JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN ALBANIA

Analysis of factors and causes of juvenile delinquency in Albania
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QENDRA PER MBROJTJEN E TE DREJTAVE
TE FEMIJEVE NE SHQIPERI

Children’s Human Rights Centre of Albania – CRCA

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Children’s Human Rights Center of Albania - CRCA would like to thank UNICEF office in Albania for making this research possible. Without their extraordinary help this would not have been possible. We especially acknowledge Mr. Leon Shestani, Mrs. Mirlinda Bushati and Mrs. Floriana Hima, for their ongoing contribution in terms of ideas and opinions.

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This research would not have been possible if it wasn’t for the contribution of Mrs. Afërdita Deda, Mrs. Alma Maksutaj and Mrs. Alma Tafani, who worked hard in collecting primary data and for completing basic information under which analysis of this phenomenon were undertaken.

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Finally, CRCA would like to acknowledge all people, representatives of central and local institutions and representatives of community and other different groups and NGO’s, who provided us with great help in terms of information and data, ideas and opinions regarding the situation of children and juvenile delinquency in Albania.
This study is the first effort to draw a comprehensive picture on the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency in Albania. The increasing number of juveniles involved in criminal activities has become a major concern for the Albanian society especially in the past ten years. When looking at statistics from central and local institutions involved in this field, the negative public opinion towards juveniles delinquency seems then justified. The curve of juvenile delinquency is indeed constant.

The following analysis is based on facts and figures and is an attempt to clarify basic concepts concerning juvenile delinquency. Last year records on juvenile offences will be presented and analyzed so as to identify stimulating factors of criminal behaviour. A profile of juveniles in conflict with the law will also be drawn based on interviews with convicted juveniles. Preventive measures will then be presented and we will try to draw conclusions on this issue.

The objective of this study is not only to analyze simple facts and figures on child and juvenile delinquency but also to produce a document that we hope will help to increase the understanding of this phenomenon. It is aimed at specialists who work in the field of prevention, at parents who are trying to help their child, at teachers who are confronted with problematic behaviour in school, at children themselves in order to help them understand the causes and consequences of their behaviour, and finally at actors interested to make any contribution to facilitate the situation of children and juveniles in Albania.

In order to complete the study a pattern of cross analyzing of primary and secondary sources has been followed. Gathering primary data required that all institutional sources be used such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecution, Police Directory of Tirana County and interviews with representatives of local government, police, schools, parents, children and juveniles who are in conflict with the law.

Secondary data and analysis of existing reports on juvenile delinquency have helped to the formulation of this research and its conclusions and recommendations. Domestic and foreign sources were also used for the research.

The study contains illustrations with juvenile history in conflict with the law and also the Tirana Case Study, which is an analysis of individual and environmental factors that drive the formation of juveniles’ personalities in conflict with the law.
1. General overview

This study is an effort to draw a general picture of the situation regarding juvenile delinquency, while putting emphasis on risk factors and on the profiling of individuals more likely to be involved in criminal activities. In this context, it is necessary to clarify the age limit of individuals who are the actual object of the study. According to the text of the Criminal Policy “for individuals under the age of 18, Albanian legislation uses the term “juvenile.” The term “child” is also used in a number of other dispositions of the Code. Under article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, “a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” Albanian legislation states that one needs to be under the age of 18 to be a juvenile.

“In some Western European countries, studies tend to make a difference between juveniles and a special category that has been largely accepted as the so called “adult juveniles”. It is used for individuals of 18 to 21 years and sometimes even for those of 23 to 25 years of age.”

In the Albanian culture, child and juvenile are terms which often do not correspond to the specific age mentioned here above. Therefore, are generally considered and treated as children individuals of age 16 and under, and individuals of age 16 to 18 – 20 are considered juveniles. This difference in age evaluation of individuals involved in criminal behaviour is of particular relevance. In order to adjust to the Albanian culture and mentality, the terms children and juveniles will thus be used throughout this study.

Such a choice will help us to identify more accurately factors which affect children and juveniles, characteristics of their personality, as well as preventive measures that have to be taken into account in order to lower effects of their behaviour and activities.

Involvement of juveniles and young people in criminal activities has turned into a distress for Albanians, especially in the last decade. Statistics from central and local institutions working in the field show that the concerns of the public are in general justified. The curve

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1 Criminal Policy in Albania, E. Elezi dhe V. Hysi, Tiranë 2006, page 155
2 Ibid.
of child and juvenile crime is indeed constant, and remains almost unchanged. It must be pointed out that some figures of previous years such as those of 1997 should be carefully revised because of the unusual context in which the country found itself at that time.

In recent years, about 90 percent of youth sentenced were charged for criminal acts. For example, in 2005, 289 juveniles were court sentenced, 258 of them for offences and 31 for petty crimes. Sentence of juveniles for offences has increased from 2004 to 2005 (31 in 2005 and 7 in 2004).

Offences against property or theft are considered offences most often committed by juveniles.

While focusing on some more specific data on prevalence of crime among juveniles we came to see that the proportion of juveniles apprehended for criminal acts has fallen. In 2005 there were 25 sentenced juveniles for 100.000 individuals of this age group whereas a year earlier there were 32 children for 100.000 individuals.

Studies made on this area show that criminal behaviour in young ages, specifically for juveniles, has its roots in the interaction of many factors such as individual, family and society. This is the reason why in order to understand the phenomenon of juvenile crime we must focus and consider all factors and all levels they affect.

Involvement of juveniles in criminal activity is associated with individual and external factors which create an environment for criminal behaviour. Under these conditions, any study of the role of individual factors, like physical and psychological properties, should be analyzed in association with external factors such as family, social environment, community environment, quality education, governance and law compliance experiences.

Family and its environment are generally considered as having a major influence on the child and its personality which is determinant when becoming adult.

A number of juveniles involved in criminal activities come from problematic families. Growing delinquency in young ages during the last decade is directly associated with the crisis that the Albanian family has suffered over the years of political transition. Juvenile delinquency is frequently associated with individuals who are from families with history of divorce, violence, single parent or immigrant parent. In such environments, with considerable lack of emotional and material support, children and adolescents don't have a proper model for their development. It is either absent or deformed and problematic. Children feel unsupported and not backed up, neglected and not respected. Furthermore, environment offers them stressing, difficult and often unbearable situations.

When it comes to geographic/territorial distribution, juvenile delinquency is more frequent when individuals live in heterogeneous environments. During the transition period, a significant number of families have moved from deep zones and rural regions to main urban centres. Inner movement of population was mainly driven from the lack of resources
in their hometowns. Extreme poverty, high unemployment rate, lack of public services and impossibility of performing life activities were the main feed of this phenomenon. The newcomers in urban areas found a new and difficult reality. A considerable part of this settlement area was totally unprepared to support these newcomers. There was no investment and no elementary preparation for new living areas. As for the newcomers themselves, they did not have enough qualification to find employment and were unprepared to survive in these new conditions. In some aspects life was even harder for them. Life costs were higher and unemployment was constant. Discrimination and social rejection was evident. Furthermore, cultural differences were an obstacle for normal communication and local inhabitants saw them as unwelcome people. Situation became even worse when newcomers occupied properties of local population. Tendencies for rejection became stronger. Such a difficult environment fed illicit activities.

Many researchers of juvenile delinquency point out to the positive impact education can have. It is considered as the main factor for fighting poverty and family instability. The school is where children are educated, formed and brought up. Nowadays, juveniles do not have the possibility to reach fulfillment through education. Poverty, lack of transport, lack of dorms, lack of security etc. undermine completely such a prospect. On the other hand, school curriculum is not practically based. Children do not get essential knowledge, which could be used to change their lives. Under these conditions, it is often easier for them to drop out of school and to get involved in activities that contribute to the family income. In this context they are more likely to get involved in criminal activities. This is the only way that can explain the increasing number of juveniles that drop out of school without completing their basic education. Teachers and educators are often unmotivated to identify and help resolve problems with which their students are confronted.

2. Basic concepts of juvenile delinquency

Juveniles’ delinquency is of different nature depending of one’s profession. For police officers, juveniles with criminal tendencies are just under aged criminals whereas for school authorities, they are simply lazy youngsters with drugs or alcohol problems who dropped from school. For some parents, young offenders are just children who are not properly controlled by their parents. For shop owners, those juvenile offenders are seen as people who are wandering around their business. Even experts who study this phenomenon and work with problematic children don’t seem to find a consensus for a proper definition of juvenile delinquency. Some authorities define delinquency as “emotionally disturbed behaviour”; others see it as “continuous/constant antisocial behaviour”, other specialists define delinquency as “adolescent behaviour in disappointing situation beyond every known boundary”; some more pragmatics define it as “behaviour that police would find deviant in every circumstances”. From a legal perspective, juveniles involved in criminal activities are analogous to adult criminals. This means that juvenile and youth delinquency is a status determined by the arbitrator according to domestic legislation, supported by evidence and data. Furthermore, even language used by specialists differs when it comes to

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4 Ibid.
juveniles. For example, when a judge for adults gives a sentence at the end of the judicial process, he tends to express himself by saying “based on facts and evidence I here by declare you guilty and sentence you ...” whereas in a juvenile court, judges would say “based on facts and evidence I find you offender boy or girl”. ⁵

The confusion regarding the definition of juvenile criminality is not so much related to some attempt to produce a vast and all-inclusive definition of this phenomenon. It has to do more with the drafting of a concise and broadly-accepted definition of something which is a social problem and not just a behavioural one.

In fact, any definition of crime that goes along an agency, family, school or community is as accurate as any other used definition. However, even a boy who is rejected by neighbours in a community can be treated like an offender by this same community. A legal comprehension of juvenile delinquency should thereby be supported by legislation.

It must be emphasized that legislation does not include or unifies differences and definitions regarding this kind of behaviour. Variations exist when it comes to behaviours considered as offences; there is some confusion as to what should be seen as prohibited behaviour, and there are disagreements regarding what ought to be the minimal and maximal age when considering the standing of court to be applied.⁶

Juvenile crime has two components closely related: juveniles as offenders and juveniles as victims.

The fact that juveniles are responsible for serious offences such as murder, theft, extortion, rape etc. should raise concerns to all the policy makers. Also is a fact that a numbers of criminal offences by juveniles are many times higher than of that thought by their peers. From available data analyzing of juvenile delinquency, not only are juveniles committing offences, but they are also victims of those same acts committed by their peers.

⁵ Ibid, page 588.
⁶ Ibid, page 588.
Outlined tables help us understand the proportions between offenders and victims of this age\(^7\).

### Table 1. Criminal offences against the person in the first six months of 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Children up to age 14</th>
<th>Children 14 - 18 of age</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree severe wounding</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual relations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent sexual relations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infamous acts</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other criminal acts</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal arms bearing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>170</strong></td>
<td><strong>193</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Victims of criminal offences against the person in the first six months of 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>child victims of age up to 14</th>
<th>children 14 - 18 of age</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second degree murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree severe wounding</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual relations with a minor</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual relations with minors of age 14 -18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent sexual relations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infamous acts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping /hostage taking</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other criminal acts</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>148</strong></td>
<td><strong>184</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown by the above figures, proportion between young offenders and young victims are in similar proportion. Criminal behaviour of one group seems to reflect similar numbers for victims. This is one of the main reasons why one must take into consideration these two components when analyzing juvenile delinquency. A victimised individual under certain circumstances can act by victimising other people. The interaction between two groups is possible.

