



**Gloria De Felice**

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences  
Degree Programme in Social Services  
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# **“I AM NOT ALONE.” A HANDBOOK FOR WOMEN OF IMMIGRANT BACKGROUND FACING INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**



## ABSTRACT

Gloria De Felice

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This product-based thesis aims to create a handbook that lists and explains what an immigrant woman is supposed to know if she is a victim of intimate partner violence in Finland. The target group of the handbook is non-Finnish-speaking women in Finland, who are victims of intimate partner violence. The working life partner organization collaborating in this product is MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, which is a nationwide multicultural women's non-government organization (NGO) that aims to promote equality, inclusion, and the prevention of domestic violence towards immigrant women in Finland (MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, 2021).

Intimate partner violence is a form of violence (physical and psychological) committed by an intimate partner (WHO, 2012). In 2018 there were 9900 victims of domestic and intimate partner violence crimes reported to Finland's authorities. According to MONIKA- Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, most of the women victims were immigrants (MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, 2021).

For this reason, I decided to focus my thesis on developing a product for these immigrant women, and I collected all the must-know information in a short and simple handbook. I chose to title the handbook “You are not alone”, referring to Finland's services and support for immigrant women and victims of intimate partner violence. My research process was reading the most recent statistics, articles, reports and interviewing two counselors who work with intimate partner violence victims.

Only after I was able to create my product, MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, evaluated and approved it. Together, we agreed to write it concisely in easily comprehensible English to inform on intimate partner violence in Finland, the legislation, support services, and organizations also focused on integration programs. There are also chapters dedicated to the Crisis Center Monika Shelter Mona and the Integration Center Monika. The main result is that now MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, has a handbook available to offer to their clients, victims of intimate partner violence with the possibility to translate the product into other languages since many of the immigrant women do not speak English. The product is accessible in online pdf format and is also available for printing. In conclusion, my biggest hope is this handbook will help as many immigrant women as possible to understand intimate partner violence easily and spread more awareness of the topic.

Keywords: intimate partner violence, immigrant women, support services.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This is a product-oriented thesis. I created a handbook with the collaboration of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland (Monika-Naiset liitto ry in Finnish language), an organization for immigrant women living in Finland. This organization is a Finnish NGO that aims to promote equality, inclusion, and the prevention of violence towards immigrant women in Finland. It has services in different languages (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, 2021).

The handbook is written in English, and it explains what to do in case a woman is a victim of intimate partner violence in Finland.

This thesis aims to create a clear and straightforward handbook with the help of revision by professionals and proper research of documents, articles, and literature. The target group is immigrant women in Finland, victims of intimate partner violence who do not understand the Finnish language, and are not well informed on the Finnish legislation.

This product is needed because of the lack of information in foreign languages about intimate partner violence and networking. According to MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland (2021), many immigrant people do not speak English, so my idea is to allow translation into languages other than English, maybe the ones most common among immigrant women in Finland.

This thesis’s objectives are searching and gathering information in a handbook about support services, and social help provided for immigrant women victims of intimate partner violence. In the implementation chapter (TABLE 1) I analyzed all the objectives in a Smart objective table (Wayne State University, n.d.).

I decided to create the product because many immigrant women and intimate partner violence victims do not have enough information. Still, some do not have enough independence and networking (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, Counsellor 1, personal communication, 13.1

2020). The handbook will also support intimate partner violence victims as well as services and organizations that help immigrants networking and integrating.

The purpose of the handbook is to have it distributed in public places and to assure its free availability on the MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland’s website. The product will be in English as previously mentioned, but many immigrant people do not speak English (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, 2020), so my intent is also to permit its translations into different languages, possibly the ones most common among immigrants in Finland.

According to Statistics Finland (2019), 9000 cases of domestic violence towards all women were reported in Finland in 2019. There is no specific data how many of them were immigrants. However, many immigrant women do not have any contacts in Finland aside from their partner. In most cases, they do not know how to report their situation, and, most of all, they are afraid of reporting, getting a restraining order, and starting a new life alone in a foreign country (Counsellor 2, personal communication, 16.1 2020).

This product thesis relates to social and community work since it focuses on immigrant women living in Finland who highly need help in understanding how the system in Finland works. As stated early, the working life partner in collaboration with this product is MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland. The organization has previously approved the Product idea, and it is available in APPENDIX 1.

## 2 BACKGROUND

This chapter describes what kind of sources and literature are available in Finland related to immigrant women and intimate partner violence.

The research of material for the thesis is based on books and articles that are talking about integration, multicultural families, and articles in Finland regarding these topics (diak Finna, n.d.). The statistics data and the website of my work-life partner organization and interviews with professionals were also essential. To learn how to properly write a product-based thesis I read previous Diak thesis from Theseus.

This chapter explains what kind of information is available about intimate partner violence, understanding why the Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention for 2018-2021 was significant for Finland, and what type of support the legislation in Finland provides for an intimate partner victim.

On the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health website in Finland, there is a section dedicated to all the information about Domestic Violence, including intimate partner violence. The information is provided in both Finnish and English language.

As the website declares, the committee to combating violence against women, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence started to operate in 2017 relating to the Istanbul Convention. This term will last until December 2020 (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2018). On this page, there is all the preliminary information available regarding services and legislation. Unfortunately, some of the sources are not updated. For instance, it is accessible a guidebook about female immigrant domestic violence victims from 2005 (MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, 2005). Still, the situation has changed when it comes to immigrant women in Finland as the number of immigrants has increased significantly. (Statistic Finland, 2019).

## 2.1 The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (called THL from the Finnish name Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos) contributes to preventing this form of violence, but the material available is in Finnish and English. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare writes on how to prevent domestic violence. For instance, it states that social and health professionals have enough skills to work with their clients, children should be provided with sexual and safety education, support should be made available for the non-violent parent, and professionals should conduct a risk assessment and using multidisciplinary working methods dealing with violence by speaking to their client.

Also, there is a significant part in addressing the effects of intimate partner violence (THL, 2021). The product has a chapter dedicated to it.

As previously mentioned, this information is not in English, and they explain the difference between physical and mental violence through concrete examples. It is crucial since it is not exactly clear for many people that violence is not only physical.

Physical violence is the easiest to prove, but mental violence can have terrible consequences if not considered. This subject is going to be more specific in the key words chapter.

The value to diagnose the psychological consequences of violence is crucial to help the victim (THL, 2021).

According to The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, what is the outcome of psychological, intimate partner violence? Toxic stress, posttraumatic stress disorder, state of fear, panic disorder, psychosomatic disorder, alcohol or drug abuse, suicidal or violent behavior (THL, 2021).

## 2.2 Council of Europe - The Istanbul Convention

In 2014, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights exposed that 30 % of women from Finland between 18-74 years old had experienced intimate partner violence.

The Council of Europe is Europe's leading human rights organization, and since 1990 it supports initiatives regarding violence against women.

On 1 August 2015, the Council of Europe Convention, hereafter referred to as the Istanbul Convention, started to implement measures for preventing violence against women.

The Istanbul Convention consists of prevention acts to fight violence against women in Europe. This convention drives political parties to support those who are victims of violence, especially women.

This action plan contains Article Nine, which is important to this thesis.

Article 9 “Non-governmental organizations and civil society parties shall recognize, encourage and support, at all levels, the work of relevant non-governmental organizations and of civil society active in combating violence against women and establish effective co-operation with these organizations”

Why is this convention important to Finland? What kind of impact has it had?

Thanks to this convention in Finland more measures for the prevention of intimate partner violence have been taken in Finland, and many projects and non-profit organizations have been created and remain active these years.

Together with other countries, Finland also signed the convention. The difference with other countries is this violence does not apply only towards women but also towards men. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2017).

The Istanbul Convention aims to protect the victim of violence and prevent violence (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2017).

Through the support of parties and non-profit organizations, Finland has the right to fight violence and effect cooperation through all organizations. The handbook list and also describe some other organizations in Finland whose aim is to promote inclusion and support.



