QENDRA PSIKO-SOCIALE "VATRA"

# ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Vlora, 2015

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## 2014

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Vlora, 2 January 2015

**CONTENTS**

DIRECT ASSISTANCE ..... ..... 4

COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE..... 12

IMPLEMENTATION OF OTHER PROJECTS (PREVENTION)..... 14

TRAININGS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING OF STATE STRUCTURES IN ANTI-TRAFFIC FIELD ..... 19

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE ..... ..... .....24

REPORT ON NATIONAL CONFERENCE..... ..... 25

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... .36

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS ..... 37

ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2014.....38

## DIRECT ASSISTANCE

Based on the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy / National Action Plan 2011 - 2013, Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking / Potential Victims of Trafficking, the National Referral Mechanism and based on the Standards for Residential Centers for Victims of Trafficking / Potential Victims of Trafficking, Vatra's staff has worked for the correct and effective implementation of all obligations set forth in these documents for the Centres working in anti-trafficking.

Specifically our work has been focused in terms of direct assistance to victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking, realization of awareness raising and sensitizing activities in the community and with the young people in schools in relation to human trafficking, provision of consultative and informative trainings and meetings to various state institutions and NGOs, lobbying and advocacy in protection of the rights of victims of trafficking. In addition, during this year, "Vatra" Centre expanded its activity in the field of prevention of trafficking in human beings by working in Shkodra and Dibra districts (cities of Shkodra, Malesi e Madhe, Puke, Peshkopi and Bulqize) in North of Albania.

Vatra's work has been carried out in accordance with its mission through the implementation of projects funded by international donors and the support of central and local government.

**PROJECT 1: "Providing sustainable assistance for the accommodation, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking", supported financially by:**

- Postcode Foundation, Sweden;
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, Sweden;
- U.S Department of State (through the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- King Baudouin Foundation, Belgium;
- UN Voluntary TRUST FUND;
- Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, Albania.

## SERVICES OFFERED

During 2014, "Vatra" Centre assisted a total of 87 victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking, of whom 28 new cases assisted during 2014. In addition, 9 children of victims (of whom 8 children accommodated together with their mothers in the Shelter and 1 child accommodated together with the mother in rented apartment) were assisted.
Given that "Vatra" Centre provides accommodation also to victims of domestic violence until they are issued the Immediate Protection Order, 5 victims of domestic violence and 3 children of victims have been accommodated in the shelter.
Likewise, in the framework of long-term monitoring of the reintegration process, Vatra has followed-up **23 cases of former victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking after they have come out of the shelter and live iun their places of origin or other alternative dwellings.**
Thus, the total number of beneficiaries victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking assisted with primary or long-term reintegration services has been 59 cases.

In 2014, Mobile Unit, Vlora identified and reported to the Responsible Authority (RA) 22 cases of potential victims of trafficking, of whom 18 cases have been referred to Vatra for services and other 4 cases have been referred to other service providers.

**Referrals of cases victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking and their children.**

30 % of cases have been referred by Police of Districts.

25 % of cases have been referred by other partner organizations.

45 % of cases have been referred by other state service providers.

**Accommodation / Housing**

A total of **38 beneficiaries victims / potential victims of trafficking and their children** have been assisted in the shelter and / or rented apartment, by meeting all their needs for food, clothing, medication, safety, etc.

Pursuant to Law No. 9355, dated March 10th, 2005, and adoption of guideline No. 1547, dated August 27th, 2009, in July 2014 the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth started supporting the covering of costs for food for victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking accommodated in the Shelter.

**Medical assistance**

The Centre's doctor has conducted periodic medical check-ups to the beneficiaries and in cases of specific health problems has referred and accompanied them to health institutions. In this framework, Vatra has cooperated with the Directorate of Public Health, Vlora, Regional Hospital, Vlora, Aulona Center, Vlora as well as with the other health centers in other districts.

During this period, a total of **45 beneficiaries and 18 children** have been treated. They have resulted in different pathologies such as: gynecological problems, otitis, viral condition, cefalea, dental problems, febrile condition, mental health problems, etc. All cases have been provided relevant medications and appropriate medical care according to the prescription and advice of the specialist doctors. Support has been provided also to 7 hospitalized children. 9 beneficiaries have conducted tests for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV AIDS at the Directorate of Public Health, Vlora. For the assistance of beneficiaries with mental health problems during their stay in the shelter, the doctor of the Centre has cooperated closely with the psychologist of the center and the Psychiatric Hospital, Vlora. 2 cases resulting with serious health problems, have been referred for medical check-ups to the Psychiatric Hospital, Vlora and have been treated with the relevant medications according to the prescription of the specialist doctor.

In the framework of the cooperation with the Regional Hospital, Vlora in the premises of the shelter have been organized group informative and counseling sessions where specialists in the field of pediatrics and gynecology have been invited to conduct these sessions. The session with the pediatric specialist was enabled in a period when the number of mothers with children accommodated in the shelter was high.

Furthermore, the centre's doctor has conducted **informative sessions** as well as group counseling on personal hygiene care, care during pregnancy, care towards sexually transmitted diseases, child care etc.

**Psychological assistance and counseling**

Victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking due to the problems and difficulties they have encountered, present e series of psychological problems. Almost all victims come from dysfunctional families,

have passed one or more traumatic experiences in their lives and have adopted unhealthy mechanisms of coping with stress. They present physiological problems such as chronic headaches, insomnia and mental health disturbances such as: post-traumatic stress symptoms, anxiety disorders, depression, anger outburst and aggressive/hostile behavior. During this 1-year period, the presence of the psychologist in the shelter has been daily, conducting on average 1-2 counseling sessions a week with each of the beneficiaries accommodated in the shelter, according to their needs and concerns. The psychologist has conducted a total of 492 individual counseling sessions. The counseling sessions with these beneficiaries have been aimed at: reducing the symptoms of mental health problems; restoring the emotional and psychological equilibrium and improving the relationships with the families.

Due to psychological problems and past experiences, the beneficiaries often present problems in maintaining balances of relationships with other people, difficulties in re-commitment to the responsibilities and daily life activities and in the care towards their children (when they have children). All these problems have been also in the focus of the psychologist's work during the counseling sessions.

Besides individual counseling, group therapy and meetings facilitated by the psychologist have been also conducted. During these meetings psychological tests have been filled out and issues such as: strategies for managing everyday conflicts, parent-child communication, self-confidence and self-esteem, social aspects of domestic violence, emotional intelligence, the level of anxiety and stress, importance of education and preparation for independent living, etc have been addressed. A total of 24 group sessions have been conducted.

Children of beneficiaries have been also in the attention of the psychologist, who are often witnesses and also victims of abuse and exploitation. The centre's psychologist has conducted the assessment of their psycho-emotional development and has identified their needs for psychological intervention. Children often present symptoms of stress, anxiety and behavior disorders. Psychological intervention for children includes individual and group sessions (when this has been possible taking into consideration the age of the child) for stabilizing the emotional situation, eliminating anxiety and stress, reducing problematic behavior and it has been worked in terms of misunderstandings and schemes that children may have created. Also, it has been worked in terms of support and strengthening of mother-child relationship by working with both of them simultaneously.

**Psycho-social assistance**

During 2014, all cases assisted (remained and new cases) have been provided psycho-social support. This service has been provided by the social workers of the Shelter with the aim the planning and implementation of the reintegration process. Social workers conduct recurrent individual counseling in accordance with the objectives set in the individual reintegration plan for each of the beneficiaries.

For each case accommodated in the shelter who has agreed to enter the program, counseling sessions have consisted mainly in identification of the problem, stabilization of mood, addressing of needs, increase of self-esteem, risk and conflicts management, etc.

Furthermore, the social workers (case managers) have provided counseling about the importance of establishing contacts with the family, the importance of education and vocational training, increase of life skills, etc.

Counseling sessions have been even more frequent with mothers with children to facilitate the adaptation of children in the shelter premises. Special attention has been paid to counseling about childcare, especially when the latter have had health problems.

