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**I AM NOT
FOR SALE!**

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IN COOPERATION WITH:

The Association of Roma Women "Better future" Tuzla
Youth Roma Initiative " Be my friend" Visoko
Association "Romani ćej-Roma girl" Prnjavor
Association "Roma's tear" Srebrenica

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Sarajevo, February 2012

“I was born into a poor family with many children...we lived difficult lives; violence, hunger, a beat-upbarrack, sometimes working on the street ‘till you drop, all of this was a part of my childhood. Then I thought the day of my salvation came. I knew that my folks would sell me, but if nothing else, it would save us all from misery. I wish it was so... I gave birth to one child, and then they forced me to give back all that money they gave me, andin the worst way possible. I had to sell my body day after day, night after night. I stopped counting the “customers”, I just dreamed about the day when I will gather the sum of money and change my life forever. But every day, the interest on “my debt” grew;I would have needed three lifetimes to save myself. When my body was worn out, they mutilated it and I had to beg with my children. Somehow I managed to get away from that horror... I don’t even know how. And now, I roam from pillar to post, with my body and soul disfigured...”Anonymous

SUMMARY

Human trafficking is a phenomenon that is found in the ancient history of mankind. Many centuries have passed since the time of slavery, but the same problem is as acute today, in a somewhat different form. Human trafficking is considered to be one of the three most profitable criminal activities, together with drug trafficking and the illegal arms trade. It is commonly referred to as a “highly profitable and low risk activity” because, on the one hand, it is estimated that the profits of human traffickers amount to 500 billion dollars a year, and, statistically speaking, very few of them end up in court and receive harsh sentences. The following text will theoretically present the problem of human trafficking and the treatment of these issues within the legislative and legal framework, and it will present the results of the research conducted in Roma communities in the municipalities of Sarajevo, Visoko, Srebrenica and Prnjavor.

1. INTRODUCTION

Through human trafficking, people are becoming commodities, just like any other item in a supermarket. A commodity with a value attached to it, to be paid after the appraisal. Unjust fee for a human life that should not, and does not, have a price!

It is said that the era of slavery is long behind us. The age when the person at a superior position had the absolute right to control another's life, their health, time, habits and all that can be classified as a part of that individual's life. Large-scale slave trade started developing as early as the fifteenth century, when the Europeans began selling captured Africans and earning money from it, shipping them across the ocean to become the workforce in European countries. This practice lasted until the nineteenth century. Today, slavery is prohibited by law, although it still exists in some parts of the world. Many countries in the world have enacted multiple laws, declarations, conventions, constitutions and other laws and bylaws concerning the basic human right: the right to life and freedom. Such documents were ratified in many countries around the world. Despite this, throughout the world, many children, girls, women, and even men, are currently living the same fate of the aforementioned Africans in the fifteenth century. The importance of (modern) slavery is highlighted by the fact that this subject is discussed in the sacred texts of all monotheistic religions. Specifically, liberating a slave is considered to be one of the greatest deeds; this in itself implies the severity of the crime of being a "human trafficker".

Human trafficking is the commercial sale of human beings, often resulting in sexual exploitation (e.g. forced prostitution, forced marriage), or forced labor without pay, and includes physical abuse, coercion, intimidation, sexual exploitation, fraud, and other forms of coercion, terrorizing and intimidation to coax, catch, detain and transport people with the purpose of further exploitation.

Human trafficking is a part of the new terminology in the presentation of the problem of human slavery. Therefore, the simplest definition of this concept would be that "human trafficking, especially in women and children, is a trade in human misery, and represents one of the greatest crimes of our time."¹

Considering that, in the recent years, this topic became widely discussed, several

1 Bjelica, J., 2001, Human trafficking in the Balkans, Handbook for journalists, B92, Belgrade. Cockburn, A., 2003, 21st. Century Slaves, National Geographic

definitions of the term were coined. One of the widely accepted definitions is given by the United Nations, according to which human trafficking is “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring 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 through fraud or other forms of coercion for the purpose of sexual or economic exploitation for profit and benefit of a third party and/or groups (macro, pimps, traffickers, middlemen)”²

Human trafficking is considered to be one of the three most profitable criminal activities, together with drug trafficking and the illegal arms trade. It is commonly referred to as a “highly profitable and low risk activity” because, on the one hand, it is estimated that the profits of human traffickers amount to 500 billion dollars a year, and, statistically speaking, very few of them end up in court and receive harsh sentences. The published research on “Trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation in the Balkans”, done by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the Stability Pact, found that each year 120,000 women and children from the eastern part of the continent set off toward the Western countries in search of a better life. Thousands of them end up as white slaves. The same research states that more than 6,000 women from the Balkan region and its neighboring countries end up in Western Europe, mostly as prostitutes, and it is estimated that the actual numbers are, unfortunately, much higher.³ Certain data indicates that between 300,000-500,000 women and children are “sold” into the countries of Western Europe annually; during the same period, about 250,000 are “sold” in Asia, and 50,000 in the United States, of which about 10,000 individuals come from South America. The total number of victims of human trafficking in one year is 4 million.⁴ The reports of the CIA estimate that about 40,000 women and children are brought into the USA every year under false promises of a better life, and are forced to work as sex workers, or in some form of forced labor, or as slaves.⁵ The UN estimates that about 4 million women are trafficked from one country to another and within countries, and that largest portion of the human trafficking annual profits mentioned above

2 Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Dec. 13 2000, supplementing the U.N. Convention against transnational organized crime G.A. Res 55/25, Annex II, U. N. Doc. A/res/55/25 (Nov.15, 2000).

3 www.iom.int

4 Marinović, L. 2003, Human trafficking; available at: www.artefact.mi2.hr

5 Belušić, M., et al. 2006, Human trafficking

is invested in the expansion of sex industry, thus contributing to the growth of organized crime.⁶

Human trafficking includes the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring 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. Human trafficking is now recognized as a growing problem in the fight against international organized crime, through which women, children, and men are subjected to various forms of abuse, exploitation and denial of their basic human rights.

Human trafficking was defined as a serious criminal offence in the late eighties and early nineties of last century.

When it comes to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the crime of human trafficking experienced a sharp increase from mid- to late nineties, when - as is commonly believed - thousands of women were exposed to organized groups of traffickers, who were active throughout the country. Most victims were from Eastern Europe. After their arrival to a particular location, often a bar or a nightclub, the victims were forced to provide sexual services to clients of the traffickers, which, in many cases, included the members of the international peacekeeping forces. Any attempts of rejection by the victims would be met with severe physical violence, threats against their family members, or even murder of the victim by the traffickers or their accomplices.⁷

The change in the relationships in our once bipolar world greatly contributed to the development of human trafficking business. Human trafficking operates on the principle of supply and demand. On the one hand, unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, wars, political instability, domestic violence and discrimination are the main factors driving the people to look for a job, continue their education or build a life in another city or country, in search of a better life or, simply, struggling to survive. On the other hand, in the era of globalization, there is a growing demand for cheap products, cheap labor, and cheap services

6 <http://action.web.ca/home/catw/readingroom.shtml>

7 Trafficking in human beings and responses of the domestic criminal justice system: A critical review of law and emerging practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of core international standards, OSCE, June 2009.

in the more developed and richer countries. It is not irrelevant to note that the twentieth century was the century of numerous armed conflicts and international peacekeeping operations, which, on the one hand, demonstrates a huge demand for sexual services wherever the military troops are stationed, and on the other hand, the absence of institutions and the collapse of the system in the countries party to the conflict, all of which represents a fertile ground for unimpeded development of all types of crime, including human trafficking.⁸