## 2.3 Legislation

The Legal Aid act (257/2002) provides legal assistance to immigrant women victims of intimate partner violence. The act offers a legal service paid for by the state.

This might happen in case of intimate partner violence for getting a divorce or legal support through any psychological or physical damage of the abused victim (Finlex, n.d.).

There is also a full translation available online by Finlex of all the legal aid acts and the requirements to receive legal service and support. One of the most important service legislations provided in Finland is for a victim of intimate violence to apply for an act of restraining order (898/1998) (Finlex).

A restraining order is given when preventing harassment or offence by someone who the victim feels endangers their life, health or freedom. (30.7.2004/711) (Finlex, n.d.). (Section 1)

The restraining order can be temporary or last at most one year and it can be renewed. To impose a restraining order, there are different circumstances that should be considered besides the district court decision made on the application (written or oral).

Once the victim applies for a restraining order, there will be an investigation before the decision. The assessment might be different depending on the circumstances and the victim might need to show concrete proof to the police that she is a victim of violence (section 2a 2004/711).

It can be for a maximum of a year and if the person prohibited attempts to reach out, this action is punishable by law.

Furthermore, the English translation of The Criminal Code of Finland (39/1889, amendments up to 766/2015 included) (Finlex, n.d.), contains some sections related to physical and psychological violence which also concerns intimate partner violence.

Regarding intimate physical violence, Sections 5 and 6 of Chapter the Criminal Code (39/1889) (Finlex) focus on assault (578/1995) (sections 5, chapter 21) and aggravated assault (654/2001). An assault is physical violence or injuries of health that provoke a form of pain to someone. An assault shall be sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for a maximum of two years. An aggravated assault is more brutal. (Finlex, n.d.)

The perpetrator could have used a firearm, a weapon or a lethal instrument. But of these attempts are punishable by law.

Also, rape is defined in the Criminal Code of Finland (509/2014) (section 1 chapter 20) as a person who has sexual intercourse with someone without their permission. This is a crime that should be sentenced from one year to six years.

Then, in section 5 chapter 20, there is sexual abuse (563/1998) and sexual harassment which can be both can be physical and psychological. For example, if the perpetrators threaten the intimate partner through sexual attempts. Forcing the partner to do something sexual against their will.

Rape compare to sexual abuse, and sexual harassment always has sexual penetration. Sexual abuse also includes rape, but it is not only that. It could also be psychological and broader (The Conversation, 2018).

Sexual harassment eventually is even broader than sexual assault because it also includes little gestures that the perpetrator might force (The Conversation, 2018).

In addition, there is a section about communication focused on psychological harassment.

When someone bothers the victim via mobile phone (calls or messages) with the intent to disturb them or harm them, this might be considered harassing communication and can be punished with a fine or detention for a maximum time of six months. (879/2013) (violence section 1(a) of Chapter 24).

In intimate partner violence, this is a prevalent form of violence that the perpetrator commits towards the partner. It is a form of manipulation that can damage the psychological health of the victim.

## 2.4 Working life partner: MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland

MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland is a nationwide multicultural women’s non-government organization (NGO) that promotes the equality and inclusion of immigrant women in Finland and prevents violence against women.

The MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland structure is mainly divided into four units. It provides support in different languages and it specializes in diverse types of violence that affect immigrant women, for instance honor-related violence, forced marriages, and human trafficking.

The central office which arranges the general activities: volunteer work, planning, funding, and advocacy. The Crisis Center offers low-threshold crisis help, psycho-social support, and supportive post-shelter housing for victims of violence or those experiencing the threat of violence. Women can receive help anonymously online and/or without an appointment.

The shelter Mona is the place that female victims of violence to go for a limited time because where they live is not safe enough (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, 2020). It is the only shelter in Finland offering crisis assistance and a secure residence in a secret location. Since 2021, it is the only shelter in Finland which admits only women. Victims of domestic violence from all over the country have access to this service.

The shelter offers counseling support. Usually, women cannot stay longer than three months (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, Counsellor 2, personal communication, 16.1 2020).

The last unit of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland is the Integration Center Monika. It promotes integration and employment through individual counseling, group activities, and mentoring. The work that supports the client’s integration is planned to take into account her overall situation. Activities are intended to support the individual’s own goals.

The support is also available in several languages (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, 2020).

### 3 KEY CONCEPTS

The key concepts of my thesis are intimate partner violence, immigrant women, and support services. This chapter examines them at great length, highlighting why I chose these three key concepts, explaining the meaning with closer attention on Finland. Furthermore, I conclude this chapter with a subchapter about previous projects in Finland on the same topic.

#### 3.1 Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence is the main key concept of this product thesis. Before going into details, I start this chapter with a basic definition of intimate partner violence by Breeding.

“A form of violence that includes physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partner (i.e., spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, dating partner, or ongoing sexual partner)” (Breeding, 2015).

And an intimate partner is a person that someone has a close relationship. He/she can be a spouse, a boyfriend/girlfriend, a casual sexual partner. If the perpetrator is someone with whom the victim had a relationship previously, is a “former intimate partner” (Breeding, 2015).

WHO (World Health Organization) defines intimate partner violence as one of the most common forms of violence in women. There are four main types of intimate partner violence: physical violence, sexual violence, emotional abuse, and controlling behaviours (2012).

Physical violence is a form of violence through physical harm (IGI Global, 2020).

Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act, for instance, a rape, forcing someone to do any physical attachment (WHO, 2020).

Emotional abuse is a form of psychological violence where the perpetrator

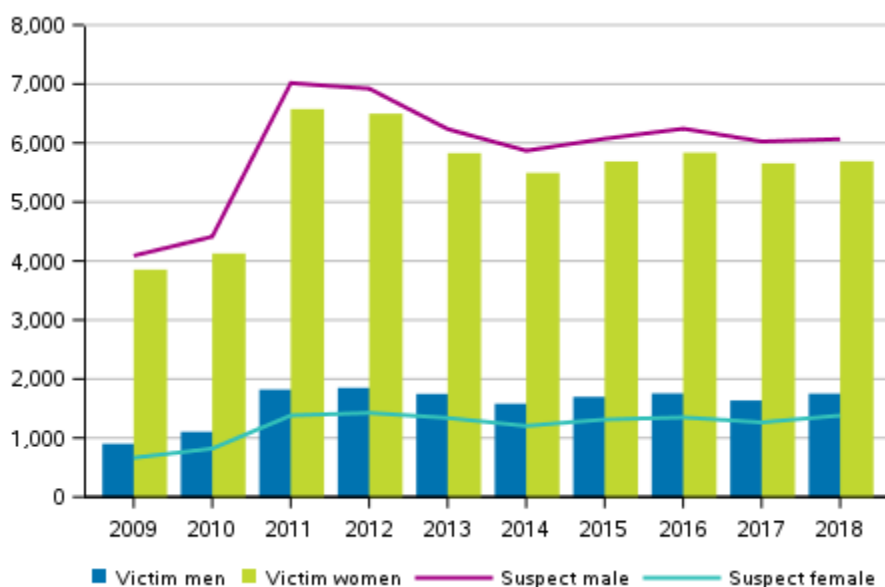
tries to frighten or controlling the partner using words and behaviors, for example, undermining the victim (Healthline, 2020).

Controlling behaviors are behaviors that the perpetrator uses to ensure the partner satisfies his own need and does what he expects. For instance, two very forms of controlling behaviors are stalking and financial abuse (Supportiv, 2020).

In 2018 there were 9900 victims of domestic and intimate partner violence crimes reported to the authorities in Finland.

The table (FIGURE 1) shows domestic violence victims and intimate partners over the years (blue represents male victims, green represents female victims). In 2018, the percentage increased by 3.6% from the previous year. According to Statistic Finland, half of the violence between adults happened in cohabiting or married couples. Of the adult victims, 76.5% were women, and 24.4% of all victims were minors. (Statistic Finland, 2019).

FIGURE 1. Victims of domestic and intimate partner violence crimes reported to the authorities in Finland 2009-2018



Source: Official Statistics of Finland (retrieved 10.10.2020)

Yle (Yle Uutiset, 2021) released an article that Finland, according to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, is the EU's second most

violent country for women: 47 percent have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15 (Yle News, 2015).

