

Child Trafficking in Albania

Definition of trafficking: The UN Convention on Transnational Crime (The Palermo Convention) adopted by the UN General Assembly of 15 November 2000:

“Trafficking in persons means the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons either by threat or use of kidnapping, force, fraud, deception or coercion or by the giving or receiving of unlawful payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labour”

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It is often difficult to establish the age of victims, so while the focus is on children, the report also refers to women. The bulk of the research concerns victims trafficked for prostitution to Italy. The situation in Greece, with regards to trafficking for prostitution has not been researched.

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List of Acronyms

Catholic Relief Services	CRS
Department for International Development	DFID
End Child Prostitution, Pornography And Trafficking	ECPAT
Gazeta Shqiptare (newspaper)	GS
International Catholic Migration Committee	ICMC
International Medical Corps	IMC
International Organisation	IO
International Organisation for Migration	IOM
International Rescue Committee	IRC
International Social Services	ISS
Netherlands Development Organisation	SNV
Non Governmental Organisation	NGO
Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe	OSCE
Republika newspaper	REP
Save the Children in Albania	SCiA
Useful to Albanian Women	UAW
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Development Program	UNDP
United States Agency for International Development	USAID

1. Executive summary

Albania has been a major source country for the trafficking of women and children¹ (under 18-year olds) since the collapse of communism in 1991. It is estimated that there are 30,000 Albanian prostitutes abroad. Despite this, until 1997, Albanian authorities were reluctant to admit that many were the victims of trafficking. Today, trafficking is high on the political agenda, but still very little research has been done into the trafficking of Albanian women and children abroad. Apart from the efforts of some national non-government organisations, the fate of trafficked women and girls has, by and large, been ignored.

Due to the absence of any meaningful or reliable statistics on trafficking (either in Albania or host countries), this study relied on anecdotal evidence at grassroots level to better determine numbers, recruitment areas, trends and practices. Through discussion groups, questionnaires and over a 100 interviews, the research team consulted victims, teachers, missionaries, villagers, speedboat owners, students, state officials, non-governmental organisations and international organisations. The intention has been to hear first-hand from those who have witnessed trafficking in the worst affected areas of Albania.

This study concludes that trafficking has been and still is widespread in the country and the majority of victims are children. Trafficking is usually conducted through offers false marriages and jobs, or abduction and selling. In some parts of Albania, there is hardly a village that remains untouched. While the trend has shown a slight decline since 1997/98, trafficking of children for prostitution continues on an almost daily basis and the risks of recruitment remain high, especially for the poor and ill educated.

For example, in Puke district in the north, village teachers have identified 87 females trafficked in the last three years, 80% of them children. Local sources claim 2000 women from the Berat district are working as prostitutes abroad, 80% of them were children when they were trafficked. In a handful of villages in the Zadrime area, it is estimated that 30 women have been forced into prostitution. There are countless other examples detailed in this report and a significant number of those have occurred in the last 6 months.

However, the picture is a complicated one. There is a steady rise in emigration for voluntary prostitution abroad to escape poverty and bleak futures in Albania. It is difficult to determine who leaves willingly and who is forced to leave for prostitution. But according to Italian NGOs, many of the voluntary prostitutes are unprepared for the harsh reality awaiting them and often end up being trafficked, exploited, and victimised when abroad. The area of forced trafficking and willing emigration for illicit activity is further blurred when discussing children. For children may say they go willingly, but are often coerced or convinced by adults to engage in illegal activity without understanding the nature of the work.

¹ The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines children as under 18 years old.

In Italy and Greece where there are estimated to be 15,000 and 6,000 Albanian prostitutes respectively, Albanian girls are subjected to extreme levels of danger, violence and sexual exploitation. Many, perhaps the majority, are unpaid rendering them sex-slaves. Their passports are taken and threats and intimidation to themselves and their families prevent them from escaping and testifying against their pimps. The Albanian pimp has a reputation for extreme ruthlessness and murder is not uncommon. Last year, the Italian Ministry of Interior reported that 168 foreign prostitutes had been killed and the majority of them were Albanians or Nigerians murdered by their pimps.

Those who do return to Albania (many are deported from Italy daily) are given very little help. There is not a single official shelter or welfare programme available to them and the state provides no security or protection. Some religious orders offer temporary accommodation but these services are on an ad hoc, case-by-case basis. If they attempt to return to their communities they usually face ostracisation and family rejection. Albania still has a culture that blames girls that have been sexually abused rather than seeing them as victims. In practise many fear to come back and those that do are usually re-trafficked.

The trafficking of children to Greece for begging and forced labour is no less alarming. It is estimated that there are 1000 mainly Albanian gypsy children in the city of Thessaloniki alone. They, too, tell stories of systematic violence and exploitation at the hands of their traffickers. Yet the Albanian Ministry of Public Order claims to have no evidence of the trade and the general public appear to be largely indifferent.

An alarming consequence of the fear of trafficking in Albania is a dramatic decrease in the number of girls over the age of 14 attending high school. In remote areas, where pupils may have to walk for over an hour to get to school, the research has discovered that as many as 90% of girls no longer receive a high school education. Although there are other factors that contribute to the trend, the majority of parents say their daughters would attend school, if their security on route could be guaranteed.

Awareness of trafficking is high in many areas as a result of media attention and the warnings of those who have returned. But there is still an urgent need to inform those in the remote areas because the conditions that make girls and women susceptible to the approaches of traffickers – poverty, unemployment, lack of education and reduced marriage prospects due to the mass emigration of boys – are as acute as ever.

Trafficking of women and children, illegal immigrants, drugs and weapons is a multi-million dollar industry, which directly and indirectly employs many people in Albania. But despite the fact that trafficking is now high on the political agenda, there are still very few prosecutions. Albania is now a major transit country for the trafficking of thousands of foreign women every year from countries such as Moldova, Romania and Ukraine and the crime networks continue to operate with virtual impunity.

While traffickers (many of whom are well known) continue to live within the community and their activities are tolerated, there is a continuing threat to Albanian girls. As an ex-

INTERPOL source says, “As long as the economic conditions prevail and the financial rewards are so high, Albania will remain a source country.”

It is incumbent on the government of Albania to address the issue of trafficking more seriously. It needs to enforce the law, prosecute criminals, provide services and welfare programmes for victims, ensure the security and protection of victims and organisations trying to help them and tackle the indifference of the Albanian public. In the meantime, international organisations and NGOs can do a great deal to prevent further trafficking of children and help those already trafficked.

Main conclusions

- Albania continues to be a significant source country of trafficking. This situation will remain as such until the law is enforced and the prevailing conditions of poverty and lack of opportunity ameliorate.
- The most “at risk ” groups are children (under 18) from poor and ill-educated families.
- There needs to be programmes and services to help victims, but these must be developed in conjunction with local NGOs and with the support of the government and community. This is not possible until the government provides protection and security.

2. A trafficking story

In December 1998, a fifteen-year-old school girl, Marjana, from the north of Albania fell in love with Xh.G. He promised to marry her and take her to Italy to start a new life. Although she did not want to go, he and his older brother persuaded her and another girl from Shkodra to take a speedboat to Italy. When they arrived they were told that the marriage plans were over. Instead both of them were forced to become prostitutes. Meanwhile her sister Klodeta, who is a few years older, was abducted by neighbours and taken to become a prostitute in Belgium.

Their elder sister Marta, 35, went to the police and reported the names of her sisters' two traffickers. Word got back to the criminals who confronted the sisters' 12 year old handicapped brother, Tonin. He was told that if the family persisted in pursuing the matter with the authorities, Marta would be taken as well.

Not long after, on May 31, 2000, the girl's father, Gjin returned home to find the walls splattered with blood and no sign of Marta. The next day her dismembered body was found in bags in the nearby river. Gjin alleges that there was no forensic evidence gathered at the crime scene and there was no autopsy.

Both traffickers were arrested the following day. While they were charged with trafficking and drug offences, there have been no murder charges.

“The Albanian State and the police have ignored this crime and I fear that these wealthy men will get off. There is a lot of pressure and money to set them free” said Gjin.

His younger daughter is now being sheltered by a religious order in Italy. She has written to her father and wants to come home, but she is traumatised and too frightened of the traffickers to return.

(Gjin was interviewed by the researcher in March 2001).

3. Methodology

The purpose of this report

- To collect and systematise information about the extent of trafficking and smuggling of Albanian children in terms of number, age groups, and gender.
- To collect information about victim's background, socio-economic status.
- To establish reliable data on where and how they are recruited means of travel and final destination.

Research Methodology

Discussion groups

Because of the lack of reliable statistics either officially or unofficially, the methodology for this report has been to research the phenomenon at the village level, to hear from those directly affected. The research study took place over a 10-week period from January 8 – March 12, 2001.

Sample areas in Albania were identified where trafficking is known to be a serious problem: the districts of Berat, Fier, Pukë, Lushnje, Lezhë and Shkodër. In collaboration with the USAID funded Dairy Development Project, *Land O'Lakes*, which works with 8000 women in rural areas, discussion groups were set up with rural women to collect information about trends, statistics and attitudes. Each discussion group had on average, twelve women from different villages in the sample area, aged 18 - 55. They were all small-scale farmers and as a result of several years of collaboration with *Land O' Lakes*, were open and willing to exchange information.

Discussion group 1. South Shkodra district. (Dajç, Barballush, Bushat.)

Discussion group 2. Lezha district (Zadrimë, Grash, Trashan, Gjadër)

Discussion group 3. Lushnja. (Krutje, Mërtish, Këmishtaj, Kolonjë, Gore, Pirrë, Rrapëz).

Discussion group 4. Fier (Verbas, Metaj, Libofshë, Zharëz, Ndërnenas)

Discussion group 5. Berat. (Urë e Kuçit).

In addition, two discussion groups were held with villagers in the village of Muçaj in Tirana District and the village of Shënavlash in Durrës District. The groups were set up using the *National Democratic Institute's* network of rural contacts. Each group had 13 participants from rural backgrounds between the ages of 18 and 62.

A further discussion group was held with nine 18-20 year old students from rural areas attending the University of Tirana.

In total approximately 90 people took part in eight discussion groups.

Questionnaires

Each participant was asked to take 3-5 questionnaires home to be completed. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect as much information as possible about girls who had left the sample areas, the reasons why and whether they could be considered victims of trafficking. Over 400 questionnaires were distributed in total, 100 of which have been returned.

Over 50 questionnaires were distributed to teachers and pupils in Laç High School. Over 50 questionnaires were distributed to village teachers in 26 villages in the Puke district. Their distribution was organised by the Puke based Albanian children's NGO, *Mendoni edhe për ne* (Think about Us).

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with priests, missionaries, nuns, veterinarians, teachers, doctors, local police, traffickers, speedboat owners, national NGOs and commune chiefs all over Albania. The purpose was to seek out people in each community who had a comprehensive knowledge of their area and also an active interest in the welfare of the community.

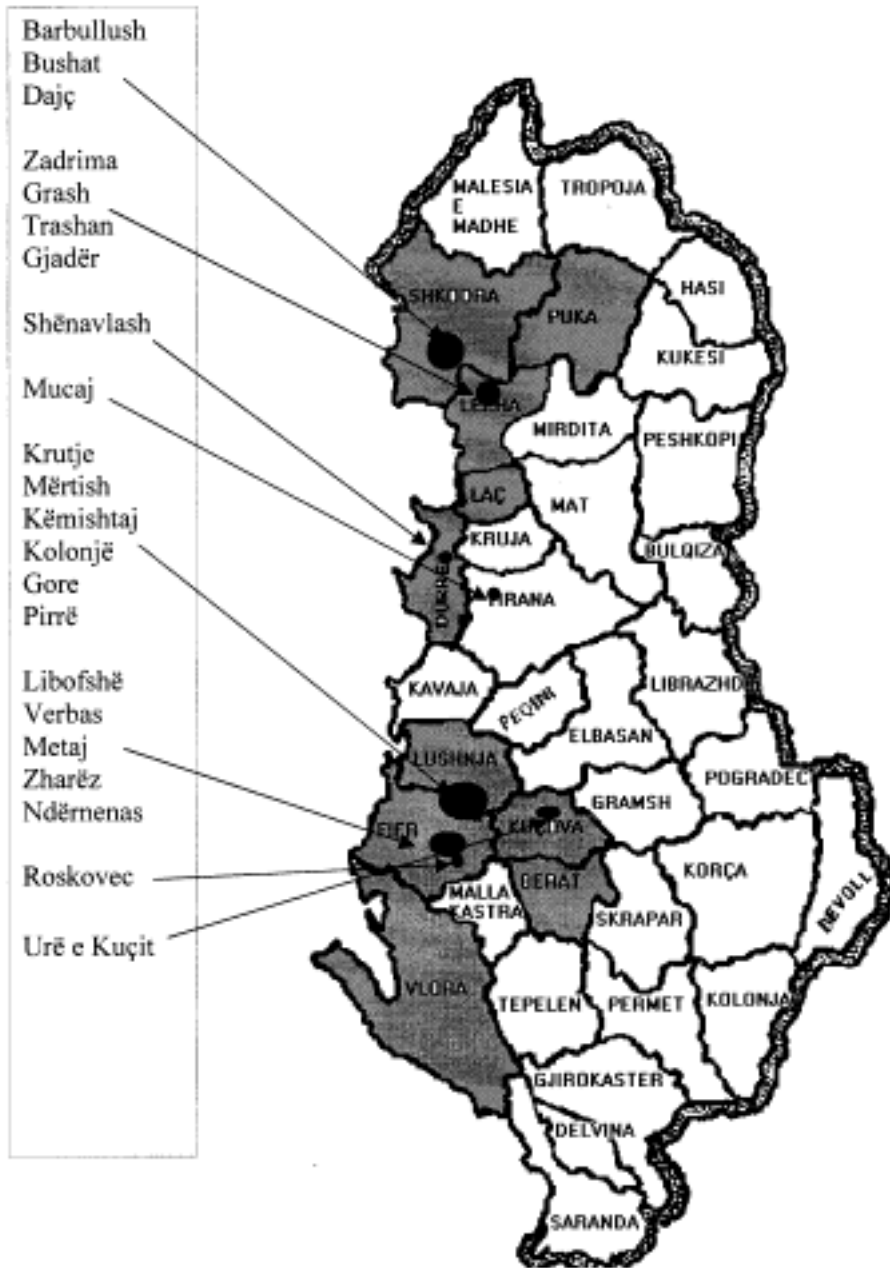
The researcher s also interviewed government officials, national, and international organisations as well as organisations working with victims of trafficking and unaccompanied Albanian minors in Italy.

Caveats

Due to clandestine nature of trafficking and its associated dangers, it is difficult to find conclusive evidence and corroborated testimony. Families and victims rarely want to talk about their experiences and incidents often go unreported, either because of fear, ignorance, complicity or lack of faith in Albanian authorities. Therefore the report, has had to rely primarily on third-party testimony, some of which is inevitably speculative, contradictory and possibly wrong. It also has to be noted that despite the best efforts to explain the definition of trafficking, it may not always have been clear to those providing examples.

Some of the interviewees, in particular those who work with victims of trafficking, requested anonymity for security reasons. Wherever possible the report gives the source of information, however in some cases names have been omitted.

4. Map of the areas in Albania in which the research was conducted



5. Recent reports of trafficking in Albania

Reports from interviews and discussion groups

“Three weeks ago (January 2001), I took a couple to Vlora. She was very beautiful and about 16 years old. Her fiancée was telling her that they would get married in Italy. But he was tricking her, because I know he’s a trafficker and he’s already happily married in Berat.” (Berat taxi driver)

“In January 2001, a man from Libofshë sold his wife, sister in law and 6 year old child. With the money he paid some judges to get his brothers released out of prison. The police are now investigating him. The wife went to Greece and the sister went to Italy. No one knows what happened to the child.” (Fier Discussion group)

“A 15 year old Albanian girl called the Shkodra women’s help line in January 2001 to say that she was being prostituted along with another Albanian girl and an Italian. She had been deported from Italy and was back in the hands of traffickers. The help line staff heard an argument with a man that they presumed to be her pimp and the telephone hung up.” (Shkodra Women’s Help line)

“Five months ago a 15 year old in the village of Verbas got engaged to a man that was not from the area. The man presented false parents. He took her to Italy where he tried to make her become a prostitute. She refused and escaped and returned to Albania. She has gone back to her family. They don’t blame her.” (Lushnja discussion group)

“A year ago (January 2000) I was on the bridge in Lezha and I heard two men talking to a woman from Kakariq. They asked her to get two girls between the age of 18-22. She agreed a price of \$400 for each of them. I told her she deserved to be beaten because she could have been taking my daughters. Three days later there were two girls abducted in Kakariq on their way to see the local nuns.” (Shkodra discussion group)

Recent reports from Albanian national newspapers

Gazeta Shqiptare and Republika, November 2000 and January 2001

November 11: Two men, 19 and 30 years old, from Fier were arrested after kidnapping a 16 year old girl for prostitution. (GS)

November 23: A Vlora girl, 13, was kidnapped, sold and raped. Policeman arrested the criminals. (GS)

12 January: Near the Durrës high school “Leonik Ptomeu” two men and a girl in a Mercedes kidnapped a girl of 17. The newspaper presumes for trafficking purposes. (REP)

17 January: A policeman from Korça was sentenced to 7 years in jail, because he cheated a 12 year old girl in order to make her a prostitute in Greece. (REP)

23 January: The police in Tirana found a girl, 15, in a hotel after she had disappeared. In the same hotel they found, a 12 year old. A man was arrested. (REP)

6. The trafficking of Albanian girls and women for prostitution

6.1 A brief history of trafficking for prostitution in Albania

Since the collapse of communism in 1991, Albania has emerged as a major source of trafficked women and girls. Poverty, unemployment, the low status of women in rural areas and the desire for a better life in the west, created the perfect conditions to lure people abroad under false pretences. By the mid 1990s, various local Albanian NGOs were reporting that thousands of women and children had been conned by false marriages or job offers, or simply abducted or sold to become prostitutes in western Europe.²

Early in the 1990s, the city of Berat in the south of Albania, emerged as the epicentre of trafficking due, in part, to the city's influential government connections. Meanwhile Vlora, with its Adriatic Sea port, became the centre of the speedboat operations which take the girls across the seventy-mile sea passage to Italy.³ Apart from the powerful Vlora and Berati gangs, other trafficking strongholds emerged in Fier, Tirana, Lezha and Shkodra and traffickers soon became active in all of Albania's major cities.

