

Chapter III COORDINATION

What is coordination?

Coordination mobilizes the knowledge and resources of Albania's "anti-trafficking community".

The "Albanian National Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Persons 2008-2010" is a coordination document that apportions distinct but interdependent functions among responsible entities.

Coordination mobilizes the national and local "anti-trafficking community," to utilize its resources and knowledge toward a common goal. Coordination promotes: sharing of information and techniques; clarification of roles and responsibilities among government actors, and between government and civil society; and more effective use of human, financial and institutional resources throughout the country. Unlike networking, coordination is decision-driven, creates programs and assists individuals. In other words, it is first and foremost for operational purposes, although awareness raising may be an auxiliary outcome.

Even more than a mechanism, coordination is a philosophy and an approach that has been appropriated enthusiastically by Albanian anti-trafficking actors. This philosophy is grounded in the belief that Albania has a substantial variety of willing and able government officials, NPO staff members, and community leaders who sincerely want to combat trafficking of the children and women in their country, and help support and reintegrate those who have become its victims.

The Government of Albania's Office of the National Coordinator on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (ONAC), directed by a Deputy Minister of the Interior, exercises extensive coordination leadership among the central Ministries of the Government, with local government, and in cooperation with civil society organizations. In particular, the ONAC promotes and supports anti-trafficking efforts from both the perspective of law enforcement and human services, enabling communication and cooperation between law enforcement bodies and social/education authorities across the country. This work is conducted in the framework of the "Albanian National Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Persons 2008-2010". This Strategy, in itself, is a coordination document that apportions the distinct but interdependent functions of various anti-trafficking actors in the country to achieve a comprehensive set of services and programs to investigate and prosecute traffickers, assist and reintegrate their victims, increase prevention of these crimes, and track the changing nature of the phenomenon.

From 2005 to 2009, the CAAHT program supplemented the work of the ONAC by facilitating contact and cooperation between various anti-trafficking actors within specific communities as well as between regions of the country through events such as the CAAHT Regional Cluster Groups, Annual Conferences and technical workshops. CAAHT grants also gave priority to projects that utilize coordination approaches, thus encouraging partnerships not only among NGOs, but also between NGOs and local government offices. Several of the recipient NPOs initiated the creation of local community coordination groups.

Coordination tools

Coordination tools include:

- *Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator,*
- *Regional Committees in the Fight Against Human Trafficking,*
- *local networks,*
- *coalitions,*
- *national conferences,*
- *and regional cluster groups.*

Coordination occurs through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms, described in this chapter as “tools”. The National Anti-trafficking Strategy and the Administrative Order helped to establish the Regional Committees in the Fight Against Human trafficking, as well as administrative procedures of several Ministries¹, providing a national anti-trafficking framework that incorporates prevention, protection and prosecution. These “tools” designate roles for government offices in partnership with civil society for public awareness raising, prevention services to vulnerable populations, reintegration assistance for victims of trafficking, and investigation and prosecution of trafficking crimes.

The Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator, part of the Ministry of the Interior, is responsible for promoting and supporting coordination of these efforts among all the governmental actors. In addition to the Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator, the Government of Albania has created *qarku*-level Regional Committees in the Fight Against Human Trafficking (RCAT), under the auspices of the *qarku* Prefect. These Committees are responsible for ensuring that comprehensive anti-trafficking efforts are conducted in each region as well as coordinating reporting on human trafficking to the central government.

In some municipalities, local networks of government and NPO service providers coordinate interventions to assist specific vulnerable individuals and families, as well as supporting reintegration of victims of trafficking. These networks also support awareness raising programs and advocacy to increase institutional support for anti-trafficking efforts in the community.

There are several anti-trafficking coalitions in Albania. The *National Coalition of Anti-trafficking Shelters* was established in 2007, with the support of the CAAHT program. It comprises the main government and NPO shelters in the country that offer short or long-term assistance and reintegration services for victims of trafficking. The main purpose of the Coalition is to coordinate services for the protection, assistance, support, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of human trafficking. (This coalition is described in more detail in section 2. of this chapter.) In 2001, the *All Together Against Child Trafficking* (BKTF) coalition was created to bring together NPOs around Albania that provide protection and advocacy services for vulnerable children.² Other women’s and children’s coalitions also include counter-trafficking among their services.

National conferences on trafficking of children and adults are convened by a variety of actors including intergovernmental organizations (e.g.

¹ The Government of Albania ministries with specific responsibilities in anti-trafficking include the Ministry of the Interior (Mol) Ministry of Labor, Social Affaires and Equal Opportunity (MoLSAEO), Ministry of Education and Science (MES), Ministry of Health (MoH), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

² For more information about the BKTF coalition, please visit the organization web site www.bktf-coalition.org

Coordination links established through these forums create ongoing relationships of cooperation among government and civil society anti-trafficking actors.

What key factors contribute to coordination?

The most important purpose for anti-trafficking coordination is to improve assistance to vulnerable children and women as well as victims of trafficking,

IOM, Unicef and OSCE), the Government of Albania, international NPOs (e.g. Terre des Hommes and Save the Children), national NPOs (e.g. the Gender Alliance for Development and the Children's Rights Center for Albania), and from 2005 to 2009, the CAAHT program. Such events provide opportunities to strengthen links between similar programs and offices throughout the country, enhancing the consistency of awareness raising messages, program methodologies, staff skills, and analysis of trends in human trafficking.

The CAAHT program also convened governmental and civil society stakeholders in multi-*qarqe* Regional Cluster Groups. These fora brought together local and regional government authorities and civil society leaders to learn about government strategies, meet potential partners in nearby communities, and compare trends in human trafficking across similar areas of the country.

Perhaps most importantly, coordination links established through all of these fora create ongoing relationships of cooperation among government officials, NPO staff and community leaders as they secure services to victims of trafficking and other vulnerable people, and implement anti-trafficking projects in their communities.

Successful coordination relies on the dynamic interplay of research-based strategies, human and financial resources, and active networks. The following factors are essential for productive coordination of counter-trafficking efforts:

- National and local counter-trafficking strategies developed based on successful methodologies and credible data about the nature of human trafficking in the country, region or community targeted.
- Clear assignment of roles and responsibilities for all anti-trafficking actors.
- All actors are familiar with these strategies and understand their responsibilities.
- Sufficient human and financial resources are allocated to achieve the responsibilities assigned.
- Retention of qualified government personnel and NPO staff in positions responsible for anti-trafficking coordination to enable strong relationships of cooperation to be established over time.
- Forums of coordination (e.g. Regional Committees, networks and conferences) are convened regularly.
- Forums of coordination are conducted using collaborative methodology.
- Updated information such as analyses of changing trends in human trafficking, changes in legislation or administrative procedures, new training or education resources, and new institutional partners is disseminated to all actors in a timely and systematic fashion.

