



Save the Children in Albania

CHILD TRAFFICKING IN ALBANIA. MARCH, 2001.

THE DEFINITION OF TRAFFICKING: THE UN CONVENTION ON TRANSNATIONAL CRIME (THE PALERMO CONVENTION) ADOPTED BY THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 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”*

The report is by Daniel Renton (with assistance from local staff)

It is often difficult to establish the age of victims, so while the focus is on children, the report also refers to women and children. 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.

A TRAFFICKING STORY

In December 1998, a fifteen year old schoolgirl, Marjana Lleshi from Fushe Arrez in the north of Albania fell in love with XG. He promised to marry her and take her to Italy to start a new life. Although she didn't 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's a few years older, was abducted by neighbours in Fushe Arrez and taken to become a prostitute in Belgium.

Their elder sister, Marta, 35, went to the police and reported the names of her sister's two traffickers. Word got back to the criminals who confronted the family's 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 Lleshi, 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 Lleshi alleges that there was no forensic evidence gathered at the crime scene and there was no autopsy.

Both traffickers were arrested the following day, but 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 Lleshi.

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 Lleshi was interviewed by the researcher in March 2001.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Save the Children in Albania would like to thank in particular *Land O' Lakes*, the *National Democratic Institute* and *Mendoni edhe Per Ne* for their help in organising discussion groups and surveys.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Methodology

Recent reports of trafficking

1. THE TRAFFICKING OF ALBANIAN GIRLS AND WOMEN FOR PROSTITUTION:

- 1.1 A Brief History of trafficking for prostitution in Albania.
- 1.2 Police/State/Law.
- 1.3 Recruitment.
- 1.4 Social/cultural trends that may help trafficking.
- 1.5 Profile of victims (age, origin).
- 1.6 Routes.
- 1.7 Practise abroad.
- 1.8 Health.

2. EVIDENCE:

- 2.1 Anecdotal evidence of trafficking, region by region.

3. FEAR AND AWARENESS IN ALBANIA:

- 3.1 Security fears - decline in school attendance.
- 3.2 Awareness.
- 3.3 Attitude of the public towards trafficked children.

4. RETURN AND REINTEGRATION OF GIRLS/WOMEN TO ALBANIA:

- 4.1 Return
- 4.2 Deportation
- 4.3 Assisted Return.

5. OTHER FORMS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING

- 5.1 Trafficking of boys to Italy.
- 5.2 Trafficking of boys and girls for begging in Greece.
- 5.3 Assistance Programmes.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Appendix I. Case studies of trafficked Albanian/foreign girls and women.

Appendix II Case studies of children trafficked for begging/forced labour in Greece.

Appendix III Results from questionnaires.

Recent reports of trafficking in Albania:

“Three weeks ago (January 01), 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. In Berat all the men are trafficking – it’s what people do here.” (Berat taxi driver)

“In January 2001, a man from Libofshe 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 helpline in January 01 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 helpline staff heard an argument with a man that they presumed to be her pimp and the telephone hung up.” (Shkodra Women’s Helpline)

“Five months ago a 15 year old in the village of Verbas got engaged to a man that wasn’t 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 the Albanian national newspapers: Gazeta Shqiptar and Republika, November 2000, 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 Durres 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)

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. Despite the figure of 30,000 often quoted as the number of Albanian prostitutes abroad, 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 local non-government organisations, their fate has, by and large, been ignored.

Due to the absence of any meaningful or reliable statistics on trafficking or attempts at data collection either in Albania or host countries, this study has to rely on anecdotal evidence at grassroots level to better determine numbers, recruitment areas, trends and practices. By means of discussion groups, questionnaires and over a 100 interviews, the research study has consulted, victims, local teachers, missionaries, villagers, speedboat owners, school pupils, state officials, non-government 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 through false marriages and job offers, abduction and selling has been and still is widespread in the country and the majority of victims have been children. In some parts of Albania, there's hardly a village that remains untouched. While the trend has shown a decline since 1997/98, trafficking of children (under 18 year old) for prostitution continues almost on a 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 children when they were trafficked. In a handful of villages in the Zadrime area, it's estimated 30 women have been forced into prostitution; and there are countless other examples detailed in this report. A significant number happened in the last 6 months.

However, the picture is a complicated one: there's a steady rise in emigration for voluntary prostitution abroad to escape poverty and a bleak future in Albania and sometimes it's hard to determine who prostitutes willingly and who is forced. But according to Italian NGOs many of these voluntary prostitutes are unprepared for the harsh reality and often end up being trafficked themselves.

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

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

passports are removed 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; the Italian Ministry of Interior reported that last year 168 foreign prostitutes had been killed and the majority of them were Albanians or Nigerians killed by their pimps.

Those who do return to Albania – and many are deported from Italy on a daily basis – 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 ostracization 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's estimated that there are 1000 mainly Albanian gypsy children in 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 lack of security in Albania is a large decrease in the number of girls over the age of 14 attending high school because of fears for their personal safety. 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, if their security on route could be guaranteed.

Awareness of trafficking is high in many areas as a result of greater media attention and the warnings of those who've returned. But there is still an urgent need to inform because in remote areas 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 more seriously the issue of trafficking. It needs to enforce the law, prosecute the 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, there is much that International Organisations and NGOs can do to prevent further trafficking of children and to help those already trafficked.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS:

- Albania continues to be a significant source country of trafficking. This situation will remain as long the law is inadequately enforced and the prevailing conditions of poverty and lack of opportunity exist.
- 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.

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:

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, Puke, Lushnja, Zadrime and Shkodra. 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 groups 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. (Dajci, Barballushi, Bushati.)
 - Discussion group 2. Lezha district (Zadrima). (Grashi, Trashani, Gjader)
 - Discussion group 3. Lushnja. (Krutje, Mertish, Kemishtaj, Kolonje, Gore, Pirre, Rrapez).
 - Discussion group 4. Fier. (Verbas, Metaj, Libofshe, Zharez, Ndernenas)
 - Discussion group 5. Berat. (Ure e Kucit).
- In addition two further mixed-sex discussion groups were held with villagers in the village of Mucaj in Tirana District and the village of Shenavlash in Durres District. The groups were set up using the *National Democratic Institute's* network of rural contacts. Each group had 13 participants from a rural background, aged 18-62.
 - 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.

- 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.
- Over 50 questionnaires were distributed to teachers and pupils in Lac 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 Per Ne* (Think About Us).
- Over 100 interviews were conducted with priests, missionaries, nuns, vets, teachers, doctors, local police, traffickers, speedboat owners, local 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 also interviewed government officials, domestic and international IOs and NGOs as well as organisations working with victims of trafficking and unaccompanied Albanian minors in Italy.

CAVEATS

Due to trafficking's clandestine nature and its associated dangers, it is difficult to find conclusive evidence and corroborated testimony. Families and victims rarely want to talk about their experience 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 accepted that despite the best efforts to explain, the definition of trafficking may not always be 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, but in some cases names have been omitted.

