

**'VULNERABILITY' TO
HUMAN TRAFFICKING:
A STUDY OF VIET NAM, ALBANIA,
NIGERIA AND THE UK**

**Report of Shared Learning Event held
in Tirana, Albania: 24-26 October 2017**

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ACRONYMS

APOV	Abuse of a Position of Vulnerability
CP	Child Protection
DV	Domestic Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEM	Gender Equitable Men scale
GNI	Gross National Income
HDI	Human Development Index
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NCATS	National Coalition of Anti-trafficking Shelters (Albania)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	National Referral Mechanism (UK)
ONAC	Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator (Albania)
PoCs	Points of Contact (IOM staff in Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SLEs	Shared Learning Events
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW	Violence Against Women

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CONTENTS

Acronyms	2
Acknowledgements	3
List of Figures, Tables and Graphs	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	8
The Research Study	10
Shared Learning Events	15
Albanian Context	17
Shared Learning Event in Albania: Presentations from Stakeholders	22
Key Themes Arising out of Albania Shared Learning Event	31
References	33
Appendices	36
Appendix 1: Shared Learning Event Day 1 Agenda (English version)	36
Appendix 2: List of Organisations Participating in Albania Shared Learning Event	38

LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND GRAPHS

Figures:	
Figure 1: IOM Determinants of Vulnerability model	13
Tables:	
Table 1: Top Country of Origin NRM Referrals for 2015 and 2016	10
Graphs:	
Graph 1: Albanian NRM Referrals and Asylum Applications	21
Graph 2: Gender Breakdown of Albanian Adults Referred into the UK National Referral Mechanism between 2014 and 2016	26
Graph 3: Reported Exploitation Types of Albanian Adults Referred into the NRM in 2016	26
Graph 4: Reported Exploitation Types of Albanian Minors Referred into the NRM in 2016	27

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the first stages of an ethically-led, two-year research study into understanding the causes, dynamics and ‘vulnerabilities’ to and resilience against human trafficking in three source countries– Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria – plus the support needs of people from these countries who have experienced trafficking when identified as potential ‘victims’ of trafficking in the UK. These countries have consistently been the top three countries for referrals of potentially trafficked persons into the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) within the UK.

This study has been conducted in partnership between the University of Bedfordshire and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The research study uses an IOM Determinants of Vulnerability model in its examination and analysis of vulnerabilities to and resilience against human trafficking. This model identifies risk and protective factors for vulnerable migrants across five different levels – individual, household and family, community, structural and situational.

The focus of this report is on Albania, detailing knowledge, learning and emerging themes following a Shared Learning Event (SLE) held in Tirana, Albania, that took place between 24 and 26 October 2017.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1. Explore socio-economic and political conditions plus other contextual factors that create ‘vulnerability’ or enable resilience to human trafficking in Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria
2. Utilise and refine the IOM Determinants of Vulnerability model
3. Outline routes taken from Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria to the UK
4. Review existing academic and ‘grey’ literature on trafficking within and from Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria
5. Explore the support needs of people who have experienced trafficking from Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria and have arrived into the UK

STUDY APPROACH

This study is mainly qualitative in its approach with the intention of drawing out the complexities and nuances of human trafficking from Viet Nam, Albania and Nigeria. In each of these countries, and the UK, a minimum of 40 semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key informants and adults who have experienced human trafficking. These will be supplemented by available quantitative data from IOM’s centrally and locally held databases on trafficking and data held by partners working alongside IOM. Ethical considerations remain paramount throughout this study, from the design stage through to dissemination. An Ethical Protocol has been drawn up and continues to evolve alongside the research.

SHARED LEARNING EVENTS

Prior to commencing the qualitative and quantitative aspects of this study, Shared Learning Events (SLEs) were held in each country as the first step in ascertaining what is already known about trafficking and contextually-based considerations for conducting research on this topic.

The focus of this report is on the Albanian SLE held in Tirana, Albania, between 24 and 26 October 2017. Thirty-three stakeholders from civil society organisations and government agencies, such as law-enforcement, children services, and health services participated in the first day of the SLE. These stakeholders were invited to provide presentations addressing the key research aims and questions, helping to ensure that local knowledge was incorporated into the research study at an early stage. These presentations considered the picture of human trafficking within Albania, patterns of human trafficking from Albania to the UK and factors that shape ‘vulnerability’ to trafficking. During the second and third days, a smaller group of stakeholders were invited to discuss research design, methodologies, ethical protocols for conducting the research and the design of interview schedules to be used for data collection with the UK and Albania research team.

ALBANIAN CONTEXT

With a current population of around 2.9 million, there are numerous historical and structural factors that impact on Albania's socio-economic development. Up to the early 1990s, emigration from Albania was banned during 45 years of communist rule and internal movement was tightly controlled. Post-communism, the collapse of a pyramid savings scheme in 1997 and the movement of people following the armed conflict in Kosovo have each resulted in people leaving Albania through multiple means. Human trafficking is part of this mobility, becoming a criminal act in Albania from 2001.

This report details these historical, structural and situational factors relating to Albania's transition from a centrally-planned to market economy and how these relate to migration and, more specifically, human trafficking. To do this a timeline of key political events plus events relating human trafficking has been compiled, with input from the thirty-three participants attending the SLE. This historical and contextual knowledge will now inform remaining fieldwork and analysis.

INDICATIVE KEY THEMES AND LEARNING ARISING OUT OF ALBANIAN SHARED LEARNING EVENT

At this early stage of the research, a range of key themes and learning points emerged out of the Albanian SLE and these preliminary themes will now help shape the subsequent research. This intentionally descriptive report provides the first interim report for the study, relating solely to Albania, which will be followed up with a final report addressing research aims across all three source countries in early 2019.

Issues arose around five key areas – risks and vulnerabilities; forms of exploitation; support services; the extent, nature and impact of stigma and discrimination against victims of trafficking; and, issues related to data protection plus the collection and recording of data on human trafficking.

The first of these – risks and vulnerabilities – included discussion of:

The causes or drivers of human trafficking appeared to be broad, multiple and overlapping. Stakeholders highlighted multiple vulnerabilities to trafficking in Albania across the different levels of the Determinants of Vulnerability model. These included poverty, other economic factors, low levels of education, mental health issues, forced marriage arrangements and limited options for safe and legal migration.

Gender imbalances within the society were outlined as a key factor for understanding trafficking within Albania. Domestic, intimate partner and sexual violence were highlighted. It was suggested that the National Actions Plans for these forms of abuse should be linked to human trafficking Action Plans in a more coherent way. There is a potential risk factor of being a woman at the individual level which is a consequence of these gender imbalances. This can also arise from household / family and community level imbalances which are reinforced or at least unresolved at the structural level.

Recruitment methods were varied, ever changing and related to close personal and family ties. It was considered that the use of social media was a key recruitment method for trafficking alongside previous recruitment methods within close family or close social ties. There are both risk and protective factors at the household and family level and the community level.

Post-1991 migration and human trafficking are intrinsically linked to the 'transition' from a centralized state-led economy to a market economy. The transition from communist rule, where emigration was banned in Albania and internal mobility tightly controlled to market economy structures has enabled peaks of emigration in response to political and economic events. During this period new routes for migration were established and an Albanian diaspora emerged. This transition appears to be a cause of vulnerability to human trafficking at a structural level.

'Hope' and being willing to take 'risks' to find better economic and social circumstances are key factors relating to migration and human trafficking within Albania. The economies of shortage in the early 1990s and lack of hope for better futures were an intrinsic part of migration during that time.

An extensive range of places of origin were discussed. Participants in the SLEs discussed known cases of human trafficking from across Albania. Further work to establish the locations and places of origin of trafficking cases reaching the UK is necessary.

There is an implementation gap between a strong legislative and policy framework in Albania with practice in reality. Stakeholders at the SLE highlighted high level political commitment to responding to human trafficking in Albania, evidenced by the adoption of a number of policy and legislative measure but there was a feeling that these are not being fully implemented in practice.

Secondly, forms of exploitation included:

The forms of exploitation are multiple. Alongside sexual exploitation as a key purpose of trafficking for adults, other forms included forced labour (in businesses or within families), forced marriages, petty criminality or enforced criminality and work on cannabis production. For children sexual exploitation, forced begging, early marriages and enforced criminality were considered the main forms. For both adults and children, multiple forms of exploitation were outlined as common but under-researched.

Thirdly, issues around support services included:

There is little understanding or support for men and boys who have experienced trafficking. The focus of support for women and children was apparent from discussions and there is a gap in understanding about the causes of trafficking of males or their support needs.

Other support needs were identified such as insufficient financial support for individuals and a lack of access to justice. The provision of low levels of financial aid to assist victims of trafficking was outlined as an issue, as was the lack of access to free legal aid and access to justice mechanisms, considered vital but missing from current provision.

There is a gap between the number of Albanian nationals referred into the UK NRM and the numbers of people accessing support service for trafficked persons in Albania. The difference between the numbers of people referred into the UK NRM and the numbers of people identified as victims of trafficking or potential victims of trafficking within Albania was great. There is a need for further research into the reasons for such differences and potential challenges for reintegration and identification of people returning from the UK to Albania.

The fourth of these – the extent, nature and impact of stigma and discrimination against victims of trafficking – related to:

Social stigma and discrimination as a direct result of human trafficking was discussed at length and considered to be a key issues in support. These discussions centred around those who had been identified as trafficked as well as those who worked with them and access to accommodation and health services. Discriminatory labels in official or media accounts were outlined as common. Stigma and discrimination was also reported to be a key issue for the children of those who had experienced trafficking. Rejection by family members was considered a common response to people who had experienced trafficking first hand.

Finally, issues around data included:

Statistics on trafficking could be improved. Although statistics were available from different agencies, further work to centralize and improve these would be beneficial, including recording exploitation type. The available data on trafficking within Albania does not provide a clear picture of the nature and trends of trafficking, nor does it assist in understanding what makes people vulnerable to trafficking. The underlying data in Albania requires further work in two key respects – recording of exploitation type in national statistics and a mechanism to compare cases and statistics recorded with those from other sources such as shelters. The available NRM data on trafficking of Albanian nationals to the UK only focusses on referrals, with no disaggregated data provided for people officially identified as trafficked in the UK in terms of their gender, exploitation type or place of origin.

Data protection, confidentiality and anonymity were under-regarded in practice.

It appears that there is little emphasis given to data protection, confidentiality and anonymity for people who have experienced trafficking across a broad range of sectors within Albania, including within media reports. This is particularly important given historic disregard for data protection and associated principles as well as the geographic and context-specific considerations of a closely connected population within Albania.

Overall, it appeared that among the stakeholders who attended the SLE, there was less knowledge of trafficking from Albania to the UK and less experience of working with people who have been trafficked to the UK than knowledge and experience of trafficking within the region.

The primary knowledge and experience discussed was on trafficking within the Balkan region and some other European countries such as Greece and Italy which appeared to be of greater interest and concern to stakeholders within Albania. This will be a key consideration during purposive sampling for this study.

KEY MESSAGES

This intentionally descriptive report details the first stages of an ethically-led, two-year research study into understanding the causes, dynamics and 'vulnerabilities'¹ to human trafficking in three source countries – Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria – conducted in partnership between the University of Bedfordshire and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The study also seeks to improve understanding of the support needs of people from these three countries who arrive into the UK having experienced trafficking.

The focus of this report is on Albania, describing the context of Albania, presentations given during a Shared Learning Event (SLE) held in Tirana, Albania between 24-26 October 2017² and emerging themes from these presentations and workshops held during this event. These preliminary themes will help shape subsequent qualitative research with people who have experienced trafficking and key informants who work closely with them. This qualitative research will ultimately be supplemented by quantitative data extraction from IOM's centrally and locally held databases on trafficking and/or data held by partners working alongside IOM.