The low figures of children being victims of offences against property can be explained by the fact that this group age rarely enjoys ownership rights or they are limited to personal belongings. It is thus no surprise that victims of offences against property are mostly adults.

\(^7\) Data provided by the Ministry of Interior.
Table 3. Criminal offences against property in the first six months of 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of offence</th>
<th>Children up to age 14</th>
<th>Children 14 - 18 of age</th>
<th>Total children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theft (enterprises, companies etc)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft (market places)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft (houses)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft (cars and other items)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent robbery</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distruction of property</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
<td><strong>225</strong></td>
<td><strong>304</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Victims of criminal offences against property in the first six months of 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Offence</th>
<th>Victims up to 18 years old</th>
<th>Total victims (adult and children)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theft (enterprises, companies, market places etc)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft (houses)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft (cars and other items)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent robbery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distruction of property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>1524</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Methodology of the research

To complete the research a method of cross reference of primary and secondary sources was used. Gathering primary data required that all institutional sources be used such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Prosecution, Police Directory of Tirana County, and interviews with representatives of local government, police, schools, parents, children and juveniles who are in conflict with the law.

In Annex 1, names of all the interviewees who contributed to this research with their information and knowledge are provided.

Secondary data such as literature and conclusions and recommendations from other reports are one of the latest in the area of juvenile crime management. Sources are both domestic and foreign. For more information on this sources please refer to Annex 2 (Bibliography of research).

In order to present a more realistic and comprehensive analysis, this research contains illustrations with stories of juveniles in conflict with the law as well as the Tirana Case Study. Stories of children in conflict with the law have served to illustrate personality characteristics, while Tirana Case Study was more focused on identifying environmental factors responsible for juvenile delinquency.
1. Situation of juvenile delinquency

Juvenile delinquency appeared and quickly became a serious issue at the beginning of the 90’s. Growing concern has existed ever since. Nevertheless, research on the nature, incidence and prevalence of this phenomenon are still deficient today. Gathering data and setting up efficient registration practices has been a difficult task for those involved in research on the topic. Furthermore, a new analytical approach had to be adopted for juvenile delinquency was not as manifest and disturbing in the past.

According to records from Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2002 there were 274 juvenile delinquencies, in 2003 there were 308, in 2004 there were 320 and in 2005 there were 289.

Table 5. Sentenced offenders in Albania (2002-2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nr. of offenders</th>
<th>Year 2002</th>
<th>Year 2003</th>
<th>Year 2004</th>
<th>Year 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Juvenile</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Juvenile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes</td>
<td>3614</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>5246</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraventions</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1382</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4370</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>6628</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By comparing the above numbers, one can see that juvenile criminality followed a steady trend from 2002 to 2005. It has increased proportionally with the overall criminality and is mostly seen in the main urban centres of the country.

In Tirana, juvenile delinquency followed this: 56 cases out of 744 registered in total for the year 2002, 36 out of 1505 for 2003, 77 out of 1569 in 2004 and 104 out of 1442 for 2005. Expressed in percentage, the situation in Tirana is as follows:

- For the year 2002 juvenile crime comprises 7.5 percent of cases
- For the year 2003 juvenile crime comprises approximately 2.4 percent of cases
- For the year 2004 juvenile crime comprises approximately 5 percent of cases
- For the year 2005 juvenile crime comprises 7 percent of cases

Vlora, as one of the main urban centres in Albania, has the highest crime rate:

- For the year 2002, out of 323 offences 16 were committed by juveniles, approximately

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8 Data provided by the Ministry of Justice.
5 percent
- For the year 2003, out of 263 offences 3 were committed by juveniles, approximately 1.1 percent
- For the year 2004, out of 307 offences 13 were committed by juveniles, approximately 4.2 percent
- For the year 2005, out of 341 offences 5 were committed by juveniles, approximately 5 percent

The above figures for Vlora do not justify the negative perception that is widely spread regarding criminality in general and more specifically juvenile delinquency in this county.

In Elbasan, one of the most populated urban centres, juvenile criminality is presented as follows:
- For the year 2002, out of 208 offences 13 were committed by juveniles, approximately 6 percent
- For the year 2003, out of 310 offences 17 were committed by juveniles, approximately 5.5 percent
- For the year 2004, out of 279 offences 29 were committed by juveniles, approximately 10.4 percent
- For the year 2005, out of 252 offences 6 were committed by juveniles, approximately 2.4 percent

Berat is considered as the city with the highest rate of juvenile delinquency, especially in terms of human trafficking, transportation and distribution of narcotics and offences against other people such as: murder, wounding or unsuccessful attempts. Figures show us this situation:
- For the year 2002, out of 157 offences 5 were committed by juveniles, approximately 3 percent
- For the year 2003, out of 141 offences 18 were committed by juveniles, approximately 12.7 percent
- For the year 2004, out of 246 offences 19 were committed by juveniles, approximately 8 percent
- For the year 2005, out of 209 offences 12 were committed by juveniles, approximately 5.7 percent.

These figures show that juvenile criminality in Berat distressing when compared to other counties. However, the situation is not so different from other big centres even if the situation tends to be more positive in cities with more homogenous population and lower number of inhabitants like Dibra, Bulqiza, Permeti and/or Pogradec.

Analyzing records of juveniles delinquency helps us to understand the proportion of juveniles in conflict with the law compared to the overall criminality rates, the centres with the highest juvenile delinquency rate and the reasons for this, the changes in the criminality curve and finally how figures of juvenile delinquency can be disturbing as well as its implications.

From a rapid assessment and comparison of figures it can be seen that juvenile delinquency comprises 6.25 percent of all offences for the year 2002 (out of 4370 offenders, 274 are juveniles).
Table 6. Number of court sentences as per District Courts (2002 – 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County courts</th>
<th>Year 2002 Total</th>
<th>Year 2002 Juveniles</th>
<th>Year 2003 Total</th>
<th>Year 2003 Juveniles</th>
<th>Year 2004 Total</th>
<th>Year 2004 Juveniles</th>
<th>Year 2005 Total</th>
<th>Year 2005 Juveniles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berat</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulqizë</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dibër</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durrës</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1244</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elbasan</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fier</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gjirokastër</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gramsh</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavajë</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolonjë</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korçë</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krujë</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kukës</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurbin</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lezhë</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librazhd</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lushnje</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Mat</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirditë</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Përmet</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pogradec</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pukë</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarandë</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shkodër</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skrapar</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tepelenë</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiranë</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1505</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1529</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1442</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropojë</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vlorë</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe crimes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For 2003 figures seem to be lower, juvenile delinquency comprises 4.2 percent of all offences (out of 6628 offenders, 308 are juveniles).

For the year 2004, the situation seems steady as that of previous year. Out of 6379 offenders, 320 are criminal acts committed by juveniles, which means approximately 5 percent.

Juvenile delinquency for 2005 comprises approximately 4.4 percent of offences in total.
The above tables show a phenomenon that has been mainly stable for the past four years. However, it still remains a concern. Regardless of the decrease in number of offences in general, juvenile delinquency figures remain largely unchanged. Given the fact that juvenile criminality is precursor of high adult criminal tendencies, the phenomenon becomes more distressing.

2. Dynamics and structure of juvenile delinquency

According to most studies, juveniles involved in criminal activities tend to keep this habit at adulthood. Juveniles in conflict with the law are 2 to 3 times more prone to get involved in serious, violent and chronic offences than other individuals who get involved in crime at a later stage in their life.9

Further juvenile crime figures reveal another feature. Higher rate of juvenile delinquency is concentrated primarily in main urban centres like Tirana, Korça, Durrës, Elbasan, Gjirokastër, Vlorë and Berat. This feature can be interpreted in various ways.

Firstly, these are centres with the highest concentration of population in the country. Number of offences committed by juveniles should be compared to the number of population in general and to young population in particular that resides in these centres.

As seen in the above table, the most frequent offences committed by juveniles are theft and robbery. In 2004, out of 313 criminal acts, juveniles were responsible for 94 thefts (30 percent of total) and 97 thefts in association and that more than once (30 percent of total). As for 2005, out of 258 criminal acts, juveniles were responsible for 61 robberies (approximately 23 percent of total) and 122 robberies in association (approximately 50 percent of total).

The numbers show an increasing tendency of juveniles to get involved in organized crime. In 2004 they were responsible for 30 percent of acts in association whereas in 2005 the figure was 50 percent. Even if seen as a simple figure, this alone is sufficient to support our already consolidated theses that early incrimination tends to increase further involvement in more sophisticated and organized criminal activities.

Another interesting element to be drawn from table 7 is the fact that despite prejudices of a high juvenile involvement in offences such as murder, wounding etc., the most frequent crime remains theft. Given the fact that a number of juveniles lack the resources to live properly, one should not be surprised of this. Poverty, needs and desire for money, clothes and entertainment, impossibility of ensuring employment and decent activity in the community very soon drive juveniles towards crime like robbery. From their perception, it is the “easy” and “faster” way to obtain the necessary and desired goods.

Secondly, these centres have recently turned into residential areas for newcomers from rural areas. Many of newcomers brought criminal behaviour, previously expressed or acquired because of their difficult living conditions.

Table 7. Type of criminal offences committed by juveniles (2004 -2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78/1</td>
<td>First degree murder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Murder in other circumstances</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Murder out of carelessness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>First degree wounding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88/a</td>
<td>Wounding in a situation of severe psychological trauma</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100/1</td>
<td>Sexual relations with a minor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Infamous acts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110/2</td>
<td>Illegal imprisonment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114/a</td>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134/1</td>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134/2</td>
<td>Theft in partnership with or more than once</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>Violent robbery</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>Death as a result of a robbery</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Insurance of means for robbery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>Destruction of power supply</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>Collision of long vehicles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>Smuggling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>Counterfeit money</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174</td>
<td>Trafficking of licensed products</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186</td>
<td>Falsification of documents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189</td>
<td>Falsification of ID/visas</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>Falsification of seals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>Falsification of acts of civic registrar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>192/a</td>
<td>Elimination and stealing of documents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>236</td>
<td>Resistance to the police</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243</td>
<td>Attack of a family member or a public person</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278/1</td>
<td>Production and illegal arms bearing and ammunition</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278/2</td>
<td>Production and illegal arms bearing and ammunition</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279</td>
<td>Production and illegal arms bearing of cold armor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>283</td>
<td>Production and sale of narcotics</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290</td>
<td>Violation of traffic rules</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298</td>
<td>Assistance on illegal border crossing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Withholding a crime</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301</td>
<td>Obstruction of justice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305</td>
<td>False statement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>323</td>
<td>Prison escapees - fugitives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>313</strong></td>
<td><strong>258</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thirdly, these centres are the mainstay of social and economic life and are therefore more likely to generate criminal behaviours such as: trafficking, prostitution, robbery, extortion, narcotics etc. This is supported by the fact that these 3-4 centres with the highest crime rate are also crossing points between cities like: Durrës, Vlorë, Gjirokastër and Korça.

The labelled data will help us understand the type of offences that is most often committed by juveniles.