Supervisors support their staff to establish and nurture informal relationships of cooperation with counter-parts in other government offices and NPOs.

Defining success and measuring impact

Successful coordination relies on the dynamic interplay of research-based strategies, resources, and active networks actors.

Coordination occurs in both formal and informal ways. For example, Regional Committees are expected to consolidate information from the government offices represented on the Committee in their reports to the ONAC. This is a formal coordination function. Similarly, Technical Working Tables provide formal case management coordination to ensure that specific vulnerable children receive the combination of services and support necessary to resolve their vulnerability. In Albania, these formal mechanisms are fledgling. More often cooperation for implementing programs and assisting vulnerable people occurs through informal relationships of coordination between government and civil society actors who trust and support one another. The results of each of these efforts need to be determined in relationship to the specific type of coordination being pursued.

The most important purpose for anti-trafficking coordination is to improve assistance to vulnerable children and women as well as victims of trafficking, as the following story demonstrates (the names of the beneficiaries have been changed to protect their privacy).

Juliana and Shpresa, two sisters 14 and 12 years old come from a family with serious economic and social problems. They live with their mother, who is remarried. Both were identified by social services as children at risk of trafficking. They entered an NPO residential program, where they stayed for three years, while maintaining contact with their family. In the spring of 2009, their mother insisted they return home. The younger girl was forced to collect recycled material at garbage cans. The step-father "rented out" the older girl to male clients for prostitution. The NPO's social worker sought out the girls to assess the situation. They asked for the help of the NPO staff to escape from their mother and stepfather. Realizing the danger they were in, the NPO welcomed them back at the residential center. The staff contacted the Child Protection Office in the municipality, the anti-trafficking sector at the regional Directorate of Police, the Office of Regional Social Services, and the prosecutor's office. The stepfather was prosecuted for sexual exploitation. For their protection and through the coordination of the National Shelter Coalition, the girls are now accommodated in another residential center where they are pursuing their education and receiving psychosocial support.

Law enforcement personnel have expressed particular appreciation for opportunities to refer vulnerable people and victims to social service providers, as well as receiving reports of likely crimes being committed, as in the previous story.

This cooperation was not achieved just at a blow of the whistle. There have been attitudes like "It's not my business!" "I am not related to trafficking" or "I am busy with other tasks! The committees overcame this mentality. In the beginning it was like a dream, but later I recognized with pleasure that it was done - all were committed.

- Former Chief of Anti-trafficking, Regional Directorate of Police

Coordination Tools

1. Regional Committees in the Fight Against Human Trafficking

Description³

These government structures are responsible for problem identification, policy determination, and measures to be taken as part of the fight against human trafficking at a local level.

On 16 June 2006, the Prime Minister signed Administrative Order No. 139 establishing *Regional Committees in the Fight Against Trafficking*. The core design for these Committees emerged from the advice of the CAAHT Regional Cluster Group discussions held during 2005 and 2006.

Regional Committees have been established in each of the 12 *qarqe* of the country. These committees are headed by the Prefect of the *Qarku*. The National Anti-trafficking Strategy 2008-2010 advises that they should include representatives from the: State Social Services, the Regional Employment Office, the Regional Police Directorate (including the Anti-Trafficking Police), the Regional Director of the State Informative Service, the Regional Education Directorate, the Regional Public Health Directorate, the Social Assistance and Protection Offices (incl. CPUs) in Municipalities and Communes, the District's Prosecution Office, as well as NGOs.

These government structures are responsible for problem identification, policy determination, and measures to be taken as part of the fight against human trafficking at a local level in compliance with the National Anti-trafficking Strategy. This Committee also is a local partner for the ONAC and serves as a point of contact for the authority supervising the implementation of the National Referral Mechanism.

The 2008-2010 National Anti-trafficking Strategy assigns the following tasks to the Committees⁴:

- Setting and program design at the regional level;
- Enabling and supporting the work at the local level;
- Ensuring that national standards are implemented at the municipal/commune level by way of monitoring and quality checks;
- Ensuring availability of services for vulnerable persons/groups and trafficked persons at the regional/local level;
- Backstopping the municipal referral bodies and intervening in non-routine/intricate cases;
- Participating in the National Task Force on Human Trafficking; and
- Participating in the NRM Working Group.

³ This description is excerpted from "Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy Against Trafficking in Human Beings 2005-2007" from the Ministry of Interior Office of the National Coordinator on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, pages 73-74.

⁴ Republic of Albania National Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Persons 2008-2010, page 16.

The Order stipulates that every Committee establish a Technical Working Table comprised of technical staff from each of the government offices represented on the Committee. These technical groups are designated to cooperate in the case management of assistance for vulnerable and trafficked children and women. They also assist law enforcement agencies in the identification of victims/potential victims of trafficking.

Objectives

Through policy determination and research, coordination of institutional activities, and other measures taken at the district level:

- a) prevent human trafficking within the *qarku* boundaries, and
- b) ensure comprehensive protection and reintegration assistance for victims of trafficking who are from or reside in communities within the *qarku*.

Outcome or Impact

The National Anti-trafficking Strategy for 2008-2010 identifies the following output indicators for the Regional Committees:

- Regular meetings held;
- Regular reports to the ONAC;
- Existence of community development programs in all identified vulnerable communities;
- All RCATs and Technical Tables undertake training and are familiar with the envisaged structure and their tasks;
- Existence of Terms of Reference for RCATs and Technical Tables;
- Membership of RCATs expanded to include *qarku* councils, deputy prefects, the Heads of the Regional Council Regional Directorates of Borders and Migration, and NGOs;
- Existence of situation assessments for each *qarku* as baseline for future review; and
- Existence of regular situation assessment reports (bi-annual).

Implementation

While the Prefect is the nominal head of the Regional Committee, most Prefects have appointed a member of his or her staff to serve as Technical Secretariat officer to administer the work of the Committee and its Technical Working Table. The Regional Committees are encouraged to organize themselves in ways that most effectively meet the needs in their local situation. At minimum, it is expected that they meet quarterly, with the Technical Working Tables meeting more frequently. They are asked to report on their activities bi-annually to the ONAC.