In the first half of the decade, most of the victims either came from the major cities or southern areas. The north was more protected because of its adherence to the laws of the Kanun: a traditional mediaeval law which communism had tried to suppress, but had re-emerged in the remote mountainous north during the period of transition. The Kanun lays strong emphasis on close family ties, honour and revenge and in these areas it was harder and more dangerous for traffickers to infiltrate communities and find suitable victims.

But by the second half of the decade, there had been so much internal and external migration, particularly of the male population, that the traditional way of life could no longer be relied on to protect potential victims. Tens of thousands of men and boys had left to seek work abroad and it became easier for traffickers to target girls and women in remote northern villages. Although trafficking has always been more prevalent in the south and in the cities, today victims come from all areas.

Trafficking of Albanian women and girls peaked, in terms of numbers, between 1996 and 1998 and since then there has been a gradual decline, although it is still a very serious problem.⁴ This downturn was triggered by the collapse of the pyramid schemes in 1997 which led to months of anarchy in Albania and a temporary break-up of the criminal hierarchy. In Berat many traffickers were killed as rival gangs sought revenge for their unchallenged dominance of the Albanian trafficking scene.⁵ At the same time, Albanians broke into the state armouries and stole half a million weapons. This meant that the

² Useful to Albanian Women, *Prostitution: Society in Dilemma*, 1997 report.

³ Interview with CARITAS investigator in Albania, February 2001, & *Ibidem*.

⁴ Collective impression from interviewees.

⁵ Interview with CARITAS investigator in Albania, February 2001.

population, which was becoming more aware of trafficking as a result of increased media attention, was now able to take revenge.

There was an example of a family in Zhitom i Madh, Berat district, who killed a local trafficker as he tried to take their daughter⁶ and as cases like this became more common, traffickers had to become more wary. From then on traffickers targeted the most vulnerable girls and women in society, although with regards to the authorities they could still act with virtual impunity.

Because of the increasing dangers of recruiting in Albania, traffickers turned their attentions to the lucrative new market in foreign women and children from other Eastern European countries such as Moldova, Romania, and the Ukraine. Since 1997 this market has expanded rapidly; Albanian traffickers buy women and children from criminal gangs abroad and bring them through Albania to take them by speedboat to Italy. Last year the International Organisation of Migration and the International Catholic Migration Committee gave shelter and assistance to 125 foreign girls and women trafficked through Albania. Italian NGOs report a substantial increase in Moldovans, Romanians and Ukrainians on the streets of Italy over the last year of whom thousands are trafficked through Albania.⁷

Albanian traffickers (many of whom are known) continue to live within the community and as long as their activities are tolerated, they will continue to recruit Albanian girls. As an ex-INTERPOL source says, “As long as the economic conditions prevail and the financial rewards are so high, Albania will remain a source country.”⁸

Some traffickers in Albania appear to have connections with international organised crime, while many others are small-time operators, who take girls as a means of earning fast money. In Italy it is reported that many traffickers/pimps are unconnected to any organised network⁹; they “own” a couple of girls just for personal profit. Some are relatives and neighbours of their victims.

Albanian traffickers and pimps have a reputation for extreme ruthlessness that has allowed them to live quite openly in Albania as well as securing a strong foothold abroad. The Italian press report that Albanians now control many of the prostitution rackets in Italy, having driven out their Italian counterparts. But it seems unlikely that there is not some sort financial pay-off to Italian Mafia for the right to earn large sums by pimping foreign girls on Italian streets.

6.2 Police, the Law and Statistics

The overwhelming view of the discussion groups and interviewees is that trafficking exists because of the failure of the police and state to tackle the problem. Many

⁶ Interview with ex-employee of INTERPOL, February 2001.

⁷ Interview with ICMC, Tirana, February 2001.

⁸ Interview with ex-employee of INTERPOL, February 2001.

⁹ Interviews with Italian NGOs, March 2001.

participants accuse the authorities of apathy as well as collusion in the activities of the traffickers, and the accounts of some trafficked women tend to support this view.¹⁰ Although the police make some arrests, there are very few prosecutions.

The Ministry of Public Order's official report for 2000, reports 144 penal prosecutions for offences to do with trafficking: 13 for organising trafficking, 20 for illegal border crossing, 20 for helping people to cross the border illegally, and 91 for "favouring" (aiding and abetting) prostitution. But according to OSCE's Human Rights Officer in Albania, "There is no co-ordinated effort to prosecute criminals and no disaggregated figures to demonstrate prosecutions."¹¹

OSCE considers existing Albanian law to be adequate to fight the crime of trafficking of both women and children, while other organisations argue there is a need for new laws that deal specifically with the crime of trafficking in humans. But the real problem is less the law but the lack of implementation. When the law is applied, often it is the victim that is penalised for prostitution offences rather than the pimp.

Recently, because of international pressure, Albanian police have been more pro-active, and according to one speedboat owner,¹² the continuing joint Italian /Albanian police counter-trafficking effort, "Operation Eagle", has made it harder for speedboat operators in and around Vlora Bay. But according to OSCE in Albania, Operation Eagle only has a "limited effect".¹³

There are no reliable official statistics about trafficking in Albania and to date there has been no serious effort to collect, systematise, or evaluate data. This is partly due to the Albanian authorities unwillingness to acknowledge Albania as a source country prior to 1998, but it is also a result of a pervading indifference towards the problem. For example, on October 31, 2000, the Minister for Public Order at that time, Spartak Poci, declared that Albania was no longer a source country for the trafficking of girls and women.¹⁴ However, in February 2001, the new Minister of Public Order, Ilir Gjoni, declared during a seminar in Rome that Albania is not only a country of transit but also of origin.

Data collection is also hindered by the following factors. Firstly, it is difficult to determine who is a victim of trafficking and who goes voluntarily. Secondly, the general public are often reluctant to report incidents and, thirdly trafficked victims are unwilling to testify against their pimps.

In January 2001 the Ministry of Public Order reported the "incomplete data" that 348 Albanian females were trafficked for the purpose of prostitution in Western European

¹⁰ The researcher interviewed Moldovan girls in July 2000 who said they had been stopped by Shkodra police who were then bribed by the traffickers.

¹¹ Interview with OSCE Human Rights Officer in Albania, March 2001.

¹² Interviews with Vlora speedboat owner, March 2001.

¹³ Interview with OSCE sources in Albania, March 2001.

¹⁴ "The Italy-Albania Counter-trafficking Experience", an international conference in Tirana, 31 October 2000.

countries. Sixty-three of them were girls between the ages of 14 and 18 years.¹⁵ It is hard to determine the timeframe or the meaning of this statistic, although it may refer to the number of cases still under investigation.

In Italy there is also very little disaggregated data about the trafficking of Albanian women and girls and little co-ordination between the many organisations (often linked to the Catholic Church) that help them. Unfortunately, the situation in Greece seems to be even worse. There is no information available in Albania about the fate of Albanian women and children trafficked to Greece for prostitution.

Interview with speedboat owner, aged 31, in Vlora
March 2001.

“I own a speedboat and on a good night, after I have paid all my costs, I can earn 10,000USD. I reckon that in the Vlora district alone there are 10-15 speedboats that leave nightly when the weather is good. On average they carry between 30-40 passengers. When the weather is bad, especially in the winter, only three or four will go. Those are the bigger speedboats with three engines.

Collectively, the speedboats will carry in one night, an average of 30-40 Albanian women and 50 foreigners for prostitution in Western Europe. Normally they are accompanied by men from Fier or Berat. Generally they all come from very poor backgrounds. A lot are going voluntarily and I reckon most of them know what they are going to do, but not all of them. I would say a lot of them are around 17 – 25 years old.

Operation Eagle (The Italian/Albanian counter-trafficking initiative to seize speedboats) has made it harder recently for speedboat owners. But we pay the Albanian police to turn a blind eye and although they have taken some speedboats, you’re never going to stop the activity – there is too much money involved. I know some people in Italy at the moment buying new boats.”

6.3 Recruitment

According to the discussion groups in sample areas, traffickers have networks of contacts in villages who identify suitable girls to target. The most common form of approach and recruitment is an offer of marriage or a job abroad, either as a waitress or sometimes as a dancer in a club. Both offers are always accompanied by promises to arrange everything from travel documents and visas, to housing in the host country.

Traffickers may spend months convincing a girl to get engaged or married and will often present false parents to the family to demonstrate good credentials.¹⁶ He will persuade the

¹⁵ Ministry of Public Order letter to Save the Children, February 2001.

parents that they can benefit too, because if the couple go abroad, they can send back money to help the family. There are reports¹⁷ that some families are told that the couple will be going to Greece where many Albanians now have relations but at the last minute, the girl finds herself on a speedboat to Italy.

In the north of Albania, it is reported that sometimes when a girl is abducted, her family will claim the opposite –they will say she got married to the person who took her in order to avoid a scandal. Villagers only discover the truth when the trafficker reappears in Albania.¹⁸

Traffickers also employ female procurers (who may be ex-prostitutes) to recruit girls in Albania. For example in February 2001, community leaders informed an NGO in Elbasan of a hairdressing teacher who uses her job as a front to identify suitable candidates for trafficking. Her task is to win the confidence of girls on her courses and persuade them to take up “new opportunities”. Her husband is a well-known trafficker.¹⁹

Once the trafficker has a girl, he will either accompany her directly abroad where he will pimp her, or else she will be sold. Buying and selling is common and many trafficked women find themselves the “property” of several different pimps. The average price for a girl doubles when she arrives in Italy – generally a girl is worth 2500 USD, although some sell for as much as 4000 USD.²⁰ A young virgin is reported to command prices of 10,000 USD.²¹ There are reports of girls being gang raped and prostituted prior to departure in order to prepare them psychologically for what lies ahead.²²

Abductions were fairly common in the 1990s and reached their peak during the anarchy of 1997.²³ The Albanian INTERPOL office has reportedly dealt with 103 kidnappings of females between 1993 - 1998 of which only 44 have been traced alive. There are still cases of abductions reported in the Albanian press, and according to an unofficial source, Albanian INTERPOL was notified of 12 missing persons last year but many cases go unreported because of a combination of fear, shame and distrust of the authorities²⁴.

There are also numerous cases over the last decade of women and children being sold to traffickers, sometimes by relatives and friends (see evidence section and case studies.)²⁵ There is also evidence of babies or very young children being sold by Roma families.²⁶

¹⁶ Interview with Shkodra trafficker, Vlora Women’s Hearth, CARITAS trafficking investigator and discussion groups, January and February 2001

¹⁷ Interview with Italian NGO *Parsec* that provides advisory services to Albanian prostitutes in Rome.

¹⁸ Interview with teacher collecting questionnaires in Fushë Arrëz, March 2001.

¹⁹ Interview with international NGO working with victims of domestic violence in Elbasan, February 2001.

²⁰ Interviews with trafficked girls (mainly from third countries) at ICMC/IOM shelters, July 2000.

²¹ Useful to Albanian Women, *Prostitution: Society in Dilemma*, 1997.

²² Interview with Catholic Centre, Elbasan, January 2001.

²³ Report from the IOM and DFID workshop on “Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation”, 21-22 September 1999.

²⁴ Interview with Albanian freelance journalist with eight years of trafficking expertise, February 2001.

²⁵ Interview with CARITAS trafficking investigator.

²⁶ Interview with “Ndihmë për fëmijët”, Elbasan, and Catholic order in Berat.

There is also a trade in babies born to trafficked girls/women. The NGO *Women's Hearth* interviewed a 22 year old Moldovan in September 2000 who had been encouraged by her Albanian pimp to continue her four month pregnancy with the promise that he would buy the baby. The same woman claimed she had two trafficked friends in Italy who were also about to give birth and they were planning to use the money from the sale of their babies to return home. To date, the fate of these children is still not known. Although there have been allegations of illegal adoption and organ trafficking, none have been proven.

Many interviewees and Italian NGOs reported an increasing number of Albanian girls going voluntarily abroad to prostitute as a way of escaping a bleak future in Albania. It appears that few of these girls are aware or prepared for the harsh reality of the life of a prostitute with an Albanian pimp; many end up exploited and abused.²⁷

E. B is one of six children from a poor family living in a village in Skrapar district. Her mother is paralyzed. She was 14 years old in 1996 when her father sold her to a man from Fier for 20,000 Lek (145 USD). She was raped and drugged before being sent to Italy where an Albanian from Berat prostituted her. For four years she has worked the streets of Milan, day and night. She had to bring in 1 million lira each day, or else she was violently beaten. She went for four successive years without contacting her parents. She was arrested by police and returned to Albania by ferry. She wants to see her family, but is fearful of her father and the trafficker who might find her again.

Case study from Vlora Women's Hearth, 2000.

6.4 Social and Cultural Factors that Affect Trafficking

The primary reason for trafficking is poverty, low status of women, lack of opportunity and a desire for a better life. But there are also various social and cultural factors that may make it easier for traffickers to convince girls to leave.

In rural areas, the tradition of very young marriages, often below the legal age of 16, is still widely practised.²⁸ This is because rural life is so hard that women feel they have to marry young, before they lose their looks. Furthermore, in the north especially, an unmarried woman in the house is a potential source of shame and embarrassment lest she loses her virginity outside marriage and dishonours the family name. In these communities an unmarried girl over the age of 20 may already be the victim of malicious gossip. Therefore once a girl reaches puberty, the parents will actively look for a suitable husband.²⁹

²⁷ Interviews with Italian NGOs, March 2001.

²⁸ Information from discussion groups.

²⁹ Ibidem.

Because of the high rate of male migration from villages (in some areas it is as high as 90%), girls may have problems finding husbands. This makes it easy for traffickers to propose false marriage to girls who have few opportunities.

Rural families, who often have many children, face a severe economic hardship. An offer of marriage and a better life abroad is potentially an opportunity for the family to improve its financial position. The idea that family members under 18-years old are children who have rights does not hold in rural areas; it is normal for children (especially in very poor families) to work from the age of 14. Many boys are sent by their families to Greece to work from the age of 15.

Comments from discussion groups on age and marriage

- “There are Albanian men in their thirties who come back from abroad looking for a wife. They want young girls, sixteen year olds, not older women. If the girl is older than 19 there is little probability of her getting married.”(Shkodra district)
- “There are so many more women than men in this area because of emigration – so many do not have a chance to get married. Girls want to leave because they want to find their dream.” (Zadrime, Lezha district)
- “In my village there are 50 women who are unmarried and over the age of 18. You have to get married as soon as you can” (Shkodra district)
- “There are girls getting married at 13 or 14 in our village” (Muçaj, Tirana district)
- “About 90% of all boys from this village have emigrated. Mainly girls and older people are left.” (Shënavlash, Durrës district)
- “There is nothing to do. No jobs, no work. I spend most of the day in the house. Even the dog lives a better life than us women.” (Berat district)

6.5 Profile of victims

Age

The evidence from sample areas and interviewees points to a decline in the average age of children/women being trafficked for prostitution. This is partly because of market demand, but also because children are more easily intimidated, controlled and exploited than older women.

For example, it is estimated that there have been 2000 cases of trafficking from the Berat/Kucova region over the last decade and 75% of them were children.³⁰ During 2000, the NGO *Vlora Women's Hearth* interviewed 219 Albanian prostitutes of whom 70% were children between the ages of 14 and 17, and 68% were from rural areas. Respondents to the research questionnaire in Puke district identified 87 victims of trafficking since 1998 and 80% were children, mainly 16 to 17 years of age.

In Italy there is very little data on the number of children working as prostitutes, although the Italian Ministry of Interior estimates that 40% of Albanian prostitutes are children.

³⁰ Interview with CARITAS trafficking investigator, February 2001.

Very few Italian NGOs³¹ that have contacts with prostitutes have statistics on their ages because victims are reluctant to give out information and most carry false documentation. Pimps pressure children not to reveal their ages, because they would likely be taken into care. Many fear this lest their pimps take revenge on either themselves or their families. Italian NGOs say a relationship of trust has to be established before a girl will tell the truth and this can take a long time.

But Italian NGOs say Albanian girls are the youngest prostitutes working in Italy along with the Nigerians. Generally they estimate that the majority of them are around 18 to 20 years old, but some are clearly much younger.

Origin

In the first half of the decade, public awareness was so low that it was easy to prey on girls from cities and rural areas. Many girls wanted to live abroad, and it was not hard to con people into believing they were going to find a better life. Recruits came from all sorts of backgrounds including well-educated graduates from university.³² Today, because public awareness about trafficking is much higher, traffickers tend to target girls from rural backgrounds who come from poor, ill-educated and sometimes dysfunctional families.