Social workers conduct group counseling during which topics such as: "The rights and obligations in the family", "Social networks - a way of communication but also a risk", " Albanian traditions and customs", "Parental care for preschool children", "What is life? Why should we appreciate life? ", etc have been addressed.

Group sessions, in addition to information aim the emotional stabilization, entertainment of beneficiaries and their preparation for reintegration in the social life.

**Socio-cultural activities within and outside the shelter**

Activities to be carried out with the beneficiaries who are assisted in the shelter are planned by the multidisciplinary team of the shelter in collaboration with the beneficiaries taking into account their needs and wishes, depending on the internal rules of the program. The relaxing activities, such as: musical evenings, bibliotherapy, various psychological quizzes or questionnaires, time of games and creativity with paints and plasticine or celebration of birthdays remain the most desired activities for the beneficiaries during their stay in the shelter.

Moreover, among the activities carried out can be mentioned:
• Bibliotherapy
The social workers together with the beneficiaries select books from the shelter's library, read and discuss about the issues these books address. Two bibliotherapy sessions are conducted per week on the basis of books' chapters.
• Activities to increase basic life skills
These activities have consisted mainly in:
- practice of professional skills in the shelter, for beneficiaries who have completed cooking, hairdressing and tailoring courses;
- learning of new dishes;
- preparation of facial and hair masks with indoor products;
- increase of skills to keep clean the environment where we live;
- handiworks (embroidery and crochet work).

• Recreational activities in the shelter
- musical evenings organized by the shift social workers;
- "Zumba" dancing organized twice a month by an external trainer;
- painting with oil and water paints organized by the shelter's teacher;
- "home cinema" with rented movies;
- electronic games for beneficiaries at an appropriate age.

• Recreational activities outside the shelter

To come out somewhat from the routine of life in the shelter, a number of activities outside the shelter, such as: picnics, visits to museums, visits to tourist sites, games in the playground, etc have been organized with the beneficiaries of the shelter. These activities have been carried out not only in Vlora, but also in other cities such as: Tirana ,Fier, Berat Kruje During the summer season, the beneficiaries have gone to the beach accompanied by social workers and transportation organized by the Centre.

• Celebration of national and religious holidays

In "Vatra" shelter have been celebrated all national and religious holidays such as: Christmas, New Year, Easter, Barjam, March $7^{th}$-$8^{th}$ , May $1^{st}$ , June $1^{st}$, etc. In these marked days in the shelter has been felt the special atmosphere as the beneficiaries have cooked dishes, desserts chosen by themselves and have often exchanged presents between them.

**Legal assistance and counseling**

This service has been offered by the lawyer of the Center and has consisted of individual and group counseling as well as assistance to institutions such as: Police, Prosecution Office, Court, Central Registrar' s Office, Tirana and the Regional Registrar' s Offices in districts etc, according to the legal problems and needs of the beneficiaries.

During the period January-December 2014, all beneficiaries accommodated in the Shelter have been legally counseled. Out of these beneficiaries, 13 beneficiaries have been assisted according to the relevant problematic (10 new cases and 3 cases remained from 2013) on legal issues such as: denunciation against the trafficker, divorce, registration of children in the Registrar' s Office, legal custody, change of exercise of parental responsibility, change of surname, etc.

Out of 13 beneficiaries assisted, 3 of them have been victims of violence who have received legal service for the issuance of Immediate Protection Orders (3 IPO-s) and Protection Orders (2 PO-s).

1 case potential victim of trafficking, in addition to counseling for the denunciation of the trafficker and procedures in Prosecution Office and Court, has been assisted for the issuance of IPO and PO because her trafficker was the cohabitant who used continuous violence against her.

Beneficiaries who have denounced the traffickers have been accompanied to Police, the Prosecution Office for giving statements or testimonies, whenever necessary and requested by the respective institutions.

Moreover, the lawyer has supported the beneficiaries for the provision with identification documents such as: birth certificates and identity cards when they did not possess such documents. In this framework, a total of 13 beneficiaries and 6 children have been provided with identification documents of whom: 13 beneficiaries with birth certificates, 6 beneficiaries with identity cards and 6 children with birth certificates.

Furthermore, for 1 beneficiary who had the orphan status it has been cooperated with the Office of the Economic Aid, Levan (Fier) in order to be allocated the economic aid because of her status and the beneficiary accompanied by the lawyer has withdrawn the payment every month in Levan Commune.

Group sessions with the beneficiaries in the shelter have been conducted. Issues addressed in these sessions have been: Albanian legislation in protection of victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking'', fundamental human rights, legislation on gender equality, the procedures for issuance of POs, domestic violence as a criminal offence, the legal framework in protection of children victims of trafficking, etc.

**Education**

School-age beneficiaries continue their education even during their stay in "Vatra" shelter. Cooperation with the Regional Directorate of Education has always been fruitful in facilitating the registration or re-registration procedures of victims in school, providing various educational documents, etc. Likewise, for the children of the beneficiaries registration and attendance of kindergarten and school has been enabled.

During this 1 year period a total of 24 beneficiaries have attended school or kindergarten, of whom:

- **12** beneficiaries have been registered and have attended the secondary school;
- **6** beneficiaries have been registered and have attended the high school;
- **6** children of beneficiaries have been registered and have attended kindergarten;

Education of primary or secondary beneficiaries has been followed up by the shelter's teacher based on the educational and cultural curricula. In this framework, the teacher has accompanied the children each day in school and kindergarten, has realized meetings with the respective teachers in which it has been discussed the performance of children, their achievements and difficulties in acquiring new knowledge and concepts and has taken part in the meetings with parents. During the stay of the beneficiaries in the shelter, the teacher monitors the fulfillment of tasks assigned by the school teachers, works with the beneficiaries on mathematical tests based on the school curriculum and includes them in reading extracurricular books.

Various educational and entertaining activities with preschool-aged children have been carried out. These activities have included: in-laid works, works with plasticine, drawing and coloring. With children aged 1-3 years old it has been worked for the development of psycho-motor skills, learn to retell, etc.

**Establishing contacts with family**

One of the biggest challenges in working with victims of trafficking remains the establishment of contacts with the family of origin. From Vatra' s experience, the beneficiaries who have good relationships and the support of families have more success in reintegration. On the other hand, when the victims of trafficking have no family support are more at risk to be recycled into trafficking.
Mediation with the family of origin is assessed since the first two weeks of accommodation in the shelter and inclusion in the program. Only in cases when family members are suspected and proved to have been implicated in trafficking or violation of the beneficiary, Vatra' s staff excludes the contact with the family members.
This important service is enabled and realized through:

- meetings of the family members with the beneficiaries in the offices of the Centre;
- mutual phone calls;
- counseling of the beneficiaries and family members by the social staff;
- discussions with the beneficiaries and family members on program services and their progress;
- safe return in the family or in another alternative dwelling.

Following meetings and work of the social staff with the beneficiaries and their family members, during this 1 year period, **7 beneficiaries (5 of them minors) and 2 children** have returned to their families after coming out of the shelter.

**Vocational training**

Vocational training has been considered as a very good opportunity to improve the low social and economic status of the target groups Vatra works with. Provision of this service is enabled in close cooperation with the Vocational Training Centre in Vlora, institution with which Vatra has signed an agreement and has been cooperating for years.
A total of 16 beneficiaries have been given the opportunity for vocational training during the annual period.
Specifically:

- ☐ In the hairdressing course 5 beneficiaries
- ☐ In the cooking course 3 beneficiaries
- ☐ In the tailoring course 3 beneficiaries
- ☐ In the aesthetics course(nails) 2 beneficiaries
- ☐ In the computer course 2 beneficiaries
- ☐ In the Italian language course 1 beneficiary

1 of the beneficiaries has attended two vocational courses.

**Mediation for employment**

In order to provide this service, "Vatra" has been collaborating for many years with the Regional Employment Directorate in Vlora, but also with the Regional Employment Directorates in the districts where the

beneficiaries come from. Moreover, the staff of "Vatra" keeps contacts with public and private institutions with a view to finding employment for the beneficiaries.

