PSYCHO-SOCIAL CENTRE
"VATRA"

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

JANUARY 2022

VLORA, ALBANIA

Report prepared by:

Brikena Puka - Executive Director
Entela Avdulaj – Program Manager / Administrator
Xhensila Murati – Reintegration Program Manager
Ledjona Fejzaj – Case Manager

Edited in Albanian and translated into English by:
Ana Gjokoli (Translator)

Design and Layout: Elzana Agolli

CONTENTS

Supported Target Groups 5

I. PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/ EDUCATION AND INFORMATION 7

1.1 Informative sessions with youth in secondary schools and high schools 7

1.2. Informative sessions with the community 8

1.3 Public Activities 8

1.4 Forum/meeting with students 10

1.5 Production and dissemination of informative materials 11

1.6 Radio/TV Talk 12

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL 13

II. DIRECT ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING / SEXUAL ABUSE AND ALL TYPES OF VIOLENCE 15

PROFILE OF trafficked CASES SUPPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING 2021 15

2.1 DIRECT ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING/POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING 16

2.2 DIRECT ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND ALL TYPES OF VIOLENCE 24

2.3 COUNSELING FOR VIOLENT MEN AND BOYS EXERCISING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 29

2.4 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING, VIOLENCE AND ABUSE 30

III. CAPACITY BULDING FOR EMPLOYEES OF STATE STRUCTURES AND NGOs FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ANTI-TRAFFICKING AND ANTI-VIOLENCE POLICIES 32

3.1 Trainings with local anti-trafficking intuitions and NGOs 32

3.2 Trainings with local institutions responsible for the protection of victims of gender-based violence 33

3.3 Workshops 34

IV. LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY IN PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN, GIRLS AND CHILDREN VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING, ABUSE AND VIOLENCE 36

4.1 At the local level 36

4.2 At the national level 36

4.3 At the international level..... 38

4.4 Production and distribution of a study as a tool of advocacy 39

V. VATRA'S AWARD DURING 2021 40

VI. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION..... 41

The program of “Vatra” Psycho-Social Centre

- Preventing trafficking in human beings, violence, and sexual abuse (through sensitizing campaigns all over Albania, supporting children, girls, and women in vulnerable situations with services);
- Identification of victims and potential victims of human trafficking through outreach work from mobile teams;
- Rehabilitation and reintegration services for victims of trafficking, sexual abuse, and violence;
- Capacity building for the representatives of local government institutions and other NGOs;
- Lobbying and advocacy for the protection of the victims' rights and the strengthening of the protection system in Albania.

Supported Target Groups

During 2021, Vatra Center has provided reintegration services to victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking, victims of sexual abuse, victims of gender-based violence, children of the victims and family members. To strengthen the protection system, Vatra has provided capacity-building training for local employees, responsible for providing services to victims of human trafficking, sexual abuse and all types of gender-based violence in all regions of the country.

Direct support/reintegration services for victims of human trafficking, sexual abuse and all forms of violence

1. Identification of victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking through outreach work of 4 Mobile Units in 4 Regions of Albania;
2. Shelter accommodation and security (24/7); meeting basic needs for food, hygiene, clothing, medical care;
3. Assisted return of victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence;
4. Case management (need evaluation, draft of intervention plans and support for the implementation of the plan);
5. Counseling and psychological assistance;
6. Medical assistance and health monitoring;
7. Legal assistance and counselling;
8. Support for re-enrollment in the education system and follow-up;
9. Multidisciplinary services for children of beneficiaries in the shelter or community;
10. Activities to increase life skills;
11. Occupational, socio-cultural activities inside and outside the shelter;

12. Counseling and mediation to re-establish contacts and reunite with the family (mainly minor cases) and family support;
13. Providing counseling cycle for employment and self-employment;
14. Registration and follow-up of the vocational training process at Vocational Training Directorates;
15. On-the-job training/internship at the business;
16. Mediation and assistance for employment and employment;
17. Support for the establishment and management of micro-businesses;
18. Support to meet basic needs for community-assisted cases (food, hygiene, medications, clothing, etc.);
19. Support with accommodation in rented apartments (paid by the program for 3, 6 or 12 months)
20. Mediation to the local government for their inclusion in the social housing scheme.
21. Informing the beneficiaries about the map of existing services in the community;
22. Long-term monitoring and follow-up of the cases' progress during the program

Preventive, educational and advocacy activities of "Vatra"

1. Informative sessions with youth from secondary schools and high schools;
2. Informative sessions with the community;
3. Forums with youth;
4. TV and radio talk;
5. Production and distribution of informative materials;
6. Public awareness activities;
7. Trainings with employees of state and non-state institutions;
8. Organization/participation in lobbying and advocacy activities;
9. Studies and research.

I. PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE/ EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

- ✓ **1400 youth were informed during face-to-face informative sessions on issues regarding trafficking, domestic violence and gender-based violence.**
- ✓ **1285 community members were informed during face-to-face meetings on issues regarding trafficking, domestic violence and gender-based violence.**
- ✓ **6085 community members were informed through social networks (Facebook and Instagram) about the services of Vatra and the ways to seek help.**
- ✓ **9000 community members, employees of state institutions, youth, and activists, were informed through the distribution of informative materials.**
- ✓ **2 videos produced and distributed on social networks presenting services for victims of trafficking provided by Vatra, as well as forms of human trafficking.**

1.1 Informative sessions with youth in secondary schools and high schools

1400 youth in secondary schools and high schools in the districts of Vlora, Dibra, Durres and Berat were informed on issues regarding trafficking in human beings through 65 informative sessions. Informative sessions with the youth in schools were carried out by the Mobile Units of Vatra in 4 regions of Albania, in cooperation with the Local Education Offices and Child Protection Units in the respective municipalities.

It is worth mentioning that the informative sessions were also carried out during national campaigns (National Anti-Trafficking Month and 16 Days of Activism Against Violence). In this context, Vatra joined the initiative of Vlora Local Police Directorate for the conduction of **8 informative sessions with 240 students** of eight secondary and high schools in Vlora, with the aim of informing the youth about issues related to gender-based violence.

Photos from informative sessions in schools

1.2. Informative sessions with the community

2 meetings with 100 women and girls of the Roma/Egyptian community in the district of Dibra and Berat have been organized during 2021. The activities were carried out in order to raise awareness and inform marginalized communities about the risk of trafficking, the exploitation of vulnerability and the forms of reporting the phenomenon. The meetings were conducted in cooperation with other members of the mechanism and child protection workers.

65 community members in the areas of Peshkopia, Maqellare, Klos, Burrel and Shupenze Administrative Unit of Diber district were informed about human trafficking through 6 informative meetings. During these activities, Vatra's specialists distributed information related to: human trafficking, all forms of violence in family relations, services for these target groups, legislation and policies for the protection of victims of human trafficking and sexual abuse.

Photos from informative sessions with the community

1.3 Public Activities

In the framework of *International Women's Day*, March 8, "Vatra" Center organized the public awareness activity "Solidarity for women, with women!". As part of the activity, sensitizing materials such as T-shirts, bags, and leaflets were produced and distributed in order to promote gender equality and deliver messages against violence and exploitation. The community has also been informed about the services Vatra provides in support of survivors of trafficking and violence.

In the framework of the *World Day Against Trafficking in Human Beings, July 30*, "Vatra" Psycho-Social Center organized an awareness campaign against trafficking in social networks, with the aim of increasing

information and awareness of the community regarding the phenomenon, its consequences as well as ways of protection and treatment of victims of trafficking in human beings.

On October 18, the European Day Against Trafficking in Human Beings, Vatra organized in Vlora the **public awareness activity** on the topic **#together#stoptrafficking**. The Municipality of Vlora and the Regional Directorate of Social Services joined this initiative for a more aware and cooperative society in the fight against trafficking. During the activity, informative materials, brochures, t-shirts and bags with slogans against human trafficking were distributed. On the same day, the MU of Vatra in Berat district organized a public activity to raise awareness among communities on issues regarding trafficking.

Photos from public activities in Vlora and Berat

On November 25, on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence, Vatra and Vlora Local Health Care Unit in cooperation with the Local Education Office organized the **march** with the slogan "Make the world orange: Stop violence against women NOW!, Special contribution to the realization of this activity was given by the students of "Ali Demi" high school and Vlora Local Police Directorate. T-shirts, masks and banners with sensitizing slogans were produced in order to raise community awareness on gender-based violence.

Photos during the march on "Ismail Qemali" boulevard, Vlora

In support of the fight against trafficking in human beings, for the sixth year in a row, the installation **UN GIFT BOX** was placed in Rreshen, where citizens of these communities signed the petition in the fight against the phenomenon. "Vatra" Center was engaged as part of URAT network "United against human trafficking".

Vatra, as part of AWEN network, participated today in the awareness activity to say NO to violence against women and girls. The activity was conducted in the framework of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Representatives of the center and beneficiaries supported with services discussed the importance and necessity of supporting victims of violence for their reintegrate and rehabilitation. Awareness messages about reporting and denunciation of violence were distributed during the activity.