Although this problem has long been recognized and many existing mechanisms and resources are included in its resolution, the beginning of its end is nowhere in sight. There are multiple answers for this, with money certainly being one of the possible culprits. The aforementioned data cite the million-dollar annual amounts in play, which in itself is enough of a reason for the business to go on. However, is it possible that money is now more valuable than human life? Indeed, it appears to be, bearing in mind that human trafficking is third on the list of global problems, and from the looks of things, there is no indication that its magnitude will be lessened in the foreseeable future. Corruption is certainly another possible cause of frequent protection of white slave traders' interests. Human trafficking takes place within the well-structured groups that are often affiliated with various highly positioned government officials, which allows them to operate successfully and continuously. It is impossible for any organized group, even if it is underground and illegal, to operate in any country and for the police not to be aware of it. Police officers do report on the issues and problems, including the abovementioned ones, but despite their reports, human trafficking is still so widespread in some countries that it has become almost commonplace.

However, the most poignant part of this story is the fact that the victims are exposed to violations of human rights at all stages of the trafficking process. A prerequisite for human trafficking is the violation of political, civil, economic and/or social human rights of certain groups or classes of people in the country of origin. In many developing countries, or countries undergoing economic and political transition, women are affected by discrimination in the economic, social, political or legal field. Women also experience discrimination in the labor market and in professional training: they often receive lower wages than men and are disproportionately affected by unemployment. People belonging to lower classes, castes and religious or ethnic minorities also suffer from similar forms of discrimination, which makes the women in these communities twice

8 http://oc-pgz.hr/clanci_trgovanje_ljudima.html

as vulnerable. The number of single mothers is on the rise in countries affected by the transition, civil wars, or natural disasters, and these women are also the most affected by severe cuts in terms of social protection. Women and children are experiencing domestic abuse and violence in the workplace. Moreover, the participation of women in decision-making processes within the spheres of private and public life is negligible, which creates another obstacle for the improvement of their economic and social status. All these factors influence the decision to migrate in search of a better life, which consequently makes women and children a potential prey for human trafficking.⁹

Most victims of human trafficking are women, who fall prey to promises of good jobs and opportunities for further education made by potential traffickers in search of a new commodity. They often end up in the hell and despair of the underground, forced to buy one day of their life at a time through prostitution. They provide their personal slave-owners with a hefty profit, while the only thing they can provide for themselves are their bare lives.

Knowing the profile of potential victims of trafficking, particular attention should be paid to persons who suffer discrimination on any basis, bearing in mind that the desire for migration and a better life, often promised by human traffickers, is usually the desire of people coming from socially disadvantaged families, less educated backgrounds, minority groups, i.e. the people who, due to a combination of these factors, experience the so-called multiple discrimination. If we consider all of this, we can conclude that Roma, and particularly the Roma women, represent a high-risk group with regard to issues of human trafficking, at least when it comes to the region of South East Europe.

Roma are among the most vulnerable populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Roma communities in BiH are particularly vulnerable because of the generally low level of education, lack of personal documents, discrimination, and limited access to civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Even though they are the largest national minority in BiH, they are also a minority with the highest level of social vulnerability, according to all the parameters used to measure and determine the status of any social group. In relation to the members of any other national minority in BiH, as well as the constituent peoples, the number of Roma children who enroll and graduate from elementary schools, secondary schools, and colleges, is the lowest by far. The percentage of

9 <http://www.osce.org/sr/odihr/13986>

the Roma employed in the public sector in BiH is extremely low, and Roma-owned businesses and workshops are few and far between. This means that the vast majority of Roma in BiH are in social need, and they should be cared for by the centers for social work and other institutions, and organizations involved in social welfare and humanitarian activities. However, in practice, this is frequently not the case and, consequently, many members of this national minority survive at the lowest levels of human existence.¹⁰

Roma women are in an even worse situation as they are subjected to further discrimination because of their ethnic origin. Bearing in mind their low levels of education and employment, and rigid traditional patriarchal way of life in the Roma communities, it is easy to deduce that Roma women have almost no chance to get actively involved in public life. Unfortunately, there are no women even in the various government bodies which deal with the issues of the rights of Roma women; this public area is also dominated exclusively by men. An extremely low number of Roma women's organizations in BiH is also an indicator of an extremely difficult position of Roma women.

In cases where Roma women are involved in the work of nongovernmental organizations, these organizations are exclusively governed by men, and Roma women are most frequently working on the issue of the protection of mothers with children.¹¹ Considering all of the above, Roma women are often denied information, legitimate employment, and education. Therefore, there is big chance that, in search of a better life, they could become victims of ruthless human traffickers.¹²

Victims of human trafficking become slaves, and the conditions in which they are forced to work are inhuman. Victims are stripped of all human rights, especially those relating to the right to life, liberty, and personal security, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their life is doomed to failure, with false promises and physical abuse. As previously mentioned, trafficked persons often come from poorer regions of the world, where their opportunities are limited or where the social situation is highly sensitive. However, victims are not just

10 Action plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for addressing Roma issues in the field of: employment, housing, and health care; available at <http://www.bospo.ba>

11 Shadow report on the implementation of the CEDAW convention and women's rights, 2010; available at <http://www.zenezenama.org>

12 Political participation of Roma with emphasis on political participation of Roma women CARE International NWB, BiH, 2011.

from poor families. Their social status and financial situation might be different, but their fate is similar. Faced with a difficult situation and not being able to see a way out of it, parents are selling their own children in order to survive.¹³

1.1 STAGES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The European Convention, in its definition of human trafficking, clearly outlines the criminalization of internal trafficking, and defines organized crime as an aggravating circumstance. Organized crime is defined in the international law as all criminal activities committed by a group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert in order to obtain a financial or other material benefit.¹⁴

The elements of trafficking are outlined in Article 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. This is a complex criminal activity, which consists of three main elements: activity, means and purpose.

This Article is designed to provide legal recognition of the gradual accumulation of serious violations of human rights, which includes every form of human trafficking. First, there is a necessary element of the execution of the activity, which includes “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons.” Second, there are means for executing the activity, which consist 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. Third, there is a special purpose for the execution of the activity, which involves the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.¹⁵

13 <http://www.advance.hr/r/human-trafficking-trgovina-ljudima-kako-ne-postati-zrtva.html>

14 Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the Convention against transnational organised crime, U.N. Doc. A/55/383, from December 15th, 2000, ratified on December 25th 2003 [further, the “Palermo Protocol”].

15 Trafficking in human beings and responses of the domestic criminal justice system: A critical review of law and emerging practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of core international standards, OSCE, June 2009.

As previously mentioned, human trafficking occurs in several stages. The first stage is the recruitment of potential victims. There are different methods of recruitment used by traffickers, but they all have the same goal and are directed towards meeting the needs of potential victims in terms of finding a well-paid job in their home country or abroad, and providing a better life. People who recruit potential victims can be people whom the victims trust (acquaintance, family friend, boyfriend). Potential victims are recruited through:

- various ads for well-paid jobs abroad or in the country (these services can be offered by a variety of employment agencies, escort agencies, marriage agencies, modeling agencies, etc.)
- internet, for example through chat rooms and meeting people through social networks.