Some of their primary functions include:

- Creating and maintaining an up-to-date situational analysis of the trafficking situation in the *qarku*.
- Ensuring identification of vulnerable individuals, families and groups and prevention interventions to reduce their vulnerability.
- Ensuring comprehensive assistance and reintegration of children and women who have become victims of trafficking.

Situational analysis of the trafficking situation in the *qarku*

The National Strategy calls upon every RCAT to develop a situational analysis of the trends in human trafficking as well as the services for its prevention in the *qarku*. Consolidation of relevant data at the *qarku* level has two purposes:

- 1) Providing disaggregated and comparable data to the ONAC in order to create a credible and comprehensive view of the state of trafficking of women and children in the country and the efforts to prevent the phenomenon;
- 2) Providing key leaders in each *qarku* local information that enables them to make better decisions and choices to ensure that sufficient local programs and mechanisms are in place to combat trafficking in humans through prevention, prosecution, protection and assistance to victims.

In addition, it helps the RCATs better define roles and responsibilities of the different governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. A situational analysis of the (anti-) trafficking situation in the *qarku* is important not only to assist the newly established Committees in developing their regional action plans, but also to establish a data baseline against which to monitor and evaluate the accomplishment of the goals and objectives set out in the respective action plans. An updated situational analysis is to be submitted to the ONAC every six months.

One of the purposes for the situational analysis of human trafficking in the qarku is to identify vulnerable individuals and groups.

Identification of vulnerable individuals, families and groups and prevention interventions to reduce their vulnerability

One of the purposes for the situational analysis of human trafficking in the *qarku* is to identify vulnerable individuals and groups. The process will help to determine the level of vulnerability to trafficking of different areas, communities, and individuals within the *qarku*. More precise recognition of vulnerable locations and people enables improved targeting of social services delivery as well as other awareness raising and prevention techniques. It is widely recognized that women and children represent the most high-risk/vulnerable groups for trafficking in human beings. Nevertheless, gender and age alone are not the main indicators. Identification of a more complex set of indicators will enable anti-trafficking actors to better target who within the *qarku* may be more at-risk of being trafficked. Other factors to be considered include signs of

domestic violence or other family dysfunction, school abandonment, law enforcement information on trafficking and smuggling networks, etc.

Local government structures, especially the police and the departments of social services, employment, and education, carry many responsibilities to identify and assist many of the individuals with the types of problems described in the previous paragraph. While much is known through these offices about the needs of and opportunities for these people, often government officials express concern that they lack sufficient infrastructure and resources to assist these people in finding long-term solutions to resolve their vulnerability. In many communities, local government, NPOs and local community leaders have established strong relationships of cooperation that combine their knowledge, services and resources to provide a more comprehensive approach to supporting and protecting people, families and communities who are most vulnerable to the crime of trafficking.

Assistance and reintegration of children and women who have become victims of trafficking

After someone is identified as a victim of trafficking by law enforcement authorities or service providers, the person's access to social support, assistance and protection must become a primary consideration, irrespective of their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement authorities. The combination of responsibilities and resources among the government offices represented should be sufficient to ensure for the victim being assisted - at minimum - safe accommodation, psychosocial counseling, health and medical care, legal assistance, education and vocational training and employment opportunities. Meeting these obligations to the victims often also best serves the interests of authorities responsible for investigation and prosecution of criminals because well-supported victims may be more willing and able to cooperate with the justice system.

For both prevention services and reintegration assistance for victims of trafficking, the Technical Working Tables are the "backup" forum of representatives from key government agencies that are positioned to ensure access to all services needed in specific cases.

Cost considerations, timing & complexity

Anti-trafficking roles and responsibilities of the government offices represented on the RCATs are stipulated in the administrative procedures of each Ministry and in the National Anti-trafficking Strategy. In most cases, this work should be conducted with the human and financial resources of each office represented.

Several RCATs have called upon the Central Government to allocate funds for a full-time anti-trafficking coordinator in each *qarku* to carry out the functions currently tasked to the Technical Secretariat in the Office of the Prefect.

NPOs are able to regularly contribute expertise to the RCATs at no cost. However, most of them must secure specific financial support for

any projects they are expected to carry out in the *qarku*. RCATs are encouraged to cooperate in mobilizing financial and in-kind contributions towards NPO project budgets, which will encourage external donors to share the burden of these project costs.

Complementary Activities

- Awareness raising in schools and the community.
- Remedial education and vocational training for vulnerable populations as well as reintegrating victims of trafficking.
- Police investigation of crimes related to human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Prosecution of perpetrators of those crimes.
- Regular national situational analysis of the trends in human trafficking and the state of anti-trafficking efforts by both the ONAC and civil society.

Lessons learned

- Anti-trafficking practitioners – governmental and NPO – welcome the creation of the RATCs and their Technical Working Tables. They want to see them further elaborated, with a greater emphasis on implementation rather than reporting.
- RATC members desire more training to understand their roles and responsibilities. They would welcome more training and support from the ONAC and other agencies.
- Reporting requirements and training for the RATCs needs to be elaborated further in order to make better use of the information available, and avoid duplication of information already reported by the RATC members to their respective line ministry.
- NPOs are the primary source of practical anti-trafficking knowledge (outside law enforcement data) and programming in most *qarku*. They are important advisors and implementers for the RATCs.
- Central ministries such as MOLSAEO and MES need to make greater effort to familiarize and update their representatives about national standards and strategies of these ministries so that their regional representatives have a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to counter-trafficking.
- RATCs are well-positioned to mobilize institutional resources (human and financial) for their work. To date, most RATCs have used their existence primarily to attempt to secure new funds to be budgeted through the Office of the Prefect. As of June 2009, the political will capacity and influence of the RACTs remains substantially under-utilized.

For more
information, please
contact

Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator, Ministry of the Interior: at_nationalcoordinator@yahoo.com
Technical Secretariat in the Office of the Prefect in your *qarku*. See CAAHT contact database on the Toolkit Resources CD for more information.

