ANNUAL REPORT 2007

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Acknowledgements

2007 was a special year for all of us because Vatra has been in operation for ten years since its creation. In retrospect, we are satisfied that Vatra has evolved since 1997. It has developed and strengthened in its adaptation to the evolution of the country during this decade. Vatra now presents itself as a powerful, active organisation and is always willing to protect the rights of Albanian women and children all over the world.

In this acknowledgement, I do not wish to present Vatra`s ten-year history since its work, achievements and the contribution it has provided for the two fields most problematic to our society, namely, "the human trafficking phenomenon" and that of "domestic violence" which have been part of its work for years.

With women and young people as the focus of our work as the two main groups in our society, we have worked and fought to develop and strengthen the social status of women in Albania in order to inform and educate young people with the best moral and patriotic values of our country. This is with the intention of raising a healthy generation which is dignified to suit a democratic and emancipated society.

An abundance of research and work has been carried out over the last ten years. Nevertheless, we have certainly not been alone. We have been supported and valued by all. We have received international

awards and certificates, we have been visited by the Ministry, Members of Parliament and Euro-Members of Parliament from different countries of the world, by Ambassadors and Directors of international organizations and those of the state institutions in the country, however, above all we have received the indefinite gratitude of the vulnerable strata of the society that has required our support.

Vatra would like to express warm gratitude to all of those who have worked with us and supported us during the years, specifically to our long-standing donors such as: The American Embassy, The Embassy of the United Kingdom, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), CAAHT (with funds of USAID), Kvinna Till Kvinna (Sweden), Sigrid Rausing Trust (London), OSBE/ODIHR, Save The Children, UNICEF, Amnesty International, Anti Slavery International, IOM, The World Bank etc.

Vera Lesko
Executive Director

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ACTUAL SITUATION OF HUMAN BEING TRAFFICKING DEVELOPMENT FOR 2007

Comparing the actual situation to the phenomenon illustrated above; we emphasise that the situation has not changed significantly in relation to the development of human trafficking.

During 2007, the phenomenon has been sustained and is on the increase. This is due to the decrease of the standard of living in Albania and the increase of unemployment on a large scale. We have illustrated the true situation of the phenomenon in Albania within the interim narrative reports. The problems concerning the phenomenon, which Vatra has continuously made available to related institutions, were proven even in the EU report in which Albania continues to be ranked as a place with a high level of corruption, organised crime and illegal trafficking.
What Vatra has identified during this year is that internal trafficking has developed into an increased concern in our society.

Internal trafficking

Internal trafficking is a phenomenon that has not been dealt with properly. Neither the NGOs nor the state have come up with a study on the number of women and girls included in this phenomenon: the ways in which it has developed, the elements, level of expansion, the problems it generates etc. We have defined internal trafficking as the exploitation of women and girls in daily prostitution. It is known

that prostitution in Albania is punishable by law therefore, it is conducted secretly and in a well-protected way. Although the media continuously provides accounts on the actions that police undertake in some hotels and motels in big cities where traffickers, victims or clients are caught, the action taken against this phenomenon is not strong enough to cease this illegal activity. The actions are sporadic and not strategically planed. The analysis applied to the phenomenon provides evidence of an increase in the number of the victims of trafficking.

During the interviewing of **45** trafficked girls exploited abroad, 20 of them confessed that they had been exploited even within the country. If we add to this figure the 19 endangered women and girls exploited in the country; the report of external trafficking and internal trafficking is almost equal. Taking into account that internal trafficking is conducted secretly and that it is not policed properly is concerning. The government does not admit this phenomenon exists and does not take any measures to prepare an action plan to resolve it. This has allowed traffickers not only to become more efficient at trafficking, it has boosted profits considerably whilst also increasing the number of women allowing themselves to be exploited daily. Due to extreme poverty, women and girls descending from rural areas near big cities, can be found on the streets in order to provide for their families. Various agents or protectors recruit them by capitalising of their vulnerability, find clients for them and share the profits.

From the analysis of the phenomenon, the victims of internal trafficking can be divided into four categories:

- Women and girls, married and divorced, with many children and extremely poor, who come from rural areas
- Minor girls between the ages of 14 and 18 years old
- Students, living on campus, descending from other cities or rural areas
- Trafficked women and girls repatriated by EC countries

Victims of the First Category:

These underprivileged and unemployed women living in villages close to the cities without any support, travel to the city where they prostitute themselves on a daily basis, for payment ranging from 500 to 1000 lek per client.

Prostitution is carried out in the early hours of the morning until midday, at which time they return home. Clients and those interested in prostitutes already know where to find the "goods", namely in hotels and motels and know how much the service costs, etc. Prostitution is most prolific in Tirana, Durresi, and Vlora etc.

The Second Group are Minors:

This is the most at risk group and bears serious health concerns, not only due to the young age, but also because of violent abuse they are subjected to. Minor girls between the ages of 14 and 17 years are secondary or high school girls, lied to and threatened by their boyfriends who exploited into prostitution daily. Their trafficking, endured violence and uncontrolled exploitation has forced these young victims to endure unwanted pregnancies. So, during this year 8 minor pregnant girls between the ages of 14 and 17 years of age have been accommodated in the shelter. All of them belong to Roma and

Egyptian communities. Minors coming from these communities are the most at risk victims to be exploited into prostitution however, they are mistreated by traffickers and abused by clients who oblige them into unprotected intercourse. Their clients can be ordinary people or those affected by substance addictions which can in turn, risk the lives of the victims. The diseases they contract or the unwanted pregnancies of these women has at times, put their lives at risk.