However, victims can also be abducted, and it is not unheard of for parents to sell their own children due to poverty.

The second stage is the transport, preceded by the creation of documents and obtaining a visa and/or permission to work abroad. The potential victim usually does not make arrangements for their documents on their own; this is done by the person who recruited them. At this stage, the victims still believe that they are walking toward a brighter future and that they will get the job they were promised.

The third stage is the stage of exploitation. Upon arrival, the victim's resistance is broken using mental, physical and sexual violence.

After breaking the victim's resistance, they are thrust into "debt bondage" and are forced to engage in prostitution, begging or some other form of forced labor until they pay off their debt to the trafficker who bought them. Often, the debt is increasing daily and it is impossible to repay it. At this stage, traffickers use various means and mechanisms to establish control over the victim, such as:

- seizure of documents
- violence against the victims and threatening their families and friends
- debt bondage
- creating a drug dependency
- isolation.¹⁶

16 http://oc-pgz.hr/clanci_trgovanje_ljudima.html

1.2. CONSEQUENCES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING FOR THE VICTIM

Every victim of human trafficking is constantly exposed to trauma and stress caused by mental, physical, and sexual abuse during the whole process. Victims of human trafficking are abused by all perpetrators: traffickers, “the employers”, pimps and customers. The consequences are certainly multiple, but can be classified into three categories:

- Emotional consequences

Victims of trafficking feel shame, guilt and have low self-esteem. They feel betrayed, especially if the perpetrator is someone whom they trusted. These factors, as well as the experience itself, can cause nightmares, insomnia, feeling of hopelessness and depression, and may lead to suicide.

- Physical consequences

Victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation are in great danger of infection from sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Many women and girls stated that “customers” pay more for sex without a condom, and young women and girls are rarely in a position to demand that the “customer” uses a condom. Children exploited for domestic work, work in factories, or for begging are also often sexually abused, raped and beaten, which can leave lasting effects on their health.

- Psychosocial consequences

Human trafficking has many psychosocial effects on children, particularly in social and educational development. Many children don't have a family and are forced to work from an early age. Without education and family support, and through exclusion from normal social activities, they never fully develop their potential. Since they are under constant supervision and have no contact with the outside world, they are not able to seek help.¹⁷

17 http://oc-pgz.hr/clanci_trgovanje_ljudima.html

1.3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE ISSUE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The struggle against human trafficking has become an integral part of the measures aimed at strengthening the rule of law and human rights protection mechanisms in the process of post-war recovery of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2003, the criminal justice system established the necessary structures for combating this phenomenon; the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina assumed jurisdiction over this criminal act, and the State Prosecution, as well as the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), are specialized in combating organized forms of human trafficking. Since then, this issue has frequented the agenda of the Council of Ministers, indicated, inter alia, by the three consecutive and amended state action plans to combat human trafficking. The latest action plan calls for a change in criminal law and practice.¹⁸

The Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina prescribes a sentence for imprisonment from one to ten years for the basic form of the crime of human trafficking. Compared to other criminal acts, this sentence seems to be proportional. The penalty framework for human trafficking also reflects the gravity of the offense through the prescribed sentence of minimum five years, same as the sentence prescribed for murder in the criminal laws of the Entities and Brčko District. For several explicitly specified aggravating circumstances in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, such as trafficking offenses committed against minors, the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina prescribes a higher specific minimum, and imposes strict sanctions.

For qualifying form of the offense, a sentence of minimum term of imprisonment of five years is prescribed. Similarly, human trafficking committed within an organized criminal group is punishable by imprisonment of minimum ten years.¹⁹

The domestic legal framework, which defines the act of human trafficking as a criminal offence, varies between the Criminal Code of BiH and the Criminal

18 Trafficking in human beings and responses of the domestic criminal justice system: A critical review of law and emerging practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of core international standards, OSCE, June 2009.

19 Ibidem

Codes of the entities. At the state level, human trafficking is defined in Article 186 of the Criminal Code of BiH, and is an integral part of Chapter 17 titled "Crimes against humanity and values protected by international law". Article 186, paragraph 1, thus defines the offense of human trafficking: "Whoever, by means of use of force or threat of use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud or 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, recruits, transports, transfers, harbors or receives a person, for the purpose of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or similar status, servitude or the removal of organs or of the other type of exploitation."²⁰

The Criminal Codes of the entities and the Criminal Code of Brčko District do not define human trafficking as a criminal offense in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. However, individual provisions contain elements of this complex crime. Article 198 of the Criminal Code of Republika Srpska stipulates that the offense of human trafficking for the purpose of prostitution is committed when anyone: "in order to get financial benefit, entices, incites or lures another into prostitution or [...] in any way, enables turning a person over to another for the exercise of prostitution or [...] in any way, takes part in organizing or managing prostitution."²¹

It should be noted that domestic regulations do not take into account the vulnerability of persons under 18 years of age, and continue to demand evidence that the perpetrators were enticing, inciting or compelling that person. Moreover, domestic provisions do not take into account the means taken by the offender in achieving the purposes of exploitation. By emphasizing the prostitution, other purposes of exploitation are being completely ignored.

The State Prosecution is an institution that has taken the lead and has a specialized function in the struggle against human trafficking. Internal criteria and the recently introduced practice suggests that the Division II of the Prosecution, specializing in organized crime, economic crime and corruption, should prosecute suspects in the organized form of human trafficking, while Division III would have the same role in respect of suspects in cases of human trafficking without elements of organized crime, or in cases of internal human

20 Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, supra note 12, Article 186

21 Criminal Code of Republika Srpska, Article 198, SGRS 49/03, with amendments in no. 108/04, 37/06, 70/06 (2003.)

trafficking. In its work in investigation of criminal offenses related to trafficking, the Prosecution is assisted by the Border Police, the Office for Foreigners, and SIPA. SIPA is the lead investigative agency in cases falling within the jurisdiction of the Prosecutor's Office. In addition, there is an ad hoc Task Force for Combating Human Trafficking and Organized Illegal Migration. At the entity level, there are no specialized departments of the Prosecutor's Office with special authorities. In terms of the police, liaison officers have been appointed within the law enforcement agencies across the country.²²

The ambiguity of the elements of the crime of human trafficking has been further highlighted by the fact that it is outlined in the sections relating to offenses against sexual integrity, liberty, and morality. Therefore, although the majority of human trafficking cases include elements which are provided by the laws at the entity level, this does not mean that, vice versa, any form of criminal behavior in accordance with the laws of the entity or Brčko District may qualify in accordance with the definition of human trafficking, provided in the Criminal Code of BiH. Therefore, even if the offenses, which are defined in the Criminal Code of BiH, could be subsumed under provisions of other criminal laws, the former is more accurate and contains specific elements of the offense, and it should be given preference in the process of qualifying a factual basis. Moreover, it can be concluded that the Criminal Code of BiH should be applied in all cases that might qualify as human trafficking. To achieve this goal, the State Prosecution would have to be an institution responsible for the legal prosecution, as discussed in the previous section of this report.²³

22 Trafficking in human beings and responses of the domestic criminal justice system: A critical review of law and emerging practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of core international standards, OSCE, June 2009.

23 Ibidem

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Roma Women Empowerment is a two-year project carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project is focused on strengthening the position of Roma women, through Roma Women's Organizations active in the region. CARE International North-West Balkans (CARE NWB) has taken the role of a project leader and a mentor to key partner organizations in the implementation of project tasks.