The key themes emerging from the Albania SLE related to risks and vulnerabilities; forms of exploitation; support services; the impact of trafficking; and issues related to data collection.

The focus of this research study is on trafficking from the Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria and the SLE in Tirana was designed to enable discussion about trafficking from Albania to the UK. It became clear early on at the SLE that there is limited knowledge about trafficking from Albania to the UK and/or of support for victims of trafficking in Albania who had previously experienced trafficking to the UK. This report begins to fill these gaps and the subsequent research will continue this endeavour.

People are 'trafficked' for a range of reasons, including for the purposes of sexual and labour exploitation, domestic servitude and a range of other exploitative practices. Since 2010, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been mandated to

¹ The use of inverted commas around terms in this report have been minimised to enable ease of reading. However, it should be noted that many terms used herein are contested and continue to be debated, including the term 'trafficking' itself, the recent use of the term 'modern slavery', 'vulnerability', 'capacity' and the use of the terms 'victim' and 'survivor' to describe a person who has experienced 'trafficking'.

² This SLE was the first of three held in Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria between October 2017 and January 2018.

produce reports on trafficking of people. Their 2016 global report outlined how sexual exploitation and forced labour had been found to be the most common forms of exploitation among identified victims with other forms such as begging, forced marriages, organ removal and the production of pornography becoming increasingly apparent³.

Global concerns about human trafficking during the 1990s led to the UN General Assembly adopting the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime in November 2000, supplemented by an additional protocol – the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children – widely referred to as the Palermo Protocol 2000. This protocol provided the first internationally agreed and most used definition of ‘trafficking’ which states that:

‘... “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.’

This definition contains three interrelated yet distinct elements, the ‘act’ (recruitment, transportation and transfer), the ‘means’ (use of violence, threats or other use of force or coercion) and the ‘purposes’ (a range of forms of exploitation).

Since the late 1990s, the estimated global prevalence of trafficking based on this definition has been fervently debated, particularly in relation to the lack of empirical evidence for statistics cited (Laczko and Gramegna, 2003; Salt, 2000; Tyldum, 2010). Global estimates of ‘modern slavery’ for forced labour and forced marriage have been produced by the International Labour Organization and Walk Free Foundation in partnership with IOM, providing an estimate of 40.3 million ‘victims’ of modern slavery worldwide in 2016 (Alliance 8.7, 2017). These estimates help inform steps towards the achievement of Target 8.7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of eradicating modern slavery, forced labour and trafficking around the world. The lack of reliable global statistics or the uncritical use of estimates are key limitations to understanding human trafficking (Mugge, 2017). Furthermore, most knowledge about trafficking is based on people who receive assistance rather than those who decline or avoid support (Brunovskis and Surtees, 2007; Tyldum, 2010).

The Palermo Protocol was signed by the UK in December 2000, coming into force in February 2006. The UK also ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking which became operational from April 2009. The UK government created a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to comply with Article 10 of the Council of Europe Convention. The NRM is the framework by which people are formally identified as ‘victims’ of human trafficking and referred to specialist support.

In 2015 the Modern Slavery Act gained Royal Assent in the United Kingdom. This Act made provisions to address slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour as well as human trafficking. It further put in place mechanisms for the protection of those identified as victims of trafficking and established the role of an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. Under this Act, human trafficking is considered an offence if somebody arranges or facilitates the travel of another person for the purposes of exploitation; travel meaning arriving into, travelling within and departing from any country. There are distinctions between the Palermo Protocol and the UK’s Modern Slavery Act. For example, Section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act adds detail around the exchange or control of individuals who have experienced trafficking. It is more explicit about trafficking within a country, something which is commonly referred to as ‘internal trafficking’. The Modern

³The 2016 UNODC report provides a figure of 63,251 victims detected in 106 countries between 2012 and 2014. Of these, figures for 2014 – 17,752 victims detected in 85 countries – have been utilised to consider the profile of victims and trends in the forms of exploitation, profile of traffickers and trafficking flows.

Slavery Act also provides for the prosecution of those who have enslaved or exploited individuals in the UK even if it is difficult to prove any form of travel.

In March 2017 Amber Rudd, the Home Secretary of the UK government, announced the first Modern Slavery Innovation Fund investment in 10 projects to tackle modern slavery around the world. This was in line with the UK government commitment to achieving the SDGs Target 8.7 outlined above. The 10 awards included projects working in source countries to reduce vulnerability to exploitation, support victims and improve the evidence-base. On 19 September 2017 the UK Prime Minister made a Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking at the 72nd Meeting of the UN General Assembly, reflecting the political commitments of 37 Member and Observer States to achieve this same Target 8.7.

This report details the first steps of an ethically-led, two-year research study (April 2017-March 2019) into understanding the causes, dynamics and ‘vulnerabilities’ to human trafficking in three source countries – Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria – carried out in partnership between the University of Bedfordshire and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)⁴.

This research explicitly seeks to understand what causes and creates vulnerability to trafficking. Spaces for vulnerability to trafficking and the vulnerabilities of people who have been trafficked have been the subject of previous studies but much less is known of the capacities⁵ of people who have experienced trafficking or examples of ‘good practice’ in human trafficking work. This study seeks to address this gap, looking at contextually-based vulnerabilities/risk factors and capacities/protective factors across Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria. The study also seeks to improve understanding of the support needs of people from these three countries who arrive into the UK having experienced trafficking, focusing on ‘good practice’ where found.

The term ‘trafficking’ is used throughout as ‘modern slavery’ was not a recognized term within Albania at the time of the SLE.

This research study focuses on Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria as during both 2015 and 2016, these three countries were the top three referral countries of origin (excluding the UK) into the NRM. Total numbers of people referred into the NRM from these three countries and the UK as potential trafficked persons during 2015 and 2016 are presented below:

Table 1: Top Country of Origin NRM Referrals for 2015 and 2016

Country	Number of adults referred to the NRM in 2015	Number of children referred to the NRM in 2015	Total 2015	Number of adults referred to the NRM in 2016	Number of children referred to the NRM in 2016	Total 2016	Change 2015 to 2016 (Total)
Albania	394	206	600	472	227	699	+99
Viet Nam	230	248	478	292	227	519	+41
Nigeria	214	43	257	200	43	243	-14
UK	64	127	191	71	255	326	+135

⁴This research study is one of the ten projects awarded funding through the Modern Slavery Innovation Fund.

⁵IOM’s Determinants of Vulnerability model looks at ‘vulnerabilities’ and ‘capacities’. Within the literature on migration there has been some work on micro-level migrant ‘capabilities’ as well as ‘aspirations’ of migrants.

This study seeks to provide rich and nuanced accounts of human trafficking from these countries to help understand the complexities of root causes of human trafficking and the support needs of victims from these top three countries in the UK. It seeks to provide contextually-based understandings of vulnerabilities in each of the three source countries.

Human trafficking is a sensitive topic to research, not only because of the moral implications of the topic, but also because of the often polarized and highly charged debates around who constitutes a 'victim' or 'survivor' of trafficking.

'Vulnerability' is a broad and often contested term and has to be understood within the context used, particularly in relation to exploitation, human trafficking or migration more broadly (IOM, 2017). As outlined in a UNODC Issue Paper (2013), specifically on the topic of Abuse of a Position of Vulnerability (APOV), vulnerability is accepted as an integral part of the definition of trafficking. The same Issue Paper outlines how international law does not define APOV, with official guidance on the concept being ambiguous and unofficial guidance of limited usefulness. The Issue Paper notes the lack of an agreed definition of the term vulnerability but goes on to suggest its use to refer to inherent, environment or contextual factors that increase susceptibility of an individual or group to being trafficked such as human rights violations, inequality or poverty that are contextually defined:

'A multitude of factors operate to shape the context within which trafficking takes place and the capacity of the individual to respond. A genuine understanding of vulnerability will thereby almost always require situation-specific analysis.'
(UNODC, 2013:14)

Within studies of human rights, Bryan Turner has suggested that the concept of human vulnerability is universal to all. He suggested that vulnerability 'defines our humanity and is the common basis of human rights' (Turner, 2006:1), that rights are enjoyed by individuals 'by virtue of being human – and as a consequence of their shared vulnerability and human frailty (Ibid., 2006:3). Turner's ideas of universal and embodied vulnerability have been challenged by some who consider that vulnerability is more about power relations and is specific to cultural and historical contexts rather than having universal application (Ibid., 2006).

In the context of migration, IOM defines vulnerability as:

'The diminished capacity of an individual or group to have their rights respected, or to cope with, resist or recover from exploitation, or abuse... [and] ... the presence or absence of factors or circumstances that increase the risk or exposure to, or protect against, exploitation, or abuse.' (IOM, 2016)

Within trafficking debates and discourses, vulnerability is linked to socio-economic constraints more than civil and political rights. There is considerable critique of the way in which those who have experienced trafficking are viewed through lenses of 'victimhood' and vulnerability. Critiques are also often centred around focus on the organized crime aspects of trafficking resulting in part from the Palermo Protocol on trafficking supplementing the Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime. The Protocol's focus on women and children has been criticized for leaving the trafficking of men poorly understood and overlooked resulting in a lack of support and assistance for trafficked men.

AIMS OF RESEARCH

The aims of this research study are to:

1. Explore socio-economic and political conditions plus their contextual factors that create 'vulnerability' or enable resilience to human trafficking in Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria
2. Utilise and refine the IOM Determinants of Vulnerability model
3. Outline routes taken from Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria to the UK
4. Review existing academic and 'grey' literature on trafficking within and from Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria
5. Explore the support needs of people who have experienced trafficking from Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria who have arrived into the UK

RESEARCH APPROACH

This research is mainly qualitative in its approach to understanding vulnerabilities and capacities of people pre, during and after trafficking. This qualitative approach places emphasis on the complexities and 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) of this global phenomenon. It is not the intention to generalize from interviews with those who have experienced trafficking and those who work with them. Rather, it is the intention that qualitative accounts will illuminate and help explain contextual factors that create vulnerability to trafficking and capture a range and diversity of experiences.

These qualitative accounts will then be supplemented by analysis of available quantitative data within IOM's centrally and locally held databases on trafficking and/or data held by partners working alongside IOM. Whilst there are methodological limitations involved in the use of these databases (Surtees and Craggs, 2010), examination of country-specific quantitative data may help to show trends around the known causes and consequences of trafficking from the countries included in this study.

Aims 1 and 3 of the study relate to understanding why people in Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria may be vulnerable to human trafficking and how they are trafficked to the UK. Aim 2 focuses on the IOMs Determinants of Vulnerability model and how its risk and protective factors across the five different levels work in the context of cases of human trafficking. Aim 4 is a review of existing literature, both academic and 'grey' literature. A team of researchers from the University of Bedfordshire are carrying out this literature review, with Expert Researchers employed in Tirana, Hanoi and Lagos contributing. It is anticipated that the Literature Review will therefore be supplemented by an Annotated Bibliography of country-specific literature on human trafficking and good practice for Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria. Aim 5 explores the support needs of people from these countries who have arrived into the UK.

The sampling of areas and then participants is a common strategy in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012; Mason, 2002; May, 2001; Silverman, 2000). This research has been designed to ensure that sampling of participants within the four countries is purposive – in other words, participants will be interviewed strategically based on the particular context within each country. Additionally, given the clandestine nature of human trafficking, reaching people who have experienced trafficking is both sensitive and difficult, requiring a focus on building trust (Hynes, 2003; van Liempt and Bilger, 2012).