On December 2020, Yle News wrote that domestic violence incidents are expected to be a quarter higher than 2019, according to Finland's National Police Board. The main reason is the Covid restrictions where families spent most of the time at home (Yle News, 2020).

For this reason, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) started to implement a study during 2020-2021 in collaboration with Tampere University and the University of Turku to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the restrictions have caused on domestic violence (THL, 2020,2021).

### 3.2 Immigrant Women

The target group of women for whom I planned to write this handbook are immigrant woman based in Finland, who might be victims of intimate partner violence.

Quoting the definition of an immigrant from the Cambridge Dictionary, an immigrant person is

“a person who has come to a different country in order to live there permanently” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020)

Therefore, an immigrant woman is a woman who lives in a country in which she did not grow up. She might have moved for family reasons, for work reasons or other reasons. When an immigrant woman becomes a victim of violence, it is harder because she is not in the country she grew up in, legislation might be different, and the language is not her own. Furthermore, it is harder for her to understand how to proceed (MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland,2020).

I found a statistic of how many immigrant people live in Finland (FIGURE 2); secondly, I will go more into detail talking specifically about women.

FIGURE 2. Population by origin, country of birth and language 2019

## Population by origin, country of birth and language 2019

Population 31.12.2019: 5 525 292			
Finnish background 5 101 798		Foreign background 423 494	
Country of birth Finland 5 049 340	Country of birth foreign country 52 458	Country of birth Finland 71 773	Country of birth foreign country 351 721
<b>Language</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Language</b>
domestic* 5 041 327 other 8 013	domestic* 46 176 other 6 282	domestic* 13 409 other 58 364	domestic* 11 736 other 339 985

\*Domestic languages = Finnish, Swedish, Sami

Statistics Finland / Population structure

Source: Statistics Finland (retrieved 4.10.2020)

As the table shows, in 2019 the number of people with a foreign background was 423 494, and 71 773 were born in Finland. Of the 351 721 only 11 736 spoke Finnish but 339 985 did not. Unfortunately, I could not find the exact number of women among those immigrants, but it is highly important to see that a lot of people of immigrant background in Finland do not speak the main language, Finnish.

Additionally, in MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, services for immigrant women are provided mainly in Arabic, English, Estonian, French, German, Spanish, Swedish, Finnish. (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, 2021).

According to the thesis research by Adelin Karollina who interviewed the Managing Director of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland who said in her interview that immigrant immigrant women have 2.5 more chances of being a victim of violence than a Finnish woman. Ethnicity is not the main reason, but cultural factors influence the fact that authorities are not contacted in the situation of violence. When moving to Finland for family reasons, women easily become dependent on their husbands (Korhonen, 2007)

Most non-Western women, once they once they have moved to Finland become dependent on their husbands; for this reason, they do not easily learn the Finnish language, culture, legislation, and they do not work. Other causes

are the family honor. For example, in some cultures divorce is not acceptable to the family members or to the patriarchal family structure that is part of that culture in which males are dominant. (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, Counsellor 1, personal communication, 13.1 2020).

### 3.3 Support Services

A support service could be an organization, a project, or any other aim to help a specific group of people. I focused my research on two types of support services: support services focused on intimate partner violence and support services focused on networking and learning skills. As I mentioned before immigrant women need to connect with other people than their partner and learn different skills, mostly learning the Finnish language, in case they need to search for a job. Of course, this type of service is useful for any immigrant person in Finland, but for many victims of intimate partner violence the need for independence is of extreme significance. (Counsellor 2, personal communication, 16.1 2020).

I focused on researching different support services for immigrant women who are or have been victims of intimate partner violence. I studied what kind of services are possible at present and the alternative due to the 2020 pandemic of the Coronavirus, where the Finnish Government (2020) recommends people spend most of the time at home and avoid gatherings. For example, there is a new collective in Finland called “Plus Collective” (2020), promoting social change and human rights. This group is currently organizing online workshops, releasing podcasts, and planned an exhibition about the topic of violence, with a high focus on intimate partner violence in November 2020.

In Finland, many projects and organizations aim to support and help immigrants integrate into Finnish culture and work-life.

I found the biggest ones that I will also list in my handbook. MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, also organized peer support groups and Finnish classes for immigrant women in their Integration Center Monika. Similar to this, there are other organizations that I will list in



the handbook, like The Finnish League for Human rights in Finland (Ihmisoikeusliitto), Iraqi Women's Association (Irakin naisten yhdistys ry); Women's line (Naisten Linja ry); The Finnish League for Human Rights in Finland monitors the country's situation to ensure everyone has full human rights (2020).

The Iraqi Women's Association (Irakin naisten yhdistys ry) aims to promote the position of women with an immigrant background, especially in the family and society (2020).

Women's Line (Naisten Linja ry) is a telephone line for women or girls who suffer from abuse, threats, or fear. The call is confidential and free of charge, and the people who answer the phone are volunteers and trained for this job (2020).

InfoFinland is a free service aiming to help and support legislation and procedures to live in Finland (2019). According to the website, all immigrants have the right to receive services to support integration with advisors provided by the Finnish municipalities and the Employment and Economic Development Office (Työ – ja elinkeinotoimisto) that offers the possibility for unemployed immigrants to take internships and full-time courses in Finnish schools.

### 3.4 Previous projects on the same topic

I did not find much information related to intimate partner violence towards immigrant women specifically. However, there are many projects and organizations focused on helping and supporting immigrants in Finland (support services chapter). Most of the information on the MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland website, but I have noticed they are more focused on recognizing the violence, how to get the restraining order, and how to go to the shelter.

I also found information in English on the police website, and Pluscollective (2020) organized online seminars about domestic violence and intimate partner violence towards immigrant and Finnish women in Finland.

In addition, I found a complete guidebook in Finnish, but it is from 2005 and I focused on intimate partner violence towards all women but it was made for professionals (MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, 2005). I believe the situation has changed a lot, considering that the number of immigrants has increased significantly since then.

## 4 PRODUCT PLANNING

Product planning is the first phase before starting the implementation. It contains the necessary information in order to obtain clarity so as to then proceed with the actual implementation of the Product (Spolander et al, 67, 2012).

The product is the design of an English language handbook for immigrant women victims of intimate partner violence in Finland.

### 4.1 Goals and Objectives

The handbook explains to immigrant women based in Finland, who are victims of violence, how to report and how to act after reporting the violence to the police. Also, there are further guidelines and advice for immigrant women to network, learn Finnish and get professional independence. It is titled “You are not alone” since many women think they might be completely alone to take action against the partner perpetrator of intimate partner violence.

This product is a handbook in English for immigrant women living in Finland who don't speak any Finnish and are victims of intimate partner violence. The aim is to collect all the primary information about how Finland works, recognize violence, and act appropriately legally.

For the objectives, I used a Smart objective chart (TABLE 1) to understand the main goals better in preparing the handbook. I made this Smart Objectives table following the indication of the Wayne State University (2020).

TABLE 1. Smart Objective Chart

S Specific	What needs to be done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the meaning of intimate partner violence</li> <li>• What are the biggest challenges in Finland as a female immigrant victim of intimate partner violence?</li> <li>• Inform immigrant women on how to get out of an intimate partner violence relationship.</li> <li>• Support immigrant women in gaining independence.</li> </ul>
M Measurable	How will you know it meets expectations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with specialists in MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland.</li> <li>• Reading proper literature</li> <li>• No budget</li> </ul>
A Achievable	Can I do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can write the handbook in English but there is a need for it to be translated into different languages and to be useful and informative.</li> </ul>
R Relevant	Why should it be done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It should be done because according to Statistic Finland victims of intimate partner violence were 9 000 in 2018</li> </ul>

		<p>(Statistic Finland, 2018).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immigrant women are highly more among the victims, because they do not know how to proceed (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, 2020).</li> </ul>
T Time-Oriented	When will it be done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The time frame was around one year.</li> <li>TABLE 4 for the calendar of all the working plan.</li> </ul>

In TABLE 1 I added the main objectives on why I pursue this product-oriented thesis. These objectives are concrete phases on how the product should be done, but also when starting a project it is relevant to answer the Five Questions W (What, Why, Who Where, When). (Spolander et al., 2012, 77)

All the five Ws are listed in TABLE 2.