1.4 Forum/meeting with students

On International Human Rights Day, Vatra and AWEN conducted a meeting with students of the Department of Law of "Ismail Qemali" Vlora University about the role of justice institutions in the protection and safety of women and girls. Present at the forum were Mrs. Petra Burcher, Head for the International Development at the Swedish Agency for Cooperation and Development, who shared the Swedish experience with the young participants, Mrs. Brikena Puka, Director of "Vatra" Center who conveyed some very important messages as well as Mrs. Frosina Londo, Deputy Rector of "Ismail Qemali" University.

Photo from the forum with students

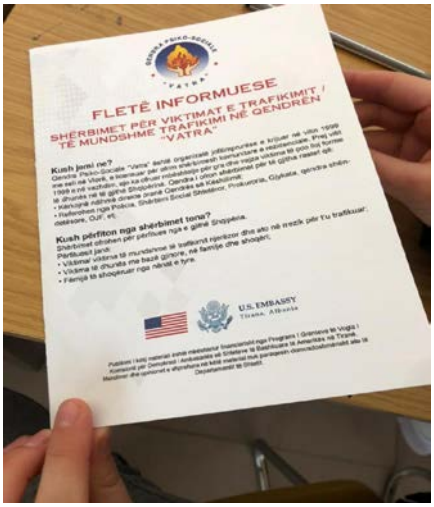
1.5 Production and dissemination of informative materials

In order to inform the youth in schools and members of the community, sensitizing materials have been produced and distributed, as below:

- **1,500 informative leaflets** on services for victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking at Vatra Center;
- sensitizing poster on trafficking in human beings;
- **40 t-shirts with slogans** against trafficking in human beings, which were distributed during informative sessions in schools and the community;
- **350 masks with slogans** against trafficking in human beings;
- **2 videos** on services for victims of trafficking and forms of trafficking

"Vatra" – A safe place for victims of trafficking"[1] is one of the videos produced during this year, which aims to inform the community about the services that Vatra offers for the reintegration and protection of victims of trafficking.
The second video "Forms of trafficking"[2] reflects and focuses on the forms and methods of exploitation of human beings by emphasizing even the consequences of trafficking.

"Vatra" – A safe place for victims of trafficking"[3] is one of the videos produced during this year, which aims to inform the community about the services that Vatra offers for the reintegration and protection of victims of trafficking.
The second video "Forms of trafficking"[4] reflects and focuses on the forms and methods of exploitation of human beings by emphasizing even the consequences of trafficking.



Photos of sensitizing materials

[1] https://youtu.be/_e34EOni1Lo
[2] https://youtu.be/RD6U2cR6H8Y
[3] https://youtu.be/_e34EOni1Lo
[4] https://youtu.be/RD6U2cR6H8Y

1.6 Radio/TV Talk

Vatra's Program Manager was part of the TV talk[5] "Pasditja ime" on the National TV station to talk about trafficking in human beings and support services for victims of human trafficking that are provided in the framework of the program "Transformation of the National Response to Human Trafficking in and from Albania" which is implemented by UNICEF Albania and supported by the UK government.

Photo from the TV talk on the National TV Station

On December 10, 2021 on the International Day of Human Rights, Vatra's specialists conducted a TV talk[6] on the topic "Gender-based violence and the challenges faced by the victims". The TV talk focused on the phenomenon of violence against women, the services Vatra as an organization offers in their protection and the challenges faced by victims.

[5]https://www.facebook.com/unicefalbania/posts/pfbid02TMvsAjVYF9v4saUzdJiZXAsvPbyWGgbHqPYGajCxJ4wJ16DQUhFyPhzPPut8JpZVl

[5] https://www.facebook.com/onetvhd1/videos/878113286236209

[6] https://www.facebook.com/onetvhd1/videos/878113286236209

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

The identification of victims/potential victims of trafficking has been conducted in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking. During 2021, **66 victims/potential victims of trafficking and 54 children of victims** were referred for services to "Vatra" Center **for the first time**. The referral sources were the Mobile Units of Vatra Center in Vlora, Diber, Berat and Durres; local institutions responsible for the identification and protection, such as the State Police, Child Protection Units in the Municipality, Regional Directorates of the State Social Service; civil society organizations, etc. For each case, the Responsible Authority at the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator at the Ministry of Interior has been notified.

Mobile Units

During 2021, in addition to Vlora Mobile Unit, Vatra has set up and continued the work for the proactive identification and referral for services of victims/potential victims of trafficking, with 3 Mobile Units in Diber[7], Berat and Durres[8]. The Mobile Units target and access marginalized areas and groups, as well as individuals who have limited access to information and protection, or who are at risk of trafficking.

The work methodology of these units is based on a proactive identification in public environments, schools, administrative areas (rural and urban) known for the high degree of social-economic vulnerability, in close cooperation with the local Police institution and the Protection Unit of Children and other service providers. During 2021, the Mobile Units have identified and referred 54 victims/potential victims of trafficking for services at Vatra. It should be noted that in addition to the proactive identification conducted directly by the Mobile Units, the latter have cooperated with local institutions to identify potential cases. During 2020-2021, representatives of these responsible institutions throughout Albania have been supported with training and mentoring by Vatra's specialists and have increased their role in identification and referral. 12 cases were referred by institutions such as municipalities, police, state social service directorates and health centers.

Regarding the cases identified by the Outreach Team, 80% of them are girls and women and 20% are boys. 27% of them were exploited for begging, 66% exploited for sexual purposes and 7% exploited for work and committing low criminal acts. Mobile Units remain the main referral source of cases for services (82% of cases).

Table 1. Human Resource

Referral Source	**Number of beneficiaries supported for the first time**
Vlora Regional Police Directorate	1
Fushe-Kruja Regional Police Directorate	1
Tirana Regional Police Directorate	1
Gjirokastra Regional Social Services	1

[7] *This Mobile Unit was established in the framework of the project "Transformation of the National Response to Human Trafficking in and from Albania" supported by UNICEF with the support of the Embassy of the United Kingdom.*

8 The two mobile units in Berat and Durres were set up in the framework of the project "Identification and education for the effective prevention of human trafficking in Albania" with the support of the United States Embassy, Small Grants program

Berat Regional Social Services and MU	1
Dibra Regional Social Services and MU	1
Dibra Municipality and MU	1
Durres CPU and MU	3
Fier Local Coordinator against violence	1
Mary Ward Loreto	1
Vlora MU	19
Dibra MU	10
Berat MU	12
Durres MU	13
Total	**66 beneficiaries dhe 54 children of beneficiaries**

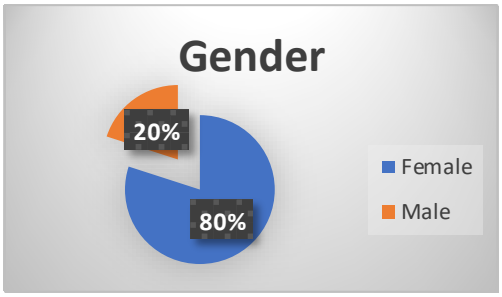
II. DIRECT ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING / SEXUAL ABUSE AND ALL TYPES OF VIOLENCE

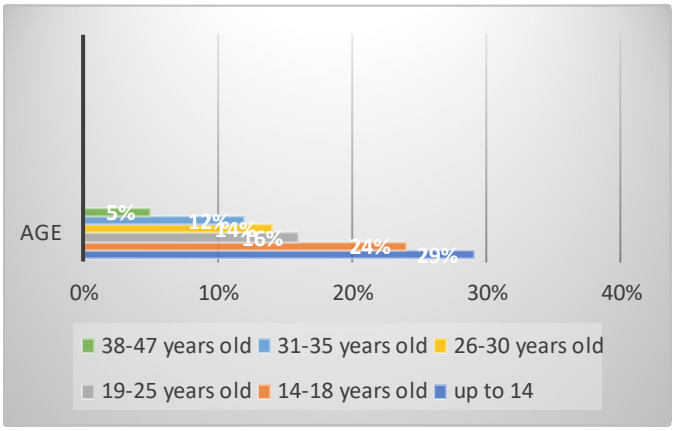
- ✓ **144 victims of trafficking in human beings have been supported with reintegration services**
- ✓ **87 children of victims of human trafficking have been supported with direct services**
- ✓ **327 victims of domestic/gender-based violence have been supported with empowerment services**
- ✓ **71 children of victims of violence have been supported with direct services**
- ✓ **20 burra dhunues janë mbështetur me këshillime për rehabilitimin e tyre**

PROFILE OF trafficked CASES SUPPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING 2021

Gender

From 66 cases assisted for the first time during 2021, 80% are girls and women and 20% are boys, mostly minors. Compared to 2020 and 2019, there is a significant increase in the number of identified and assisted potential victims of trafficking.