The project goal is to: strengthen the position of Roma women in BiH through supporting the efforts of the organizations, institutions, and Ministries involved in anti-discrimination, empowerment, and minority rights promotion campaigns in the target countries.

The project operates in partnership with the Association of Roma Women "Better Future" from Tuzla, Bosnia.

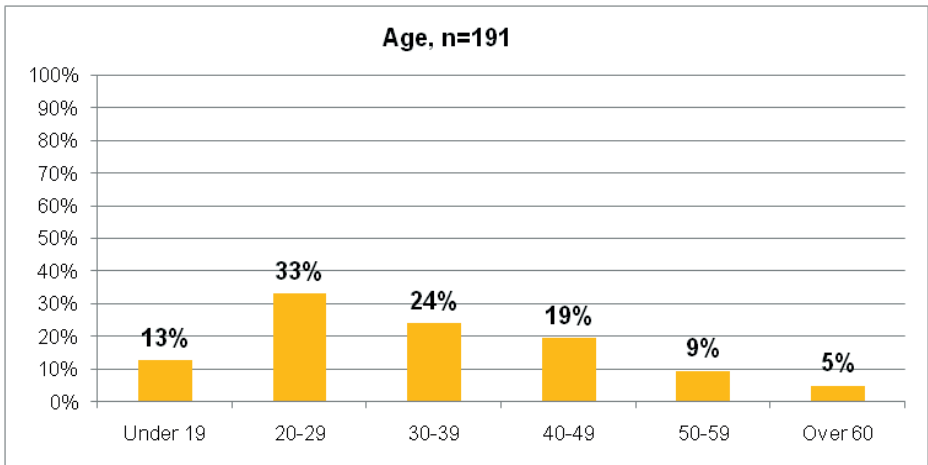
The project seeks to make positive changes to the following sub-goals:

1. Advocacy position of Roma women's organizations is enhanced;
2. Capacities of the partner organizations to implement projects aimed at empowering Roma women in Western Balkan region is built;
3. A functional network of NGOs is engaged in Roma Women Inclusion strategy, development, implementation, and awareness-raising of the status and position of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
4. Policy-makers/decision-makers at national and sub-regional level are aware of ways to improve implementation of Roma National Action Plans and are taking steps to implement such improvements;
5. Capacities of Roma NGOs to implement projects aimed at empowering Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been developed;
6. Awareness of specific target groups and the general public on status of Roma women, as well as the risks of trafficking the Roma girls are facing, is raised.

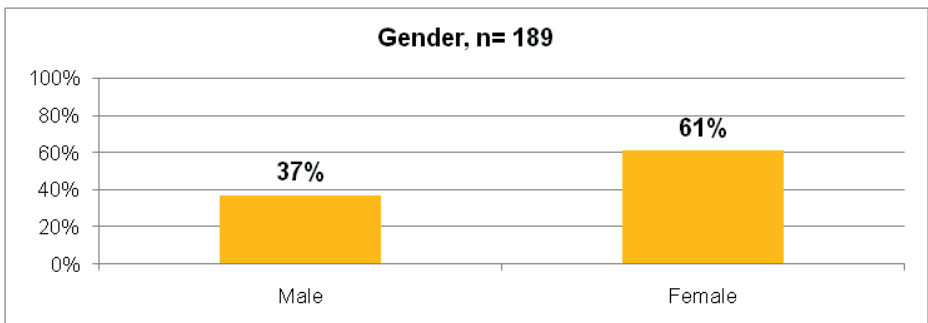
The research process in the project on the topic of human trafficking took place in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska, and specifically in the following municipalities: Sarajevo, Visoko, Srebrenica

and Prnjavor. The research consisted of fieldwork and the interviewers' direct work with the research participants, and was conducted in the target areas by the following organizations: ARW "Boljabudućnost" Tuzla, Association "Romska djevojka-Romani ćej" Prnjavor, YRI "Budi mi prijatelj" Visoko, and the Association "Romska suza" from Srebrenica.

The characteristics of the target population were not strictly defined so the age structure of respondents included participants aged between 14 and 70 (see table below).



Research on the issues of human trafficking included 191 participants in the abovementioned geographical areas, of which 73 were male and 116 were female, with two respondents who did not declare their gender.



In order to adequately address the challenges of this research, particularly in terms of its methodology, it was done according to the principles of PAR (**Participatory Action Oriented Research**) methodology, which **focuses on the positive social change within the local community in which it is implemented, or the methodology of the participatory and action-oriented research.**

Questionnaires used to gather data that will be presented in the following text were designed exclusively for the purposes of this project and, as previously noted, all implementers of the project participated in the creation of the questionnaires. The questionnaire contained 21 questions, mainly focusing on the issue of human trafficking and exploitation of children.

3. RESULTS

Prevention of human rights violations is a very complex issue, and therefore it is hard to point out the most effective protective measures. However, the correlation between the position of high risk groups in the countries of origin and their vulnerability to human trafficking is obvious, and is frequently discussed. Strategies for effective prevention of human trafficking include taking measures to address the causes which make certain people the potential victims of human trafficking. Improving the social and legal position of the group usually targeted by the human traffickers requires a broad, multidisciplinary approach and it is necessary to analyze the whole range of factors of this complex problem.²⁴ This research is certainly one method of preventive action in this regard, and its results will be presented in the text below.

The first question in this research, with a goal to establish how many respondents were offered an opportunity to get “an easy job” for good money, showed rather disturbing data. Given the number of participants, the percentage of 26.7% is not negligible, considering that more than one half of participants who answered affirmatively would have accepted the job, and that these participants have no fear that the act of acceptance of such job offer could turn their lives into a “living hell”.

24 Kartsusch, A. 2001, Reference guide for anti-trafficking legislative review with particular emphasis on South Eastern Europe, OSCE/ODIHR

Table 1:

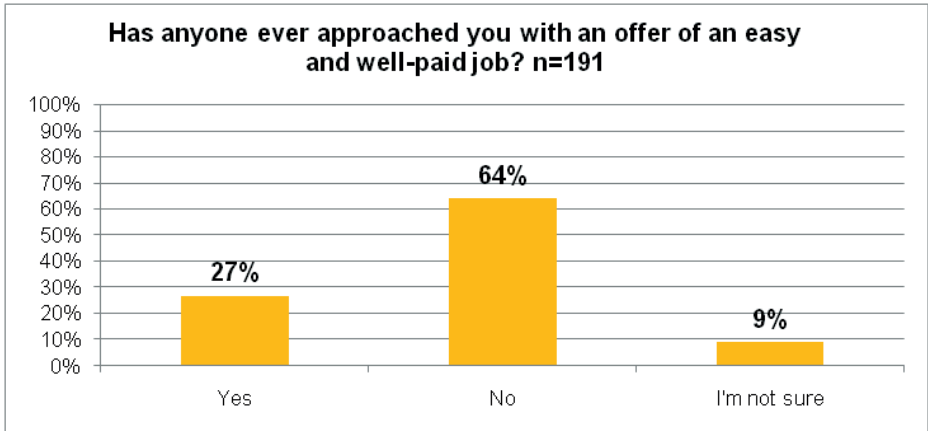
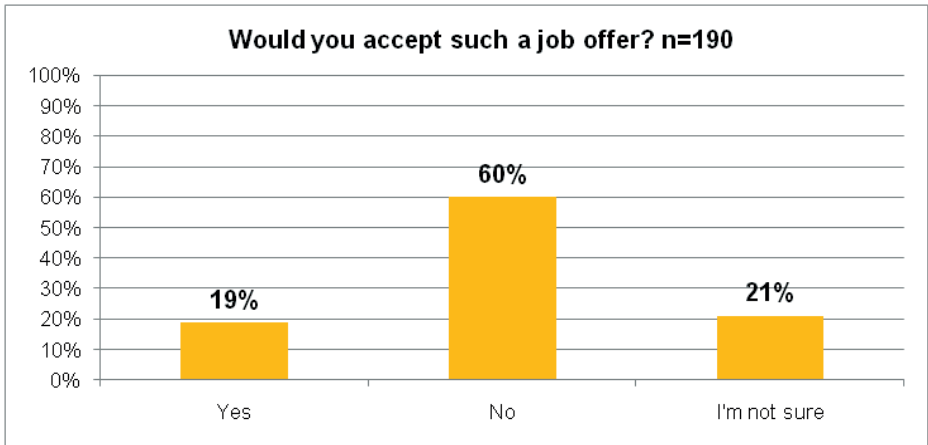


