

First Wave Survey Study on Youth Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices with Regard to Human Trafficking, in Four Regions in Albania

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



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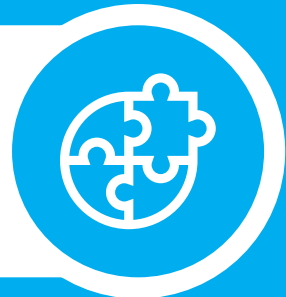
Transforming National Response to Human Trafficking in and from Albania Programme

With funding from the Home Office, UK Government, UNICEF Albania and its partners are currently implementing a programme that will contribute towards an overall reduction in human trafficking in and from Albania. The programme brings together various initiatives to reinforce active prevention of, and protection from, human trafficking, and then to amplify these efforts with focus on the change that must occur to bring about a lasting and sustainable impact. In the long run, these efforts must be complemented by implementation of actions with a progressive approach to address the root causes of human trafficking, through long-term engagement among government, civil society and local communities, with—most critically—direct communication with individuals, families and communities in at-risk areas in the country.



Evidence informed strategic communication that leads to positive change among individuals, families, communities and duty bearers.

Sustainable and rights based models for reintegration of the victims and the at-risk.



Victim oriented justice and effective law enforcement and prosecution.

Community driven solutions with access to social services to reduce vulnerabilities and reintegration of the most at risk and victims of trafficking.



INTRODUCTION

Albania is recognised as a source country for human trafficking. Albanians are trafficked to Italy, Greece, the United Kingdom (UK), Sweden, Germany and Switzerland, often through organised criminal networks. Albanian adults and children are trafficked for labour or sexual exploitation in these, and other, destination countries. Trafficking from Albania to Kosovo also takes place, especially for Roma children, who are forced to beg, often by their families. Domestic trafficking in Albania became a significant phenomenon after 2004, with many victims trafficked from rural to urban areas. Domestic human trafficking victims include a large proportion of children and youths. Analysis of data from organisations working in the field highlight that most of the victims come from a background of poverty, homelessness and a lack of education. For trafficked children and youths, the risk factors mostly emanate from the household and family, and include a lack of stable family support, family breakdown, abandonment, and family separation resulting from migration. The consequence of these factors is compounded by the absence of protective safety nets.

Despite clear evidence that Albanian youths are vulnerable to human trafficking, there is a dearth of literature on the level of youth knowledge regarding the phenomenon in Albania, or on youth attitudes and their practices regarding human trafficking. Only two recent studies from the last five years discuss knowledge and awareness of human trafficking in the country. From those studies, we know that Albanian adults are more aware of sex trafficking than labour trafficking; that more than half of surveyed Albanian adults think human trafficking is a serious problem, but concern mostly women and children; and that many people do not know how they can help suspected victims. As neither study addressed the level of knowledge among youth, specifically, or their attitudes and practices regarding human trafficking, the present study explores the subject with the aim of filling this important knowledge gap. The study is undertaken in the framework of 'Transforming National Response to Human Trafficking in and from Albania' programme. The results will be useful to UNICEF Albania and its partners, government and civil society in Albania, as well as academics and policymakers globally working in this area.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The present study set out to understand and explore the level of youth knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding human trafficking in the regions of Diber, Kukes, Shkoder and Tirana, selected because they are known source regions for human trafficking in Albania, and of Albanians abroad.

There are two parts to this study: (1) a first wave, and (2) second wave survey. The aim of the first wave study is to understand the level of knowledge, attitudes and practices of Albanian youth regarding human trafficking in the four regions, and understand which channels of communication they use regularly to learn about social issues, including human trafficking. The first wave data will be used to inform the development of communication strategies, to be implemented by UNICEF Albania and its partners in the four target regions of the country. Following the communication strategy a second wave survey will be conducted in the same target areas, and will measure shifts in targeted or selected knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding human trafficking in Albania, and assess the formats and messages on human trafficking that have led to positive shifts in youth knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding the phenomenon.

THE STUDY'S OBJECTIVES ARE TO MEASURE THE FOLLOWING:

Knowledge

- What human trafficking means
- Where human trafficking occurs
- The types of exploitation that occur
- Those who are at risk
- The conditions that can lead to human trafficking
- Recruitment methods and human traffickers
- Ways to support suspected human trafficking cases
- Support services available for victims.