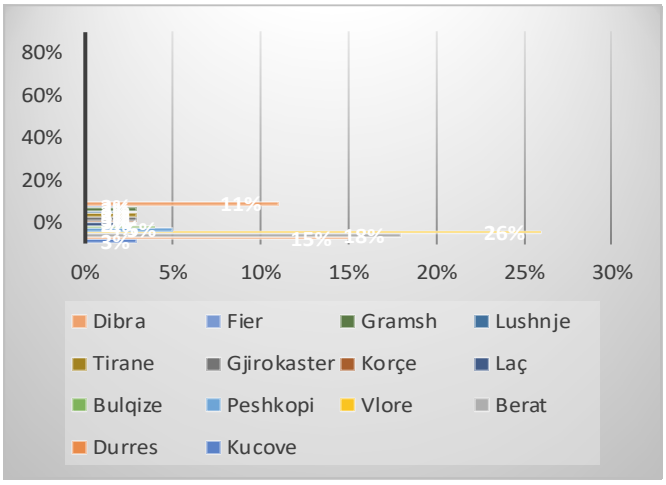


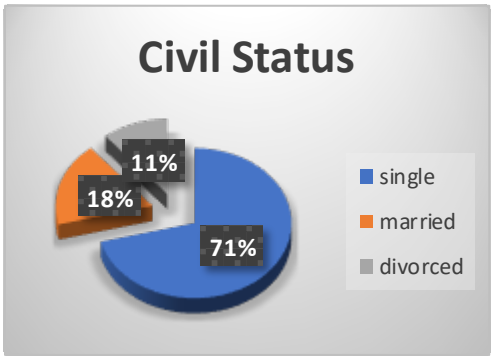
Age

Referring to the graph, 29% of the beneficiaries belong to the category up to 14 years old, 24% of them belong to the age group between 14 and 17 years old. Compared to 2020, there is an increase in the number of minor beneficiaries. Beneficiaries belonging to the age groups 19-25, 31-35 and over 36 years old make up 47% of cases.

Origin

About 80% of assisted cases during 2021 come from urban areas. *Regarding ethnicity*, about 40% of the cases belong to the Roma and Egyptian communities, exploited mainly for sexual purposes, begging and committing low criminal acts. Compared to last years, there is an increase in the number of beneficiaries belonging to minorities.



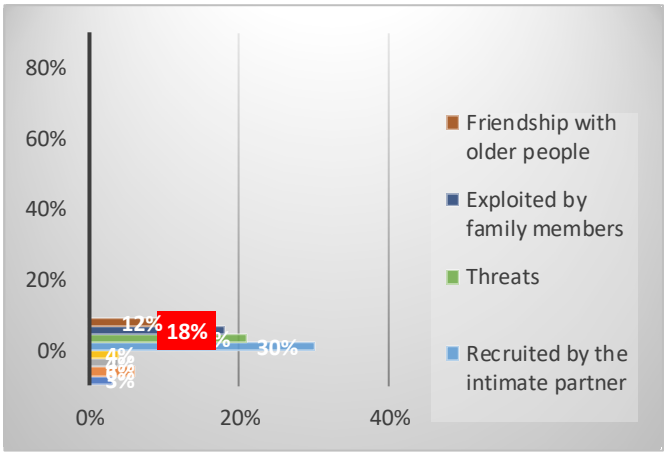


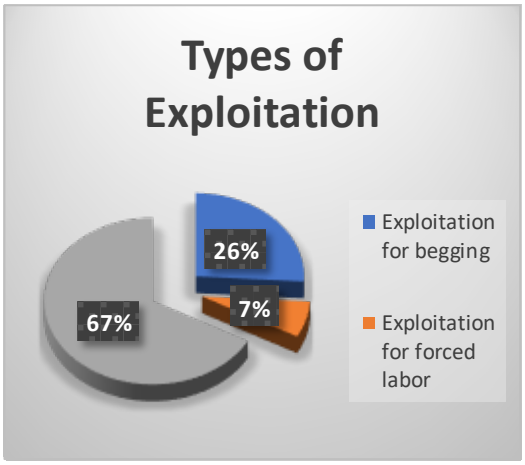
Civil Status

71% of assisted cases are single and 18% married (generally with children) and 11% divorced. Compared to 2020, there is an increase in married beneficiaries who have been exploited by their husbands (intimate partners).

Methods of recruitment and types of exploitation

Among the 66 cases assisted for the first time during 2021, most of the victims (24%) were recruited by their partners, (23%) by their family members, (22%) through false promises for marriage, (11%) forced labor and (20%) from criminal groups. Exploitation of the vulnerable situation and social media continue to remain the main ways of recruiting victims.





Types of exploitation

Regarding the ***types of exploitation***, 66% of the beneficiaries were exploited sexually, 7% exploited for forced labor and 27% exploited for begging. Of the 44 beneficiaries exploited sexually, 92% of them were exploited within the country and 8% abroad (Greece and Italy). Compared to 2020, there is a significant increase in the number of victims, mostly minors, exploited for begging within the country.

2.1 DIRECT ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING/POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

144 victims of human trafficking (66 new cases) and 87 children of victims were supported during 2021 with reintegration services.

2.1.1 Needs assessment, drafting of the assistance plan and case management

Professionals of the multidisciplinary group of the center have assessed the needs of the beneficiaries within 2 weeks after the referral and inclusion in the program, such as: need for long-term housing, psycho-social support, medical and legal assistance, mediation with the family, professional training, mediation for employment, education, etc. Assessments and individual intervention plan were carried out for the 66 surviving victims and 54 children of the victims assisted for the first time in the program. Assistance plans have been revised/applied for 78 beneficiaries of the program who were supported in the second and third

phase of the program. Every 3 months, a progress report is drafted for each of the cases included in the reintegration program.

Counseling and informative sessions are provided by case managers, at every step of the implementation of the assistance plan, mainly for the adaptation to the environment, information about shelter regulations, emotional stabilization, relationship with family and other beneficiaries, progress at school, employment, plans for the future, independent living, etc. Twice a month, meetings of the multidisciplinary group are conducted for the assessment and management of cases.

Specialists of the Center have participated in 15 meetings of the Inter-Sectoral Technical Group for the assessment of the needs, protection and support with services of eight children identified as potential victims of trafficking in the municipalities of Vlora, Berat, Fier, and Saranda.

2.1.2 Accommodation and security/housing

Housing for victims/potential victims of trafficking is provided in the shelter of Vatra and rented apartments.

Accommodation in the Shelter

During 2021, a total of 51 beneficiaries have been accommodated in the shelter of "Vatra", from which 32 victims of trafficking and 19 children of victims. 25 victims of trafficking and 18 children were new cases accommodated for the first time in the shelter.

The beneficiaries have benefited from safe housing service with 24-hour shelter protection, food, clothing and the full package of rehabilitation and reintegration services. Beneficiaries supported in the shelter have benefited from safe accommodation, basic services for a living (food, clothing, hygienic and sanitary materials), health and psycho-social services and counseling, educational and school services, legal services and counseling, mediation and strengthening of family relations, life skills and occupational and recreational activities, services for children of surviving victims, vocational support and support for economic empowerment, such as: mentored guidance for employment, vocational training, on-the-job training, employment mediation. In addition to the above-mentioned services, the beneficiaries of the shelter and children of beneficiaries, have benefited from weekly and monthly allowances, for the fulfillment of special needs and wishes, which do not constitute the fulfillment of basic needs.

Rented Apartment

33 beneficiaries and 20 children of beneficiaries have been financially supported with housing services in the community. Housing is provided in rented apartments and apart from the payment of the rented apartment, financial support is provided to meet basic needs (food, clothing, hygienic and sanitary materials). In addition, the beneficiaries in the rented apartment have also benefited from health, psychological, legal services, school and professional support, mediation for professional training and employment, support for their children, support for family members, mediation and information about the benefit of community services in the countries where they live, etc. Rented apartments, provided by the Vatra's program, depend on the needs that the beneficiaries present, from 3 to 12 months.

2.1.3 Medical assistance

67 beneficiaries of the three phases of the program have been assisted through **830** medical visits and have been supported with medications, medicines and specialized visits. During this period, the beneficiaries accommodated in the shelter and the community have been accompanied to health care institutions for medical visits and periodic examinations at Regional Health Care Directorate, Health Centers, Vlora Regional Hospital, "Aulona" Center etc.

For 10 beneficiaries of the program who have presented mental health problems of different levels, the staff of Vatra has collaborated with mental health specialists, "Ali Mihali" Psychiatric Hospital Vlora and the Community Mental Health Center Vlora as well as the Hospital for Children and Adolescents at the University Medical Center of Tirana.

Throughout this year, the beneficiaries accommodated in the shelter have been supported by a psychiatrist through periodic consultations and visits.

Table 2. Data on health problems and support

Physical health problems	Number of cases	Treatment
Gynecological problems	36	Medical visits at "Aulona" Center. Medications
Digestive problems (stomach, kidneys, colitis, etc.)	17	Cooperation with the Regional Hospital. Medications
Dental problems	43	Dental visits to the dental clinic. Medications
Seasonal virus	57	Cooperation with the Regional Hospital. Medications
COVID 19	10	Treatment according to the protocol against COVID 19/ tests and medications
Headache	22	Medications
Children's health problems	10	Cooperation with Vlora Regional Hospital and pediatrician. Medications
Hospitalization for various diseases	3	Cooperation with the Regional Hospital for hospital treatment

Mental health problems	Number of cases	Treatment
Borderline mental retardation	2	Counseling
Personality disorders	2	Counseling
Behavioral disorders	3	Specialized counseling and medication
Moderate mental retardation	3	Specialized counseling and medication

The doctor and nurse of the center have also provided health counseling and addressed topics related to health care for the beneficiaries of the program.

Photos from the infirmary of the shelter

2.1.4 Psychological assistance

337 individual counseling sessions, 12 group therapies and 24 group conversations were carried out by the psychologist of the center for the psycho-emotional support of 46 beneficiaries of the program and 19 children of the beneficiaries.

