

# CAAHT 2005 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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## *Session III: Improving coordination of anti-trafficking services and programs*

### **Panel Presentation:**

### **Coordination of Anti-Trafficking Programs and Services in Albania**

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- 1) What kind of cooperation is necessary for the anti-trafficking actors in your sector, so that they can be effective in their efforts?**

#### **Coordination of anti-trafficking programs and services in Albania**

Human trafficking is a criminal phenomenon. To combat it, we need a multi-faceted coordination, including all the major actors that act in this area. From this perspective, the following are needed:

- Coordination of actions at national level
- Coordination of actions at local level
- Coordination of actions at international level

#### **At the national level, the following are needed:**

- Coordination of joint actions among state institutions
- Coordination of actions between state institutions and NGOs that work in the area of anti-trafficking of human beings.
- Coordination of actions among NGOs
  - NGOs working in the area of prevention
  - Community service centers
  - Shelters
- Coordination of actions among state institutions, NGOs and the media
- Coordination of national networks and regional networks

#### **At local level**

- (a) Coordination of actions between local structures and NGOs
- (b) Coordination of actions between NGOs and the community
- (c) Coordination of actions between NGOs and the families of the target groups—both trafficked and those at risk
- (d) Cooperation between local NGOs and international organizations operating in the same area.

## **RILAT**

### ***When was R.I.L.A.T established?***

From this perspective, and considering the experience gained over the past years through direct work with victims, it became indispensable to coordinate and cooperate with state institutions and NGOs to effectively combat human trafficking, and this led to the establishment of the first local anti-trafficking network: RILAT. The network was established in August 2004 upon the initiative of the Psycho-Social Center "Vatra" and the Anti-Trafficking Center in Vlora. The organization and operation of the network—which is far from the practices that have been applied so far by other networks or coalitions currently operating in Albania—has contributed to the enhancement of VATRA work.

### ***Mission***

Coordinate efforts between state institutions and local organizations working in the area of human trafficking for a fast, sustainable and multi-dimensional response in all the areas where its members operate.

*The establishment of RILAT was appreciated by the institution of the Minister of State, and the experience was reflected in the National Anti-Trafficking Strategy 2005-2007, as a success story to be followed and applied.*

### ***What has been achieved?***

- Preparation and professional training of the contact points that were designated by NGOs and local institutions, in the area of combating human trafficking.
- Coordination of joint actions in the area of supporting victims of trafficking.
- Cooperation and sharing best practices among NGOs and local institutions working in the area of human trafficking.

The network is working well, and it cooperates with all local institutions that are responsible for the functions of combating human trafficking. After identifying best practices, the network is now replicating those positive experiences.

- As a result of the cooperation, the overall number of referred cases of victims of trafficking by the Organizations to the Regional Police Departments has increased;
- More victims of trafficking have been reintegrated into normal life of the society, as a result of the cooperation between the organizations and Regional Employment Departments, which RILAT members. Only in the District of Vlora 30 girls were employed by various companies in the short period after the establishment of the network, August 2004 - September 2005.
- Continuous work of district prosecutor's offices on cases of victims of trafficking that have denounced their exploiters, in order to complete cases successfully.
- During 2003 24 young women denounced their traffickers, and only 13 of them completed the assurance of evidence. In 2004 20 young women—victims of trafficking—cooperated with the police and denounced their traffickers. In all the cases victims completed the assurance of testimonial evidence.

RILAT representatives have also shared challenges and the need for the continuation of the network operation:

- Not only did Center “Vatra” take the initiative for the establishment of the network but it is also continuing its efforts for fostering its continuity and functioning in the future
- Cooperation between local institutions and organizations in other districts has not been effective.
- Although the ”Vatra” Center plays an important role in the growth of cooperation among network members, in several cases there has been no reciprocity by local institutions.
- Follow-up of trafficking victims has not been possible to be done in all the districts that are RILAT members. This requires substantial financial costs, not all network members that are able to perform the follow-up cooperate with each other.

#### RILAT goals for the future

- Increase efforts for involving RILAT member NGOs in the implementation of Anti-Trafficking Action Plans and Strategies that have been developed by the Albanian Government—so far only Vatra has been involved in their implementation.
- Influence the Government so that the human trafficking is not only seen as a criminal act, but also as a social problem.
- Influence officials and politicians so that they implement Action Plans developed by them.
- Influence the Government so that trafficking is not only seen as a social aspect that affects victims of human trafficking but also as an issue that affects their families and the community as a whole.
- Build RILAT member capacities for effective cooperation and functioning of the network, so that it is more rational in the areas where it operates.

#### **At international level**

- Coordination of actions and cooperation between countries of destination and countries of origin, for the development and implementation of deportation programs, in line with the concrete economic conditions of each country.
- Coordination of actions in the area of international cooperation on exchanging information during criminal proceedings
- International cooperation among CE countries on the implementation and functioning of the Law on Witness Protection
- Government lobbying for raising funds

## **2) How can the coordination happen?**

#### **At national and local level**

- Signing of agreements and contracts between local government institutions and NGOs
- Cooperation on joint government-NGO projects
- Social service delivery
- Establishment of joint working groups for the development of national anti-trafficking policies and action plans.

- Cooperation in various government or NGO activities organized at national and local level
- Strengthening and functioning of joint networks and coalitions
- Strengthening and professional training for specialists of government anti-trafficking structures.
- Identification and selection of communities or target groups at risk.
- Development and implementation of laws, regulations and guidelines issued by the Government in the area of combating and preventing human trafficking.
- Tri-partite cooperation—state, media and civil society
- Government political will for the implementation of anti-trafficking programs and action plans.
- Establishment of professional anti-trafficking media.
- Establishment of contact points at schools and neighborhoods
- Cooperation with the religious communities
- Cooperation of communities with different ethnicities
- Direct contacts and communication with families and victims

#### **At international level**

- Organization and participation in national and international conferences
- Cooperation with international donors and organizations
- Distribution of anti-trafficking information on the internet
- Cooperation with international networks and coalitions in the area of human trafficking.
- Lobbying for signing and implementing various anti-trafficking agreements and conventions by governments of countries of destination and origin

### **3) Has the CAAHT regional group been useful for you and your colleagues? If yes, how? If no, why not?**

#### **The regional CAAHT group has been cooperative and useful for:**

- The implementation of a new working methodology in the area of fighting human trafficking in the country and abroad
- The support for facilitating the work of Vatra with government anti-trafficking structures.
- The cooperation in partnership with various NGOs, materialized with projects and agreement signing
- The collection of ongoing information from the best practices of member NGOs at CAAHT regional groups in the anti-trafficking projects.
- The extension of the geographical map (extension of the activity of Vatra in other areas, Fire, Gjirokastra, Elbasan, Tirana etc.)
- The inclusion of Vatra in the Regional Group of Southern Albania
- The dissemination of Vatra activity information to other regional group members, particularly to the north and north-east of the country.
- The inclusion of Vatra in working groups

**4) What is needed from central or local governments to continue with the improvement and support for your efforts in the area of combating trafficking?**

- The government should be aware of the existence and development of internal trafficking (identified with the exploitation of women and girls in daily prostitution)
- Development of policies and action plans on combating and preventing internal trafficking, which causes the risk of transforming Albania into a destination of this phenomenon.
- The government should treat the trafficking of human trafficking not only as a criminal phenomenon but also as a social one
- Better commitment of politicians and officials to the implementation of action plans and policies in the area of anti-trafficking.
- Designation of special funds within the budget for financially supporting NGOs that operate in the area of combating human trafficking.