The Third Group, Campus Students:

Another group placed at risk by traffickers are students from other cities, living on campuses at universities. These girls being far away from their families, express themselves in terms of experimenting with alternative clothing and behaviour, leaving them vulnerable to procurement of traffickers. Their clients are specifically selected people, married men, businesspeople, professors, lawyers, politicians etc. These clients pay considerable amounts for every kind of service offered. Since the girls facilitate this kind of exploitation voluntarily it is difficult to evidence and combat this phenomenon. These girls often "work" alone, without agents and they manage themselves, receiving full profit for their services. However, there are cases of traffickers or agents monitoring their daily activity and make threats and use blackmail to obligate the victim to "work" for them.

The Fourth Group, Repatriated Victims from EC Countries:

The victims of prostitution are older due to many years of exploitation in prostitution within various countries of EC. Their return to their places of origin, facing the impossibility to adapt and reinte-

grate, forces them to exploit themselves in daily prostitution until they find a way in which to leave Albania again.

Methods of Recruitment:

The methods employed by traffickers to recruit women and girls into prostitution are as follows:

1. Voluntarily
2. False engagements
3. Threats and blackmail via naked videos recorded with mobile phones

This phenomenon is carried out not only the hotels and motels in the suburbs of the cities' but also in abandoned houses or rented apartments.

Increase of the Number of Victims Due to Domestic Violence

Another phenomenon observed this year is the inclusion of sexually abused women within networks of internal trafficking. This phenomenon has attracted our attention because of the data collected by the staff during interviews carried out with sexually abused women counselled by us within and out with the shelter. Although figures are not high due to the lack of institutions to address this target group, it is important to be treated and analysed as a phenomenon, in order for us to take the necessary measures to prevent it.

Family crime is present in many Albanian families, particularly in rural areas. Many women descending from these areas, due to the violence they endure at the hands of their husbands or other family members, leave home and are often at risk of inclusion into the net-

works of human trafficking. Our centre provides supported accommodation to an increasing number of women and can also make referrals to other centres for the provision of accommodation. In the last few months, 9 sexually abused women have received treatment at Vatra, some of which were involved in daily prostitution.

The awareness of state institutions, civil society and the community in general in relation to the risk of domestic violence increase, has particular importance in this situation in order to target all negative phenomena that are a product of violence in general.

Given the above analysis, we think that Albania is actually facilitating the following forms of human trafficking:

1. Trafficking of women and girls and their exploitation abroad
2. Internal trafficking

From the above analysis, the phenomenon of internal trafficking, the way it is developing and the lack of government action being taken, results in Albania being considered as a primary destination for this phenomenon.

PROJECT
May 2007 – April 2008

Shelter for trafficked, clandestine, abused and ar risk women and girls.

Financed by:

- Sigrid Rausing TRUST
- Kvinna Till Kvinna (KTK)
- Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)
- CAAHT with funds of USAID-it
- OSBE/ODHIR

The aim of the project is to reduce the number of trafficked victims and to facilitate their reintegration into society via the services offered within and out-with the shelter.

The year 2007 is the sixth year of the functioning of the shelter, established in 2001, as a project financed by the Organisation "Save the Children", in Albania.

In 2001, the shelter was established as a welcoming and accommodating centre for female victims of human trafficking. In 2003, "Vatra" extended its focus not only to the rehabilitation of the victims but also to their reintegration within society thus facilitating the increase of the number of victims in receipt of this service. From 2003, the shelter has accommodated woman and girls who are victims of human trafficking and during the last two years, we have also accom-

modated victims of domestic violence. The reason for this is due to the lack of residential centres of this nature in Southern Albania. Violence against women is present in many Albanian families today, especially in the rural areas. Many of these women leave their homes because of the violence they suffer at the hands of their husbands or family members and they are often at risk of being incorporated into networks of human trafficking. The number of women accommodated at VATRA and referred to other centres progressively increases. During this year, **11** abused girls have received treatment, some of which have been exploited in daily prostitution.

ACTIVITIES

During this year, the staff at the shelter have successfully continued to carry out the existing activities of the project and have also developed additional activities within its framework .

Accommodation

During the year 2007, **126** women and children have received services and have been accommodated by the shelter. Based on interviews carried out by the professional staff at the shelter, it transpired that out of the aforementioned **126** women, there were:

- 45 girls and women were victims of trafficking (accommo dated for the first time)
- 8 girls and women were victims of trafficking (accommodat ed more than once in the shelter)
- 23 were at risk
- 29 clandestine

- 11 abused
- 9 children
- 1 male child at risk of being trafficked

Rehabilitation

All service users accommodated in the shelter within the framework of the rehabilitation process have undertaken the services provided such as health assistance, legal counselling and assistance, individual and in-group psycho-emotional counselling, family counselling and it has been geared towards their inclusion in society.

Health Assistance

During their period of residence in the shelter, the service users receive health care from the doctor and the nurse based within the shelter. Service users also have access to specialists such as: psychiatrists, haematologists, neurologists, gynaecologists, opticians, dentists etc. Vatra has received the co-operation of these health professionals for many years.

During the course of the year, there have been 210 visits from health-care professionals. 121 of these cases have been treated for problems such as: bronchitis, colitis, gastritis, tonsillitis, pharyngitis, influenza etc. 33 service users have been treated in relation to pregnancy, gynaecological, optometry, dental and neurological problems

Additionally, assessing the rate of the risk of the contraction of STDs, the shelter's staff along with the support of medical professionals, have promoted the service users' awareness of sexual health and administer diagnostic tests. This year, 15 service users tested positive

for HIV, HEPATITIS B, AIDS, etc. This was made possible by the cooperation of the QUOVADIS Centre in Vlora. One of the girls tested positive for hepatitis B.
In collaboration with the Aulona Centre in Vlora, **9** service users underwent the smear test.