TABLE 2. The Five Ws

WHAT	The product is a handbook written in collaboration with the NGO MONIKA- Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland. It is made for immigrant women living in Finland, victims of intimate partner violence.
WHY	The handbook is a simple guide referred to as someone willing to know more about it in Finland. It lists all the meaningful services, procedures, and the types of violence common in intimate partner violence.

	<p>Most importantly, there is helpful information for immigrant women on how to proceed if the reader is witnessing this kind of violence.</p> <p>The primary purpose is to give the readers the essential information they need to know about intimate partner violence to provide them with significant acknowledgment of the topic.</p>
WHO	<p>It is a product-based thesis created by myself, in collaboration with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland. The product’s process was made by reviewing the product and two interviews with two social counselors working in Monika Shelter and Crisis Work Center.</p>
WHERE	<p>The handbook is made in collaboration with the working life partner organization. My previous idea was to be printed and distributed in public places, e.g. libraries. Since of the Covid-19 situation, the handbook can be distributed online in a pdf format.</p>
WHEN	<p>Developed during 2020 and delivered by March 2021.</p>

TABLE 2 describes the five main questions a product has to answer before proceeding to implementation. The Five Ws are central because they give a first and clear structure to the product.

The handbook also explains what happens after a victim leaves the shelter and why her course has just begun and what she should expect after asking for help. Talking with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, it shows that many of the victims return to the partner because they do not have anywhere to go (Counsellor 2, personal communication, 16.1 2020).

According to the interview with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland’s counselors (Counselor 1 & 2, personal communication, 13.1 2020, 16.1.2020), the biggest obstacle with most of their clients is that they do not have connections other than the partner. In the handbook, some advice is added to create connections as well as some ways to learn Finnish without spending any money. The victim with more independence from the intimate partner might easily leave the perpetrator and start a new life.

## 4.2 Target Group and Stakeholders

Freeman gives one of the most precise definitions of stakeholders (2012,83) as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives.”

The product stakeholder group is the MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland organization, since it collaborated with the product’s creation.

The upstream stakeholders are all the umbrella organizations, non-profit organizations, and projects in common with Monika, the inclusiveness of immigrants, and operates in Finland (2012, 85). In the chapter on supportive services I added three organizations that focus on immigrant women, human rights and intimate partner violence in Finland: The Finnish League for Human Rights in Finland, The Iraqi Women’s Association and Women’s Line. These organizations are also listed and described in the handbook and they are described better in the Supportive Services Chapter.

The target group is the group of people that the project is intended to be for (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

The handbook’s target group is immigrant women living in Finland and who understand English since the written language is English. Additionally, it is made for female victims of intimate partner violence and domestic violence.

## 4.3 The importance of the product

This product is needed, as I mentioned in the objectives, for several reasons. The only handbook available online is from 2005 and it is in Finnish. It was made for professionals and not for the victims, for this reason it is very long to read, and all the information is too old to be considered relevant (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, 2005).

There is some information about domestic violence on several websites, including in MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland but what

misses mostly is information in English about what exactly happens after a woman decides to go to a shelter or leaving the partner.

The shelter is only for a limited time and a person needs an action plan if she wants to get out of a violent situation. That is why it is important to consider different angles and explain the best ways to cope with certain situations as easily as possible. Also, in the product I highlighted that the client will never left alone after receiving social support (MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, 2020)

#### 4.4 Resources and Budget

The main resources needed for this handbook are human resources, articles and books mostly for ethics and projectuality. In addition, for planning, implementing and evaluating the product, I have taken a course for project management with the university, where I gained the necessary skills to proceed on this thesis product.

Additionally, I had many consultations with my thesis supervisors and with MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, about the product revision.

Since it is a multimedia product, there is no need to buy any material. I took some photos personally to add to the handbook with my camera.

There is no budget for this product.

#### 4.5 Risk Analysis

What is the risk analysis, and why is it essential to have it for this product? In this case, the best way to highlight potential difficulties is the SWOT analysis. This analysis shows both what can be successful (strength) and what is risky and difficult (weakness) (Sponlander et al., 2012, 30).



TABLE 3. The SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data and statistic about immigrants Finland</li> <li>• List of services and support (both for intimate partner violence victims and for networking)</li> <li>• Informal language that improves the facility of the reader to understand the topic quickly.</li> <li>• A clear explanation of intimate partner violence and its effects (physical and psychological).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many victims do not know how to read and write. This handbook might not be useful for them.</li> <li>• Only available in English, would be good to translate in different languages.</li> <li>• COVID-19: many of the organizations cannot do many physical gatherings at the moment.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more information in a language other than Finnish.</li> <li>• Allow immigrant women to understand how to proceed if they realize they are victims of intimate partner violence.</li> <li>• Understand clearly how the process works in Finland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid-19: difficulty of meeting clients who cannot read and do not use a computer.</li> <li>• Language barrier</li> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Motivation</li> </ul>

Illustrated in TABLE 3, the analysis summarizes the positive sides (Strength and Opportunities) and the weaknesses (Weaknesses and Threats).

The strengths are the big support this handbook can give to immigrant women, with a summary and an explanation of all the services, in addition to giving clear information and especially where to find certain services. The opportunity is underlined more to understand how Finnish policy works in this situation and how to proceed if a person is a victim. It is also good that the language is not Finnish but it would be great to provide multilingual services, like many services from MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland. But this is a step forward for the product.

As for the connection with the weakness, language is one of them. Firstly, because talking with the counselors of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, they both mention that many of the victims cannot write or read, so this handbook would be of no use to them, also because English is one of the languages. Still, many immigrant women do not speak English or Finnish. Another weakness is the current situation people are living in now. When I started the thesis research Covid was not present, and now we are under a pandemic, and domestic violence and intimate partner violence have increased greatly in the last year in the whole world (WHO, 2020).

Many of the organizations do not do any more physical gatherings and many women cannot leave the house anymore. This makes the situation even harder.

In conclusion, the threats also relate to Covid-19, the language barrier and where to distribute the handbook.

And connected to my time management and motivation, I had to postpone the thesis implementation for personal reasons and it took longer than I had originally planned to finish it.

## 5 PRODUCT IMPLEMENTATION

The product implementation starts once all the planning is complete. It is the “operation phase” where the product starts to become alive. It is essential to have good sources, a clear timetable, and ethical consideration for a successful implantation (Spolander et al, 2012).

### 5.1 Documentation and Communication

The product was implemented firstly by finding proper literature material and interviewing professionals in MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland. This research enabled me to create the handbook. The language, form, layout, and order of the content will be done through the organization’s support.

As mentioned, the NGO MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland is my working partner organization.

According to their website MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland’s aim (2018) is to promote equality and inclusion for all women living in Finland including immigrants and it is also focused on preventing violence against women.

The website has services in different languages, online chat and call services, and guidelines for domestic and intimate partner violence.

Before starting my thesis, I agreed with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, to create a handbook. I decided on the main topics together with the Managing Director.