The psychologist of Vatra has offered psychological service as follows:

- Individual psychological counseling;
- Psychological assistance through individual sessions and group therapies;
- Psychological assessment, support and accompaniment of beneficiaries at law institutions such as Court, Prosecution, Police, etc.;
- Discussion on 24 psychological topics "Eating disorders", "Anxiety and stress management", etc

The psychological concerns have been of an *emotional, cognitive and behavioral* character listed as follows: elements of post-traumatic stress disorder, emotional fluctuations, feelings of guilt and shame, feelings of abandonment, anxiety, deep pessimism, elements of trauma and loss, developmental problems (developmental delay), irrational thinking, maladjustment, extreme fear, attempts at self-harm, lack of empathy, behavioral problems, feeding problems, problems with sleep and dream.

2.1.5 Mediation and strengthening of family relations

In order to strengthen the relations of the beneficiaries with their families and relatives, about **6415** phone conversations were carried out. 250 counseling through phone calls and 28 direct meetings were conducted with the families of 32 beneficiaries. *Establishing contacts with family members was carried out with the will of the beneficiaries.*

This service has been provided through continuous evaluation of the families of the beneficiaries of the program. Vatra's specialists have assessed whether or not returning to the family of origin poses a risk for the beneficiaries. As a result of strengthening relations with the family, 18 beneficiaries and 7 children of the beneficiaries have returned to the family of origin. The beneficiaries have continued to be supported with

reintegration services by "Vatra" Center even after leaving the shelter, in cooperation with local actors and other organizations that operate in the countries where they have returned.

2.1.6 Legal assistance

Through this service, legal counseling has been made possible for **32** beneficiaries and direct legal assistance has been provided in justice institutions and other institutions.

Legal service offered include:

- Individual legal counseling and information for each case;
- Support and accompaniment of the beneficiaries at law institutions, Vlora Local Police Directorate, Vlora Prosecution District Court, Vlora, Fier, Saranda District Court during the criminal/civil process against the traffickers;
- Counselling and information on the progress of the criminal/civil process;
- Equipment with means of identification and registration of children of beneficiaries in the Register of Civil Status;
- Obtaining the "Orphan" status;
- Equipment with the necessary documentation for the initiation of criminal and civil judicial cases;
- Informing the beneficiaries on legal topics such as "Trafficking in persons and the profile of victims of trafficking, their rights", "Law no. 37/2017 "Code of Criminal Justice for Minors", etc.

Types of criminal cases:

- 1 case was mediated and assisted in the Prosecutor's Office of Saranda District Court in cases with the object "Sexual Harassment";
- 1 case was mediated and assisted in Vlora Prosecution in cases with the object "Trial of two citizens", accused at the request of the mother of the beneficiary and the beneficiary, for the criminal offenses of "Other intentional damage" and "Insult", article 90, 119 of the Criminal Code;
- 1 case was mediated in Berat Prosecution District Court and represented in Berat District Court for the criminal offense "Trafficking of adults", Article 110/a, of the Criminal Code";
- 1 case was mediated by the lawyer during the investigation process at Vlora Prosecution Office of Vlora District Court for the criminal offense "Exploitation for prostitution", Article 114 of the Criminal Code.
- 8 cases have been represented in Vlora District Court in the case with the object "Issuance of the Immediate Protection Order" Law No. 9669 "On measures against violence in family relations" and was provided with an Immediate Protection Order.
- 1 case was mediated, accompanied by the Forensic Doctor, at Vlora Regional Hospital, for the examination of signs of violence, as well as contacts were established with the Prosecutor's Office of Saranda District Court regarding the prosecution of the beneficiary for the criminal offense "Domestic Violence", Article 130/a/4 of K.

Types of **civil cases**:

- 1 case was assisted at Saranda District Court for the case with the object "Divorce" as well as in the registration of her minor child at Konispol Civil Status Office, Saranda.
- 2 cases were mediated to obtain the "Orphan Status", for minor children,
- 1 case was assisted in the civil case "Execution of the decision for divorce", at Vlora Bailiff's Office;
- 13 women and girls have been financially supported for equipment with means of identification (ID card).

2.1.7 Educational assistance/education

After assessing the educational needs, **71** *beneficiaries, children and young people, potential victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence*, were supported with school supplies in the framework of the beginning of the new academic year 2021 - 2022 in Vlora, Fier, Berat, Durres, Diber, Kruja, Shkodra and Tirana.

The package included a school bag and all the necessary tools for the children to learn in optimal conditions and fulfill school needs. Part of the educational assistance are also the occupational activities conducted in the shelter such as: English language courses, courses and practice of knowledge of computer programs, reading and discussion of artistic books, various occupational games, etc.

Specialists of Vatra have mediated with the Child Protection Unit at Vlora municipality for the registration of 2 beneficiaries at the School of Persons with Mild Intellectual Disability.

Photos of school kits for the beneficiaries of the program

2.1.8 Support for the children of victims of trafficking

71 children of the beneficiaries in the shelter and community have been supported with accommodation services in the shelter and community, psychological service, meeting basic needs for food and clothing, health service and medications, educational assistance, meeting basic needs). For the 19 children accommodated in the shelter of "Vatra", special importance has been given to health care, food, education and entertainment. In the function of psychological well-being, the psychologist and other specialists have organized 30 conversation groups and special games.

2.1.9 Socio-cultural activities inside and outside the shelter

Increasing life skills. In order to increase life skills, activities such as: meal planning, weekly menu consultation and shopping, exercise of skills in the kitchen, home maintenance, hygiene, etc. have been conducted with the beneficiaries. In the shelter of "Vatra" have been established corners to practice professional skills in tailoring, hairdressing, and aesthetics, and the beneficiaries of the shelter practice the knowledge gained in the professional training courses.

Educational topic. 132 topics and 127 group discussions were conducted by social workers during the year. The topics have been selected depending on the problems encountered in management, the wishes of the beneficiaries, holidays and international days, etc.

Gardening. Beneficiaries accommodated in the shelter are involved in gardening activities in order to increase life skills and spend part of their free time in a useful and healthy way. All vegetables/fruits planted during a year in the shelter are consumed by the beneficiaries.

Bibliotherapy. In addition to individual readings, the beneficiaries are organized into groups for bibliotherapy, discussing topics and exploring their emotional state after reading novels and poems. They have also produced artistic creations, poems and essays which have been displayed in monthly artistic activities organized in the shelter.

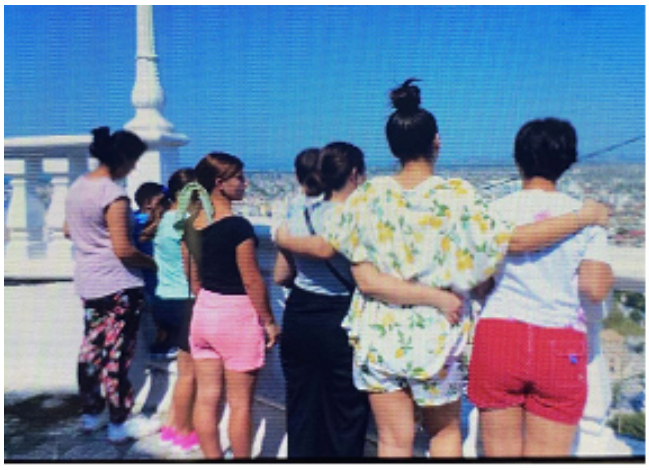
Literacy courses, English language courses and computer courses. The beneficiaries are included in English, computer courses and literacy courses twice a week.

Home cinema, birthday parties and national holidays. Vatra organizes home cinema nights during which the beneficiaries enjoy watching a movie, and every weekend for the beneficiaries in the shelter the staff organizes games, evenings with music and dancing.

Painting and creativity class. Painting and handicrafts (work with recyclable materials, embroidery, bracelets) are desirable creative activities for the beneficiaries in the shelter.

Photos from handicrafts made inside the shelter

The activities carried out outside the shelter are planned with the aim of the social and emotional development of the beneficiaries. In order to entertain the beneficiaries and strengthen group relations, throughout the year they have been part of 12 excursions outside the shelter (Tourist Park of Llogara, Old Orik, Old Amantia, Kanina, Berat, Kruje, etc,). During the months of July and August, the beneficiaries of the shelter have gone to the beach for 15 days.



Photos from activities made outside the shelter

2.1.10 Long-term monitoring (third phase of the program)

During 2021, 23 beneficiaries and 15 children of the beneficiaries were monitored and supported during the III phase of the program. The monitoring was carried out in cooperation with other organizations and State Social Service of Albania. Regular contacts have been maintained with the beneficiaries in order to support them with referral/mediation for services.

The main challenges faced by assisted cases in the community are related to: lack of long-term housing, lack of stable or suitable job for the beneficiaries with children, lack of financial and emotional support from the family of origin, economic inability to pay the fees of nursery/kindergarten for children and school books etc. The social group that monitors the cases, according to the needs, has addressed the relevant issues.

2.2 DIRECT ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND ALL TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Program beneficiaries

- ✓ **327 victims of sexual abuse and all types of violence and abuse (269 new cases) and 71 children of the victims have been supported during 2021 with rehabilitation and reintegration services.**
- ✓ **20 violent boys and men, of which 18 new cases and 2 ongoing cases have been counseled for their rehabilitation**. This service has been offered in order to reduce the incidence of violence against women, girls and their children.