Individual and In Group Counselling

From the interviews conducted with service users it was identified that almost all of the trafficked, at risk and abused girls are victims of psychological pressures such as; continuous threatening behaviour, false promises, physical and sexual violence etc.
The individual counselling carried out by the psychologist and the social interaction of the group within the shelter has had a positive impact on those who have been repeated victims of trafficking. This is achieved from presenting them with the opportunity to engage in self evaluation and to reflect on how hey can rebuild their lives within a protected environment.

There have been **46** in-group counselling sessions carried out with accommodated service users and **54** women and girls have received individual therapy sessions. All counselling sessions were carried out by the centre's psychologist.

Family Counselling

Family counselling has been offered to the families of the service users in order to address their attitudes regarding the cultural difficulties in accepting them back home. This service is continuously available to families and involves regular meetings with social worker staff and our psychologist. The aim of the service is to promote the devel-

opment of a positive relationship between the service users and their families and to facilitate the reintegration of the women into their respective families. There have been 50 families who have received this type of counselling and as a result, positive communications were developed between the women and their families.

Legal Counselling and Assistance

The lawyer based within the centre has established a legal counselling service for all service users accommodated within the shelter dealing with legal matters pertaining to legislation such as; "The law for the protection of the witness", "The law for human trafficking", "The law for violence" etc**. 64** women and girls that have encountered difficulties with matters involving possession, divorce, custody, and child registration have also received assistance in the form of legal counsel and protection.

Our lawyer has provided legal assistance to **9** victims of trafficking who had denounced their representatives and has provided support to the women by attending police investigations and court proceedings with them.

In-Group Discussions, Information Provision for Service Users and Daily Activities within the Shelter

The staff at Vatra are committed to the success of the daily activities taking place within the centre. They acknowledge that by involving the residents in these day to day activities, facilitates their rehabilitation. Staff have paid attention to detail in the socio-emotional counselling of the service users attending the reintegration programme. Some of the programmes and activities offered by Vatra are: the care and treatment of self, the care provision provided by the shelter, IT

courses gardening, foreign languages, literacy and the celebrations of birthdays and of other occasions. Service users have also been encouraged to offer suggestions for other activities, some of which have been have been successfully carried out.

Provision of Identity Cards

During this period, **4 accommodated girls** were supplied with passports. Similarly, **91** women and girls were provided with personal certificates. This service has been provided with the co-operation of the office workers from the "Fight Against Trafficking" service to the Southern District Directory of Police.

Reintegration

The reintegration of the victims of trafficking is an important component of work taking place within the shelter.
Reintegration is a long and difficult process. It cannot be successfully achieved without the full co-operation of both the victims and the various state institutions.

The following reintegration services have been offered to the victims of trafficking within the shelter:

Professional education courses

The Centre of Professional Education (State Institutions dependent on the Ministry of Social Affairs) have supported the service users in terms of education, based on signed agreements.
Besides the existing courses offered in IT and tailoring, the centre has introduced additional courses in hairdressing and cookery, offered free of charge by the Professional Formation Centre instead of the

Private Aesthetics Centre in Vlora, as in previous years.

The hairdressing course is offered by the Centre of Professional Education for a small fee in comparison to that of the private salons. This provided Vatra with the opportunity to increase the number of service users who wanted to train as hairdressers.

Vatra views the professional training and education supported by the Centre of Professional Education as a means of promoting the inclusion and self-esteem of the women as well as the provision of job prospects. To improve the achievement of inclusion, the women and girls at VATRA are integrated with members of the public in order to train without prejudice or discrimination. In doing so, it has assisted the women and girls to feel part of society by establishing relationships which has in turn, boosted them spiritually and provided them with a more positive outlook of life. This experience of community integration and acceptance has served as a preparatory step to their adaptation and reintegration into society when they leave the protective environment of the shelter.

During 2007, 44 women and girls have been educated and trained:

- **15 received training for tailoring**
- **13 received training for hairdressing**
- **4 received training for IT**
- **1 received training for cookery**
- **11 received training for embroidery**

The sisters of the Catholic Church in Vlora offer the embroidery

course free of charge for accommodated women and girls.
5 girls are currently attending the hairdressing course.

Education

Another factor that influences the inclusion of the victims in trafficking is the lack of education knowledge of culture. By acknowledging the importance of this, staff of Vatra have worked with the accommodated girls in the shelter, especially the younger ones, in an attempt to encourage them to attend school to achieve a sound education in order for them to build a successful future.
From the signed agreements with the Regional Education Directorate, the girls at Vatra wishing to receive an education can be registered on a part time basis to schools during 2007, there were **3** girls registered to attend middle school and **1** girl was registered to attend lower education.

EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Employment

Employment is another element of the reintegration program. The women and girls are employed according to the professional education they have received.

During 2007, Vatra has facilitated the employment of **20** girls and women including those previously involved in human trafficking. The type of employment secured includes:

- 14 service users were employed within private organisations due to the co-operation of the Professional Formation Cen tre and the Regional Office of Employment in Vlora.

- **2** girls have been employed by the Aesthetic Centre in Vlora.
- **2** girls work in the prevention Centre as support workers.
- **1** girl works as a support worker for World Vision.
- **1** girl was employed as a sales assistant in one of the boutiques of Vlora city.

The employment of the victims of human trafficking is still a problem because of the absence of job vacancies, low salaries and the insecurity of the continuity of private factories. It is important that state institutions and the local government take responsibility for finding a solution for this problem.

Self-Employment

This year Vatra Centre was included in the project of OSBE and ILO – IPEK Tirana, which is actually part of the projects**, "ILO/ Migrant" and "Establishment of Micro Businesses for the Victims of Trafficking via Low Level Funding".** The aim of these projects was to provide trafficked girls and women treated by Vatra with the opportunity to receive funding for the establishment of small individual and family businesses.