In each of the four countries a minimum of 40 face-to-face, semi-structured interviews will be carried out across a geographical, gender and sectoral range discussed during SLEs in each country:

- Minimum of 20 semi-structured interviews with people who have experienced trafficking in each country
- Minimum of 20 semi-structured interviews with key informants in each country

This will mean that a minimum of 160 semi-structured interviews will take place in total across all four countries. The interviews will be audio recorded where appropriate and fully-informed consent has been given by participants. The interviews will be fully transcribed, coded using specialist social science NVIVO11 software and analysed thematically.

ETHICS

Ethical principles remain paramount within this research and ethical issues will be addressed throughout the life of this study. This includes the development of a 'living' Ethical Protocol which has and will continue to evolve and be developed in close consultation with IOM country offices in Albanian, Viet Nam and Nigeria. This 'living' Ethical Protocol will document key ethical issues at each stage of the research process, including minimizing harm or potential distress to participants and maximizing benefits of participation; ensuring the informed consent of participants; plus ensuring data protection, confidentiality and anonymity. It is anticipated that contextually-based ethical issues and dilemmas raised throughout the life of the study will be discussed and documented within this Ethical Protocol which will then be published as an output of this research. This has been developed in conjunction with ethical guidelines available in this field (Refugee Studies Centre, 2007; Zimmerman and Watts, 2003).

Formal applications were made to the University of Bedfordshire two-stage ethics approval process for research, firstly to the Institute of Applied Social Research Ethics Committee and then the University of Bedfordshire Research Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was granted at both stages, enabling this research to be undertaken. Endorsement and oversight by national bodies was also sought, with the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in Nigeria and the Data Protection Commissioner in Albania approving and endorsing the study. A number of suggestions following these submissions have been embedded into the study and shared with participants at each SLE.

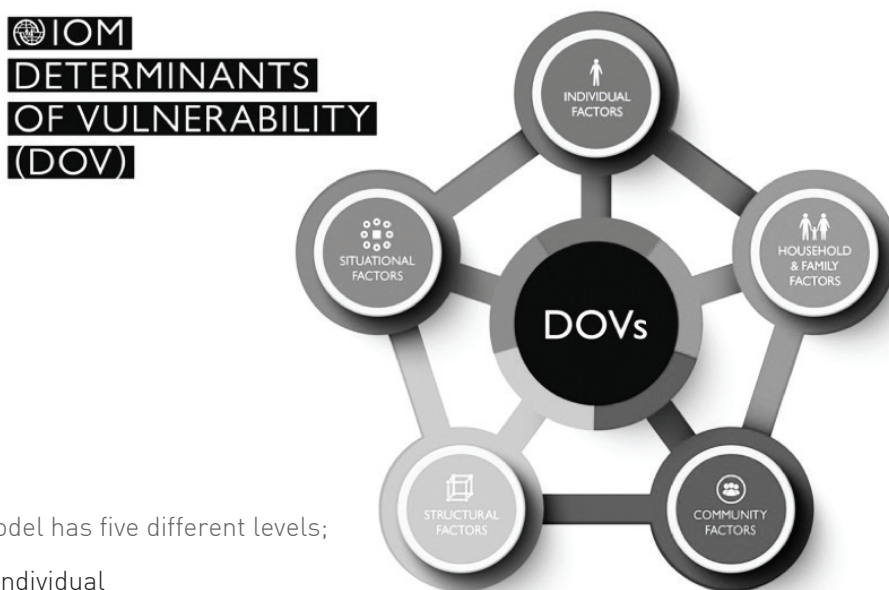
IOM'S DETERMINANTS OF VULNERABILITY MODEL

An innovative aspect of this study is the application of IOM's recently introduced Determinants of Vulnerability model⁶. This is a model to address the protection and assistance needs of people who have experienced or are vulnerable to violence, abuse, exploitation or rights violations before, during and after migration. It is important to recognize that this model has not been specifically designed for the purpose of understanding the vulnerabilities of trafficked persons. It does however give equal consideration to understanding both what can create migrant vulnerability and resilience.

This model provides a key conceptual tool for this project to enable exploration of contextual factors at these different levels plus incorporating both the vulnerabilities and capacities of those who have experienced or are vulnerable to violence, abuse, exploitation or rights violations.

The IOM Determinants of Vulnerability model is shown below:

Figure 1: IOM Determinants of Vulnerability model



This model has five different levels;

- Individual
- Household and Family
- Community
- Structural
- Situational

Within each of these five levels there are different risk and protective factors. There is no hierarchy between the levels and different risk and protective factors. The risk factors are those that increase vulnerability – or create space for vulnerabilities to emerge. The protective factors are those which build resilience against vulnerability. IOM recognizes

⁶The IOM Determinants of Vulnerability model is still being developed and refined by IOM. The model presented at the SLE and in this report remains subject to change.

resilience as the capacity to avoid, resist, cope with, or recover from violence, exploitation, abuse, and/or rights violations. Within this study, concepts of vulnerability, capacity and resilience will be examined around these five levels and the complex interplay between them.

Others have described resilience at an individual level as meaning individuals' abilities in being able to deal with past traumatic or stressful circumstances, being able to withstand present difficult circumstances and having the capacity to recover and develop coping skills for their future (Luthar, 2003; Rutter, 2007). Newman (2004) argues that it is never too late to build resilience. How people cope in adversity (Colson, 1991) and the non-linear process of building resilience will be explored throughout the research. Resilience at community or more structural levels relates to systems or mechanisms put in place to reduce risk.

The first level of the Determinants of Vulnerability model relates to individual and demographic characteristics, including ascribed characteristics such as gender, age or ethnicity over which the individual concerned has no control. There may also be disability, physical, sexual or mental health factors at this level.

Some individual factors can be risk factors or protective factors depending on the context. For example, being in a particular ethnic group may be a protective factor when that ethnic group is the majority but may be a risk factor when that group is a minority. However other individual factors may largely be recognized as either always being a risk or a protective factor. For example, literacy is almost always a protective factor, while illiteracy could be considered almost always as a risk factor.

The second level is the household and family level. Household and family factors can include family size, household structure, socio-economic status, migration histories, employment, livelihoods, education levels, gender norms, and family dynamics. Households and families can cause both risk and protective factors. Risk factors can include inter-personal violence between family members, households headed by a child or a single parent, and a history of unsafe migration. Protective factors may include having a supportive home environment or equitable distribution of resources and opportunities between male and female children.

The third level is the community level. In this study the relationships between people will be included, particularly those of friends, peers, acquaintances, community leaders, close and extended family members to view how these influence vulnerabilities to trafficking. The community level includes settings in which individuals interact, the local climate or acceptance levels of violence or abuse. Community factors include educational opportunities, quality of available health care and social services, livelihood and income generation opportunities, the natural environment, and social norms and behaviours. Community risk factors include practices such as early marriage or gender-based violence. Examples of protective factors include a good education system that is accessible to all, and access to good health and social welfare systems.

The fourth level is the structural level. Structural factors might enable an economic or political climate that renders – or creates space – for vulnerability to trafficking. For example, there may be social norms that support patriarchy or condone high levels of sexual, gender-based or other forms of violence and discrimination. Structural factors include those at a transnational level that will inform choices made by individuals migrating via safe or unsafe routes and mechanisms. Risk factors include conflict, marginalization and discrimination, poor governance, and weak rule of law. Protective factors include good governance and respect for human rights.

The final level is the situational. The model includes situational factors to ensure that change and deviation from 'normal circumstances' is factored into the model (IOM, 2017). This includes situations or statuses at the individual, family / household, community, and/or structural levels, that can change quickly, and/or in an unforeseen way, and that increase or decrease the exposure of individuals, families, and communities to violence, exploitation, abuse, and/or rights violations. This could include armed conflict, humanitarian crisis or other contexts that enable human trafficking as a result of organisational structures. These situational factors are different from factors at the individual, household, community, or structural levels because they are shorter-term, sudden, and/or unforeseen.

The IOM model is similar to the ecological systems theory originally developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) to explain the way in which the immediate and surrounding environment affects child development. Bronfenbrenner identified five different environmental systems were the microsystem (the immediate environment), the mesosystem (connections), the exosystem (the indirect environment), the macrosystem (social and cultural values) and the chronosystem (changes over time). These five systems each affect a child's development and if there is a change in any one of these areas, it is accepted within this theory that this affects and influences the other systems. The chronosystem adds a useful dimension to this theory – time – which captures change and continuities in the environment. In this report key political events within Albania are incorporated to illustrate this aspect of the model. Bronfenbrenner's theory was further developed by Belsky (1993) who applied this to child maltreatment, particularly physical abuse and neglect. Belsky also outlined a variety of contexts within which maltreatment could occur including the immediate environment and broader context of the community.

This ecological model which outlines different nested spheres of influence is most often represented as concentric circles showing the different levels - the individual, family and relationship, community and societal levels. Each of these levels are interrelated, with the interaction between them and influence of each level analysed. The model has also been applied to youth violence (Krug et al., 2002), violence against women (Moreno et al., 2015), violence against children (UNICEF, n.d.) and sexual violence (Heise, 1998). This body of work has shifted thinking around differing forms of abuse and violence from single-cause models to more multifaceted models that emphasize interacting factors and such nested-ecological models. These models also recognize that risk and protective factors may change over the life course. Applying this to human trafficking, Zimmerman et al. (2016) suggest this ecological framework allows for larger contextual forces to be considered alongside attributes and behaviours of people who have experienced migration and labour exploitation. They suggest that this framework:

'... is often the starting point from which a researcher or program planner will delve deeper to identify more specific multi-level risk and protective factors.'
(Zimmerman et al., 2016:17)

They also point out that at the individual, family and community levels there is a potential role for 'community migration norms' to be considered, wherein common practices around migration that influence and 'lend confidence' to individuals considering their migration options (Zimmerman et al., 2016:17). Beyond these levels, the authors suggest that structural and contextual factors such as government policies, global inequalities, conflict and crisis situations underlie issues faced by migrants and, as such, remain central and essential areas for action for change over time (Zimmerman et al., 2016:7). The requirement for an integrated approach which incorporates these structural and community strategies is advocated.

A key part of this study has been the design and delivery of SLEs across the three countries of origin. The structure of these events emerged out of an iterative process between the UK research team, IOM UK and Points of Contact (PoC) in IOM Albania, IOM Viet Nam and IOM Nigeria, plus Expert Researchers employed for the purposes of this study. The aims of these SLEs were multiple. Day 1 of these events (see Appendix 1) focused on bringing together relevant stakeholders from civil society organisations, government agencies, law-enforcement, children's services, health services and academia involved in working with people identified as trafficked to:

- Share what is already known about trafficking from the source countries (observed trends, patterns, origin communities, destination locations, numbers, profiles) with an additional focus on the UK as a destination country
- Explore contextually-based 'vulnerabilities' and resilience relating to human trafficking
- Explore what 'good practice' exists to address these 'vulnerabilities' and strengthen resilience against trafficking
- Ensure this knowledge from each country is incorporated into the research from the outset

- Hear presentations from a range of stakeholders on topics relating to the aims of this study
- Develop a timeline of key political events and key events relating to human trafficking and/or migration
- Hold workshops on vulnerability, resilience and good practice in relation to the IOM Determinants of Vulnerability factors

Day 1 of the Albania SLE was structured to provide space to discuss these points within three sessions of presentations and then workshops on vulnerability, resilience and good practice. The three presentation sessions were entitled:

1. The picture of human trafficking in Albania
2. Patterns of human trafficking from Albania to the UK
3. What factors shape vulnerability and capacities to human trafficking in Albania?