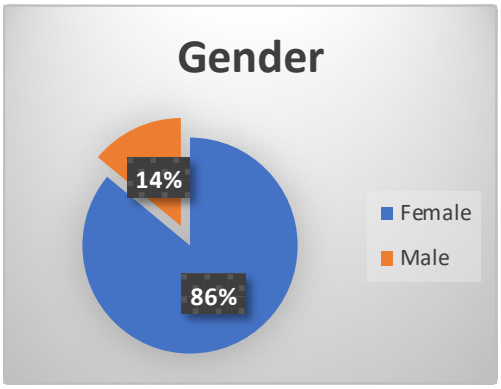
PROFILE OF VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE SUPPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING 2021

During 2021, a total of 347 beneficiaries have received legal and psychological services at Vatra Legal Clinic, of which: 327 beneficiaries were referred as victims of violence and 20 were referred as perpetrators.

From 327 cases, victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence, 269 cases are new, and 58 ongoing cases from previous years.

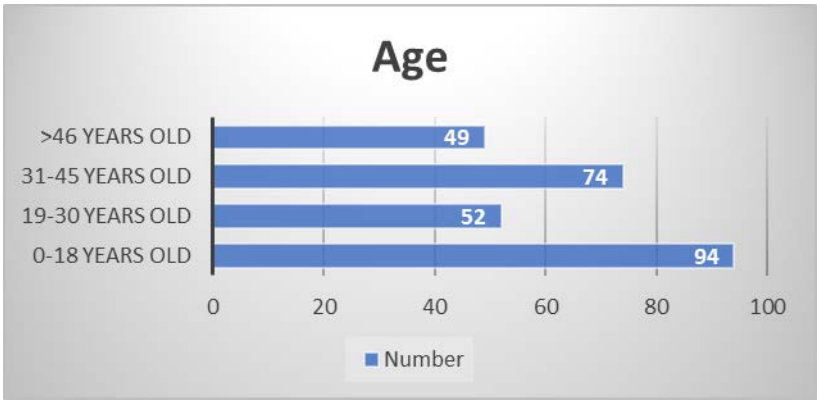
Gender

During 2021, a total of 269 new cases, victims of domestic violence, have been assisted. Among the victims of violence, 212 cases are female and 57 are men and boys.



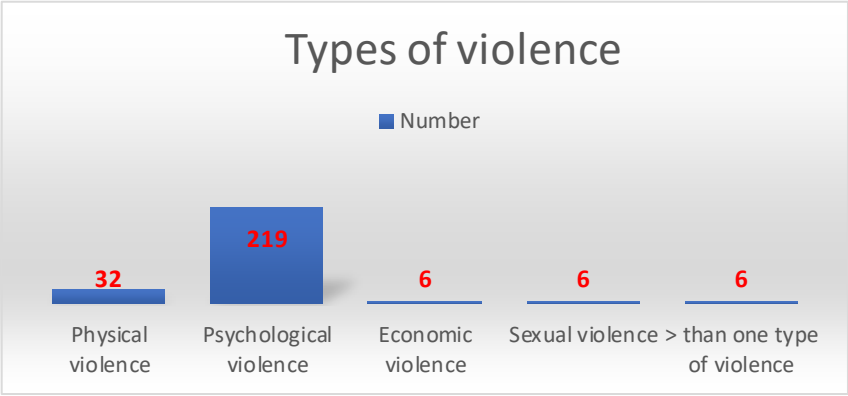
Age

Compared to last year, during which prevailed the age group of 31- 45, in 2021 the dominant age was 0 -18 years old, in total 94 cases (34.9%), which is followed by the age of 31- 45 years old, 74 cases (46.9%). The age group over 45 years old do not tent to seek services, 49 cases (18.2%). It is noted that the number of minors who report or are referred as victims of violence has increased.



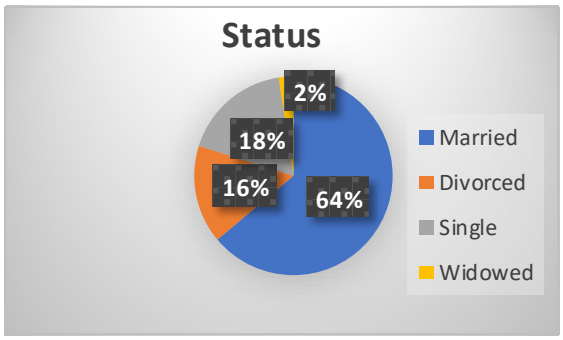
Types of violence

In recent years, greater importance has been given to the reporting of psychological violence. 219 cases or 81.4% have reported having been subjected to psychological violence, without the presence of physical violence, followed by 32 cases that have reported physical violence. Although 6 cases reported more than one type of violence, it is worth noting that all types of violence are associated with psychological consequences. There have been 6 cases reported as victims of sexual abuse.



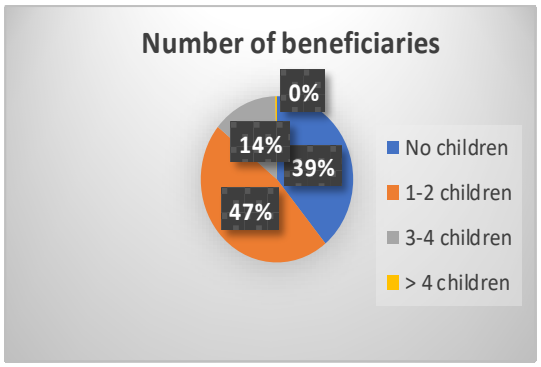
Civil Status

Among 269 cases in total, 108 report having obtained the "single" status. 30 of them are married, 27 of the cases report that they are divorced and only 4 of them have lost their partners. The high number of assisted minors also explains the high number of single beneficiaries.



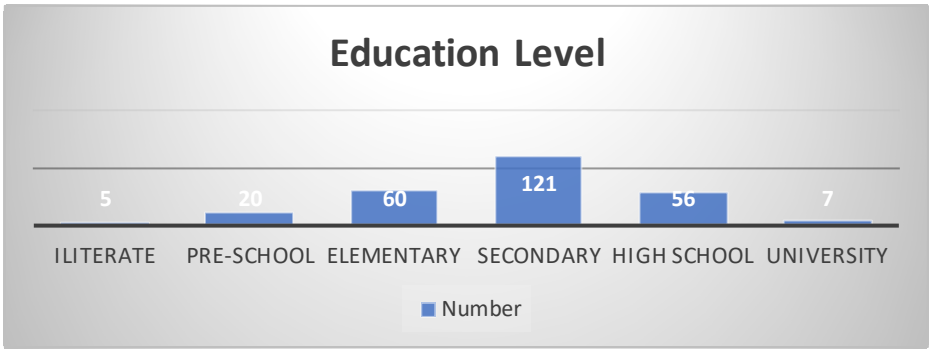
Children of the victims

Among 94 minors who received services referred as victims of violence, 53 were children of supported beneficiaries and 41 were supported as primary beneficiaries and were referred as victims of all types of violence. Regarding the number of children, 126 beneficiaries report having 1-2 children and only 1 beneficiary reports having more than 1 child.



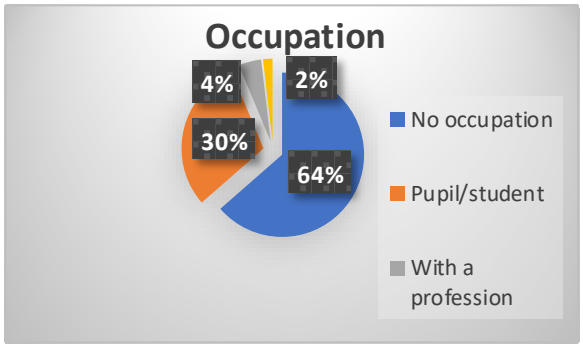
Education

121 of the beneficiaries report having finished secondary school. It is worth noting that 23 of the beneficiaries still continue this education cycle and 98 of them have finished it and have not continued with higher education. 5 beneficiaries have reported being illiterate and only 7 of the beneficiaries report having finished higher education.



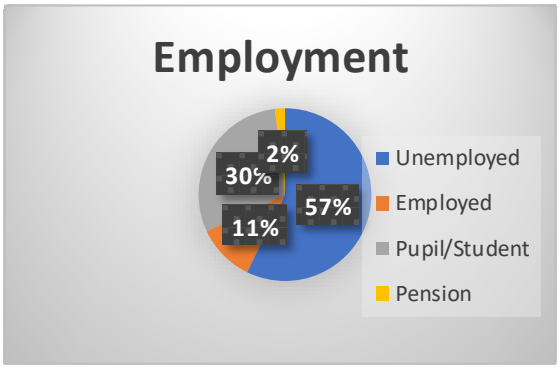
Occupation

63.5% of the beneficiaries who have received services report to have no profession. 81 of the beneficiaries still continue with their education and 12 beneficiaries are specialized in the fields such as tailoring, hairdressing, health, cooking, teaching, nursing, etc. The lack of a profession in the lives of victims of violence remains a major problem, making them vulnerable in the violence cycle.