This trend is confirmed by Italian NGOs which say that while a few years ago it was possible to meet well-educated Albanian prostitutes, now the majority are from rural areas with very low levels of education; some are even illiterate.³³ This makes intervention much harder, as these girls are less aware of their rights and less responsive to offers of help.

The trend favouring recruitment in rural areas started a few years ago. In 1996, IOM in Italy interviewed 50 Albanian prostitutes (the majority were children) and identified two waves of Albanians entering the country. Between 1993 and 1994, the group of girls were often well educated, accompanied by male relatives or fiancées, and originated from urban areas such as Tirana, Durrës and Vlorë. The second wave, between 1995-1996, came predominantly from rural villages with much lower levels of education.

In the two month period between December 2000 and January 2001, *Vlora Women's Hearth* interviewed 65 Albanian prostitutes (data on their age is not available), of whom 49 were deported from Italy. The information on their origins demonstrates that increasingly more girls are being recruited from the remote mountainous areas of Albania.

Origin of 65 Albanian prostitutes: urban vs. rural areas (interviewed between December 2000 - January 2001)

³¹ Interviews with *Associazione Giovanni XXIII, Casa dei Diritti Sociali, Parsec, Progetta città Prostituzione, CARITAS Rome*, February 2001.

³² Ibidem

³³ Interview with NGO *Parsec*, which offers advice and services to prostitutes in Rome.

Urban areas	Number of girls/ women		Less populated/ rural areas	Number of girls/ women
Tiranë	8		Laç	3
Berat	6		Skrapar	1
Durrës	4		Kavajë	2
Elbasan	6		Libofshë	1
Fier	7		Lushnje	3
Korçë	7		Malësi e Madhe	1
Lezhe	1		Kukës	1
Shkodër	3		Kuçovë	1
Vlorë	5		Tropojë	4
			Pogradec	1
Total	47		Total	18

6.6 Routes

The main route for trafficked women to Western Europe is across the Otranto channel to Italy on a speedboat. The speedboats are operated mainly by Vlora gangs and depart from various points along the Albanian coastline. It costs between 700 USD and 1000 USD to make the passage. The speedboats are also used for drug and weapon smuggling and the girls often act as carriers.³⁴

The speedboats leave their passengers on Puglia's southern coast, along the Calabrian coast to the south and the coast of Abruzzo to the north.³⁵ Albanian gangs have cut deals with Italian Mafia in Puglia who allow them free movement in the area in exchange for not interfering in Italian cigarette smuggling across the Adriatic.³⁶ The route along the north-eastern Adriatic coast with illegal entry from the Trieste border is sometimes used, though the northern routes seem to be much harder for traffickers to enter than the southern ones.³⁷

An Italian unit of Guardia di Finanza is based in Durrës, Albania and on Sazan island in Vlora bay following a reciprocal agreement between the Italian and Albanian governments. Their job is to support the Albanian police in their anti-trafficking operations. According to the Albanian Ministry of Public Order's official report for 2000, last year the police stopped 75 rubber boats, 30 speed boats, 17 ships and 10 other sailing vessels involved in trafficking. In the last two months of 2000, the police stopped 15 speedboats, 7 rubber boats, 7 large ships, and 10 other vessels involved in trafficking.

³⁴ Interview with CARITAS trafficking investigator, March 2001.

³⁵ Interview with Ms Altamura, ECPAT, Italy. Interviewed by Federica Donati, Save the Children UK, December 2000.

³⁶ AP report (Rome) of comments made by Senator Tana de Zulueta. Italian Parliament's Anti Mafia Committee, January 2001.

³⁷ Interview with Ms Altamura, ECPAT, Italy.

6.7 Practice abroad

*The following information is based on interviews with organisations that provide trafficked girls and women shelter and reintegration services in Italy. The information was collected from Associazione Giovanni XXIII, Casa dei Diritti Sociali, Parsec, Progetta citta prostituzione, Associazione Pianzole Olivelli, and Fondazione Regina.*³⁸

Very little data is available with regards to numbers, age, origin, psychological profiles and trends of prostitutes in Italy. There is almost no data or any disaggregated statistics on trafficked children for prostitution. However, most organisation claim that Albanians are among the youngest and most numerous working on the streets, although recently there has been a big rise in the number of women coming from Moldova, Ukraine and Romania (generally they also have Albanian pimps).

The majority of Albanian trafficked children/women prostitute in Italy rather than Greece. This is because the profits from prostitution are higher in Italy and it is a better transit point for the re-sale of women to third countries.³⁹ Though Albanian prostitutes are also found in Belgium, Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland and the UK.

On arrival in Italy, the “husband” often induces the girl to prostitute claiming that he can not find a job and the couple need money. Alternatively, he may sell her on to another pimp. Albanian girls often refer to their shock at the sudden transformation of their “husbands” from loving individuals, to violent pimps.

Italian NGOs working with prostitutes say Albanian pimps have the worst reputation for violence and exploitation. Regular beatings, torture and rape are common and threats are also made against their families. Girls who they fear might escape inevitably fare the worst. According to the Italian Ministry of Interior, many murders of Albanian girls have been reported. 168 foreign prostitutes were killed in the year 2000 and the majority of them were Albanians or Nigerians murdered by their pimps.

The girls’ passports are usually confiscated by the pimps and they are given very little freedom, which makes it difficult for welfare officers to intervene. According to one NGO who employs an Albanian woman to approach the girls in the street, they are frightened to be seen talking to others and are also fearful that word might get back to their families about what they are doing. Often they deny being Albanian. Sometimes it is the client who helps the girls and takes them to shelters or the police.

Albanian girls mainly work in the street from late at night until dawn (the most dangerous form of prostitution). They are controlled either visually by their pimps or female “guardians” or else remain in contact by mobile phone.

³⁸ The interviews were conducted in March 2001.

³⁹ Interview with Vlora Women’s Hearth and others, February 2001.

Many are required to earn between 500,000 lira – 1 million lira (250 USD - 500 USD) a night and face punishment if they fail to reach the target. It is common practice for the pimp to hand out a fixed number of condoms each day which represents the amount he expects the girl to earn.

Most girls are not paid for their work so pimps earn large sums from their activities. One trafficker from Berat claims to “work” three young girls in Switzerland. He maintains that he earns 3000 USD each night and that his personal income over a nine-month period was 200,000 USD.⁴⁰

Very few Albanian prostitutes report their pimps and when the girls are detained by the police, they often deny the exploitative relationship. Many attribute this to the extreme intimidation and violence used by the traffickers, as well as to the social background of the girls which encourages a dependency on males.⁴¹ A trafficker interviewed by the researcher confirmed this; He said he preferred Albanian girls to foreign ones because they were more docile and easily controlled.

A number of NGOs comment on the strong affection that some Albanian girls have for the pimps and even after being subjected to extreme violence and intimidation, persist in the belief that the pimps will eventually marry them. This may in part be due to the prevalence of domestic violence in Albania, which leads girls into thinking that abuse is part of a normal relationship.

There is a rise in the number of Albanian girls arriving in Italy to prostitute voluntarily, but it seems many are ignorant about the world that awaits them. Because most of them arrive illegally, they have to rely on criminal networks to get false documents and in this way they come in contact with pimps. It is reported that many girls that go voluntarily end up in situations of extreme exploitation and maltreatment.

After a period of time, some girls may be allowed to keep a portion of their earnings, but this is rarely more than 20-30%. Other women become trusted and are given privileged positions as procurers or “guardians” of girls on the street. When these return to Albania (for a holiday or perhaps to recruit more girls), they often flaunt their wealth. This can be a strong incentive for girls who wish to escape poverty and lack of opportunity in Albania to leave for “better lives” in Italy.⁴²

Albanian girls that seek refuge in shelters rarely want to go home because of family and community hostility, poverty, lack of opportunity and fear of encountering their traffickers. Italian NGOs say that, in general, Albanian girls are able to adapt to new circumstances quickly. But their aspirations are quite low, albeit sometimes unrealistic. They want family life, a home, a loving husband and money.

⁴⁰ Interview with Albanian NGO, Vlora Women’s Hearth.

⁴¹ Federica Donati, *The Situation of Separated Albanian Minors in Italy*. Save the Children, December 2000.

⁴² Interview with a Catholic priest in Zadrime, Albania, January 2001.

According to data from the Italian police over the last five years more than 50% of crimes relating to prostitution in Italy were committed by foreigners and over a half of these crimes were committed by Albanians. Last year 780 Albanians were reported for offences relating to prostitution.

Questions addressed to four girls (under the age of 18) assisted by the Association Giovanni XXIII.

Name of interviewee	MJ	ID	AI	EL
Means of transport to Italy	With her boyfriend by speedboat.	With her boyfriend by speedboat.	With her boyfriend by speedboat.	With another girl by speedboat.
Location of work	In the street	In the street	In the street	In the street
Earnings	500,000 – 1 million lira per night. 50.000 for 10 –20 min in car.	500,000 – 1 million lira per night. 50.000 per 10 –20 min in car.	500,000 – 1 million lira per night. 50.000 per 10 –20 min in car	500,000 – 1 million lira per night 50.000 per 10 –20 min in car.
Percentage of money earned that is kept	0 %	0 %	0 %	20 –30 %
Working hours	Afternoons and evenings	From 22.00 to 5.00	From 23.00 to 5.00	21.00 to 4.00
Who controls her	Boyfriend by mobile	Boyfriend by mobile	Boyfriend by mobile	No one
Level of violence and abuse	Beaten every time she gets little money.	Severely beaten.	Severely beaten - threats to her family	Threats to the family
Life dreams	A man who loves her, a nice home, a happy family and money.	Pleasure, money, a boyfriend who loves her, lots of friends.	Go back to her family, to have good economic conditions.	Study. Help mother who's alone. Be independent.
Perception of Italy	A nice country to live, abundance of goods, a society where women are respected and have the opportunity of an independent life.			

Prostitutes by origin and age contacted by the organisation *Parsec* in 2000 in Rome.

Months	Italy	Albania	Romania	Nigeria	Moldova
January	1			2	3
February	1			2	1
March	1	1		1	1
April		3	2		1
May		1			
June		2	1		
July			1		2
August		1		1	
September		2	2	2	
October			1	1	1
November					
December	1	3		6	
Total	4	13	7	15	9

Origins and numbers of trafficked women granted permits to stay in Italy under Article 18 “Protezione Sociale” of Italian law. (This is a witness protection programme).

Source: Italian Criminal Police.

Nationality	Number
Albanian	129
Moldavian	184
Nigerian	142
Ukraine	116
Romanian	97
Yugoslavian	11
Bulgarian	114
Russian	15

6.8 Health

Many Albanian girls, especially from rural areas, have little to no sex education.⁴³ As a result, it is reported that clients prefer them because they are more likely to consent to unprotected or extreme acts of sex. In the early nineties, Albanian women and girls were particularly popular because they were thought to be HIV free.⁴⁴

Because of their illegal immigrant status and the nature of their work, many Albanian girls have no access to medical care. Yet many suffer have severe health problems such as STDs, hepatitis A & B (very common), genital trauma resulting in gynaecological problems, psychological trauma and drug abuse.⁴⁵

Italian NGOs report that abortion rates among prostitutes are very high and there are examples of some girls having as many as 12 abortions. Apparently, pimps get frustrated at the time it takes to recuperate after having an abortion and some girls are forced back on to the street very quickly and consequently suffer serious infections.

The International Medical Corps treated 125 trafficked children and women from third countries in Albania last year. They described the girls and women as “chronically diseased”. Forty five per cent had contracted STDs, mainly syphilis and gonorrhoea; four attempted to commit suicide, nine were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and two were pregnant. None were tested for HIV/AIDS.⁴⁶

⁴³ Interview with IMC, February 2001.

⁴⁴ Useful to Albanian Women, *Prostitution: Society in Dilemma*, 1997.

⁴⁵ Interviews with Association Pianzole Olivelli (with centres in Pavia, Milan, Padova) and Gruppi di Volontariato Vincenziano based in Piemonte, March 2001.

⁴⁶ Interview with IMC in Tirana, February 2001.

7. Evidence

7.1 Anecdotal evidence of trafficking, region by region

The following section details the results from discussion groups, first-hand interviews (with teachers, local NGOs, missionaries, priests, villagers) and questionnaires distributed in sample areas. This is anecdotal evidence, which cannot be corroborated. Much of it is reported verbatim. It is important to note that despite the many recent examples of trafficking, all discussion groups believe that the situation is not as bad as it was.

Please also see the breakdown of the questionnaires in appendix 3.

Shkodra District

Information collected from a discussion group of 13 women from the villages of Dajç, Barballushi, Bushati.

In this group the awareness of trafficking was high and women were very interested to discuss the issue. Generally, participants believed that trafficking had decreased as result of people exercising more caution. Teenage girls are carefully watched, few go to school and arranged marriages at a young age are the norm. In some villages up to 90% of the men have migrated.

- “In January 2001 a man was murdered in *Velipoja*. He was divorced and had married a 16-year-old girl from *Shkodra*. He took her to Italy where he tried to sell her. She refused to prostitute or be sold and eventually he returned her home. He said to her father that they were a bad match. He was found dead.”
- “In January 2001, I was in *Shkodra* and saw some men abduct two girls in the centre of the town. There was a policeman standing nearby who did nothing. Someone else rang the police on his mobile phone. The girl was found after one month.”
- “One year ago I was on the bridge in *Lezha* and I heard two men talking to a woman from *Kakariq*. They asked her to get two girls between the ages of 18 and 22. She agreed a price of 400 USD for each of them. I went up to her and said that she deserved to be beaten. She could have been taking my daughters. Three days later there were two girls abducted in *Kakariq* on their way to see the local nuns.”
- “Two years ago in *Fushë Kruja*, a 14 year old girl was kidnapped from her school and taken to Greece. She has made contact with her father identifying both the pimp and the place she was being held, but they have not managed to find her.”
- “A girl from *Barballush* got married to a 16 year old boy two years ago. They went to Italy where he forced her to prostitute and then he sold her. She went to the police and married an Italian.”
- In the last 2 to 3 years, the focus group claimed that 10 women had been cheated into prostitution after false marriages in *Barballush*. All were under the age of 18. (The

researcher travelled to *Barballush* to talk to the local priest and nuns. They knew of only a few cases of trafficking.)

- “Traffickers took a 17 year old from *Mushan* to Italy. Eventually she called her family and her brother-in-law brought her back.”

Information collected from interviews in Shkodra district

The Women’s Help line in Shkodra reported the following two cases in January 2001:⁴⁷

An Albanian girl, 15, had called the help line to say that she was being prostituted along with another Albanian girl and an Italian. She had been deported from Italy but was back in the hands of traffickers. The help line staff heard an argument with a man that they presumed to be her pimp and the telephone hung up. They think she was calling from a Shkodra hotel.

The help line received a call from a 16-year-old girl, who had got engaged and gone to Italy. She had aborted 7 times, and is now pregnant again. Her so-called husband is prostituting her. Her parents are divorced and she cannot go home.

The help line heard of many cases of trafficking in the area, especially in the area of *Malësi I Madhe*. The towns of *Koplik* and *Bajzë*, which are on the main trafficking route from Montenegro, are especially bad.

Shkodra is the main collection point for trafficked foreign women who have entered the country illegally from Montenegro. The research team met two traffickers (father aged 60, and son, 24) in a hotel in *Shkodra*. The men were trafficking three Moldovans, 18, 21, 22 who were for sale and claimed to know what they were going to do.⁴⁸

Lezha district (Zadrima area)

Information collected from a discussion group of 12 women from Grashi, Gjadër and Trashan

The women were less forthcoming than in Shkodra area. They claimed there have been public awareness campaigns in the area. They believed that between 30 and 40 women had been trafficked from their area over the last five years: 15 abducted, 15 cheated through marriage and 5 to 6 sold by the family.

- In January 2001, an 18-year-old woman was found dead in *Shëngjin* harbour. She came from *Barballush* and had been abducted and reportedly sold to traffickers. The family had reported the kidnapping to the police.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Interview with Women’s Help line (mainly for victims of violence and domestic abuse), February 2001.

⁴⁸ Interview with foreign trafficked women in Shkodra. February 2001.

⁴⁹ Confirmed in interview with OSCE Shkodra field office, January 2001.

- Four years ago, a mother from Biraj village sold her two daughters, 19 and 16 years old to traffickers to prostitute in Italy. One of them escaped and was sheltered by nuns in Albania. The other is now prostituting and has contacts with the family.
- In *Trashan*, a girl got married with to a man from Laç. After two weeks he sent her to Italy. The family knows nothing about her.
- Three years ago, a girl from *Kallmet* married a boy from *Balltren*. Two months later she was sold in Italy.

See appendix 3 for results of questionnaires.

Information collected from interviews in Lezha District

A local priest who has spent eight years working in the *Zadrime* area and has been very active trying to stop trafficking, knows of 30 women who have left from the area (population approximately 5000) to become prostitutes. Ten per cent of the women and girls were under the age of 18; 70% were trafficked through false marriage, 10% were abducted and 20% have gone voluntarily. He believes recruitment is declining because of increased awareness, economic improvement and better co-operation with the police. Some women now come back and flaunt their wealth, but rarely admit to what they do. Some return to recruit others. In *Blinisht* the priest has erected 10 white crosses to “the lost girls of *Zadrime*”. These women have disappeared without a trace.⁵⁰

In the commune of *Shënkoll* (villages: *Tale*, *Manati*, *Barrbulloje*, *Pllanë*, *Rrila*), the Rogationist Fathers reported there were very few incidences of trafficking because the community is closely knit and access is very limited. But in the village of *Breçlet* there was an attempted abduction in 2000.⁵¹

An Albanian NGO working with children with disabilities in *Lezha* knew of four children and three women trafficked in the last three years. Six are in Italy and one is in Germany. All had been “married” to *Lezha* traffickers. By and large, the trafficked girls were from poor and broken families.