**Table 8. Type of petty crimes committed by juveniles (2004-2005)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Intentional minor wounding</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Other intentional damages</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Violation of property</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205</td>
<td>Illegal cutting of woods</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239</td>
<td>Insult on the line of duty</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>Disturbance of public order</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>Phone abuse</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277</td>
<td>Bloodfeuds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>291</td>
<td>Driving under influence of alcohol</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297/1</td>
<td>Illegal border crossing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>306/1</td>
<td>False statement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from table 8 show us an outline of offences committed by juveniles. As seen on the figures they are not so different from those of table 7. From 2004 to 2005 the number of offences committed by juveniles has quadrupled. Offences can and should be considered as early indicators of juvenile involvement in more serious offences.

The 2005 figures are thus a concern, especially when recalling that out of 31 offences in 2005, 13 of them (or 42 percent of the total) were illegal border crossing, a crime which cannot be considered as a minor offence. Furthermore, it is an indicator that juveniles now tend to be better organized and are capable of committing more serious offences.

Social and political factors – such as governmental turnover - are important when attempting to understand the increasing number of offences between 2004 and 2005. Political and legal vacuums as well as tensions in society create a favourable context for potential juvenile offenders.
Both graphics outlined below, graphic 1 and 2, present data regarding juvenile criminal acts in the first 6 months of 2006, according to officials of Ministry of Internal Affairs.

**Graphic 1. Criminal offences against the person in the first six months of 2006**

The data above show that juvenile delinquency has increased in the first 6 months of 2006. As the figures at the end of this period are very similar from those of the same period of 2005, it shows that juvenile delinquency is a serious and ongoing phenomenon that requires not only research but also intervention.

**Graphic 2. Criminal offences against property in the first six months of 2006**
Graphic 2 also shows alarming data. The number of robberies committed by juveniles is increasing and the rate is now many times higher than that of the previous two years. Here again data seem to confirm our thesis that juveniles involved early in criminal activities are more likely to do the same when reaching adulthood. If no help or assistance is provided to those at risk, deviant behaviours will be seen as acceptable and juvenile criminality will most likely bloom.

Based on interviews and discussions conducted with police and court specialists, we came to know that in most cases juveniles are used to help to commit offences. Adults take advantage of their vulnerability in order to achieve their own goals. However, this “taking advantage of juvenile” aspect is only part of the problem. Moreover, juveniles are often driven towards criminal activities after adopting deviant behaviour as model in early ages. Such model is then further assimilated and intensifies as the child grows up, thereby making him more prone to enter organized crime groups or gangs in adulthood.

According to data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, juveniles also seem to be involved - in increasing numbers - in transporting and distribution of narcotics. Only 4.2 percent of such acts were committed by juveniles in 2005 while in the first 6 months of 2006 it amounted to 10.4 percent (13 out of 124 offenders).

Based on figures seen here above, a general conclusion has to be drawn. The number of juveniles involved in criminal activities is increasing. Furthermore, they tend to do so in areas very much similar to those of adults. Main population centres, heterogeneous population centres and centres with shortages of living sources are places where juvenile delinquency blooms. On the other hand, small cities with homogenous population and strong and traditional ties are characterized by low rates of juvenile delinquency. As for the type of offences, the most common one is robbery in all its different forms. The distribution and use of narcotics being on the rise, it should also be seriously dealt with. An increasing juvenile delinquency should therefore be seen as a major concern for it is a sign of a growing deviant behaviour.

Social, economic and political changes are responsible for the instability and vacuums that have undermined the Albanian society. The figures displayed above in terms of juvenile delinquency are therefore mainly results of those same problems.
1. General factors

Most of the factors responsible for child delinquency seem to be different of that of juvenile delinquency. These factors tend to be more of biological, individual and family related by nature. While in juvenile group these factors tend to be more social in nature or that of group where they belong and as a result most of the criminal behaviour is edified.

However, nature and intensity of risk factors are yet to be proved with certitude and no single factor can explain juvenile delinquency. On the other hand, the more factors there are (e.g. deficient parental care combined with low marks in school) or the larger the scope of act is (family or school risks), the higher will be the chances for a juvenile to adopt a criminal behaviour.

a) Early factors

In early ages (day care and early years of education) risk factors are more of individual and family nature. Specific indicators such as being aggressive, impulsive or attention seeker are joint products of various influences which go from genetic to the environment where a child is brought up. Aggressive behaviour is proven to be the best indicator of future criminal behaviour. All research on the subject conducted both in Albania and abroad, shows that children with aggressive behaviour - even from day-care – are most likely to get involved in criminal activities when reaching adolescence. Anti social behaviour in early age is therefore a fairly accurate indicator of criminal behaviour in adulthood, especially for boys.

According to Loeber\textsuperscript{10}, a scholar working on criminal behaviour, children and juveniles involved in offences against property or in violent behaviour exhibit some of the following patterns:

- have behaviour problems in kindergartens
- are more aggressive and inclined to lie or steal,
- have hyperactive and impulsive behaviour

Aside from early antisocial behaviour, the family environment can also have an important impact on potential criminal behaviour. Some of the features that might contribute to early criminal involvement are:

\textsuperscript{10} Loeber, 1988.
- parents with antisocial behaviour;
- parents with a history of problematic consumption (drug and/or alcohol);
- parents with explicit mental problems;
- poor parental skills combined with a lack of necessary care or positive stimulation for the child’s development;
- physical violence;
- history of family violence;
- large families (high number of family members meaning poor attention for the youngest

Most of these factors are in constant interaction with factors from other social environments such as peers and the larger community. The family remains nonetheless a central source for criminal behaviour according to recent studies, as family size, deficient parenting and antisocial parents can have deep and lasting effect on the child’s development.

b) Peers

In order to determine the exact impact and influence peers can have on criminal behaviour, further research is needed. Nevertheless, up to date data show that implication of juveniles in criminal behaviour is the result of a combination of factors outlined as follow:

- anti social tendencies of children with erratic behaviour in early ages;
- influence from peers with problematic behaviour;
- negative consequences of rejection from peers

Going to school and getting involved in the community are steps in life confronting the child with new risks. According to most studies, there is a clear connection between juvenile criminal behaviour and the time a child spends with a problematic group. The question one should ask is then which of the variants is true: “the effects of a so-called bad society” or the assumption that “bad people get along”.

A number of theses suggest that problematic groups attract and encourage individuals without prior criminal history towards criminal behaviour. For those already involved in illicit activities, the group tends to accentuate slightly the already existing problematic behaviour. Juveniles under the influence of those groups are more likely to end up in prison than those free from this influence. Furthermore, studies show that older siblings involved in criminal activities can be negative but powerful role models. It is especially the case for children close to each other (age and relationship).

Another factor responsible for criminal behaviour mentioned in modern literature is rejection by others. It undermines the child’s self-esteem and leads to antisocial behaviour. Rejected children and adolescents are thus pushed towards problematic groups and gangs that can offer immediate support while encouraging deviant social behaviour. Studies tend to show that children are nowadays more likely to identify themselves with problematic groups at an earlier stage in their life. They are therefore more inclined to get involved early in serious criminal activities
Association with problematic groups has thus a strong influence on children’s behaviour, especially if combined with poverty, poor parental care, a lack of interest in school, sad events in life and a previous criminal experience.

c) School and community
School and the surrounding community are factors that cannot go unmentioned if one wants to comprehend the sources of juvenile criminal behaviour. It has already been proved that children strongly connected to school are more interested in learning, tend to respect rules, and have less chance to adopt antisocial behaviours.

By examining the link between school and antisocial behaviour, studies demonstrate that low marks in school evaluations are intimately linked with early expression of delinquency. No interest and lack of motivation put children in a risky situation when it comes to criminal involvement.

Scarce resources can be responsible for the lack of discipline in the classroom. A limited number of teachers it means a higher number of pupils in each class. As a result, the lack of supervision increases probabilities for children to develop antisocial behaviours.

Research conducted on the role of schools in the development of problematic behaviour show that a number of features found in learning institutions are problematic:
- lack of moral support and satisfaction for pupils work;
- teachers not motivated for their work;
- lack of cooperation between teachers;
- class order that supports anti social behaviour;
- un-determined rules about behaviour;
- lack of compliance

Much of the characteristics of the community where juveniles live can be turned into promoting factors of criminal behaviour. Unorganized community with low level of social control can indeed leave criminal activities undetected and unmonitored, thereby increasing a potential escalation. In some extreme cases, communities become themselves instigators and promoters of juvenile delinquency. With their high crime rate, they expose juveniles to a social environment that gives the impression of supporting such values as delinquency and criminality.

d) Ethnic and gender background
The interaction between ethnic and gender backgrounds and early involvement in illicit activities has yet to be fully explored and studied. As a result, policy makers, law practitioners and social workers tend to adopt stereotypes-based approach when dealing with the ethnic and gender side of juvenile delinquency.

Non-white juveniles are more easily accused and/or sentenced for criminal offences. This is particularly apparent knowing the (significantly lower) proportion of the overall population this group represents. On the other hand, the number of females accused and/or sentenced for criminal behaviour is low in light of their proportion in the population. They are indeed more likely to be seen as victims of criminal acts committed by males.
Aside from these general observations, no comprehensive understanding of gender and ethnic issues is possible unless serious studies are carried out on this topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 9: Overview of risk factors associated with criminal behaviour according to age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Risk factors from pregnancy to early childhood</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Child** | Pregnancy and labour problems  
Brain injuries/low intelligence  
Hard temperament  
Hyperactivity/impulsivity/attention deficits  
Male gender |
| **Family** | Parental substance abuse  
Adolescent mothers  
Repeated change of custodians  
Poor educated parents  
Maternal depression  
Poor communication between parents and children  
Poverty/low social economical level  
Serious marriage problems/ big families |
| **2. Risk factors during early childhood**                                                 |
| **Child** | Aggressive behaviour  
Repeated lies  
Attention seeking and erratic behaviour  
Lack of guilt, lack of empathy |
| **Family** | Harsh discipline methods/abuse and negligence |
| **Community** | Violent exposed/ violent broadcasting on television |
| **3. Risk factors during childhood**                                                      |
| **Child** | Robbery and criminal behaviour in general  
Early expression of problematic behaviour  
Early expression of substance abuse and of sexual activity  
Depressive nature/distracted behaviour  
Positive attitude towards violence  
Victimization and exposure to violence |
| **Family** | Deficient parental care |
| **School** | Poor school results  
Class repetition/ laze  
Negative attitude towards school  
Schools with poor organizational and functions |
| **Peers** | Rejection |
| **Community** | Association with children with problematic behaviour  
Residence in poor communities/abandoned  
Residence in disorganized communities  
Use of arms |
| **4. Risk factors during adolescence**                                                    |
| **Child** | Use and arms bearing  
Drug use  
Unemployment |
| **School** | School dropouts |
| **Peers** | Involvement in criminal groups |

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11 Child Delinquency, Bulletin Series, May 2003
2. TIRANA CASE STUDY: Individual factors of child and juvenile delinquency

In order to construct and analyse the Tirana Case Study the researchers reviewed three areas of the capital of Albania, Tirana. They are different in the origin of its inhabitants, welfare and problems they face with integration with the native population. If “Blloku” is among the richest areas of Tirana and Albania, “Kombinati” constitutes a more native resident area of the city, while Bathore represents largely an informal area of newcomers (similar to Brasil’s favelas), established after the end of communism by the internal migrating population. The areas are part of the Municipality of Tirana, while the services and provided by three different local municipalities.

a) The “BLLOKU” case study
The “Blloku” was only developed and has only expanded recently. The name dates from the previous regime when the area was inhabited only by senior communist officials, while was “blocked” or otherwise prohibited for other people to walk through this area of Tirana. This is how the area became known as “the block” or “bloku” in Albanian. When the regime collapsed in the early 90’s, the block opened to the general public and to private investments. Changes were quick and significant as normal citizens could now come to work and live in this area of Tirana.