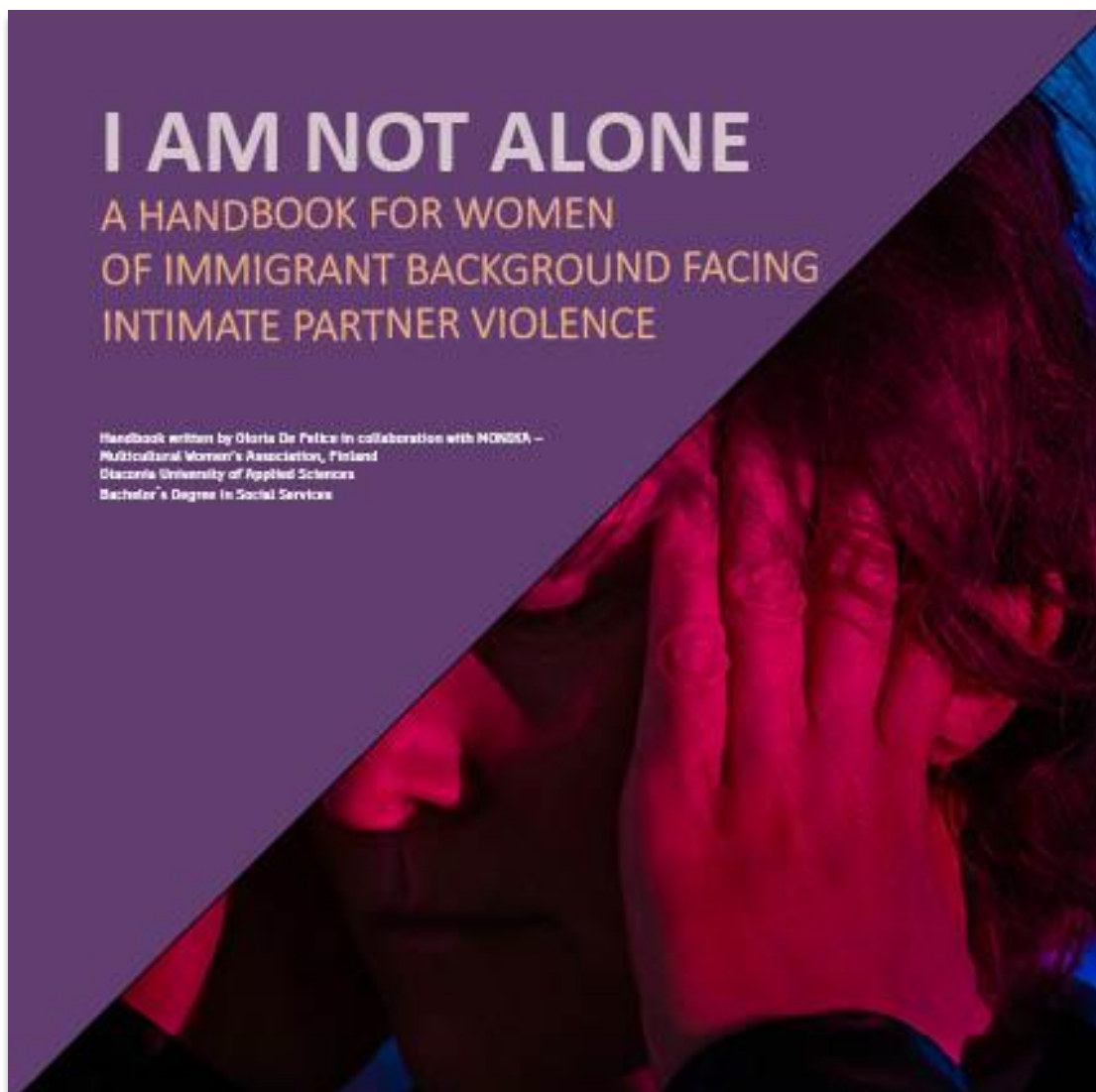
I have also interviewed two counselors of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, who stressed that the interviews are confidential and only for the purpose of this thesis. I recorded both of the interviews and they will be deleted once the thesis is published. I could not interview any intimate partner violence victims since it is a bachelor thesis, and I could not do it.

## 5.2 Description of what types of methods or process were used to implement or develop the product.

The handbook was completed with the manuscript and approved by the working life partner organization.

I made the design through the software InDesign, and I took a couple of photo portraits of a professional actress who represents a victim of intimate partner violence. The colors chosen are congruent with the color palette of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland website. In FIGURE 3, a photo of the cover of the handbook. The handbook is in Appendix 1.

FIGURE 3. Handbook Cover



### 5.3 Timetable

The product process was done by first gathering interviews and online material in English about intimate partner violence in Finland. I started writing the handbook and ultimately reviewing the product with the organization to finalize.

TABLE 4. Timetable

Time	Task
January 2019:	Agreeing with the working partner organization. Conducting interviews. Presented first thesis plan (to redraft it).
13.01.2020	Recorded Interview Counsellor 1 - Focused on Monika Crisis Center
16.01.2020	Recorded Interview Counsellor 2 – Focused on Shelter Mona.
May 2020	Thesis plan finalized.
June 2020	Working on the thesis plan and transcribing product
September 2020	Meeting with the Managing Director of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland supervisor to discuss the product and finalize the research permission as a working life partner organization and to use the interviews as information.
November 25 2020	Presented manuscript and evaluation of the product. The organization has approved the product.
December 4 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Sent corrected manuscript.
December 2020	Finalized the Product and approval of the Product by MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland.
1 <sup>st</sup> February 2021	Registration for the thesis assessment process
17 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	Confirmed the final thesis with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland.
22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2021	Submission of preliminary thesis
3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2021	Preliminary thesis publication seminars
4 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Maturity test
15 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Submission of the final thesis

In TABLE 4, I described my timetable for what I planned to do to finish my final product. The process started in January 2019 when I began two different permissions. Firstly, I signed the agreement with the working life partner organization. The second step was the permission for the interviews conducted. As previously mentioned, I will use the material anonymously, and the recording I took will be deleted once I publish the thesis.

From March to May 2020, I took a break from my thesis for personal reasons, I started to work on the thesis in May 2020. Once the thesis manuscript and the product were approved, I focused on finalizing the thesis by February 2021. The working life partner organization read the final thesis before the submission and publication.

#### 5.4 Handbook Content

The handbook is addressed to women who do not speak Finnish and who live in Finland. Most of these women, victims of domestic violence, do not know how to report and react in this circumstance.

The product will cover different topics focused on what to do after an immigrant woman is a victim of intimate partner violence. The handbook is referenced to help and support those women who do not know precisely how to proceed. Most of the handbook content is done through personal research in MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland Website (2018) and literature I mentioned earlier. Aside from the interview of the two counselors who also gave me the case examples regarding the different services through the consultation and online research.

I previously discussed with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland the content of my handbook. Talking with Monika’s counselors was also very useful for understanding what to research and what to focus on. MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, approved my product, and we agreed on the content (TABLE 5).

TABLE 5. Handbook's content

Introduction	In the introduction, I explain the handbook's purpose of helping immigrant women, victims of intimate partner violence in Finland.
What is intimate partner violence	This chapter defines intimate partner violence and the four more common forms of violence detected by The World Health Organization (2019).
Most common violence outcome and Long term consequences of underestimating violence	Two chapters are focused on the effects any violence can have on a victim.
Advice on how to detect evidence of violence	This chapter advises on some methods to prove violence.
What you should know legally about intimate partner violence	This chapter focuses on the legislation in Finland (Finlex, The Council of Europe Convention, The Legal Aid Act, Restraining Order)
About MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland	An introduction about MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, which collaborated on the project.
The Crisis Center Monika	A description of the Crisis Center Monika and its services .
What should you do when you have been threatened with violence, and you do not know where to go	This chapter explains what a person should do when has been threatened with violence. When calling a shelter and what are the numbers available (112 and Nolla Linja).
The Shelter Mona	A description of the Shelter Mona, the only one in Finland in a secret location.
What happens to the survival after leaving the shelter?	What kind of procedures happen once a victim leaves the shelter and what is suggested to do.
The Integration Center Monika	This chapter describes the services and support offered by the Integration Center Monika.
How a immigrant woman can be integrated in Finland?	This chapter focuses on what happens once a victim leaves the partner; maybe, she just left the shelter and needs to seek for integration program.
Other organizations that focus on immigrant women in Finland	Introducing other organizations that focus on immigrant women in Finland and intimate partner violence: The Finnish League for Human Rights in Finland, Women's Line and The Iraqi Women's Association.