Durrës district

Information collected from the discussion group of 13 people at Shënavlash village.

(There are about 4500 - 5000 people living in the village.)

- "There were 2 cases of abduction in our village where the girls were taken to Italy in 1999 and 2000. One of the girls returned 5 months ago. They were 17 and 19 years old."
- "Many years ago things like that did not happen. It all started in 1997."
- "In *Shënapren* a 20 year old was trafficked by her so-called husband."

⁵⁰ Interview with a Catholic priest, Zadrime, February 2001.

⁵¹ Interview with Rogationist Fathers, January 2001.

- "In *Sukth*, a 17 year old was trafficked by her so-called husband after 1 year of marriage."
- "In *Kullari* there were two cases of girls (aged 18 and 19 years old) cheated into prostitution through false marriage."
- "We have not heard of such cases in our village but we heard of cases in the village of *Karec*. There, a 20-year-old girl was forced by her "husband" to prostitute after 2 or 3 years of marriage."
- "Two years ago in *Berat* a 20 year old girl got married to man who forced her to prostitute in Italy. Her father found out about it and sent somebody to Italy to kill him. They brought his head back to the girl's father."
- "A married man from *Shënavlash* coerced a 17-year-old girl from *Fermë Sukth* through false marriage. He sent her to Italy for prostitution. Two months later the family of the girl went to Italy and rescued the girl."
- "They should do something. There is a shop owner in *Shijak* who has made his money exploiting 25 Albanian girls in Italy. The manager of those girls is a woman from *Burrel*."

Fier district

Information collected from the discussion group of 10 women from *Verbas, Metaj, Libofshë, Kolonjë, Zharëz, Ndërnenas*.

Fier has the reputation for being a trafficking centre. The town is a collection point for trafficked women and it is reputed to be home to many traffickers.

- "Five months ago a girl, 15, from the village of *Verbas* got engaged to a man that was not from the area. The man presented false parents. He took the girl to Italy where he tried to make her become a prostitute. She refused, escaped and returned to Albania. She has gone back to her family. They do not blame her."
- "In the autumn of 2000, some traffickers took a mentally disabled man from *Ardenica* to Italy to beg. He escaped and returned to Albania. The pimps caught him and demanded money and threatened to kill him if he did not pay. Now they force him to work in their fields and threaten to take his wife."
- "In January 2001, a man from *Libofshë* sold his wife, sister-in-law and 6 year old child. With the money he earned from their sale, he paid some judges to get his brothers released from prison. The police are now investigating. The wife went to Greece, and the sister went to Italy and no one knows what happened to the child."
- "In August 2000 a man from *Mbrosta* cheated a girl, 15, and forced her to prostitute. She was from a very poor family. We have heard that the daughter now sends money to the family."
- "A girl from *Verbas* fell in love with a boy from *Patos*. She followed him to Italy where she is now working as a prostitute. Sometimes the boy brings her back. "
- "A women, 23, from *Verbas* who had a husband and child, was persuaded by another man in the village to leave. He then sold her in *Roskovec*. She was taken to Italy and

forced to prostitute. After 4 months she was arrested by the police and returned to Albania. She is now back with her family."

- "Five years ago some boys from *Fier* took a 15 year old girl from *Shën Kozmai (Libofsha)*. They sold her in Italy. She did not want to work as a prostitute so they beat her and broke her leg. She escaped and went to a centre run by nuns. Everyone knows who the trafficker is. He lives in *Fier*; he has a big house built with the money."

Information collected from interviews conducted in Fier district

The hotels and motels of *Fier* are well known collection points for trafficked women and prostitutes.

SNV in *Fier* reported that the villagers of *Strum* (near *Roskovec*) were worried *Berat* gangs would visit the village now that a new road to the village had been built.⁵²

The director of *Roskovec* High School said that he heard of several cases of trafficking prior to 1998, but generally people were feeling more secure in the last two years. The researcher held a discussion with a class of pupils in the 12th grade (17-18years olds). They said they knew of 10 cases of girls leaving *Roskovec* to go abroad in the last two years. About half were under the age of 18. Most had got engaged and left for Italy. The pupils believed they had been trafficked for prostitution. They said the level of awareness about trafficking was very high in *Roskovec*.⁵³

Catholic missionaries reported that they had heard of many cases of trafficked girls in the area, mainly through false marriages, but they believed there was a decline in activity because of heightened awareness.⁵⁴

Lushnja district

Information collected from a discussion group of 12 women from the villages of *Krutje, Mërtish, Këmishtaj, Kolonjë, Gore, Pirre, Rrapëz*

Lushnja district borders the trafficking hot spots of Fier and Berat

- Participants said there had been 6 cases of trafficking of under-18 year olds and two of adults during the last decade in *Rrapëz*. They believe the dangers of trafficking are increasing because a national road passes close by and now, a lot of expensive cars drive into the village.

⁵² Interview with SNV in Fier, February 2001.

⁵³ Interviews at Roskovec High School, February 2001

⁵⁴ Interview in Fier, February 2001.

- “Three months ago a *Rrapëz* girl got engaged to a man who was already married. He took her to Italy. Her family has received no money from her.”
- In *Gore* village there have been 2 to 3 cases of trafficking since 1999. “Last year a 17 year old was taken to Italy after dating a boy from *Rrapëz*. He took her to expensive restaurants and she loved him. We believe she was trafficked. Girls go because there is nothing for them here.”
- “Last year an 18-year old from my neighbourhood fell in love and got engaged to a man who took her to Greece. She came back and claimed that she hadn’t been a prostitute, but she was very regretful. Now she goes to university.”
- “There have been 5-6 cases of trafficking in the last five years in *Këmishtaj*. There was a 24-year old that left her family to go to Italy with a boy she loved. She was a prostitute for two years, but when she came back she did not have any money. She still had the same clothes.”
- In *Krutje*, there have been 5 to 6 cases of girls between the age of 16 and 19 being trafficked. They all went to Italy and some still have contact with their families. They were all cheated into marriage.
- In *Kolonjë* there have been at least two cases of trafficking. “One of my neighbours is a trafficker. He got engaged to a 16 year old girl three years ago and forced her to prostitute.”
- “There are two families in our town, *Kolonjë*, that house Albanian girls before they go abroad, but we can not do anything because we feel unprotected. There is also a brothel.”
- “Some families do not report cases of trafficking because they are too frightened of what the traffickers might do. I know one family who was terrorised by traffickers into letting their daughter go. He said he would burn their house down.”

Berat district

Information collected from a discussion group of 5 women from the village of Ura e Kuçit. The local veterinarian who works in the villages of Fier Shagani, Kuçi, and Toshkëz was also present.

Ura e Kuçit is a closely-knit village and the women reported no cases of trafficking. But they said there were many examples in the villages around them and the level of fear was very high.

- “Six months ago a woman from *Bani* was murdered in Italy. She had got engaged and gone to Italy but refused to prostitute. Her trafficker was from *Cerriku*.”
- “Two years ago there was a case of a local girl, 15, who left home because she did not get along with her parents. She came back later and took her two younger sisters and 10-year old brother. They all went abroad and we think they must be prostituting. The parents receive money from them. They have accepted the situation.”

Information collected from interviews conducted in Berat district

In *Berat* a doctor⁵⁵ reported that between 1997 and 1998 there had been many abductions in the city but it has been much quieter in the last few years. Now she believes the majority go voluntarily to prostitute. The doctor is treating the depressed parents of several victims:

- A mother who's daughter was kidnapped in 1998. She was sent to Italy to prostitute and then to Belgium. She resisted and last year she called her mother to tell her the pimps had cut off her nose and ears. She is now in a Belgian hospital. The mother has developed serious mental problems.
- A mother of a girl from *Mbrakulla*. In 1997, traffickers took her two oldest daughters, 18 and 20, to prostitute in Italy. Now one of the girls is married to an Italian but the other is still forced to prostitute. The traffickers brought one of the women back for 10 days to see her mother, but then she returned to Italy. The mother is being treated for depression.
- A mother of a teenage girl who got engaged to a man from *Vlora* in 1997. He got a visa for Italy and forced her to prostitute there. She refused and was killed.

A taxi driver from *Berat* reported: "Three weeks ago (mid-January 2001), I took a young couple to *Vlora*. She was very beautiful and about 16 years old. He was telling her that they would get married in Italy. He had arranged it with her parents. I took them to a hotel in *Vlora*. But he was tricking her, because I know the man. He is a trafficker and he is already happily married in *Berat*. In *Berat* all the men are trafficking – it is what people do here. I know most of them. Many 'work' two or three girls in Italy, but some of them just buy and sell women."⁵⁶

A Caritas trafficking investigator⁵⁷ estimates that 2000 girls and women from *Berat* district have left to prostitute over the last ten years, 80% of them have been trafficked and 75% were under the age of 18. Many village girls have gone in the last four years and most are from poor, sometimes dysfunctional families. According to *Republika* newspaper (January 2001), Berat police said 1,700 girls had been taken for prostitution by traffickers in the last three years.

A Caritas trafficking investigator also says: "There is a reduction in the number of false marriages, but a rise in the number of women saying 'take me to Italy to find me a job'. They are preyed upon to prostitute, not just by the pimps, but also by the female enforcers."

"I have identified cases where Roma living in *Berat* have sold their daughters 13 and 14 year old daughters. This is still happening. I can normally tell by the attitude of the family. They feel guilty and if we come in contact with the girl she does not want to

⁵⁵ Interview of doctor by researcher, February 2001.

⁵⁶ Interview of taxi driver in Berat, February 2001.

⁵⁷ Interview with Caritas trafficking investigator, February 2001.

contact her parents.”⁵⁸ According to one source, Roma children are sold for 50,000 Lek (350 USD).⁵⁹

According to the Chief of Police in Berat, trafficking has declined and most recruitment for prostitution is now voluntary. In cases where women are cheated, he says it is very hard to gather evidence. For example, in January 2001, parents from *Rroshnill* reported that a man was forcibly taking their daughter to Greece. But the daughter claimed to be going willingly to meet her fiancée.⁶⁰

Kuçova

Information collected from interviews conducted in Kuçova

According to a Caritas trafficking investigator, there have been at least 100 cases of trafficking from Kuçova and the surrounding villages since 1998. There are 30 pimps operating in the town, four of who have been detained in Milan, Italy, but the remainder are still at large in Albania.

According to a journalist, two years ago (1999), an 18-year old girl was abducted in *Kuçova* by the husband of her cousin, and sold in Italy for prostitution. He pimped her there and sent the money home to his wife who bought a new house. In November 2000 trafficked girl came back to Albania, after her parents appealed for her to come home.⁶¹ Her parents are the only people who agreed to appear on an anti-trafficking programme on national Albanian TV and admit that their daughter was a prostitute.

Staff of a religious order in *Kuçova* has helped the families of various trafficked women during the last 8 years; half were “white Albanian” and the remainder Gypsy and Roma. They believe many of the trafficked girls had been sold. Because awareness in *Kuçova* is high, traffickers are now recruiting in the villages.

The staff of a religious order in *Kuçova* also said: “A 16 year old girl from *Divodicë* got engaged to a man from *Berat* in 1995. He took her to Italy and then returned. He told her parents that she had been kidnapped by Italians, but he was prostituting her. The police in Italy found her and she is now being sheltered by nuns. She cannot return home because of the fear of the traffickers.”

Skrapar district

Poliçan (a former industrial centre with army barracks and weapons production factory), *Bargullas* and *Dobrusha* have all experienced severe trafficking since the mid-1990s. In

⁵⁸ Ibidem

⁵⁹ Interview with Ndihmë për fëmijët in Berat, February 2001.

⁶⁰ Interview with Chief of Police in Berat, February.2001.

⁶¹ Interview with Albanian freelance journalist with eight years of experience covering trafficking stories, February 2001.

Poliçan existing arms smuggling networks trafficked local women when the weapons factory closed. The Association of Bahai' women have reported (date unknown) that 2-3 girls were disappearing *Çorovodë* (pop: 7000) every week.⁶²

Puka district

With the help of a Puke based Albanian NGO, 33 questionnaires were completed by 24 teachers and nine businessmen and commune chiefs in 26 villages in the *Puke* district in Northern Albania. Three of the respondents were from the town of *Puke* and the remainder lived and worked in villages in the district.

According to the facilitator of the questionnaire distribution and collection (a teacher), trafficking has been a very serious problem in *Puke* district. People are generally fearful to speak about it because of shame (the influence of the traditional law, the Kanun and prejudicial attitudes toward prostitution) and fear. The Kanun and its emphasis on revenge has deterred traffickers to some extent. For example, in *Gjegjan* commune, where the Kanun is very strong, there have only been four cases of trafficking in 14 villages in the last three years.

The questionnaire respondents identified 87 cases of trafficking since 1998 of which 80% were children between 16 and 17 years old. The facilitator estimates that 10-20% of the incidents occurred in the last twelve months. Almost all the traffickers came from towns in the north of Albania. Abductions have been quite common although sometimes families claim their daughters have got married in order to avoid the shame associated with prostitution.

Despite the seemingly high level of trafficking, 77% of the respondents said trafficking was rare in the area. This may be because there are just a few incidents from each village and the respondents were unaware of the figures across the entire district. But certainly in comparison with the south, the numbers appear to be much lower.

Sixty eight per cent of the respondents said awareness about trafficking in the district was either low or non-existent. The facilitator reported that trafficking is declining in *Puke* district due to the emigration of entire families, which has reduced the number of suitable recruits.⁶³

Please see appendix 3 for a list of the trafficked victims.

Catholic missionaries reported that in the *Fushë Arrëz* area of *Puke* district there had been several abductions on the north-south highway that runs through the town, including two

⁶² Women in Development Association Report: *Prostitution and Trafficking of Women in Albania*, Jeta Katro, Liri Shamani, 2000.

⁶³ Interview with teacher living in Pukë district who conducted research in that area, February 2001.

abductions in May/June 2000. Many girls no longer go out after four in the afternoon in the winter months because of the risks.⁶⁴

Laç, Kurbin district

Results of questionnaires completed by 20 pupils and 9 teachers at Laç high school

The respondents identified 57 cases of trafficking in the last three years from the town of *Laç* and the surrounding villages, of which 46% were children. They claim 64% were cheated either by a false marriage or engagement and 30% were abducted. Fifty seven per cent believed trafficking in the area was common and 67% believed that awareness of trafficking was either low or non-existent. See appendix 3.

Information collected from interviews conducted in Laç

According to a high school teacher in *Laç* who also works with a local NGO on women's issues, *Laç* is a trafficking hotspot and is also a midpoint town for the transit of foreign women from *Shkodra* to the south.

There has been large-scale migration to *Laç* from the north of the country and there have been many cases of traffickers preying on new arrivals to the town. What is more, unemployment in the town is very high as a result of the closure of the chemical factory. This has led to large-scale migration and many teenage boys from the age of 14 have left for Italy and Greece, leaving women vulnerable to the coercion of traffickers. The level of awareness about trafficking in *Laç* is high and now there are fewer incidents. But it is still a big problem in the areas of *Mamuras*, *Milot*, *Fushë Kuqe*.

The daughter of the principle of the high school in *Laç* was abducted one and a half years ago. The abductor was caught within three hours. The parents sent their daughter abroad for her own safety.

The high school teacher knows six girls personally who have been trafficked. One of them was a 14-year-old who was kidnapped and forced to prostitute in Italy. She returned but was trafficked again. Her mother is in denial. The high school teacher also knows 7 traffickers living in *Laç*. They are aged between 20-35. Some of them collaborate with the police.

The Director of the Palace of Culture in *Rrëshen* said he knew of six cases of trafficking – mainly by false engagement or marriage in the 1990s in *Rrëshen*. The girls/women went to prostitute in Italy, Greece and Holland. They all came from very poor families.⁶⁵

Elbasan district

⁶⁴ Interview with missionaries, Pukë area, February 2001

⁶⁵ Interview with the director of the Palace of Culture in *Rrëshen*, January 2001.

The Catholic missionaries reported that they had helped over 50 victims of trafficking in the last eight years (mainly by helping them with documentation once they had been sheltered by religious orders in Italy).

Gramsh district

According to a teacher at Gramsh high school, local authorities and NGOs estimated that 300 women had left *Gramsh* and the surrounding villages in 1998. More than 50% were children still attending high school. The majority were trafficked, mainly through false marriage or engagement and cheated into prostitution. Very few of the trafficked women and girls have returned because of the stigma.⁶⁶

The teacher at Gramsh high school had worked in the village of *Besniku* until 1996. She estimates that 20 *Besniku* girls, the majority of which were under the age of 18, had been trafficked for prostitution after getting married.⁶⁷

Vlora district

Vlora is the main collection centre for trafficked women waiting to be shipped over to Italy. The trade in humans (trafficked or clandestine) is big business for the town and employs many people directly and indirectly. Apart from the actual traffickers there are hotel owners who provide accommodation for trafficked girls, drivers who take them to the coastal pick-up points, a multitude of scouts and go-betweens, speedboat crews (*skafisti*), and speedboat manufacturers. According to residents, *Vlora* gangs generally do not traffic girls from their own town. But in the *Llonxha* district of *Vlora*, (primarily a “gypsy” quarter), it was reported in 1997 that one girl in every two families works in either Italy or Greece as a prostitute and sends money home. In the village of *Kota* outside *Vlora*, ten families had their daughters cheated into prostitution either by marriage or false job prospects.⁶⁸

Please see appendix 1 for case studies.