It has now become one of the richest and the most popular neighbourhood in the Albanian capital. Buildings, offices, clubs and shopping centres are luxurious and expensive. Even though no specific data is available for this particular area of Tirana, it should be emphasized that it is included in one of the most developed municipal units of the city, Municipality Unit No. 5.

This particular unit is situated in the south-west part of Tirana. It is 2.2 km wide from north to south, 403 m long from east to west, and has a surface of 540 acres. About 75 000 inhabitants live in the area.

Table 10 outlines records of population by gender from 1994 to 2003. It also displays records of newcomers, the number of families, marriages as well as information on natural and total population growth. Growth by 20 thousand people (supported by the official data) in this area does not seem realistically considering that a number of newcomers in the area haven't completed their registration procedures.

Unit no. 5 has relatively few families on social assistance (about 500) and the “bloku” area counts for a very small number of them. Families living there are therefore generally wealthy. According to local government representatives, most of the families living on welfare are either alone or handicapped people.
Based on interviews with representatives of the area, we were informed that violence exists in some families living in the “block”. However, it goes unnoticed as those families do not want neighbours to have a bad image of them, an image which would be incompatible with the area’s high living standards. Some of those family groups are of very traditional culture and have had economical and psychological problems in the past. During the transition period, others have suffered severe stress and anxiety as instability deeply affected their activities. Luxurious apartments are thus only smoking screen hiding family and interpersonal problems.

According to data, there has only been one murder, in 2005 and neither attempted murder nor suicides were recorded in between 2003-2006 in the area. However, this does not mean children and adults lives are problems free, since most difficulties and issues remain veiled.

Many juveniles find themselves in family environments indifferent to their deviant behaviour and criminal acts such as robbery. However, according to police officials, families living in the block are generally supporting their juveniles when confronted with drugs or alcohol abuse and quarrel in night clubs. Let us not forget that even teenagers from relatively wealthy families are sometimes going through crisis and use drugs or alcohol as a manifest expression.

12 Source: Municipality Unit No. 5, Civil Registrars Office
The education level is average in this community, meaning that parents have generally completed pre-university education. On the other hand, a significant proportion of adults also have a university degree (graduate or postgraduate). Offences and criminal acts seem to be committed by children regardless of the education their family has.

Table No. 13. Educational institutions at the Municipal Unit No. 5, Tirana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Families in total</th>
<th>Children per class</th>
<th>Nr. of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day-care</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergartens</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-grade schools</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5,697</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,774</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen on table 11, the Block has a significant number of institutions such as kindergartens and schools. According to official data, only 1 percent of children have dropped out of compulsory education, but 27 percent dropped out from secondary education. Specialists agree that this is a high figure. From a research made by Tirana Municipality the rate of drop outs of compulsory and secondary education is 2.8 percent. The state of the schools in the area is rather good but they do not avoid problems faced by other schools of the country.

The Block area is known as one of the richest and most expensive neighbourhood in Tirana. Therefore, it is no surprise that the cost of living is a source of stress for its inhabitants. From research completed by specialists of unit no. 5, the area has 800 marketing and service businesses.  
- 200 bar-café, restaurants, hotels etc.  
- 330 various services  
- 240 trading centres  
- 30 restaurants and pizzerias.

The territory of Unit No. 5, that encompasses the Block area, has several centres and facilities which provide a wide range of social services. Even if they are situated in this area, they serve the entire city and play an important role for juveniles.

Social services from NGO’s in Unit nr 5

- NGO for human rights: 7 organizations
- NGO for civic and patriotic education: 4
- NGO for economic rights: 3
- NGO for children and orphans: 8
- NGO for women: 6
- NGO for culture and arts: 11
- NGO for minorities: 1
- NGO for social and human assistance: 4
- NGO for youth: 2
- NGO for health matters: 5
- NGO for research: 12
- Coordination and training centres for NGO’s: 1

13 Source: Municipality Unit No. 5, Civil Registrars Office.
Based on interviews conducted with leaders of this unit and representatives of the community, we learned that few of these organizations actually perform their activities on a regular basis and few of them focus their work on juveniles.

Police officials told us that problems with the community are rare and that they have in general good relations with teachers in schools. With respect of the few criminal acts recorded in the Block (about 28 cases of theft, violent robbery etc), all were committed by children who reside in other areas of Tirana.

Newcomers in those areas are often confronted with aversion upon arrival. Integration in the community is undermined by widespread stereotypes, especially towards people coming from the north. Ethnic background stereotypes are less frequent as the area doesn't have a strong non-Albanian community.

To summarize, what are the conditions of juveniles growing up in the “Block”? What social and development possibilities do they have and what kind of model affects them the most? The area provides an interesting research field for this. It can help us to understand what kind of influence (positive or negative) a certain type of neighbourhood can have on juveniles. As outlined previously, it is one of the most dynamic and wealthy areas of Tirana with luxury and high prices as main features. It is attractive when thinking of the glamour side of the area but also repellent owing to the cost one has to pay in order to afford such luxury.

Those two sides have a significant impact on juveniles. When attending school in the Block, they are exposed to a life style which remains inaccessible for many of them. This reality can influence their personality and thereby affect their development. Such wealth and luxury also gives the impression of a life with no actual purpose beside entertainment and material enjoyment. This life style remains nonetheless very attractive for many young people who end up in bars and clubs spending their parent's money or money they earned by suspicious means. It can thus become an important source of conflict within the family and more generally with the whole community.

The Block is therefore a good example of social inequity as families and juveniles are led to believe that a costly life style is necessary. It is then not surprising to see people spending important amounts of money in night clubs and pubs while others try desperately to avoid this kind of habits. Negative impacts such as social pressure, anxiety, jealousy, frustration and anger deeply affect this latter group in terms of personality and social behaviour. This is particularly problematic for families which saved for years in order to afford housing in the Block as they now face high living expenses.

Since money and entertainment are dominant features in this neighbourhood, prostitution has become a problem. Seeking better revenue sources, young girls accept to become sex workers in the Block. Sexual abuses, school drop outs, family conflicts and marginalization from the rest of society are then common problems.

In short, let us say that the Block area represents a contradictory social model for children and
juveniles as they are often pushed towards a life-style they cannot afford. Therefore, one should not be surprised of existing problems such as drinking, smoking, increasing rate of drop outs from school, distribution of narcotics, family conflicts, etc. In most cases, those problems are due to the lack of proper role models for young people and insufficient parental and social supervision. Without a proper response, this could have long lasting effects.

a) Bathore case study
Most Bathore residents have been living there for a relatively short period of time, as this was a mainly rural area used for state farms during the communist period. People have then left their ancestors towns and villages hoping to find a better life in Bathore. However, problems were soon to arise.

First, the area had no residential infrastructure to accommodate newcomers. There are few paved streets, no sewage system, no water supply, no proper energy supply and finally a shortage of community services. Despite investments in recent years, there is still much to be done.

Furthermore, many new residents found themselves confronted to a reality not foreseen. Employment and community opportunities as well as education services were in short numbers. Moreover, the local culture and values were unknown to them, thereby complicating any attempt to mingle in the community.

Before reviewing relevant factors regarding the situation of juveniles in Bathore, let us make a general presentation of this particular area.

The administrative unit of Bathore is part of the larger Municipality of Kamez. It is bordered in the north by Zall Herr, in the south by Tirane – Shkoder national highway, in the west by the Terkuz River and in the east by Koder Kamez. It covers an area of 500 hectares. The unit consists of 7 neighbourhoods and has a population of 33 000 inhabitants, of which 60 percent are children. Some 650 families receive welfare benefits which run to 1000 Lek per month for each family. Only families made of at least 5 members are entitled to receive this financial help. Since a lot of poor migrants from the north come to live in Bathore, living conditions are difficult and not really improving.

Violence towards women and children is common within families residing in the area. It seems to be used both as a mean for discipline as well as an appreciated tool when it comes to maintain the family under control. Confronted to a new cultural reality, feeling powerless, and being deeply affected by unemployment and poverty, men in Bathore tend to have chosen violence to regain some sense of certitude. It is needless to say that children receiving such treatment are more likely to develop disorder problem and adopt aggressive behaviour, thus pushing them closer to criminal and illicit activities.

Even if murder committed by a child or a juvenile is unknown to Bathore, it should be emphasized that Bathore is not problem free. For example, according to the police records, a 16-year-old girl committed suicide after being in conflict with her parents who forced her to drop from school.
Juveniles have complex problems as they do not have proper family support and tend to compare their lives with the one people the same age can have in Tirana. Television programs increase this sense of discrepancy which in turn undermines children and juveniles’ self-esteem. Aggressive behaviour and frustration towards other individuals in the community is thus not surprising.

Family environment is, as seen above, problematic in most cases of juvenile delinquency as parents are often absent from the social circle necessary for a child’s proper development. Furthermore, parents sometimes simply cannot meet their child’s basic needs, illiteracy, low education, unemployment and deep poverty being widespread. On the other hand, parents can also represent an active harm when transposing their own frustration and problems on children. Let us not forget that divorces, illnesses, and cultural integration are common.

Educational level of children involved in criminal acts or offences is low. They do not attend school on a regularly basis, in part because it is often seen as useless by other family members. In Bathore, there are 3 elementary schools and one secondary school. Each neighbourhood has its own kindergarten. According to interviews conducted there, the teaching staffs are adequately trained but scarce resources mean overcrowded classroom and lack of learning material.

Community taken broadly is no positive social environment. Unemployment is widespread meaning difficult economical situation for most households. Records suggest that 70 percent of homeowners have only part-time employment, thus no financial security and stability.

Services offered in the area are limited. Although roughly 20 organizations exist in Bathore, only 6 of them are functional.

Police officials from Police Station No. 5, who is responsible for the area, enjoy positive relations with the community. They maintain regular contacts with parents, aldermen but first of all with school principals and teachers. We were told that offences most frequently committed by children or juvenile are petty thefts and mainly concern the 9-13 years old category. However, according to those police officials, the most problematic group age is 12-16 years old, as teenagers are also involved in violence such as knife fights.

Juveniles in the Bathore area are victims of discriminating stereotypes and prejudices. They often have to endure insults such as “malok – wild” or “Chechen”. They feel discriminated, are less cultured and educated, and don’t have the same social and cultural opportunities as their counterparts in Tirana. Attempts to improve their personal situation are often met with strong and lasting disappointment.

To summarize, what does this environment offer to juveniles in terms of models and possibilities, and how does it affect their social development?

As outlined earlier, juveniles in Bathore are familiar with disappointments. The improvements people wished for when they came to live in the area did not come true. Insecurity, poverty, unemployment and unattainable dreams are now part of the daily routine. In addition, discrimination and rejection are now well known realities.
Difficult family environments make children and juveniles more likely to adopt deviant behaviour. The lack of respect in family relations and tensions that follow indeed increases chances of under age to have serious problems. Violent behaviour, alcohol and drug abuses, gambling and association with street and criminal gangs are few examples of such problems.