Supportive service for job searching and language learning	Introducing supportive services in Finland: InfoFinland and the Employment and Economic Development Office (TEE Office).
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In TABLE 5 I wrote the main chapters of the handbook and their contents. The handbook is divided into sections focused on the meaning of intimate partner violence, MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, Finnish supporting and networking services.

### 5.5 Ethical Consideration

Laerd dissertations (2012) lists five principles of research ethics which are valid to follow also in this product thesis: Minimizing the risk of harm, obtaining informed consent, protecting anonymity and confidentiality, avoiding deceptive practices, Providing the right to withdraw (2012). Through those ethical principles the handbook and the thesis will be implemented in the appropriate way. The first principle, minimizing the risk of harm, is mostly related to the fact my target group is immigrant women in Finland, a pretty diverse group in terms of nationality and culture, which calls for frequent ethical consideration on my part.

The second principle obtains informed consent. It is mostly related to the stakeholder MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, since it is the one that is collaborating for the product and gave through the interviews some confidential material to be used for research.

The third principle, protecting anonymity and confidentiality, is to mention the people involved anonymously. This states that you have viable sources and claims based on them but you are safeguarding their privacy by citing them as anonymous sources. In this case, the two social counselors who prefer to be neither mentioned by name nor any further details of themselves other the department in which they work.

The fourth principle, avoiding deceptive practices, always demonstrates where the data comes from to prove it was not invented.



The fifth, and last, principle provides the right to withdraw. The working life partner organization MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland has the right to withdraw from the thesis and to evaluate the final product. Transparency, regular communication and assessment of the product are essential.

When implementing the thesis, it must be considered that all the professionals and people interviewed will be anonymous (third principle). The topic is highly delicate, and it is not conceivable to generalize. It is mandatory to consider different problems and issues- professionals will be the only ones who are directly in touch with the victims since a bachelor student cannot interview the victims directly. So, two professionals in MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland. have answered some of my questions to understand more what the handbook has to focus on and giving statistics about the shelter in MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland.

All the research permits, and consents were done through the organizations. Also, other data will be collected through bibliography, journalistic articles, and books.

In conclusion, as the National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway (18), whatever information used through the interviewers must be used only for this thesis purpose, and the interviewed with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland’s counselors will be deleted after the thesis will be published.

## 6 PRODUCT EVALUATION

In this chapter, I evaluate the product with evaluation tools. For this product-based thesis, I decided to use a goal-based model through a DAC Evaluation Criteria (SECO/WE, 9, n.d.) based on five criteria: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Sustainability, Impact.

After analyzing the five words in table 6, I added a calendar (TABLE 7) about the evaluation meetings with the working life partner organization. I concluded with a final SWOT analysis to understand the work's effectiveness as a personal evaluation.

TABLE 6: DAC EVALUATION CRITERIA

RELEVANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The objectives are covered in the handbook.</li> </ul>
EFFICIENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gathering the right material.</li> <li>Respecting the deadline with the working life partner organization.</li> </ul>
EFFECTIVENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can the handbook be useful? Collaboration with professionals.</li> <li>Process of feedback which I reported on TABLE 7.</li> <li>Personal evaluation through a SWOT analysis on how effective the product is.</li> </ul>
SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What kind of benefits in the long term can give the handbook?</li> </ul>
IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What kind of impact has the handbook?</li> </ul>

In the relevance, I verified the objectives, and the contents of my product were explained. To do that, I needed to ask for feedback from the Managing Director of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland.

In the efficiency, I ensured the material I researched for my handbook was correct, and the language used was good for the readers. The Managing Director gave me feedback on how to improve until the final approval focused both on the contents and style of the product (TABLE 7). In the beginning, the text in the handbook product was too long, and, according to the feedback received, I had to be briefer. As mentioned previously, I made a personal evaluation of my product reported through a SWOT analysis at the end of the chapter.

In the effectiveness, I had to be sure that my product was developing correctly. To understand this, I had several meetings with the working life partner organization to ensure that I was doing right until they were satisfied with the final work.

I received feedback from the Managing Director and from the two counselors from Shelter Mona and the Crisis Center that I previously interviewed. One of the critical pieces of feedback I received from the Managing Director was to be concise and only putting bullet points that victims of intimate partner violence might be interested to know.

Sustainability is crucial to highlight the long-term benefits the handbook can have. To make that, I improved my work and understanding better my readers who are immigrant women who need to know information quickly and without spending too much time reading the handbook. Besides, the collaboration with professionals helped the product to be completed and concise and it can help immigrant women understand the topic widely.

The impact explains what kind of effect the product could have. I hope to provide information about intimate partner violence easily to immigrant women. Of course, the handbook is not released yet, so I can not answer if this product’s impact will be useful. I am aware that three professionals over-evaluated the work with proper feedback, and hopefully, this product could benefit more women as possible.

TABLE 7: EVALUATION MEETING CALENDAR WITH THE WORKING LIFE PARTNER ORGANIZATION

What	Presented	Feedback	Where	Who
Thesis plan approved	28.9.2020	28.09.2020	MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland’s central office	Managing Director
Product approved	21.12.2020 by email	13.01.2021	MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland’s central office	Managing Director
Preliminary thesis feedback and extra feedback on the product	8.02.2021 by email	19.02.2021	MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland’s central office	Managing Director + Shelter Mona Counselor, Crisis Center Counselor (feedback reported to the Managing Director the day of the meeting)
Last reviewing of the product	18.02.2021 by email	19.02.201	Email	Managing Director

In the evaluation process and the assessment of the actual product, I got all the permissions from MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland (Spolander et al, 2012).

As reported in TABLE 7, I have been doing four meetings with the Managing Director. In the first meeting, I proposed my thesis plan and product idea, which was approved by my working life partner organization. I agreed with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, how the handbook will look. The Managing Director approved the contents after some correction and feedback. When I planned my thesis product, I was thinking of writing a guidebook instead of a handbook, but the Managing Director suggested it was more practical to create a handbook with key point explanations because it is what is needed most.

Nevertheless, before making the handbook, I agreed with MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland about the type of product I decided to do and what type of content I should focus on.

In the second meeting, I focused on developing the product, the handbook. We agreed that I should create something simple to read and easy to be translated into different languages since many immigrant women do not speak English. In the second meeting, the handbook was approved, but I still had to work better on the language and the layout style.

When I met the Managing Director, I provided a draft of my handbook with an idea of layout design. She approved my contents, adding specific information about all the services of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland. Moreover, she corrected the handbook’s length, alerting me that there was too much text for the reader. Consequently, I worked on a shorter text to make the product easy and straightforward to read.

The third and the fourth meeting was focused on the evaluation on the product. In the third meeting, I had additional comments from the counselors of MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland. I interviewed, and finally, the work was complete. In that meeting also the preliminary thesis was approved. I sent my definitive handbook to the Managing Director. She gave me the last correction on adding MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland websites to help the reader if they need to search for more information.

From an ethical point of view, everything has been planned, and all decisions have been respected.

I made an additional Swot analysis (Sponlander et al., 2012, 30) based on the Managing Director and the two counselors' feedback as personal evaluation after making the handbook.

TABLE 8: SWOT Analysis Evaluation

Strength	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The handbook is simple to read, and it has the essential information about immigrant partner violence.</li> <li>• It is easy to translate.</li> <li>• I gathered essential information evaluated by MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland's Managing Director, and two counsellors interviewed.</li> <li>• It is good to read both online and printed.</li> <li>• It highlights not only physical violence but also mental violence and its effects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The distributions at the moment would be available online because of Covid reasons.</li> <li>• It is available only in English language.</li> <li>• Due to my lack of Finnish Language knowledge I had difficulties to read proper articles and references in Finnish language.</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This handbook reading can help immigrant women gain more knowledge about intimate partner violence and procedure in Finland.</li> <li>• It can be both printed and online and, for this reason, can be distributed on different platforms, physical and online.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to Covid situations, many women might not be able to read the product, and women have less chance to network and meet people.</li> <li>• There might not be enough information provided for everyone since each case is different.</li> <li>• Some immigrant women are not able to read.</li> </ul>

As stated in the Swot analysis, I found several difficulties in creating this product since I started work on this thesis at the beginning of a historical period where human contact is significantly diminished because of the corona pandemic. So I had to partly take into account that many events, projects, and organizations previously active for networking and helping women in need are now canceled. Also, people are hardly going out to network and meet people. It was hard for me, as a non-Finnish speaker, to find proper references and articles since most of the material is written in Finnish language. Additionally, I received a lot of help from the working life partner organization, which addressed me finding suitable references. In the strength, I highly appreciated the incredible support I received from MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, to create the handbook, which is simple, easy to read and gather the essential information adapted to the reader.