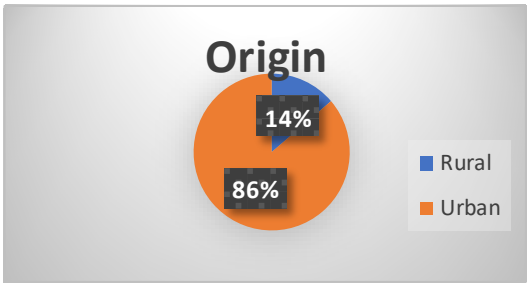
Employment

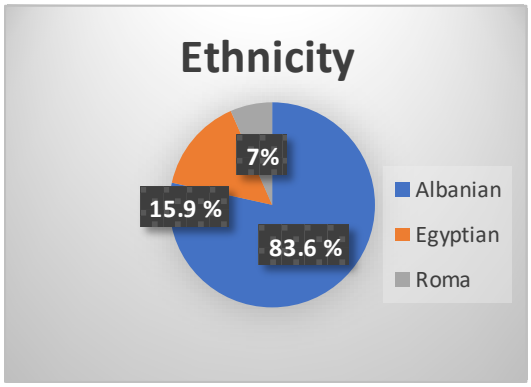
Employment continues to remain a key issue in the lives of the beneficiaries, as it affects directly their separation from the cycle of violence. 154 cases report being unemployed and only 29 cases report being employed in factories or in other private businesses. Also, due to their minor age, 81 of the cases still follow school.



Origin

As in previous years, this year as well, the highest number of reports come from beneficiaries from urban areas. Only 13.7% of them reported living in rural areas. Access in deep rural areas as well as a low level of awareness of issues related to the cycle of violence continue to be a problem.



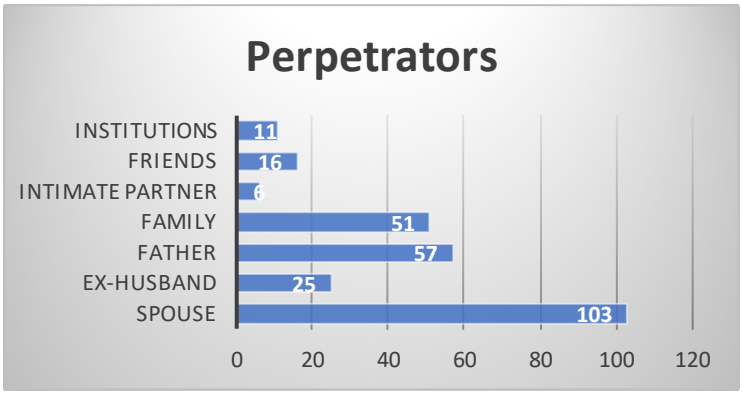


Ethnicity

225 of the cases belong to the Albanian ethnicity, which is a significant number. Only 43 of the cases belong to the Egyptian ethnicity and only 1 of the cases belongs to the Roma ethnicity. Due to cultural differences, the Egyptian and Roma ethnicities require fewer services, but according to other data, the phenomenon of violence is very widespread in these ethnicities as well.

Perpetrators

Violence in family relationships, specifically violence in couples remains the most widespread and most reported. 103 of the victims of violence reported to have been subject of violence by their husbands. 57 of them report that they have been violated by their father. The male figure in the family is more prone to exercise violence against family members. 51 of the cases have reported that they were violated by different individuals of the family circle such as mother, sister-in-law, father-in-law or mother-in-law, nephew, uncle as well as sister or brother. There is an increase in the number of individuals who have reported violence exercised by institutions. This violence has been psychological or economic.



Referral sources

123 of the new cases, victims of all types of violence referred to Vatra reported having heard about Vatra's services from members of the community. The community remains one of the main referral sources. This occurs as a result of awareness activities that Vatra realizes every year in rural and urban areas. 81 of the cases were referred by Vlora District Court, which has requested services from "Vatra" organization. There still is a problem of referral by Police Institutions as the first actor in which victims of violence seek help and protection. Only 5 of the cases were referred by the Police Station.

Referral sources	Number of cases
Community	**123**
Police	**5**
Court	**81**
LCAV	**35**
CPU	**5**
Bailiff's office	**6**
NGO	**5**
Prosecution	**5**
Vlora Orphanage	**4**
TOTAL	**269 cases**

Services provided for victims of violence

2.2.1 Legal Assistance

210 victims of violence have benefited from legal services provided by the lawyers of the Legal Clinic, from which 141 new cases and 69 ongoing cases. *98 victims of violence have benefited from legal counseling and 112 cases have benefited from legal assistance.*

The cases for which legal support has been provided have been of a criminal and civil nature in Vlora and Fier District Court , Vlora Court of Appeal, the Prosecution, the Police Station, the Civil Status Office, Regional Directorate of State Social Service, Directorate of Social Services and Economic Assistance in the municipality, etc. Below there is a table with the cases of legal issues for which beneficiaries have been represented and assisted:

Most frequent issues:	Other issues:
Divorce – 72 cases	**Moral and material compensation for two children - 1 case**
Divorce, IPO and PO – 5 cases	**Request for the issuance of the Execution Order - 1 case**
Immediate Protection Order – 4 cases	**Verification of the legal fact of being employed - 1 case**
Immediate Protection Order and Protection Order – 3 cases	**Obtaining the Orphan status – 2 cases**
Family guardian – 4 cases	**Reinstatement of the right to sue "Contestation of presumed paternity" - 2 cases**
Correction of the court decision – 2 cases	**Assistance/Mediation for ID – 1 case**

Appeal on the prosecutor's decision not to initiate criminal proceedings - 1 case	**Exercise of parental responsibility - 3 cases**
Authorization to cross the border together with the children - 1 case	**Domestic violence - 2 cases**
Stalking - 1 case	**Appeal against the decision of the prosecuting body of the criminal offense "Sexual harassment of a minor" - 1 case**
Change of the decision for divorce - 3 cases	**Appeal of the Court's decision on the case "Divorce" - 1 case**
Correction of the Court's decision on the case of "Divorce" - 1 case	**Appeal of the Court's decision on the subject matter "Exemption from taxes and court fees and expenses for an expert, compensation for moral and material damage" - 1 case**

2.2.2 Psychological assistance

138 girls and women victims of violence have been assisted with psychological support (counseling, assistance and psychological assessments). Psychological service is provided by the psychologist of the Center at the offices of the Legal Clinic, Local Police Directorate of Vlora, the Court, the Prosecution, Bailiff's Office and the online service.

At the request of Vlora District Court, District Prosecution Office and Bailiff's Office, the psychologist has provided psychological services to these institutions for **75 cases** involving women and girls, victims of violence and abuse, and minors, in cases of "Divorce", "Leaving the children for upbringing and education", "Domestic violence" and "Theft" committed in cooperation.

2.2.3 Support for accommodation in the shelter and rented apartments and other supportive services

47 victims of violence and 71 children of the victims have been financially supported with rented apartments and have also been accommodated in Vatra's shelter. Financial support for rented apartments varies from 3 to 6 months, depending on the needs of the beneficiaries.

Based on the assessment of needs, victims have been supported with multidisciplinary services to:

- meet nutritional needs,
- health consultations and visits,
- medications
- clothes for the victims and their children
- school supplies for children etc.

2.3 COUNSELING FOR VIOLENT MEN AND BOYS EXERCISING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

At the Legal Clinic, a counseling service for violent men and boys is offered. This service is offered to all men and boys who have experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence in the family.

The purpose of the service is to reduce the incidence of violence against women, girls and their children.

The social worker for abusive men and boys has assisted 20 boys and men who have had problems with violence and aggression through psycho-social counseling.

During this year, services for abusive men and boys has managed to build bridges of cooperation with the main institutions of Vlora.

1. Cooperation agreement with Vlora District Court

2. Cooperation agreement with Vlora Regional Police Directorate

3. Cooperation agreement with Vlora Probation Service

Cooperation has also been extended with other institutions of the city, such as the local coordinator of violence in the municipality of Vlora and Himara, as well as this service has been presented to the main institutions of the city, such as administrative units, the social service of Vlora Municipality, Aulona Center Vlora, as well as CPU of the city.

2.4 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING, VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

2.4.1 Counseling cycle for employment

The counseling cycle for employment aims to increase the skills and potentials of the beneficiaries in the function of more stable employment and better quality of life, given their individuality and wishes. 39 girls, women and boys victims of violence, trafficking and abuse participated in the counseling cycle

2.4.2 Vocational training

Vatra's staff followed the registration, course attendance and professional growth for 25 beneficiaries. The beneficiaries attended vocational training courses in aesthetics, tailoring, kitchen, hairdressing, plumbing and barbering at Vlora Vocational Training Center and "Violeta Ruzi" Vocational Training Center in Berat.

At the end of the professional course, all the beneficiaries were supported with packages of basic tools for practicing the profession.

2.4.3 On-the-job training (Internship). Vatra has followed and has supported financially with on-the-job training 14 beneficiaries victims of violence, trafficking and abuse. The trainings were carried out in kitchen/fast food, aesthetics, bakery, coffee bar, tailoring/embroidery, professional massages and logistic assistants. For 4 of the beneficiaries who were supported with on-the-job training, their employment was achieved in the private entity where they followed this process.