Ten girls accommodated at the shelter were selected and trained for one week with specialists of the Besa Foundation. Three girls will receive small funds from them.
One girl has received funding from this foundation and has started work for a beauty salon. Two others are awaiting funding: one girl will open up a shop for meat and dairy products and the other girl will establish a small tailoring business in the area where she lives with her family.

In addition, 18 out of the 24 girls trained as hairdressers and in embroidery and have commenced their professions near where their families reside.

Co-operation with other shelters

Vatra views the co-operation with other shelters operating within Albania as an important contributing factor to the success of its direct work with the victims of trafficking. This co-operation has assisted the development of new opportunities and found solutions for many of the problems that the girls encounter.

This year, under the care of CAAHT (along with funds of USAID), Vatra co-operated with all of the shelters that operate within Albania. This co-operation resulted in the creation of the Albanian National Coalition. Members of this coalition are: the Vatra Centre, Vlora; Equal and Different, Tirana, the National Welcoming Centre, Linzë, Tirana, Another Vision, Elbasan, Life and Hope, Gjirokastër.

This new but professional organisation has brought about changes in the operation and the strengthening of the relationship with our partners.

During 2007, 17 trafficked and vulnerable women and girls have been referred from various shelters to other shelters and organisations. This year Vatra became a member of the Coalition Against Child Exploitation, established by the organisation CRCA in Tirana.

Temporary Accommodation in Rented Apartments

The last and important element of the reintegration programme is the relocation of the girls from the shelter into rented apartments. During 2007, **4** women and girls (including a mother with her child), have been accommodated in rented apartments.

Relocating the girls into rented apartments provides them with the opportunity to create a financially independent lifestyle, facilitating their reintegration into society.

The staff at Vatra monitor their progress and offer them support with difficulties and concerns in relation to the community or with specific individuals in order to assist their adaptation into everyday life.

PROJECT
September 2007 – February 2008

"Awareness Campaign for Young Girls and Women of the Roma Community for the Risks of Human Trafficking and the Reintegration of the Victims."

Financed by the Norwegian Church Aid

The project's objective: Raising the awareness of the Roma families in order to prevent child trafficking and to promote social support for the reintegration of trafficked victims within this community.

During its ten-year activity, the Vatra Psycho-Social Centre has operated an awareness campaign in cities and rural areas, directed towards the youths, women and the community as a whole. During recent years, there have been studies conducted on human trafficking based on material such as direct interviews with victims, polls and observations on this phenomenon.
Thanks to such research, it has become possible to identify specific groups potentially at risk of trafficking along with links to social causes and consequences of the phenomenon.

Based on our research, approximately 50.2 % of girls trafficked for

the purposes of prostitution belonged to families with a low economic status within the community of Roma.

One of the methods of procurement **during** the last few years has been by means of marriage, ether legitimately or illegitimately. This method of procurement is facilitated by the traditions and culture of this community, with the girls marrying at ages as young as thirteen to fifteen years of age.

The low level education of the girls or children from this community is another facilitating factor in the human trafficking phenomenon. The education status for the greatest part of the Roma community is reportedly illiterate.

We say this because the employers refuse to employ individuals of this community even though they may be fully able. This is the reason why 75% of active work forces that belong to this community do manual labour which does not require professional qualifications.

In evaluation of this, the staff at Vatra decided to deliver education sessions with the children of Roma community aged between fourteen and sixteen years of age and also with the women of the community who are unemployed as a result of poor education. On the other hand, this community suffers from prejudice and racial discrimination and a general feeling of social exclusion.

Education Sessions with the Students

Vatra has worked closely with the education directory in the areas in

which the projects have been implemented and this has contributed to the success achievement of these activities since 1999. This partnership of services have made the education of high school and lower school pupils possible it possible, specifically in relation to social themed subjects such; as human trafficking, substance misuse, sexual health promotion and the awareness of domestic violence, etc.

Given that the immediate problem of the Roma community is the exploitation of the girls and children in trafficking, the themes were specifically focused on this phenomenon and on the cases concerning the coexistence of the two communities.

During the education sessions with young people, the themes addressed were that of; discrimination and prejudice, coexistence and tolerance, all issues pertaining to human trafficking including prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims into society and the role of the media in the fight against human trafficking, etc.

There were 80 education sessions held during the period of September and December and 2287 youths participated

Education Sessions with Women

The work with the women and girls in the community is very important. Throughout, the staff at Vatra have aimed to promote awareness and provide information to those who require it the most, i.e. to girls who do not attend school and to the housewives. Since these women are unemployed, it was difficult to have them participate in the education sessions out with the area they lived, due to their social isolation. In light of this, the project staff considered the development of a campaign whereby they could bring the education sessions to the homes of these particular groups of women. Whilst working with the women in this community, information was gathered on those who had been victims of trafficking, abuse, those at risk and repatriated women who required assistance and specific treatment in order to include them in the reintegration programs offered by Vatra. This provided us with the ability to offer the victims of human trafficking the opportunity for societal reintegration.

There were 32 education sessions held in which 84 girls and women from the Roma community participated. This year, for the first time, 32 men who were interested in being present at the treatment of

social themes, participated in the sessions with women. During these sessions, the following themes were addressed: "The contribution of "Vatra Psycho-Social Centre", "The Consequences of Smoking, Drug and Alcohol Use", "Coexistence and Tolerance", "Discrimination and Prejudice, "Human Trafficking", "Methods of Procurement into Trafficking" "SIDA" and "Sexual Health Promotion", etc.