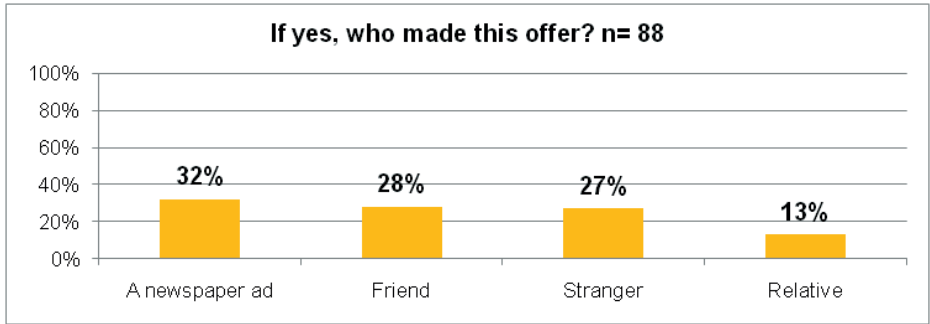
Table 2:



The reasons for this kind of thinking can be justified by the fact that people who offered these jobs to the participants were mostly their friends (25 cases), followed by their relatives, or through ads in newspapers, but a considerable number of respondents (24) stated that they received such offers from a complete stranger, which can be seen in Table 3. A certain number of participants did not provide an answer to this question, due to the fact that they answered “No” to the previous question, which eliminates the need to answer the subsequent

question. This is true for all subsequent linked questions and answers.

Table 3:

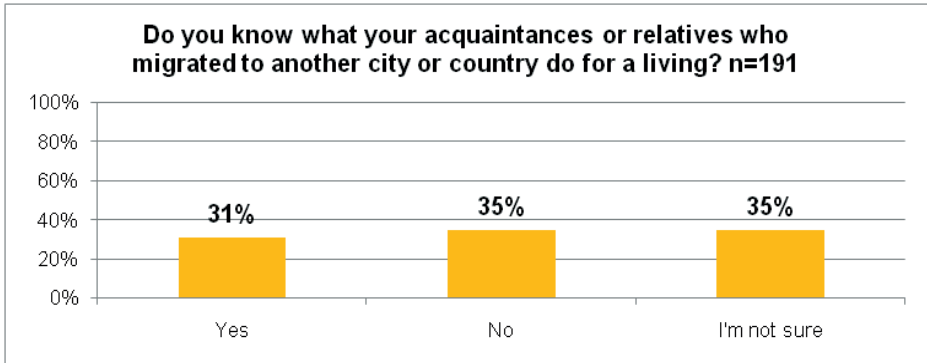


10.5% of participants consider such offers as sincere and well-intentioned, and believe that they are quite valid, which naturally supports the fact that a significant number of them would accept such job offer “without a second thought”, while 33% of participants said that they were unsure about the genuineness of these job offers, which is also not a negligible figure.

It is well known that many citizens are leaving our country in search of a better life. Unfortunately, although we frequently think that the problem of human trafficking only happens to “other people”, the answers to the next question indicate the opposite. As many as 30.9% of all participants state that they do not know what their acquaintances, friends, or family members who moved to another city or country actually do, or how they live, and 34.6% of them stated that they are not sure.

Those who are familiar with what happens to the people who migrate to other places for some reason, say that they mostly work as cleaners, construction workers, beggars, collectors of secondary raw materials, and some even cited various criminal activities, including dealing of narcotics.

Table 4:



The answers to the question of whether the subject knows of cases in which a person leaves the country and, subsequently, no one knows where that person is, are also quite disturbing. Specifically, 18.9% of participants stated that they know of such cases, and 42% of them stated that they were not sure where the people who have migrated to other areas may be currently located. This data suggest that the problem of the disappearance of young people and children is not unknown in the Roma communities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Seeking a better and happier life, wanting to start their own families, many people become victims of human trafficking. They end up in nightclubs around the world as a commodity, available to anyone with enough money to pay for it. Singing in the streets, begging, freezing to death, all while suffering ongoing violence and humiliation, and often mutilation, Roma children remain deprived of their basic human rights in plain sight of our community.

Frequently in the Roma communities, the problem of arranged marriages emerges, where the guardians of underage girls usually sell her for a certain sum of money, so that the new “owner” has the right to deal with her as he pleases. To keep her as his daughter-in-law, wife, slave, to make her do heavy physical labor, or begging, or even prostitution, and since her family received money for her, neither she nor those who sold her have any right to complain. There is a frequent misconception in the society that this type of marriage is a Roma tradition, and that, as such, these cases should not be prosecuted. This form of marriage is far from Roma customs; exploitation of underage innocent girls is certainly not a Roma tradition, but only a part of an organized network of crime and prostitution.

Table 5:

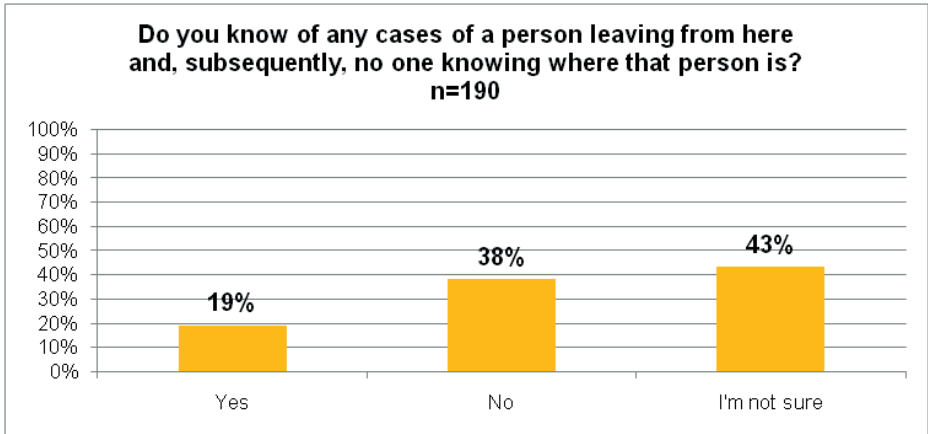
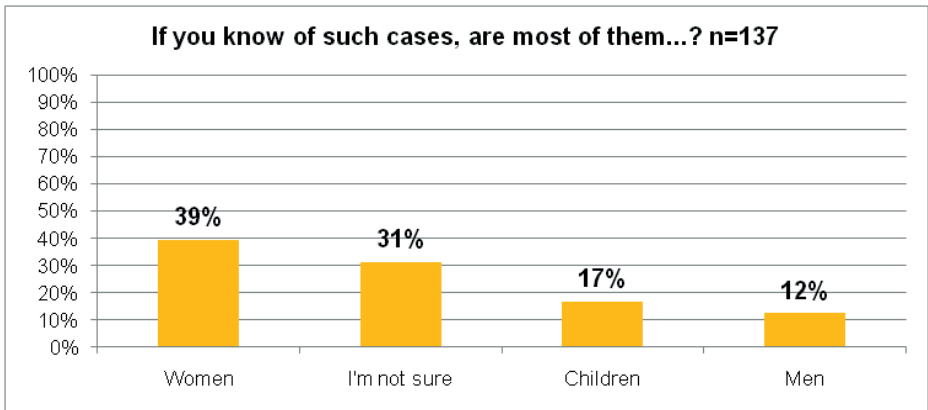