2.4.4 Mediation for employment and employment. In cooperation with Vlora Employment Office and private entities, Vatra's staff mediated the employment of 85 beneficiaries and employment and monitoring was achieved for 44 beneficiaries in factories (tailoring), restaurant, call center, pastry shop, hairdresser, beauty center, hotel reception, mosaic company, etc. Stable employment continues to remain one of the main challenges in the process of reintegration of victims of trafficking.

2.4.5 Support for setting up micro-businesses. During this year, **Vatra has supported financially the establishment of 7 micro-businesses for 7 beneficiaries**. The micro-businesses for the production of jam,

hairdressing/aesthetics, offices for evaluations and psychological therapy, hairdressing, aesthetics and tailoring are supported with the complete package for microbusiness establishment, counseling, and instructions aiming the maximization of income and monitoring. After the identification, together with the representatives of the micro-businesses, a business plan was built in accordance with the needs of each of the businesses. At the same time, trainings were conducted regarding the keeping of business accounts and their approach to the process of fiscalization. An important matter to be solved was the physical security of the business and the equipment with fire extinguishers in case of possible danger. Through continuous consultations, micro-businesses have also been supported with knowledge on the visibility and publication of their activities and services in social networks.

Photos from microbusinesses established with the financial support of Vatra during 2021

III. CAPACITY BULDING FOR EMPLOYEES OF STATE STRUCTURES AND NGOs FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ANTI-TRAFFICKING AND ANTI-VIOLENCE POLICIES

- ✓ **602 specialists representing local institutions in 12 districts of the country, responsible for the identification and protection of victims/potential victims of trafficking have been trained and mentored on the identification and protection of victims, based on the legislation and policies in force.**

- ✓ **235 specialists representing local structures in 12 districts of the country, responsible for providing services to victims of domestic violence/gender-based violence, have been trained to provide quality services and effective models.**

3.1 Trainings with local anti-trafficking intuitions and NGOs

550 specialists from responsible local anti-trafficking institutions, representatives of police structures (police, border police, judicial police officers), education (psychologists, social workers and teachers), health, SSS/CPU (social administrators in the Municipality, Labor Inspectorate) participated in **31** trainings on the topic *"Recognition and implementation of the rights of victims/potential victims of trafficking, their identification and protection by anti-trafficking actors"*. The trainings took place in Berat, Durres, Fier, Vlora, Tirana, Elbasan, Lezha, Korca and Gjirokastra.

Specifically:

- 125 employees from police structures (police, border police, judicial police officers)
- 139 employees from educational structures (psychologists, social workers and teachers)
- 159 employees from public health institutions (nurses, doctors, psychologists, social workers)
- 127 employees from the structures of SSS/ CPU/ Labor Inspectorate

were trained during the trainings organized in the above-mentioned cities.

Photos from trainings with anti-trafficking structures

3.2 Trainings with local institutions responsible for the protection of victims of gender-based violence

136 specialists, representatives of police structures (police and judicial officers, Local Coordinators against Violence, SSS/CPU (social administrators in the Municipality and representatives from local NGOs) participated in **12** trainings on the topic "*Good practices for the social and legal protection of victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence"*. The trainings took place in the districts of Berat, Durres, Fier, Vlora, Tirana, Elbasan, Lezha, Korca, Gjirokastra, Dibra, Kukes and Shkodra.

Specifically:

- 35 employees from police structures (police, judicial police officers)
- 40 employees from the structures of SSS/ CPU
- 30 local coordinators against violence
- 31 representatives from NGOs.

were trained in the trainings organized in the above-mentioned cities.

Part of the discussions during the trainings were also research questions (focus group) with the aim of involving and engaging the participants on the topic of practices followed for the management of violence to ensure the social and legal protection of the victim of gender-based violence or domestic violence.

Photos from the trainings with structures against violence

99 specialists, representatives of police structures (police and judicial officers), health (nurses, doctors), Local Coordinators against Violence, Inter-sectoral Technical Group and SSS/CPU (social administrators in Municipalities) participated in **10** trainings with the **topic** ***"Management of reported cases of domestic violence during crises, including cases of natural disasters and health emergencies such as Covid-19 pandemic, also in accordance with the provisions of the law on measures against violence in family relations"*** **as well as** ***"Management of common cases of victims of trafficking and other returnees in Albania"***. The trainings took place in the districts of Berat, Gjirokastra, Fier and Vlora.

Specifically:
- 32 employees from police structures (police, judicial police officers)
- 24 employees from health facilities (nurses, doctors)
- 23 employees from the structures of SSS/CPU (Local Coordinators against Domestic Violence and Child Protection Employee)
- 20 specialists of the Inter-Sectoral Technical Group

were trained in the trainings organized in the above-mentioned cities.

Photos from trainings

3.3 Workshops

The Mobile Unit of Vatra Center in Dibra carried out **4 workshops with 52** representatives from the local authority, municipality, the Regional Directorate of Social Services, the Police, Civil Affairs, health institutions, educational institutions and student governments, in Shupenze and Zerqan Administrative Unit.

During the meetings, the main issues of trafficking and the concrete work being conducted in the field were discussed, and the attendees were informed about the support services offered to victims of trafficking.

Photos from focus-groups in the district of Dibra

Throughout the year, the staff of "Vatra" Center has been trained and has participated in workshops related to issues regarding human trafficking, protection of victims' rights, the recognition and implementation of the New Action Procedures for the protection of victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking, knowledge of child protection policies, etc. Below is a summary of the training Vatra's staff received during the year:

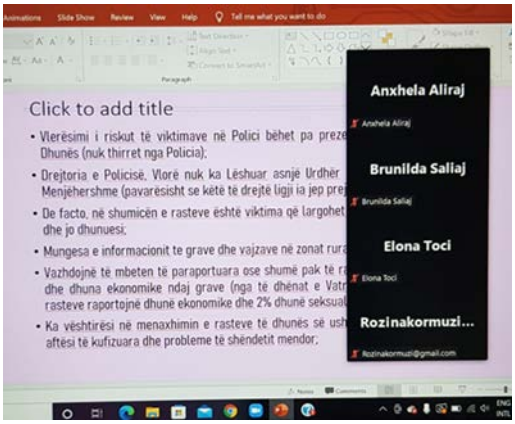
- July 9, 2021- Training cycle focusing on training in supporting micro-businesses, organized by @progettoalive CIES Albania.
- July 2021- Training, on the topic "Psycho-social intervention for unaccompanied children", organized by CODE Albania;
- October 6-7, 2021- Workshop "Child safeguarding policies for women's shelters", organized by WAVE;
- October 14 – 15 - Training on "Identification, referral and assistance to victims of trafficking during the Covid-19 crisis as well as in other crisis situations", organized by the Prefect of Vlora District and "Other Vision";
- December 1-2, 2021 - Participation in the training on "Out of the box approaches for tackling the backlash against women's human rights", organized by WAWE;
- December 9, 2021 - Participation in the training on the topic "Advanced psychological counseling techniques with targeted groups: victims of trafficking, sexual abuse, domestic violence", organized by TDH, etc.

IV. LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY IN PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN, GIRLS AND CHILDREN VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING, ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

Vatra's experts are involved in local, national and international initiatives aiming the improvement of the legislation and social policies at all levels.

4.1 At the local level

For the fourth year in a row, Vatra has cooperated with the Directorate of Social Services and Economic Assistance to draft a list of children who will attend crèche and kindergarten free of charge during the year.



Vatra has conducted an online meeting with the Women's Alliance of Vlora Municipal Council to discuss the challenges and difficulties faced by victims of domestic violence in Vlora Municipality. In this meeting, the Alliance and Vatra decided to undertake several initiatives aiming at the improvement of services offered in the protection of women and girls victims of violence.

As a result of advocacy work that Vatra has done during 2021 at the local level, 15 former victims of human trafficking and violence have been included in the social housing system, covered by the budget of Vlora Municipality. Also, 22 children of victims of violence and human trafficking have been supported by Vlora municipality with the payment of the kindergarten fee.

4.2 At the national level

- Vatra as member of National Referral Mechanism for victims of human trafficking has participated in a consultation meeting for the drafting of the new Antitrafficking Action Plan 2021-2023, which has been approved with Decision of the Council of Ministers, No. 670, dated 10.11.2021. During the consultation meeting Vatra and other members of National Coalition of Anti-trafficking Shelters advocated to include in the new Action Plan the drafting of a new specific and comprehensive law with a the focus on the protection of victims of human trafficking. This recommendation has been supported by other members of the National Referral Mechanism and has been taken into consideration by the Ministry of Interior/ Office of National Antitrafficking Coordinator to include it in the new action plan 2021-2023.

- During 2021 Vatra's experts have provided contribution on the drafting of a Protocol for the Management of cases of sexual violence against adults, at the local level through a coordinated multi-sectorial approach. This protocol has been produced by UNDP, Albania.

- Vatra as member of AWEN network was involved in the initiatives of 28 organizations in gathering 22 000 citizen signatures for the drafting and approval of a new law on the creation of the National Registry for perpetrators of sexual acts. 28 organizations achieved to gather 22 000 signatures and the draft of the new law was presented by a group of organizations (Vatra

was among these organizations) to the Law Commission of Parliament. The draft law is under consideration to be revised and approved by the Albanian parliament.

