



DemandAT - Project Summary

Project context and objectives

Should consumers be held responsible for exploitative practices that may be involved in the production of goods and services they consume? If yes, in what ways? What about firms and large institutional procurers purchasing goods and services through supply chains? What is their leverage and in what ways can they be encouraged, or indeed be obliged, to address trafficking in their supply chains? What about other fields in which trafficking occurs? Do campaigns encouraging the public to report suspicions of trafficking to the police or specialised NGOs result in tangible results? These types of questions are discussed in the anti-trafficking field as referring to “demand” or “demand reduction”. In fact, Article 18 of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive (Directive 2011/36/EU) states that “Member States shall take appropriate measures, such as education and training, to discourage and reduce the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation related to trafficking in human beings”. The EU Anti-Trafficking Directive does not offer clear instructions with regard to the meaning of demand and how exactly demand can be reduced or discouraged. Focusing on demand in relation to trafficking has been recognised as having the potential to shift the focus of anti-trafficking policies towards those who profit from trafficking and therefore might have some responsibility for the occurrence of trafficking. However, what kind of measures should discourage demand and how they are intended to work remains unclear.

In order to provide clarity on the above-mentioned issues, the project “Demand-side measures against trafficking” (DemandAT) was launched in 2014 under the EU’s 7th framework programme. The project, involving a multidisciplinary team of researchers and practitioners from seven European countries, aimed to examine demand-side approaches in the context of trafficking in human beings, to clarify the meaning and relevance of demand in different policy areas as well as to contribute to a better formulation of anti-trafficking policies addressing demand. The project was structured in three, interlocking, phases, representing different stages in the research process. The first phase of the project was designed to take stock of existing research and secondary sources, and to build the basis for the second phase of the project involving five specific case studies. Thematically, this first phase involved a comprehensive analysis of demand from an economic and historical perspective, a review of the use of demand arguments in different “fields” of trafficking, a review of policy instruments in steering demand and a mapping of demand related policy measures in different countries. The second phase of the project involved five in depth empirical case studies, while the third phase developed an integrated approach to demand by linking all research results from all individual sub-studies. The project combined theoretical analyses of the concept of demand (Vogel, 2017a) and different types of policy interventions (Boswell and Kyambi, 2016) with a mapping of policy debates (Cyrus and Vogel, 2015; Cyrus 2015) and implemented policies across a large range of countries (Rogoz et al., 2016), as well as different fields in which trafficking occurs with in-depth studies of particular fields (domestic work, prostitution) and approaches (supply chains, law enforcement, campaigns).

First, the project contributes to improved communication in the anti-trafficking field. Second, it presents smart policy choices in specific trafficking related areas. Third, the project intends to provide arguments for informed choices on selected policy issues.

Project work and main results

Conceptually, the project suggests limiting the meaning of the concept of demand to its core economic meaning, i.e. the willingness and ability to buy a good or a service (Vogel, 2017a). This approach requires that reference to demand is made with the correlative supply and/or with specific reference to a market – what good or service is purchased and/or on what market? A trafficked person is transferred into and kept in an exploitative relation through force, deception or abuse of a position of vulnerability. This implies that a non-market relation is at the core of understanding trafficking in human beings. The analytical value of using demand-and-supply-terminology is highest when it is applied to contracting situations. It is important to consider that exchanges take place in different markets and in different contexts, implying that there is no fixed “demand-side” and that who is on the demand-side and what measures can be taken differs between a consumption context (where consumers are on the demand side), a production context (where employers demand labour directly from workers or from labour providers) and a recruitment context (where individuals demand various brokerage services, such as smuggling or labour matching services and related services, such as loans).

Considering the above and based on the empirical results of the various sub-studies conducted in the study, demand-side and other interventions against trafficking should be both context specific and evidence based. Context specific policy making should acknowledge that policy impacts relate to a wide range of contextual factors including national, sectorial and organisational aspects. One implication of this is that transferability of measures from one area to another is difficult and sometimes the transfer of a possibly successful measure from one context is not helpful in other contexts. For instance, awareness raising is considered to be a preventive measure in the anti-trafficking policies. Research on awareness raising campaigns conducted within DemandAT shows that although a large audience is targeted, only a few members of the public change their behaviour. Therefore, awareness raising as such should be considered against its potential impact and not only as a label in the prevention of trafficking. The results of the research suggest that awareness raising alone is insufficient as an intervention expected to affect the extent of trafficking. Demand-side measures have to be custom made for particular markets. Involvement of those affected by exploitation and/or trafficking in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of demand-side measures is more likely to lead to progress in addressing exploitation, including trafficking.