Another Vision, Elbasan: Tjetervision@albmail.com

In Protection of Urban and Rural Women's Rights in Berat: artadyrmishi@yahoo.com

Murialdo Social Center, Fier: gsm@murialdo.org

Victims of Mines Assistance (VMA) Kukës: kukesi@albmail.com

Vatra Psycho-Social Center, Vlore: qvatra@icc-al.org

Different & Equal (D&E): different&equal@icc-al.org

2. National Anti-trafficking Shelter Coalition

Description

The Coalition is comprised of

- *“Another Vision” in Elbasan,*
- *“Different & Equal” in Tirana,*
- *“Life and Hope” Transit Shelter in Gjirokastra,*
- *MOLSAEO National Reception Center for the Victims of Trafficking in Tirana, and*
- *“Vatra” Psychosocial Center in Vloa.*

The National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters was established in July of 2007. It is comprised of “Another Vision” in Elbasan, “Different and Equal” in Tirana, the “Life and Hope” Transit Shelter in Gjirokastra, the MOLSAEO National Reception Center for the Victims of Trafficking in Tirana, and the “Vatra” Psychosocial Center in Vloa.

The main purpose of the Coalition is to enable cooperation and coordination of the members’ activities and services for the protection, support and reintegration of trafficking victims.

Areas of cooperation include:

- Providing a full and long-term package of services to ensure the social inclusion and reintegration for child and adult victims of trafficking.
- Creating access to the reintegration services victims of trafficking desire, in the location they choose, and through cooperation in case referrals between member agencies.
- Cooperating between shelters in order to exchange experiences and expertise, particularly to develop and guard high standards of service.
- Cooperating with government agencies to track and analyze trends in human trafficking, and assist in investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes.
- Advocating with government and intergovernmental bodies to promote the best legal framework, regulatory standards, and institutional practices in victim assistance and reintegration throughout Albania.
- Joint funding requests to international and domestic donors and government institutions to support all member agencies.

The Coalition made substantial contributions to the development of the National Anti-trafficking Strategy 2008-2010 and MOLSAEO’s Standards for Victims of Trafficking as well as social services’ residential facilities.

Objectives

To ensure high quality assistance and reintegration support for child and adult victims of trafficking in Albania.

Outcome or Impact

- A well elaborated, victim's rights-based system of services for full reintegration of child and adult victims of trafficking.
- Financial sustainability of the entities providing assistance and reintegration for victims of trafficking.
- Continual professional capacity building for the staff of member institutions.
- Regular and up-to-date anonymous victim case data made available to the ONAC and other institutions to contribute to the analysis of trends in human trafficking in Albania.

Implementation

Coalition members share responsibilities among all the agencies according to the activities needed to achieve the Coalition's work plan.

Leadership of the Coalition is shared among its members by rotating the Presidency every six months between the Directors of the member agencies. At the beginning of each new Presidency, a six-month work plan is developed and adopted by the full membership.

The President convenes meetings as the need arises, generally once a month. The agenda for each meeting is developed in consultation with all members. Advocacy positions are developed and reviewed by all members. Consensus is sought whenever possible.

Since the membership of the Coalition is relatively small, all the Directors often attend advocacy meetings and workshops together. However, the President usually is called upon to represent Coalition positions.

Coalition members share responsibilities among all the agencies according to the activities needed to achieve the Coalition's work plan.

CAAHT staff has provided the Coalition technical support and secretarial services since its inception. This concludes in September 2009. Secretarial functions are being assumed by the staff of the organization that holds the Presidency.

Cost considerations, timing & complexity

Meetings are hosted by the member agencies, and staff participation is considered part of an organization's staff responsibilities. Therefore, the core operational costs for the Coalition are borne by its member agencies. Specific activities are funded through project funding raised from donors.

Complementary Activities

- Cooperation with the ONAC.
- Cooperation with RATCs and Technical Working Tables.
- Training and advisory services to other NPOs and government institutions that conduct anti-trafficking programs.
- Cooperation with law enforcement to promote prosecution of traffickers.

Lessons learned

- Regular contact between agencies in the Coalition increases the effectiveness of victim case referrals in Albania.
- The practical implementation and individual case knowledge of the staff of the member agencies of the Coalition is an essential resource to all governmental and NPO anti-trafficking entities in the country. Because the staff of these organizations works for extended periods, and often on a daily basis, with individual victims of trafficking, they have the most in-depth understanding of the detailed characteristics of the phenomenon of human trafficking, and its changing trends in Albania from the perspective of the victim's experiences.

For more information, please contact

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3. National Coordination Conferences

Description

The task is building greater cooperation — particularly between civil society and government office actors — to utilize good practices and to enhance skills building to create consistent, good quality anti-trafficking programs and services throughout Albania.

Albania has substantial human resources – in both government and civil society - able to combat trafficking in persons. The task is building greater cooperation — particularly between civil society and government office actors — to utilize good practices and to enhance skills building to create consistent, good quality anti-trafficking programs and services throughout Albania. National conferences that bring together a wide variety of decision makers and practitioners can provide an important opportunity to create a two-way dialogue between local implementers and national leadership. Additionally, they create a forum for sharing of experiences and models between practitioners in different parts of the country.

Several offices and agencies are well-positioned to convene National Conferences, especially the Office of the National Coordinator on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. CAAHT program stakeholders have frequently expressed the hope that a national agency will continue to convene national conferences using the collaborative methodology of the CAAHT program.

Between 2005 and 2009, the CAAHT program convened five national conferences, each building on the outcomes of the preceding event. Each conference was designed using a collaborative methodology, with increasing emphasis on presentations from local actors in Albania. While initially perceived as primarily an event for civil society and capital-based actors, each succeeding conference attracted more participants from government offices and from outside the capital, Tirana.

The initial launch conference in May 2004 introduced the 88 participants to the goals and objectives of the CAAHT program. Participants engaged in small group discussions to identify which government and civil society actors they should encourage to cooperate with the CAAHT program over the next three years⁵. At this initial launch conference, 43 percent of the participants came from local civil society organizations, 25 percent came from international NGOs, and 13.5 percent came from Albanian government offices. Senior USAID, CAAHT, and Albanian central government representatives delivered the majority of the conference presentations.

At the 2005 Annual Conference, the source of expertise shifted substantially. Eighteen speakers from Albanian NGOs, government offices, and the media offered presentations during four panel sessions. During these sessions, the presenters discussed good practices and challenged the participants to address gaps in programming and services. Over 90 participants joined in the two-day event. Over 60 percent came

⁵ The initial contract for the CAAHT program was for three years – FY 2005-2007. In 2007, USAID awarded a cost extension to Creative Associates, doubling the life of the project to six years – FY 2005 – 2009.

from national NGOs, while government attendance remained at the comparatively low level of 16 percent. While the overall increase in national participants indicated increasing “ownership” of the CAAHT process by Albanian partners, the conference identified the need to engage government partners more actively as a continuing key priority.