⁶⁶ Interview with local high school teacher and director of an Albanian NGO helping “at risk” women.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*

⁶⁸ Vlora Women’s Hearth, *Information on the Trafficking of Women and Girls in Vlora*, December 1997.

8. Fear and Awareness in Albania

8.1 Security Fears Result in Decline in School Attendance

One of the achievements of Albanian communism was the emancipation of women in rural areas, giving them for the first time, access to both primary and secondary education. Girls were encouraged to go to school beyond the age of 14 (the minimum age for mandatory schooling) and high school attendance (14-18 years) was high.

Since the collapse of communism in 1991, there has been a large decrease in the number of rural girls attending high school. In urban centres, 52% of girls who finish mandatory elementary school continue their studies in high school, whereas in rural areas the figure is 28% for girls and 72% for boys.⁶⁹

Until now, this huge decrease in female attendance has been attributed to cultural traditions and poverty. It was presumed that girls were being kept at home in order to work in the fields (the mass emigration of boys and men has created a shortage in agricultural labour), take care of household chores, and prepare for marriage.⁷⁰

But the research has revealed that while economic and cultural reasons are significant, the primary reason given for the decline in attendance is fear. Participants in the discussion groups say this is a result of the general breakdown in law and order, which has contributed to crimes like trafficking. Fear is exacerbated by the fact that many high schools in rural areas have closed (in 1995 there were 472 high schools in Albania and in 1999, there were only 394⁷¹). Now, some pupils have to walk for over an hour from their villages to attend school. Parents say the security risks are too great, so they choose to keep their daughters at home.

In some areas, both north and south, the danger is perceived to be so serious that 90% of girls no longer attend high school. For example, in the village of Mucaj, 90% of the 60 girls over the age of 14 do not go to high school because they have to walk along a national road. However, in Gramsh where security is perceived to be better, more than half of the 900 pupils attending high school are girls. In Bushat, Fshati i Ri (population: 1000) in the Shkodra district, just two girls have gone to high school in the last decade, yet in nearby Barballush, where there is a high school, 70% of girls attend.

More research needs to be done to see how much fear is used as an excuse for non-attendance. But the majority of parents in the discussion groups said they would send their daughters to school if their security could be guaranteed.

In a few isolated instances, there are examples of parents addressing the problem, either by arranging for their children to be escorted to school or else by hiring a minibus. But,

⁶⁹ *Albanian National Women Report 1999*, UNDP.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*

⁷¹ *Albanian Human Development Report 2000*.

unfortunately, this kind of initiative is rare. The result is that the fear of trafficking is denying a generation of rural women a decent education.

Evidence from discussion groups

Lezha district

According to the discussion group, 80% of girls over the age of 14 in Zadrime do not go to school mainly because of fear. In villages where there are high schools such as Blinisht, Dajç and Gjadër, attendance is much higher. A few parents have organised school transport or parent accompaniment, but generally this is rare.

- “We keep them at home because we are afraid.”
- “In former times we were honoured to send out daughters to school, but now it is too dangerous.”
- “When schools are far from the village we do not send the girls.”
- “Most of the girls in Zadrime area do not go to school because of the fear of abduction or rape. It started in the 1990s.”

Shkodra district

In the southern Shkodra area, participants estimated that 90% of girls do not attend school.

- “Most people don’t send their girls to school after the age of 13 years.”
- “Even if the girl is the best student, she can only go to school if she is accompanied by her father or a brother.”
- “I want to send my child to school, but I am very frightened of the dangers of trafficking.”
- “The high school is just 15 minutes away, but I will not let my girl go. It is too dangerous.”

Muçaj, Tirana district

The commune of Muçaj has approximately 1500 inhabitants. There are between 60 and 70 girls in the village between 14 and 18 years old, but according to participants, 90% do not go to school. Participants in the discussion group claim they do not go because they have to walk along a national highway and they are too frightened their daughters will be abducted.

- “We do not want to keep our girls uneducated. We are simply scared.”
- “In 1997 we took our girls away from school because of the political situation in Albania. But we are also worried about the opinion in the village.”
- “The closest high school is in Vorë, 30 minutes away on foot. You have to pass the national road and there is no safety”.

- “If the school were here in the village all girls would go to school.” (All participants agreed.)

Shënavlash, Durrës district

There are about 4500 people living in the village. The closest high school is in Shkozet, Durrës, about six kilometres away from Shënavlash. About 30 - 40% of the village girls go to high school. Other parents do not let their daughters go for security reasons.

Fier district

In the village of Libofshë, the majority of girls attend high school in nearby Kolonja. But in the village of Verbas, only a third of the girls go to school.

- “Some villagers organise minibuses to collect pupils. People really want to send their children to school, but sometimes they can not because of fear.”
- “Other villages have arranged a rota by which a different parent will accompany their children to school.”

“A lot of girls, especially from the Patos, area do not go to school. The mothers are frightened because the road is not safe and because it is impossible for them to accompany the girls to school every day. In Shtyllas (Levan Commune) 70% of the girls don’t go to high school because they think the main road is unsafe. But the parents really want to send them to school.” (Interviewee at Catholic centre in Fier, February 2001)

Ura e Kuçit, Berat district

The local high schools are in Syzez, Fier-Shegan, one hour away. Only 2 to 3 girls out of 30 in the village go to high school. The girls that go to high school only do so because their families share a car to take them. According to the participants the main reason for non-attendance is economic, but security is another reason. It is a very poor area.

Lushnje district

In the village of Ngurëz (population: 1000), 50% of the girls do not go to school. It is the same for the outlying villages which have to send their daughters to the high school other towns.

- “It’s because of fear. They have to walk a long way to get to the nearest high school. But everyone who lives near the school sends their kids.”
- “Most parents want their kids to go to school, but fear keeps them away” (all participants agreed).

Urban areas of Gramsh and Roskovec

The deputy director of Gramsh High School said attendance of girls in his school was high; over half the 900 students are girls. The director of Roskovec (Berat district) said attendance was high in his school, although there were a few girls who did not attend because of fear and economic reasons.

8.2 Awareness

“People are more aware now, they know about the scams. But awareness must continue, because women and girls in rural areas are looking for a new life.” Teacher in Gramsh High School

The participants in the discussion groups were quite aware of the dangers of trafficking. They explained that they knew about the dangers of trafficking through a variety of sources. First, in the last three years the Albanian media has taken a keen interest in the activity of traffickers, although there has been criticism that some news reports are sensationalist and titillating. Several interviewees praised the documentary “Jete e shitur ne trotuar”, a graphic account of the trafficking of Albanian women broadcast on TVSH (Albanian national television) towards the end of 2000. Second, some trafficked women have returned to towns and villages and relayed their experiences. Third, national and international NGOs have launched public awareness campaigns in certain areas.

While levels of awareness were high in the sample areas, this may be because they have been trafficking hot spots. In southern villages especially around Berat, Fier and Lushnja villagers said most people were very aware of the dangers and in one village (Urë e Kuçit), it was “the hottest topic of conversation”.

However, in more remote areas, where access to media is poor (including TV), it is reasonable to expect that awareness levels are much lower. In the remote northern district of Puke, 78% of the 33 respondents in 26 villages said awareness of trafficking was either non-existent or low. In Laç the 27 pupils and teachers who completed questionnaires claimed the level of awareness was increasing, but still very low.

All discussion groups and interviewees said there was a need for more information, not just to fill the gaps in knowledge, but also to keep reminding vulnerable groups of the dangers of trafficking. Particular attention should be paid to informing people about the extreme levels of violence and exploitation that are associated with forced prostitution abroad. Many, especially those who do not have access to the media, are likely to be unaware. Increased awareness and understanding helps to soften traditional attitudes whereby abused women are blamed rather than seen as victims of sexual exploitation. Such a change is fundamental to successful return and reintegration programmes.

Another benefit of raised awareness is that the population will learn more about the exploitation and trafficking of foreign women (such as Moldovans, Russians, and

Romanians) through Albania. At the moment there appears to be widespread indifference.

Evidence from discussion groups

- “We should work with mothers and daughters so that they understand the situation. We should give them concrete examples to make them more aware.” Shkodra discussion group.
- “Everyone knows more now from the TV and also because they have talked to some of the women that have returned. So the number of cases is going down.” Fier discussion group.
- “There is never enough information, people should always be more informed. But now, people are much more aware than in the past.” Fier discussion group.

8.3 Attitude of the Public Towards Trafficked Children

The Albanian public and the State have been indifferent and hostile towards victims of trafficking in the past but, this may be due to a lack of information. The research team detected a shift in attitude as people became more aware and better acquainted with the facts.

Most villagers in the discussion groups recognised the difference between voluntary and forced prostitution, and while there was intense hostility towards the former, there was sympathy for the latter. While some northerners say their village mentality would preclude them from helping, in the south there was more willingness to assist victims. Some villagers gave examples of girls who had returned and re-integrated.

But the overriding impression remains that it is still very difficult for trafficked Albanian girls to be reintegrated into communities because of negative social stigma.

Young people are probably the biggest hope, because they better relate to the experiences of their peers. At Roskovec High School in the district of Fier, the research team found a high level of awareness and sympathy among a class of 16 to 18 year old students. Some personally wanted to help victims of forced prostitution and they claimed the public would be more receptive if it knew more about the means of trafficking and the suffering associated with it.⁷²

Evidence from discussion groups

- “No one would ever support a prostitute being in the village, but those that are forced deserve help.” Zadrime discussion group.

⁷² Discussion with a class of 16 to 18 year old high school students in Roskovec, February 2001.

- “My family would never help even a forced prostitute. Even if it was my sister – it is too shameful.” Zadrina discussion group.
- “A lot of parents would not allow their children to talk to ex-prostitutes. It is a question of mentality.” Lushnja discussion group.
- “Everyone should respect a prostitute that tries to escape. Everybody will help these girls.” Lushnja discussion group.
- “We would support anyone who had suffered.” Fier discussion group.
- “Some people would worry what the neighbours would say if they talked to an ex-prostitute.” Fier discussion group.

9. Return and Reintegration of girls and women in Albania

9.1 Return

At present there are no official government sponsored programmes or services dedicated to helping victims of trafficking. IOM and ICMC hope to establish a programme later on in 2001 which will help 40 trafficked victims from Albania, but this is a pilot project which will benefit only a small minority of the thousands who have been trafficked. At present, if trafficked girls choose to return home, they have no access to reception centres, shelters, specialised medical care, trauma counselling, family mediation or re-integration programmes. Non – governmental programmes are restricted mainly to the activities of the Catholic Church, and these are small scale and on a case-by-case basis.

An Ex-INTERPOL source tells the following story, which took place in 1996. He maintains the indifference and the lack of assistance on the part of state authorities is much the same today.

“A fourteen year old girl was kidnapped by two cousins and sent to Italy to work as a prostitute. Her father reported the case to the prosecutor. Because we were able to identify her abductors, criminal proceedings began. We located the girl in Italy. Her pimps were extremely aggressive and violent. I travelled to Italy to bring her back for the court proceedings, having received requests from her father and the Albanian General Prosecutor. The girl was in a very confused and distressed state. When we arrived in Durrës, I expected to be met by the prosecutor’s office, or at least a police car. But nobody was there and I could not contact anyone who showed any interest. In the end, I paid for her to stay in a hotel and I took her to Saranda to be reunited with her uncle, because her father was away. I heard afterwards that the girl stayed in Albania for just three days before the pimps took her again. She was completely dominated and controlled by the pimps. Two years later, her father came to the INTERPOL office again. He heard that the girl had broken her leg in Italy- we believe it was the pimps - and had been sent a hospital bill for 20 million lira. He is still trying to get his daughter back.”

9.2 Deportation

In most cases, Albanian young women and girls caught by the Italian police are immediately and forcibly repatriated as irregular migrants, according to law enforcement regulations and the re-admission agreement in force between Albania and Italy. Although protection and assistance to victims of trafficking is set forth in Article 18 of the Alien Law, women are afraid to report their traffickers to the police. In addition, procedures to

determine those women and girls who are trafficked as opposed to those that are illegal migrants are not followed.⁷³

Deportation of Albanian girls and women from Italy takes place on an almost daily basis via ferry to Durrës and Vlora. It is claimed that some of these are children, though they may not have documentation to prove their age and seek social service assistance in Italy. On one day in mid-January 2001, 34 women/girls were deported from Italy to Durrës.⁷⁴ Last October, 70 women/children were returned by ferry on one day from Italy to Vlora.⁷⁵

While the Italian police are supposed to inform Albanian INTERPOL of the return of trafficked women/girls, this rarely happens in practice. Sometimes it is the ferry crew, notified by the Italian Police, who report the women's identity to the Albanian police.⁷⁶

The Vlora police often notify the Albanian NGO, Vlora Women's Hearth, which interview girls and women in the police station when they have been deported to Albania. The interviews take place in a cramped corridor, surrounded by many witnesses, including policemen. Sometimes there are as many as 20 women to be interviewed in one day. Last year not a single interviewee admitted to being trafficked. The NGO believes they disguised the truth for the following reasons:

- the presence of policemen who sometimes collaborate with traffickers;
- the presence of girls who may share the same pimp and inform on them;
- intimidation by the traffickers.

Girls stay in the Vlora police station for 24 hours while their families are notified. As few families accept them back, the NGO believes that most of them are almost immediately re-trafficked. Witnesses describe how traffickers wait outside the police station for the women to be released.⁷⁷

Vlora Women's Hearth stresses the urgent need for a secure "accommodation centre", where women and clandestine emigrants can be properly interviewed and their needs and intentions ascertained.

⁷³ IOM, *Measures to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Women and Minors for Sexual Exploitation*, final report to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1 July 1999 – 30 June 2000.

⁷⁴ Durrës police source.

⁷⁵ Interview with a Caritas trafficking investigator, February 2001.

⁷⁶ Interview with ex-employ of INTERPOL, February 2001.

⁷⁷ Interview with Caritas trafficking investigator, Vlora Women's Hearth, and ex-employee of INTERPOL.

9.3 Assisted Return

According to Italian NGOs sheltering Albanian girls who have been trafficked, very few want to come back to Albania for the following reasons⁷⁸:

- Negative social stigma
- Family rejection because of shame, complicity in the trafficking, or economic reasons
- Fear of retribution from the traffickers
- Lack of prospects and employment opportunities
- The absence of any government assistance programme
- The state's failure to provide any security and protection to victims.

In Albania, there are shelters run by IOM and ICMC for trafficked foreign women (Moldovans, Romanians, Ukrainians, etc), but until now, no dedicated services for Albanians exist. This is primarily due to the negative factors listed above.

In the context of their programme to assist foreign women trafficked through Albania, IOM and ICMC also helped fifteen Albanian trafficked women who volunteered to return home in 2000. The women, between the ages of 17-21, were given varying levels of financial assistance for housing, vocational training and reintegration services. Twelve of the girls were repatriated from Italy, 1 from Belgium and 2 from Kosovo.

In the majority of cases, re-integration with their families proved impossible. By February 2001, two of the girls had returned to Italy, five had lost contact, five were still reliant on the support of the programme and just two had returned to their families. The pilot project (which is now finished) confirmed the acute difficulties of return and re-integration in Albania.

Nonetheless IOM and ICMC are currently developing a proposal to set up a network of 25 agencies and NGOs in the country to provide re-integration services, including shelter, counselling, medical help, family mediation and vocational training. The project intends to help 40 women in 2001 who volunteer to return to Albania.

The programme aims to develop a systematic inter-agency approach that provides long-term return and reintegration options. But traffickers pose a continuous threat and there is an overriding belief that no long-term solutions can be found until the Albanian government guarantees security and protection for NGOs working with victims of trafficking. Many NGOs in Albania are reluctant to get too involved because of the security issues.⁷⁹ In 1998, the President of Vlora Women's Hearth was forced to leave Vlora for a year after threats from traffickers

Various religious orders based in Catholic centres in Fier, Elbasan, Korça, Kuçova, Tirana, and Lezha offer ad-hoc assistance in the form of family tracing or liaison,

⁷⁸ Interview with IOM Programme Co-ordinator, Tirana, February 2001 and Italian NGOs.

⁷⁹ Interview with IOM Programme Co-ordinator, February 2001.

vocational training and temporary shelter, but this is only on a case-by-case basis.⁸⁰ Various Catholic orders are running training courses for at-risk girls in Elbasan, Gramsh, Lezha, Fier and Kuçova. An Albanian NGO is starting a similar programme in 2001 for 20 at-risk women in Gramsh.⁸¹

One centre in Elbasan has helped trace, contact and mediate with 55 families since 1992.⁸² The staff says re-integration is very difficult because of family rejection and economic hardship. Several interviewees believed it was better for trafficked girls/women to stay in Italy because of the lack of social services and the serious security issues in Albania.

Caritas employs a trafficking investigator in Albania to help girls and women who have come in contact with the authorities in Italy. The investigator, who works in the Berat, Kuçova, Skrapar area, traces families, mediates and helps with legal documentation. There are over 30 cases every year.