During this year, difficulties have been encountered in finding and keeping a stable job. Therefore, in some cases it has been mediated several times to find an adequate and stable job for the beneficiaries. In the framework of cooperation with the Regional Employment Directorate in Vlora, a total of 4 beneficiaries were included in the program on promoting employment this year.

Overall, mediation was conducted for employment of **34** beneficiaries, out of whom **16** have been employed. Respectively:

- 7 beneficiaries in tailoring enterprises;
- 1 beneficiary in fast-food restaurant;
- 2 beneficiaries as sales clerks in boutiques;
- 2 beneficiaries as cooks/ cook assistants in Tirana (cases supported in the shelter and then in rented apartment in Tirana);
- 4 beneficiaries have been included in the program on promoting employment **We have identified that beneficiaries who were included in this program despite the agreement the Regional Employment Directorate in Vlora has signed with the businesses where the victims are employed, the latter do not pay the victims for the work they do although they work full-time and often even on holidays. Beneficiaries have been transferred to their bank accounts solely the fund of 11 000 ALL by the state. Unmotivated for the work they do, sometimes beneficiaries have refused to continue to work in these enterprises. Vatra has raised this concern at the Regional Employment Directorate in Vlora but it has not found a solution yet**

**Semi-independent living / support with rented apartments**

Semi-independent living is a service provided to the beneficiaries that do not have the support of their families, cannot be accommodated in their families or returning to the place of origin constitutes a risk for them. The beneficiaries included in this category are accommodated in apartments, the rent of which is paid in the framework of the programme for 6 months (in specific cases even for a longer period of time). During the first month the basic living costs are covered as well, such as: food, detergents, electricity, water. This support is provided in order to support the beneficiary until she establishes the basis for independent living. During this time the beneficiary is followed-up by a social worker who is responsible for monitoring the cases accommodated in rented apartments.

A total of 13 beneficiaries have benefited from this service, out of whom:

- 2 victims of trafficking;
- 10 potential victims of trafficking;
- 1 woman with social problems, at risk to be trafficked;

**Support for the economic empowerment of former victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence.**

Since 2009 onward, 15 victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking and victims of violence have been supported with micro-businesses with the assistance of our donors such as: the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through the Norwegian Church Aid), World Vision and IOM. One of the micro-businesses was closed because the beneficiary left the country.

In 2014, after the assessment conducted by the social staff and program coordinator was enabled the establishment of 2 other micro-businesses. Micro-businesses established during this year are nails' aesthetics. The monitoring conducted has shown that generally the beneficiaries that run micro-businesses have had a good progress. One of the positive indicators has been the family support, while a concern was the decline in the number of customers in specific periods due to the crisis (usually beauty saloons earn more during summer), high rents, taxes to be regularly paid in order to properly proceed with the micro-businesses. Out of 16 micro-businesses established, 5 have been established in an additional room in the houses of the beneficiaries, thus reducing the rent costs.

**Moreover, during this year with the assistance of Open Society Foundation for Albania, SOROS, 7 former victims of domestic violence** and with social problems from the communes of Vllahine, Novosele and Qender of Vlora District **were supported for economic empowerment**. Specifically: 2 beneficiaries were donated livestock (cow, calf), 1 beneficiary basic materials for fast-food, 4 beneficiaries seedlings of citrus and olive trees. Vatra prioritizes the provision of this service to the target groups it treats in order to prevent their re-trafficking or involvement in trafficking.

**The total number of beneficiaries supported for starting an economic activity is 24.**

While monitoring this process and seeing it as a positive opportunity in the sustainability of reintegration of former victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence, Vatra' s staff will continue its efforts to find new opportunities for provision of micro-businesses from potential donors.

**Long-term monitoring**

In the framework of the long-term reintegration process, the beneficiaries that have been treated in the shelter with the services under the rehabilitation and reintegration programme, after leaving the shelter and based on their will, are included in the long-term monitoring process which according to the standards approved by the MoLSAEO (now the Ministry of Health and Social Protection) lasts from 3 to 5 years. Thus, in the framework of the long-term monitoring of the reintegration process after coming out of the shelter, Vatra has followed-up 23 cases of former victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking where 56% of the cases have progress, 26% have pronounced economic problems, 18% have regression and it is suspected for their recycling into trafficking.
This process is carried out through direct meetings conducted in their families or other alternative places where the beneficiaries live independently, meetings at the offices of "Vatra", by telephone and online (especially for those cases outside the Albanian borders), meetings at their work places, etc.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

In its Community Service Centre, Vatra offers support for women and girls victims of domestic violence, men and boys perpetrators and people with other social problems. For these target groups have been provided the following services:

**Legal service**

The legal service has been provided not only to the beneficiaries accommodated in the shelter, but also to women and girls from the community, victims of domestic violence, who have come at Vatra' s offices and have requested this service. A total of 106 cases from the community have received this service of whom 99 are new cases and 7 are remained cases from 2013.

The legal cases have been mainly related to: issuance of Immediate Protection Orders (IPOs) and Protection Orders (POs) in court, divorce, child custody, requesting an increase in the child support payments, recognition of paternity for children, etc.
During the year, a total of 10 IPOs and 5 POs were issued.

The cases have been assisted in different institutions such as: Vlora District Court, Court of Appeal in Vlora, Prosecution Office, Vlora, Registrar's Office, Vlora, Directorate of Economic Aid and Social Services, Municipality of Vlora and Regional Psychiatric Hospital.

**Psychological service**

The psychologist of the centre has provided psychological service for women, girls, men and boys from the community who have come at Vatra' s offices and have requested this service. In this framework the psychologist has assisted:

- 97 women and girls victims of domestic violence;
- 24 children of beneficiaries.
- 6 men and boys perpetrators who have voluntarily requested the assistance of the psychologist for the purpose of re-establishing family relationships.

**Vocational training**

During the year, it has been mediated for the registration in vocational courses of 9 cases from the community, victims of domestic violence, of whom:

- 3 cases have been registered in the hairdressing course;
- 3 cases in the tailoring course;
- 2 cases in the cooking course;
- 1 case in the computer course.

10 beneficiaries from the community who attended and successfully completed the tailoring or hairdressing courses were donated the profession tools. This has been applied not only to the beneficiaries who attended the courses during 2014, but also to those beneficiaries who had completed the courses in the previous years and have had no opportunity to purchase the tools in order to work privately after completing the course.

**Mediation for employment**

During the year, in cooperation with the Regional Employment Office, Vlora it has been worked also in terms of employment of victims of domestic violence who, mainly after denouncing violence need support in finding a job to afford the living costs. In this framework, Vatra's social staff has mediated for the employment of 32 beneficiaries but only 11 of them have been employed as: cleaning ladies in restaurants, cooks and cook assistants, hairdresser assistants, dressmakers. Difficulties in this regard have been numerous, due to the fact that private businesses in which beneficiaries are mostly employed, have financial difficulties and often reduce the number of employees. This has led 4 beneficiaries remain again unemployed after some months work. Currently the staff is making efforts to find new jobs for these beneficiaries.

It is worth emphasizing that for the first time in 15 years, Vatra has managed to employ 3 beneficiaries from the community in state enterprises as cooks and cook assistants. One of the cases has been accommodated previously in the shelter and currently is being assisted n the family.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF OTHER PROJECTS

**Project: "Increase of proactive identification of victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking",** funded by the U.S Department of State (through IOM) and Assist Impact with USAID funds (through "Another Vision" organization, Elbasan).

For the identification of victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking were engaged two social workers who did outreach work (on the streets, in bars, at the beaches, in nightclubs, etc.) in the city of Vlora. During the project period (January - October 2014) a total of 22 potential victims of trafficking (16 females and 6 males) were identified. 16 cases were minors and 6 cases adults.

More specifically, the cases have been identified as follows:

- 11 cases have been identified as potential victims of trafficking for begging;
- 10 cases have been identified as potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation;
- 1 case has been identified as a potential victim of trafficking for drug distribution.