During the sessions, the participants were keen to listen to the subjects and shared their own personal experiences in relation to the daily discrimination and intolerance that they were subjected to their racial, cultural and racial origins. Moreover, the social group has started to address the subject of human trafficking due to the difficulties in accepting that this phenomenon exists within the Roma community. However, the continual provision of data collected by Vatra specialists has enabled the women of the Roma community to be more open when discussing trafficking and its related themes and to provide information of known cases. Due to this information, 9 girls and women from this community have been included in the reintegration programme and were trained in professional courses for hairdressing and tailoring.

Seminars

Vatra staff consider the use of seminars to be one of the most effective methods in which to deliver information.

In November 2007, a seminar was conducted in the Levan Commune on the subject of, "**Strengthening of the Cooperation Between the Local Institutions and the Community as a Whole; The Main Factor for the Co-existence and Integration of Vulnerable Com-**

munities".

The participants were representatives of the local government, state institutions, media, NGO-s and representatives of the Roma community, etc.

During the discussions, many of the problems concerning the Roma community were identified, namely: education, employment, child registration, etc. Local government representatives accepted accountability for these concerns by agreeing to co-operate with the Roma community in order to address these concerns.

Legal and Psychological Assistance for the Roma Community

The lawyer and psychologist based within the centre were involved in the meetings organised by project staff with the members of Roma community. During these meetings, the lawyer and the psychologist made a presentation to the group whereby they offered their services in the form of individual and group support. As a result, the psychologist has counselled 16 young people and 11 women of the Roma community.

The lawyer's service has provided assistance to 73 members of the Roma community. Regarding the registration of the Roma children, the registration of 27 children from this community has been granted by the court in Levan, Novosel, Llakatund and Roskovec municipality. Although the registration of Roma children is not part of the project's agenda, Vatra performed an awareness campaign to provide legal support and assistance to all Roma families wishing to register their children.

Informative Bulletin

The publication of the bi-monthly informative bulletin by Vatra has been viewed as an efficient means for the provision of information within the community, not only in Vlora district but also in Southern Albania.

The bulletin not only informs of work carried out by Vatra staff within its three institutions (Prevention, Shelter and Drop-In Centre) but also of the problems identified with women and young people and the communities included in the project. Discrimination, prejudice, human trafficking, exploitation of Roma children, frequent divorces, unregistered marriages and children of the civil state etc, are all concerns that Vatra have addressed alongside representatives of local institutions. The bulletin has provided solutions to cases such as the registration of Roma children within the civil state, attendance of legal cases, advertisement of girls who have received training for employment.

Many copies of the bulletin have been distributed in schools, municipalities, communes and within the community that Vatra implements its projects.

PROJECT
May 2007 – April 2008

"Strengthening assistance and protection of victims of trafficking"

Financed by OSBE-ODHIR

This project is being implemented in the Southern Albania within the framework of the protection of the rights of trafficked women and girls, those at risk of trafficking, abused women and children, Roma and Egyptian communities, young people exhibiting dangerous behaviours.

Within the framework of this project, the Drop-in-Centre has been created and provides general information, psycho-emotional counselling, legal services and other services for the victims of human trafficking.

Services offered by the drop-in-centre:

1. Information on a range of issues relating to human traffick ing delivered by professionals such as psychologists, social workers and lawyers.
2. Legal counselling and support offered free of charge by the lawyer based at Vatra.
3. Contacts with and referrals to NGOs and institutions pro viding assistance on a range of social and legal issues.

4. Psycho-Social counselling and support by the psychologist.
5. Support in accessing health care.
6. Support realising employment opportunities.
7. Free Internet access to research issues pertaining to the focus of project.
8. Information in relation to domestic abuse.
9. Information regarding migration and the rights of migrants.
10. Health promotion (including information provision regard ing drugs, alcohol, smoking, sexual health, etc).
11. Information on children's rights.
12. Information on gender issues and women's rights.
13. Information on the socio-economic situation of the Vlora region.
14. Information on Albanian legislation.

The activities conducted within the framework of the project

The preparation of files and composition of the services in the territory

This composition of services is used to provide information and to facilitate the employment of the target-group, including trafficked women and girls and other vulnerable groups such as high risk groups. Interview files of the NGOs' and local businesses offering job placements have been prepared for applicants according to their level of education and professional training respectively. All of these documents are filed in their respective folders in the archives.

Facilitation of employment

Another important component of the project is the facilitation of employment, specifically for the victims of trafficking, vulnerable groups and the other target groups with which we work. During this period, different service users from the community who are interested in securing employment have presented their CVs or have brought a list of their data to the Drop-in Centre.

The staff of the Drop-in Centre have facilitated **40 women to find employment**.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Work Fair

A **Work Fair** was organised in Vlora during the month of July 2007 in co-operation with the MJAFT Foundation, Vlora Municipality and the Commercial and Industrial Chamber in Vlora. The office was invited to offer its services at this fair and specifically, the service for "Facilitation of Employment" for the target group. Approximately **35 people** received advice and completed their CVs.

The Distribution of Leaflets in the Most Frequented Public Places of the City.

In July and August, the staff of Vatra along with volunteers, organised and conducted activities to raise awareness whereby various informative materials such as leaf-

lets, brochures, posters etc., were distributed to approximately 1200 people. By the distribution of these materials, citizens received information regarding the services that the Drop-In-Centre provides, the rights of women and children, immigration, STD, etc.

Workshops and Seminars

The importance of the organisation and development of the activities of a social nature is acknowledged and the staff have conducted several seminars and workshops geared towards different target-groups, the focus of which have been young people.

Sixteen workshops have been conducted in which representatives were from the identified target group of the project and members of the community in general. These workshops have been conducted in several cities of Southern Albania such as: Vlora, Fier, Berat, Gjirokastër etc.