The 2006 Annual Conference reflected both a significant increase in attendance and a dramatic shift in government participation. It mobilized the sharing of good practices and local knowledge through presentations by over 40 civil society and government representatives. One hundred nineteen participants attended the conference, with 43 percent coming from government offices and 38 percent from civil society. Over 80 participants came from areas outside the capital city of Tirana.

The 2008 Annual Conference emphasized sustainability of anti-trafficking work in Albania. One hundred and eight participants attended, with an equivalent percentage of local government (37 percent) and civil society (35 percent) participants. Networks and systems for anti-trafficking were highlighted. Eleven presentations of good practices in practical collaboration for prevention of trafficking, awareness raising and assistance/reintegration for victims of trafficking were presented by teams from collaborating agencies, governmental and nongovernmental. Recognizing that financial resources are an essential element of sustainability, a panel of “donors” predicted coming trends in international and domestic funding sources.

Detailed reports from each of the conferences described, including descriptions of small group presentations and discussions by *qarqe*, may be found on the CAAHT Reports CD with this Toolkit.

Objectives

The goals and objectives for each national conference need to be established as part of the initial design process. The most successful conferences are designed giving priority to the objectives of the participants as well as the host office or organization.

Outcome or Impact

Outcomes and impacts for these conferences also need to be identified as part of the initial conference design process. The most effective conferences target practical application of information conveyed and relationships established.

Implementation

CAAHT national conferences have been widely acclaimed by government, civil society and intergovernmental representatives. In these forums, local government and civil society actors came together with counterparts from their own communities and from across the country. The collaborative process enabled them to engage in substantive discussions that promoted the development of relationships of mutual trust and respect.

Use of a trained facilitation team was key to the success of this collaboration methodology. Trained facilitators provide neutral leadership for working groups and guide participants in the use of creative, even playful, techniques that elicit input from all participants. At the same time, facilitation keeps the group discussion focused on the task at hand, giving particular attention to moving the discussion ahead in accordance with a predetermined allocation of the time allowed for each step of the working group process.

This collaborative approach was developed with the technical support of a professional facilitation and group processes specialist, Dr. Sheila Ramsey, from EnCompass^{LLC}. Over the life of the first four conferences, she trained members of the CAAHT staff and trainers from the Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center (ANTTARC) in techniques for group facilitation and other group process skills. The Toolkit Resources CD includes three handbooks that provide principles for good facilitation as well as a number of group process techniques. These handbooks are 1) *Resource Materials for Staff Development Sessions - May 2004*, 2) *Tools and Methods to Enhance Participatory Learning* and 3) *Creating an Effective Learning Environment*.

The [CAAHT] Conferences were not alike. The preparation for the conference, discussions, and exchange of information were characterized not only by knowledge, but also satisfaction.—NPO Project Coordinator

Under Dr. Ramsey's tutelage, CAAHT staff discovered how important detailed design and preparation is for successful conferences. The design work for each conference began a minimum of three months before the event. The results of the previous conferences were reviewed, the state of anti-trafficking coordination in Albania assessed, and stakeholders were consulted about what they hoped would be encountered at the next conference. For example, before the 2008 conference, stakeholders were asked to provide input to the CAAHT staff by responding to these questions:

- What do you and/or your organization/institution want to do in the coming year to promote sustainability of anti-trafficking programming in the coming year?
- What do you want to learn and/or experience at the CAAHT 2008 Annual Conference to help you achieve this?

The goals and objectives, as well as potential presentations, were then identified based on this constellation of input. Once the goals and objectives are clearly defined, a step-by-step agenda was developed and refined through a dialogue between Dr. Ramsey, as the lead facilitator, and the CAAHT staff facilitation team. At the same time, a detailed checklist was developed to track all the activities needed to ensure full preparation and follow-up for the conference. It included specific assignments for staff as well as benchmark and completion dates for every task. An example is included in the Toolkit CD in an Excel workbook format that may be modified as needed.

In the final week before the conference, Dr. Ramsey – in collaboration with the CAAHT staff facilitation team – designed a facilitator's guide that gave detailed plans for timing and techniques to be used throughout the conference. The "Facilitators Guidelines" for the CAAHT Launch

Facilitation is “a process in which a person who is acceptable to all members of the group, substantively neutral, and has no decision making authority intervenes to help a group improve the way it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions, in order to increase the group’s effectiveness.”

Conference found on the Toolkit Resources CD is an example of such an instrument.

CAAHT conference participants repeatedly highlighted the skills of the CAAHT and ANTTARC facilitators that guided all the working group activities as one of the most appreciated aspects of CAAHT conferences.

Facilitation is a specific methodology and skills set, distinct from training. It is “a process in which a person who is acceptable to all members of the group, substantively neutral, and has no decision making authority intervenes to help a group improve the way it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions, in order to increase the group’s effectiveness.”⁶

These key behaviors and guidelines undergird successful facilitation work.

A facilitator

- is a neutral servant of the group;
- does not evaluate or contribute ideas;
- focuses energy of the group on a common task;
- suggests alternative methods and procedures;
- protects individuals and their ideas from attack;
- encourages everyone to participate; and
- helps the group find win-win solutions.

Specific *facilitation techniques* to keep in mind are:

- clearly define your role;
- get agreement on common problems and processes before beginning;
- don’t try to be the expert - “boomerang” questions back to the group members;
- be positive, compliment the group;
- don’t talk too much;
- support the recorder;
- don’t be afraid to make mistakes; and
- help to educate the group.

It is important to capture the good ideas and information being generated through plenary presentations and working group discussions. Make sure to have sufficient records identified and agree in advance on a structure for note taking at the event. Recorders should be encouraged to try to capture the actual words of speakers in order to avoid

⁶ Roger M. Schwartz, *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994.

misinterpreting their meaning and to increase their sense of contribution to the proceedings. This information should be consolidated into a comprehensive report of the proceedings, to be distributed to all participants and other interested actors in a timely fashion.

Cost considerations, timing & complexity

National conferences are generally a complicated and expensive undertaking, particularly if fees must be paid for venue, meals, lodging, materials, etc. Costs can be offset or shared in several ways. Government offices may have access to government-owned facilities that could be used without charge. Speakers and panelists from government and civil society can offer their services without charging fees. Government and civil society participants can secure approval from their superiors to charge their transportation, per diem and lodging costs to their office or organization budgets, rather than expecting the sponsoring agency to pay their expenses. Invitations for the conference should be initiated at least one month before the event in order to allow sufficient time for participants to secure authorization for these charges.