The identified cases have received information and psycho-emotional counseling by the social workers and have been referred to other institutions for the benefit of services (according to the problematic of the case). As mentioned above, *11 from these cases were referred to Vatra to receive the services it offers.*

In the framework of the project were organized 2 trainings with participants from the local institutions of Vlora District:

- 1 training was conducted with 16 employees of the Municipality of Vlora, Directorate of State Social Service, Orphanage, Employment Office, the Region Council, etc.
- 1 training was conducted with 14 employees of health institutions in the district.

Moreover, 5 informative sessions with the participation of 130 people from the community were organized. The sessions aimed to raise the awareness about human trafficking and increase the community cooperation in the identification and referral of victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking.

**Project: "Prevention of human trafficking –Strengthening of assistance for former victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking",** funded by the Postcode Foundation, Sweden.

Besides providing direct services to victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking, this project had two very important components that were implemented in the districts of Shkodra and Dibra in northern Albania: prevention of trafficking through awareness raising of young people and other community members and capacity building of employees of institutions working in the anti-trafficking field.

From the start of the project, for the iimplementation of the activities, the partner organizations signed cooperation agreements in the respective districts with institutions such as: Regional Directorates of Education, Regional Directorates of State Social Service, Vocational Training Centres, Regional Offices of Employment, Police Directorates. In addition, cooperation agreements were signed with each school where the awareness raising activities were carried out.

Prevention of trafficking in human beings

In order to carry out the prevention activities in Shkodra and Dibra districts, "Vatra" Centre contracted two local organizations, respectively: "Woman to Woman" organization in Shkodra and "Agritra Vision" organization in Dibra. In this regard, it was worked in the cities of Shkodra, Puke, Malesi e Madhe of Shkodra district and Peshkopi and Bulqizë of Dibra district. The implemented activities are as follows:

1. Informative sessions with young people of high schools

Informative sessions have been conducted with young people of high schools during which have been addressed issues of human trafficking such as: “The current situation of human trafficking in Albania”, "Causes of trafficking", "Methods of recruitment", "Types of trafficking" "Profiles of traffickers and victims of trafficking", "National and international legislation against trafficking" "Prevention of trafficking in human beings", "Role of media in the fight against trafficking", etc. Throughout the year it has been worked with the same groups of young people with whom have been conducted a total of 134 informative sessions.

A total of 470 young people of high schools participated in the sessions.

*Photos from the informative sessions with the young people of high schools*

2. Informative sessions with community members

The topics mentioned above were addressed also with 5 groups of women, girls, boys and men from the community which were set up in the 5 areas selected for the project implementation (1 group in each area). A

total of 57 informative sessions with the participation of 131 community members were conducted. Furthermore in the community were set up 5 contact points who have facilitated and supported the staff's work not only in terms of organizing informative sessions but also in terms of distributing awareness raising and sensitizing materials such as: brochures, leaflets, posters, etc.

*Photo from the informative sessions with community members*

3. Seminars

During the project implementation were conducted 5 seminars (1 seminar in each area) with the participation of 320 people: representatives of Municipalities, State Social Service, Directorates of Education, Police, parent committees of schools, teachers and young people. For the realization of each seminar were contracted lecturers who addressed issues such as: parent-child relationship, support of victims of trafficking by family and community, existing services in Albania for victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking, etc.

In one of the seminars in Dibra, following speeches of lecturers, students acted theatrical parts prepared by them about trafficking in human beings and situations faced by a victim of trafficking. The way of organization was congratulated by the participants and use of theatre was appreciated as an effective tool for awareness raising and sensitizing.

*Photos from seminars with representatives with state institutions*

*Photos from theatrical parts about trafficking in human beings and situations faced by a victim of trafficking. acted by high school students.*

4. Publication of leaflet and poster

Together with “Woman to Woman” organization, Shkodra it has been worked for the drafting, design and publication of a leaflet and a poster about human trafficking.
The slogan used in these publications is "Trafficking in human beings is a violation of human rights. Stop human trafficking!". Also, the poster contains the national telephone number where victims or any community member can contact for help or report trafficking.
The leaflet contains general information about the phenomenon of trafficking and existing services in Albania for victims of trafficking.

*Photos from the poster and leaflet*

## TRAININGTS ON CAPACITY BUILDING OF STATE STRUCTURES IN THE ANTI-TRAFFICKING FIELD.

**Trainings with the Regional Anti-trafficking Committees (RATCs)**

During the project period, based on the project plan 2 trainings have been realized by Vatra in Shkodra and Dibra Districts with the members of the Technical Table of RATCs and specifically from: Regional Police Directorate, Regional Directorate of State Social Service, Regional Directorate of Education, Regional Directorate of Employment and Vocational Training Directorate, Public Health Directorate, Municipalities, Districts' Prosecutions, Districts' Informative Services, "Woman to Woman" Organization, "Agritra Vision" Organization, "World Vision" Organization. The trainings were conducted on January 31st, 2014 (Shkodra District) and March 20th, 2014 (Dibra District). A total of **56** members of these institutions (29 participants in Shkodra and 27 participants in Dibra) participated in these trainings.

These trainings were conducted with the close cooperation of the Ministry of the Interior/ Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator. The main topic of the trainings was "Prevention of trafficking in human beings/Strengthening of assistance for victims of trafficking." For the realization of the trainings 5 experts of the anti-trafficking field were contracted, specifically representatives from: the Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Social Service, Prosecution of Serious Crimes, General Directorate of State Police. Vatra gave its expertise in this field too.

Issues addressed during the trainings were:

- Current situation of trafficking in the country, national anti-trafficking policies;
- Role of RATCs in the identification and protection of victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking;
- Role of the State Social Service in the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking/Potential Victims of Trafficking;
- Albanian anti-trafficking legislation. Recent amendments to the Penal Code of the Republic of Albania. Cooperation with Police;
- Role of the State Police in the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking/Potential Victims of Trafficking. Cooperation with Prosecution;
- Human trafficking. Methods of recruitment. Profile of victims of trafficking.
- Services for victims of trafficking.

  During the trainings participants were included in discussions and questions about the issues addressed and concrete situations they face every day in their work. The experts have answered the questions based on the situation or based on the cases presented.

In the training conducted in Shkodra, the presence of the local and national media (which found interesting the coverage of this activity in their programming) was also appraised.

*Photos from the trainings with the Regional Anti-traffcking Committees*

**Project: "Community policing - Strengthening cooperation between State Police and youth to reduce trafficking in persons"** funded by Swedish Support to Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoI) /Albanian State Police (ASP) on Community Policing. Implemented in the city of Vlora.

The project started to be implemented in 2013 and continued until January 31st, 2014. During January, in the framework of the project were carried out the following activities:

- 12 informative sessions in secondary and high schools in the city of Vlora with the participation of 694 young people.
- Setting up of contact groups in the 5 schools where the project was implemented.
- Training with police officers of regions in the city of Vlora (20 police officers)
- 1 radio talk;
- Psychological service for minors in the Police of Vlora (26 minors)
- 1 TV spot;
- 6 stands containing photos from the project activities were placed in the schools where it was worked.

All project activities were implemented in close cooperation with the Police Directorate, Vlora and participants in activities were representatives of the Anti-trafficking Sector in this Directorate.

**Providing expertise in the anti-trafficking field for other organizations.**

During this year, among other things, "Vatra" has had a very good cooperation with "Woman to Woman" organization, Shkodra, "Agritra Vision", organization, Peshkopi and "ARSIS" organization, Tirana. While working with these organizations, training for respective staffs arose as a necessity in order to build the capacities in assisting cases of victims of trafficking / potential victims of trafficking. Trainings have been conducted by

Vatra's experts who have been working for years in providing direct services to victims and have been focused on the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking / Potential Trafficking and practices in this field.

A total of 25 staff members of the abovementioned organizations participated in the trainings.