Child trafficking research areas in Albania

Barbullush
Bushat
Dajç

Zadrime
Grash
Trashan
Gjadër

Shenavlash

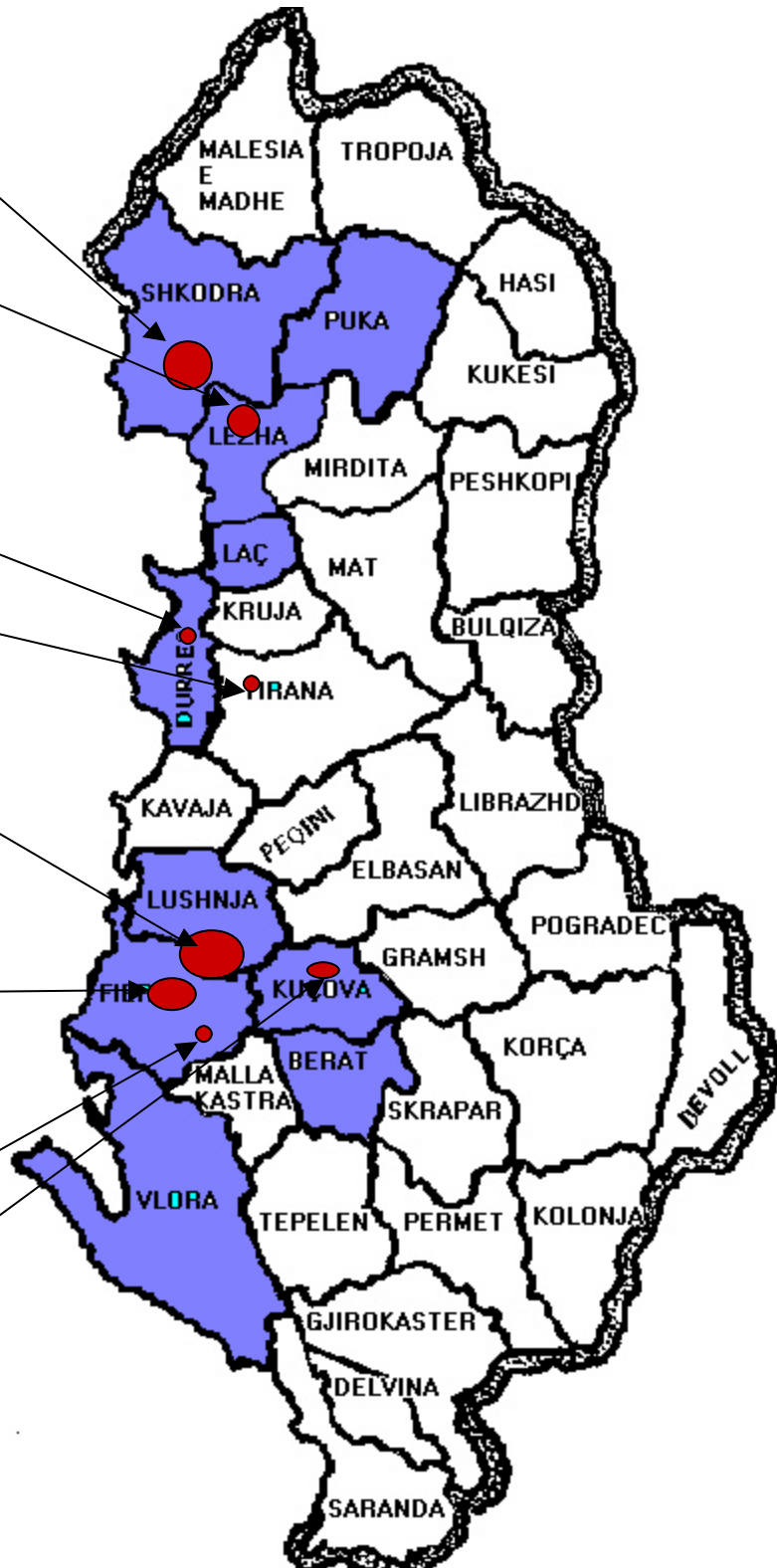
Mucaj

Krutje
Mërtish
Këmishtaj
Kolonjë
Gore
Pirre

Libofshë
Verbas
Metaj
Zharëz
Ndërnenas

Roskovec

Urë e Kucit



1. THE TRAFFICKING OF ALBANIAN WOMEN AND GIRLS FOR PROSTITUTION.

1.1. 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 under false pretences abroad. By the mid 1990s, various local Albania 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 as a result of 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 soon 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 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 at a high level.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

² Useful for Albanian Women: 1997 report: Prostitution, Society in Dilemma

³ Interview Caritas investigator in Albania, Feb 01, & Ibidem 4.

⁴ Collective impression from interviewees.

⁵ Interview with Caritas trafficking investigator in Albania. Feb, 01.

state armouries and stole half a million weapons. This meant that the 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 Zhitomi I Madhe, Berat district, which 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 they were more careful to target the most vulnerable girls and women in society, although with regards to the authorities they could still act with virtual impunity.

But 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; Albania 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/International Catholic Migration Committee gave shelter and assistance to 125 foreign girls and women trafficked through Albania. Italian NGOs report a big increase in Moldovans, Romanians and Ukrainians on the streets of Italy over the last year – 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’s 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/pimps have a reputation for extreme ruthlessness which 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 isn’t some sort financial pay-off to Italian mafia for the right to earn large sums by pimping foreign girls on Italian streets.

1.2. POLICE/LAW/STATISTICS

⁶ Ibidem 7.

⁷ Interview with ICMC, Tirana. February 01.

⁸ Interview Ex-Interpol. Feb 01.

⁹ Interviews with Italian NGOs. March 01.

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 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, Official Report 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 the Office of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Human Rights Officer in Albania, “there’s 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’s 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 is only having “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, Spartak Poci declared that Albania was no longer a source country for the trafficking of girls and women.¹⁴

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 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 01.

¹² Interviews with Vlora “scafisti”, March 01.

¹³ Interview with OSCE sources in Albania. March 01.

¹⁴ The Italy-Albania counter-trafficking experience. International Conference in Tirana, 31 October, 2000

Countries. Sixty-three of them were girls between the age of 14-18.¹⁵ 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 in Greece the situation 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 \$10,000. 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's bad, especially in the winter, only three or four will go. Those are the bigger speedboats with three engines.

Collectively the speedboats will carry on one night, an average of 30-40 Albanian women and 50 foreigners for prostitution in Western Europe.¹⁶ Normally they're 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're going to do, but not all of them. I'd 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's too much money involved. I know some people in Italy at the moment buying new boats."¹⁷

1.3 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

¹⁵ Ministry of Public Order letter to Save the Children. January 01.

¹⁶ Interview with Vlora speedboat owner, March 01.

¹⁷ Speedboat owner was interviewed in person in Vlora and by telephone in March 2001.

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.¹⁸ He will persuade the parents that they too can benefit, because if the couple go abroad, they can send back money to help the family. There are reports¹⁹ that some families are told that the couple will be going to Greece where many Albanians now have relations. At the last minute the girls finds herself on a speedboat to Italy.

In the north of Albania, it's reported that sometimes when girls are abducted, families claim the opposite – they say they 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.²⁰

Traffickers also employ female procurers who may be ex-prostitutes to recruit girls in Albania. For example in February 01, 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.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 Girls from rural areas are less likely to return once they've lost their virginity because of the shame and negative social stigma.

Once the trafficker has a girl, he will either accompany her directly abroad where he'll pimp her, or else she'll 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 they arrive in Italy – generally they're worth 2500 USD, although some sell for as much as 4000 USD.²³ A young virgin is reported to command prices of \$10,000.²⁴

Abductions were fairly common in the 1990s and reached their peak during the anarchy of 1997.²⁵ The Albanian Interpol Office has reportedly dealt with 103 kidnappings of females between 1993 - 1998 of which only 44 have been traced alive. Even now there are still cases of abductions reported in the Albanian press and according to an unofficial source, Albanian Interpol were notified of 12 missing persons last year. Some cases go unreported because of a combination of fear, shame and distrust of the authorities²⁶.

¹⁸ Interview with Shkodra trafficker, Vlora Women's Hearth, CARITAS investigator and discussion groups. Jan/Feb 01

¹⁹ Interview with Italian NGO Parsec, that provides advisory services to albanian prostitutes in Rome.

²⁰ Interview with teacher facilitating questionnaires in Fushe Arres. March 01.

²¹ Interview with International NGO working with victims of domestic violence in Elbasan. Feb.01

²² Interview with Catholic Centre, Elbasan. Jan 01.

²³ Interviews with trafficked girls (mainly from third countries) at ICMC/IOM shelters. July 2000

²⁴ Useful for Albanian Women, Prostitution, Society in Dilemma. 1997.

²⁵ See: IOM, Report from the IOM and DFID Workshop on trafficking in Women for Purpose of Sexual Exploitation, 21-22 September 1999.

²⁶ Interview with Albanian freelance journalist with eight years of trafficking expertise. Feb 01.

There are also numerous cases over the last decade of women and children being sold to traffickers, sometimes by relatives and friends (see sample areas and case studies.)²⁷ The Researcher has also heard examples of babies or very young children being sold by Roma families.²⁸

There's also a trade in babies born to trafficked girls/women. The NGO Vlora 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 as well as Italian NGOs report 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 prostituting with Albanian pimps. Many also end up exploited and abused.²⁹

1.4 SOCIAL/CULTURAL FACTORS THAT MAY HELP 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.³⁰ 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.³¹

But because of the high levels of male emigration from villages (and in some it's as high as 90%) girls may have a problem finding a husband. This makes it a lot easier for traffickers to get married to girls who, otherwise, may have little opportunity.

²⁷ Interview with CARITAS investigator.

²⁸ Interview with Ndiham Per femije, Elbasan, and Catholic order in Berat.

²⁹ Interviews with Italian NGOs. March 01.

³⁰ Interviews with discussion groups.

³¹ Information from discussion groups.

Poverty in the villages also means that rural families who commonly have many children, face a severe economic burden. An offer of marriage and a better life abroad is potentially an opportunity for the family to improve its financial position.

The idea that under 18-year olds are children and they have children's rights until that age, does not hold in rural areas. In these parts it's normal for some children (especially in very poor families) to work from the age of 14. Many boys are sent 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. But they want young girls, sixteen year olds, not older women. If the girl is older than 19 there is no probability of getting married”.(South Shkodra district)
- “There are so many more women than men in this area because of emigration – so many don't have a chance to get married. Girls want to leave because they want to find their dream.” (Lezha/zadrime 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” (South Shkodra district.)
- "There are girls getting married at 13 or 14 in our village” (Mucaj, Tirana district)
- "Most boys have gone as refugees, so there are more girls than boys here."
- “About 90% of all boys from this village have emigrated. Mainly girls and older people are left.” (Shenavlash, Durres 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).

1.5 PROFILE OF VICTIMS (AGE, ORIGIN)

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's estimated that there have been 2000 cases of trafficking from the Berat/Kucova region over the last decade and 75% of them were children.³² During 2000, the NGO Vlora Women's Hearth interviewed 219 Albanian prostitutes of which 70% were children, between the ages of 14-17 and 68% from rural areas. Respondents to the research questionnaire in Puke district identified 87 victims of trafficking since 1998 and 80% were children, mainly 16-17 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. Interviews with Italian NGOs³³ which have contacts with prostitutes reveal that very few have statistics relating to age and this is often due to the reluctance of victims to give information and the fact that most have false documentation. Pimps pressurise children not to reveal their age, or else they are likely to 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. This can take a long time.

But all 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 18-20, but some are plainly a lot younger.

ORIGIN

In the first half of the decade, public awareness was so low that it was easy to prey on both city and rural girls. Many wanted to live abroad, and it wasn't 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.³⁴ Today, because public awareness about trafficking is so much higher, traffickers tend to target girls from a rural background who come from poor, ill-educated and sometimes dysfunctional families.