Cost can also be shared among several sponsors. In addition to offices of the Government of Albania, intergovernmental organizations such as the IOM, OSCE, Unicef as well as large international NPOs such as World Vision and Save the Children are often interested in supporting major conferences. Increasingly, businesses are interested in sponsoring events through cash or in-kind contributions.

Complementary activities

Collaborative conferences are most successful when the participants are engaged in practical application of the topics addressed. Some of the responsibilities borne by anti-trafficking actors (governmental and civil society) who benefit from national conferences include:

- Review and elaboration of the legal framework to counter human trafficking and protect vulnerable populations.
- Review and elaboration of standards for services to decrease individuals' vulnerability to human trafficking and to improve quality of reintegration services.
- Regional Committees in the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Child Protection Units in various municipalities.
- Awareness raising in public schools.
- Prevention services from NPOs and government agencies for vulnerable populations.
- Assistance and reintegration services from NPOs and government agencies for child and adult victims of trafficking.

Programmatic prerequisites

- A team of staff and volunteers who have in-depth knowledge of the topics to be discussed at the conference.
- A strong network of contacts through which to identify the best resources for speakers as well as participants.
- Support from senior government, civil society and intergovernmental representatives.
- Knowledge of previous conferences and workshops convened on similar subjects in order to build on previous inputs and avoid repetition of information and processes.

Questions to ask before beginning this activity

- What are the key goals and objectives for this conference?
- Who is our target audience?
- How does this build on previous conferences, workshops and trainings provided to this target audience?
- Who will sponsor this event?
- Do we have sufficient human and financial sources to ensure a quality conference?

Lessons learned

Conference success is significantly increased when participants feel "ownership" of the conference because they were consulted.

- Detailed planning and early preparation are pivotal to creating a successful conference.
- Conference success is significantly increased when participants feel "ownership" of the conference because they were consulted in its design, contributed to the technical content, and given sufficient time during the event to discuss in working groups or other small group discussion configurations (such as "world café").
- The "world café" process was particularly valued by CAAHT conference participants, both governmental and NPO.
- Conference facilitators need training in facilitation skills.
- A detailed guide for every step of the conference facilitation process needs to be designed before the conference.
- All conference facilitators need to be trained before the conference on how to implement a detailed facilitation plan.
- The planning and facilitation techniques used to organize national conferences also may be applied to designing workshops and other events at both national and local levels.

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4. Regional Cluster Groups

Description

The purpose of the CAAHT Regional Cluster Groups was to enhance the collaboration between civil society and the local government in combating trafficking.

From 2005 to 2007, the CAAHT program convened quarterly local government and civil society stakeholders in multi-*qarku* forums called “Regional Cluster Groups”. The purpose of the CAAHT Regional Cluster Groups was to enhance the collaboration between civil society and the local government in combating trafficking while ensuring coordination and cooperation among CAAHT grantees. These forums were designed to:

- Support prevention campaigns and programs to decrease vulnerability to trafficking of human beings in each region;
- Develop more effective reintegration services for victims of trafficking;
- Consolidate information about trafficking in human beings as it occurs in each area (community, district, region) and monitor trends;
- Improve communication among anti-trafficking stakeholders, maximizing human and financial resources, and effectively streamlining efforts and services;
- Enhance cooperation between civil society and government actors to combat trafficking of human beings in their areas of responsibility; and
- Disseminate reliable information about trafficking of human beings in Albania.

The CAAHT Regional Clusters were made up of civil society and local government actors. Cluster divisions were based on district boundaries. Certain municipalities noted below that were more logically connected to a different cluster are in parentheses.

- Northern Cluster: Shkoder, Kukës, Lezhe and Dibra
- Central Cluster: Durrës, Tirana and Elbasan
- Eastern Cluster: Korça, with Permet and Skrapar
- Southern Cluster: Vlore, Gjirokastra (except Permet), Berat (except Skrapar) and Fier



Geographic distribution of CAAHT Regional Cluster Groups

In June 2006, the Prime Minister signed an Administrative Order formalizing Prefect-led Regional Committees in the Fights Against Trafficking in Human Beings (RCATs) for all 12 *qarks* of the country. The design and purpose of these Committees emerged substantially from the consultative process of the CAAHT RCGs over the previous two years. In June and July of 2006, the CAAHT program collaborated with the ONAC to conduct orientation workshops for the RCATs, configured in the same format as CAAHT RCGs.

Regional Cluster Groups supplement the function of the RCATs, serving as important forums for information sharing, collaborative analysis of patterns of trafficking in human beings in local areas, and program cooperation among local government and civil society actors. Both government and civil society representatives emphasize that they benefit from the opportunity to meet with their counterparts from neighboring regions because they face similar opportunities and challenges, that may differ from other areas of the country. In interviews conducted for the final impact assessment of CAAHT coordination, many program stakeholders emphasized that they hoped other offices or organizations would continue to convene similar regional cluster groups.

Objectives

To enhance the collaboration between civil society and the local government in combating trafficking while ensuring coordination and cooperation among CAAHT grantees.

Outcome or Impact

For local government and civil society leaders:

- Increased knowledge of human trafficking in Albania.
- Improved knowledge of government strategies and standards to combat human trafficking and assist vulnerable populations.
- Knowledge of program techniques to implement counter-trafficking programming in local communities.
- Expanded network of counterparts with whom to collaborate to achieve comprehensive and effective counter-trafficking programs and services in local communities.
- Identify common areas of concern and needs to bring to the attention of central government officials and international donors.

Implementation

With an average of four meetings per region, RCGs brought together civil society participants from mainly local NGOs of women, children, youth and legal assistance with representatives of local government offices. Representatives included participants from the regional office of social services, office of social and economic assistance in the municipalities, anti-trafficking police, regional education departments, regional employment office, regional councils, etc. Representatives of

CAAHT's role in the RCG process was primarily that of facilitator. Participants clearly understood that CAAHT was neither there to impose ideas nor to provide ready made solutions. The participants themselves were the generators of the ideas.

international agencies like UNICEF, ILO, IOM, OSCE, and TdH have held the status of observers/advisors. Most have been present during the Central RCG meetings, while a few of them have participated in the meetings of other regions as well.