Attitudes

- Concern regarding human trafficking
- The degree to which youth are sympathetic towards victims
- Effective prevention measures.

Practices

- Whether and how youth learn more about human trafficking and engage in activities countering human trafficking.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with Albanian youth during August 2020. In all, 1,537 interviews were conducted with Albanian youth in four regions of the country: Diber, Kukes, Shkoder and Tirana, and also with Roma youth. The households were randomly selected, and only one person per household was allowed to participate in the interview. Only persons from the age group 15–29 years were eligible to participate in the interviews, which were up to 20 minutes in duration and carried out using tablets.

FINDINGS

When comparing the survey results against the evidence already available on the causes of trafficking in Albania, and globally, it became apparent that the level of knowledge on human trafficking among surveyed Albanian youth is, in some respects, high, but in other areas there is significant scope for strengthening it regarding the types of exploitation that occur; where human trafficking is an issue (i.e. within Albania, or to foreign countries); the persons at risk; the recruitment methods; ways of reporting suspected cases; and the support services available for victims. Attitudes of surveyed youth regarding human trafficking were, for the most part, positive, with most surveyed being concerned about human trafficking, being sympathetic towards victims and believing that victims should receive support services, and having positive attitudes regarding law enforcement responses to human trafficking. However, there is scope for a shift in attitudes, particularly among 15–17-year-olds, regarding concern

for human trafficking, and attitudes regarding victims. Presently, it is very clear that surveyed youth would like to learn more about human trafficking and engage in activities countering the phenomenon but would prefer to do so through only a small number of communication channels: television, social media and online news.

KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

1 Knowledge of the meaning of human trafficking

- 47%** Most surveyed youth identified human trafficking as a human rights issue;
- 22%** as a crime and legality issue.
- 10%** believe it to be a migration-related issue.

Overall, knowledge among the youth about the meaning of human trafficking is sound. Whereas they may be unable to define the term accurately, they understand that it is a human rights issue, a crime, and related to (irregular) migration.

2 Knowledge about where human trafficking occurs

Most Albanian youth consider that the trafficking of Albanians to foreign countries is a serious issue.



More than half of those surveyed considered that such trafficking is a very serious, or serious, problem.



Only one in three youths thought that domestic human trafficking is a serious issue in Albania.

Thus, they are less aware of the occurrence of the phenomenon in the country than they are of trafficking of Albanians abroad.

- 70%** More than 70 percent of the youths considered that human trafficking in their local area was only slightly serious, or not serious at all.

In some municipalities knowledge that human trafficking can occur in the local area is extremely low.

Across all three survey questions on where human trafficking occurs, Roma youth demonstrated better knowledge than the other groups, while youths of age 18–29 years have better knowledge of where it occurs than those of age 15–17 years.



Youth with higher education demonstrated better knowledge that human trafficking occurs within the country, and even in their community, than do youth with lower levels of education.



Surveyed female youth consider slightly more strongly than their male counterparts that human trafficking to foreign countries and within Albania is an extremely serious, or very serious, problem.

Meanwhile, youths from urban areas were more aware that human trafficking occurs in their local area than were rural youth.

3 Knowledge about the types of exploitation that occur in Albania and in foreign countries

The majority of surveyed Albanian youth are aware of the most common forms of exploitation, such as trafficking for sexual exploitation, and forced labour. However, they are less aware of other types of exploitation, such as trafficking for early marriage, child pornography,¹ and organ trafficking. There were no significant differences between the responses of male and female youth, between different age groups, between education levels, and between urban and rural youth to the questions on the types of exploitation that occur in Albania and abroad. Roma youth demonstrated slightly less knowledge than the other youths of the different types of exploitation that occur outside Albania.

YOUTH ARE LESS AWARE OF THESE TYPES OF EXPLOITATION



EARLY MARRIAGE



CHILD PORNOGRAPHY



ORGAN TRAFFICKING

4 Knowledge of those at risk of human trafficking

Most surveyed youth consider that the group most at risk of human trafficking is girls under the age of 18 years.

- 80%** of the opinion that the level of risk is great or 'a lot'.

Most Albanian youths do not think that men and boys are at risk of being trafficked.

- 10%** consider that men are at risk.