Research on labour inspections and domestic work showed that people are trafficked into exploitation of various degrees. The sole emphasis on extreme situations is unhelpful in identifying forced labour and trafficking in human beings. With regard to trafficking for labour exploitation, there is a need to look beyond the point of contracting (demand, supply, price) and to look at the relational aspect of the employment arrangements. Vulnerabilities may not be obvious at the beginning of a labour relation, but can evolve or come to the attention of the employer in the course of a relation. In that sense, combating lesser forms of exploitation

and improving labour standards more generally is a prevention measure against the emergence of more severe forms of exploitation. Access of (migrant) workers to mechanisms for reporting exploitative situations is expected to contribute to detecting and preventing trafficking for labour exploitation. As resources to fight trafficking are limited, addressing situations of various degrees of exploitation (which might not subscribe to anti-trafficking situations) is expected to contribute to detecting and preventing trafficking.

Final results and potential impacts

One of the main contributions of DemandAT to the field of anti-trafficking, subscribing to improved communication in the field, comprises theoretical and conceptual clarifications with regard to demand in the context of trafficking in human beings. By limiting the meaning of demand, the focus is then on how market transactions (such as the purchase of specific goods by consumers) are linked to situations of trafficking, and as a corollary, how demand-side measures targeting participants in the market transaction (e.g. through campaigns promoting consumers to buy goods certified to have been produced under fair labour conditions) or the rules under which market exchanges occur (e.g. by criminalising the particular types of exchanges) impact on trafficking. Consequently, phrases such as “demand for trafficking in human beings” do not make sense and should be avoided, since trafficking is not a good or a service.

Like other criminal activities, states address the crime of trafficking in human beings predominantly with command-and-control measures involving the detection and sanctioning of socially undesirable forms of demand. However, states have a pool of other, “smarter” policy options to choose from. For instance, states can also redesign the legal infrastructure/framework of markets to make undesirable forms of demand less likely (Boswell and Kyambi, 2016). They can use market-based incentives such as taxes and subsidies, or use measures promoting specific values or behaviours through peer pressure, promoting, for example, relevant initiatives by businesses, NGOs or other actors either by incentives (subsidies, cooperation) or through legal obligations. Yet, measures may also be used for symbolic reasons. Both, research on government responses to demand in the context of trafficking and research on demand arguments in debates in different fields of trafficking revealed that demand is often used in its economic understanding, but not consistently. The analysis of demand arguments found that demand is increasingly employed in debates to explain the framework of trafficking as an activity and as well as to justify particular approaches. These approaches are embedded in political frames that link measures to value-loaded problem definitions. Empirical research on initiatives addressing trafficking and forced labour practices in and around global supply chains showed that the context in which a transaction takes place is relevant. Initiatives addressing exploitation in global supply chains are specific to the industries and level at which they operate. In a similar vein, the DemandAT research on domestic work highlights the importance of the relational (as opposed to the market) dimension of the relationship between employer and worker. As a corollary, policies focusing solely on the demand-side cannot be expected to provide solutions to human trafficking as relevance of demand varies according to the specific areas where THB occurs. Indeed, in some contexts, demand may not be a useful category at all.

All empirical work in this project had to deal with the fact that while much is written on measures against trafficking, empirical evidence on the impacts is rare and difficult to produce. Research on evaluations of information campaigns underlined that evaluability is key for better learning from past interventions and improving future ones. Research found that solid evaluation is possible if it is planned in advance and resources are allocated accordingly for both, learning-oriented self-evaluation and external professional evaluations (using established standards as developed by professional bodies). Through publicising evaluation reports it is expected that organisations learn from one another. For this purpose, evaluation should be recognised as a success in itself, as learning from past interventions is crucial for improving future ones.

Project Facts

Coordinator: International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Partners: University of Bremen (UBr); University of Edinburgh (UEDIN), International La Strada Association (LSI), University of Lund (ULu), University of Durham (UDUR), European University Institute (EUI); Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF); La Strada Czech Republic (LS CZ)

Duration: 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2017 (42 months)

Funding: 7th Framework Programme, European Commission (DG Research), total volume 3.2 million. EC contribution: 2.5 million.

Website: www.demandat.eu

Contact:

Albert Kraler, Senior Researcher
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
Gonzagagasse 1, 5th floor, A-1010 Vienna

Phone: +43-(0)1-5044677-2345
E-mail: albert.kraler@icmpd.org

This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 612869