The poor and monotonous social life which Bathor has to offer is also an important factor when one tries to explain juvenile delinquency. We cannot exaggerate this problem when we are reminded of the high number of social opportunities which are made available to children and juveniles in Tirana in comparison.

Low family income and lack of motivation are responsible for higher drop out rates. School does not offer the supervised and stimulating environment needed for a proper social development. Juvenile delinquency is thus only step away when seen as a mean for accomplishment and survival. No support whatsoever is offered as a counterweight to this tendency since neither services nor organizations focus its work on juveniles in need. More potential offenders mean more potential victims. Without an adequate response, a vicious circle of juvenile delinquency is inevitable.

b) The “Kombinat” case study
This area of Tirana has special characteristics, which makes it an interesting ground for research on juvenile criminality. It was named Kombinat in the late 50’s – early ’60s when the main employer was the Textile Factory, which closed in early ’90s. Not only people were given work, but the company also provided them with housing.

In the early 90’s, social, economical and political changes affected the then relative stability of Kombinat. The city started to attract residents from surrounding rural areas as well as residents from southern and northern regions of Albania. In ten years, the population quadrupled and such a massive migration was not without effect on juveniles’ social environment. As of today, many of those “newcomers” are still not registered.

The Kombinat area is included in Unit No. 6, and covers an area of 6000 m2 in south-west of Tirana. Its population is heterogeneous and amounts to 59,348 inhabitants.15 This diversity has had a significant impact on such issues as social integration, unemployment, prostitution, narcotics, feud, criminality, divorce, illiteracy etc.

Family violence is one of the most encountered phenomena in the area, being driven by a lack of sensitivity towards newcomers, few working opportunities and poor living conditions. As frustration increases, aggressive behaviours are more likely to appear within the family. According to interviewed people, violence tends to be physical as well as psychological. Aside from this, children often grow up without their educational and emotional needs being taken into account. Parents simply provide them with food, clothing and shelter. Although criminality in the area is a concern, no case of murder or suicide committed by a juvenile has been reported.

15 Data from Municipality No . 6, September 2006.
In terms of institutions, there are 3 secondary schools in Kombinat (2 professional and 1 gymnasium) and 4 elementary schools. Teachings are generally of good standard and some efforts are made in helping children and family in need. However, in spite of the relatively high numbers of learning establishments, long distances prevent many children from going to class on a regular basis. Others simply drop from school because of this. When they stop to attend school, children and juveniles are more likely to enter gangs and to get involved in criminal activities. Providing help then becomes a more complicated task.

The lack of social services in the area is notable. It is particularly true considering the extreme difficulties that most families are confronted with (unemployment, divorces, poor health, etc.). Nevertheless, some non-profit organizations are active in this field, such as the Center for women and children, ADRA, the Society for Women and Children with Disability and the National Center for Children’s Development, Education and Rehabilitation. Despite their goodwill, these organizations have limited resources and cannot meet the community’s growing needs. As for children in conflict with the law, they simply receive no assistance whatsoever.

A newly established Police Station No. 6 is responsible to maintain law and order in the Kombinat area. Police officials keep close ties with the local community in order to improve crime prevention. They maintain regular contacts with school principals, teachers and parents. They also deal with criminal offences committed on their territory. According to some police officials interviewed for the purpose of this study, most young offenders commit their acts (mainly theft and robbery) outside the Kombinat area, aiming instead at the Block where it can be more profitable. In light of increased juvenile delinquency, officials tend to become more and more sensitive towards children in conflict with the law.

About 300 Roma families live in the outskirts of this area, mainly on streets like: “Frang Bardhi”, “F. Qelqi”, “Shaban Bardhoshi” or former Kombinat. This particular group is most affected by social and economical problems and stereotypes based on ethnicity and origin are prevalent. Newcomers in general are not spared either. The word often used is “kombinats” which refer to bad temper, wild nature and tendencies to break the law, all social manifestations, particularly common in the trouble periods of 1991, 1992 and 1997.

In conclusion, we can summarize the problem of juvenile delinquency in this area if we underline the main factors which are a heterogeneous social environment, stressful family backgrounds, poverty, poor community services and widespread prejudices against minorities. Insecurity, frustration and aggressive behaviour are the results of such problematic living conditions.

Juveniles in Kombinat have no positive models to relate to and without proper support from their family and local community; criminal behaviour becomes an alluring alternative. Delinquency is thus a mean to externalize frustration and resentment, no other opportunity being offered to do so. It also represents a prospect for “easy money” through robbery, drug trafficking, arms bearing, etc. As most residents from this area are poor, criminal offences are generally committed in more wealthy and attractive neighbourhoods Driven by low self-esteem and a desperate need for survival; young offenders represent a major concern.
Research on juvenile delinquency reveals that juveniles involved in criminal activities develop specific social characteristics with a psychological profile of their own. The following presentation will outline cases of juveniles in conflict with the law. Information such as the name, surname and the birthplace of interviewed people have been omitted intentionally. We hope the following cases will help us to understand juvenile behaviour and that it will enable us to identify patterns in delinquency.

a) Age and criminal behaviour

Based on information gathered during visit in confinement and detention centres, the large majority of detained juveniles are 14 to 17 years old. Even if some have a history of anti-social behaviour, most of them are confined and detained for the first time.

**Evis case.** He was 15 when he was apprehended. He is from a rural area north of Albania. He has only completed school up to the 6th grade. He is an orphan and lived in very difficult conditions before being sent to the centre. He has no outside support whatsoever and has never been convicted before. The boy was charged of illegal arms bearing and the court sentenced him to 3 months and 10 days of confinement. He admitted charges from the moment he was arrested and explained that he needed the weapon for its trading value in order to pay for basic needs. Members of his larger family could not afford a lawyer so the court appointed a lawyer for him.

The interaction between various factors is evident. The age issue is important and the same pattern will be seen in the next examples.

**Genc case.** He was 15 when he was apprehended. He comes from a rural area situated between the north and centre of Albania. He has a 8th grade education and has never been convicted before. He was charged for taking part in a theft in cooperation with other people, a criminal offence covered by art. 134/2 of the Criminal Code. The act was committed at his workplace and he used a copied key to enter. Economic motives explain the boy’s behaviour that also dropped from school because of difficult living conditions. He admitted charges and returned all stolen goods, worth 1 million Lek (approximately Eight thousand Euros).

**Petrit case.** He is 16 years old and used to live in a small town in the northern part of the
country. He dropped from school after the 6th grade. The boy had never been convicted until being charged with bearing illegal arms, of disturbing public order and of resisting his arrest. Before being caught, he was on the run for during an entire month. When he was apprehended, a lawyer was appointed to him by the court because his family could not afford one. He explained that he kept arms just for showing off to his friends and that he did not have harmful intentions.

The three cases we have presented are helpful in understanding at what age young people are more likely to drift towards juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, we can see that stories encountered all involved cases of robbery, extortion and illegal arms bearing. However, criminal behaviour should not be seen as limited to a specific age group as mentioned in previous chapters. Problematic attitudes such as aggressivity also exist in early ages when children are still in elementary school. Nevertheless, one must point to the fact that in most cases when a child or juvenile is in conflict with the law, no attempt is made to understand the behaviour responsible for the committed offence.

**Astrit case.** He is 15 years old and was charged for attempting to commit a robbery with other people. He was sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment. The boy has a 6th grade education. He used to live in the southern part of the country, in very difficult conditions since both his parents are unemployed. Lives in a grave economic situation because both of his parents are unemployed Not able to afford a lawyer, one was appointed to him.

**b) Level of education**

According to records of juveniles contacted for this research, most convicted juveniles have a low education level. This should not serve as prejudice, even if it appears that the lower the education is, the graver the criminal act tends to be. In the three cases previously outlined, juveniles had only a 6th to 8th grade education.

The following cases concern youngsters who have a 4th grade education only. They are charged of murder and robbery in collaboration. On one hand, the seriousness of offences tends to follow the age curve; on the other hand, it tends to follow the opposite curve when compared to the education level. Let us consider the following examples.

**Arben case.** He is 17 and lives in a small northern town. He went through 4 grades only. Lives alone with his mother because his father was killed years ago and his brother lives abroad. He has not been previously convicted. His family has good living conditions since the brother supports them. The boy is accused of first-degree murder and sentenced to 10 years and 8 months of imprisonment. Motive was revenge (he avenged his father).

**Tani case.** He is 17 and lives in a rural area of a northern county. He went through 4 grades only. He is an orphan and lives with his mother and his 21-year-old brother. He has previously been convicted for robbery when he was 14 and sentenced for 10 months but was released on parole. He is now charged of the same criminal act in collaboration with another juvenile. He stole vehicle parts and sold them. He did so for economic reasons. Investigations lasted 3 months. His family did not think appointing a lawyer was necessary
and could not afford one in any case. A relative took charge of this.

**Guri case.** He is 17 and has been convicted for armed robbery in collaboration and sentenced to 5 years in prison. He was born and lived in a northern region. He was poor as his parents were both unemployed. He has only a 5th grade education.

c) Economic situation

There is no doubt that this remains one of the main factor influencing one’s personality and behaviour and explaining how and why a juvenile gets in conflict with the law. Most of them have indeed important economic problems. They come from poor families, or have no chance for employment and ensuring their financial needs, or the person in charge of them simply cannot provide basic needs. All above cases reported so far had a strong economic component even if other factors were mainly dealt with.

**Flamur case.** He is 17 and lives in an apartment in a former industrial centre close to the capital. He has completed elementary education and has not been previously convicted. He is charged for robbery in collaboration and had economic motives to do so. He has not returned the stolen goods, since they were split with the other people involved in the robbery. An appointed lawyer now defends him because his family could not afford one.

**Zamir case.** He is 15 and lives in the same town as one in a previous case. He is charged for the same offence but had not been convicted before. He also had economic motives when he decided to commit the robbery.

The difficult economic situation in which these juveniles find themselves is underlined by the fact they could not afford their own lawyer. It is worth mentioning that families usually don’t appreciate much appointed lawyers as they are imposed to them.

Economic background not only constitutes an important factor interacting with others, it is actually often responsible for some of those other factors leading towards criminal behaviour. Juveniles living in difficult economic conditions often cannot attend school. Without a proper education they are less likely to find employment and are thus more easily prone to be driven towards alternative ways for survival.

The following cases illustrate the interaction between these components.

**Elidon case.** He is 16 and was charged of robbery. His motives were economical. His father is an alcoholic and his mother unemployed. He has only a 5th grade education. He is of no interest to his family and he only receives food from his detention centre.

**Ilir case.** He is 17 and was sentenced to 3 years and 4 months because he was involved in an armed robbery in collaboration. He was born and raised in southern mountainous region, he has only completed elementary education. His family is going through difficult times since both parents are unemployed.
Besim case. He is 16 and was sentenced to 8 years in detention after committing an armed robbery in collaboration. He was born and has lived in a problematic northern region. He has completed his 4th grade and used to live in a very difficult situation because both his parents are unemployed.