There was significant variation in responses at the municipality level regarding knowledge that men and boys can be trafficked. For example, 67 percent of youths surveyed in Kukës reported that boys are at great risk of trafficking, compared to only eight percent in Diber.

¹ The term 'child pornography' was used in the first wave questionnaire. Acknowledging that the terms 'child sexual abuse' and 'child sexual exploitation materials' are considered by the international community as less stigmatising for victims, in the second wave survey, alternate terminology will be used.

Youths with higher education have better knowledge than other youths that men and boys are at risk of human trafficking.

Knowledge that national minorities and people from rural areas are at risk of human trafficking is also quite low in some areas. In Diber, for example, only 34 percent of surveyed youth consider that national minorities are at risk of trafficking, and only 29 percent that people from rural areas are at risk of trafficking. More than half (58%) of surveyed Roma youth think that national minorities have 'a great deal' or 'a lot' of risk of being trafficked.



Analysis of the responses of youth living in rural and urban areas suggest that the majority of the former do not think they are at significant risk of being trafficked due to their environment.

5 Knowledge of the conditions that can lead to human trafficking



Surveyed youth consider that the key factor leading to human trafficking is poverty, but that many other conditions and vulnerability factors are not significant.

27%

of surveyed youth link lack of health-care services to risks of human trafficking,

31%

think that lack of information about safe migration is important,

47%

though nearly half think that family pressure to earn money is a pre-condition that could lead to human trafficking.

Youths in rural areas, Roma youth, and youths with the least education attainment do not consider a lack of education as one of the most significant factors that can lead to human trafficking. Similarly, with regard to information on safe migration and on prevention, risks and consequences of human trafficking, Roma youth, and youth with basic education, have much lower levels of awareness that these factors can lead to human trafficking than do other surveyed youth.

6 Knowledge of human trafficking recruitment methods and human traffickers

Knowledge of human trafficking recruitment methods is sound, with **most surveyed youth responding 'true' to all of the options provided in the question on recruitment methods and human traffickers,**



i.e. that the Internet can be used to recruit victims;



that traffickers are part of organised criminal groups;



that boyfriends and girlfriends can be human traffickers;



and that other friends can be human traffickers.



However, few of those surveyed responded 'true' to the option that 'family members can be human traffickers'.

Female youths have a better grasp than male youths of the recruitment methods, and who might be a human trafficker. Youths of age 25–29 years have more knowledge than younger age groups of recruitment methods and who might be a human trafficker.

7 Knowledge of ways to report suspected cases of human trafficking

Surveyed youth know that they can report human trafficking to the police, but are not very aware of other reporting lines. **The most frequently selected options to the question of how suspected human trafficking cases can be reported were: Police station (87%), and Police hotline 129 (60%),** the latter of which was more common in Diber (72%) than in Tirana (56%). The next most selected option was 'teacher, psychologist or other professional in the school' (43%). In all, these responses suggest that **Albanian youth have a good level of trust in law enforcement and education personnel, or that they consider these two systems as at least most relevant.**

THE MOST FREQUENT OPTIONS SELECTED TO REPORT



POLICE HOTLINE



POLICE STATION

Knowledge among surveyed Roma youth of ways to report suspected human trafficking cases is very low, with twelve percent responding that they did not know who to contact about such cases, compared to only 1–2 percent of other youth across the four regions. Females had more knowledge in this area than did males, with the exception of the Police line 129 (62% among male and 58% among females). Youth in urban areas have better knowledge on how to report cases to the police, while those in rural areas were more aware of Police hotline 129.



Nevertheless, it is alarming that 21 percent of Roma youth responded that they did not consider any of the reporting options relevant, indicating a lack of interest in reporting suspected cases of human trafficking.

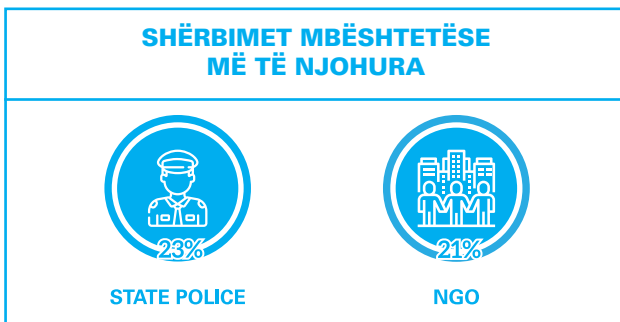
This could represent a lack of trust in law enforcement and other actors, or the view that these agencies and individuals would take no action to intervene in such cases.