The increasing participation from the local government representatives demonstrates their growing interest of the insights and information shared during these meetings, particularly in the context of planning future anti-trafficking activities. For example, a former Chief of the Anti-trafficking Police in Korça and an active RCG participant there, observed:

What CAAHT is doing is very important for our work. Now I know about more NGOs involved in anti-trafficking in our region and what they are doing, so it is easier for me to ask support from them when needed.

The development dynamics of RCG meetings have been different in each region. Contributing factors include:

- the level of anti-trafficking knowledge and understanding of anti-trafficking actors in each region;
- the level of commitment and pro-active attitude of the actors in coordinating their work with other stakeholders;
- the previous experience, especially of NGOs;
- existing anti-trafficking information and the level of willingness to share it, especially amongst partners in the NGO sector;
- the level of sensitivity of local government actors to anti-trafficking and the place anti-trafficking occupies on the local government's list of priorities (anti-trafficking police has it always as a priority); and
- the question of whether the different anti-trafficking actors would be able to coordinate at the regional level or not.

CAAHT's role in the RCG process was primarily that of facilitator. Participants clearly understood that CAAHT was neither there to impose ideas nor to provide ready made solutions. The participants themselves were the generators of the ideas, the finders of the solutions and embodied the local ownership of all new developments in this process. CAAHT staff was present to guide the participants through the process and offer technical guidance when needed.

The design and facilitation instrument and process described in the previous section on National Conferences equally apply to the implementation of Regional Cluster Groups. For more specific information, see Dr. Sheila Ramey's three training manuals 1) *Resource Materials for Staff Development Sessions - May 2004*, 2) *Tools and Methods to Enhance Participatory Learning* and 3) *Creating an Effective Learning Environment* found on the Toolkit Resources CD with this Toolkit.

Cost considerations, timing & complexity

Costs can be offset or shared in several ways.

Conducting RCGs requires investment of time in preparation as well as implementation.

The cost considerations for conducting RCGs include rental of meeting facilities, possible stipends and travel expenses for facilitators, moderate costs for coffee breaks and meals, as well as possible costs for printing materials to be distributed at the meeting. Costs can be offset or shared in several ways. Government offices may have access to government-owned facilities that could be used without charge. Facilitators and resource persons from government and civil society can offer their services without charging fees. Government and civil society participants can secure approval from their superiors to charge their transportation, per diem and lodging costs to their office or organization budgets, rather than expect the sponsoring agency to pay their expenses.

Conducting RCGs requires investment of time in preparation as well as implementation. Sufficient preparation time is needed to identify and train the local facilitators, so that they are well prepared to lead the group discussions. This person must be able to facilitate discussion effectively, provide accurate information about trafficking, build a sense of trust and respect among the participants and maintain the confidentiality of victims at all times.

Complementary Activities

- Regional Committees in the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings
- Child Protection Units in various municipalities
- Awareness raising in public schools.
- Prevention services from NPOs and government agencies for vulnerable populations.
- Assistance and reintegration services from NPOs and government agencies for child and adult victims of trafficking.
- Investigation and prosecution of traffickers.
- National anti-trafficking strategies and standards.

Programmatic prerequisites

- A team of staff and volunteers who have in-depth knowledge of the topics to be discussed at the cluster group meeting.
- A strong network of contacts through which to identify the best resources for speakers as well as participants.
- Support from senior government, civil society and intergovernmental representatives.
- Familiarity with previous RCGs convened on similar subjects in order to build on previous inputs and avoid repetition of information and processes.

Questions to ask before beginning this activity

- Which government and civil society offices should we try to attract to our RCG?
- How can we get their input to establish the purpose and design of the RCG meeting?
- What are the key goals and objectives for this RCG?
- How does this build on previous conferences, workshops and trainings provided to this target audience?
- Who will sponsor this event?
- Do we have sufficient human and financial resources to ensure a quality RCG meeting?

Lessons learned

- Detailed planning and thorough preparation are pivotal to creating a successful RCG.
- Topics for RCGs should be focused on applicability of the topic/information to the local context.
- RCG participants appreciate having national experts make presentation at these events.
- RCG success is significantly increased when participants feel “ownership” of the meeting because they were consulted in its design, contributed to the technical content, and have sufficient time to speak during the event, both in plenary and small group configurations.
- RCG facilitators need training in facilitation skills.
- A detailed guide for every step of the RCG facilitation process needs to be designed before the meeting.
- All conference facilitators need to be trained before the RCG meeting about how to implement the detailed facilitation plan.

For more information, please contact

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SUCCESS STORY

Coordination Key to Effective Anti-trafficking Work

Regional Cluster Groups share information to support partnerships to combat trafficking



Photo by: CAAHT

Gjirokastra Regional Committee members strategize at an orientation workshop organized by USAID's CAAHT project.

With growing awareness that young women were being trafficked, NGOs across Albania have sought ways to prevent trafficking and rehabilitate victims. Because many NGOs are located in communities in remote areas of the country and lack the opportunities to meet one-another and build cooperation, the efforts have been at best, sporadic.

That has begun to change, however, with the support of USAID's *The Albanian Initiative: Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking* (CAAHT). Since 2004, CAAHT national conferences and Regional Cluster Groups have been providing forums for sharing information and building skills to enable coordinated anti-trafficking activities among government and civil society actors.

"D&E's relation with CAAHT started before it was a donor. We participated in the [CAAHT] Launch Conference to learn about other organizations," said Marjana Meshi, executive director of Different & Equal, Albania's only long-term rehabilitation and reintegration shelter. "I am a member of the [Central] Cluster Group which coordinates organizations so that action can be taken."

Long before disbursing over \$2 million in grants to 19 local and two international NGOs, CAAHT had set in motion cooperative activities that would mobilize entire communities in the fight against trafficking.

Even when they had limited experience and financial resources, NGOs and the Anti-trafficking Police have been in the forefront of the anti-trafficking work in Albania. Therefore, they have been particularly encouraged to participate in CAAHT coordination forums where they have been building strategies for cooperation with other governmental bodies such as social services, educators and employment officers.

"Our relationship with CAAHT helped change the perception in the community about trafficked victims, said Fatbardha Idrizi, founder and director of the Gjirokastra Community Center (GCC), a CAAHT grantee. "We convened meetings with the prefecture, education directorate and other officials."