The aim of the SLE was to focus on knowledge around human trafficking from Albania to the UK. However, at the SLE it became clear that there are distinct narratives around regional trafficking within the Balkans and EU countries such as Greece and Italy and a smaller, less well-informed narrative around human trafficking to the UK. Overall, it appeared that the experience of those being trafficked from Albania to the UK was less well known or understood within Albania. Thus while Albania has been one of the most significant source countries for potential victims of trafficking in the UK for a number of years it appears that within Albania there is limited knowledge and understanding about the UK as a destination country for Albanian trafficked persons.

Day 2 of the SLE in Tirana focused on the research project and how the country-specific presentations from Day 1 related to the study. The co-design and refinement of research tools for the study took place on Days 2 and 3 and contextually-, age- and language-appropriate tools were designed and refined as a result.

There was also a strong focus on ensuring the study was led at all times by ethical considerations. Existing ethical guidelines were explored (Refugee Studies Centre, 2007; Zimmerman, 2003). Key aspects of an Ethical Protocol were discussed and agreements made about ongoing feedback into this 'living' protocol for the duration of the study. This Ethical Protocol will ultimately provide country-specific ethical considerations for conducting research on human trafficking within each source country.

Considerations of the quantitative aspects of this study were also considered during Days 2 and 3 with discussions centring on the availability of quantitative data and case management processes. Day 3 also enabled discussions around translation and interpretation questions. The establishment of systems to securely record, translate, password-protect and store data enabled broader discussions around Data Protection in each context to be explored. As will be discussed in the Ethical Protocol, data protection is either not legislated for or implemented within Albania, Viet Nam and Nigeria. It was, however, a topic considered by many participants of the SLEs to be key to accessing victims of trafficking within each country. Safeguarding concerns, and the limits of confidentiality, were subject to wide-reaching discussions during these events and, again, will be detailed within the Ethical Protocol at country-specific levels. Given all of the above considerations and following discussions during Day 1, purposive sampling strategies were devised for key informants and adults who have experienced trafficking for each country.

The SLE in Tirana was the only SLE which was 3 days long. As this SLE was held at an earlier stage, the research tools were much less developed which meant that more time was required for working with participants in co-designing the research tools. More participants were invited to attend the discussions on the research tools and the practicalities of conducting the research in Tirana than Hanoi and Lagos. The larger number of participants meant that the discussions took longer. The SLE in Tirana was the only one where the discussions on the research tools and the practicalities of conducting the research after Day 1 were not conducted in English. The process of translating between Albanian and English meant more time was necessary than was available in one day.

Overall, the SLEs were an investment in building trust about the research project across a broad range of stakeholders within each country. From this foundation, relationships will be developed further throughout the life of this research project.

Albania currently has a population of approximately 2.9 million (Human Development Report, 2016) and according to the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) is ranked 75th out of 188 countries⁷. According to the 2016 Human Development Report, an Albanian has a life expectancy rate of 78 years, can expect 14.2 years of schooling and has a \$10,252 per capita Gross National Income (GNI). Inflows of remittances as a share of GDP were 8.9% in 2016 (World Bank, 2016)⁸. The global average for remittances as a share of GDP in 2016 was 4.6%. Albania's 8.9% is the 32nd highest in the world.

Gender (in)equality for Albania, measured by the Gender Development Index (GDI) was 0.959 in 2015 which puts Albania in group 2⁹, suggesting medium to high levels of equality within the country. According to the 2014 Global Status Report on Violence Prevention, Albania has National Action Plans across a range of forms of potential violence – interpersonal violence, sexual violence, child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and elder abuse – and fully enforced laws against statutory rape and corporal punishment. However, the partial enforcement of child marriage, an absence of legislation specifically recognizing rape in marriage, limits on the removal of a violent spouse from the home and a range of forms of sexual violence suggests further actions on these particular social issues is warranted (Global Status Report on Violence Prevention, 2014). This partial enforcement may mean risk factors at a structural level which can increase vulnerability for individual women in Albania.

In a study for UNDP designed to engage men and boys against gender-based violence within Albania, Tahiraj outlines how social norms around masculinity 'often cause harm to women and girls' (2016:10). Tahiraj also suggests that Albania has seen considerable progress in developing frameworks for women's rights but these are within a context wherein:

'Unquestionably, however, men remain in the dominant position compared to women in both public and private spheres.' (2016:10)

Under-reported levels of violence against women and girls are said to be widespread and across all social strata within Albania, with women most likely to be victims of domestic violence (Tahiraj, 2016:12). A desire for change and questioning of traditional gender roles is outlined as being well underway (Ibid.) and the mixed-method approach of the study sought to capture the nature of masculinity and violence within Albania. A survey of 694 boys and girls and 723 parents in Durres and Diber, utilizing the Gender Equitable Men (GEM) scale, replicated an earlier 2013 study. In the 2016 study it was found that inequitable attitudes to women's independence and autonomy in marriage remain (35% men, 31% boys), around half of men consider violence against women and girls justifiable in retaliation and 35% of boys, 31% of men and 24% of girls believe that a wife is the property of the husband (Tahiraj, 2016:22-35).

EXISTING LITERATURE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ALBANIA

Overall, literature relating to trafficking in Albania is descriptive rather than evaluative. In the context of both peer reviewed and grey literature, structural factors tend to emerge most strongly, alongside a recognition that these interact in different ways at the levels of community, household and individual experience (see, for example, Vullnetari, 2012; Caro, 2013; Tahiraj, 2013; Tahiraj, 2017). There is much less detail on how structural factors are translated into experience at the level of the individual or household. The research literature is weakest in respect to situational factors, but the lack of support for this dimension of the model can be explained methodologically, in light of limited narratives or life history accounts from individuals.

⁷The index runs between 1 and 188 with Norway ranking first (ranked 1) and the Central African Republic last (ranked 188). The HDI is a composite index of life expectancy, education and per capita income indicators.

⁸Viewed on 6 February 2018 at: data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=AL

⁹The GDI runs from 1 to 5, with 1 denoting high and 5 denoting low levels of gender equality.

Nevertheless, the literature indicates a high level of consensus in terms of risk factors that may create vulnerability to human trafficking. Structurally, Albania's history and its impact of this on socio-economic development – for example, the collapse of pyramid schemes in the 1990s, high levels of poverty and migration, the transition to a neo-liberal economy and the development of a civil society, are all seen as important elements of the backcloth to this (Vullnetari, 2012; Bekteshi, Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Ngucaj and Elezi, 2014; Mece, 2016). The structural context also includes Albania's geographical location, combined with the country's longer history of migration and the ways in which this intersects with the social and economic consequences of globalization (Gallagher and Holmes, 2008; Leman and Janssens, 2011; Gallagher, 2015).

The 2017 US State Department Trafficking in Persons report acknowledges that Albania is seen primarily as a source country of origin for trafficking but is also regarded as a transit and destination country, particularly for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Within Albania, it is acknowledged that political progress has been made in, for example, ratifying international agreements regarding trafficking and introducing legal measures against organized crime (Tota and Mecka, 2014; Kelmendi, 2015). This is also recognized internationally, for example the US State Department 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report acknowledges, 'The Government of Albania does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore, Albania remained on Tier 2.' At the same time, the nature of the political system – for example, corruption and a relatively weak state – have been unhelpful in challenging criminal networks and, in community contexts, result in distrust of the criminal justice system (Muço, 2013; Meçe, 2016), and to this extent real change on the ground is more limited. There is also a limited number of health, educational and other civil society organisations that can raise awareness and work to prevent trafficking or support the reintegration of individuals who have been trafficked (Surtees and de Kerchove, 2014).

Research undertaken within Albania often provides the best picture of the characteristics of individuals who have been trafficked. Overall, the literature is focused on the trafficking of women, with very little, if any, reference to cases of young men or boys being trafficked. There is a high proportion of children and adolescents (Puka et al, 2010; Meshi, Picari and Pinderi, 2009). Data from organisations working to protect women and children emphasise that most victims come from a background of poverty, including homelessness and low levels of education (Meshi, Picari and Pinderi, 2009; Voko and Tahsini, 2014 and Tahiraj, 2017). For children who are trafficked, there is focus on risk factors at the household and family level, such as a lack of stable family support – whether through family breakdown, abandonment or separation resulting from migration. The consequence of these is that children lack important protective structures. The ethnic Roma and Egyptian¹⁰ populations in Albania are identified as experiencing disproportionately high levels of poverty, insecure accommodation, low levels of school attendance and, concomitantly, high levels of illiteracy. (Tahiraj, 2008). This is attributed to a history of stigma and discrimination against these communities, which has resulted in their experiencing greater economic pressures and heightened vulnerability to different types of exploitation, including trafficking (Vullnetari, 2012; Simon, Galanxhi and Dhono, 2015).

Historical and cultural factors have a direct bearing on the lived experience of communities. Vullnetari (2012; see also Tahiraj, 2008; People's Advocate, 2014), examining the experience of Roma and Egyptian communities, describes the way in which discrimination against these groups is reflected in their community location, typically living in neighbourhoods on the outskirts of villages, socially marginalized and lacking access to basic health and education services. Poverty in rural areas is also important, placing extreme economic pressure on families that may result in individuals recruiting family members for trafficking (Meshi, Picari and Pinderi, 2009; Puka et al, 2010).

¹⁰Roma in Albania were officially recognised as one of the nine national minorities according to law No.96/2017 on the 'Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania', adopted on 13 October 2017 shortly before the SLE took place. Reportedly, there are two types of minorities in Albania (Ombudsman of Albania, 2014). Firstly, the national ethnic minorities which include the Greek, Macedonian and Serbian-Montenegrin minorities. Secondly, ethno-linguistic minorities which include the Vlach minority and, prior to 2017, Roma populations. Other de facto communities include the Bosnian, Egyptian and Gorani communities. The origin of the Egyptian community is unclear.

There is also overlap between risk factors at the structural and household and family levels in the context of family/household arrangements. The unequal nature of gender roles and relationships have discriminated against women and made them vulnerable to violence and exploitation (Bekteshi, Gjermeni and Van Hook, 2012; Tahiraj, 2013; Tahiraj, 2016). Families exercise considerable authority over young women in terms of betrothal and marriage, making it difficult for women to exercise choice, and resulting in women being trapped into prostitution (Van Hook, Gjermeni and Haxhiymeri, 2006; Simon, Galanxhi and Dhono, 2015). At the same time, women often lack access to the education and employment that would enable them to avoid exploitation (Van Hook, Gjermeni and Haxhiymeri, 2006). These are risk factors at the individual level. Research with victims also supports a more direct relationship, namely that young women are frequently recruited for trafficking by members of their own families and will often know their traffickers. (Meshi, Picari and Pinderi, 2009; Zhilla and Lamallari, 2015).

TIMELINE FOR ALBANIA

Research on migration is often ahistoric (Malkki, 1995) and to ensure this research captures the structural and situational factors involved in creating vulnerability to trafficking or helping people become resilient against trafficking, a timeline of key political events plus key events relating to human trafficking and migration was partially drawn up by the research team prior to the SLE taking place. It was important to try and learn about potential structural and situational risk and protective factors through this process because it was expected that the interviews with key informants and people who have experienced human trafficking would be focused on case work, individual experiences plus household, family and community factors and would not provide as much data regarding structural and situational factors. Participants were then invited to add additional key dates onto this timeline during Day 1 of the SLE. Suggestions were made relating to what should be added as key political events, migration patterns more broadly and dates/events relating directly to human trafficking. These suggestions included the dates of prevention campaigns, dates shelters were opened in the country, dates of key associated legislation, key prosecutions, publication of reports, examples of 'good practice', details of remittances and any other associated migration, labour migration or internal migration known to participants.