Activities in the framework of the anti-trafficking week (18 – 24 October)

On 18 October in the city of Vlora was organized the public march with the slogan "TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IS A CRIME! JOIN US TO STOP IT!". This activity was realized by "Vatra" Centre in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs/Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, State Police, Regional Directorate of State Social Service, Regional Directorate of Education, Child Protection Unit at the Municipality of Vlora.

*Photos from the Public March*

On 20 October an exhibition of paintings and essays was organized in a public place in the city of Vlora. The slogan of the anti-trafficking week "Trafficking in persons is a crime! Join us to stop it!" was also used in this activity. This activity was made possible thanks to the cooperation with the Regional Directorate of State Social Service, Regional Directorate of Education and the Child Protection Unit (Municipality of Vlora). The paintings and essays were realized by students of high schools in Vlora District.

*Photos from the exhibition of paintings and essays*

On 23 October Vatra was invited to give its expertise in anti-trafficking at a meeting held with lecturers and students of “Ismail Qemali” University, Vlora. The meeting aimed to provide information about the current situation of trafficking in Albania, its causes and consequences for the victims and society, identification and referral of victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking, existing services to help the victims.

*Photos from the meeting with lecturers and students of “Ismail Qemali” University, Vlora.*

On 24 October in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs/ Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, was organized The National Conference "Trafficking in persons is a crime! Join us to stop it!/VATRA, 15 years of achievements and challenges in actions against human trafficking and violence in Albania" which closed the National Sensitizing Campaign of the Anti-Trafficking Week: Trafficking in Persons is a Crime! Join us to stop it!”.

*Photos from the National Conference Against trafficking in Persons*

**Conference objectives:**

Presenting an outline of the anti-trafficking work and actions not only of Vatra' s but of all national and international institutions;

Presentation of the current human trafficking situation in Albania.

Giving of recommendations to all anti-trafficking actors on the next steps in the fight against trafficking in persons and in particular for its prevention as well as protection and social reintegration of the victims of this phenomenon.

- The Conference was attended by the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs / National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator Ms. Elona Gjebrea, Ambassadors of: U.S Embassy, Austrian Embassy, the OSCE Presence in Albania, the European Union, Head of Swedish Development Agency. Participants in the conference were also representatives of state and non-state central and local institutions key anti-trafficking actors in Albania.

The main conclusions of the conference:

- Anti-trafficking is a priority of the Albanian government. However, it requires for the cooperation of all actors involved--the police, prosecutors' office, courts, social services, employment offices, civil society, international organizations, etc.
- The Albanian state should focus on prevention, penalization of traffickers and cooperation with all actors to reach effectve results against traffiking. Investigation and punishment, also including confiscation of criminals' assets that can be used for the compensation of victims of trafficking must be prioritized. Pro-active investigation is important.
- It is important to raise the awareness, increase the identification and integration of victims in society.
- Empowerment of women and girls in economic and social difficulty is important to combat human trafficking.
- It is necessary to establish and maintain the regional cooperation, especially with neighbouring countries, to combat human trafficking.
- Improvement of the legislation, especially its implementation, is the key for the effective fight against trafficking.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Realization of trainings on capacity bulding of state structures members of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), especially of State Police (Offices Combatting Traffics) and State Social Service in regions for the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Trafficking / Potential Victims of Trafficking continues to be necessary;
- Inclusion in the educational curriculum of topics on human trafficking;
- Funding of services for victims of trafficking based on the needs that shelters (offering these services) have with the aim the sustainability of these services.
- Support of the Albanian government for the re-operation of Mobile Units already established in Tirana, Elbasan and Vlora and their expansion to other districts;
- Continuous monitoring and inspection by the Labour Inspectorate and the Regional Employment Offices on enterprises contracted for the Programs on Promoting Employment.

Below Annex I. Report on National Conference:

## REPORT ON NATIONAL CONFERENCE:

”TRAFFIKCING IN PERSONS IS A CRIME!

JOIN US TO STOP IT!

"VATRA, 15 years of Achievements and Challenges
in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons in Albania

**REPORT ON NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**TRAFFIKCING IN PERSONS IS A CRIME!**

**JOIN US TO STOP IT!**

**"*VATRA,* 15 years of Achievements and Challenges
in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons in Albania"**

**Organized by Psycho – Social Centre “VATRA” in collaboration**

**with the Ministry of Internal Affairs.**

- **CONFERENCE OVERVIEW, PARTICIPATION, AND METHODOLOGY**

o **CONFERENCE OVERVIEW**

The National Conference “VATRA, 15 years of achievements and challenges in actions against human trafficking and violence in Albania" which closed the National Sensitizing Campaign of the Anti-Trafficking Week: Trafficking in Persons is a Crime! Join us to stop it!” was organized by “Vatra” Psycho-Social Centre, a non-profit organization that focuses on protection of victims of trafficking and promotion of women’s rights, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs/ Office of the National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Persons. The realization of the Conference was enabled thanks to the funding from the United States Embassy, Tirana, Austrian Development Cooperation and Kvinna Till Kvinna Foundation (with SIDA funds).

The Conference had a double purpose: Bringing together anti-trafficking actors to assess the progress and discuss about future challenges and commemorate the 15th anniversary of the Vatra Psycho-Social Centre.

The Conference brought together all anti-trafficking actors in the country-– governmental institutions and civil society organizations, stakeholders and international donors who have supported and support anti-trafficking efforts in this issue, media and other interested parties.

The objectives of the Conference were:

- presenting an outline of the anti-trafficking work and actions not only of Vatra' s but of all national and international institutions; presentation of the current situation in Albania in relation to this phenomenon.

- giving of recommendations to all anti-trafficking actors on the next steps in the fight against trafficking in persons and in particular for its prevention as well as protection and social reintegration of the victims of this phenomenon.

o **PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

134 people representing 91 organizations—Albanian and foreign-based—participated in the conference activities. The table below presents participation in the conference according to different stakeholders. A complete list of people and offices/organizations represented at the Conference may be found in Annex 2.
Both the Albanian civil society organizations and government actors were major players in the National Conference. Government sector was represented by 47 people coming from 35 central and local institutions. 51 representatives of 33 non-governmental organizations and media attended the Conference. 36 people representing 23 foreign organizations including governmental organizations, international organizations, international NGOs, and foreign NGOs based in Albania also actively participated.

o **CONFERENCE DESIGN**

Every effort was made to design a conference experience that offered opportunities for dialogue, networking and active engagement of all attendees. The large group learning methodologies of presentation/discussion and panels with questions were used throughout the conference.

The Conference was organized around one main theme: Trafficking in Persons is a Crime! Join us to stop it!

Main methods included:

1. Two panel discussions followed by questions-answers-discussions. Panel discussions focused on the following themes:

    a. Albanian Government in Combating Trafficking in Persons
       The role of State institutions and civil society in the Fight Against Human Trafficking.
    b. Vatra' s contribution in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (1999-2014).
       Vatra' s cooperation with local institutions and organizations in Albania.

2. Presenting the documentary “Vatra- Achievements and Challenges in anti-trafficking actions in Albania” and the photo exhibition, Vatra 1999-2014 and the mini-exhibition with handworks of the beneficiaries assisted by NCATS shelters

The use of these methods ensured that participants had maximum opportunity to share information and diverse perspectives with each other. Participants were encouraged to mix and develop new connections during breaks and lunch.

## 2. CONFERENCE WELCOME, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 WELCOME

The National Conference was convened at “Partner” Hotel in Vlora, on October 24th, 2014. The theme of this conference was Trafficking in Persons is a Crime! Join us to stop it! “ Vatra- 15 years of achievements and challenges in the fight against human trafficking “

The participants were welcomed by the Executive Director of Vatra, Ms. Brikena Puka. She briefly presented the purpose of the conference. She then gave the floor to Ms. Vera Lesko, Founder and President of Honour who greeted the Conference and presented to the participants the story of Vatra since its establishment in 1999, visiting the main moments in Vatra’ s fight against trafficking. Then guests of honour greeted the conference. Below are given their main points of presentations.