This trend is confirmed by Italian NGOs who say that while a few years ago it was possible to meet Albanian prostitutes with quite a high level of education, now the majority are from rural areas with a very low level of education and some are even illiterate.³⁵ This

³² Interview with Caritas trafficking investigator. Feb 01.

³³ Interviews with Associazione Giovanni XXIII, Casa dei Diritti Sociali, Parsec, Progetta citta prostituzione, Caritas Roma. Feb 01.

³⁴ Ibidem 34. Feb 01.

³⁵ Interview with NGO Parsec which offers advice services to prostitutes in Rome.

makes intervention much harder, as these girls are less aware of their rights or their surroundings 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. The first, between 1993 – 1994, were reasonably well educated, accompanied by male relatives and fiancées and came from city areas such as Tirana, Durres and Vlore. The second wave, between 1995-1996, came predominantly from rural villages with a much lower level of education.

In the two month period between December 00 and January 01, Vlora Women's Hearth interviewed 65 Albanian prostitutes (data on their age is not available), of which 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 women interviewed between Dec 00/Jan 01

Tirane	8	Lac	3
Berat	6	Shkoder	3
Durres	4	Skrapar	1
Elbasan	6	Kavaje	2
Fier	7	Libofsh	1
Korce	7	Lushnje	3
Lezhe	1		
Malesi e Madhe	1	Kukes	1
Tropoje	4	Kucove	1
Vlore	5	Pogradec	1

1.6 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 \$700 -\$1000 to make the passage.

The speedboats are also used for drugs and weapons smuggling and the girls often act as carriers.³⁶ There have also been reports of fatalities on the speedboats as well as people being thrown overboard.³⁷

³⁶ Interview with Caritas investigator. March 01.

³⁷ Tony Blair and Giuliano Amato, Italy's prime minister, in a recent joint statement: "Every day we hear of the horrors illegal immigrants endure at the hands of the people traffickers [they] have thrown women and children, many of whom cannot swim, into the Adriatic to avoid detection by police patrol boats." The Guardian Newspaper, February 01.

The speedboats leave their passengers between Puglia's southern coast, along the Calabrian coast to the south and the coast of Abruzzo to the north.³⁸ Albanian gangs have cut deals with Italian mafia in Puglia which allows them free movement in the area in exchange for not interfering in Italian cigarette smuggling across the Adriatic.³⁹ 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 than the southern ones.⁴⁰

An Italian unit of Guardia di Finanza is based in Durres, 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, Official report 2000, last year the police stopped 75 gomone, 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 gomones, 7 large ships, and 10 other vessels involved in trafficking.

1.7 PRACTISE ABROAD

(The information is based on interviews with organisations that give assistance to trafficked girls/women in the form of shelter and reintegration programmes in Italy: Associazione Giovanni XXIII, Casa dei Diritti Sociali, Parsec, Progetta citta prostituzione, Associazione Pianzole Olivelli, Fondazione Regina)⁴¹

There is very little data available with regards to numbers, age, origin, psychological profiles and trends. There is almost no data or disaggregated statistics about trafficked children for prostitution. With regards to Albanians most agencies say they are among the youngest and most numerous working on the street, 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 trafficked children/women prostitute in Italy, because in contrast with Greece, profits from prostitution are higher and it's a better transit point for the re-sale of women into third countries⁴². There are Albanian prostitutes in Belgium, Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland and the UK.

On arrival in Italy, the "husband" induces the girl to prostitute claiming that he can't find a job and the couple need money. Alternatively he may sell her on to another pimp. Albanian

³⁸ Interview with Ms Altamura, ECPAT, Italy. Interviewed by Federica Donata, Save the Children UK in Deember 00.

³⁹ AP report (Rome) of comments made by Sen. Tana de Zulueta. Italian Parliament's Anti Mafia Comm. January 01.

⁴⁰ Interview with Ms Altamura, ECPAT, Italy.

⁴¹ The interviews were conducted in March 01.

⁴² Interview with Vlora Women's Hearth and others. Feb 01.

girls often refer to their shock at the sudden transformation of their ‘husbands’ from loving individual to violent pimp.

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, inevitable fare the worst. There have also been many murders of Albanian girls - according to the Italian Ministry of Interior, 168 foreign prostitutes were killed in the year 2000 and the majority of them were Albanians or Nigerians killed by their pimps.

The girls’ passports are removed and they’re given very little freedom which can make it very hard 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 and are also fearful that word may get back to their families of what they’re doing. Often they deny being Albanian. Sometimes it is the client who helps a girl and takes her to shelters or the police.

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

They’re required to earn between 500,000 lira – 1 million lira a night and face punishment if they fail to reach the target. It’s common practise 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 which means 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.⁴³

Very few Albanian girls report their pimps and when they’re 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 their social background which encourages a dependency on males.⁴⁴ A trafficker, interviewed by the researcher confirmed this. He said they 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 pimp 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.

⁴³ Interview with Albanian NGO, Vlora Women’s Hearth.

⁴⁴ Save the Children in Albania. Report: The situation of separated Albanian minors in Italy. Federica Donati. Dec 2000.

There is a rise in the number of Albanian girls arriving in Italy to prostitute voluntarily, but it seems many are very naive. 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's reported that many end up in the same position of extreme exploitation and ill-treatment.

Some girls after a period of time may be allowed to keep a proportion 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 in the street. The obvious wealth of these women when they return to Albania either for a holiday or perhaps to recruit more girls, can be a strong incentive to girls wishing to escape poverty and lack of opportunity in Albania.⁴⁵

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 they are quite robust and 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.

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 on average 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.

	MJ	ID	AI	EL
Arrival in Italy	With her boyfriend by speedboat.	With her boyfriend by speedboat.	With her boyfriend by speedboat.	With another girl by speedboat.
The way of work	In the street	In the street	In the street	In the street
How much does she earn	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.
The percentage she keeps for herself	0 %	0 %	0 %	20 –30 %
What time does she work	Afternoons and evenings	From 22.00 to 5am	From 23.00 to 5am	21.00 to 4am
Who controls her	Boyfriend by	Boyfriend by	Boyfriend by	No one

⁴⁵ Interview with Priest in Zadrina, Albania. January 01.

	mobile	mobile	mobile	
What is the level of violence and exploitation they have underwent.	Beaten every time she gets little money.	Severely beaten.	Severely beaten - threats to her family	Threats to the family
What would they like from life?	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.
What kind of perception has she of Italy country.	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 in Rome by the organisation Parsec in 2000.

Months	Italy	Albania	Romani	Nigeria	Moldova
November					
December	1	3		6	
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
Total	4	13	7	15	9

<i>Age per nationality</i>	<i>19 - 25</i>	<i>26 - 30</i>	<i>31 - 40</i>
Albania	11	3	1
Romania	6	2	0
Nigeria	10	5	1
Moldavia	8	1	0

(19-25 age group is thought to include children)

Origins and numbers of trafficked women granted a permit to stay under Art. 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

1.8 HEALTH

Many Albanian girls, especially from rural areas, have no sex education.⁴⁶ As a result, it’s 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 HIV free.⁴⁷

Their illegal immigrant status and the nature of their work, means that many girls have no access to medical care. Yet many suffer severe damage to their health: STDs, hepatitis A & B (very common), genital trauma resulting in gynaecological problems, psychological trauma and drug abuse.⁴⁸

Italian NGOs report that abortion rates are very high and there are examples of some girls having as many as 12 abortions. Apparently the pimps get very frustrated at the time take for recuperation and some girls are forced back onto the street very quickly and suffer serious infections as a result.

The NGO International Medical Corps, which treated 125 trafficked children and women from third countries in Albania last year, described them 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.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Interview with IMC, Feb 01.

⁴⁷ Useful for Albanian Women, Prostitution, Society in Dilemma.1997

⁴⁸ Interviews with Association Pianzole Olivelli (with centres in Pavia, Milan, Padova) and Gruppi Di volonteriato Vincenziano” based in Piemonte. March 01.

⁴⁹ Interview with IMC in Tirana. Feb 01.

2. EVIDENCE.

2.1 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 and some of the examples given in the questionnaires appear to be contradictory. 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.)

SOUTH SHKODRA DISTRICT

Information from Discussion Group, 13 women from the villages of Dajci, Barballushi, Bushati.

Overall impression: Awareness of trafficking was very high and women were very keen 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 are the norm. But in some villages up to 90% of the men have gone.

- “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 01 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, but someone else rang the police on his mobile phone. The girl was found after one month in the town.”
- “ A 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 age of 18-22. She agreed a price of \$400 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 *Fushe 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 haven’t 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 2to3 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).”
- “Traffickers took a 17 year old from *Mushan* and took her to Italy. Eventually she called her family and her brother in law brought her back.”

Information from interviews in Shkodra district:

The Women’s Helpline in Shkodra reported the following two cases in January 2001⁵⁰:

An Albanian girl, 15, had called the helpline 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 helpline 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 helpline received a call from a girl, 16, who’d got engaged and gone to Italy. She had aborted 7 times. Now she was pregnant again. Her so-called husband is prostituting her. Her parents are divorced. She can’t go home.

The helpline had heard of many cases of trafficking in the area, especially in *Malesi I Madhe*. The towns of *Koplik* and *Bajze*, which are on the main trafficking route from Montenegro are especially bad.