“Generally the family is negative and it takes a lot of hard work to broker a solution. The majority of the families are very poor and sometimes it can take 6 months to arrange a visit. We contact mothers who are more sensitive about the fate of their children. We also have to clarify the relationship, because some parents just see their children as a means of making money.”⁸³

Between 1999-2000, the NGO Useful to Albanian Women helped nine cases that were referred by NGOs in Italy and Belgium. There are also a variety of shelters run by national and international NGOs that have assisted trafficking victims on a case-by-case basis, but by and large these shelters are for victims of domestic violence and abuse.

“We got a message from an association in Belgium notifying us that they were sheltering a 13 year old girl from Shkodra. She had been forced into prostitution. They had been in contact with her mother and she had asked for the girl to be sent back because her brother was sick. They asked us to visit the mother and assess the situation. We found the mother, who was divorced, with three children living in a former army building in very poor condition. She was working as a prostitute and she told us that she had sold her daughter to a notorious pimp in Shkodra, who had taken her to Belgium. Now the pimp was threatening her because her daughter had escaped and he wanted his money back. The brother was not really sick. The thirteen year old stayed with the association in Belgium.”⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Interviews at centres in Albania, January/February 2001.

⁸¹ Interview with Gruaja Kurajoze in Gramsh, February 2001.

⁸² Interview at Elbasan Catholic Centre, February 2001.

⁸³ Interview with Caritas investigator, February 2001.

⁸⁴ Interview with Useful to Albanian Women, January 2001.

10. Other Forms of Child Trafficking and Exploitation

10.1 Trafficking of Boys to Italy

Thousands of Albanian boys travel to Greece and Italy every year and they too are sometimes victims of traffickers. Although there is plenty of evidence in Greece (and to a lesser extent Italy) of trafficking for begging and forced labour, the Albanian government maintains there is no evidence to prove the phenomenon exists.⁸⁵

In 2000, according to the Committee on Foreign Minors in Italy, 5,743 Albanian separated minors were registered by the authorities - 91% of them were boys, the majority between 17 and 18 years of age. The true figure is likely to be much higher as many Albanian families, especially in rural areas, encourage their children (from the age of 14) to work abroad in order to supplement family incomes.

Although many of these boys travel independently to Italy, some become indebted to traffickers after borrowing money to pay for the speedboat crossing. Traffickers force the children to sign contracts to pay back large sums of money and in order to meet their debt obligations the boys may become involved in begging rings or forced labour. According to the Murialdo Centre in Fier, which has provided educational programmes to over 100 boys returning from Italy since 1997, many of the boys they work with have been in begging rings and been badly exploited.⁸⁶

For more information see: *Report on the Situation of Separated Albanian Minors in Italy*. Federica Donati, Save the Children UK, December 2000.

10.2 Trafficking of Boys and Girls for Begging and Forced Labour in Greece

“The traffickers can be very cruel. I know people who’ve been cut with knives and hurt to make them work better. People are frightened of the traffickers. They threaten to kill us and our families. If a trafficker says he wants 20,000 drachma, you have to earn it or he beats you, sometimes with sticks. Lots of them are drunk. They are bad” (Ela, 14. She has been going to Greece since she was 4 years old. Her mother sold her sister, 13, for prostitution to Italy. She also sold her baby child. Interview with researcher, January 2001.)

The Greek government estimates that there are 3,000 unaccompanied Albanian boys in Greece, however with the large-scale migration of boys to work in the Greek agriculture and construction industries, especially in the summer time, this figure is likely to be much higher.

⁸⁵ Ministry of Public Order letter to Save the Children, February 2001.

⁸⁶ Interview at Murialdo Centre in Fier, February 2001.

Many children are trafficked for begging and forced labour with the majority belonging to the minority “Gypsy” and “Roma” groups. The ethnic distinction is made by Albanian Gypsies and Romas themselves. Gypsies believe they originate in Egypt, while Roma come from the Asian continent. There are varying statistics about their numbers in Albania: officially there are 35,000 Roma and Gypsy, although the two groupings claim the true figure is closer to 100,000.⁸⁷

The Albanian NGO Ndhmë për Fëmijët (Help for Children), which runs re-integration programmes for children trafficked to Greece, says there at least 1,000 Albanian children in the city of Thessaloniki alone though the number varies according to the season and religious holidays. Thessaloniki is the most popular destination because it is close to Albania, cheaper than the capital Athens, and has fewer foreign child trafficking gangs competing for money.

Ninety per cent of children trafficked to Greece are Gypsy while 10% are either Roma or “white Albanian”. The majority come from Elbasan, Korca, Berat and Tirana where there are large Gypsy and Roma communities. Ndhmë për Fëmijët estimates that 80% of the children are recruited by traffickers while 20% are sent by their families. The traffickers are either Albanian or Gypsy, although the overall bosses tend to be Albanians living in Elbasan or Greece.

Families come to a commercial arrangement with traffickers by which they receive a monthly stipend in exchange for the services of their children. The children, some of whom are as young as seven, cross the border into Greece by foot accompanied by their traffickers. The journey takes around five days and the most popular routes are via Korça-Bilisht-Follorine or Gjirokastra-Janine. Some of the children have crossed the border over fifty times. According to the children, the Albanian police show little interest in their movements and rarely bother to register them when they are deported from Greece.

When they arrive in Greece, the children are set to work either as beggars (the younger ones) or to wash car windows and other such chores. They are normally given a target sum of money to earn each day and if they fail to earn it, they are punished. They suffer from poor living conditions, systematic violence, abuse, and ill health.⁸⁸ While the children may earn an average of 1000 USD a month, the traffickers pocket the vast majority and send only a fraction back to the families. More often than not, the children get nothing.

Children who come to the attention of the Greek police are either deported immediately or detained and sometimes placed in adult jails prior to their departure. Often the police detain them for as long as it takes to fill up a bus to take them back to the Albanian border. Sometimes they sleep at the border crossing and return immediately to Greece.

⁸⁷ *Review for the Rights of Children and Youth in Albania*, February 2000. Children’s Human Rights Centre in Albania.

⁸⁸ Interview with “Ndhmë për Fëmijët”, February 2001.

The children tell stories of torture and violence:

“I was in prison for two months and the Greek police treated us very badly. If we knocked on the cell door to go to the toilet they would come and beat us up. Spatim peed into a bottle and the policeman came in and held a gun to his head and forced him to drink it. He said he would kill him if he didn’t.” (Tony, 17, who’s been to Greece approximately 100 times)

“The Greek police treat us very badly. I was caught with 30 people near the border. I cut my hair so I looked more like a boy. The Greek soldiers took away three women in our group and raped them.”(Ela, 14. Interviewed January 2001)

Unlike Italy, there appear to very few social services/assistance programmes available to Albanian children in Greece, but there needs to be much more research in this area.

Please see appendix 2 for more case studies.

10.3 Assistance Programmes

Ndihmë për Fëmijët and Terre des Hommes, both of which have run programmes for Albanian children (primarily boys) who were trafficked to Greece, attribute this type of trafficking to the following causes:

- poor economic conditions
- broken and dysfunctional families
- social problems associated with discrimination against minorities in Albania
- poor education and employment opportunities due to discrimination
- Gypsy and Roma cultural traits that make child employment normal
- a culture of itinerancy (especially among Roma).

Both organisations have been working for five years on education and re-integration programmes for trafficked and at-risk children in Elbasan, Korca, Berat and Tirana. The programmes have helped 230 families with a combination of special education classes to help children re-integrate back into school, vocational training, social work visits to families, financial support and public awareness. The programmes have had a proven success in re-integration. In the last two years, 15 of children have returned to mainstream formal education.

In 2001, with funding from UNICEF, Terre des Hommes, will begin a 12 month pilot prevention programme in Elbasan and Korçë aimed at tackling the indifference of local

authorities, schools and social services towards the trafficking of children for begging and cheap labour in Greece. The intention is also to inform 3000 at-risk children and their families about the levels of exploitation, violence and discrimination perpetrated against trafficked children in the hope that this information will act as a deterrent. To date, both organisations have kept a low profile for security reasons.⁸⁹

10.4 Repatriation from Italy

The majority of repatriations of Albanian boys from Italy are organised by International Social Services in Italy and Albania. ISS does background checks with families in Albania to ensure repatriation is in the children's best interest. Those that return are given some financial assistance to help them with vocational training. In most cases families do not want their children back because of their poor economic circumstances.⁹⁰

According to the Committee on Foreign Minors in Italy, the total number of Albanian minors repatriated by ISS until 15 December 2000 has been 506, with 347 Albanians repatriated between 1998-1999. In 2000, ISS in Tirana investigated 600 cases of which 80% were boys, but repatriated just 47 children, three of whom were girls.

This big decline in repatriation is attributed to the application of new procedures in Italy involving stricter criteria and longer evaluation and processing time. In 2001, ISS Tirana is planning an evaluation of all repatriations to see how many returnees have stayed in Albania. ISS repatriates very few girls because of the lack of services, the security risks and the negative social stigma.

⁸⁹ Interviews with "Ndihmë për fëmijët" and "Terre des Hommes" in Albania, February 2001.

⁹⁰ Interview with ISS, Tirana, February 2001.

11. Recommendations

Public Awareness and Education Programmes

Over the last three years the Albanian media has played an important role in raising awareness about trafficking in Albania. But while awareness appears to be high in urban areas and many of the more populated rural zones, there is a continued need for nation-wide public awareness campaigns. These should focus particularly on remote areas, communities with high poverty and unemployment, and cities where there are many migrants from rural areas.

Public awareness programmes should not only inform about trafficking and recruitment methods, but also about what happens to women abroad: the working conditions, the violence of the pimps, the health risks and the theft of earnings. Increased awareness is the most significant reason for the downturn in recruitment – but more comprehensive knowledge might also deter women who are in danger of going voluntarily.

Suggested Programmes

A dedicated anti-trafficking team should carry out an intensive programme of school visits all over Albania over a six-month period. Because of the high decline in girls' attendance over the age of 14 in rural areas, the team should focus on elementary schools. The team would make presentations to teenage target groups and their teachers. Ideally victims of trafficking could tell pupils first hand about their experiences. This could be done in a video presentation. All NGOs and IOs working in the educational sector should pool their contacts with schools, teachers and parent councils in order to take advantage of existing links with schools.

A programme to raise the level of awareness of teachers and school parent councils should be developed. This would involve information packs and seminars for teachers in rural areas and towns. Teachers should be trained to impart information about the dangers of trafficking.

A nation-wide media campaign should be launched. This would include TV spots and short documentaries that highlight the experiences of those that have been forced into prostitution and begging rings. At the same time, there should be a “No to Trafficking” poster campaign for distribution in schools, universities, commune buildings, hospitals, police stations, etc. Leaflets should be distributed to hotels which are often used as stopover points for trafficking victims.

A Nation-wide Fundraising Campaign

Albania needs a project that targets the inaction and indifference of the Albanian public and makes people directly contribute to welfare programmes for victims. This has to be a

hard-hitting campaign that highlights the experience of victims, the apathy of Albania towards their plight and the continuing activity of traffickers.

Suggested Programme

A nation-wide fundraising campaign to raise money for anti-trafficking projects should be launched. Fundraising would take place through a series of graphic but sensitive TV adverts. Each advert would include a personal appeal from a popular apolitical Albanian (i.e. the writer Ismail Kadare, the actress Margarita Xhepa, the comedian Kosta Kamberi, the footballer, Rudi Vata etc) to other Albanians to make a donation to help stop trafficking and help the victims. A big publicity campaign would follow in newspapers, television, and radio inviting people to contribute to the campaign bank account. The publicity would be updated on a monthly basis to inform the public of money raised. The campaign would be administered by a joint international/Albanian steering group so as to engender trust and ensure transparency. The money would be used to fund anti-trafficking programmes, projects and services for victims.

Return to School Programmes

There is an urgent need for co-ordination between NGOs and IOs working in the educational sector to address the alarming decline in high school attendance among girls.

Suggested programmes

A programme should be developed to work with school directors, parent councils and commune chiefs to provide safe passage to schools. Parental accompaniment or shared transport needs to be encouraged. Where there is genuine willingness to address the problem, a community or school could be provided with a transport subsidy to help pay for the daily cost of minibus hire. The subsidy would be dependent on raised attendance.

Some parents in rural discussion groups suggested that a police patrol along school routes, or even a police presence in schools, (such as exists in some schools in Tirana) could help restore confidence. The policemen would have to be trusted by the community. Sympathetic regional police chiefs might support the idea.

Research

There needs to be research into the trafficking of Albanian girls for prostitution in Greece and the social services and assistance programmes available to them. Likewise more research should be conducted on the help available to Albanian boys in Greece. Greek authorities also need to be alerted to the human rights abuses committed against Albanian children by the Greek police.

Co-ordination between NGOs, IOs, and Authorities in Albania and Abroad

There needs to be more co-ordination between the multitude of agencies (mainly religious orders) in Italy that deal with Albanian girls and their counterparts in Albania. This would enable statistics and data to be collected and evaluated.

Advice, Family Tracing and Mediation

At present there is no central contact and information point in Albania offering services such as advice, family tracing, or mediation for families of trafficked girls. The bulk of family tracing and mediation appears to be carried out by missionaries and Catholic church employees, but this is generally on a poorly advertised ad hoc basis. It is very hard for a family in Albania who is trying to find their daughter to know whom to approach. However, due to security issues, this service will have to be carried out cautiously.

Receptions Centres in Vlora and Durrës

There is an immediate need for reception centres in Durrës and Vlora to interview and help girls/women when they are deported from Italy and Greece. The centre would provide facilities to interview women in private, establish their identity, provide medical and psychological help, trace their families if requested and give advice on further assistance.

Return and Reintegration Programmes

At present there are no return and reintegration programmes for Albanian women in Albania, although IOM and ICMC plan to implement a programme for 40 women later in 2001. There needs to be a long-term fully dedicated programme of sufficient size to deal with Albanians that may want to come home. The programme needs to provide assistance in terms of safe housing, medical and psychological support, education and vocational training. In cases where girls can return to their families, financial support for vocational training should be arranged. Most interviewees stressed the need for an international initiative in order to have the full trust of victims. The Albanian government must guarantee security and protection.

Programmes for At-Risk Children

There are various programmes in Albania helping at-risk teenagers. But given that

The root cause of trafficking is poverty and lack of employment opportunity. More emphasis should be given to providing vocational training to at-risk teenagers. Useful lessons can be learned from Terre des Hommes and Ndihmë për fëmijët's prevention and re-integration programmes for boys and girls being trafficked to Greece and the Murialdo Centre in Fier's prevention and reintegration services for boys. But there needs to be more attention focused on at-risk girls. Girls' clubs could be set up in regional centres to teach vocational skills and provide a venue for recreation and community activity, as well as awareness raising.

Legislation

OSCE in Albania believes existing Albanian law is adequate for punishing the crime of trafficking of both women and children. Some organisations differ, believing that the law has to be changed to create specific trafficking offences. But the main problem is that the law is not implemented. Many IOs and NGOs are lobbying the government to change this situation and this pressure has to be maintained.

Public Awareness Campaigns in Italy and Other Host Countries

More public awareness campaigns should be launched in host countries about the circumstances of Albanian and other foreign girls/women trafficked for prostitution. It is very hard to influence the supply side given the huge profits and the nature of the criminal networks – but more should and could be done to influence the “buy” side which created the market in the first place. Often people know of trafficking but are unaware of the severe abuse and exploitation the children suffer. What is more, people are often unaware that a majority of the child prostitutes and beggars did not choose that lifestyle, but were forced or coerced into it. Increased community awareness can only help the many thousands of women and children trafficked for prostitution.

Italian NGOs report that it is often the client who reports cases of trafficking, because they develop a relationship with the victim, which provides a “safe” environment in which to confide the abuse to which they have been subjected. This consciousness and awareness could be usefully developed.

Appendix I

Case Studies of Trafficked Albanian and Foreign Girls and Women

M.P lived in a village near Berat. When she was 20 years old she went abroad with a boy from the village who promised to marry her. For three years she was forced to prostitute in Milan. She belonged to a group of five girls, all Albanian, controlled by two Albanian and an Italian pimp. She worked in the street from noon until midnight in all kinds of weather and had to earn 1 million lira a day. She was regularly drugged and she developed serious health problems. All the money she earned was taken by the pimps, although they claimed they had opened a Milan bank account for her. She was allowed to return to Albania for health tests as they were too expensive for her in Milan. The pimps refused to pay for her return home.⁹¹

Case Studies Supplied by IOM Tirana

Case study 1: O.N.

NAME:	O. N.
DATE OF BIRTH:	1986
NATIONALITY:	Albanian
MARITAL STATUS:	Unmarried
CHILDREN:	None
PREGNANT:	No
HEALTH CONCERN:	None
EDUCATION:	8 years of school
LANGUAGE SKILLS:	Mother tongue: Albanian
WORK EXPERIENCE:	None
DATE OF ENTRY IN ITALY:	February 2000
DATE OF LEAVING COUNTRY:	--/--/2000
Returning to:	ALBANIA

Personal Background

O.N. has been in Italy for two months. She says that she was kidnapped in where her parents rented a house. At the time of the kidnapping she was returning from visiting her brother O. At approximately 18:00 hrs she was forced into a car at gunpoint. Once in the car, she was tied up and gagged. O.N. was taken to the sea, forced into a rubber motorboat together with two young men who were already in the possession of her passport. She can remember that there was a photograph of her in the passport taken during a birthday party of one of her friends.