As can be seen on the fold-out page of this report, this timeline outlines key events relating to both migration more broadly and the introduction of actions against human trafficking (blue line) and key political events occurring in Albania since 1944 (grey line). Contributions from participants are shown in the centre (pink line) and illustrate important considerations when understanding human trafficking within and from Albania.

POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITION

During 45 years of communist rule, emigration was banned in Albania and internal mobility was tightly controlled (King et al., 2008). Migration and human trafficking are part of the process of transition made by Albania since the end of communist rule in 1991. King et al. (2008) outline three distinct peaks in emigration between 1991 and 1992 post-communism, 1997 following the collapse of a pyramid savings scheme and during 1999 due to the Kosovo refugee situation. Internal migration also increased post-1991 but estimates suggest that international migration was considerably higher than internal migration during this period (King et al., 2008).

The transition from a centralized state-led economy to a market economy has seen challenges such as unemployment, decaying physical infrastructure and corruption (Milkani, 2013) plus transitions within gender, family structures and intra-family care arrangements (Vullentari and King, 2016a, 2016b). These are all related to the five different levels in the IOM determinants of vulnerability model.

Of particular interest are the additional entries completed by participants at the SLE around the transfer of power and conflict due to political and economic instability in the early 1990s, characterized by one participant as 'anarchy'. Subsequent lack of hope for the future is then detailed post 2010, considered by another participant to constitute 'anomie', a term used by the sociologist Emile Durkheim in the 19th century to denote desperation, despair and aimlessness as a result of rapid societal change and the loss of old values (see also Tahiraj, 2008). Mai (2010) suggests that the post-communist political,

social and economic changes occurring within Albania broke down traditional figures of authority and challenged historic values and rules associated with an authoritative state. Migration in this context, facilitated by those with social networks outside the country, is understandable.

Mai (2010) also suggests that: 'Trafficking and migration must be analysed jointly as two different but related aspects of the complex process of transformation ...' of this post-communist transformation. The connection between human trafficking and broader migration flows has been elaborated on at a global level by UNODC who suggest that:

'The patterns of detected cross-border trafficking ... in many cases broadly resemble discernable regular migration ...' (2017:57)

In relation to Albania specifically, this is reiterated by de Waal who considers:

'Migration, internal and external, continues to be the most significant socio-demographic and economic phenomenon since the end of Communism...'
(2014:307)

This research will explore these aspects further. However, the timeline begins to illustrate how migration post 1991 relates to human trafficking, which became a criminal act in Albania in 2001.

ADOPTION OF LEGISLATION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ALBANIA

Albania ratified the Palermo Protocol in 2002 and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in 2007. Actions by the Government of Albania show consistent attempts to tackle the issue of human trafficking. Amongst other actions, a State Committee of the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons was established in 2002, a National Referral Mechanism was established in 2006 and Regional Committees established in 2006 and revised by Prime Minister's Order in 2017. Child Protection structures have been set up in 61 Municipalities. Identification procedures have been established, based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Articles 110/a and 128/b of the Penal Code have provisions for trafficking of adults and children respectively. A free hotline – 116 006 – was established in 2014. As can be seen in the attached fold out Timeline, there have been four National Action Plans between 2001-2004, 2005-2010, 2011-2013, 2014-2017.

The National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking plus three Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) across Albania (Different & Equal, Tirana; Psycho - Social Centre 'Vatra', Vlorë; TjeterVizion, Elbasan) implement the SOPs for identification and referral of adults. This includes providing rehabilitation and reintegration services in cooperation with other service providers. An international NGO – World Vision, Tirana – offers support for identification across a range of areas. A further NGO in Tirana – Arsis – focuses on children who have experienced trafficking, providing them with shelter and emergency services (up to 72 hours).

During the SLE there were suggestions of an implementation gap between existing legislation/policy and practice. Other available reports reiterate this gap. For example, the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA, 2016) has welcomed a number of actions taken whilst urging the government of Albania to take steps to ensure the timely identification of victims of trafficking. Specifically GRETA urge that the SOPs are complied with, funding is provided to support reactive regional mobile teams and broaden their geographical scope and give consideration to improving statistical systems that disaggregate not only the sex, age, country of origin and/or destination, but also by type of exploitation. As mentioned previously the 2017 US Trafficking in Persons report, Albania has remained at Tier 2 level as it does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but the government is seen as making significant efforts to do so.

GRETA's recommendations for strengthening identification measures among irregular migrants and asylum seekers relates to the way the trafficking and asylum populations are connected.

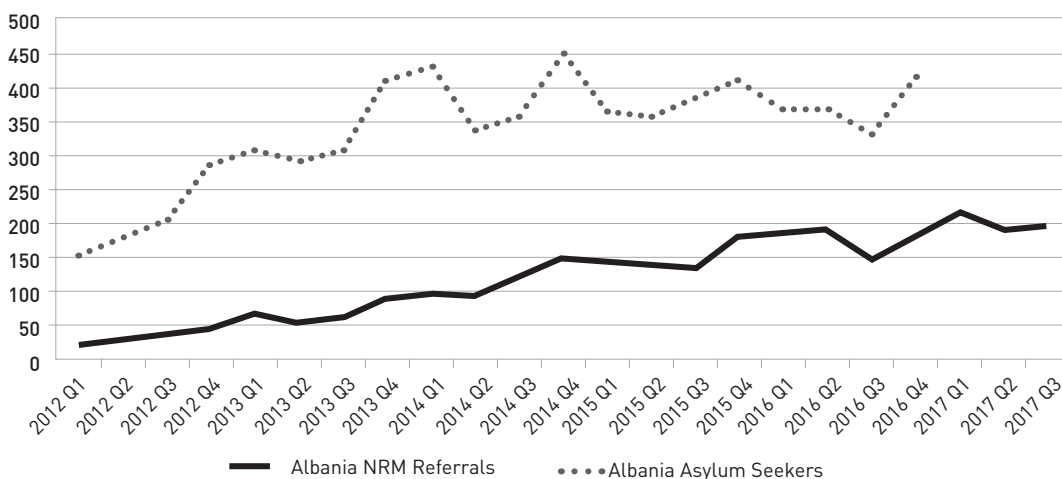
MIGRATION PROFILE

There is an intersection between human trafficking and other forms of migration and a range of other policy fields (Carling, 2017; Mai, 2010). Within the literature on forced migration this is sometimes termed the migration-trafficking nexus (Carling, 2017; Kaye, 2003). There is also a suggested link between asylum and migration, referred to as the asylum-migration nexus (Carling, 2017). In both cases, the term nexus refers to sets of complex interdependencies between processes that run in parallel such as human trafficking and asylum or two phenomena such as migration and development. It has been long argued that anti-trafficking efforts run parallel to broader global immigration and asylum agendas which can themselves generate structural ‘harms’ that exacerbate vulnerability and enable exploitation (Anderson, 2012; O’Connell Davidson, 2013). However it is phrased, in the case of Albania there are multiple ways in which migration occurs and multiple outcomes of that migration.

According to UNHCRs global statistics there were 7,811 Albanian Persons of Concern to UNHCR at the end of 2016, made up of 138 refugees, 2,752 asylum seekers and 4,921 Stateless persons (UNHCR, 2017)¹¹. During 2015, Germany experienced an increase of new asylum applications from people from Albania, rising from 7,900 applications in 2014 to 53,800 in 2015 (UNHCR, 2016:38). Also during 2015, some 68,500 applications for asylum became known to UNHCR from Albanian nationals (UNHCR, 2016:42).

In relation to the UK, applications for asylum from Albanian nationals are shown below and, as can be seen, numbers of referrals through the NRM are considerably lower than the number of asylum applications. For example, during the fourth quarter of 2016 there were 416 people seeking asylum and 179 referrals of Albanian nationals to the UK NRM. However, it should be noted that of these NRM referrals, not all lead to positive identification, with only 31% of Albanian adults referred into the NRM between 2009 and 2016 having received a positive Conclusive Grounds decision¹².

Graph 1: Albanian NRM Referrals and Asylum Applications



Source: Gov.UK National Statistics, National Crime Agency adult and minor NRM referral statistics.

Within the UK, Albanian women who have been trafficked form a ‘particular social group’ within the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees because they share a common characteristic that cannot be changed and have a distinct identity which is perceived as being different by the surrounding society (Home Office, 2016:5). This does not mean this ‘particular social group’ is sufficient to be recognized as a refugee as persecution is established on an individual basis, recognizing the variety of trafficking

¹¹ UNHCR Population Statistics, viewed on 14 December 2017 at: popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview.

¹² Reducing Modern Slavery, National Audit Office, viewed on 16 March 2018 at: nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Reducing-Modern-Slavery.pdf

causes and experiences within Albania. Home Office country guidance outlines how it is not possible to create a typical profile of a trafficked woman from Albania, with women coming from all areas of the country and from varied social backgrounds (Home Office, 2016:5).

Whilst there is field evidence, (sometimes sensational) media reporting and fact-finding reports that provide snapshots in time around the issue of trafficking from Albania, it is clear that further academic evidence is necessary to fully understanding this issue (Tahiraj, 2017).

'Shelters offer people a protective place where they can be provided with support but they do not offer paradise or replace what they have lost.' (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

'The way to reduce vulnerability is to provide good services.' (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

'We need to strengthen coordination between our organisations – we need to understand the ways people are recruited and travel.' (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

'We have Standard Operating Procedures in Albania, this is a positive for us.' (speaker comment, SLE Day 1, Session 1)

Thirty-three participants attended the SLE in Tirana. This included stakeholders from civil society organisations, law-enforcement, children services, health services and government officials. The presentations were delivered by people from those sectors.

As outlined above, Day 1 of the SLEs was structured to provide an overview of the picture of human trafficking, patterns of trafficking from Albania to the UK and consideration of what factors shape vulnerability to trafficking. These are now addressed in turn.

ALBANIA: THE PICTURE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Statistics from January-September 2017 were presented from the Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator (ONAC) at the SLE showing 22 total 'victims of trafficking' and 55 'possible victims of trafficking' during that period. Of the 77 cases (62f/15m) 39 were children and 38 adults. A reported 7 people were of Egyptian origin and 1 from the Roma ethnic group. 70 were Albanian nationals and 7 were from other countries. It is important to note that the countries to which people were trafficked, or where exploitation took place, was not included in presentations so it remains unclear whether any of these cases related to trafficking or exploitation in the UK. Exploitation type was also not included in these figures.

The ONAC also outlined how the age of children varied between 4 to 18 years, with one unprecedented case of a newborn child reported as being sold. Other speakers outlined how children potentially constitute the largest number of victims, including how adult victims identified had been recruited as children.

Places of origin for people who had been identified within the ONAC figures were mainly Elbasani, Vlora, Tirana and Fieri districts. Limited numbers of people had been identified in Berat, Korçe, Durrës, Dibër and Shkodër districts. For the first time, Gjirokastër district had seen the identification of one person. Figures from a database from the Psycho - Social Centre 'Vatra' were presented at the SLE of 99 cases between 2015 and September 2017 which constitute part of 144 cases from 2014 to date. These figures represent both those formally identified as trafficked and potential cases. These cases illustrated an extensive range of places of origin, including: Vlorë, Fier, Berat, Tirana, Elbasan, Lushnjë, Shkodër, Tepelenë, Librazhd, Peshkopi, Burrel, Pogradec, Sarandë, Korçë, Skrapar, Gramsh and Durrës.