Shkodra is the main collection point for trafficked foreign women who’ve 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.⁵¹

LEZHA DISTRICT (zadrime area). Information from discussion group, 12 women from Grashi, Gjader and Trashani

The women were less forthcoming than in South Shkodra possibly because it is a very conservative area – but there have been public awareness campaigns in the area. They believed that between 30-40 women had been trafficked from their area over the last five years. Fifteen abducted, 15 cheated through marriage and 5/6 sold by the family.

⁵⁰ Interview with Women’s Helpline (mainly for victims of violence and domestic abuse), February 01.

⁵¹ Interview with foreign trafficked women in Shkodra. Feb 01.

- In January 01, a woman, 18, was found dead in *Shengjin* harbour. She came from *Barballush* and had been abducted and reportedly sold to traffickers. The family had reported the kidnapping to the police.⁵²
- In *Biraj* village, four years ago a mother 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 family.
- In *Trashane*, a girl got married with to a man from *Laçi*. 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 III for results of questionnaires.

Information from interviews in Lezha District

A local priest who's spent eight years in the *Zadrime* area and has been very active trying to stop trafficking, knows of 30 women that have left to become prostitutes in the area where he works (population approximately 5000). Ten per cent were under the age of 18; 70% were trafficked after a 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 trace.⁵³

In the commune of *Shenkolle* (villages: *Tale*, *Manati*, *Barrbulloje*, *Pllanne*, *Rrilla*), the Rogationist fathers reported there were very few incidences of trafficking, because the community is closely knit and access was very limited. But in the village of *Breçlet*, there was an attempted abduction in 2000.⁵⁴

An Albanian NGO working with handicapped children 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.

DURRES DISTRICT

Information from the discussion group at Shenavlash village, 13 people.

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

⁵² Confirmed in interview with OSCE Shkodra field office. January 00.

⁵³ Interview with Catholic Padre, Zadrime. Feb 01

⁵⁴ Interview with Rogationist Fathers. Jan 01.

- "There were 2 cases of abduction in our village where the girls were taken to Italy in 2000 and 1999. One of the girls returned 5 months ago. They were 17 and 19 years old."
- "Many years ago things like that didn't happen. It all started in 1997."
- "In Shenapren a 20 year old was trafficked by her husband."
- " In Sukth a 17 year old was trafficked by her husband after 1 year of marriage."
- " In Kullari there were two cases of girls aged 18 and 19 years old. They were falsely married and cheated into prostitution."
- "We haven't heard of such cases in our village but we heard of cases in the village of *Karec*. A 20-year-old girl was forced by her husband to prostitute after 2-3 years of marriage."
- "Two years ago in *Berat* a 20 year old girl got married to a guy who forced her to prostitute in Italy. Her father got to know about it and sent somebody to Italy to kill him. They brought his head back to the girl's father."
- "A married man from *Shenavlash* got married to a young girl, 17, from *Fermë Sukth*. He sent her to Italy for prostitution. Two months later the family of the girl went to Italy and took the girl."
- "They should do something. There's a shopowner 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 from discussion group, 10 women from *Verbas, Metaj, Libofshe, Kolonje, Zharez, Ndernenas*.

Fier has a reputation of 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 wasn't 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 and escaped and returned to Albania. She has gone back to her family. They don't blame her."
- "In the autumn of 2000, some traffickers took a mentally retarded 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 didn't pay. Now they force him to work in their fields, or else they say they will take his wife."
- "In January 2001, a man from *Libofshe* 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. The wife went to Greece, and the sister went to Italy. 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've 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 woman, 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 boys from *Fier* took a 15 year old girl from *Shen Kozmai (Libofsha)*. They sold her in Italy. She didn’t 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 is the trafficker. He lives in *Fier*; he has a big house built with the money.”

Information from interviews in Fier district:

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

The NGO, SNV in *Fier* reported that the villagers of *Strum* (nr. *Roskovec*) were worried Berat gangs would visit the village, now that a new road to the village had been built.⁵⁵

The director of *Roskovec* High School said that he heard of several cases 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 (17-18yr 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’d been trafficked for prostitution. They said the level of awareness about trafficking was very high in *Roskovec*.⁵⁶

Catholic missionaries reported that they had heard of many cases of trafficked girls in the area – mainly false marriages – but they believed that generally there was a decline in activity because of heightened awareness.⁵⁷

LUSHNJA DISTRICT. Information from discussion group, 12 women from the villages of *Krutj, Mertish, Kemishtaj, Kolonje, Gore, Pirre, Rrapez*)

Lushnja district borders the trafficking hot-spots of Fier and Berat

- *Rrapez village*. (1200 inhabitants). Participants said there had been 6 cases of trafficking of under-18 year olds and two of adults during the last decade. They believe the dangers are increasing because a national road passes close by and a lot of expensive cars drive into the village.

⁵⁵ Interview with SNV, Fier. February 01.

⁵⁶ Interviews at *Roskovec* High School. February 01

⁵⁷ Interview in Fier. February 01

- “Three months ago a *Rrapez* 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 2-3 cases of trafficking since 1999. “Last year a 17 year old was taken to Italy after dating a boy from *Rrapez*. He took her to smart 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 in the last five years in *Kemishtaj*. There was a 24-year old that left her family to go with a boy she loved to Italy. She prostituted for two years, but when she came back she didn’t have any money. She still had the same clothes.”
- In *Krutj*, there have been 5-6 cases of girls between the age of 16-19 being trafficked. They all went to Italy and some still have contact with their families. They were all cheated into marriage.
- In *Kolonje* 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, *Kolonje*, that house Albanian girls before they go abroad, but we can’t do anything because we feel unprotected.” There is also a brothel.
- “Some families don’t report cases of trafficking because they are too frightened of what the traffickers might do. I know one family who was terrorised by the traffickers into letting their daughter go. He said he would burn their house down.”

BERAT DISTRICT.

Information from discussion group, 5 women from the village of *Ura e Kucit*. The local vet who works in the villages of *Fier Shagani*, *Kuci*, and *Toshkez* was also present.)

Ura e Kucit is a closely-knit village and the women reported no cases. 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’d 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 didn’t get on with her parents. She came back later and took her two younger sisters and her 10-year old brother. They all went abroad and we think they must be prostituting. The parents get money from them. They’ve accepted the situation.”

Information from interviews in Berat district:

In Berat a doctor ⁵⁸ reported that between 1997-1998 there had been many abductions in the city. But it has been much 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 Belgium hospital. The mother has developed serious mental problems.
- A mother, 54, of a girl from *Mbrakulla*. In 1997, traffickers took her two oldest daughters, 18, 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 geography student who got engaged to a *Vlora* man in 1997. He got a visa for Italy and forced her to prostitute there. She refused and she was killed.

Berat taxi driver: *“Three weeks ago (mid-january 01), 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'd arranged it with her parents. I took them to a hotel in Vlora. But he was tricking her, because I know the man. He's a trafficker and he's already happily married in Berat. In Berat all the men are trafficking – it's what people do here. I know most of them. They all “work” two or three girls in Italy, but some of them just buy and sell women.”*⁵⁹

A Caritas trafficking investigator⁶⁰ 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, in January 2001, Berat police said 1700 girls had been taken for prostitution by traffickers in the last three years.

- “There's 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 other cases where Roma living in Berat have sold their daughters aged 13-14. 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 doesn't want to contact her parents.”⁶¹ According to one source Roma children are sold for 50,000 Lek.⁶²

⁵⁸ Interview with Researcher. February 01

⁵⁹ Interview, Berat, Feb 01

⁶⁰ Interview with Caritas investigator. Feb 01.

⁶¹ Ibidem 69.

⁶² Interview with Ndihm Per Femije, Berat. Feb 01

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 01, parents from *Rroshnill* had reported a man who was taking their daughter to Greece. But she claimed to be going willingly to meet her fiancée.⁶³

KUÇOVA

Information from Interviews

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

“Two years ago (1999), a girl, 18, was abducted in Kuçova by the husband of her cousin, a policeman, and sold to Italy for prostitution. He pimped her there and sent all the money home to his wife. They bought a new house. In november 2000 she came back to Albania, after her parents – the only ones who would agree to appear on an anti-trafficking programme on national Albanian TV and admit that their daughter was a prostitute – appealed for her to come home’⁶⁴

Staff of a religious order in *Kuçova* have 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.

“A girl, 16, from *Divodice* was engaged to a man from Berat in 1995. He took her to Italy and then returned. He told the 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

Poliçan (a former industrial centre with Army barracks and weapons manufacturing), *Bargullas* and *Dobrusha* have all experienced bad trafficking since the mid-90s. In *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 every week in *Corovode* (pop:7000).⁶⁵

⁶³ Interview with Chief of Police, Berat. Feb.01.

⁶⁴ Interview with Albanian journalist specialising in trafficking. Feb 01.

⁶⁵ Women in Development Assoc. Report: “Prostitution and trafficking of women in Albania.” Jeta Katro, Liri Shamani.

PUKE DISTRICT (North Albania).

With the voluntary 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 of North Albania. Three of the respondents were from the town of Puke and all the remainder lived and worked in villages in the district.