- Vatra joined the **protests** and **marches** organized by the civil society in Tirana, Elbasan and Rreshen during the months of May, September and November with the aim of raising the awareness of society and institutions that killing, wounding, rape and violence against women are all crimes and a violation of the right to life..

Photos from the protests in Tirana and Rreshen

Vatra, as a member of the URAT network, was involved in an awareness campaign[9] in the fight against human trafficking. The video aimed to learn from the victims' experiences and turn their suggestions into concrete actions, leading to a victim-centered approach and more efficient response to the phenomenon. As every year, on February 8, the network celebrated the "International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking". This year's activity was focused on the theme "Economy without trafficking".

Other initiatives where Vatra has engaged efforts in the fight against trafficking, violence and abuse:

- At the conference "Joint efforts to combat human trafficking in Albania", organized by the OSCE Presence and the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for the fight against human trafficking, Vatra presented an exhibition of paintings of trafficking survivors.

- In the meeting with the partners of the anti-trafficking program, supported by UNICEF Albania, Vatra was engaged in order to improve the action for coherence, increase and coordination of the local presence and sustainability of the intervention.

- In the meeting with the Ambassador of the United States in Tirana, Mrs. Kim, Vatra engaged with some of the leaders of the civil society in Albania regarding their role and the needs of the citizens, placing emphasis on the issues related to trafficking and violence.

- Public reactions for the protection of women and girls throughout the year by condemning the language used to bully the figure of women in politics and in the media. These reactions have

[9] https://www.facebook.com/URATnetwork/videos/1940033699499569

also been realized with the support of AWEN, the Monitoring Network Against Gender-Based Violence, etc.

4.3 At the international level

Representatives of Vatra participated and contributed to the training organized by UNODC on the topic "Active involvement of civil society in the fight against corruption", in Belgrade, Serbia. The training brought together the efforts of 28 civil society organizations and state institutions from the Western Balkans, to identify ways in which civil society can be actively involved in the implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

- As every year, Vatra has contributed to the annual thematic **report of the "UN Special Rapporteur on a practical approach to dealing with the sale and sexual exploitation of children",** which will be presented at the 49th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2022. The report will be uploaded on the official website of the UN Special Rapporteur.

- As an active organization and part of the national anti-trafficking and anti-violence mechanisms based on gender and with several years of expertise in this field, Vatra is invited to contribute to important reports of international institutions such as the Report on Trafficking in Persons (TIP REPORT) of the US Department of State for 2021, the Council of Europe Progress Report on Albania 2021. Regarding the latest report of more than 10 years with the support of Kvinna Till Kvinna Foundation in Sweden, Vatra participates in direct consultative meetings with high-level representatives of the Council of Europe, the European Commission and members of the European Parliament in Brussels.

For all the above reports, Vatra provides input on the situation of human trafficking and gender-based violence in Albania, issues related to the rights of victims as well as recommendations for the improvement of Albanian anti-trafficking and anti-violence policies and legislation.

The findings and recommendations that Vatra has shared with the US Embassy in Tirana, the Council of Europe are considered important and many of them are reflected in the respective reports.

- During 2021, Vatra together with the 10 Awarded Member Organizations of Child 10 Award 2021, have jointly contributed to put child trafficking on the international agenda and give organizations working on the ground a voice in key decision making processes. In this framework, Vatra was part of the joint advocacy initiative addressed to national and regional policymakers on the EU Anti-Trafficking Day on 18 October. The joint call focused specifically on preventing child trafficking for sexual exploitation and countering the growing normalization of commercialization of girls' bodies by educating children on trafficking and sexual exploitation of children online and offline, as well as on healthy relationships, children's understanding of sexual consent and equality between genders.

4.4 Production and distribution of a study as a tool of advocacy

In 2021, Vatra conducted a study on "**Compatibility of the Albanian legal framework with the Acquis Communautaire of the European Union in the field of the fight against human trafficking"**[10]. The purpose of the study is to contribute, through its results, to the strengthening of the protection system of victims of trafficking in Albania, specifically with regards to improving the Albanian legislation on the protection of victims' rights.

The objectives of the study are:

• To explore the compliance of the Albanian anti-trafficking legislation with the Acquis Communautaire of the European Union (EU) in the area of combating THB.

• To recommend improvements to the legislation in those directions that would contribute to a complete and effective protection of the rights of THB victims.

The study is organized in five chapters: in the first two chapters the study provides the legal acts of the EU aqcuis, related to the area of the fight against human trafficking, followed by the regulatory mechanisms of the Albanian legal framework in the fight against this phenomenon. The basic part of the study addressed in the third and fourth chapters provides an analysis of the compliance between the existing legal standards with those of the EU, both in the area of THB and the rights of victims. The fifth chapter provides recommendations to harmonize the legislation in cases of lack of compliance.

The study has been published and distributed to local, national and international agencies, as well as distributed on Vatra's official website and social media.

[10] http://www.qendravatra.org.al/previewdoc.php?file_id=719

V. VATRA'S AWARD DURING 2021

Vatra Center is one of the 10 organizations awarded in Europe with the award "Girls' rights have no price" from Child10 Awards 2021, for the contribution given in the fight against human trafficking. On October 18, on the EU International Day against Human Trafficking, 10 European civil society organizations received their Child10 Award by Her Majesty Queen Silvia.at the Royal Castle in Stockholm, Sweden.

Among these organizations was also Vatra, which, together with the other nine organizations was awarded for its work against human trafficking and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation of girls and women.
..."Thank you for your exceptional work in combating trafficking and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children. Organizations such as yours, working directly with these children, either in person or online, are essential in order to guarantee a safe environment for children to seek help", said HM Queen Silvia during her speech.

Networking

During 2021, Vatra becama e member of "La Strada International" Network and signed the declaration for ensuring the promotion and effective protection of human rights for all surviving victims of human trafficking.

VISITS FROM NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

During 2021 Vatra center has been visited by the Minister of Health and Social Protection, Mrs. Ogerta Manastirliu and the Ambassador of Norway in Kosovo, Mr. Jens Erik Grondahl.

The exchange of information on the situation of trafficking and gender-based violence in Albania, the work and challenges encountered in the identification and protection of victims of trafficking were the focus of these meetings.

Photo from the visit of the Minister of Health and Social Protection at the Shelter, as well as the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway in Kosovo

VI. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

For the realization of the activities undertaken and the services it offers in the framework of the projects implemented by Vatra, there is a wide network of local, national and international cooperation. The following table gives a picture of the collaborators and partners of "Vatra" Psycho-Social Center.

ASSOCIATES	PURPOSE OF THE COLLABORATION
Ministry of Interior / Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator	Strengthening the referral system and managing of cases of victims of trafficking; exchange of information, organization of joint anti-trafficking activities, case reporting to the Responsible Authority, etc.
Regional Police Directorates	Referral of cases for assistance; providing security during the accompaniment of victims to law enforcement institutions when they have reported traffickers, reporting, etc.
Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP)	Joint activities, financing of food for the beneficiaries in the shelter, financing of the salaries of the specialized staff of the rehabilitation program, referral of cases for assistance, inspection of services, support for solving the problems of cases with special health needs, referral of cases.
State Social Service (SSS) at central and regional level in the districts; Labor Inspectorate	Joint activities, inspection of shelter services, referral of cases for assistance, reporting, etc.
Regional Employment Directorates/Offices	Referral of cases for assistance, referral of cases for mediation for employment and involvement in employment promotion programs, joint awareness activities, etc.
Regional Vocational Training Directorates / Vocational Training Centers	Cooperation for the provision of vocational training for victims of trafficking and gender-based violence, joint awareness-raising activities, etc.
Directorate of Public Health, Vlora Regional Hospital, "Ali Mihali" Hospital Vlora	Health assistance, referral of mutual cases for assistance.
Ministry of Education; Regional Education Directorates Vlora, Fier, Berat, Gjirokastra; School directorates in districts.	Joint activities, facilitation by the Ministry and RED in the districts for the realization of awareness-raising activities in schools, referral of cases for assistance, etc.
Municipalities and Administrative Units of the whole country	Referral of cases for assistance; cooperation in the organization and development of awareness activities
National Coalition of Ant i-Trafficking Shelters NCATS, JAC etc.	Mutual referral of cases for assistance; lobbying and advocacy for the protection of the rights of victims of crime, joint activities at

	national and international level etc.
AWEN, URAT, RENATE, WAVE, LA STRADA INTERNATIONAL	Mutual referral of cases for assistance; lobbying and advocacy for the protection of the rights of victims of crime, joint activities etc.
Regional Anti-trafficking Committee / Anti-trafficking Technical Table Vlora	Referral and addressing the needs of victims; coordination of actions to fulfill needs; joint awareness activities, etc.
Vlora District Prosecution, Vlora District Court	Referral of cases for assistance; joint activities.
Vlora Municipality, Directorate of Social Services and Economic Assistance, Local Coordinator against Violence, Child Protection Unit	Funding for operational costs for Vatra Counseling Center, referral and case management, field identification of cases of children in street situation, joint awareness activities, etc.
Vlora Regional Council	Mediation for financing from MHSP funds for the salaries of rehabilitation program specialists, case referral, joint activities, etc.
Network of Women's Organizations in the Western Balkans, supported by Kvinna Till Kvinna Foundation	Advocacy and lobbying at the European Commission, Brussels for women's rights; joint activities.