Since many people are working from home and spending most of the time in their houses, domestic violence victims are in a dangerous situation, and it is harder for them to seek help.

In the opportunities, I highlight how this handbook can be spread quickly online and can support women to understand intimate partner violence in Finland better.

## 6.1 Professional Development

I chose this topic because I have been collaborating as a journalist with many Finnish projects relating to intimate partner violence. In 2017 I joined Eve's Ribs, a Russian- Finnish project where they highlighted intimate partner violence during their festival in Saint Petersburg.

I have also directed a documentary for the Finnish television show "Yle Perjantai" (2020) where a former victim of intimate partner violence in Finland told her story as an immigrant woman.

I also participated at the Women's Day (March 8, 2020). I took part in the seminar in Oodi Library, Helsinki, and interviewed the Finnish psychologist Hannelle Törrönen about trauma psychological violence in intimate partner violence. I am currently a member of Plus Collective (2020) and volunteering in the collective, which organized an art installation for the National Day of Violence Against Women (November 25, 2020). Due to my activity throughout the years, I thought it would be best for me to work on a thesis connected to my field so as to understand more what I had mostly focused with journalistic projects and works. Talking with many immigrant women in Finland, they found it challenging to get information in Finland on intimate partner violence. That is why I thought creating a handbook with the biggest organization for multicultural women (MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland) would be a great opportunity.

In my social services studies, I gained further understanding on the topic of violence from a diverse perspective. Through the Mental Health course, I understood how much psychological violence is at the same level as physical violence. In the product, I highlight this matter since, nowadays, mental health is still not highlighted sufficiently.

Throughout my bachelor's degree studies, I focused on mental health, counseling, and community work courses. I found out how important it is to support inclusiveness in any project and organization. I interned with one NGO called the Shortcut, promoting inclusiveness and networking for immigrant people in Finland. There I understood how critical is the need for immigrant people to network and gain independence. I also had an internship in the project "Finland for all Families," where I learned the importance of having equal rights for



diverse families, which is not yet the case in Finland (Finland for All Families, 2020) .

During this thesis implementation, I improved the product planning skills, and I learned properly how to plan, implement and evaluate a project. Apart from the DIAK course on project management that I took in 2019, I have not ever done anything similar before. Most of the tables (Smart objectives, 5w's, and SWOT analysis) I learned to handle on that course.

Additionally, I took it upon myself to read the literature and material of the Domestic Violence course in Diak to understand more about my thesis's main key point.

## 7 CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I demonstrated that major information for immigrant women about intimate partner violence is necessary for them to be comprehended. This handbook lists the main services and information about immigrant partner violence. It allows a quick and straightforward reading to give the essential information they need to know. This product will help immigrant women to provide what they need to learn faster and more efficiently.

Besides, I could not find much specific data online about immigrant women and intimate partner violence in Finland.

After talking with professionals, I understood how important networking is for immigrant women, and building contacts with other people can be beneficial if they are in a dangerous situation.

Also, intimate partner violence in Finland increases because of the current situation with the corona pandemic (Yle News, 2020). Some projects with face-to-face peer support groups might no longer be valid.

From an ethical perspective, I believe immigrant women should not be considered a unique group since they are different people with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and languages. There should be more collaboration to find a way to communicate and help everyone in the same way.

Immigrant women are twice more at risk than Finnish women as intimate partner violence victims (MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland). The main reason, as I previously mentioned, is because they do not know how to act. Things are worsening because of the COVID 19 restriction (THL, 2020, 2021).

In November 2020, Marisel Soto Godoy from MONIKA – Multicultural Women’s Association, Finland, gave a speech at the “We Want We Do” event by PlusCollective, a video available on their website (2020). She told a story of an immigrant woman, a victim of intimate partner violence and domestic violence, whose main reason for being afraid to call was frightened of going to prison (PlusCollective, 2020). Marisel also mentioned that despite the increase of shelters for female victims of violence, their numbers are still frighteningly low. There should be more of them because there is a high need in Finland.

What should be done is to raise awareness because apparently, what has been done so far is not enough; statistics have not improved over the years (Statistic Finland, 2019).

According to WHO, intimate partner violence has highly increased in the world during the pandemic. Victims are fearful of attending health care centers because of the risk of getting infected by the disease (2020).

According to the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare (THL), there has been an increase in people asking for shelters in 2020, the year of the coronavirus pandemic (THL, 2020,2021).

It is evident the situation is critical. My recommendation to organizations that help people in need of support against intimate partner violence is to find a way to help people without face-to-face meetings and support domestic violence victims facing intimate partner violence.

After my studies, experiences, and reading, I think there are enough services focus on inclusiveness, networking, and spreading knowledge of Finnish legislation and society. However, they are still not promoted well enough among the immigrant people. Especially there is a need for translation of various languages. My handbook can be easily translated into other languages, but this would just be a small platform. As I mentioned before, many immigrant women in Finland do not know how to read or write, so further assistance and support should be provided in those circumstances (2021).

Thanks to the Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention for 2018-2021, the services focused on intimate and domestic violence have greatly improved. Still, there is a lot more work needed. More focus should be placed on immigrants as their numbers are increasing vastly, and services and organizations should think about solutions to help victims of domestic violence during the coronavirus pandemic that, unfortunately, is not ended yet.

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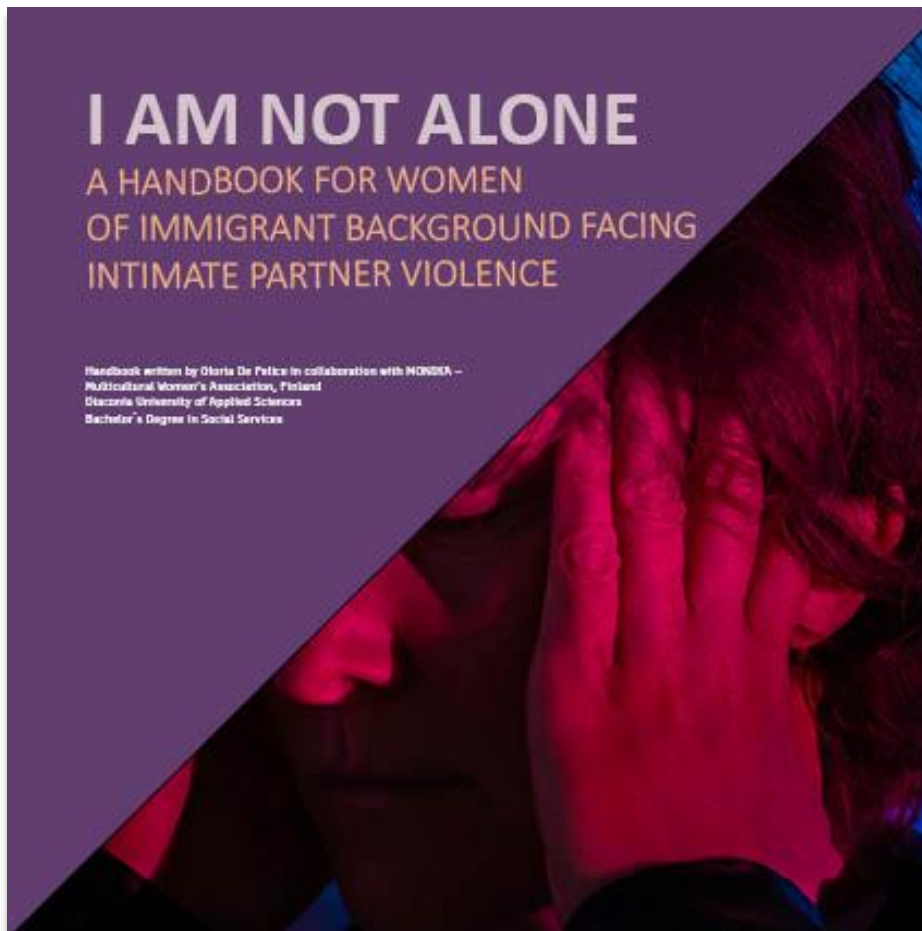
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## 9 APPENDIX 1. THE HANDBOOK



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## Introduction

Are you an immigrant woman in Finland? Have you opened this handbook to get more information about intimate partner violence?