The themes addressed by these activities have been diverse and spe-

cific to each of the respective target groups such as: "The Law for Measures Against Domestic Abuse", "The Representation of the Phenomenon of Domestic Abuse and Human Trafficking by the Media", "Adolescence, Family Conflicts, Violence and Its Consequences in Albanian Society" and the experience exchange amongst the organisations that work within the same field etc. The aim of these workshops was to deliver information concerning the problems currently affecting the Albanian society and the measures to be taken in order to resolve them.

Library service

This service was considered an important component of the project for the provision of information to service users. The library, located within close proximity to the Drop-In –Centre, is stocked with publications by Vatra and other national and international organisations such as: OSBE, IOM, The Gender Alliance for Development, The Advocate Centre, CRCA etc. The mate-

rials that these organisations have supplied to the Drop-In Centre have provided a wide range of information.

The Drop-In Centre is frequented by a high number of young people, principally the students of "Ismail Qemali" University in Vlora.

68 service users have frequented the office and have used the library to locate information on legal immigration, gender equality and general legislation. The laws most frequently researched by service users pertained to human trafficking and domestic abuse.

Internet access

Internet access is free of charge to the young people of Vlora city. The office is accessible at any time of the day for this purpose. The service users are from all target groups but principally from the University of "Ismail Qemali", in Vlora.

62 service users have accessed this service throughout the course of 2007.

Professional courses

On the premises, professional courses in Information Technology, Italian and English are available to the girls accommodated within the

shelter. These courses are taught by staff and two volunteers based at the centre. 12 girls accommodated at "Vatra" shelter undertook these courses.

Raising awareness and other social activities

The Preparation of Leaflets

The staff prepared 14 leaflets to circulate information on different themes such as: human rights, children, women, employment rights, the law "For Measures Against Domestic Abuse", trafficking, legal migration, sexual health promotion, etc. All leaflets were widely distributed to service users, schools and villages within the territorial remit of the project.

Other direct and cost free services

Legal assistance for victims of human trafficking and vulnerable groups:

In the framework of the project, the lawyer of the centre has offered to provide the following services:

1. **Counselling for the girls accommodated within the shelter (those victims of violence and human trafficking). 55** girls have undertaken this service.

Legal assistance for the 13 victims of human trafficking;,

- **There are currently 2 penal cases in process**
- Completed: **8** cases + **1** case of a young person
- Completed: **2** cases

2. **Counselling for the Roma and Egyptian community (140 cases in total).**
3. **Legal assistance for the Roma/Egyptian community (20 cases in total);**

- **17 child** registration cases, 9 of which have been successful with the registration of 30 children
- **3 divorce cases** which are currently being handled by the lawyer

4. Counselling within the community **(48 cases in total).**
5. Legal assistance for the community (6 cases in total) of which:

- 2 cases of child registration (2 were successful) resulting in the registration of 7 children
- 3 cases of divorce (1 UMM successful, victim of violence).

10. Psychological Assistance and Counselling

The psychological service has been viewed as a key element in identifying the phenomenon and treating it in a coherent and efficient way. This is closely related to the social and psychological problems that exist within these communities.

The psychologist has treated 73 psychological counselling sessions;

- **25 cases were** counselling sessions for the accommodated girls within the shelter
- **5 cases were** psycho-social counselling sessions and assistance for the Roma community
- **43 cases** were psycho-social counselling sessions and assistance for the community as a whole.

IV PROJECT
July - December 2007

Institutional capacity and the consolidation of the vatra psycho-social centre

Financed by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)

The project objective: To increase the institutional capacity of Vatra for efficient and effective contribution in the provision of social services for the community as a whole, specifically strengthening the social status of women.

Vatra centre is currently one of the most active organisations, working in the field of human trafficking and violence against women, in the protection of their rights.
Since its creation, Vatra has implemented a number of projects, contributing to the fight against negative stereotyping of our service users in Albanian culture. The rights of these women and girls have been protected by the strengthening of Vatra and by the development of its organisational capacity.

Due to the evolution of Albania in recent years, Vatra has strived to achieve organisational consolidation.
The project conducted this year, continuing the institutional consolidation, was aimed towards developing professional abilities of the

staff, offering qualitative services to the service users and to the community as a whole as well as increasing its organisational sustainability.

The project was conducted in co-operation with the Training Organization ANTTARC, one of the organisations with high professional capacities acknowledged by the region and the country.

The project was carried out during the period of July to December, 2007 and its implementation consisted of two main activities;

- **The training programme.**
- **Technical assistance.**

The Training Program

The training program included four training modules, geared towards increasing the abilities and the knowledge of participants in relation to organisational planning and managing, project management and development and the anti-trafficking legal cases.

The methodology of the training course encouraged the exchange of experiences and group bonding. Methods such as role play, the use of case studies and group work were used intensively throughout the programme.

The Training Course for Organisation Management

The young members of staff were involved in an intensive training course lasting three days on the subject of organisation management. In this course, participants discussed the management systems of hu-

man resources and practices including the recruitment of employees, the creation of job descriptions and performance evaluation. In addition, the training course focused on the financial management of the NGOs based on the accepted principles of book-keeping (the principles of which have been standardised by law in Albania) which include: the definition financial management and its users, the main principles, the creation of a main book-keeping system, the annual activities of book-keeping, the budget process, general considerations for auditing and the auditing scheme.

The Training Course for Project Management

The training course for project management focused on the various issues surrounding project management.

During the course, topics such as financing the requests of donors relating to project activities, monitoring and evaluation were discussed.

In addition, the training focused on the strategic considerations of projects, human resources management, identification, preparation, project planning, their commencement and their implementation as a process.

Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

During this training, the following issues were discussed: monitoring and project evaluation, the analysis of the phenomenon, making recommendations, writing reports and gathering the resulting data, etc. Much consideration was given to the impact and evaluation of the project.

Training Course for the Legal Anti-Trafficking Cases.

This course was geared towards developing the abilities and heightening the knowledge of Vatra's staff, especially for those shelters related to trafficking legal cases and the institutional framework; knowing and understanding the strategy of the Albanian government in the fight against trafficking; knowing the mechanisms for prevention and their implementation; increase of knowledge and skills in the reintegration process as well as the methods and participants, etc.

Technical Assistance

The best practices outlined in the training were established during the 5-day technical assistance where the abilities and knowledge acquired during the activities were applied. The technical assistance focused on the needs identified during the evaluation phase and were implemented in the activities plan.

The technical assistance resulted in the increase of the organisational capacity, sustainability and transparency.

V SUPPORTING PARTNERS OF THE CENTRE

NATIONAL

1. The Ministry of Interior (District Directory Police of Fier and Berat)
2. The Ministry of Social Affairs(Employment Regional Offic es, Professional Education Centre : Vlora, Fier).
3. The Regional Education Directories Vlora, Fier and the High School Directories of these cities.
5. The municipalities of Vlora , Fier, Roskovec
   The communes: Novosel, Llakatund, Levan
6. The Murialdo Centre, Fier
7. The Woman's Counselling Centre, Durrës Equal and Dif ferent, Tirana
8. Dea Association, Fier
9. The "Gruaja Korçare" Centre, Korça
10. The Catholic Church, Vlora
11. Young People's Centre, Vlora
12. The Woman's Centre "Aulona", Vlora
13. The Multifunctional Communal
    The Welcoming Centre, Gjirokastër.
14. The National Welcoming Centre, Linzë.
15. Another Vision, Elbasan
16. ANTARC, Tirana
17. CRCA, Tirana.

18. KRIIK, Albania
19. The Albanian Centre for Economic Research
20. The Door, Shkoder

INTERNATIONAL

1. USAID
2. IOM
3. OSBE
4. Antislavery International
5. TRUST
6. The Norwegian Embassy
7. ODHIR
8. World Vision
9. Euro DEMOS, Rumania
10. Campobasso Commune, Italy (Interreg Project, "Criminali ty") The "Libera" project

DONORS

- The American Embassy
- Norwegian Church Aid
- CAAHT (with funds of USAID)
- Sigrid Rausing TRUST (London)
- Kvinna Till Kvinna (Sweden).
- OSBE (ODIHR).

VI PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **25 January 2007**, the fifth meeting of the Regional Co-operation Group of KVKTNJ (CAAHT) for Southern Albania organised by KVKTNJ, financed by USAID.

- This year, **Vatra was included in the Coalition for the Preparation of the Alternative report KDF,** initiated by the CRCA organisation. During this year, the staff have taken part in all of the organised meetings of this organisation with the work group that will compile this report.

- **21 – 28 April 2007,** Training course delivered on the following theme: "The Prevention and Fight Against Human Trafficking via Modelling Agencies", organised by Rumania.

- **28 – 29 May 2007, The** participation in the conference: "Contrast Strategies in the International Trafficking of Organised Crime", organised in the framework of the Interreg Project by Campobasso province, Italy.

- **21 May 2007,** participation in the conference organised by OSBE, Vienna, Austria on the theme: "Alliance Against Human Trafficking".

- **25 May 2007, participation in the national conference on**: "The Rights and Participation of Young People", organised by the KRIIK organisation, Albania.

- **2- 5 July** 2007, seminar organised by the Norwegian Church Aid in which the participants were all partners of this organisation. Aside from addressing the **NCA Co-operation – Partner on Management/Administration of Projects** (which was the focus of the seminar), this seminar was also addressing the theme of: "Regional Strategies for Western Balkans- Peace programme".

- **12 June 2007,** "The International Day Against Child Work and Exploitation", was organised in protest and was initiated by CRCA, Tirana. This was also with the participation of the other organisations in this field.

- **20 – 21 June 2007 –** Training organised by CAAHT (with funds of USAID), on: "The Use of Monitoring and Assessment as a Means of Management and Evaluation".

- **11-13 July 2007,** participation in regional training **"On the Civil Dialogue",** organised by Diakonia Agapes, Tirana.

- **26 – 27 September** 2007, A two-day seminar on the theme of: Building Mechanisms for the Effective Implementation of Acceptance Agreements Between Albania, the European Community and the Interested Third Party Countries", organised by IOM in co-operation with the Border and Migration Police Directory in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

- **3-4 October 2007,** participation in the seminar organised by CAAHT (with funds of USAID), on: "Information Management System for Anti-trafficking: Improvement of the Educational Methods and Management programme".

- **18 – 19 October 2007**, Vatra was a participant in the international meeting in Vienna, Austria, on the theme of: Fighting the Sexual Exploitation of Children", organised by OSBE/ ODIHR, Vienna.

- **19 – 21 October 2007**, participation in the First Albanian Congress of Psychotherapy with the theme of : "Family Conflicts: Finding Solutions", organised by the Albanian Association for Psychotherapy, with the support of the European Association for Psychotherapy and the Sigmund Freud University, Vienna.

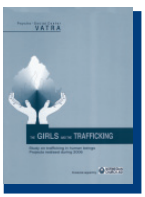
- **11 October 2007,** participation in the conference organised by the Libera project, Lecce Italy, in the framework of ENaT project, with the theme of: The Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Victims of Trafficking", where Vatra presented its work related to the theme of the conference.