8 Knowledge of ways to report suspected cases of human trafficking

Knowledge of the various types of support available to victims of human trafficking is low among the youth surveyed,

41% unaware of any forms of such support available.

The most frequently identified types of support services were: specific support from state police (23%) and social support from NGOs (21%). Knowledge of the services available was lowest in Diber, with 55 percent unaware of such support services, and among Roma (46%).



Knowledge of the support that is available to victims of human trafficking is higher among female than male youths and among 18–24-year-olds than among other age groups.

25% Youths with tertiary education had more knowledge (only 25% unaware) about such support

62% than those with lower levels of education (62% unaware).

ATTITUDES TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

1 Level of concern regarding human trafficking

56% surveyed youth reported that they feel a great deal, or a lot, of concern about human trafficking.

Concern is highest in Tirana (69%), least in Shkoder (37%), and 58 percent among Roma youth. Female youths feel more concern about the issue (66%) than do male youths (45%), and 15–17-year-olds less so than 18–29-year-olds. Meanwhile, youth from urban areas are more concerned about the issue than those from rural areas (66% and 46%, respectively), and youth with tertiary education more than those with basic education (68% and 40%, respectively).

2 Attitudes towards victims



Most (91%) of surveyed youth reported that they feel 'extremely' or 'very strongly' that victims should be provided with assistance. Only two percent reported that they feel only slightly or not at all that victims should be provided with assistance.

Thus, attitudes towards victims are positive in that surveyed youth feel that victims should be provided with government and non-government support services.

3 Attitudes towards preventing human trafficking

Albanian youth think that law enforcement measures are the most effective means for preventing human trafficking, and give less significance to the socio-economic factors that make people vulnerable to human trafficking.

94% surveyed youth think that stricter punishments for those who violate women and girls would be extremely or very effective in preventing human trafficking,

93% with a similar proportion believing that such measures applied to traffickers would be extremely or very effective.

Responses regarding employment and housing support and education as methods for preventing human trafficking indicated less support for those measures than for stricter punishment options. Thus, most surveyed youth see human trafficking as an issue that is best prevented through strict law enforcement measures. The responses also suggest a strong attitude against human traffickers. Youth with tertiary education believe more strongly that all the options provided in the question are effective in preventing human trafficking than youth with lower education levels.

PRACTICES AND CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

1 Interest in learning more about, and engaging in activities countering, human trafficking

The youth that were surveyed would like to know more about human trafficking and engage in activities countering the phenomenon through watching a film or documentary on the topic (49% 'a great deal' or 'a lot'), reporting possible cases (49%), followed closely by watching an investigative TV programme on human trafficking (48%). The least popular responses were: 'play a game or quiz on your smartphone about human trafficking' (23%), 'volunteering for an anti-trafficking NGO' (28%), and 'engaging in a local anti-trafficking campaign' (30%).

The youth that were surveyed would like to know more about human trafficking and engage in activities countering the phenomenon through

Watching a film or documentary on the topic Reporting possible cases watching an investigative TV programme on human trafficking

49%

49%

48%

Female youth were more interested in engaging in relevant activities than male youth. More than half of surveyed females reported being interested 'a great deal' or 'a lot' in watching a TV programme on human trafficking, watching a movie or documentary about it, contacting or reporting a possible case of human trafficking, talking with their family about human trafficking, or reading an article on social media about the issue. Youths of age 15–17 years were less interested than other age groups in most options. For the options 'contact or report somewhere about a possible human trafficking victims' and 'engage in an anti-trafficking campaign' there was more interest in doing these activities among youth in urban areas than in rural areas. Interest in these two activities was also much higher among more highly educated youths.

2 Methods of learning about social issues, including human trafficking

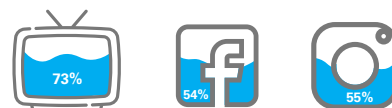
The most popular responses to the question 'What sources of information do you regularly use to learn about social issues?' were: television (77%), followed by Facebook (62%), Instagram (61%), and online news on apps (30%). There was very little interest, if at all, in learning about social issues through: religious groups (0%); public talks (0%); playing a game or quiz on a Smartphone (1%); posters (1%); engaging with NGOs (1%) or universities (2%); radio (2%); leaflets (3%); work (4%); youth group (4%); and books (6%). School is seen as a key source of information for 15–17-year-olds.