According to the facilitator (a teacher) who lives in the area, trafficking has been a very serious problem in Puke district, but people are generally fearful to speak out 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. 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 respondents identified 86 cases of trafficking since 1998 of which 80% were children, between 16-17 years old and 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 the country. Abductions have also been quite common although sometimes families claim their daughters have got married in order to avoid the shame of abduction and 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 individual 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 reports that trafficking is declining in Puke district due to the emigration of entire families, which has reduced the number of suitable recruits.⁶⁶ SEE APPENDIX III for a list of trafficked victims.

Catholic missionaries reported that in the Fushe Arrez area, Puke district there had been several abductions on the north-south highway that runs through the town, including two abductions in May/June 2000. Now girls do not go out after 4pm in the winter months because of the risks.⁶⁷

LAC, KURBIN DISTRICT.

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

The respondents identified 57 cases of trafficking in the last three years from the town of Lac 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 III.

⁶⁶ Interviews with facilitator – a teacher living in Puke district. Feb 01.

⁶⁷ Interview with missionaries, Puke area. Feb 01

Information from interviews 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 immigration to *Laç* from the north of the country and there have been many cases of traffickers preying on new arrivals to the town. 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. 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 *Mamurras*, *Milot*, *Fushe 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/women personally who've been trafficked. One 14 year old was kidnapped and forced to prostitute in Italy. She returned but was trafficked again. Her mother is in denial.
- The high school teacher knows 7 traffickers living in *Laç*. They're aged between 20-35. Some traffickers collaborate with the police.

The Director of the Palace of Culture in *Rreshen*, said he knew of six cases of trafficking – mainly by false engagement/marriage in the 1990s, in *Rreshen*. The girls/women went to prostitute in Italy, Greece and Holland. They all came from very poor families.⁶⁸

ELBASAN

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

According to a teacher at Gramsh high school, in 1998 local authorities and NGOs estimated that 300 women had left Gramsh and the surrounding villages. More than 50% were children and still at high school. The majority were trafficked, mainly married/engaged and cheated into prostitution. Very few have returned because of the stigma.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Interview, Director of Palace of Culture, Rreshen. Jan 01.

⁶⁹ Interview with local high school teacher and Director of an Albanian NGO helping “at risk” women

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.

VLORA

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 directly or indirectly. Apart from the actual traffickers there are hotel and motel 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 Vlora residents, Vlora gangs generally do not traffick 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.⁷⁰

SEE APPENDIX I FOR CASE STUDIES.

⁷⁰ Vlora Women’s Hearth. *Information on the Trafficking of Women and Girls in Vlora*. December 1997

1 FEAR AND AWARENESS IN ALBANIA

3.1 SECURITY FEARS - 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 education at elementary schools and high schools in rural villages. Girls were encouraged to go to school beyond the age of 14 (the minimum age for mandatory schooling) and attendance at high school (14-18 years) was high.

Since the collapse of communism in 1991, there has been a huge 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 schools, whereas in rural areas the figure is 28% for girls and 72% for boys.⁷¹

Until now, this huge decrease in female attendance has been attributed to cultural traditions and economic decline. 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) and to prepare for marriage.⁷²

But the research has revealed that while economic and cultural reasons are significant, the primary reason given for the decline in attendance is fear. 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, 394⁷³) and now some pupils have to walk for over an hour from their villages to attend classes. Parents say the 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 outside Tirana, 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. But in the large town of Gramsh where security is perceived to be better, the number of girls attending is high - more than half the 900 pupils. 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.

⁷¹ Albanian National Women Report 1999. UNDP

⁷² Ibidem 77

⁷³ Albanian Human Development Report 2000.

In a few isolated instances, there are examples of parents getting round the problem, either by arranging for their children to be escorted or else by hiring a minibus. But unfortunately this kind of initiative is rare. The result is that the fear of trafficking is denying a whole 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, Dajc and Gjader, 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’s 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.”

SOUTH SHKODRA DISTRICT

In the south Shkodra district, participants estimated that 90% of girls do not attend school. But in *Barballush*, where there is a high school, 70% of girls attend. In *Bushat, Fshati I Ri* (population approximately 1000), just two girls have gone to high school in the last decade.

- “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 the school if she’s 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 (*Suk of Dajc*), but I won’t let my girl go. It’s too dangerous.”

MUCAJ, TIRANA DISTRICT

The commune has approximately 1500 inhabitants. There are about 60-70 girls in the village between 14-18 years, but according to participants 90% do not go to school because they have to walk along a national highway and they’re too frightened.

- “We don’t 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’s no safety”.
- “If the school were here in the village all girls would go to school.” (All participants agreed.)

SHEVANLASH, DURRES DISTRICT

There are about 4500 people living in the village. The closest high school is in *Shkozë*, *Durrës*, about six kilometres away from *Shenavlash*. About 30 - 40% of the village girls go to high school. Other parents don't let their daughters go because of security reasons.

FIER DISTRICT

In the village of *Libofshe*, the majority of girls do 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’t 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 don’t go to school. The mothers are frightened because the road is not safe and because it’s impossible for them to accompany the girls to school every day. In *Shtyllas* (*Levas* 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.)

URA E KUCIT, BERAT DISTRICT

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

LUSHNJE DISTRICT

In the village of *Ngurez* (population: 1000 people), 50% of the girls don’t go to school. It’s the same for the outlying villages who have to send their daughters to the high school in *Kolonja*.

- “It’s because of fear. They have to walk a long way to *Krutja* 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).

Interviews from the 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 didn't attend because of fear and economic reasons.

3.2 AWARENESS

“ People are more aware now. They know about the scams. But awareness must continue, because there is a very high number of females in rural areas and they are looking for a new life.” Teacher in Gramsh High School”

The discussion groups showed quite a high level of awareness about the dangers of trafficking for the following reasons:

- In the last three years the Albanian media has taken a keen interest in the activity of traffickers, although there's 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 towards the end of 2000.
- Some trafficked women have returned to towns and villages and related their experiences.
- There have been public awareness campaigns in some areas by local and international NGOs, in particular Zadrime, Vlora, Kucova.

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 it was “the hottest subject of conversation” (Uri I Kuqe).

But in more remote areas, where access to media including TV is poor, it's 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 higher, but in the majority of cases it was still 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 don't 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 can also learn more about the exploitation and trafficking of foreign women (for example, Moldovans, Russians, Romanians) through Albania. At the moment there appears to be widespread indifference.

Discussion group comments:

- “Everyone knows about trafficking - it is the hottest subject in the villages.” *Uri I Kuci, Berat.*
- “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 be informed more, but people are much more aware than in the past.” *Fier discussion group.*
- “People are more aware now. They know about the scams. But awareness must continue, because there are a very high number of females in rural areas and they are looking for a new life.” *Teacher in Gramsh High School.*

3.3 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 in large part, this may be due to a lack of information. The research study detects a shift in attitude as people become 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 Fier District, the Researcher found a high level of awareness and sympathy among a class of 16-18 year olds. Some personally wanted to help victims of forced prostitution and they claimed the public would be more receptive if it knew more.⁷⁴

Examples of comments from discussion groups:

- “No one would ever support a prostitute being in the village, but those that are forced deserve help.” *Zadrima discussion group.*
- “My family would never help even a forced prostitute. Even if it was my sister – it’s too shameful.” *Zadrima discussion group.*
- “A lot of parents wouldn’t allow their children to talk to ex-prostitutes. It’s 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.*

⁷⁴ Discussion with a class of 16-18 high school pupils at Roskovec. February 01.

2 RETURN AND REINTEGRATION OF GIRLS/WOMEN IN ALBANIA

4.1 RETURN

At present there are no official government sponsored programmes or services dedicated to helping the 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 tiny minority of the thousands who have been trafficked. At present if they 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, but 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 and because we were able to identify her abductors, criminal proceedings began. We located the girl in Italy – her pimps were extremely aggressive and violent – and 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 Durres I expected to be met by the Prosecutor’s office, or at least a police car. But nobody was there and I couldn’t 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’d heard that the girl had broken her leg in Italy– we believe it was the pimps - and he’d been sent a hospital bill for 20 million lira. He’s still trying to get his daughter back.”

4.2 DEPORTATION

Albanian young women caught by the Italian police are in most cases 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 by article 18 of Alien law, women are afraid

of reporting to the police and clear means/procedures to detect trafficked women out of illegal migrants are still to be applied.⁷⁵

Deportation of Albanian girls and women from Italy takes place almost on a daily basis via ferry to Durres and Vlora. It's claimed that some of these are children, but 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 Durres.⁷⁶ Last October, 70 women/children were returned by ferry on one day from Italy to Vlora.⁷⁷

While the Italian police are supposed to inform Albanian Interpol of their return, in practise this rarely happens. Sometimes it's the ferry crew, notified by the Italian Police, who report the women's identity to the Albanian police.⁷⁸

The Vlora Police notify the Albanian NGO, Vlora Women's Hearth, who interview girls/women in the police station when they're 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;
- the intimidation of 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 the majority are almost immediately re-trafficked. Witnesses describe how traffickers wait outside for the women to be released.⁷⁹

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.

⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁶ Durres police source.

⁷⁷ Interview with Caritas Investigator. Feb.01

⁷⁸ Interview with Ex-Interpol. Feb.01

⁷⁹ Interview with Caritas investigator, Vlora Women's Hearth, Ex-Interpol.

4.3 ASSISTED RETURN

According to Italian NGOs sheltering Albanian girls who've been trafficked, very few want to come back to Albania for the following reasons⁸⁰:

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

In Albania there are IOM/ICMC shelters for trafficked foreign women (Moldovans, Romanians, Ukrainians etc), but until now no dedicated services for Albanians, mainly because of the many negative factors listed above.

