confidentiality and data protection regulations. Moreover, regular multi-stakeholder working groups should be convened to review TiP data trends, reporting gaps, and challenges, fostering collaborative problem-solving and data management improvements (i.e., through mechanisms such as the WCDCV).

The GoRTT and CSOs may also wish to consider contributing data to the CTDC. Contributing data to the CTDC provides governments and CSOs with access to a global repository of trafficking data, enabling them to identify trends, emerging trafficking routes, and vulnerabilities more effectively. By integrating national data into this global evidence base, stakeholders can benchmark their anti-trafficking efforts, enhance data-driven policymaking, and improve targeted interventions for prevention and victim protection. Additionally, participation in the CTDC fosters international collaboration, allowing governments and CSOs to leverage best practices, strengthen cross-border coordination, and secure technical support for improving national counter-trafficking strategies.

By implementing these measures, TiP data collection will become more structured, internationally aligned, and actionable, leading to better victim identification, stronger policy responses, and enhanced contributions to global counter-trafficking efforts. These improvements will not only support national efforts but will also ensure that data-driven interventions contribute to the global fight against trafficking, strengthening the overall protection environment for survivors.

⁵² IOM and UNODC. 2023. International Classification Standard for Administrative Data on Trafficking in Persons (ICS-TIP). Available [here](#).

⁵³ The Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative. Available [here](#).

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