Speakers in this and other sessions commented on a broad range of issues which were considered as underlying vulnerabilities which make people disposed to human trafficking from their own experiences and from the perspective of their own organisations. Economic factors featured heavily in explanations as did risk factors at the household and family level

such as domestic, intimate partner and sexual violence suggesting the partial enforcement of these laws outlined within the Global Status Report on Violence Prevention (2014) warrants further attention:

‘Unemployment, domestic violence, sexual violence and other forms of violence are the causes.’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1, Session 1)

‘They use vulnerabilities as a weakness – this might be domestic violence, sexual violence, economic problems, mental health issues or adolescent behaviour.’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1, Session 1)

‘Encouraging employment is the best way to decrease vulnerability.’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

Other factors related to individual level factors as well as household and family level factors and the community level factors such as forced marriages, low levels of education plus physical, psychological and economic violence also featured in discussions. This range of causes will be followed up in subsequent interviews to be carried out January-June 2018 for this study. In relation to children, there was a suggestion that child labour was under-reported within Albania:

‘Forced child labour needs to be recognised as trafficking in Albania.’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

Individual level factors around disadvantage and discrimination featured heavily during the presentations, as did the stigma associated with divorce. Structural level factors of limited options for safe and legal migration were key and often linked to comments on the methods of recruitment.

The role of social media was also particularly apparent during discussions about recruitment:

‘Recruitment from families who are poor, unemployed and via connections with other people, facebook, snapchat, social media...’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

‘People are increasingly using social media to recruit others.’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

Deception featured heavily in discussions around the offer of engagement and marriage and false promises of work in other countries:

‘There are promises of marriage and then being deceived by loved ones, but people want to save themselves from this vulnerability.’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

Traffickers themselves were considered to be people with low levels of education, often with close family or social ties to those they were recruiting for the purpose of exploitation. From an analysis of 99 cases presented by Psycho-Social Centre ‘Vatra’ between 2015 and September 2017, 68% of traffickers were either close family or had close social ties. Of these 31% were reported to be cases where ‘boyfriends’ had exploited people; 25% were friends and people known to the individual who were responsible for exploitation; and 12% were related to family members and relatives. In 19% of cases people were exploited by Facebook friends. Only 13% of cases related to a trafficker who was previously unknown to the individual. This data emphasises the importance of recognising and understanding household and family and community factors in creating vulnerability to trafficking. It also highlights the importance of recognising that some factors can be both risk or protective factors depending upon the context. Having a network of family and friends who can provide assistance in migration, finding a place to stay or work in another country could provide resilience against trafficking but if the intention of those within this network is actually to exploit the individual then their dependence on or use of these networks and contacts could make an individual vulnerable to trafficking.

The fluid nature of how traffickers operate was noted by another participant (see also Tahiraj, 2017)

'Traffickers are always looking for new methods. We have to anticipate these and act as barriers to their development.' (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

There was little comment on the issue of internal trafficking beyond citations of other studies carried out by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) reports (2016). In this GRETA report it is suggested that the number of identified cases of internal trafficking have risen above those of Albanian victims travelling abroad (2016). One participant did refer to a perceived increase in the number of children being trafficked internally and across the border to Kosovo, warranting further research:

'There has been an increase of the number of children trafficked internally and to Kosovo and the UK' (speaker comment, SLE Day 1, Session 1)

Throughout Day 1 of the SLE different speakers highlighted different forms of trafficking experienced by Albanian adults – these included:

- Sexual exploitation (including for seasonal work)
- Forced labour (in businesses or within families)
- Forced marriages (but not formally identified as 'victims of trafficking' as forced marriage may not be recognised within the definition of human trafficking)
- Enforced criminality (for example, cannabis production)
- Multiple forms of exploitation (for example, sexual exploitation and begging)

For Albanian children the forms included:

- Sexual exploitation (including during the tourist season)
- Enforced begging (explained as being carried out by parents, close relatives and other kin)
- Early marriages
- Petty crimes (for example, selling cigarettes)
- Multiple forms of exploitation (for example, sexual exploitation and begging)

Whereas ONAC statistics of the Roma and Egyptian population show relatively low numbers – a reported 7 people were of Egyptian origin and 1 from the Roma ethnic group in the first nine months of 2017 – statistics from other agencies suggest there is a larger population remaining unidentified. For example, 23% of beneficiaries of Psycho-Social Centre 'Vatra' between 2015 and 2017 were from the Roma and Egyptian community.

Of the 77 cases identified in ONAC statistics in the first nine months of 2017, there were 62 female and 15 male cases. The numbers of male cases identified by Psycho-Social Centre 'Vatra' were reportedly increasing alongside the establishment of a Mobile Unit developed for the purposes of outreach. This suggests a gendered element to human trafficking from Albania which is also apparent in the significant difference between the numbers of men and women from Albania referred into the UK's NRM. Gender is recognised as a risk or protective factor at the Individual level of the IOM determinants of vulnerability model.

It was suggested by one participant that trafficking routes from Albania have remained consistent over time with the following routes outlined:

- Albania → Belgium → UK
- Albania → UK → Norway
- Albania → Italy → Netherlands
- Albania → Kosovo → Macedonia → Switzerland
- Albania → Italy/Germany
- Albania → Montenegro → Italy/Belgium/Germany
- Albania → Greece → Italy → France → Netherlands → UK

- Albania → Greece/Kosovo → USA
- Albania → Macedonia

ALBANIA: PATTERNS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO THE UK

‘Only a small number of Albanian nationals [who have been victims of human trafficking] access and get support in the UK – we need to learn why this is the case.’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

‘She was maltreated by everyone, the community, teachers, her uncle and those who were meant to take care of her. ... When she was found in the UK, the police returned her to Tirana.’ (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

This session began with a presentation about what is known about trafficking from Albania to the UK based on official statistics from the UK government. The presentation showed the context of the numbers of Albanian nationals being referred into the NRM, emphasising that Albania has been one of the largest source countries in recent years. The presentation began by highlighting how these official statistics do not help us to understand the individual circumstances of people who have experienced trafficking and do not provide any information to help understand what makes people vulnerable to trafficking or the capacities that can provide resilience against it.

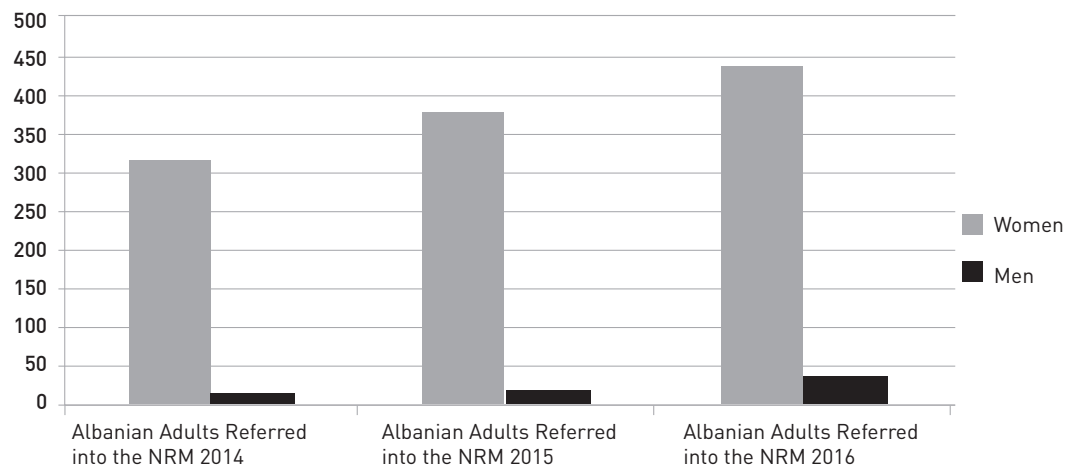
The session highlighted the numbers of Albanian adults and children referred into the UK NRM and noted the significant distinction between the numbers of Albanians being referred into the UK NRM with the number of people identified as victims of trafficking, or potential victims of trafficking in Albania. The implications for access to support were discussed highlighting how further learning was needed into understanding why so few Albanian nationals ultimately access the support they need after returning to Albania.

The presentation also highlighted the processes for referrals into the UK NRM and the different stages of decision making, those responsible for decision making and the support and assistance that is provided to people who are referred into the NRM. The presentation highlighted that people are not quickly or easily identified as victims of trafficking or modern slavery in the UK. The average waiting time for a final decision for people referred into the NRM in 2016 was 134 days. (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, 2018) The presentation discussed significant waiting times for decisions, that people are unable to self-refer into the NRM and that ultimately many of the Albanians referred into the NRM will not be conclusively identified as victims of trafficking. The presentation highlighted that only 30% of Albanian nationals referred into the NRM in 2015 had received a positive conclusive grounds decision by May 2016.

The presentation gave an outline of the UK’s Modern Slavery Act 2015 explaining how the UK has separate definitions for trafficking and modern slavery and explained the differences between these definitions.

This chart on the gender of Albania adults referred into the NRM between 2014 and 2016 highlighted the significant difference between the numbers of men and women being referred. Gender is considered as a significant risk or protective factor in the IOM determinant of vulnerability model.

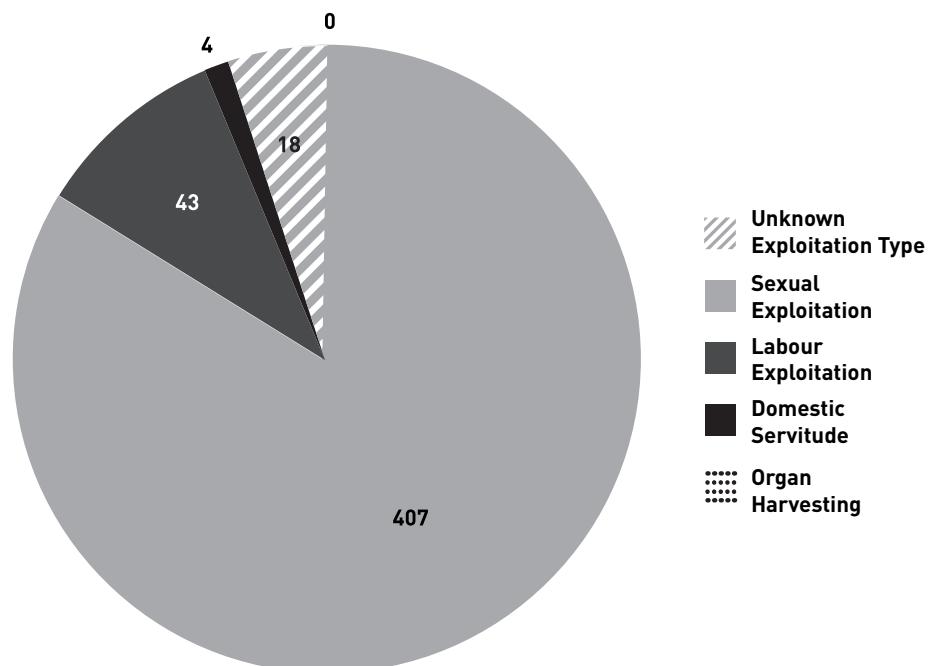
Graph 2: Gender Breakdown of Albanian Adults Referred into the UK National Referral Mechanism between 2014 and 2016