Table 6:



The magnitude of this problem is highlighted by the fact that children are frequently the victims of this process. Twenty-three participants (12%) stated that some children are potential victims of human trafficking, 39.4% state that women are most vulnerable, while 17 participants argue that potential victims are men, which indicates that no one is safe from this socio-pathological phenomenon.

Once a person enters this vicious circle, it is very difficult, in many cases almost impossible, to get out of it. White slave traders frequently hide behind the ads

for employment abroad. Victims of human trafficking reply to these ads, despite not having a clear picture of what it is that they will be doing abroad, and often do not have any way to verify these employers.

The first link in the chain of people “smuggling” is frequently the person/ employer who has the task of locating and transporting “victims” to a particular destination, where they are picked up by traffickers or pimps. Less frequently, the “victim” remains in the same hands when they reach the destination. A significant factor in this stage of “recruitment for white slavery” is the fact that these are not always people who are professionally involved in human trafficking. Frequently, they simply transfer a few acquaintances, girls, to the next link in the chain, and then migrate on or sort out their own residence status with the money they receive.

In most of these cases, the person is either someone whom the victim knew from before, or someone who already resided in the countries the victim wants to migrate to. There are several testimonials of victims, girls who have emigrated from their native country with their boyfriends, who then sold them into slavery. One of the crucial moments when the immigrant becomes a victim is the moment when they hand over their passport to someone else for safekeeping, or for completion of administrative tasks related to visa, etc.

This is the moment in which a person becomes a “slave” to their pimp or “owner”, thus entering into the chain of crime, prostitution, begging, illegal drugs and weapons trade, etc. As much as this phenomenon seems distant and unreal, it is everywhere around us and can happen to anyone.

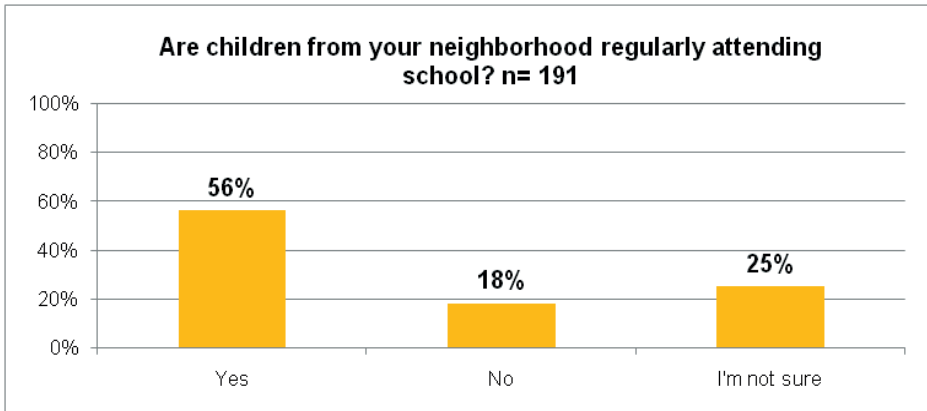
We live in the 21st century, a time of high level of access to information, a time when the percentage of illiteracy should be reduced to a minimum, a time of European integrations and overall progress particularly when it comes to the Balkan countries. Regular school attendance is legally compulsory for all children, it is the right guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as a series of laws in most countries worldwide.

However, there are still many children who remain deprived of all of the above. This is particularly the case with children from Roma communities. The report on “Gender Dimension of the Cause of Roma Children Leaving Compulsory Education in the Region - Bosnia and Herzegovina” states that “one of the most

important factors directly related to the very low rate of participation of Roma children in compulsory education system is the poor socio-economic status of their family, and hence the impossibility of providing the necessary materials for their normal schooling. In addition, Roma parents feel undesirable, stigmatized and labeled in schools, which enhances their lack of interest for greater involvement of their children in the compulsory school system. This is coupled with their attitude that if they as a parent did not attend school, there is no need for their child to attend it.²⁵

This inevitably points to the fact that due to a number of risk factors, Roma children are potential victims of human trafficking. Additionally, this study has shown that, according to the participants' responses, a fairly large percentage of children are not attending school regularly, which can be seen in the Table below.

Table 7:



Interesting responses were given to the subsequent question, where the participants were asked to comment on the issue of extracurricular activities of children from their neighborhood. Thus, 22% of participants said that in their free time, children are helping their parents, whatever jobs or duties that may entail. Furthermore, 15% of them said that children work with their parents, and 8% of those interviewed said they knew that the children from their neighborhood are begging.

25 Gender Dimension of the Cause of Roma Children Leaving Compulsory Education in the Region (Bosnia and Herzegovina), CARE International NWB, September 2011

Given that 53% of participants stated that children do “something else”, i.e. that they have no information what the children actually do in their free time, it can be concluded that, with respect to the number of participants, the number of children working with parents and begging is not negligible. Given the number of legal frameworks, laws and bylaws, and strategies against begging and other forms of maladaptive behavior, we hope that they will contribute to the protection of Roma children from such forms of exploitation and violations of basic human rights and rights of child, given that the next question points to the fact that many of them do not beg on their own volition, but that they are forced to beg by their parents, guardians, or third parties. Thus, a significant number of research participants (24%) stated that children who earn money as a result of begging give the money to their parents, 3.8% said that the money is given to someone else, while almost 45% of participants said it is uncertain who spends the money that the children “earn”, or how that money is spent.