After her arrival in Italy, she remembers going from Milan to Rome and from Rome to Mondragone (seaside village) where she was installed in a small apartment together with two other girls. During the first week she was not forced to work although she was already informed what type of work she would be doing. Then she started working. The

⁹¹ Case study from Vlora Women's Hearth, 2000.

second evening she managed to hide 100.000 Lira (500 USD) in her shoes. The third evening she escaped taking advantage of the absence of one of the two young men (who may have returned to Albania).

O.N. took her passport (now in the possession of Carabinieri), her clothes and went to find a hotel. That evening she went out to work because she needed money. She was taken by the police on the street and put in a shelter for minors.

O.N. neither denounced the two exploiters, nor was she able to assist in the investigation because she did not remember the address of the apartment where she had been kept. O.N. would like to return home to her family although she has not yet managed to establish a phone connection.

Case Study 2: E.B.

NAME:	E. B.
DATE OF BIRTH:	1980
NATIONALITY:	ALBANIAN
MARITAL STATUS:	NOT MARRIED
CHILDREN:	NONE
PREGNANT:	NO
HEALTH CONCERN:	NONE
EDUCATION:	ILLITERATE
LANGUAGE SKILLS:	Albanian/Italian
WORK EXPERIENCE:	NONE
DATE OF ENTRY IN ITALY:	Approx. 1998
DATE OF RETRUN TO HOME COUNTRY:	--/--/2000
Returning to:	Albania

Personal background

E. B., 20 years of age, grew up together with her mother, Z. Z. who presently works as a cook while E. B.'s father, G., was a factory worker. The couple got divorced when E. B. was twelve years of age and G. emigrated to Germany shortly afterwards. Both parents are re-married, E. B.'s father to a German citizen and E. B.'s mother to F., who works as a mason.

Because of the frequent and increasing violence of the stepfather towards her and her mother, E. B. decided to run away from home and sought shelter at her cousin's house

Her cousin had worked in Italy as a prostitute, her husband being her pimp. Once back in Albania, she started to deal with the trafficking of other girls, using her house as lodging for the girls who were waiting to travel to Italy.

These girls were fully aware of their final destination and of the type of activity they would be undertaking in Italy, so E. B. knew the nature of her cousin's "job" perfectly well. What she did not know and could not even imagine was that her cousin was preparing the same treatment for her and that her plan was to sell her for 2 million liras. Motivated by the excuse of an engagement and the promise of a wedding, E. B. found herself on a speedboat.

Upon her arrival in Italy, she understood that things were quite different from what she had expected, and after refusing to work as a prostitute, she was savagely beaten and maltreated, not only by her pimp but also by the other boys and girls. E. B. suffered in this situation until she learned to speak Italian. In the meantime she was transferred to Milan from Rome where she put first and then went back to Rome again.

On the first occasion, with very little money (the exact amount for the purchase of her ticket) and in poor physical condition, E. B. fled from Rome to Venice. On arrival in Venice, she heard two girls speaking Albanian in the station and asked them for help. The two girls offered her food and clothing and let her sleep in their hotel room. They both worked as prostitutes but on their own. E. B. decided to work with them in order to pay her ticket back. The police noticed her on the second day because she bore the marks of abuse. This episode marked E. B.'s dramatic exit from the street.

She was referred to a Catholic Reception Centre for rehabilitation and from then numerous attempts were made for E. B.'s social reintegration into Italy, but without success. E. B. never went to school and she is illiterate. During her stay at the Reception Centre in Padua, Italy, she was able to develop some handicraft skills.

Case Study 3: M.R.

NAME:	M. R.
DATE OF BIRTH:	1984
NATIONALITY:	Albanian
MARITAL STATUS:	Married, but not legally
CHILDREN:	One son, M., 10 months old
PREGNANT:	No
HEALTH CONCERN:	Suspecting cancer to one ovary.
EDUCATION:	5 years of school
LANGUAGE SKILLS:	Mother tongue: Albanian
WORK EXPERIENCE:	None
DATE OF ENTRY IN ITALY:	February 2000
DATE OF LEAVING COUNTRY:	--/--/2000
RETURNING TO:	Albania

Personal background

M. R. left Albania together with her sister X. G. of her own will, and aware of what kind of activity she would be doing in Italy. An Albanian citizen called I. P. helped to organise the trip. He has been M. R.'s boyfriend for approximately a year though she was already married. The reason M. R. decided to this was extreme poverty and also the conditions of her marriage where she had been subjected to violence since the age of 14. Obviously, her boyfriend only pretended to be in love with M. R. to convince her to take the trip.

M. R. left the house of her parents and joined a group of people who travelled first to Valone where they remained for a couple of weeks, and then on to Bari. From Bari the group, by now accompanied by yet another young Albanian man called A. Z., continued to Mondovì, where M. R worked on the street for approximately two months.

After two months they move to Milano because the police pursued the men. Two weeks later she and her sister were arrested. M. R. did not denounce the men, and she refused to participate in the trial as a witness.

As of that moment, the sister wants to return to Albania as soon as possible. Their decision was further accentuated by M. R.'s bad health conditions.

Case Study 4: M.K.

NAME:	M. K.
DATE OF BIRTH:	1976
NATIONALITY:	Albanian
MARITAL STATUS:	Widow
CHILDREN:	ONE, a girl of six months of age.
PREGNANT:	NO
HEALTH CONCERN:	NONE
EDUCATION:	Very poor, she is quite illiterate
LANGUAGE SKILLS:	Albanian
WORK EXPERIENCE:	In agriculture
DATE OF ENTRY IN ITALY:	January 2000
DATE OF RETURN TO HOME COUNTRY:	--/--/2000
Returning to:	Albania

Personal background:

M.K. was born in a small village near (central Albania). A friend of the family introduced MK's father to an Italian national, who had arrived in Albania to find a wife. Within a few hours, F. decided to “marry” M. K. and she accepted. At first, F. agreed in taking her small daughter from a previous marriage with them, but in the end he succeeded in convincing M. K. to leave her home. He argued that the trip would be too dangerous and tiring for the baby and it was better to wait until MK had documents after

the marriage in Italy. Two days after F.'s departure to Italy by regular ferry, M. K. left from Vlorë on a speedboat.

When MK arrived in Italy, F. said he lost everything, including his house, when he was in Albania. For the first two nights, a friend provided accommodation (obviously the friend was not there). Later on, they went to a hotel close to Termini station in Rome. While staying in this hotel two Albanian women visited her. The women tried to convince M. K. that, considering F.'s economic situation, she had to work in order to help him and they invited her to prostitute on the streets.

When M. K. refused to work she was beaten and forced to go on the streets. M. K. was able to get in contact with her father, who said her baby was ill and her grandmother had died. MK begged her pimps to let her return home, but they did not let her.

On the fourth or fifth night she was approached by someone pretending to be a client: he had noticed that she was desperate and wanted to help. She immediately denounced her exploiters who were arrested by the police.

Case study 5: ZH

NAME:	Z. H.
DATE OF BIRTH:	--/--/1976
NATIONALITY:	Albanian
MARITAL STATUS:	Unmarried
CHILDREN:	One daughter, three years old
PREGNANT:	No
HEALTH CONCERN:	None
EDUCATION:	12 years of school
LANGUAGE SKILLS:	Mother tongue: Albanian; Italian: excellent
WORK EXPERIENCE:	Housekeeper in Italy
DATE OF ENTRY IN ITALY:	Approx. 1997
DATE OF LEAVING COUNTRY:	--/--/2000
Returning to:	Albania

Personal Background:

Z. H. has been in Italy for three years. She left her home accompanied by a friend, S., with the intention to go to Italy to find work. At the time, her baby was several months old. S. was a friend of two young men, (both of poor reputation), who helped her get on the boat to Italy.

In Italy, Z. H. was brought to Turin. At first, she refused to work as a prostitute and was subjected to violence, both physical (cruel beatings) and psychological (threats not only against her, but also against her daughter left with Z. H.'s parents). Her exploiters forced her work on the street first in Turin, then in Milan.

She encountered a young man on the street that offered her help. She trusted him and let him take her away in his car. He brought her to a place where he lived together with other young men. Listening to conversations on familiar topics made Z. H. relax in the men's company. She stayed there for about a month doing housework. She felt happy to know that not all the people were mean and wanted to exploit her. She was strangely aware, however, that she was never allowed to leave the house alone.

Soon she discovered that she had been sold and that her current exploiters, were very dangerous. Several days later Z. H. was forced to the street, subjected to violence and made to work. One night, unable to withstand her situation any more, she called for help, turned herself to the police and denounced her exploiters.

Z. H. spent two years in various centres and communities where she was offered help. Unfortunately, the re-integration was not successful since few job opportunities became available to her, and also because she missed her daughter. Furthermore, she has been disappointed in the local justice system. She denounced four of her exploiters; three of them escaped and have not been arrested. The fourth was only sentenced to house arrest.

Since Z. H. completed twelve years of school, her prospects to find work in Albania are quite good. There are, however, other aspects that pose difficulties. She would be easily found in her small village by her ex-exploiters. It is probable that these men are in Albania now to avoid the pending court proceedings against them in Italy. She also fears her uncle because he is ashamed of her.

Appendix II

Case Studies of Children Trafficked to Greece⁹²

Case study 1

When I went to Greece we passed the first mountain with gypsies. The gypsies were screaming a lot on the way and the police stopped them. I quickly ran away and the police fired. I hid in a hole. I had a flashlight and hid everything in that hole. I went from that place to the highway. I got up at 12:00 a.m. and walked alone without any direction. I arrived in Follorina and began to beg there. I made 1600 Drahas and got on the bus and arrived in Thessaloniki where I met a friend who took me to his house. The next day the people with whom I was staying told me to steal but I hid myself and went to the bus and met someone else who took me in. Later the policemen caught us and put us in prison and brought us to Albania. (DC)

Case study 2

I went to Greece when I was 4 years old. The first time I went with my neighbour, T. When I was 10 years old I went with my mom and dad. I always went on foot. The road was 3 days long and then we arrived in Thessaloniki. The next day we began to work. When I was little I begged close to traffic lights. I made 15 000 lekë (100 USD) which I gave to T. When we arrived in Albania T. gave half of the money to my father.

When I got older I sold dolls and also begged with a sign that said: "I don't have a mother, I don't have brothers and sisters. I am an orphan." I earned a lot of money that way, especially during Christmas time. T. took all the money I made.

I earned a lot of money during Christmas time and New Year's. I usually went to Greece with about 30 people, mostly women and children came. They went to Greece to beg. But I also went with my father, mother and brother. We worked there but the police caught us because my father and mother begged at the doors of the Greeks. I remained alone. I slept in the road. A Greek man helped me and sent me to school. This happened when I was 9 years old. During all the time in Greece I was alone and I couldn't get any news from my parents.

Once I was with my neighbour, T begging at the traffic lights. Some Greek gypsies a friend and me and brought us to Anohopata. We stayed for a month and took care of children there. When French and Germans came they sold these children. It did not happen to me because I only stayed for short time because T. found me. My mother had threatened to tell the police about T. so he had to come get me. He gave the gypsies 300,000 Drahas to send me to Albania. These are some of my stories when I was in Greece. I have a lot of stories that I do not want to remember. Now that I am older I understand a lot of things and I do not want to go again. I have gone to Greece because I have had difficult economic conditions. (ER)

⁹² Case studies supplied by Albanian NGO, Ndihmë për fëmijët, February 2001.

Case study 3

I went to Greece with a gypsy called FI. He said to me that I would beg in Greece. My father did not want me to but my mother did and so I went. We got on a minibus and went to Kapshtica. We were in the bus all night long and during the whole following day until 2:00 in the morning at which point we started on foot. We were 10 people and 4 of us were children my age. We went to Kozan and then got on a bus and went to Thessaloniki where we started to beg at the traffic lights. All the money I made I gave to F.I. F.I. gave us food. I stayed for a short time and then the police caught me. I stayed in the police station for three days and then returned to Albania. I have gone so many times that I can not even count them. All the time I have been begging and I have not had money to send to my family. (AK)

Case study 4

I went to Greece on foot. I arrived to Telemaidh. I got on the bus and arrived in Thessaloniki. I began to beg at a traffic lights and I made 15 000 lekë (USD) per day. I gave the money to my father. I stayed one month, and then I came back and went again to Greece. (KP)

Case study 5

My name is GC I am 16 years old. I went to Greece with my neighbour to work for him. I stayed for 3 months until the police caught me. They put me in prison for 3 weeks. They beat me and said to me that Albanians are villains, thieves and beat me again. There were other kids my age. They were being beaten even harder. Finally they sent me to Albania. My teacher came to my house and asked me to come to school. I accepted to go to school and now it is been 4 years that I continue school. I want to be a carpenter. (GC)

Appendix III

The following are results from questionnaires from villages in sample areas. The questionnaires were distributed among relatively few villages – so the information provides merely a glimpse of trafficking activity.

Results from the Puka district

The results of 33 questionnaires completed by 23 teachers and 9 communes chiefs/businessmen in over 26 villages in the Puke District.

CHILDREN AND WOMEN TRAFFICKED FROM THE PUKE DISTRICT BETWEEN 1998-2001										
No	Village	Area	Age	Cause	Where trafficked to?	Contact with family to	Victim of trafficking	Origin of trafficker	Relationship of trafficker with victim.	Comments
1.	Plet	Puke	18	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	She disappeared. The family heard later what she was doing
2.	Dardhe	Puke	16	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	She wanted to get married to him, but he sold her.
3.	Dardhe	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	She was cheated and she ended up as prostitute.
4.	F.Arrëz	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	Yes	She was cheated and she ended as prostitute.
5.	Kryezi	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	Neighbour	She was cheated for a better life.
6.	Kryezi	Puke	23	Marriage	Italy	Yes	No	Laç	Friend	She got married dreaming of a better life.
7.	Orosh	Puke	20	Engagement	Greece	No	No	Laç	Friend	Cheated.
8.	F.Arrëz	Puke	20	Marriage	Belgium	Yes	No	F.Arrëz	Friend	It's said that she is became a procurer/pimp of other girls
9.	Kalivare	Puke	16	Engagement	Greece	No	Yes	Afer	No	Cheated, but they exploited her.
10.	F.Arrëz	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	Yes	She disappeared. The family heard later where she was.
11.	F.Arrëz	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	No	She got married.
12.	F.Arrëz	Puke	16	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz (t)	Yes	She was cheated.
13.	F.Arrëz	Puke	15	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz (t)	Yes	She disappeared. She is in a Charity institute now.
14.	Bugjon	Puke	17	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	Puke	No	A relative cheated her. Now she is a prostitute.
15.	Midhe	Puke	19	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Puke	Friend	She got married to a man from Kryezi. She has contact with her family.

16.	Midhe	Puke	22	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Puke	Friend	She got married to a man from Kryezi. She has contact with her family.
17.	Mertur	Puke	18	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Puke	Cousin	A man from Merturi took her and sold her to pimps.
18.	Tuç	Puke	19	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Vlora	Neighbour	She disappeared with a man from the village. It is said she is in Italy.
19.	Tuç	Puke	20	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Neighbour	She got married with a guy from Laç who was married. He sent her to Italy. She has his contacts in Italy.
20.	Lum Bardhe	Puke	16	Marriage	Greece	No	Yes	Kruje	No	He married her and promised a better life.
21.	Breg	Puke	18	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	Mirdite	Neighbour	Cheated. She left the family stealing all the money. No contacts with family.
22.	Rrape	Puke	16	Abduction	Greece	No	Yes	Puke	No	Her pimps abducted her. She visited the family, but she's gone again.
23.	Hadrai	Puke	16	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Puke	No	She sent some letters to the family, but they've stopped.
24.	Laçoj	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	Yes	Disappeared from the school. We heard a driver from Fushë Arrëzi kidnapped her.
25.	Zeaj	Puke	16	Cheated	Belgium	No	Yes	Qerreti	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
26.	Zeaj	Puke	16	Cheated	Belgium	Yes	Yes	Laç	No	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
27.	Mekaj	Puke	16	Cheated	Belgium	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
28.	Puke	Puke	17	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	Luf	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
29.	Puke	Puke	17	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	Luf	No	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
30.	Puke	Puke	16	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	Shkodër	No	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
31.	Puke	Puke	16	Cheated	Switzerland	No	Yes	Lac	No	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
32.	Puke	Puke	17	Cheated	Greece	No	Yes	F. Arrëz	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
33.	Puke	Puke	15	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	Pukë (t)	No	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
34.	Puke	Puke	16	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	F. Arrëz	No	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.