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

Nonetheless IOM/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 which can provide long-term return and reintegration options. But traffickers pose a continuous danger and there's an overriding belief that no long term solutions can be found until the Albanian Government can guarantee the security and protection of NGOs working with victims of trafficking. Many NGOs in Albania are reluctant to get too involved because of the security issues.⁸¹ 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, Korca, Kucova, Tirana, and Lezha offer ad-hoc assistance in the form of family tracing/liason, vocational training

⁸⁰ Interview with IOM Programme Coordinator, Tirana. February 01 and Italian NGOs.

⁸¹ Interview with IOM programme coordinator. Feb.01.

and temporary shelter, but this is only on a case by case basis and on a very small scale.⁸² Various Catholic orders are running training courses for at risk girls (pottery, hairdressing etc) in Elbasan, Gramsh, Lezha, and Fier and Kucova. A local Albanian NGO is starting a similar programme in 2001, funded by Soros, for 20 at risk women in Gramsh.⁸³

One centre in Elbasan has helped to trace, contact and mediate with 55 families since 1992.⁸⁴ The staff say re-integration is very difficult because of family rejection and economic problems. 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.

The NGO *Caritas* employ a trafficking investigator in Albania to help girls/women who've come in contact with the authorities in Italy. The investigator who works in the Berat, Kucova, 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.”*⁸⁵

Between 1999-2000, the NGO *Useful for Albanian Women* helped with nine cases that were referred by NGOs in Italy and Belgium. There are also a variety of shelters run by domestic 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.

CASE STUDY:

*“ 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'd been in contact with her mother and she'd 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 a very poor condition. She was working as a prostitute and she told us that she'd sold her daughter to a notorious pimp in Shkodra, who'd taken her to Belgium. Now the pimp was threatening her, because her daughter had escaped and he wanted his money back. The brother wasn't really sick. The thirteen year old stayed with the Association in Belgium.”*⁸⁶

⁸² Interviews at centres in Albania. January/february 01.

⁸³ Interview with Gruaja Kurajoze. Feb 01.

⁸⁴ Interview at Elbasan catholic centre. February 01.

⁸⁵ Interview with Caritas investigator. February 01.

⁸⁶ Interview with *Useful for Albanian Women*, January 01

5. OTHER FORMS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION.

5.1 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 of trafficking for begging and forced labour and to a lesser extent in Italy, the Albanian government maintains there is no evidence to prove the phenomenon.⁸⁷

In 2000, According to the Committee on Foreign Minors in Italy, 5743 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 them to sign a contract to pay back large sums and in order to meet their debt obligations the boys may then 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 had been in begging rings and had been badly exploited.⁸⁸

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION SEE: *Report on the Situation of Separated Albanian Minors in Italy*. Federica Donati, Save the Children UK, Dec.2000.

5.2 TRAFFICKING OF BOYS AND GIRLS FOR BEGGING/FORCED LABOUR IN GREECE.

The Greek government estimates that there are 3000 unaccompanied Albanian boys in Greece – but with the large scale migration of boys to work in the Greek agricultural and construction industries, especially in the summer time, this figure is likely to be very much higher.

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 Roma themselves: Gypsies believe they originate in Egypt, while Roma come from the Asian continent. There are varying statistics about their numbers in Albania:

⁸⁷ Letter to SCiA from the Ministry of Public Order, Feb 01.

⁸⁸ Interview at Murialdo Centre, Fier. Feb 01.

officially there are 35,000 Roma and Gypsy, although the two groupings claim that the true figure is nearer 100,000.⁸⁹

Generally Gypsies, who speak Albanian and go to school, are completely assimilated into Albanian life while Roma have their own language and culture and don't go to school. Both groups suffer discrimination.

The Albanian NGO, *Ndihme Per Femije* (Help for Children) which runs re-integration programmes for children trafficked to Greece, says there at least 1000 Albanian children in the city of Thessaloniki alone. The number varies according to the season and religious holidays, but Thessaloniki is the most popular destination, because it is close to Albania, is cheaper than the capital Athens and has fewer foreign children/trafficking gangs competing for money.

Ninety per cent of the 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 numbers of Gypsy and Roma. The NGO estimates that 80% of the children are recruited by traffickers while 20% are sent by their families. The traffickers are either "white" Albanian or Gypsy, although the overall bosses tend to be Albanian 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 Korca-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're deported out of Greece.

When they arrive in Greece the children are set to work either as beggars (the younger children) or washing car windows etc. They're normally given a target sum of money to earn and if they fail they're punished. They suffer poor living conditions, systematic violence, abuse and ill-health.⁹⁰ While the children may earn an average of \$1000/month, the traffickers pocket the vast majority and send only a fraction back to the families. More often than not, the children get nothing.

"The protectors 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 protectors. They threaten to kill us and our families. If a protector 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

⁸⁹ *Review for the Rights of Children and Youth in Albania*. February 2000. Children's Human Right's Centre in Albania.

⁹⁰ Interview with Ndihme Per Femije, Feb,01

*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.)*⁹¹

Children who come to the attention of the Greek police are either deported immediately or detained and sometimes placed in adult jails prior to 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. 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 approx. 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. See above)*⁹²

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.

SEE APPENDIX II FOR CASE STUDIES

5.3 ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

Ndihme Per Femije and the Swiss Foundation, *Terre des Hommes*, both of which have run programmes for Albanian children (primarily boys) who’ve been trafficked to Greece, attribute this type of trafficking to the following causes:

- poor economic background.
- broken and dysfunctional families.
- social problems to do with discrimination against minorities in Albania.
- poor educational/employment opportunities to do with discrimination.
- Gypsy and Roma cultural traits that make child employment normal.
- A culture of itineracy (especially among Roma).

Both organisations have been working for five years on education and re-integration programmes for trafficked children and “at risk” children in Elbasan, Korca, Berat and Tirana. The programmes have helped 230 families with a combination of special educational 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 and in the last two years, 15 children went back to mainstream formal education in Elbasan.

⁹¹ Interviews with Researcher, Jan.01

⁹² Ibidem 87.

In 2001, with funding from UNICEF, *Terre Des Hommes*, will begin a 12 month pilot “prevention” programme in Elbasan and Korce 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 in the hope that this information will act as a deterrent. To date, both organisations have kept a low profile because of the security issues.⁹³

Repatriation from Italy.

With regards to Albanian boys in Italy, the majority of repatriations are organised by International Social Services in Italy and Albania. ISS does background checks with families in Albania to ensure repatriation is in the child’s best interests. 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.⁹⁴

According to the Committee on Foreign Minors in Italy, the total number of Albanian minors repatriated by ISS up 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 a 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.

⁹³ Interviews with *Ndihm Per Femije* and *Terre des Hommes* in Albania. Feb 01.

⁹⁴ Interview with ISS, Tirana. Feb.01

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Awareness/educational 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 city areas and many of the more populated rural zones, there is a continued need for nationwide public awareness campaigns. These should focus particularly on remote areas; areas where there is 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 during a six-month period. Because of the high decline in attendance after 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 with a video presentation. All NGOs and IOs working in the educational sector (SCiA, CRS, IRC, UNICEF etc) should pool their contacts with schools, teachers and parent councils in order to best 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 rural teachers in regional towns. Teachers should be trained to impart information about the dangers of trafficking themselves.
- A nationwide media campaign including 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 hotel and motel owners, which are often used as stop over points for trafficking victims.

A NATIONWIDE 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 nationwide fundraising campaign to raise money for anti-trafficking projects. Fundraising would take place through a series of graphic but sensitive TV adverts. Each advert would include a voluntary personal appeal from a popular apolitical Albanian to other Albanians to make a donation (ie. the writer Ismail Kadare, the actress Margharita Xhepa, the comedian Kosta Kamberi, the footballer, Rudi Vata etc). A big publicity campaign would follow in newspapers/tv/radio inviting people to contribute to a 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 an international/Albanian steering group/foundation so as to engender trust and ensure transparency. The money would be used to fund anti-trafficking programmes and 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 needs to 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 needs to be done 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.

COORDINATION BETWEEN NGOS/IOS/AUTHORITIES IN ALBANIA AND ABROAD.

There needs to be much 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 which is trying to find their daughter to know who to approach. However, the security issues will mean this service will have to be sensitively advertised.

RECEPTION CENTRES IN VLORA AND DURRES.

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

RETURN AND RE-INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES

At present there is no return and reintegration programme for Albanian women in Albania, although IOM and ICMC plan a programme for 40 women later in 2001. But there needs to be a long-term fully dedicated programme of sufficient size to deal with the numbers of 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, there should be financial support for vocational training. Most interviewees stressed the need for an international initiative that could have the full trust of victims. The Albanian government must guarantee security and protection.

“AT RISK” PROGRAMMES

There are various programmes in Albania helping “at risk” teenagers. But given that 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 Ndihm Per Femije (prevention programmes and re-integration programmes for boys and girls being trafficked to Greece) and the Murialdo Centre in Fier (prevention and reintegration services for boys). But there needs to be much more attention focused at “at risk” girls. Girls clubs could be set up in

regional centres to teach vocational skills and provide a focus for recreation and community activity.

LEGISLATION

OSCE in Albania believes existing Albanian law is adequate for punishing the crime of trafficking for 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.

A PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN ITALY AND OTHER HOST COUNTRIES.