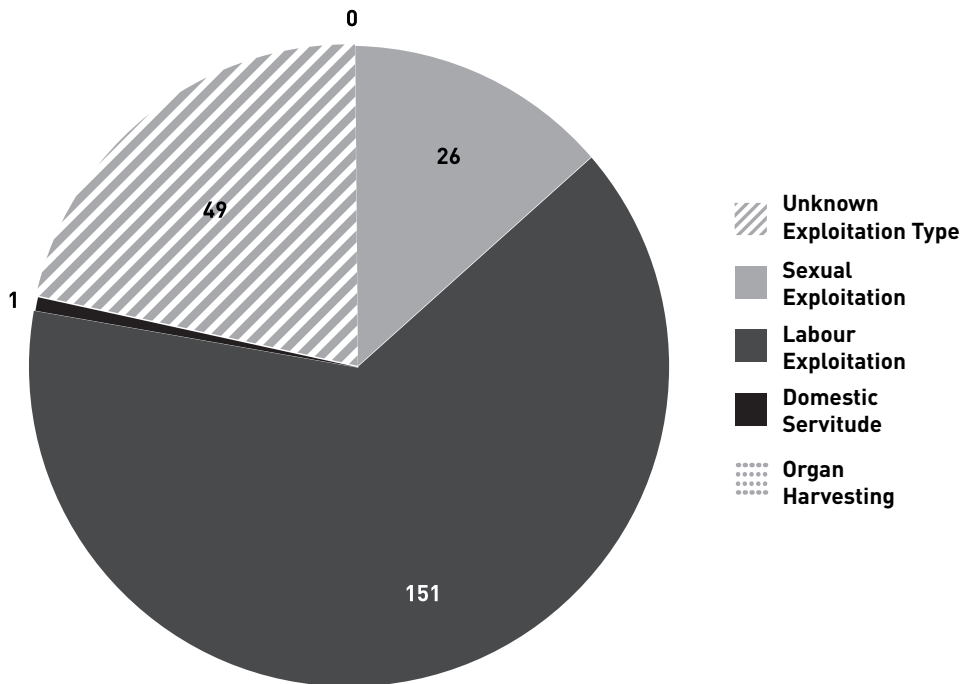
Source: NCA end of year statistics for 2014, 2015 and 2016

Stakeholders at the SLE highlighted that Albanian adults and children are trafficked for a multitude of different forms of exploitation. IOM UK also presented data on the types of reported exploitation of Albanian adults and minors referred into the UK NRM in 2015 and 2016. This data highlights that Albanian adults referred into the UK NRM reported different forms of exploitation but the vast majority were reporting having been trafficked for sexual exploitation. For Albanian minors the majority of cases reported having experienced labour exploitation. This broad category encompasses a wide array of specific types of exploitation.

Graph 3: Reported Exploitation Types of Albanian Adults Referred into the NRM in 2016



Graph 4: Reported Exploitation Types of Albanian Minors Referred into the NRM in 2016



In this session some specific case studies were shared, highlighting cases from both central and northern Albania.

Case Study 1: A young woman from central Albania was from a marginalized and impoverished family. She had left school early to work as a seamstress, earning enough money to get by but she was under pressure from her family to get a job that paid more. A friend introduced her to a man who became her boyfriend and who promised to marry her. The boyfriend provided her with fake Italian documents for citizenship in Italy and they travelled to Italy by plane. When she arrived she met a friend of her boyfriend who then sexually exploited her for one year. This man then sold her to another man in the UK who exploited her in a bar as a dancer and sex worker. She was held in the bar for several years where she was psychologically and physically abused, forced to use alcohol and drugs and denied healthcare. She was eventually identified by the police and was treated in a mental health hospital. She returned to Albania and was received at the airport by a local NGO who began providing her support services.

Case Study 2: A girl from northern Albania, with divorced parents and a father who had been imprisoned after escaping the country in the mid-1980s when it was illegal to emigrate from Albania. The stigma of both divorce and having a member of family imprisoned during this point in time was considerable. The girl's mother abandoned her and her siblings and returned to live with her own family, leaving her to live with her grandmother and uncles. She was maltreated by her family, the community and the teachers at her school for being regarded as the daughter of a traitor who had tried to leave the country. After the 1990s her father was released and then remarried and had a new family. The girl ended up living with her father but her father treated her badly and threatened her before moving to the UK with his new family, leaving the girl behind. A relative was supposed to take care of her but abused her, such as burning her for not doing household chores. During this period the girl attempted suicide a number of times. Her uncles arranged for her to go the UK to be with her father. She travelled to the UK in the back of a lorry. However, when she was reunited with her father he abused her and suggested ways she could kill herself. After a number of suicide attempts, she was hospitalized. Sometime after leaving the hospital she met a man who became her boyfriend and wanted them to move in together. He told her the rent for the flat they lived in was £2,000 per week and that he knew a champagne bar where she could work. She ended up working there seven days a week as a sex worker for which she received £150 per week. She was eventually identified by the police and returned to Albania.

'Cases are solved only when presented by the media. There is discrimination and stigma everywhere. ... parents protest if there is a victim of trafficking in the class.' (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

Although this session was entitled vulnerability to human trafficking, discussion at the SLE focused more on vulnerability as a result of trafficking. The issue of social stigma and discrimination were outlined as being key issues faced by those who had experienced human trafficking. Adults who had experienced sexual exploitation are often referred to as 'prostitutes' and other discriminatory labels. Support workers were also considered to carry the stigma of the population they worked with. Support workers advised people who have experienced trafficking not to share personal information with others so they, and their children, could avoid being stigmatised. Rejection by family members was reported as being a common response to people who had experienced exploitation and/or human trafficking, as was the loss of employment and livelihood upon exposure of this experience. Children who live in shelters were reportedly being asked to keep their addresses confidential but teachers would sometimes identify these children as living in centres. This stigma permeates other aspects of society such as accommodation and health services. This stigma could be a significant risk factor at both the community and household and family levels.

Throughout the SLE presenters and participants discussed a number of vulnerabilities which were consistent with risk factors at the five different levels of the IOM Determinants of Vulnerability model. Many of the vulnerabilities which were discussed are experienced at an individual level but are the consequence of attitudes and practices which exist within the household and family levels and community level which are inadequately addressed at the structural level.

Individual Level: Much of the focus on vulnerabilities was on risk factors at the individual level. In particular there was repeated reference to gender as a risk factor with regard to the large number of women being trafficked from Albania. Interventions from participants at the SLE as well as presenters also frequently emphasized that victims of trafficking had limited formal education and were from backgrounds of poverty.

Household and Family: One of the presentations at the SLE highlighted the numbers of people exploited and recruited by family members. Such circumstances present a very direct risk factor at the household and family level. Throughout the SLE stakeholders discussed vulnerabilities leading to trafficking that were consistent with risk factors at this level. In particular the breakdown of families and in particular single mothers and divorcees were recognized as creating vulnerabilities for both those persons and the children in these families. The risk factor of family history is also significant in the context of Albania as acknowledged in the second of the two case studies included in the SLE report.

Community: Risk factors at the household and family level and community level are closely interconnected. Stakeholders at the SLE discussed the prevalence and acceptance of domestic violence and gender-based violence in certain communities within Albania society.

Structural: A lack of coordination across different agencies and across policies was considered a key aspect of the creation of vulnerability. A lack of information and lack of trust in state institutions were also outlined. For those from rural areas, access to social assistance, health and educational services was considered to be particularly poor. Access to accommodation for Roma and Egyptian communities was outlined as a difficulty due to low social integration and education levels. The provision of low levels of financial aid to assist 'victims' was outlined as an issue, with individuals receiving 3,000 Lek per month (approximately £20) following lengthy bureaucratic processes. Access to free legal aid was considered vital but missing from current provision. The need to prove 'victimhood' to avoid criminal offences and other forms of victim-blaming were apparent from presentations and subsequent discussions.

¹³ Although this session was entitled vulnerability to human trafficking, discussion at the SLE focused more on vulnerability as a result of trafficking.

Situational: There was less discussion from stakeholders at the SLE of examples of situational factors creating vulnerability to trafficking. The vulnerabilities to trafficking that were being discussed were often entrenched and long-term risk factors at the individual, household and family, community and structural levels. However, the Albanian timeline which was developed by stakeholders at the SLE does include a number of significant situational moments that impacted upon vulnerabilities to trafficking in Albania. In particular the first moment of mass migration from Albania to Italy in 1991 and the collapse of the government investment scheme in 1997 were tremendously important changes from the 'normal circumstances'¹⁴ in Albania. The impact and consequences of these moments still have relevance in understanding why people may be vulnerable to trafficking in Albania today.

SHARED EXAMPLES OF BUILDING RESILIENCE TO TRAFFICKING

The implementation of a project entitled 'Positive Deviance' allowed for more protective factors across the different levels contained within the IOM determinants model to be considered. This study, run between 2011 and 2013, looked at the behaviour of people within communities who had successful migration behaviours that enabled them to find better solutions than other peers and, in doing so, avoid circumstances such as human trafficking. These strategies were then replicated with at-risk populations. Four key strategies were identified in this approach:

1. People prepared for migration by acquiring the right language and professional skills and mobilizing their own personal resources
2. People collected appropriate information about the country of destination such as knowledge of laws, language and culture
3. People established a social network in the destination country before and after migration
4. People became familiar with the legal and institutional framework for migration by obtaining residence and work permits and finding out beforehand where they could go to obtain help if necessary.

This approach was not without limitations as vulnerabilities may be deep and structural. While using an established network might be a protective factor which can promote resilience against human trafficking, the trust of others was sometimes misplaced, betrayal plays a significant part in the experience of trafficking. The overt focus on Individual factors was considered a weakness in this respect:

'It is important to keep in mind that people are trafficked not because they are vulnerable, but because someone decided to exploit them. In recognising that victims' behaviours are not the cause of trafficking, it also follows that addressing their behaviours exclusively cannot fully solve the problem.' (speaker comment, SLE Day 1)

SHARED LEARNING EVENT – DISCUSSIONS ON RESEARCH APPROACH

Day 1 of the SLE provided the context for further discussions on the most appropriate approach for the research during Days 2 and 3. In particular, discussions relating to the sampling strategy and indicative areas for further elaboration during the study were debated.

SAMPLING STRATEGY IN ALBANIA

During the SLE in Albania, dominant forms of exploitation were identified and a purposive sample of people who have experienced trafficking was discussed, plus decisions on the geography and key characteristics of interviewees made. The geographical spread of potential interviewees also relates to information discussed at this event with the majority of interviews to take place in Tirana and others in Elbasan, Vlore, Fier and Shkodra where feasible. It was suggested that interviews in Tirana offer a greater degree of anonymity to

¹⁴ Normal circumstances refers to the language used for the situational level of the Determinants of Vulnerability model terminology.

individuals. The original intention was for the sample of interviews to only include people who had been trafficked to the UK. However, through presentations and conversations with participants at the SLE it became clear that there are only a very small number of people who were trafficked from Albania to the UK who have returned to Albania and engaged in support services or been formally identified in Albania as people who were trafficked. Therefore we recognized that we may not be able to identify a sufficient number of people who were trafficked from Albania to the UK for research interviews. This meant that we had to discuss an alternative adapted sample for the research. Based on information provided, guiding principles for this sample aimed to satisfy the aims of the research, reflect the picture of human trafficking in Albania and provide a logic of comparison for interviews to be conducted within the UK. Segmenting a small sample in this way is not always desirable or feasible and this sample below therefore remains an aim:

- Minimum of 20 semi-structured interviews with people who have experienced trafficking in each country
- Albanian nationals who are aged 18 or over – in the knowledge that their experience of trafficking may have been as a child or young person
- A minimum of 15 interviews with Albanian majority group and a minimum of 6 interviews with Egyptian, Roma and other minority groups
- Interviewees who have been formally identified as a trafficked person through the official identification process
- Interviewees who have been informally identified as a person who has experienced human trafficking by an organization which is working with them
- A gender split of approximately 75% female and 25% male interviewees
- Interviews across a range of exploitation types: sexual exploitation (n=7); labour exploitation (n=3); begging (n=3); enforced criminality (n=3); early marriage (n=3) and other (n=2)
- Interviews to be conducted in Tirana (n=11) and geographically spread across Elbasan, Vlore, Fier and Shkodra where feasible
- If feasible, interviews with a selected number of people who have experienced trafficking to the UK and been returned to Albania
- If necessary, interviews with people who have been trafficked to any other European or Balkan country and have been returned to Albania

It was also decided that the purposive sample of key informants within Albania would be:

- Minimum of 20 semi-structured interviews with key informants in each country
- A minimum of 13 interviews with professionals from the 'social care' sector (includes service providers, social workers, shelter coordinators and civil society)
- A minimum of 8 interviews with government officials working within national bodies
- Interviews to be mainly conducted in Tirana and other locations where feasible

At this early stage of the research and prior to qualitative interviews or quantitative analysis taking place, a number of key themes emerged out of the SLE and this learning will guide the subsequent research. Issues arose around five key areas – risks and vulnerabilities; forms of exploitation; support services; the extent, nature and impact of stigma and discrimination against victims of trafficking; and, issues related to data protection plus the collection and recording of data on human trafficking.