The surveyed youths suggested that they would like to learn more about human trafficking using the same methods they use to learn about other social issues: television (73%), Instagram (55%), Facebook (54%), online news on apps (31%), documentaries (26%) and movies (24%). There was very little interest in learning about human trafficking through any of the other options provided.

3 METHODS TO GET INFORMED ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES



3 METHODS THEY WANT TO USE TO GET INFORMED ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICING



Female youths use television as a source of information on social issues and human trafficking a little more so than males, while the latter use social media such as Facebook and Instagram for sources of such information more so than females, though both use the same sources of information to learn about these issues.

Youth with tertiary education are more interested than other youth in learning about social issues, including human trafficking through online news, and documentaries. Youth with basic and secondary education are more interested in learning about social issues and human trafficking through television, through friends and family, and school, than those with tertiary education.

Overall, the findings of the study suggest that Albanian youth have a sound level of knowledge in some areas, and positive attitudes regarding human trafficking, but there are certainly gaps in knowledge and awareness that may be strengthened through communication strategies.

THE WAY FORWARD

The findings of this first wave survey suggest areas for strengthening knowledge among Albanian youth that might lead to changing attitudes and, subsequently, practices. The programmatic response therefore may consider:

- Focusing on younger males living in rural, remote or ethnic minority (Roma) populated areas, as this group, among all, demonstrates less knowledge about human trafficking, is less alert to the risks and displays a lower degree of empathy towards victims.
- Re-evaluating and re-thinking of the normal interventions as those forms and means of communication (e.g. posters) have limited effect, according to the evidence collected here.
- Strengthening knowledge that human trafficking can occur anywhere, including in Albania, and including near to home.
- Strengthening knowledge about the various types of exploitation that can occur abroad and in Albania, such as child pornography and early marriage.
- Finding a way to address the clash between strong stereotypes of masculinity and the reality that boys and men are victims of trafficking.
- Improving awareness that national minorities, and people from rural areas, are at heightened risk of human trafficking.
- Finding ways to better link and explain the correlations between various factors—in addition to poverty—and human trafficking.
- Finding ways, considering the cultural context, to raise awareness that anyone might be a human trafficker.
- Strengthening knowledge regarding measures important in reducing vulnerabilities and in preventing human trafficking, such as employment, housing and medical support.
- Strengthening knowledge on ways of reporting human trafficking (other than to the police), and of the support services available to victims (other than support from the police, and general NGO support).
- Shifting attitudes (empathy towards victims) about the right of victims to receive support services, and the importance of receiving support services to reduce the risks of trafficking, and re-trafficking cycles.
- Shifting attitudes among youth about becoming involved in combating human trafficking. An important first step would be to educate Albanian youth about the opportunities available to them in their local community. Prior to this step it may be necessary to first introduce activities countering human trafficking into various areas of the country.

The objectives listed above can be achieved by designing and implementing targeted communication strategies, capitalising on television, social media and online news, and via schools, aimed at strengthening knowledge of human trafficking, and reducing youth vulnerability to the phenomenon. In the long term the communication strategies may shift youth knowledge, attitudes and practices with regard to human trafficking and, ultimately, reduce the prevalence of human trafficking in and from Albania.

Finally, the findings of the first wave survey identify many areas where future research is needed, including, but certainly not limited to:

- Exploring the reasons why youth think that people are trafficked abroad more often than within their own country, and whether there is an important interplay between knowledge of (where it occurs), and vulnerability to, human trafficking.
- Understanding why youth think that women and girls are more at risk of human trafficking than boys and men, and why awareness that national minorities and youth from rural areas are at heightened risk is low.
- Exploring the question of youth knowledge of human trafficking recruitment methods and who might be a human trafficker. For example, future research could target improving our understanding of how, and for what reasons, extended family members engage in human trafficking crimes, and victims' perceptions of family members as potential recruiters and traffickers.
- Understanding why awareness of ways to report suspected human trafficking cases is so low (outside police reporting lines), and why knowledge of the support services available for victims is low, particularly among Roma youth. Such research could provide valuable insights into the barriers facing national minorities in accessing key support services.



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