There should be more public awareness in host countries about the circumstances of many of the 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. 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 allows a girl to confide. This consciousness and awareness could be usefully developed.

APPENDIX I

CASE STUDIES OF TRAFFICKED ALBANIAN/FOREIGN GIRLS AND WOMEN

CASE STUDY: E. B is one of six children from a poor family living in a village in Skrapar district. Her mother is paralysed. She was 14 years old in January 1996 her father sold her to a man from Fier for 20,000 Lek who often came tot he village for “business”. 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.⁹⁵

CASE STUDY: M.P lived in a Berat village. When she was 20 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 weathers 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 protectors, 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.⁹⁶

The following case studies are supplied by IOM Tirana:

NAME:	O. N.
DATE OF BIRTH:	1986
NATIONALITY:	Albanian
PASSPORT OR ID:	
MOTHER'S NAME:	S.
FATHER'S NAME:	B.
HOME ADDRESS:	
MARITAL STATUS:	Unmarried
CHILDREN:	None
PREGNANT:	No
HEALTH CONCERN:	None

⁹⁵ Case study from Vlora Women's Hearth 2000

⁹⁶ Ibidem.

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 had been kidnapped in where her parents rented a house. At the time of the kidnapping she was returning from visiting her brother O. who lives there. 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 second evening she managed to hide Lit 100.000 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).

The remaining young man went shopping and forgot a spare set of keys at home.

O.N. took her passport (now in the possession of Carabinieri), her clothes and went to find a hotel where to stay. 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

NAME:	E. B.
DATE OF BIRTH:	1980
NATIONALITY:	ALBANIAN
PASSPORT OR ID:	Albanian certificate of birth
MOTHER'S NAME:	Z.
FATHER'S NAME:	F. (stepfather)
HOME ADDRESS:	
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's towards her and her mother, E. B. decided to run away from home and sought shelter at her cousin's house (daughter of her father's brother), 30 years old, married with two children.

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 together with a group of boys and girls whom she already knew.

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 this situation until she learnt her first words in Italian. In the meantime she was transferred to Milan from Rome where she was settled 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 a disastrous 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 maltreatment. 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 insertion into Italy, through specialized structures, but without success. E. B. never went to school and she is illiterate. She has a very limited knowledge of time. She doesn't know months and years, only hours and days. During her stay at the Reception Centre in Padua, Italy, she was able to develop some handicraft abilities.

CASE STUDY

NAME:	M. R.
DATE OF BIRTH:	1984
NATIONALITY:	Albanian
PASSPORT OR ID:	False passport confiscated by the police
MOTHER'S NAME:	F. R.
FATHER'S NAME:	G. R.
HOME ADDRESS:	
MARITAL STATUS:	Married, but not legally
CHILDREN:	One son, M., 10 months old
PREGNANT:	No
HEALTH CONCERN:	A suspect of 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 prior to her leaving the home she used to share with her husband and his family. The reason that made M. R. take this decision was extreme poverty in which she has been living with her family, and also the conditions of her marriage where she had been subjected to violence and suffering since the age of 14. Obviously, her boyfriend only pretended his affection for M. R. to convince her to take the trip.

The journey was similar to all the others of this kind. 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. From there follows a trip to Bari on a rubber motorboat. From Bari the

group, by now accompanied by yet another young Albanian man called A. Z., continued to Mondovì, in the Italian region Piemonte, 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 they were arrested together with the two sisters. M. R. did not denounce the men, and she refused to participate in the trial as a witness.

As of that moment, the sisters wanted to return to Albania as soon as possible. Their decision was further accentuated by M. R.'s health conditions that were worsening from one day to another. M. R. was shattered by the diagnosis of her medical problems and wishes to be close to her relatives during this difficult period.

CASE STUDY

NAME:	M. K.
DATE OF BIRTH:	1976
NATIONALITY:	Albanian
PASSPORT OR ID:	
MOTHER'S NAME:	She died when M. K. was very young
FATHER'S NAME:	Y. K.
HOME ADDRESS:	
MARITAL STATUS:	Widow
CHILDREN:	ONE, a girl of six months of age, whose name is S.
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). One of M. K.'s father's friends, a TV technician, introduced him to F. an Italian national, who'd arrived in Albania to find a wife. It is the traditional matter of the combined marriage, a usage widely spread in that rural area. After 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: the trip would be too dangerous and tiring for the baby and it was better to wait until she had her regular documents after the

marriage in Italy. Two days after F.'s departure to Italy by regular ferry, M. K. and R.D. leave from Vlore on a speedboat.

Having arrived in Italy, F. put on an act saying that during his stay in Albania he had lost everything, house included. 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, D., R.D.'s sister, and F.'s wife (of course M. K. didn't know that the woman was F.'s wife) together with L., wife of R.D.'s brother. Both 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 R.D. beat her and forced to go on the street. During those days, M. K. was able to get in contact with her father, who gave her some bad news: her grandmother's death (she had been like a mother for her) and her baby's bad state of health because of the mother's absence.

M. K. begged her pimps to let her return home, but they made her continue. On the fourth or fifth night she was approached by someone pretending to be a client: he had noticed that she was desperate and he wanted to help. She denounced immediately her exploiters who were arrested by the police.

NAME:	Z. H.
DATE OF BIRTH:	--/--/1976
NATIONALITY:	Albanian
PASSPORT OR ID:	Regular stay permit for working reasons of the duration of two years
MOTHER'S NAME:	H.
FATHER'S NAME:	B.
HOME ADDRESS:	
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. Her story is similar to those of other young women who come to Italy to pursue their dream of a better life. 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. S. left Z. H. before they boarded the rubber motorboat.

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, where she befriended another girl. Soon after, Z. H. was sold – but the whole process was very unusual.

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 three young men, and his uncle. 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.

One day she found an opportunity to call her girlfriend in secret, to tell her how she was saved from the street. The girl informed Z. H., that she had been sold and that her current exploiters, whose names she knew, were possibly even more dangerous than the previous one. Several days later Z. H. was forced to the street, and was made to work – subjected to permanent violence – near the Milan central train station. 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 centers and communities where she was offered help to re-integrate in the society. Unfortunately, the re-integration was not successful since few job opportunities became available to her, and also because she misses 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 sentenced to house arrest thanks to his lawyer pending the hearing scheduled for June. It seems, however, that even the fourth man managed to escape.

Z.H is considering returning home and looking for work:

Future plans/expectations

Education: 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's probable that these men are in Albania now to avoid the pending court proceedings against them in Italy. She also fears her uncle (her father's brother): he doesn't want to see her any longer because she had brought shame on the family by first giving birth to an illegitimate child, and then leaving home on her own.

NAME:	K. R.
DATE OF BIRTH:	--/--/1979
NATIONALITY:	ALBANIAN
PASSPORT OR ID:	Albanian laissez-passez
MOTHER'S NAME:	Z. R.
FATHER'S NAME:	A. R.
HOME ADDRESS:	
MARITAL STATUS:	NOT MARRIED
CHILDREN:	One daughter - 1 abortion
PREGNANT:	NO
HEALTH CONCERN:	Mental instability
EDUCATION:	ILLITERATE
LANGUAGE SKILLS:	Albanian
WORK EXPERIENCE:	NONE
DATE OF ENTRY IN ITALY:	Approx. 1999
DATE OF RETURN TO HOME COUNTRY:	--/--/2000
Returning to:	ALBANIA

Personal background

K. R. comes from a Roma family.

Her mother's name is Z. R., she is 52 years of age and she works as an oncology operator.

Her father's name is A. R., he is 52 years of age and he is an agricultural worker.

The family is composed of 8 children, four boys and four girls. K. R. never went to school. She is illiterate and she is mentally unstable.

At the age of 12-13 she ran away from home for the first time with a guy named E. K. She considered him as her husband although they were not legally married (it would have been impossible considering K. R.'s age at the time). In order to better comprehend the situation, it is useful to bear in mind that marrying at a very young age is quite widespread among the Roma population. Elton immigrated to Greece together with his family (his mother and his two sisters). He clandestinely brought K. R. with him to Greece.

Once in Greece, K. R. worked as a prostitute together with her mother-in-law and her two sisters-in-law. She got pregnant from her "husband" and she had a daughter to whom she remembers she gave the name of G. Her husband fraudulently sold the daughter for a sum of ITL 2.000.000 (USD 1,000) without K. R.'s consent. The daughter's loss was a huge trauma for K. R.

K. R. started to become a burden for the family and they decided to get rid of her by denouncing her illegal status to the Greek police. K. R. was pregnant for the second time during that period and she had an abortion as soon as she arrived at home.

After a while, during a visit to her aunt, K. R. met her second “husband”, X. K. R. doesn’t know his full name. X. had legally immigrated to Italy but had returned for a brief stay of two or three days. He left for Italy on a ferry and waited for K. R. in Bari, who was to arrive there on a rubber dinghy. Once in Bari, K. R. travelled to Varese, in the North of Italy, together with some of X’s friends.

K. R.’s state of confusion can be better understood by the following episode, taken from her stay in Varese. The term “Varese” is very similar to an Albanian word meaning “cemetery”. K. R. is convinced that she lived in a cemetery for a long period where, strangely, many other people also lived (she referred to a dreadful meeting she had with a man, who was coming out from a graveyard asking her to marry him).

The police found K. R. after having been notified by neighbour. She was crying desperately on the ground floor of a building.

