



People fleeing conflict or persecution face an increased risk of becoming survivors or witnesses of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) before, during, and after their journey (IOM, MMC & UNHCR, 2024). This has significant negative impacts on the well-being of newcomers in the Netherlands (Pharos, 2018b).

Project **SAMEN**, carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Médecins du Monde the Netherlands (Mdm) from September 2022 to August 2024, aims to raise awareness of SGBV among migrants and professionals in the Netherlands and to guide affected newcomers to support services.

The recommendations report outlines the lessons from two years of **SAMEN**. This infosheet summarizes the recommendations for migrant organizations and cultural mediators.

Visit the [project website](#) for more information on the SAMEN project.

[Click here for the full report.](#)



## RECOMMENDATION 1

Make the work of migrant organizations and cultural mediators visible by uniting, communicating, and informing. Joining an umbrella organization or having a clear overview of activities on the organization's website are examples to enhance visibility.

Migrant organizations and cultural mediators play a crucial role in combating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) because they are often in direct contact with migrant communities, who tend to trust these professionals more. As a result, these professionals can detect cases of SGBV more quickly. Unfortunately, migrant organizations and cultural mediators are often not sufficiently visible to other service providers, leading to their important role being unrecognized. Clear communication about their activities and collaboration with other organizations can strengthen their position. Joining networking initiatives, umbrella organizations, or online overviews of regional services are concrete first steps.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

Facilitate accessible and informative exchanges between professionals and migrants to raise awareness about SGBV, available support services and to support professionals in reaching out to migrant communities.

Many migrant organizations and cultural mediators have extensive networks within migrant communities, while service providers often struggle to connect with these groups. At the same time, newcomers frequently lack clear information about available support services in the Netherlands and tend to have less trust in formal support providers. Information sessions and exchanges between migrants and organizations like MdM can help build trust and clarify questions and misconceptions about the Dutch healthcare system.

Migrant organizations and cultural mediators can (co-) facilitate these sessions using various toolkits, such as this one from [Voice of all Women and Pharos](#) or [this one from Médecins du Monde and Amsterdam UMC](#).

## RECOMMENDATION 3

Explore available support services for migrant survivors of SGBV, seek their advice and refer migrant survivors when necessary.

Migrants often struggle accessing necessary specialized care or shelter (de Schrijver et al., 2022; Pointer, 2023). To improve migrants' access to support services, migrant organizations and cultural mediators can actively direct survivors to formal support services where possible, with their consent. A brief overview of support services can be found [here](#), and municipalities often provide detailed lists of organizations on their websites.

Additionally, organizations like Veilig Thuis, the Sexual Assault Centers, or Victim Support Netherlands offer advice for professionals. Migrants, migrant organizations, and cultural mediators can contact these organizations anonymously for advice, either for themselves or on behalf of others.



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