- *Ms. Elona Gjebrea, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, National Coordinator, Office of the National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Persons*

  - Anti-trafficking is a priority of the Albanian Government that has the political will to fight this phenomenon. The Office of National Coordinator will ensure coordination of these efforts focusing on penal prosecution, prevention, and partnership. The penal prosecution will be conducted in close partnership with the prosecutor’s office and court. It is important that all parts of penal justice function properly. It is important to increase the number of cases going to court and the quality of judgment.
  - It is important to have the contribution of all actors—the police, prosecutor’s office, courts, social services, educational institutions, all the society.
  - Penal prosecution and functioning of the penal justice, implying cooperation between the prosecutor’s office and courts, is the key to fight the phenomenon. Investigation, in cooperation with other institutions, of the criminal assets and their use to compensate victims of trafficking is important.
  - Regional cooperation, especially with neighbouring countries, helps essentially to fight the phenomenon and investigate on trans-national criminal activities.
  - The government is adopting the new Strategy of Anti-trafficking that emphasizes the need for better identification of victims of trafficking, awareness of victims/potential victims of trafficking and community, employment, confiscation of criminal assets, cooperation with other institutions and the civil society to address the needs, etc.

- *Mr. Alexander A. Arvizu, U.S Ambassador, in Albania*

  - The U.S government puts an emphasis and priority on anti-trafficking because human trafficking is against basic values, against the fundamental right that people should live with dignity. USA will be the leader in the global efforts against human trafficking in the future, too.

- U.S government does it through several instruments and programs, assistance for the organizations that work against human trafficking and increasing the capacity of governments.
- Cooperation with other international actors is necessary and civil society organizations have a critical role to play.
- Civil society organizations play an important role relating to education, awareness, support for reintegration of victims of trafficking.
- The Albanian government must ensure that victims have access to assistance, including reintegration services such as vocational training and health care. The government can achieve this by improving services in the Centre administered by the state, as well as by funding NGOs, i. e through the Special Fund for the Prevention of Crime. "
- Traffickers should be vigorously prosecuted and punished. Albanian courts sentenced only two such offenders during 2013. This number should increase significantly onwards.
- For 2014, Albania improved its performance, rising in Tier 2 Ranking and coming out of the "Tier 2 Watch List", "The government should be congratulated on this achievement. However, now is also essential that the government and institutions maintain the positive momentum and double their efforts to combat the serious problems of trafficking in persons that continue to persist in the country. "

- *Ms. Romana Vlahutin, Ambassador of EU Delegation, in Albania*

  - EU pays attention to the fight against human trafficking. In this context, it has supported anti-trafficking efforts through different assistance instruments and will continue to support in the future.
  - It is important to investigate and prosecute trafficking and punish trafficking offenders. In this context, it is important to build the capacity of governmental institutions—prosecutors, judges, police, and local officials.
  - It is important to have a regional approach against human trafficking. In this context, cooperation with neighbouring countries is important.

- *Mr. Florian Raunig, Ambassador of the OSCE Presence in Albania*

  - Trafficking of human beings cannot be fought by only one agency or through an isolated action. Effective measures to ensure a safe environment for all citizens ask for cooperation.
  - It is our moral and legal obligation to enhance a society that shows tolerance and inclusiveness, especially towards vulnerable groups. We should create a society that does not tolerate that people, especially from the minorities, are at risk of trafficking and exploitation for work, forced begging, and criminal activities.
  - It is encouraging to see that efforts to punish penal offenders are being made.. There is a need for further efforts to punish trafficking offenders in order to prevent trafficking and protect the rights of trafficked persons.
  - Coordination and cooperation between all parties involved in the fight against trafficking is necessary. Government, civil society, business, unions should work together to deal with this phenomenon in a multi-dimensional and holistic way.
  - OSCE is committed to continue its support for the Office of the National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Persons, civil society organizations, and other institutions to help dismantle human trafficking in the country.

- *Mr. Thomas Schnöll, Ambassador of Austrian Embassy in Albania (main points of discussion)*

- We strongly believe in the need to establish and support shelters for victims of violence especially victims of domestic violence and in particular in the case of trafficking of human beings
- It is very difficult for victims to get out of such a violent relationship and dependency. Therefore, the society and in particular the state has an obligation and a responsibility to protect and support these people who are mostly women and girls but as well boys.
- Institutions like VATRA which offer shelter to these victims need to get financial, political and moral support in order to be able to provide professional support to victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence free of charge.
- More needs to be done in the context of the ongoing social care reform as well as in regard to law enforcement and justice to ensure the society's support and our obligation towards the victims of violence
- In the home or transit countries, Austrian Development Cooperation supports projects for prevention and for the protection of victims, particularly women and children, and promotes capacity development – including victim and witness protection in law enforcement agencies – and networking institutions and (civil-society) organizations.
- We supported this conference to provide a forum for exchange of experience learning and in particular a forum of cooperation and common action in our fight against trafficking and combat violence against women and children. Austria is ready to further support Albania in its fight against trafficking and domestic violence through know how transfer, close partnership and cooperation as well as funding to NGOS as crucial piece in our common fight against trafficking in human beings and domestic violence.

- *Ms. Lisa Frederiksson, Counsellor and Head of the Swedish International Development Agency in Albania*

  - I would like to underline what a great idea it is that the organisers, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Trafficking Coordinator (Ms. Gjebrea) and Vatra, chose to commemorate 15 years of inspiring work by making all the actors involved reflect and prepare themselves for further advancing the joint work.
  - I congratulate Albania for its progress on human trafficking and transforming commitments into reality, such as the strengthening of National Referral Mechanism for anti-trafficking and intensification of activities focused on prevention, the strengthening of the role of the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, actions taken by Albanian State Police to tackle forced labour and internal trafficking, etc. All these important measures are acknowledged by the EU progress report 2014. But the progress report also identifies areas where work would need to be intensified.
  - It is needed capacity building of the state structure, members of the National Referral Mechanism for the identification, referral and protection of victims of trafficking and the need for providing sustainable funding to NGOs shelters and victim assistance services.
  - Sweden has supported the work of women's organisations in Albania for many years, including a long-term successful cooperation with Vatra through the Swedish organization Kvinna till Kvinna. We strongly believe that the role these organizations play is vital for the increased respect for human rights and in particular women's rights in Albania.
  - Vatra is an excellent example of this role. Your long-term work, your courage, your commitment, your professionalism have all made a difference in the lives of trafficked women and children or those at risk of trafficking. At the same time we all know that Vatra and other organisations work in a very high risk environment.

## 2.2 CONFERENCE GOALS AND AGENDA

After the greetings by dignitaries, an overview of conference goals and agenda was presented by the lead conference facilitator, Ms. Brikena Puka. She explained that the conference goals were: (1) presenting an outline of the anti-trafficking work and actions not only of Vatra' s but of all national and international institutions; presentation of the current situation in Albania in relation to this phenomenon; (2) giving of recommendations to all anti-trafficking actors on the next steps in the fight against trafficking in persons and in particular for its prevention as well as protection and social reintegration of the victims of this phenomenon.

The moderator also introduced participants to the Conference agenda. She explained that there were planned two panel discussions that would be followed by answers-questions-discussions. She informed the participants about the photo exhibition Vatra 1999-2014 and the mini-exhibition with handworks of the beneficiaries assisted by NCATS shelters and the documentary "Vatra- Achievements and Challenges in anti-trafficking actions in Albania" which would anticipate the panel discussions. For the Conference Agenda, please see Annex 1.

## 3. CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Before starting Panel 1 of the Conference, the TV documentary: "Vatra-15 Years of achievements and challenges in anti-trafficking actions in Albania" was screened to the participants. This documentary was realized in cooperation with field experts, journalists with several years experience in terms of production of documentaries or TV chronicles. In the framework of the documentary realization, a total of 11 interviews were conducted with main partners of Vatra Centre in years, representatives of central and local government institutions, iinternational institutions and organizations and the National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters. Likewise for the documentary were interviewed also program beneficiaries who shared their personal stories and expressed thanks for the support that Vatra had given for their rehabilitation and reintegration in the society.