35.	Puke	Puke	16	Cheated	Belgium	No	Yes	F. Arrëz	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
36.	Puke	Puke	17	Cheated	Belgium	No	Yes	Shkodër	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
37.	Puke	Puke	17	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	Durrës	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
38.	Lajthizë	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	F. Arrëz	Yes	She fell in love, got married, but he cheated her.
39.	Xath	Puke	17	Emigration	Italy	No	Yes	F. Arrëz	Yes	He promised her a peaceful life but he sold her to his friends
40.	Plet	Puke	16	not known	Italy	No	Yes	F. Arrëz	Yes	She disappeared and no body knows anything about her.
41.	Puke	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	F. Arrëz	No	She disappeared with a driver of a car. it is said she is in Italy.
42.	Puke	Puke	16	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Puke	No	Disappeared from school. Now is in Italy. No contact with the family
43.	Laçoj	Puke	16	Abduction	Greece	No	Yes	Puke	No	It's said a man in a car kidnaped her. She is in Greece.
44.	Puke	Puke	19	Marriage	Belgium	Yes	Yes	Puke	Cousin	She went to Italy with her fiancée, but he forced her into prostitution
45.	Puke	Puke	14	Abduction	Greece	Yes	Yes	Luf	No	Unknown people abducted her. it is said she is in Greece.
46.	Miçaj	Puke	17	Not-known	Not-known	Yes	Yes	Vlorë	Not-known	She disappeared on her wedding night.
47.	F. Arrëz	Pukë	17	Cheated	Italy	Yes	Yes	F. Arrëz	yes	She hoped for a job but was cheated.
48.	F. Arrëz	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	F. Arrëz	Yes	She was abducted.
49.	F. Arrëz	Puke	18	Cheated	Belgium	No	No	F. Arrëz	Yes	She went to find a job.
50.	F. Arrëz	Puke	17	Cheated	Italy	Yes	No	F. Arrëz	Yes	She went to find a job.
51.	F. Arrëz	Pukë	16	Cheated	Italy	yes	Yes	F. Arrëz	yes	She went to find a job.
52.	F. Arrëz	Puke	17	Marriage	Belgium	Yes	yes	F. Arrëz	Yes	It is said she escaped from the pimps and that she married a Belgian
53.	F. Arrëz	Puke	16	Engagement	Belgium	No	No	F. Arrëz	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated.
54.	F. Arrëz	Puke	17	Engagement	Belgium	No	No	F. Arrëz	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated.
55.	F. Arrëz	Puke	16	Marriage	Italy	No	No	F. Arrëz	Yes	They promised her an easy job
56.	F. Arrëz	Puke	16	Marriage	Kosova	No	No	F. Arrëz	Yes	Disappeared. They say she is working in a night club in Kosova
57.	F. Arrëz	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	No	F. Arrëz	Yes	She went to find a job but was cheated.

58.	Qerret	Puke	16	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	Abducted. The family is very worried about her
59.	Qerret	Puke	19	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Luf	No	Kidnapped by 3 persons. The family doesn't know where she is.
60.	Kçirë	Puke	19	Marriage	Belgium	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	She disappeared with her fiancée. Family doesn't know where she is.
61.	Gomsiqe	Puke	16	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Luf	Cousin	A relative of hers exploited her for money.
62.	Qelez	Puke	16	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	Disappeared from school. Kidnapped by some guys from F.Arrëz.
63.	Dedej	Puke	19	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Luf	fiancée	She went with her fiancée to Greece. They say he is using her to get money.
64.	Gomsiqe	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Luf	Cousin	She disappeared from school with her male cousin who's exploiting her.
65.	Plet	Puke	19	Marriage	Greece	No	Yes	Qelez	fiancée	She married him but took her to Greece to prostitute.
66.	Lajthize	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Luf	no	He married her, but it is said she's working in a brothel. She doesn't dare to come back home.
67.	Lajthize	Puke	16	Abduction	Greece	No	Yes	Puke	no	Kidnapped by a man from Puka. She is now being prostituted.
68.	Kalivare	Puke	17	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	Relatives	no	She was promised marriage and a job, but she was cheated.
69.	Mesht	Puke	16	Engagement	Greece	No	Yes	Relatives	no	She was promised marriage and a job, but she was cheated
70.	Kabash	Puke	16	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Luf	no	She disappeared from school we have heard she's working in a brothel.
71.	Llukaj	Puke	17	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Puke	no	Her husband is using her to get money.
72.	Mesht	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Relatives		Her cousin cheated her.
73.	Mertur	Puke	16	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Lezhe	Yes	She went to her sister, but she was cheated, got engaged and ended on the road.
74.	Iballe	Puke	16	Cheated	Italy	Yes	Yes	Iballe	Neighbour	She went for a job but was cheated.
75.	Iballe	Puke	16	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Iballe	Neighbour	She went for a job but was cheated.
76.	Gojan I madh	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	Cheated by relatives, who sold her to pimps
77.	Gojan i madh	Puke	16	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	Cheated. She ended up working in brothel.
78.	Zezaj	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Luf	No	It's said she is in Italy with some guy from Luf.
79.	Mezi	Puke	15	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	Puke	No	The boys who sold her are from the villages.

80.	Arst	Puke	17	Marriage	Greece	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	The boys who sold her are from the villages.
81.	Miliska	Puke	18	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	B. Curri	No	Cheated.
82.	Fierz	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	B. Curri	No	Cheated or Kidnapped. They live near the national road.
83.	Fierz	Puke	16	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	B. Curri	No	Cheated or Kidnapped. They live near the national road.
84.	Porov	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Puke	No	Cheated or Kidnapped. They live near the national road.
85.	Apripe	Puke	18	Emigration	Belgium	No	Yes	Laç	No	Cheated or Kidnapped. They live near the national road.
86.	Apripe	Puke	17	Emigration	Greece	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	Cheated or Kidnapped. They live near the national road.
87.	Porov	Puke	18	Marriage	Belgium	No	Yes	F.Arrëz	No	Cheated or Kidnapped. They live near the national road.

Breakdown of information from Puka district questionnaires

Means of trafficking

Means of trafficking	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
Abduction	23	27%
Marriage	23	27%
Engagement	15	17%
Cheated	21	24%
Emigration	3	2%
Not-known	2	2%

Girls trafficked according to age

Age of girls	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
14 years old	1	1%
15 years old	2	2%
16 years old	31	36%
17 years old	33	38%
18 years old and over	20	23%

Destination countries

Country	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
Belgium	14	16%
Switzerland	1	1%
Greece	16	18%
Kosova	1	1%
Italy	54	63%
Not-known	1	1%

Level of awareness of trafficking in the Puka district

Level of awareness	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
None	8	29%
Slightly	14	49%
Aware	5	18%
Very aware	1	4%

How common is trafficking in the Puka area (according to respondents)

How common is trafficking in respondents' area	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Does not exist	4	13%
Rare	24	77%
Common	3	10%
Very common	0	0%

Results of questionnaires from Laç, Kurbin district, North Albania

Results of 27 questionnaires completed by 21 pupils and 6 teachers at Lac high school; 57 victims of trafficking were identified in Laç and surrounding villages between 1998-2001.

CHILDREN AND WOMEN TRAFFICKED FROM THE KURBINI DISTRICT BETWEEN 1998-2001										
No	Village	Area	Age	Cause	Where trafficked to?	Contact with family	Victim of trafficking	Origin of trafficker	Relationship of trafficker with victim.	Comments
1.	Laç	Kurbin	18	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Friend	She was Engagement. She has contacts with family.
2.	Rrëshen	Mirditë	16	Engagement	Italy	No	No	Mamurras	Friend	She disappeared and doesn't have contacts with her family.
3.	Laç	Kurbin	14	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Friend	She has contacts with her family.
4.	Fushë-Krujë	Krujë	15	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Tiranë	Relative	She disappeared. Her family is very concerned about her.
5.	Laç	Kurbin	18	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Friend	She fell in love with a man. He promised her a happy life.
6.	Laç	Kurbin	19	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Friend	She got engaged with a man and went with him in Italy. He started to exploit her.
7.	Laç	Kurbin	21	Poverty	Italy	Yes	No	Fier	Friend	She decided to go because of poverty.
8.	Laç	Kurbin	15	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	Boyfriend	She loved him and believed in a secure and happy life with him.
9.	Laç	Kurbin	20	Engagement	Italy	No	yes	Laç	Friend	She broke up with her fiancée, because she loved him and left with him./
10.	Laç	Kurbin	25	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Mirditë	Neighbour	She loved him and believed he also loved her. So she trusted him.
11.	Laç	Kurbin	22	Marriage	Italy	Yes	yes	Laç	Husband	She got married him, and when they went to Italy he forced her into prostitution. They are still living together.
12.	Rrëshen	Mirditë	20	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Mirditë	Neighbour	They got married. He exploits her. When they come in Albania pretend not to have happened anything.
13.	Laç	Kurbin	18	Marriage	Belgium	Yes	Yes	Kurbin	Husband	They have been married for a long time.

										When they went in Belgium he exploited her.
14.	Rrëshen	Mirditë	18	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Mirditë	Friend	He abducted her and threatened her to death if she want to escape.
15.	Laç	Kurbin	20	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Berat	Friend	She loved him and believed he also loved her. She trusted him.
16.	Patos	Fier	18	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Italy	She knew	She got officially married with an Italian man blessed by someone from Vlora. Now he exploits her.
17.	Fier	Fier	19	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Fier	Friend	Her friend introduced to the trafficker. She fell in love with and trusted him.
18.	Laç	Kurbin	23	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Shkodra	Neighbour	He introduced her to an Italian man. She got married him. Now her neighbour from Shkodra exploits her.
19.	Mirditë	Mirditë	18	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Mirditë	Neighbour	They loved each other. The brother of the man obliged him to exploit his fiancée.
20.	Laç	Kurbin	17	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Friend	Her family passed a crisis and scattered. Loving him and having no support she trusted him and accepted to co-live with him. There are 7 years that he exploits her and doe not allow her to leave.
21.	Laç	Kurbin	16	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Neighbour	She got married him and has contacts with her family.
22.	Laç	Kurbin	18	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Mamurras	Friend	He abducted her and sent her in Italy for purpose of prostitution.
23.	Laç	Kurbin	17	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Shullaz	Friend	She got married him and contacts her family rarely.
24.	Laç	Kurbin	25	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Sanxhak	Neighbour	She got married him. She contacts her family.
25.	Laç	Kurbin	19	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Gjorm	Neighbour	She has very rare contacts with her family.
26.	Laç	Kurbin	21	Abduction	Greece	Yes	Yes	Milot	Friend	She has contacts with her family.
27.	Laç	Kurbin	16	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Thuman	Neighbour	She has contacts with her family.
28.	Laç	Kurbin	15	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Rrëshen	No	She disappeared suddenly. Witnesses saw her being forcefully dragged into a car. No one could help her because the

										kidnapper was armed.
29.	Laç	Kurbin	16	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Neighbour.	She disappeared. It is thought she is in Italy.
30.	Laç	Kurbin	25	Pressure for marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Mamurras	Yes	She knows the trafficker very well. He exerted pressure to her to marry him. She did not want to, but than she accepted because her sister cheated her.
31.	Laç	Kurbin	22	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	Mamurras	Yes	She knew the trafficker. She loved him. The family did not allow her to go with him, so she just left.
32.	Thumanë	Krujë	15	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Thumanë	No	She disappeared suddenly. it is said that her friend (female) knew what would happen to her, but she was obliged to do it because the kidnappers threatened her.
33.	Sanxhak	Kurbin	17	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	Tiranë / Laç	Friend	She loved him. No one knows about her, but it is said she is in Italy.
34.	Kamzë	Tiranë	17	Abduction	Greece	No	Yes	Tiranë	Friend	It's known only the abduction moment.
35.	Tale	Lezhë	16	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	Lezhë	Husband	She got married believing in a happy life, but the contrary happened.
36.	Laç	Kurbin	18	Engagement	France	No	Yes	Laç	Neighbour	She was orphan and engaged. The trafficker cheated her and now she is in France.
37.	Gorre	Kurbin	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Gorre	Brother in law	Her husband was in jail and passed away. Her brother in law sends her to Italy for purpose of prostitution.
38.	Laç	Kurbin	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Lezhë	Relative	She disappeared and no one knows about her.
39.	Gorre	Kurbin	16	Abduction	Greece	Yes	Yes	Laç	No	They abducted and send her to Greece.
40.	Laç	Kurbin	18	Marriage	Belgium	Yes	Yes	Shullaz	Friend	She got married her friend. She has contacts with her family, but the family doesn't know what is she doing there.
41.	Laç	Kurbin	14	Marriage	Germany	No	Yes	Shkodër	Shkodër	She got married him. He sold her in Italy.
42.	Ishull Shëngjin	Lezhë	17	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Lezhë	Neighbour	
43.	Laç	Kurbin	16	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	F. Milot	Friend	She got married him because he promised

										a better life.
44.	Laç	Kurbin	19	Poverty	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	Neighbour	She left with him to end up her sufferance.
45.	Laç	Kurbin	20	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	Neighbour	She disappeared. it is said her neighbour abducted her and sent to Italy.
46.	Laç	Kurbin	16	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Husband	
47.	Laç	Kurbin	17	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	Milot	Friend	
48.	Fshat Laç	Kurbin	17	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	F. Laç	Neighbour	She wanted to get e job, but she was cheated and forced into prostitution.
49.	Fshat Laç	Kurbin	18	Engagement	Italy	Yes	Yes	F. Laç	Boyfriend	He promised to marry her, but cheated. She denounced him and the trafficker is in jail in Italy.
50.	Fshat Laç	Kurbin	17	Marriage	Greece Italy	Yes	Yes	Fushë Milot	Boyfriend	She went in Italy with her husband, delivered a baby girl. Her parents are raising her daughter. Her "husband" comes and goes, but not she. Her daughter is almost two years old, while she is 20.
51.	Milot	Kurbin	18	Abduction	Greece	No	Yes	Fushë Kuge	Neighbour	
52.	Mamurr as	Kurbin	20	Abduction	France	No	Yes	Shullaz	Friend	
53.	Dilbnis ht	Kurbin	22	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	Friend	
54.	Laç	Kurbin	18	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	No	They cheated her. She doesn't have contacts with her family.
55.	Zhej	Kurbin	23	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Laç	No	She married him and doesn't have contacts with her family.
56.	Laç	Kurbin	16	Engagement	Italy	Yes	No	Laç	Friend	She is sister of the following case.
57.	Laç	Kurbin	17	Marriage	Italy	Yes	No	Laç	Husband	

Breakdown of information from Lac area questionnaires

Means of trafficking - Laç

Means of trafficking	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
Abduction	15	26%
Pressure to marry	1	2%
Marriage	20	34%
Poverty	2	4%
Engagement	17	30%
Offer of a job	2	4%

Girls trafficked according to age

Age of girls	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
14 years old	2	4%
15 years old	4	7%
16 years old	9	16%
17 years old	11	19%
18 years old and over	31	54%

Destination countries

Country	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
Belgium	2	3%
Germany	1	2%
Greece	10	17%
France	2	3%
Italy	23	75%

Awareness of trafficking in the area

Level of awareness	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
None	4	13%
Slightly	16	54%
Aware	6	20%
Very aware	4	13%

How common is trafficking in the area?

How common is trafficking in the respondents' area	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Does not exist	0	0%
Rare	11	39%
Common	16	57%
Very common	1	4%

Results of questionnaires from Lezha district, North Albania

Forty questionnaires from respondents in 10 villages were filled in to varying degrees of completion. Nineteen victims of trafficking were identified between 1998-2001. Six other cases were mentioned, but no details were supplied.

EXAMPLES OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN TRAFFICKED FROM THE LEZHA DISTRICT BETWEEN 1998-2001										
No	Village	Area	Age	Cause	Where trafficked to?	Contact with family	Victim of trafficking	Origin of trafficker	Relationship of trafficker with victim.	Comments
1.	Mabë	Lezhë	18	Marriage	Germany	No	Yes	Shkodër	Fiancée	They got married and he took her to Germany and then sold her. She is now back in Albania, but in a very bad psychological state.
2.	Blinisht	Lezhë	16	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes			She got "married" with a guy from Laci district (Vau I Dejës) and he sent her to work as a prostitute in Italy.
3.	Gjadër	Lezhë	16	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes			
4.	Piraj	Lezhë	17	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes		No	They sold her and it is said she is in Italy.
5.	Zojz	Lezhë	30		Italy	Yes	No		Friend	
6.	Gramsh	Lezhë	16	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Vlorë	No	
7.	Gramsh	Lezhë	18	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Fier	No	
8.	Gramsh	Lezhë	16	Marriage	Greece	Yes	Yes	Vlorë		
9.	Mabë	Lezhë	17	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Yes	
10.	Lezhë	Lezhë	20	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes			
11.	Blinisht	Lezhë	17	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Blinisht	Yes	
12.	Krajen	Lezhë	16	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	Krajen	Yes	
13.	Kallmet	Lezhë	18	Abduction	Greece	Yes	Yes	Kallmet	Yes	
14.	Lezhë	Lezhë	15	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	No	She got married and then disappeared. Her family doesn't know anything about her.
15.	Lezhë	Lezhë	16	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Gjadër	Yes	Cheated by a female friend. The traffickers were her brothers and

										they cheated both girls.
16.	Lezhë	Lezhë	16	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Gjadër	Yes	
17.	Lezhë	Lezhë	17	Abduction	Greece	Yes	Yes		No	
18.	Piraj	Lezhë	14	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes		No	
19.	Trashan	Lezhë	15	Abduction	Not-known	No	Yes		No	

Breakdown of information from Lezha district questionnaires (19 victims identified)

Means of trafficking

Means of trafficking	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
Abduction	10	53%
False Marriage	9	47%

Girls trafficked according to age

Age of girls	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
14 years old	1	5%
15 years old	2	11%
16 years old	7	37%
17 years old	4	21%
18 years old and over	5	26%

Destination countries

Country	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
Greece	3	16%
Germany	1	5%
Italy	14	74%
Not-known	1	5%

Level of awareness of trafficking in the Lezha district

Level of awareness	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
None	7	18%
Slightly	14	37%
Aware	15	40%
Very aware	2	5%

How common is trafficking in the area?

How common is trafficking in respondents' area	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Does not exist	2	5%
Rare	21	55%
Common	14	37%
Very common	1	3%

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