Hasan case. He is 18 and was sentenced to 2 years in detention after his involvement in a violent robbery. He was born in Tirana and lived there. Has a completed elementary education. Both his parents are unemployed so he used to live in poverty.

d) Place of residence

When considering the place of residence of detained juveniles, it seems that most of them come either from rural areas, former industrial or new residential areas from the transition period. These are characterized by limited employment possibilities as well as a lack of resources such as land, and property. No economic activities mean a shortage of opportunities and sources to make a living.

Lezha, Puka, Shkodra, Lac and Mamurras are areas where these difficult conditions prevail, especially the lack of living sources. Parts of Tirana and its region as well as towns like Berat and Fier are not spared.

Since the link between criminal behaviour and the place of residence has already been exemplified through the previous cases, we will now present only two cases taken from Tirana and its region.

Arsen case. He is 18 and used to live in a village near Tirana. He was charged for theft. It is difficult to communicate with him who leads us to believe he has personality problems.

Arben case. He is 16 and was sentenced to 2 years and 6 months of detention. He has committed a robbery and had economic motives to do so. He was born and lived in Vore (Tirana district) . He has unemployed parent and 5th grade education. No one is interested in him so he receives no attention and feels alone.

e) Anti-social behaviour

It is a characteristic of juveniles in conflict with the law to model certain antisocial behaviours. They are known for not-tolerant discussions, limited communication skills and have problems controlling themselves in some situations. The following cases illustrate this.

Agim case. Agim is 17 and lived in one of the main city of northern Albania. He has completed elementary education and has not previously been convicted. He was charged of murder and wounding after turning himself in and admitting charges. A simple quarrel pushed him to commit these acts.

Adil case. Adil is 17 and was charged of seriously injuring another person. He has completed elementary education. He committed the offence while being involved in a street
fight. He had good living conditions with his parents who now pay him regular visits.

**Dritan case.** He is 17 and was charged of committing a murder with other people. He was sentenced to 6 years in prison. He used to live in Tirana in a good economic environment and has completed elementary education. The murder was carried out in the course of a street fighting.

**f) Minority related anti-social behaviour**

Another characteristic of juveniles in conflict with the law and their anti-social behaviour is their ethnic origin. Among apprehended juveniles, many of them are of Roma or Egyptian origin. This suggests that ethnic origin and social exclusion of some minorities may play an important factor regarding criminal behaviour since it is a further cause of stress, tension and problems.

**Romeo case.** He is 15 and was convicted for robbery. He was sentenced to 3 months in detention. He was born and lived thereafter in Tirana. His family lives in extreme poverty and is forced to find accommodation in a container in Braka. All the family members are of gipsy origin.

**g) Profile of juveniles in conflict with the law**

After reviewing cases of juveniles in conflict with the law, a socio-economic profile can now be presented:

- They generally commit their first criminal act between the age of 14 and 17. The older they get, the more serious their offences tend to be. They thus usually start by committing robberies, injuring people, getting involved in cases of extortion and by bearing arms, and will then be driven towards acts such as murder, severe wounding etc.

- Studied cases illustrate a dominance of male’s presence. No females was charged or convicted for criminal acts.

- All juveniles in conflict with the law exhibit poor education. Furthermore, the poorer the education the graver criminal act is.

- In most cases extreme poverty is a dominant feature. Juveniles’ families struggle for survival as parents are unemployed and lack minimum resources Most of them cannot afford a lawyer.

- Apprehended juveniles come from rural, suburban and undeveloped areas or from urban areas where living conditions are very difficult (e.g. in former industrial cities). Crime and intolerance are common features of the environment in which juveniles live.

- Some young offenders are from problematic and dysfunctional families. Single
parent, murdered parent, alcoholic and drug consumption problems, lack of communication families with a lot of children, abandoned or orphan children are some examples of such a difficult social environment.

- Juveniles who break the law are characterized by a problematic behaviour which has been modelled in earlier age. By going unnoticed, unresolved and ignored in early stages, those behaviour will likely worsen in time

- Juveniles’ offenders are sometimes related to minority groups like Roma or Egyptians.
1. General and specific measures

Most of judicial programs for juveniles and services offered by schools are mainly focused on children with long term problems, on adolescents with criminal records or on youth education and training issues. Very little attention is paid to children in kindergarten and elementary school in order to prevent problematic behaviour in earlier ages. Intervention is thus aimed at already-existing problems (delinquency, violent offences etc.).

Prevention is the most positive and effective tool to adopt in order to reduce juvenile anti-social behaviour and consequently juvenile delinquency. Compared to all other means of intervention, preventative measures are the ones most likely to successfully tackle juvenile delinquency. They should first focus on preventing continuous anti-social behaviour of children. Then, emphasis should be put on children delinquency prevention, especially those more at risks. Finally, efforts should be aimed at preventing adolescents from committing serious and violent acts. “The sooner the better” ought to be the central principle when intervening to prevent juvenile delinquency, be our efforts focused on children themselves or on the family, the school or the community at large.

Prevention and early intervention are now principles generally accepted by practitioners and specialists involved in the field.

Research on this issue have recommended and continue to recommend that preventive and reintegrating interventions be aimed at risk factors responsible for the development of problematic behaviours during childhood and adolescence. However, research analysts point out that there is not just one preventive measure. Studies reviewing intervention in child delinquency clearly show that multiple risk factors have to be taken into account, so is the interaction between each of them. This constitutes a challenge in which we can find efforts to lower or avoid repetition of problematic behaviour. Within the group of juveniles affected by problematic behaviour, there is a particular group that had a past history of deviant behaviours. Needless to say, preventing the repetition of such problems is no easy task.

Intervention tends to change both conditions and institutions that promote and feed crime in the community. Furthermore, juvenile judicial system, social services and other juvenile services should take in consideration multiple problems resulting from dysfunctional families.
a) Promising interventions

Many school and community programs on prevention of child and juvenile delinquency focus on several risk factors simultaneously.\(^6\)

Research workers recommend the coordination of the following types of preventive programs in schools and in the community:

- programs of behaviour management in schools;
- multiple programs in relation to class work;
- school curriculum that develops juvenile social attitudes;
- curriculum supporting the resolution and prevention of conflicts and violence;
- compulsory attendance of programs on prevention of criminal behaviour;
- after school activity programs;
- leadership and carrier development programs;
- organizational programs;
- complex preventive programs in community.

Many unique programs for young children have proven to be effective measures in lowering criminality in later stages. The establishment of supportive programs for mothers in difficult situation (unmarried or divorced) has been successful. For example, social workers and midwives of health centres regularly visited mothers living in difficult conditions, from pregnancy to the moment the baby reached the age of 2. When children turned 15, the positive impact of those visits was reflected by lower levels of criminal behaviour registered from these children.\(^7\)

Webster – Stratton (1998) came up with a completed and successful package for parental training in order to offer social and para-social help to parents when addressing problematic behaviours.

Studies of different programs about intervention and prevention of juvenile delinquency show that family support and parental education are the first steps to make when trying to eliminate juveniles’ criminal behaviour. Early identification of emotional and behavioural problems should be an objective for many organizations and institutions in this field.

For the subgroup of juveniles with prior criminal history, work with parents is of particular importance. Commitment and consideration is a key feature in order to assist them when trying to prevent further criminal tendencies of their child. Efficient methods of parenting are indeed an effective mean of preventing problems of delinquency.

b) Justice system for juveniles

Given the fact that children are at a stage of social development and continuous change, they should be treated in a different way then adults. Thus, an approach seeing children such as “underage to bear responsibility in equal terms as adults” should be adopted.\(^8\) This explains

\(^6\) Herrekoohl et al., 2001
\(^7\) Olds et al., 1998
\(^8\) Grisso, 1996
why judicial systems specifically designed for juveniles have been set up in many countries. The objective is to protect children from punishment and thus to offer them alternative and flexible measures for their re-adaptation. In this context, judicial professionals have the obligation to intervene when institutions like schools, families and specialized services for children fail to protect children.

Even in countries where a juvenile judicial system has been in place for some time now, it often serves as an institution that treats juveniles’ behavioural problems that other institutions would not or failed to do so.

A judicial system of this sort should function in close relations with other systems or institutions providing services for children. Coordination and cooperation are necessary as fragmented efforts to lower juvenile delinquency are unlikely to be successful otherwise. In modern systems dealing with juveniles, the judicial cooperates with many other services like the police, prosecutors, courts, schools, mental services, social services, community programs for poor families, unsupported children, problematic children etc.

A positive example is that of State Program of Michigan (USA) for juveniles in conflict with the law, which consists of house services provided to children younger than 13 years of age that have committed criminal offences. The Toronto project for juveniles under the age of 12 is, for its part, both the expression of Canadian state policy for treatment of juveniles breaking the law as well as and the intent to combine interventions of children, parents, schools and communities.

All multiple programs elaborated to treat juvenile delinquency are based on various principles. They have proved that intervention should be undertaken on many plans if a successful outcome is to be attained.

As for programs based on group work with involved children, one should be careful in establishing the group as it can easily have a contaminating effect for its participants. This is the reason why such programs should be combined with other interventions. It is important that in such groups a probation sentence shall be discussed and should be related to activities and courses that aim to improve the social behaviour.

**c) Mechanisms to coordinate the work between agencies**

Children in conflict with the law have many problems such as anti social behaviour, learning difficulties, problems related to their character, negligence and violence exposure. Even if services exist to address those issues, they are often not coordinated.

Research in this field share the idea that to establish and coordinate these services one should:

- Establish a coordinating body between agencies with representatives from judicial institutions, educational services etc. that have the authority to convince agencies to establish a strategy for treatment of juveniles with criminal behaviour;
Establish an evaluation mechanism (e.g. a national evaluation centre) regarding services offered to children; 
Establish a mechanism that ensures interagency relations after convictions. It would serve as a support for families and children with respect to their various needs.

**a) Legal matters**

Beside concerns related to policies and direct services offered to children, there is also much to be done regarding legal matters for juvenile delinquency. Some proposals are outlined below:

- Establishment of a functioning judicial system for juveniles which does not limit itself to punish but which also includes alternative measures like probation and reintegration in terms of education, training and employment;
- Training of professional who will work in this sector;
- Determination of a responsibility scale for juveniles to make them understand consequences of their acts and importance of the punishment.
- Proper legal defence provided to juveniles, especially when they are not responsibly fit.
- Parental responsibility as a factor that enhances parental care and ensures continuous care according to the children’s needs.
- Instead of sentencing juveniles in conflict with the law with imprisonment, alternative measures shall be applied as they represent an important factor to put them away from criminal behaviour in later stages.

**2. Criminal policy towards juveniles in conflict with the law**

**a) General criminal policy**

A country’s criminal policy is determined by a number of objective and subjective factors. On one hand, the State tries to help the sentenced offenders to rehabilitate and reintegrate, while on the other hand it attempts to prevent future criminal acts.

Experts of criminal policy in Albania see the criminal policy in itself as a gathering of criminal and non-criminal measures that aim to prevent criminality as a personal and collective phenomenon at a given time and place.\(^\text{19}\)

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\(^\text{19}\) Criminal Policy . E. Elezi dhe V. Hysi, Tirana 2006
According to the above table, the proportion of convicted juveniles in comparison with the total number of total convictions is as follows:

**In 2002:** there were 4370 recorded convictions of which 274 concerned juveniles. It represents 6.2 percent of convicted felons. Juveniles convicted of offences make up to 6.9 percent total convicted for offences and 3 percent for offences.

