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Gender Budget Watchdog Network
for a gender equal region

GRB CHAMPIONS

VATRA PSYCHO-SOCIAL CENTRE

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Name of the organization:

"Vatra" Psycho-Social Centre with disabilitiesName of country: **Albania**Sector: **Women's rights**

GRB tools used:

- Advocacy;
- Cost benefit analysis;

"Vatra" Psycho-Social Centre in Vlore is an Albanian non-profit organization, established in 1999 which provides services and expertise for the prevention and protection of victims of trafficking, and domestic and community violence. Conform to this goal Vatra works closely with the social structures at the Municipality to provide housing, psychological assistance, medical, law, etc. through information sessions, education and advocacy programmes. According to each case, Vatra's shelter accommodates the survivors for a period of days up to 2 years.

THE GRB INITIATIVE

Law No. 9669, dated 18.12.2006 "On measures against violence in domestic relations" and strong advocacy of the CSO provided the bases for the gender budget initiative made in 2011 to the municipality of Vlora for providing public funding to the Centre that will allow for provision of support and close monitoring of victims of trafficking, and domestic violence. In 2012 the Vatra center got its municipal funding, with an aim to cover basic needs (office rent, energy, water, telephone) to

keep open the door where trafficking and violence survivors can knock for help. However, the Centre continued to advocate using in addition cost benefit analysis securing for 10 years funding for continuous improvement of social policies in the Municipality of Vlora for victims of domestic violence, their children and girls and women in vulnerable situations. In example in 2019, the Directorate of Social Assistance and Services in the Municipality of Vlora and Vatra cooperated closely and contributed to the compilation of the list of children for whom the municipality will cover the costs of kindergarten due to the social risk and vulnerability they are facing.

At the same time Vatra has engaged in advocacy and lobbying in local, national and international initiatives in order to improve legislation and social policies at all levels, to protect rights of victims of violence and human trafficking, which remains one of the pillars where Vatra's work is built. These include contributions to meetings with the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator and the Responsible Authority, contributions to the analysis and evaluation of the adoption of a special law on the protection of victims of trafficking, contributions and participation in meetings conducted by international mechanisms and organizations in the fight against trafficking in persons and public activities such as marches, protests, campaigns, national exhibitions, public reactions, declarations, open letters, petitions, etc

SUCCESS OF THE GRB INITIATIVE

Since 2012 Vatra has signed a contract with the Municipality of Vlora in 2011 and financial support has been provided from the municipal budget for the Vatra center services since

2012, whereas from 2015 the Ministry of Health and Social protection also supports the center and in particular the following: the staff of Vatra's shelter through the transfer to the Vlora district and food expenses for beneficiaries of Vatra's shelter through the transfer to the municipality of Vlora.

YEAR	MUNICIPALITY OF VLORA	MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
2017	540.000 ALL (4.457 EUR)	10.489.020 ALL (87.409 EUR)
2018	540.000 ALL (4.457 EUR)	10.729.920 ALL (89.416 EUR)
2019	540.000 ALL (4.457 EUR)	11.283.364 ALL (94.028 EUR)
2020	640.000 ALL (5.283 EUR)	11.283.364 ALL (94.028 EUR)
2021	640.000 ALL (5.283 EUR)	11.753.072 ALL (97.942 EUR)

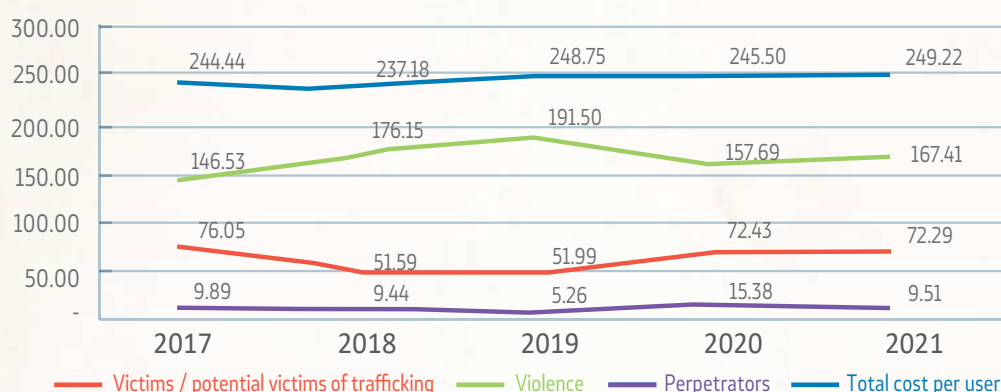
In the last four years, Vatra's services were distributed mainly to three categories of beneficiaries:

Year	VICTIMS / POTENTIAL VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING		VIOLENCE					PERPETRATORS
	Total	out of which children	Total	out of which new cases	sexual abuse	out of which children	juvenile violence	
2017	123	37	237	212	/	85	/	16
2018	82	43	280	/	/	/	18	15
2019	79	43	291	/	2	55	7	8
2020	113	31	246	/	/	46	/	24
2021	114	46	264	/	/	81	/	15

In the period 2017-2021 more than two thirds of the total annual available funds were allocated by the Center to the violence victims which corresponds to EUR 146.53-191.50 cost per user. Victims and potential victims of trafficking

have received on average one quarter of the annual available funds in the range of EUR 51.59-76.05 cost per user. Finally, on average 5% of the annual funds are allocated to the category of Perpetrators with a range of cost per user EUR 5.26-15.38.

COSTS PER USER IN "VATRA"



The cost per user across all categories has varied across the years, but the cost per user for all categories combined has remained stagnant ending with EUR 249.22 in 2021. This suggests that the total funds allocated to the Center which show a trend of increasing were used to include more users each year, rather than increasing the benefits per user.

SUCCESS FACTORS

The following factors of success have been identified:

- One of the priorities of the Municipality of Vlora is strengthening the partnership with CSOs that operate in the district and this has acted as the most important factor for the success of the initiative;
- The Law No. 9666, dated 18.12.2006. "On measures against domestic violence" obliges the municipality to have services for victims of domestic violence and the funding of the services provided through the Vatra Center put the municipality of Vlora in conformity of the law.
- The Vatra Center structure and organization make their advocacy effective as in addition to the Counselling Centre, in Vlora (established in 1999) and the Shelter, in Vlora (established in 2001, the first shelter in Albania), the organization built their capacity through Legal Clinic, in Vlora (established in 2018) and Advocacy office in Tirana (established in 2018)

MAIN OBSTACLES

Main obstacle continues to be the issue of mentality, the reintegration and rehabilitation of these categories which happens due to:

- Low level of education, difficult economic conditions, unemployment.
- Victims face difficulties with housing after a divorce from the abusive spouse / partner.
- Poverty or lack of family support
- Women are seen as guilty of breaking up the family, despite the fact that they have been subjected to physical and sexual violence, psychological, economic.
- Lack of information of victims on rights, support services, investigative and judicial procedures due to the lack of information on the part of the employees of the institutions that are responsible for assisting the victim but also their negligence in informing them.
- Due to the lack of legal information by police officers, requests for Protection Orders are drafted with shortcomings of important procedural elements.
- Dragging of court proceedings as well as execution of court decisions.

¹ <http://vlora.gov.al/transparenca/buxheti/>

² <https://rm.coe.int/albania-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-recommendations-from-cp-ic/1680a30d7f>