The first of these – risks and vulnerabilities – included discussion of:

The causes or drivers of human trafficking appeared to be broad, multiple and overlapping. Stakeholders highlighted multiple vulnerabilities to trafficking in Albania across the different levels of the Determinants of Vulnerability model. These included poverty, other economic factors, low levels of education, mental health issues, forced marriage arrangements and limited options for safe and legal migration.

Gender imbalances within the society were outlined as key factors for understanding trafficking within Albania. Domestic, intimate partner and sexual violence were highlighted. It was suggested that the National Actions Plans for these forms of abuse should be linked to human trafficking Action Plans in a more coherent way. The potential risk factor of being a woman is an individual level factor which is a consequence of gender imbalances arising from the community level and household and family level which are reinforced or at least unresolved at the structural level.

Recruitment methods were varied, ever changing and related to close personal and family ties. It was considered that the use of social media was a key recruitment method for trafficking alongside previous recruitment methods within close family or close social ties. There are both risk and protective factors at the household and family level and the community level.

Post-1991 migration and human trafficking are intrinsically linked to the ‘transition’ from a centralized state-led economy to a market economy. The transition from communist rule, where emigration was banned in Albania and internal mobility tightly controlled to market economy structures has enabled peaks of emigration in response to political and economic events. During this period new routes for migration were established and an Albanian diaspora emerged. This transition appears to be a cause of vulnerability to human trafficking at a structural level.

‘Hope’ and being willing to take ‘risks’ to find better economic and social circumstances are key factors relating to migration and human trafficking within Albania. The economies of shortage in the early 1990s and lack of hope for better futures were an intrinsic part of migration during that time.

An extensive range of places of origin were discussed. Participants in the SLEs discussed known cases from across Albania. Further work to establish the actual locations that have cases of trafficking who reach the UK is necessary.

There is an implementation gap between a strong legislative and policy framework in Albania with practice in reality. Stakeholders at the SLE highlighted high level political commitment to responding to human trafficking in Albania, evidenced by the adoption of a number of policy and legislative measure but there was a feeling that these are not being fully implemented in practice.

The second of these – forms of exploitation – included:

The forms of exploitation are multiple. Alongside sexual exploitation as a key purpose of trafficking for adults, other forms included forced labour (in businesses or within families), forced marriages, petty criminality or enforced criminality, work on cannabis production. For children sexual exploitation, forced begging, early marriages and enforced criminality were considered the main forms. For both adults and children, multiple forms of exploitation were outlined as common but under-researched.

The third – support services – included:

There is little understanding or support for men and boys who have experienced trafficking. The focus of support for women and children was apparent from discussions and there is a gap in understanding about the causes of trafficking of males or their support needs.

Insufficient Financial Support. The provision of low levels of financial aid to assist ‘victims’ was outlined as an issue, with individuals receiving approximately £20 per month following lengthy bureaucratic processes.

Lack of Access to Justice. Access to free legal aid was considered vital but missing from current provision.

Gap between the number of Albanian nationals referred into the UK NRM and the numbers of people accessing support service for trafficked persons in Albania. There was a difference between the numbers referred into the UK NRM and the numbers of Albanians identified as victims of trafficking or potential victims of trafficking within Albania. There is a need for further research into the reasons for such differences and potential challenges for reintegration and identification of people returning from the UK to Albania.

Fourthly – the extent, nature and impact of the stigma and discrimination against victims of trafficking – related to:

The issue of social stigma and discrimination as a result of trafficking were considered key issues in not only supporting those identified as trafficked but also those who worked with them. The issue of social stigma and discrimination were outlined as being key issues faced by those who had experienced human trafficking. Adults who had been trafficked for sexual exploitation were routinely referred to in media reports and official accounts as ‘prostitutes’ and other discriminatory labels. Support workers advised people who have experienced trafficking not to share personal information with others so they, and their children, could avoid being stigmatised.

Support workers were also considered to carry the stigma of the population they worked with. The loss of employment and livelihood upon exposure of the experience of trafficking was also highlighted. This stigma permeates other aspects of service delivery such as accommodation and health services. An additional social stigma around divorce was outlined as another aspect associated with those who had experienced trafficking. The need to prove ‘victimhood’ to avoid criminal offences and other forms of victim-blaming were apparent from presentations and subsequent discussions.

Children who live in shelters were also stigmatized. Children were asked not to tell other people that they were living in a shelter and to keep their shelter addresses confidential when attending schools and other activities. However, teachers would sometimes identify these children as living in the official centers and would let other children know about their identity.

Rejection by family members was reported as common. Due to the relatively small population within Albania plus the historical strength of ‘family’ ties and knowledge of the history of other families, this was considered particularly problematic. Rejection by family members was considered a common response to people who had experienced human trafficking.

Fifthly – issues around data – included:

Data protection, confidentiality and anonymity were under-regarded in practice. It appears that there is little emphasis given to data protection, confidentiality and anonymity for people who have experienced trafficking across a broad range of sectors within Albania, including within media reports. This is particularly important given historic disregard for data protection and associated principles as well as the geographic and context-specific considerations of a closely connected population within Albania.

Statistics on trafficking could be improved in Albania and the UK. Although statistics were available from different agencies, further work to centralize and improve these would

be beneficial, including recording exploitation type. The available data on trafficking within Albania does not provide a clear picture of the nature and trends of trafficking, nor does it assist in understanding what makes people vulnerable to trafficking. The underlying data in Albania requires further work in two key respects – recording of exploitation type in national statistics and a mechanism to compare cases and statistics recorded with those from other sources such as shelters. The available NRM data on trafficking of Albanian nationals to the UK only focusses on referrals, with no disaggregated data provided for people officially identified as trafficked in the UK in terms of their gender, exploitation type or place of origin.

Finally, it was clear that further research is necessary to explore gaps and key themes not elaborated upon during the SLE. These include blood feuds, the prevalence and impact of domestic violence, the exclusion of particular groups such as the Roma, missing children, attitudes to compensation for victims of sexual violence which sometimes result in forced marriages and the issue of victims' agency and the relationship of this to vulnerability or capacities.

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APPENDIX 1: SHARED LEARNING EVENT DAY 1 AGENDA (ENGLISH VERSION)

'Vulnerability' to Human Trafficking: A Study of Viet Nam, Albania, Nigeria and the UK**Shared Learning Event: Albania****24 October 2017****Agenda**

In the context of the project 'Vulnerability' to Human Trafficking: A Study of Viet Nam, Albania, Nigeria and the UK, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) are hosting a Shared Learning Event (SLE) in Albania on 24 October 2017.

The event will bring together relevant stakeholders from government, civil society and academia who are involved in counter-trafficking in Albania to:

- Share what is already known about trafficking from Albania (trends, patterns, origin communities, destination locations, numbers, profiles), with an additional focus on the UK as a destination country
- Explore contextual 'vulnerabilities' and 'capacities' that relate to trafficking in Albania (at the individual, family, community, structural and situational levels)
- Explore contextual 'risk' and 'protective' factors that relate to trafficking in Albania at these levels

TIME	SESSION
09:00	Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM Albania • Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (ONAC) • National Coalition of Anti-trafficking Shelters
09:30	Project Presentation and Overview of Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM UK • University of Bedfordshire
10:00	Session 1: The picture of human trafficking in Albania Focusing on Albania as a source country, covering nature/trends, statistics, destinations, changing patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator (ONAC) • Psycho-Social Centre 'Vatra'
11:00	Coffee
11:30	Session 2: Patterns of human trafficking from Albania to the UK What do we know from official statistics, news, reports and direct assistance about trafficking of Albanians to the UK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM UK • Different & Equal • Tjeter Vizion
12:30	Lunch

TIME	SESSION
13:30	<p>Session 3: What factors shape ‘vulnerability’ and ‘capacities’ to human trafficking in Albania?</p> <p>Focusing on individual, family, community, structural and situational factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARSIS • Different & Equal • Terre des Hommes
14:30	<p>Breakout Sessions:</p> <p>1: What are the key risk and protective factors impacting trafficking at an individual and household level? What good practice has emerged at this level?</p> <p>Examples of individual factors are age, sex, racial or ethnic identities, sexual orientation, gender identity, personal histories, mental and emotional health, and access to resources, such as money, goods, or support.</p> <p>Examples of household and family factors include family size, household structure, socio-economic status, migration histories, employment, livelihoods, education levels, gender norms, and family dynamics.</p> <p>2: What are the key risk and protective factors impacting trafficking at a community level? What good practice has emerged at this level?</p> <p>Examples of community factors include educational opportunities, quality of available health care and social services, livelihood and income generation opportunities, the natural environment, and social norms and behaviours. Some discussion of the role of peers and other social networks will be included.</p> <p>3: What are the key risk and protective factors impacting trafficking at a structural level? What good practice has emerged at this level?</p> <p>Examples of structural factors include political systems, migration governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as historical factors such as conflict, periods of instability and mass emigration.</p>
15:45	Coffee
16:00	<p>Feedback from Breakout Sessions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual and household – Reporter from Group 2. Community – Reporter from Group 3. Structural – Reporter from Group
17:00	<p>Concluding Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Bedfordshire • IOM Albania
17:30	Close

- Explore what good practice exists to address 'vulnerability' and strengthen 'capacities' in Albania

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN ALBANIA SHARED LEARNING EVENT

ARSIS

Bashkia Elbasan, Elbasan Municipality

Bashkia Tirana, Tirana Municipality

Bashkia Vlore, Vlore Municipality

DPP Shtetit, General Directory of State Police

Departamenti i Kufirit dhe Migracionit, Border and Migration Department

Different & Equal Organization

Ministria e Brendshme - Ministry of Interior

Koalicioni Kombëtar i Strehëzave Anti-trafik - National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters

Qendra Kombëtare Pritëse për viktimat e trafikimit - National Reception Center for Victims of Trafficking

State Agency for Protection of Children's Rights

Drejtoria e Shërbimit Social Shtetëror - State Social Services Directorate

TDH - Terre des Hommes

Shoqata Tjeter Vision - Tjeter Vizion Organization- Elbasan

Psycho - Social Centre 'Vatra', Vlore

World Vision Albania