APPENDIX II

CASE STUDIES OF CHILDREN TRAFFICKED TO GREECE.⁹⁷

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 saw policemen that were there and I slept in the forest. I got up at 12:00 a.m. and I walked alone without any direction. I arrived in Follorina and began to beg there and I won 16 leke (1600 Drahmas) and I got on the bus and arrived in Thessaloniki and met a friend who took us and we went to his house. The next day they told us to steal but I hid myself and went to the bus and met someone else who took me along. We went to the store place of the train when some killers came and said to one boy do you have money? We replied, no. The killer stabbed the boy with his knife. We sent him to the hospital. Later the policemen caught us and put us in prison and brought us to Albania. (DC)

When I went to Greece we passed the first mountain with my brother. It was full of snow and my brother took me by the hand and I was covered with snow. My head was out when we were in the forest. Wolves attacked us so I burnt my jacket. I arrived in Greece, went to work and gave the money to my brother. The next day the policemen caught me while my

⁹⁷ Case studies supplied by Albanian NGO, Ndihm Per Femije. February 01.

brother was looking for me in Greece and when I phoned my brother in Greece he said that I thought the Mafia took you. (SK)

I have gone to Greece when I was 4 years old. The first time I went with my neighbor. His name was Todi. When I grew up and I was 10 years old I went with my mom and dad. I always went on foot. I passed the custom. The road was 3 days long. Later we arrived in Telemaidh. We took the bus and arrived in Thessaloniki. We entered a house. The next day we began to work. When I was little I begged close to traffic lights. I won 15 000 leke which I gave to the neighbor. When we arrived in Albania Todi gave the money to my father; half of the money. When I grew up I sold dolls and wrote cardboard paper in Greek such as: "I don't have a mother, I don't have brothers and sisters. I am an orphan. I earned a lot of money this way especially during Christmas time when I sang in the road. Todi took all the money. I celebrated the year 2001 in Albania. During the previous years I have been in Greece. I have earned a lot of money during Christmas time and New Year's. We have always been about 30 persons. Women and children came with us. They went to Greece to beg. Another time I 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 has 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. I want to tell a difficult story about me. Once I was with my neighbor, Todi. When I was begging at the traffic light. The Greek gypsies took us together with my friend. They brought us to Anohopata. There we stayed one month. They took care of children and when French and Germans came they sold these children. It didn't happen to me because I stayed for short time only and then Todi found me because my mother had threatened him to tell the police. He gave the gypsies 300 000 Drahmas and they sent me to Albania. These are some of my stories when I have been to 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)

I have gone to Greece with a gypsy called Fluturak Ibrahim. He said to me you'll come to beg. My father didn't want me to but my mother did and so I went. We got on a minibus and went to Kapshtica. We stayed all night long and during the whole following day until 2:00 in the morning. At this time we went on foot. We were 10 people and 4 of us were children my age. We had a 4-day trip. We went to Kozan. Then we got on the bus and went to Thessaloniki. We stayed 1 day and the next day we went to the traffic lights to beg. All the money I won I gave to the gypsy. The gypsy gave us food. I stayed for a short time and then the police caught me. I stayed for 3 days at the police station and then I returned to Albania. This is one of my stories. I have gone so many times that I can't even count them. All the time I have been begging and I haven't had money to send to my family. (AK)

I went to Greece on foot. I arrived to Telemaidh. I got on the bus and arrived in Thessaloniki. I went to the place where I stayed and the next day I was at a traffic light and begun to beg. I won 15 000 leke per day. I gave the money to my father. I stayed one month, then I came back and went again to Greece. When I begun the trip it was snowing. And the next day it was snowing even harder. We were freezing and stayed in a village and then they sent us to the police station. (KP)

When we went to Greece we passed the village called Tren. I went with my cousin and we arrived in Follorina. There the police followed us. Me and my cousin fell in a bad place. I fainted. When I arrived at the place I waited for the train. I couldn't find anything to eat. I met a Greek man and asked him for some money. The Greek helped me to get on the train. The train arrived in Thessaloniki at 9:00. When I arrived at my place I was very pleased. (SL)

My name is Gentian Cerriku. I am 16 years old. I went to Greece with my neighbor to work for them. We stayed for 3 months. The 4th month the police caught me. They put me in prison. After an hour they let me out and checked my fingerprints. I stayed 3 weeks there. 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. The 5th week 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's 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.

The results of 33 questionnaires completed by 23 teachers and 9 commune 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	Place	Contact	Victim	pimps zone	relations	Comments
1.	Plet	Puke	18	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	No	She disappeared. The family heard later what she was doing
2.	Dardhe	Puke	16	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	No	She wanted to get married to him, but he sold her.
3.	Dardhe	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	No	She was cheated and she ended up as prostitute.
4.	F.Arrez	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	Yes	She was cheated and she ended as prostitute.
5.	Kryezi	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	Neighbor	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.Arrez	Puke	20	Marriage	Belgium	Yes	No	F.Arrez	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.Arrez	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	Yes	She disappeared. The family heard later where she was.
11.	F.Arrez	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	Yes	Laç	No	She got married.
12.	F.Arrez	Puke	16	Cheated	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez (t)	Yes	She was cheated.
13.	F.Arrez	Puke	15	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez (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	Neighbor	She disappeared with a man from the village. It is said she is in Italy.

19.	Tuç	Puke	20	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Laç	Neighbor	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	Neighbor	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.Arrez	Yes	Disappeared from the school. We heard a driver from Fushë Arrëzi kidnapped her.
25.	Zezej	Puke	16	Cheated	Belgium	No	Yes	Qerreti	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated into prostitution.
26.	Zezej	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.Arrez	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.Arrez	Yes	He promised her a peaceful life but he sold her to his friends
40.	Plet	Puke	16	not known	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	Yes	She disappeared and no body knows anything about her.
41.	Puke	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	F.Arrez	No	She disappeared with a driver of a car. It's 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 she was kidnapped by a man in a car. 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	She was abducted by unknown people. It's 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.Arrez	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	Yes	Yes	F.Arrez	Yes	She was abducted.
49.	F.Arrez	Puke	18	Cheated	Belgium	No	No	F.Arrez	Yes	She went to find a job.
50.	F.Arrez	Puke	17	Cheated	Italy	Yes	No	F.Arrez	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.Arrez	Puke	17	Marriage	Belgium	Yes	yes	F.Arrez	Yes	It is said she escaped from the pimps and that she married a Belgian
53.	F.Arrez	Puke	16	Engagement	Belgium	No	No	F.Arrez	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated.
54.	F.Arrez	Puke	17	Engagement	Belgium	No	No	F.Arrez	Yes	She hoped for a better life, but was cheated.
55.	F.Arrez	Puke	16	Marriage	Italy	No	No	F.Arrez	Yes	They promised her an easy job
56.	F.Arrez	Puke	16	Marriage	Kosova	No	No	F.Arrez	Yes	Disappeared. They say she is working in a night club in Kosova
57.	F.Arrez	Puke	17	Marriage	Italy	No	No	F.Arrez	Yes	She went to find a job but was cheated.
58.	Qerret	Puke	16	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	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.Arrez	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.Arrez	No	Disappeared from school. Kidnapped by some guys from F.Arrez.
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's 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		She was cheated by her cousin.
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	Neighbor	She went for a job but was cheated.
75.	Iballe	Puke	16	Marriage	Italy	Yes	Yes	Iballe	Neighbor	She went for a job but was cheated.
76.	Gojan I madh	Puke	17	Abduction	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	No	Cheated by relatives, who sold her to pimps
77.	Gojan I madh	Puke	16	Engagement	Italy	No	Yes	F.Arrez	No	Cheated. She ended up working in brothel.
78.	Zezej	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.Arrez	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.Arrez	No	Cheated or Kidnapped. They live near the national road.
87.	Porov	Puke	18	Marriage	Belgium	No	Yes	F.Arrez	No	Cheated or Kidnapped. They live near the national road.

PUKE DISTRICT, North Albania

Results of 33 questionnaires completed by teachers from 26 villages; 87 victims of trafficking were identified between 1998-2001.

Means of trafficking:

Abduction	23	27%
Marriage	23	27%
Engagement	15	17%
Cheated	21	24%
Emigration	3	2%
Not-known	2	2%

Girls trafficked according to age

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

Belgium	14	16%
Switzerland	1	1%
Greece	16	18%
Kosova	1	1%
Italy	54	63%
Not-known	1	1%

Are people aware of trafficking in the Puka district?

No	8	29%
Slightly	14	49%
Aware	5	18%
Very aware	1	4%

How common is trafficking in your area?

Does not exist	4	13%
Rare	24	77%
Common	3	10%
Very common	0	0%

LAC, Albania

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

Means of trafficking - Lac

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

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

Belgium	2	3%
Germany	1	2%
Greece	10	17%
France	2	3%
Italy	23	75%

Are people aware of trafficking in your area?

No	4	13%
Slightly	16	54%
Aware	6	20%
Very aware	4	13%

How common is trafficking in your area?

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 than 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:

Abduction	10	53%
False Marriage	9	47%

Girls trafficked according to age

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

Greece	3	16%
Germany	1	5%
Italy	14	74%
Not-known	1	5%

Are people aware of trafficking in the Puka district?

No	7	18%
Slightly	14	37%
Aware	15	40%
Very aware	2	5%

How common is trafficking in your area?

Does not exist	2	5%
Rare	21	55%
Common	14	37%
Very common	1	3%