SUCCESS STORY

This coordination approach has been adopted and formalized by the Government of Albania, in large part, due to consensus building activities through CAAHT Regional Cluster Groups. In June 2006, Albania's Prime Minister signed an Administrative Order that created the "Regional Committees in the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings (RC)" which includes directors of police, education, employment and social services, as well as mayors and representatives of NGOs. The RCs are led by the Prefect, the most senior official from the Central Government at the regional administration level, and provide a bridge between central and local governmental offices, in cooperation with local NGOs. "We [anti-trafficking police] are the first to be faced with this phenomenon because we have first contact with victims," explained Armand Lelaj, chief of anti-trafficking police unit and member of the RC in the Gjirokastra region.

"The RC works and it is significant that trafficking should be specifically addressed by a broader group, because before trafficking was addressed only by the police, prosecutor and courts," Lelaj said.

According to Lelaj, the RC has provided another advantage—at special invitation from the Prefect, the prosecutor has joined the group. When stories of trafficking began to circulate, victims were often treated with disdain or even as criminals. Without a better understanding of trafficking, prosecutors did not aggressively pursue traffickers.

"Being a member of the RC makes the prosecutor more engaged and more motivated to pursue trafficking cases, which is different from before," said Lelaj. "His presence in the RC helps him to understand better all aspects of trafficking."

The very morning he was interviewed, Lelaj had presented three cases of trafficked girls to members of the technical roundtable of the RC. "I presented these cases because I was hoping that both the representative of the department of employment and education directorate would be in attendance and could suggest how to assist these cases," he said.

Increased cooperation with the media is also essential. Through USAID's CAAHT grants, the Gjirokastra Association of Professional Journalists has been able to promote ethical principles and professional conduct required when reporting on trafficking, especially when dealing with victims.



SUCCESS STORY

“The problem was that the kind of reporting being done was not appropriate. There were ethical and legal problems such as publishing a victim’s identity, home location and making vulgar and sensational references to them and labeling them as prostitutes or sex slaves,” said Raimond Kola, director of this NGO. “Another bad practice that we rectified under the CAAHT project was to stop publicizing pictures and videos portraying victims.”

Mobilizing civil society, local government and the media in the fight against trafficking provides perhaps the best method of prevention, but to fully succeed, the efforts must be ongoing.

“CAAHT’s work has helped to fight trafficking in Gjirokastra because of the establishment of the RC and awareness raising that have occurred with their support,” said Lelaj. “I thank the American people for their support. It is important that this phenomenon [human trafficking] continues to decrease. I am happy that this work is being done. It doesn’t matter if I’m no longer in this position, the work should be done.”

Asked whether the police’s collaboration with NGOs and local authorities is helpful to trafficked victims, Lelaj shakes his head and smiling answers, “shume, shume, shume” - “a lot, a lot, a lot.”

- December 2006



SUCCESS STORY

With USAID's Support, Prime Minister Signs Anti-trafficking Order



Photo by: CAAHT

Pictured in this photo (from left to right) are Kelly Cronen, CAAHT's new CTO, Arian Giantris, CAAHT Anti-trafficking Advisor, Iva Zajmi, National Anti-trafficking Coordinator/Deputy Minister of the Interior and Sarah Stephens, CAAHT COP.

Albania's Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, signed an Administrative Order in June to create regional committees to fight against trafficking in humans at the prefecture level.

"This marks a beginning of a new stage in the fight against trafficking in human beings, the most severe form of the organized crime and the cruelest violation of human rights and dignity," said Prime Minister Berisha at the signing of the Order on June 19. "The Regional Committees should be present in each commune (administrative and geographical area under the prefecture), and if necessary, in the villages as well. Ministry of Interior and other governmental agencies should consider the fight against trafficking a top priority of the programs."

Prime Minister Berisha's signing of the new Order is the result of intense efforts by The Albanian Initiative: Coordinated Action Against Human Trafficking (CAAHT), a program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. USAID/CAAHT program consults with local government and civil society leaders to build consensus on how to more effectively combat trafficking of women and children in Albania.

Over the past year, listening and consensus building through the USAID/CAAHT program resulted in the recently elected government retaining the previously created National Anti-trafficking Strategy and making the creation of the local anti-trafficking committees one its top commitments in the national strategy for its first year of governance. The new regional committees will mobilize the political will, human and financial resources of local anti-trafficking government and civil society organizations so that they can develop a comprehensive capacity to combat the problem at the local level.

For the past two years, the USAID/CAAHT program has worked to bring government and civil society together to collaborate on prevention and reintegration of victims of trafficking. The USAID program underscores the U.S. Government's commitment to curtailing human trafficking in Albania. Since its launch, CAAHT has disbursed 23 grants totaling more than \$2 million to organizations working to educate the public about the dangers of trafficking as well as rehabilitating and sheltering victims.



SUCCESS STORY

Based on its Regional Cluster Groups meetings, USAID/CAAHT program advised the new government (elected in the summer of 2005) that regional committees were needed to more effectively combat trafficking in humans in Albania.

The Deputy Minister of the Interior who serves as the National Coordinator for Anti-Trafficking consulted USAID/CAAHT in the design of the new committees. Subsequently, CAAHT produced an advisory paper with information and recommendations about the purpose and structure of these regional anti-trafficking committees. The paper was welcomed by the National Coordinator, who invited CAAHT staff to be part of a small working group which drafted the Order that was then signed by the Prime Minister. The Order reflects substantially the design and purpose initially suggested by the USAID/CAAHT program.

The design establishes 12 regional committees, one for each prefecture to promote anti-trafficking activities country-wide, and to enable increased enforcement of existing anti-trafficking laws. In accordance with the National Anti-trafficking Strategy, the new committees will monitor, coordinate and prioritize the actions of governmental and non-governmental parties to prevent trafficking and to protect victims of trafficking at the local level.

The regional committees will also allow government and non-governmental sectors to collect and exchange information, identify, refer and resolve actual trafficking cases, determine the necessary measures to prevent trafficking and protect families, groups, persons and children at risk of being trafficked, among other duties.

The committees will be led by Prefects and will include the Mayor of the Central Municipality of each qark/prefecture, the Directors of the Regional Offices of the State Social Services, Employment, Education, Police, State Informative Service, and Public Health Directorate. Prefects are encouraged to also invite NGOs with anti-trafficking experience to be members as well as representative of the Regional Office of the Prosecutor.

Despite being a point of origin in the regional web of human trafficking, the U.S. Department of State says that Albania is making significant efforts to combat trafficking. Prime Minister Berisha's Order gives these efforts an additional boost.

- July 2006