This handbook aims to describe how Finland supports women, victims of violence, and those not originally from Finland.

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Finland is the EU's second most violent country for women: 47 percent have experienced physical or sexual violence since 15. Immigrant women experience violence more than the rest because in a vulnerable position.

This circumstance happens because immigrant women are not familiar with the Finnish legislation and social welfare. Many are afraid to report to the police also for visa and resident permission reasons.

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*This handbook is in collaboration  
with Monika – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland.*

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## Forms of intimate partner violence

There are four main categories of intimate partner violence according to the World Health Organization (WHO): physical violence, sexual violence, emotional behavior, and sexual behaviors. We should not underestimate either of them.

- **Physical violence:** violence through physical harm.
- **Sexual Violence:** A sexual act, unwanted sex comment against the will of the other person.
- **Emotional abuse:** A form of psychological abuse. When the partner, through words and behaviors, is hurting and fighting the victim.
- **Controlling behaviors:** the intimate partner dominates, isolates, and wants to seek control over the victim.

## Most common violence outcome

<b>PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</b> (any form of physical violence and sexual abuse)	<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE</b> (Controlling behaviors, emotional abuse)
Bruising, fractures, burns, injuries, sex without consent, hitting.	Depression, anxiety, eating and sleep disorders, increasing feelings of shame or guilt.

*This information is retrieved from the website of the Finnish Institute for health and welfare (Thi, 2021)*

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## Long term consequences of understimating violence

The Finnish Institute for health and welfare has a section on their website which explains the importance of not underestimate any type of violence, physical or psychological. They all can have long-term consequences that can be mostly:

- fear states
- panic disorders
- stress
- stress-related disorders
- suicide
- violent behavior.

*This information is retrieved from the website of the Finnish Institute for health and welfare (Thi, 2021)*

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## Advice on how to detect evidence of violence

- Obtaining evidence and a medical certificate
- Take photos of the perpetrator's text message if violent, or bruises or any evidence it might be necessary, send them to a close friend, and then delete them.
- Write a diary if you can and if it can be safe. Writing helps to understand your feelings better.
- Talk to people or get social support and professional help.
- Call the police when you are in danger.

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## What you should know legally about intimate partner violence

- Finlex offers an English translation of Finnish legislation on their website.
- The Istanbul Convention entered into force in Finland on 1 August 2015. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women.
- The Legal Aid act (257/2002) provides legal assistance to immigrant women victims of intimate partner violence. The act offers a legal service by the state expensive.
- A Restraining Order occurs when preventing harassment or offense by someone who the victim feels in danger of life, health, or freedom. It can be temporary or last at most one year, and it can be renewed. Different circumstances should also be considered when imposing a restraining order. The district court decides the application (written or oral). Once the victim applies for a restraining order, there will be an investigation before the decision. (section 2a 2004/711).

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## About MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland

MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, is a no-profit organization that supports immigrant women living in Finland. It is mainly divided into four units.

- The Central office (the administration center)
- The Crisis Center
- The Shelter Mona
- The integration center.

*More information available in the website [www.monikanaiset.fi](http://www.monikanaiset.fi)*

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## The Crisis Center Monika

Crisis Center Monika (Kriisikeskus Monika) provides a low-threshold service with the possibility of receiving help anonymously. Services include psycho-social support, guidance, peer support groups, and supportive housing.

Helpline 0800 05058 Mon 9-19 and Tue-Fri 9-16 (free of charge). Online chat Mon 16-19 and Wed-Thu 10-12 (in Arabic, English, Russian and Finnish)

*More information available in the website [www.monikanaiset.fi/kriisikeskus-monika](http://www.monikanaiset.fi/kriisikeskus-monika)*

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## What should you do when you have been threatened with violence, and you do not know where to go

The first thing to do when you feel you are a victim of intimate partner violence is to call the police, calling emergency number 112. The police will help you to contact the closer Shelter called Turvakoti, in Finland, if you need a place safe to stay.

You can call the nearest shelter or NOLLA LINJA (Zero line) 080 005 005

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Monika – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland, has the Shelter Mona.

*More information available in the website <https://www.nollalinja.fi/turvakoti/>*

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## The Shelter Mona

The Shelter Mona (Turvakoti Mona) is located at a secret address.

Immigrant women and their children from all over the country have access to this service. In the Shelter Mona, you will be followed by two social counselors and one social worker to help you understand what to do after leaving it.

Shelter Mona (24/7)+358 45 639 6274

*More information available in the website [www.monikanaiset.fi/turvakoti-mona/](http://www.monikanaiset.fi/turvakoti-mona/)*

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## What happens to the survival after leaving the shelter?

What happens to women after leaving the shelter?

- The shelter provides help in organizing life after the shelter period. (Nollalinja, 2021)
- She will be given professional help to find any options according to her life situation.
- In Finland, many associations and authorities provide support for women regarding integration and psychological support.

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## The Integration Center Monika

Integration Center Monika (Kotoutumiskeskus Monika) promotes integration and employment through individual counseling, group activities, and mentoring. The groups are run in easy-Finnish language. The free of charge number 0800 05059 provides support on:

- looking for a job
- seeking study
- housing and livelihood
- filling in forms
- well-being

*More information available in the website*  
[www.monikanaiset.fi/kotoutumiskeskus-monika/](http://www.monikanaiset.fi/kotoutumiskeskus-monika/)

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## How a immigrant woman can be integrated in Finland?

Finland offers support to peer with other people, learn the language, and help immigrants get a sort of independence.

To gain autonomy, any immigrant person should learn the Finnish language, do networking, and learn some working skills.

Any immigrant person should be aware that to start a process of integration requires also learning the Finnish language and culture.

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## Other organizations that focus on immigrant women in Finland

Other organizations in Finland focus on immigrant women and domestic violence and refer their customers to MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association, Finland.

- **The Finnish League for Human rights in Finland (Ihmisoikeusliitto):** It monitors the country's situation to ensure everyone has full human rights. ([www.ihmisoikeusliitto.fi/english/](http://www.ihmisoikeusliitto.fi/english/))
- **Iraqi Women's Association (Irakin Naisten Yhdistys ry):** The association aims to support women with an immigrant background, especially in the family and society. ([www.iny.fi](http://www.iny.fi))
- **Women's line (Naisten Linja ry):** If you are a woman or girl who suffers from abuse, threats, or fear, call this number 0800 02400 (confidential and free of charge). The women who answer the phone are volunteers and trained for this kind of phone call. ([www.naistenlinja.fi/en/](http://www.naistenlinja.fi/en/))

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## Supportive service for job searching and language learning

- **InfoFinland** is a free service aiming to help and support immigrant people living in Finland. ([www.infofinland.fi](http://www.infofinland.fi))
- Immigrant people have the right to receive assistance to support integration providing advisors by the Finnish municipalities and the Employment and Economic Development Office (Työ – ja elinkeinotoimisto - TE OFFICE ). TE.Office offers the possibility for an unemployed immigrant person to take full-time Finnish schools and internships. ([www.te-palvelut.fi/te/en/](http://www.te-palvelut.fi/te/en/))

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## Credits

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It is written and researched by Gloria De Felice in collaboration with Monika, Multicultural Women's organization, Finland. Photography and graphics are made by Gloria De Felice.

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Don't wait too long to seek help!