**In 2003:** there were 6628 recorded convictions of which 308 concerned juveniles. It represents 4.6 percent of convicted felons. Juveniles convicted of offences make up to 4.9 percent total convicted for offences and 0.4 percent for offences.

**In 2004:** there were 6379 recorded convictions of which 320 concerned juveniles. It represents 5 percent of convicted felons. Juveniles convicted of offences make up to 6.7 percent total convicted for offences and 0.4 percent for offences.

**In 2005:** there were 6317 recorded convictions of which 289 concerned juveniles. It represents 4.5 percent of convicted felons. Juveniles convicted of offences make up to 5.4 percent of total convicted for offences and 1.9 percent for offences.

In *Criminal Policy*, I. Elezi and V. Hysi present a detailed analysis of the criminal policy applied by the judicial system in Albania. Among other things, they underline that “[...] one of the principal deficits of the Criminal Code is the lack of specific disposition regarding the understanding and objective of what punishment in democratic societies ought to be”.20 The authors then comment punishment measures included in the Criminal Code and say “[...] changes in law nr. 8733 of date 24.01.2001 mark few steps back regarding in determination of punishments that is of criminal policy”.21

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20 Criminal Policy. E. Elezi dhe V. Hysi, page 68, Tirana 2006
21 Ibid, page 77.
24.01.2001 do not constitute a significant progress towards a clear and understandable criminal policy).

One of the discussions presently in course between representatives and experts of the judicial system deals with the issue of whether justice serves as a constructive tool through sentences for both criminals and victims, or if it is only used for repressive and criminal means. It is certain that high figures of punishments as for adults in years and lesser appliance of alternative measures lead us to believe that courts under pressure of public opinion for a better performance have used sentencing as a punishment measure rather than a justice serving tool for victims and authors of criminal acts.

b) Juvenile criminal policy in Albania
Based on what has just been said, researchers reviewed some records on juvenile offenders viewed this in two aspects. First, they studied cases on the national level before doing so on a local level, more specifically for the Tirana region. Punishment records from first-degree courts on the national level don’t show if alternative measures have been used for juveniles whereas records from the Court of Tirana are more detailed in that they contain this kind of specific information.

According to I.Elezi and V. Hysi, “criminal policy applied between 2002 and 2004 shows that the number of people convicted for criminal offences has increased in years. […] Punishment policy for a juvenile in 2004 has strengthened comparing to that of 2003… numerous problems exist with apprehended juveniles, arrested or sentenced. Law doesn’t allow police officers or prosecutors to apply other alternative means beside house arrest, imprisonment or freedom.”

Meanwhile, records of Ministry of Interior, below, show the types of offences carried by juveniles during the 2002 – 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentenced juveniles in Albania (2002-2005)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of convicted juveniles Viti 2005</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outlined records show that we have an increase of offences by juveniles between 2002 and 2004, with a small reduction in 2005. However, it should be emphasized that on the national level, integrated data on the type of acts committed by juveniles, their family profile, gender, ethnic origin and causative factors are deficient.

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c) Characteristics and tendencies of juvenile delinquency according to court sentences

According to observed records at the local and national level, one can easily notice that the Albanian judicial system has a tendency to punish juveniles who commit criminal acts or offences rather than to apply alternative measures. This is related to the fact that the Criminal Code does not include control mechanisms for alternative measures even if these measures are indeed included. Likewise, the Criminal Code does not include alternative measures in case of acts which do not threaten society nor does it take into consideration the well being of the child in penalty decisions. To illustrate this, research analysts used records of penalty decisions and measures from the first-degree Court of Tirana.23

Graphic 5: Sentenced juvenile offenders by the court of Tirana (2002-2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imprisonment</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23 Data from Tirana Magistrates Court (http://www.gjykatatirana.gov.al/)
As revealed by the tables and graphics, there are two tendencies. First, there is an increasing number of imprisonment sentences coming from the court of Tirana, while the number of criminal acts committed by juveniles is also increasing. On the other hand, one can easily see from the graphic about the type of sentences that alternative measures have been used slightly more from 2002 to 2004, whereas the following two years those measures tend to be left aside. The year 2006 clearly shows that punishing juveniles is a much more "popular" mean when dealing with delinquency. In that same year, alternative measures have been used only once.

d) Criminal policy towards juveniles in Tirana and developing trends
Tendencies for the development of juvenile delinquency have already been analyzed in depth in the Model of Tirana section. What we would like to address here is the different types of criminal acts for which juveniles were convicted and sentenced. The first observation to be made is that in most cases, juveniles are convicted. Alternative measures such as fines are only used in rare occasions. Furthermore, in order to analyze tendencies, the years 2002, 2004 and 2006 have been used as comparison points.24

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24 Data from Tirana Magistrates Court (http://www.gjykatatirana.gov.al/)
Table 15: Data on criminal proceedings against juveniles – Year 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of crime based on the Criminal Code</th>
<th>Juvenile Offenders</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article of CC</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Sentenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134 Theft</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189 Falsification of passports</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 Withholding of crime</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277 Blood feuds</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Data on criminal proceedings against juveniles - Year 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of crime based on the Criminal Code</th>
<th>Juvenile Offenders</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article of CC</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Sentenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79c Murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88 Severe wounding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114 Prostitution</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134 Theft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134/1 Repeated Theft or more then once</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134/2 Theft in collaboration</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139 Violent robbery</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>248 Abuse of authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278/2 Illegal possession of arms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279 Bearing of illegal arms (knives etc)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 Withholding of crime</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83/a Threat of revenge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 Minor injuries</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on available data taken from the above tables, a number of tendencies deserve to be presented:

**Tendency No. 1:** If we compare the years 2002, 2004 and 2006, we can clearly see that there is an increasing number of convicted juveniles for criminal offences. If in 2002 there were only
6 convicted juveniles, this figure increased by 322 percent in 2004, and 51 percent in 2006 (a 488 percent increase from 2002 to 2006). These figures reveal that the lack of preventive, alternative and early intervention measures towards deviant behaviour is a main factor contributing to the development of juvenile delinquency. This means that as long as no actual measure is taken in this direction, Tirana County will have increasing tendencies of juvenile involvement in criminal acts.

**Tendency No. 2:** Records of penal sentences from the Court of Tirana reveal an increasing tendency of imprisonment sentences compared to alternative measures. This shows that the judicial system in Tirana tends to punish juveniles in those cases. From the 48 juveniles convicted in 2006, 47 were sentenced to imprisonment and only one was fined.

**Tendency No. 3:** When comparing records from 2002 to 2006, one can see that there are now more types of criminal acts committed by juveniles. In 2002, there were only 4 types of such acts whereas in 2006, there were 14 of them. We can explain this by the increasing overall juvenile delinquency but also by improvements the court made when gathering information on the topic. The increasing number of violent offences committed by juveniles should also be mentioned.

### Table 17: Data on criminal proceedings against juveniles - Year 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article of CC</th>
<th>Criminal offence</th>
<th>Sentenced</th>
<th>Acquitted</th>
<th>Dismissed</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Repeated</th>
<th>Formal education</th>
<th>With formal education</th>
<th>Fines</th>
<th>Up to 2 years</th>
<th>2-5 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>10-25 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>First degree murder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88/b</td>
<td>Grievously bodily harm at the limits of self defence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100/1</td>
<td>Sexual or homosexual relations with a minor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>Destruction of cult (religious) objects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134/1</td>
<td>Repeated theft or more than once</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134/2</td>
<td>Theft in partnership with</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Possession of items intended for theft</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Destruction of property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>Withholding of crime</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Minor injuries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Libel</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278/2</td>
<td>Production of illegal arms bearing and ammunition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278/3</td>
<td>Production of illegal arms bearing and ammunition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 53 1 54 0 0 8 46 1 47 0 0 0
Tendency No. 4: As mentioned previously, theft in all its forms is the most encountered criminal act. Besides analyzing factors that push juveniles towards robbery, it is of special interest to observe the number and type of sentences. Of the 38 given by the court, 37 were imprisonment sentences and only one was a fine. This figure suggests that a juvenile committing a robbery has a 97 percent probability to be imprisoned if caught.

Tendency No. 5: It can be seen that imprisonment is proportional to the increasing number of criminal acts. In 2002, 2004 and 2006, about 100 juvenile cases were brought to the Court of Tirana. In only 2 of them were the charges dropped and in only one was the juvenile declared innocent. This means that the other 97 juvenile offenders were all sentenced to imprisonment. This figure suggests that a juvenile committing theft when sentenced has a 97 percent probability to be imprisoned.

Tendency No. 6: One can see that imprisonment of offenders of criminal acts is ineffective when trying to prevent further criminal behaviour. As juvenile delinquency increased, the court of Tirana responded with more imprisonment sentences. It is needless to say that this does not weaken deviant behaviour. On the contrary, an increasing juvenile delinquency tends to go hand in hand with an increasing use of juvenile imprisonment. Furthermore, court decisions are not supported and coordinated with other necessary services such as community work, obligatory participation in professional training courses, family assistance, family work, etc.

Tendency No. 7: According to records of sentences from the Court of Tirana, we can observe an increasing tendency of juvenile offenders to collaborate with each other. In 2002, no juvenile was convicted for crime in collaboration whereas in 2004, they were 11 and in 2006, 12 to be convicted for such crime. This should serve as an alarm signal for policy makers and law enforcers because it reveals a tendency of juveniles to affiliate with organized groups, a first step towards further organized crime. This can also mean possible child and juvenile exploitation by adults.
Previous experiences with juveniles reveal that there are various models of prevention programs and treatment of anti-social or problematic behaviour. The establishment, implementation and evaluation of such models depend on individual, family environment and community factors. In general, the most successful models are those which:

- Identify problematic areas and identify risk and supportive factors to which children and community are exposed;
- Are very focused on the population exposed to a group of risk factors;
- Identify multiple risk factors in multiple environments (families, schools);
- Offer multiple interventions through many systems;
- Ensure that programs are intensive and include daily and weekly contacts with juveniles at risk;
- Focus on intensification of positive virtues of youth and juveniles;
- Not only intervene individually but also work to improve interpersonal relations;
- Intervene at the earliest possible age.

1. Prevention and intervention

Prevention and intervention are two different concepts in time and manner.

- Prevention consists to tackle problems before being physically and verbally expressed and is aimed towards the entire population.
- Intervention is aimed at individuals who are at risk or are already involved in criminal activities, and it intends to decrease or eliminate a problematic behaviour.

Early prevention significantly lowers chances for juveniles to adopt a problematic behaviour. Preventive programs are set up for all children regardless of the fact that some are more at risk than others. These programs are considered as primary or universal programs. Some are specifically designed for children with expressed criminal involvement tendencies and are known as secondary programs for prevention. There are also specific programs for youth and juveniles that are already involved in criminal activities those are considered as tertiary programs. Intervention programs include population at high risk or violent juveniles. In such manner they should be undertaken as primary, secondary and tertiary programs.

**Primary programs** focus on conduct and attitudes – training for such basic conduct, monitoring and intensifying good behaviour, applying behavioural techniques for class
management, capacity building of schools, ensuring continuous progress for juveniles through other programs, encouraging associative rather competitive learning, and establishing of programs for youth positive development.