Table 8:

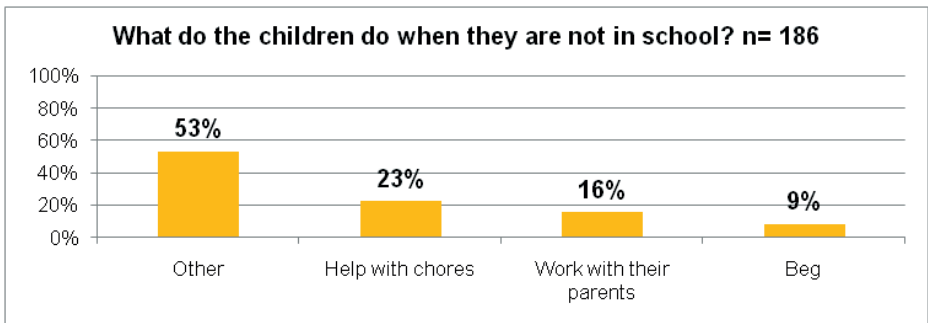
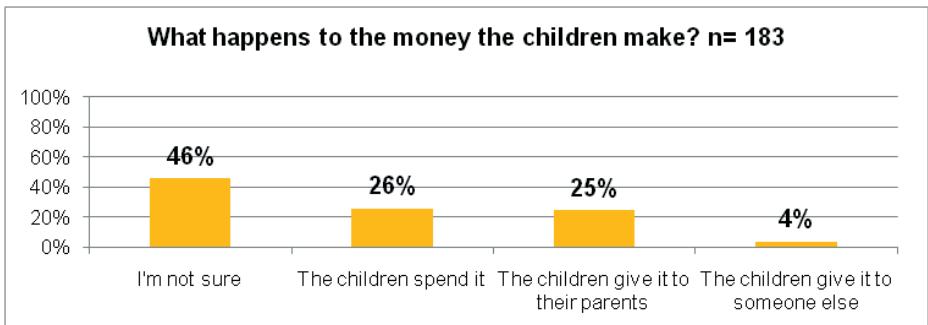
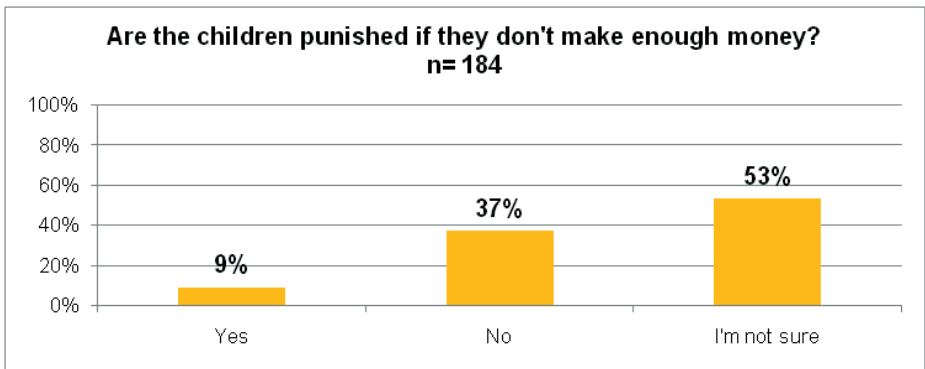


Table 9:



In addition to being forced to beg, some children are at times exposed to various forms of violence because they did not “earn” enough money. It is disconcerting that sometimes their own parents are treating their children in this way, that the institutions are aware of such data, and that no sanctions are imposed against the perpetrators of these acts. In fact, only 38% of participants stated that the children who don’t earn enough are not punished by anyone, 50% of participants are unsure, and 8.7% stated that these children are suffering physical and mental abuse because of their “failure”.

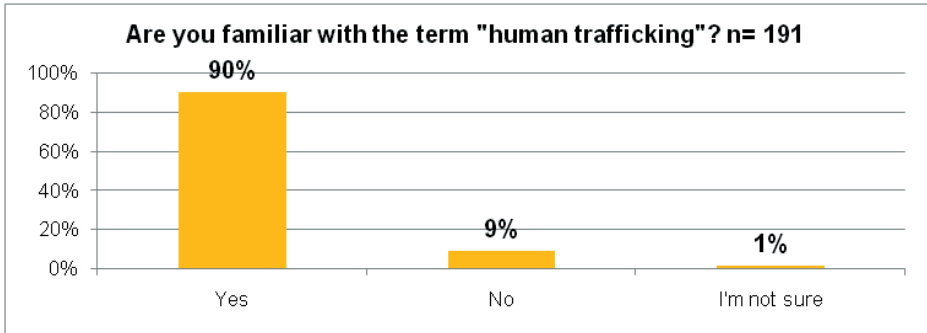
Table 10:



Human trafficking is defined as the “illegal commercial trade of human beings who are, without personal consent, forced to perform activities such as begging, sex work (e.g. prostitution or arranged marriages), forced labor (e.g. slave labor in various sweatshops). Trafficking involves the use of physical force, fraud, abuse, deception and other forms of coercion and intimidation for the purpose of acquisition, recruitment, receipt and transportation of people.”²⁶

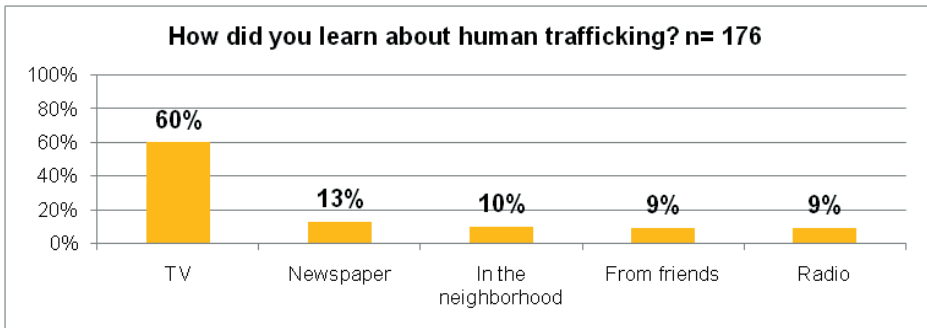
Human trafficking has become well known through the media and various means of information. Thus, 89.5% of participants were familiar with the concept of human trafficking, while a much smaller percentage of respondents, slightly more than 9%, had never heard of the term ‘trafficking’, i.e. the white slave trade.

Table 11:



The fact that the electronic media are the most powerful tool, especially when it comes to television, is demonstrated by more than 50% of participants who stated that they learned about the concept of human trafficking from the information available on the television. Other methods of obtaining information are listed in Table 12.

Table 12:



There are cases in which the people have information or suspect that another person is a victim of human trafficking, and yet they don't have the courage or desire to report such cases. In answering the question on whether they are familiar with such cases, nearly 70% of participants stated that they would report the case to the authorities, while other participants would either not do

it or are not sure how they would act if faced with this situation. As expected, the majority of participants would report such cases to the police, followed by someone they trust, and a smaller number of participants would report it to the Center for Social Work, an association or school (Table 14).

Table 13:

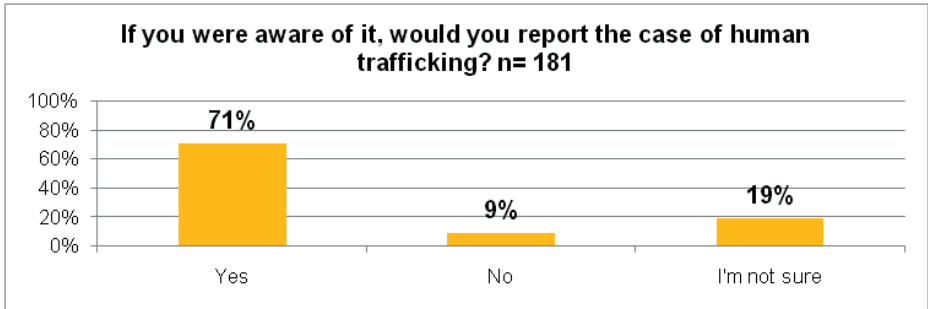
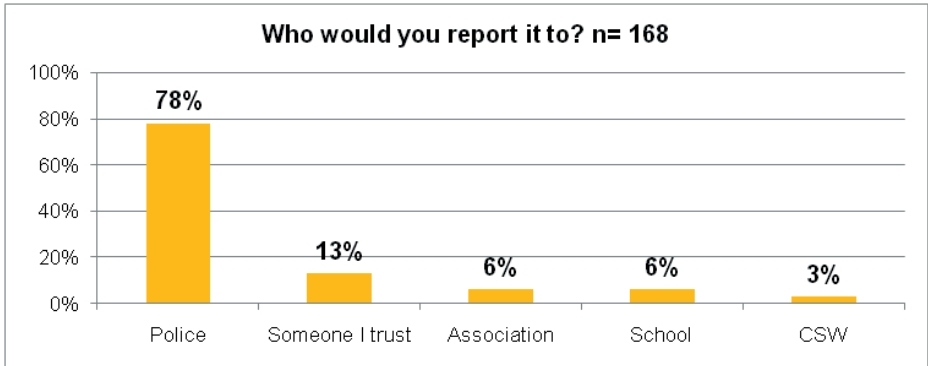
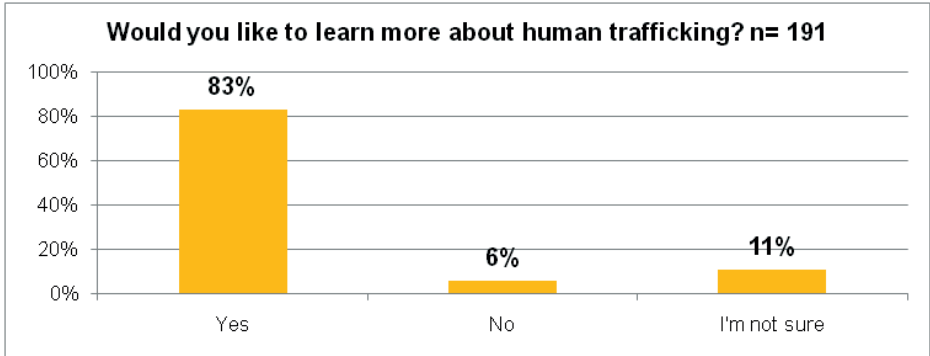


Table 14:



A positive finding of this research was the fact that most participants want to become more educated on the issue of human trafficking, which is certainly a preventative method for this social problem. Given the wide age range of the participants, it should be noted that the desire for future education on this topic was mostly expressed by the younger participants, and mostly by females, which is certainly understandable.

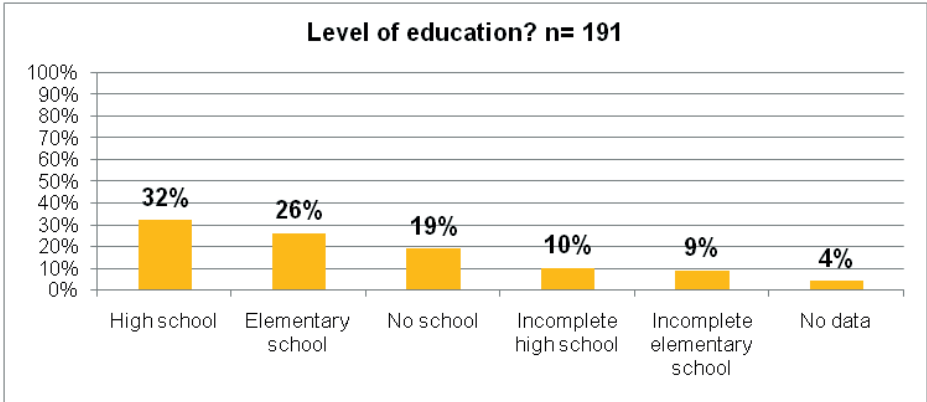
Table 15:



As the age structure of participants was given in the preceding tables, the focus of the further text will be on the educational structure of the participants. The fact that a fair number of participants have completed secondary education is certainly positive, and opens up more possibilities for them. Specifically, we interviewed people who have completed comprehensive schools (gymnasiums), high school for economics, music schools, secondary vocational schools for transportation, hairdressing, mining, etc.

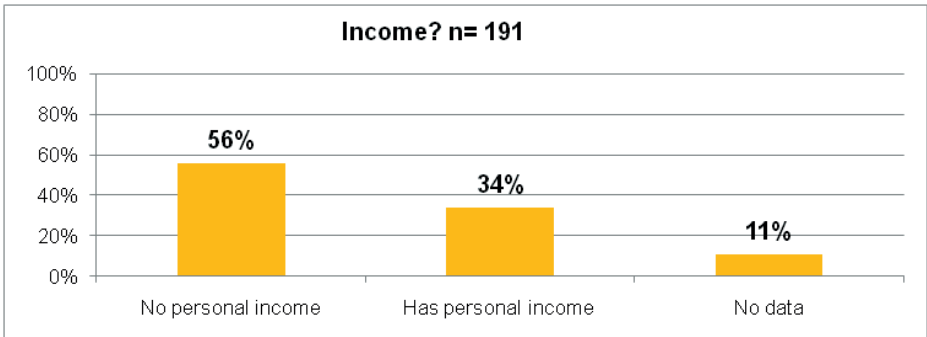
Nevertheless, taking into account that most participants fall in the age groups of 19-29 and 29-39 (i.e. the younger age groups), the fact that as many as 36 of them did not complete their elementary education is quite worrying, as is the fact that only 50 participants have completed their elementary education but have not gone further than that. This is of course a “good predisposition” for unemployment and poor financial status, which ultimately may lead to them becoming a victim of trafficking through the search for a well-paid job that fits their skills and which would take them far away from “this pain and misery.”

Table 16:



Considering that the given educational circumstances affect the levels and the possibility of employment, more than 50% of participants stated that they have no personal income, which can be seen from the Table below:

Table 17:



4. DISCUSSION

Human trafficking is a modern-day phenomenon, but it is also just a modernized version of the historical crime of slave trade, which was prevalent throughout the world. Victims of human trafficking have a limited freedom of movement and limited contact with their friends and family, which is why human trafficking is frequently referred to as modern slavery, a modern-day crime. Human trafficking is a phenomenon in which the perpetrators transfer the victim to an unknown environment, isolating the victim from their close community, thus facilitating the establishment of perpetrator's control over the victim in order to break their resistance through the use of mental, physical, and extremely brutal sexual violence.

As our country is still seen as a country-at-risk in this regard, this topic is an extremely important segment of the issue which, in order to be properly dealt with, needs to see a more intensive engagement of all relevant authorities and other responsible institutions through systematic and multidisciplinary activities. Particular emphasis should be placed on preventive action in terms of strengthening the capacities of people from high-risk groups i.e. marginalized groups, socially vulnerable and discriminated communities, as well as on general awareness-raising of the society with regards to this issue, given that each of us can become a victim of this lucrative and ruthless business.

Through theoretical and research sections of this report, it can be concluded that, with regards to this problem, girls, women, and children represent a particularly vulnerable group. Therefore, in order to work on the prevention of this problem in BiH, it is necessary to develop mechanisms to protect women and children, especially in cases of domestic violence, educational neglect, dysfunctional, socially disadvantaged and families with low levels of education, etc.

Of course, it must be noted that it is a truly disappointing realization that the human race has progressed so much since the times of the old slave-trading civilizations such as the ancient Greeks and Romans, and yet the trade in human beings which treats people as a "commodity" progressed along with it. However, this fact should not be as daunting, as all the countries in the world, at least at a declarative level, agree that human trafficking is a crime that should be eradicated, and are trying to do so through the use of different resources and mechanisms.

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