PUBLICATIONS OF 2007

In the framework of the projects carried out this year and with the financial support of donors, Vatra`s staff have published brochures, leaflets, posters, bi-monthly bulletins, an annual report etc.

The results:

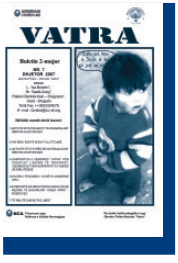
• The implementation of the project which commenced in October 2006 and was completed in February 2007: The "Increase of Public Awareness of the Woman's Role in the Social and Political Context of Albania", was financed by The American Embassy and there was a brochure and a leaflet published providing details of the activities of the project and the political and social situation of the woman of 4 municipalities of Vlora city.



• In the framework of the project campaign financed by The Norwegian Church Aid and Kvinna Till Kvinna, regarding the provision of information on the services that the Vatra centre offers as well as the presentation of the whole activity of Vatra, the following were published: The Annual Report 2006, the leaflet, "Communal Service Centre" and the "The Cycle of Themes on Human Trafficking". In the framework of this project in December, financed by the Sigrid Rausing

TRUST, there a poster published with the slogan: "Violence Kills! React!". The publication of this poster was done with the intention of raising public awareness of the danger that violence and crime present in Albanian families in rural areas.

• For the presentation of the monthly activities of the project: "Awareness Raising Campaign for the Young People and Women the Roma Community, on the Risk of Human Trafficking and the Reintegration of the Victims of Trafficking" the bimonthly "Vatra" bulletin is published, financed by the Norwegian Church Aid.



• A leaflet was published for the Drop-in Centre in order to provide information regarding the services available, financed by OSBE/ODIHR.

All these publications are distributed to national and international institutions, NGOs with which Vatra co-operates and to the wider community.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2007

It has already become a matter of practice for Vatra's staff to present in the annual reports, the financial annual report in which the implemented projects are presented by Vatra, the related funds for each project and the supporting donors.

Given that the implemented projects were a continuity of the ten-year work of Vatra in the field of anti-trafficking, the financing donors were those who have supported Vatra financially for years such as: The American Embassy, NCA, KTK, The Sigrid Rausing TRUST (London), CAAHT (with funds of USAID), OSBE/ ODHIR, etc.

The funds have been mainly in EUR. For USD and LEK currency, funds received respectively from The American Embassy and CAAHT (with funds of USAID), the following exchange rates have been used:

- 1 EUR = 1.47 USD
- 1EUR = 119.98 leke

The sum of 256558.43 EUR, has been received from the donors for this year for the implementation of the Vatra projects from which, 228 120.15 EUR have been spent.

For the projects of 2006, the auditing agencies of Vatra's projects were: the national agency, "**Inter BBK. Auditing", Tirana** and the international agency, "**Recor and Partners S.A" (with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland).** (The auditing reports are attached).

All of the projects that Vatra has initiated in 2006 have been sustained into 2007 and are presented in the table below as well as the projects that commenced in 2007, to be completed in 2008.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TABLE FOR THE YEAR 2007

FINANCIAL REPORT 1 JANNUARY 2007 -31 DECEMBER 2007
PROJECTS AND DONORS OF THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL CENTER "VATRA" FOR THE YEAR 2007

Nr	Projects	Donors	Period	Remained fund from 2006	Budget	Funds sent during 2007	Expences	Exchange gain/lost	Real difference
1	Shelter for trafficked, violated clandestine girls and women and those at risk to be trafficked	NCA Norwegian Church Aid	28 April 2006-28 April 2007	41,931.98		23,347.78	65,285.13	-20.73	15.36
	Raising the awamess of public opinion, on the role of women in political and social life on the country	AMERICAN EMBASSY	27 September 2006-28 February 2007	50.01		3,423.94	3,500.00	-26.07	0.02
2	Awareness raising campaign to sensitize the youth, the women and the girls in general, on the risk that trafficking in human beings poses and further riintegration	NCA Norwegian Church Aid	1 September 2007-28 Shkurt 2008		**17,859.00**	8,929.00	7,625.84	0.24	1,302.92
3	Shelter for trafficked, violated clandestine girls and women and those at risk to be trafficked	KTK Kvina Till Kvina	1 May - 31 December 2007		**36,325.00**	36,325.00	36,307.08	0.00	17.92
4	Shelter for trafficked, violated clandestine girls and women and those at risk to be trafficked	Sigrid Rausing TRUST	1 January - 31 December 2007		**36,230.00**	36,296.58	36,307.08	-14.09	3.59
5	Shelter for trafficked, violated clandestine girls and women and those at risk to be trafficked	NCA Norwegian Church Aid	1 June 2007-30 April 2008		**86,290.00**	45,064.73	39,178.83	-6.30	5,892.20
6	Shelter for trafficked, violated clandestine girls and women and those at risk to be trafficked	CAAHT (USAID FUNDS)	1 May 2007 - 31 March 2008		**32,465.00**	8,521.68	8,516.02	0.01	5.65
7	Strengthening Assistance and protection to Victims of trafficking (Albania)	ODHIR/OSBE	1 May 2007 - 30 April 2008		**46,800.00**	39,400.00	25,695.46	-38.95	13,743.49
8	Rritje e kapacitetit institucional te Qendrës Psiko - Sociale "Vatra"	NCA Norwegian Church Aid	1 July - 31 December 2007		**4,800.00**	**4,902.88**	**4,800.00**	0.00	**102.88**
10	Psyco-Asocial Center "Vatra"	Solidary Contribution	1 January - 31 December 2007	7,089.47		1,275.38	904.71	-93.21	7,553.35
	Total EUR			**49,071.46**	**260,769.00**	**207,486.97**	**228,120.15**	**-199.10**	**28,637.38**