Specifically from the selected institutions were interviewed:

- Ms Elona Gjebrea (Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs/National Anti-trafficking Coordinator)
- Mr. Aleksander A. Arvizu, Ambassador of U.S Embassy, Tirana
- Mr. Robert Wilton, Deputy Ambassador of OSCE Presence in Albania.
- Ms. Astrid Wein, Head of Austrian Development Cooperation.
- Ms. Alma Jani, Head of Office, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Tirana
- Mr. Blendi Klosi, former Minister of State, National Anti-trafficking Coordinator (1999-2002)
- Mr. Arjan Cala, President of Turn of NCATS
- Ms. Vera Lesko, Founder and President of Honour of Vatra.
- Mr. Genc Merepeza, Chief of Border at the General Directorate of State Police.
- Ms. Marjana Cani, Director of the Regional Directorate of Employment and Vocational Training, Vlora.
- Ms. Brunilda Mersini, Director of the Regional Hospital, Vlora,

During the interviews the aforementioned persons stated the cooperation with Vatra over the years, expressed their appreciation for Vatra' s work and gave recommendations on future anti-trafficking actions.

Part of the documentary were also footage from Vatra' s sensitizing activities in years, giving so a clear

picture regarding the work and contribution of Vatra in anti-trafficking actions in Albania. The documentary was produced in 300 DVD copies and it was distributed to the Conference participants as well as to the other institutions within and outside the country.
***In the DVD has been included even Vatra' s Strategy 2014 – 2017.***

**In the framework of the Conference an exhibition with handworks of the beneficiaries who are assisted by Vatra and by the shelters of the National Ant-trafficking Coalition (NCATS) was organized**. Some of these handworks were sold to the participants with market prices and from the sales the shelters generated some incomes which will be used for providing some services to the beneficiaries. Similarly, in this framework in the fair was promoted one book with poetry of one of Vatra' s beneficiaries titled "What is beyond pain?" . During the fair some copies of this book were sold.

Also an **exhibition "VATRA – 15 YEARS"** with 6 banners with photos of activities realized by Vatra during 15 years was organized outside the hall of the Conference. This exhibition was visited and evaluated by all the Conference participants.

### 1.1. Panel 1: Albanian Government in Combating Trafficking in Persons
### The role of State institutions and civil society in the Fight Against Human Trafficking.

*Ms. Elona Gjebrea, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs/ National Anti- trafficking Coordinator – moderator of Panel 1.*

*Ms. Bardhylka Kospiri, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare and Youth*

- Partnership with civil society is one of ministry's goals and challenges
- Economic situation, lack of family and community support, discrimination are at the foundations of the trafficking in persons.
- Prevention will help minimize the phenomenon.
- The Ministry aims at improving the legislation, the reform of the social services and modernization of the social assistance (digitalization of the economic aid in order to increase the number of real beneficiaries), empowerment of people in need, especially women (only 81 women households receive economic aid), and formalization of vocational training (only 20% of people benefiting from vocational training are girls).
- Coordination of efforts in the fight against domestic violence requires for awareness raising, improvement of the legal framework, capacity development of institutions.
- Employment, especially of women and girls.

***Mr. Eugen Beci, Prosecutor, General Prosecution/ Head of Prosecution of Serious Crime.***

- Pro-active investigation is essential in the fight against human trafficking.
- Non-profit organizations like Vatra have been the key for the success of the Prosecutor's office because the key to the investigation is the victim and Vatra has facilitated their witnessing.
- Identification of victims of trafficking and perpetrators and penal proceedings are important.
- Increased effectiveness in the work of prosecutor's office requires for the capacity development of our staff, too.
- Issues of trafficking should be addressed by the Prosecution of Serious Crimes and not by the Prosecution of districts.

***Ms. Lida Leskaj, Deputy Director General of the State Social Service***

- Fight against the phenomenon is not easy and requires collaboration.
- It is an issue for both civil society and governmental organizations, state engagement has become tangible.
- Fight against trafficking is not just a legal problem, it also includes social, economic, institutional, legal, and policy measures.
- Improvements in the policy framework and structures are important.
- It is important to encourage re-integration activities for victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence.
- National Anti-Trafficking Strategy is based on the coordination of work between local and international governmental and civil society institutions that have the capacity to contribute.
- Prevention, awareness, improvements in legislation and policies, education at school and community, poverty reduction programs, punishments for traffickers, employment measures are important measures.
- Prevention requires local and central institutions' cooperation**,** awareness, and positive attitude. Schooling and vocational education are important.

***Mr. Arjan Cala, President of Turn, National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters(NCATS)***

- The coalition is among the main actors. Four members of the coalition give a combined answer to the needs of victims of trafficking.
- We have ensured cooperation between the government and civil society and it is very important for this cooperation to continue.
- Services offered to victims of trafficking have been qualitative. However, sustainability of these services from non-public shelters leaves much to be desired. Services depend mainly on international donors. The Albanian government should increase financial support for these services.
- It is important to conduct awareness raising of governmental and non-governmental organizations relating to the phenomenon and an analysis based on consultation regarding prevention and punishment.
- The multi-dimensional/institutional cooperation is the key for increased effectiveness.

***Discussion (summary)***

- A suggestion was that pro-active investigation should be extended to domestic violence, too. Regarding this issue, it should be taken into consideration that pro-active investigation means investigate, surveillance, and identification where surveillance is the key. The laws define which of the actions can be subject to pro-active investigation.
- Violence against children is a main problem, too. Street children are an issue not only in Tirana but also in other cities.
- It is important to coordinate. The National Referral Mechanism has functioned and should be strengthened.
- What is the explanation of the discrepancy between investigated cases and those sent to the court? There is progress compared to the past, but there is still much work to be done.

### 1.2. Panel 2: Vatra' s contribution in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (1999-2014). Vatra' s cooperation with local institutions and organizations in Albania.

***Presentation by Ms. Brikena Puka, Executive Director of Vatra on Vatra' s contribution in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (1999-2014) and Strategic Objectives of "Vatra" Centre 2014-2017***

- Vatra Psycho-Social Centre is a nationally and internationally recognized actor in the fight against human trafficking and domestic violence and protection and promotion of women rights in Albania. Its mission is "to prevent trafficking in human beings and domestic violence, protect and provide social inclusion to the victims of these phenomena by means of information, education and advocacy programmes, and community and residential social services." Vulnerable groups of our society, especially women, youth, and children, are the main target group of Vatra' s work that focuses on: Prevention of trafficking in human beings;/ domestic violence; Rehabilitation and reintegration of victims and potential victims of human trafficking;/victims of all kind of violence; Capacity development of public and non-profit institutions dealing with anti-trafficking and domestic violence; Advocacy and lobbying for women's rights.

- Vatra has implemented numerous projects relating to prevention, integration, education, and advocacy. Vatra has worked on prevention of human trafficking and domestic violence and relating problems these phenomena generate. Beneficiaries include more than 45 thousand people from all over Albania. Thousands of young girls, especially from rural areas, have been informed at their homes about the danger of human trafficking. Hundreds of information and awareness raising sessions have been held at high and secondary schools. Tens of workshops, roundtables and trainings have been organized with the local government and community representatives. Television and radio are extensively used to convey messages against trafficking and domestic violence.

- Vatra established the first shelter in Albania in 2001. The shelter has been and keeps being essential for the protection and accommodation as well as rehabilitation and reintegration of women victims of trafficking. 2451 victims of human trafficking have been identified, mainly women who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation. 1416 victims of trafficking and 928 victims of domestic violence have been assisted at the shelter and their families. Since 2005, Vatra is member of the National Referral Mechanism.

- Vatra has closely cooperated with central and local governmental institutions and other CSOs active in the AT field. Vatra is member and signatory of the National Referral Mechanism Agreement and has significantly contributed to the effective functioning of this mechanism, in cooperation with other partners of the National Coalition of Anti-trafficking Shelters (NCATS). Together with other NCATS members, Another Vision (Elbasan), Different and Equal (Tirana), and Linza Centre (Tirana), Vatra has contributed to the development of legislation, bylaws, and policy documents relating to anti-trafficking including, among others, the National Anti-trafficking Strategy and Action Plan, Standard Operating Procedures for the identification and referral of victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking, and Standards for the Delivery of Social Services.

- Another major commitment of Vatra includes fighting for rights of women and their empowerment. It is member of the Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN), one of the main networks in Albania. In its framework, Vatra has advocated and lobbied for women's rights.

- Since its establishment in 1999, "Vatra" Psycho-Social Centre has evolved into a developed organization with the experience and expertise to significantly contribute to the fight against human trafficking and domestic violence and protection and promotion of women's rights. Vatra has been an example in Albania of non for profit activity. Its main values include compassion, sensitivity, and tolerance towards people, commitment to improve life of the needy, accountability to the public, collaboration, and risk-taking. Vatra has developed the strategic goals for the future including: Preventing trafficking in human beings and

violence; Protecting the rights of victims of trafficking and violence including girls, women, boys, men and children; and Social inclusion of the victims of trafficking and violence for girls, women, boys, men and children.

***Mr. Dritan Halili, General Secretary of Prefecture of Vlora qark, and General Secretary of the Technical Table of the Regional Anti-Trafficking Committee, Vlora.***

- Regional anti-trafficking committees and technical tables have been instrumental in the fight against human trafficking.
- There is a need to best discuss and trace the cases presented to the technical table in order to address the needs of victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking.
- The Regional Anti-Trafficking Committee, Vlora deems as very important the collaboration with civil society and specially with Vatra organization as a main organization in Vlora that supports victims of trafficking and also gives a contribution to the capacity building of our structures. This cooperation in fight against human trafficking should continue even in the future.

***Mr. Shaban Nexhi, Director, Police Directorate of Shkodra Qark.***

- As Police, we look forward to CSO "pressure" to be effective in our work.
- We should not focus only on the cities, but everywhere the victims are, especially targeting those that cannot address to us. Civil society organizations should continue their work in the rural areas of Northern Albania, where even the risk for trafficking of girls is higher and the level information is lower.
- We should work together and increase the trust of the victims or potential victims at law enforcement agencies. Punishment of perpetrators is important.
- Victims of domestic violence have multiplied, but there are no denunciations.
- We should deal with the problems on the spot, with our local institutions. Thus, even the cost of services decreases.

**Ms. Ines Stasa, Director of State Social Service, Vlora**

- Though there is a boom in information, still it is not sufficient.
- It is important to have continuous information regarding human trafficking situation in Albania and to work for the prevention of this phenomenon..
- We should engage young people for participation and quality activities and not let them misuse their time.
- Services for victims of trafficking are very important, and especially for Southern Albania this part has been covered by Vatra centre, certainly in collaboration with local institutions. It is important for organizations such as Vatra which play a key role in this framework, to have the support of the government and international organizations.

**Ms. Majlinda Hoxha, "Agritra Vision" Organization, Dibra Qark**

- Anti-trafficking is a problem in regions like Dibra, too. But due to conservative environment, it is not explicit. There is a need for accommodating facilities, emergency shelter in Dibra district for victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence.
- We are working in cooperation with the Municipality to protect women and in cooperation with other institutions to ensure that they receive the needed assistance.
- Teams of counselling and assistance should be established in regions like Dibra, too.
- Cooperation with Vatra in the anti-trafficking field, which started this year, in the Northern areas is proving to be successful but it should continue as long as the need for information and assistance for victims of violence and victims of trafficking is evident and very necessary.

**Discussion (summary of discussion)**

- The central government has limited information from remote districts, such as Dibra. It is important to provide information about victims of trafficking.
- It is important to work in the North, too. In this context, we should work at family level because families do not denounce and do not accept the phenomenon.
- Cooperation with all actors is important.
- There is a need for an accommodating centre in the North.

At the end of the Conference, Ms. Brikena Puka, Executive Director made a summary of the Conference.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Anti-trafficking is a priority of the Albanian government. However, it requires for the cooperation of all actors involved--the police, prosecutors' office, courts, social services, employment offices, civil society, international organizations, etc.
- The holistic approach ensures the effectiveness and impact of anti-trafficking efforts. They should focus on prevention, penalization, and partnership between the stakeholders including governmental institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners.
- Investigation and punishment, also including confiscation of criminals' assets that can be used for the reintegration of victims of trafficking, are important measures in the fight against human trafficking. In this context, pro-active investigation is important for the identification and prosecution of criminals.
- Improvement of the legislation, especially its implementation, is the key for the effective fight against trafficking.
- The Albanian government must ensure that victims have access to assistance, reintegration services. The government can achieve this by improving services in the Centre administered by the state, as well as by funding NGOs, for example through the Special Fund for the Prevention of Crime.
- It is important to increase the information level and raise the awareness of victims (and potential victims) of human trafficking, institutions and general public.
- Identification, rehabilitation, and reintegration of victims (potential victims) of human trafficking are essential for the fight against this phenomenon.
- Empowerment of women and girls in economic and social difficulty is important to prevent human trafficking.
- It is necessary to establish and maintain the regional cooperation, especially with neighbouring countries, to fight human trafficking.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2014**

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

Psycho-Social Centre "VATRA " presents balance sheet indicators as below

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Short-term assets presented in the amount | 11749913 | ALL |
| | Al Bank monetary assets | 11729211 | ALL |
| | Cashbox monetary assets | 20702 | ALL |
| 2 | Long-term assets presented in the amount | 4753679 | ALL |
| | Office equipment | 542559 | ALL |
| | Other assets | 3586070 | ALL |
| | Transportation means | 625050 | ALL |
| 2 | Short-term liabilities are | 13911869 | ALL |
| | social insurance liabilities | 254368 | ALL |
| | tax liabilities | 76267 | ALL |
| | Deferred grants | 13911869 | ALL |
| 3 | Capital | 2591723 | ALL |
| | Share capital | 2591723 | ALL |
| 4 | Incomes derived from funding | 46606304 | ALL |
| | from the change of the exchange rate | 101555 | ALL |
| 5 | Expenditures are declared by their nature based on the original purchase invoices | | |
| | expenditures are | 40224487 | ALL |
| | expenditures for salaries and insurance | 14417731 | ALL |
| | other expenditures | 25806756 | ALL |

BALANCE SHEET prepared by:
( MARSELA KARABOLLI )

Director of the Economic Unit
( BRIKENA PUKA )

# Independent Auditor's Report

To the Executive Director of

**"Vatra" Psycho-Social Centre, Vlora**

Address: Str "Nermin Falaski Vlora", Palace of Intesa Sanpaolo Bank, floor 3, **Vlore, Albania**

We have audited the accompanying financial statements the Vatra Psycho Social Centre, Vlora ("the organisation"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2014 and the statement of comprehensive income for the period ended, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year than ended and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

*Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with National Accounting Standards and Accounting guidelines of the donators. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant go to preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud and error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

*Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an independent opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. These procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of the expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

***Inter BBK Auditing shpk***

*Opinion*

In our opinion, the financial statements give a true and fair view, in all materials respects, the financial position of Vatra Psycho Social Centre, Vlora, as of 31 December 2014, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year than ended in accordance with Law 9228 dated 29.04.2004 "On Accounting and Financial Statements" and National Accounting Standards.

*Other Matter*

We draw the attention in the auditor's report that the corresponding figures are unaudited. However, we obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence that the opening balances had not contain misstatements that materially affect the current period's financial statements.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Board of Directors and the management of Vatra Psycho Social Centre, Vlora and should not be used for any other purpose.

*"Inter BBK – Auditing" ltd*

Tirana July 31st, 2015

AUDITING Sh.p.k
INTER B.B.K
TIRANA-ALBANIA

**Esmeralda BALLUKU**

Engagement Partner