**Secondary programs** focus on specific groups of juveniles who have already expressed tendencies for criminal behaviour. Main features are parental training, getting familiar with family environments, educational compensation with specific programs as needed, inspiring of moral reasoning for committed or intended acts, encouragement for applying conflict resolving virtues and positive thinking.

**Tertiary programs** are directed towards juveniles with expressed criminal behaviour and intend to inspire thinking and judgment towards social perspectives, role taking and their completion along responsibilities and pleasures going with it, interventions from various models, interventions for remodelling, training for necessary virtues, couple and family therapies from specialized staff in the related area and coordination of services for improving the situation.

As it can be understood from the outlined presentation there are many preventive and intervention programs. The following program is known as **Social Cognitive Model for Prevention**.

2. A socio-cognitive model of prevention

Many research reached the conclusion that criminal and problematic behaviour of youth is often related to a lack for virtues for resolving social problems. When children and adolescents face situation for which they are emotionally and cognitively unprepared, they tend to react with in a violent and aggressive way. Many specialists support the thesis that a child’s skills for resolving social situations in a non-violent manner can be improved by inspiring social relations with other children and by teaching them to interpret discussions/reactions of conduct so they can be socially prepared when facing potential conflicts. (Nadel and others, 1996).

Social-cognitive intervention focuses on giving children basic social tools and qualities in order to prepare them to react in a constructive manner when they will face difficult social situations, like being the last in a soccer team for example.

This model puts children in a position where they can learn social traits while observing or interacting with parents, teachers, friends, relatives and other people in their community up to the involvement of media role models.

Social cognitive interventions include didactic learning, modelling and learning of roles with the purpose of positive social interactions, learning of non-violent methods for resolving of conflicts and establishing a non-violent trust of juveniles.

3. Best practices for a social-cognitive intervention

Social-cognitive practices to prevent criminal behaviour have proven effective, especially
in short-term periods. In the following text we will try to present few steps to be taken into consideration.

i. Identify groups that you intend to work with
Chances of success when trying to prevent aggressive behaviour and attitudes are particularly high when working with children in early ages. This model should include all children and not only those with problematic behaviours. If this is impossible, the most urgent needs should be identified and resources (financial as well as human) made available.

ii. Take into consideration cultural and demographic environment of potential participants
Social-cognitive interventions should take into consideration the environment in which children live so as to adjust the approach. Doing so would enable those who intervene to better prepare children when they are dealing with difficulties in their social environment such as drugs, alcohol, poverty, divorce, etc.

iii. Choose the appropriate environment to complete the program
Many social-cognitive interventions are carried out in schools for practical reasons. Teachers are present and children are there several hours a day. However, these interventions can also be carried out in other environments where children can be brought together. For example children who dropped from school can attend meetings in community centres, quarters of religious institutions or any other organizations.

iv. Involve the community
Social-cognitive interventions should not be carried out in an empty space. The community should be involved in order to prevent anti-social behaviours. Parents and custodians should play an active role in helping children understand and fully assimilate principles taught by these programs. The impact of any social-cognitive intervention depends on the school’s attitude in general, from administrators and teachers to children themselves. They must all have a practical role. Regardless of the good functioning of these working groups, the outside support of parents, teachers and community remains crucial to maximize the effective and positive impact on children.

v. Determine clear objectives for the intervention
Social cognitive interventions promote social capabilities through the development of children’s communication and interpersonal skills. Doing so increases the chance to avoid conflict or to resolve them in non-violent ways.

vi. Carefully choose the appropriate intervention and the respective needed material
The choice of a technique is based on the participant’s age. However, models often include:
- negotiation, critical thinking and decision making virtues;
- identifying, managing and confronting skills with different emotions including anger, envy etc.;
• training to help predict consequences of a verbal and nonverbal behaviour;
• finding of non-violent alternatives;
• moral reasoning.

When preparing training material, specialists suggest that teachers be involved in these programs, that children be put in different cultural groups for them to learn tolerance towards changes, and that factors which contribute to violent behaviour be taught using language they are familiar with.

Intervention programs for students should be specifically designed for pupils and students in general on one hand, but particularly for those with violent reactions and behaviour on the other hand.

First groups should be separated by age. It’s important to remember that children in elementary school can develop criminal behaviour very fast.

For older students in elementary school, work should focus on the development of communication skills which help children to tackle problems in non-violent ways.

As for secondary school students, emphasis should be put on role-playing activities, especially those designed to increase peaceful conflict resolution abilities.

Used methods for children already involved in criminal behaviour are different. Children should be involved in activities which can reduce their anger, make them feel better and increase their self-control skills. They should then be taught ways of expressing their anger, frustration, and disappointments without harming others, and ways to analyze consequences of their violent behaviour.

Besides outlined activities and steps, the following are recommended for this program:
• include various activities and material so children and juvenile will pay attention;
• report violence to media and discussions etc.;
• involve teachers in the training process;
• coordinate activities with other agencies;
• carefully select the staff;
• associate this intervention with other interventions or strategies;
• train teachers and other people to get involved and committed throughout the program;
• continuously encourage the commitment of participants;
• continuously evaluate the program.
a) Findings and conclusions of the research

The research on juvenile delinquency in Albania aimed not only to identify the risk factors and individual characteristics of children in conflict with the law, but also to formulate several conclusions and recommendations for all the actors in the area of the administration of juvenile justice. This is especially important for policy-makers of all the levels that can indeed influence short and long term activities organized by institutions, agencies and organizations working on juvenile delinquency.

This research aimed to make experts’ and field workers’ voices heard. As they face juveniles’ problems on a daily basis, their experience and opinions are valuable to improve the situation of juvenile delinquency in the country.

Findings and conclusions of the research:

1. The problem of juveniles in conflict with the law is a serious problem for the whole society.
   Juveniles already involved in criminal activities have more chances to be in conflict with the law as they become adults. Furthermore, they bear the risk of broader involvement in serious criminal offences in later ages of their life.  

The objects of this research were children and young people exposed to the risk factors of crime and delinquency and children and young people who were not under such circumstances. The researchers proved that whenever the risk factors were stronger than supporting measures towards children and young people, the risk of being involved in criminal or anti-social activities was higher. Otherwise when supporting social measures towards children and young people are applied the effect of risk factors for juvenile delinquency is smaller. Since most of the risk factors are present throughout Albania there is a real danger for children and young people to be often in conflict with the law. Nonetheless this danger yet hasn’t been recognised or accepted by the wide public opinion. As a consequence these concerns are often neglected or not properly addressed in order to prevent further engagement of children and young people in severe criminal offences.

2. Information on juvenile delinquency is not sufficient
   The general public does not have sufficient information on juvenile delinquency in Albania,

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which in itself is very important to address the issue. Information is rather very important for the planning and establishment of new services in support of dealing with anti-social behaviour in order to prevent further involvement of juveniles in criminal activities. Children in conflict with the law through participatory approaches shall be included in other national / local researches to answer questions related to the frequency of their criminal behaviour, their characteristics and needs and how they compare with other juveniles. The problem of juveniles in conflict with the law should be addressed by national, regional and municipal research in order to enhance the understanding of this issue (common features, specificities, etc.).

During our research we have encountered a total absence of research on children’s behaviour in schools. There is in fact neither existing record on the number of children with deviant behaviour (elementary and secondary schools alike) nor any analysis on their family environment. Such a lack of data has a negative impact on other aspects of dealing with the problems of these children. For example, there are no records on the institutions dealing with juveniles that have already shown anti-social or criminal behaviour.

On the other hand, police annual reports contain records on the number of convicted children and details regarding the type of criminal offences committed. Police records are based on rough data taken from the Ministry of Interior and thus present only a very general view of the juvenile delinquency. Recently, these records were updated and now include information on groups: up to 14 years old and from 14-18 years old. Police records do not however contain information on the personality, gender, education and social background of young offenders. The situation seems very similar at the General Prosecutors Office. Information is limited to figures and rough data.

The Ministry of Justice has records on offences committed by juveniles but does not have specific information on juvenile’s personality. Files contain information on the type of criminal offences, sentences, medical files or education and alternative means applied on juvenile offenders. However the difference between the Police and the Ministry of Justice records call for an increased cooperation and synchronization of data collection and analysis at their disposal.

3. Juvenile delinquency is a financial and social burden for taxpayers and society. Children and juveniles in conflict with the law are a financial drain on the public purse, because they shall receive support through specific services in schools, youth agencies, police and justice, social structures, mental health institutions etc. Juvenile offenders shall receive assistance from almost all the child and youth support agencies.

Many children in conflict with the law become persistent law breakers. They will become a burden on society throughout their entire life and as a result incur more costs for the public purse. Under these conditions the financial costs of care for juveniles in conflict with the law are a financial cost to be shared by the whole society.

4. Lack of services and supportive measures increases the risks of children and juveniles to get involved in illicit activities
Children and juveniles in conflict with the law represent a significant number of people. However, they are not always seen as being in need for supporting services. The granting of provisions of services and other social measures would lower the risk of the juveniles to be in conflict with the law or to become future serious offenders.

Services offered to this group of juveniles have to be integrated. The lack of coordination regarding services offered to juveniles, lack of case records, lack of appropriate information often leads to overlapping of case management and services. Non-integrated services are less effective than the integrated ones, especially when the latest ones are properly planned and evaluated.

5. Early intervention is crucial when dealing with children with anti-social tendencies and behaviour
Although in Albania there have been sporadic efforts made by local organizations to help juveniles, there is a lack of continuous and early interventions measures to prevent anti-social tendencies and behaviour among juveniles, which could lead to criminal behaviour. More specifically, special preventive and re-integrative programs for juveniles in conflict with the law are simply not-existent, whereas they should be part of our legislation.

6. Establishment of a system for the administration of juvenile justice is an emergency
Albania doesn’t have a justice system specifically designed for juveniles. As a consequence this has made it more difficult the sentencing or rehabilitation of juvenile offenders based on their age and development characteristics. Such a lack in the administration of justice is closely related to other difficulties in terms of services to support juveniles and their families.

7. Data collection and analysis by the justice system lacks harmonisation.
The study of the Albanian criminal policy, based on the observations of magistrate’s court decisions in several districts of the country, revealed that there is a disproportional gap between the data available on juvenile delinquency from one court to another. Since few years, the Court of Tirana has established a database that includes information on juveniles such as their criminal offence and the type of sentence rendered by the court. However, other district magistrate courts do not use such a data collection and analysis, which means that data on juvenile offenders are mostly non-available.

8. Further research on criminal policy towards juveniles in Albania is required.
The Albanian criminal policy towards juveniles, as this research has revealed, shows several deficiencies and tendencies. In most cases observed by the researchers, local judges prefer imprisonment sentences rather than alternative measure of punishment. Because of the lack of disaggregated data the criminal policy could not be studied in detail and for that further research of court decisions is required.
b) Recommendations

Recommendation 1: 

*Improve and increase the level of information and public awareness on juvenile delinquency, risk factors and the need for new social services for children in conflict with the law.*

State and civil society actors shall take measures to increase the level of information for the policy makers and general public regarding the prevalence of juvenile delinquency. Information shall also include child and juvenile anti-social behaviour, number of children who receive social support and those who do not, type of risk factors that they face and the work undertaken to reduce or eliminate those factors. Information on existing preventive measures should also be made widely available.

Recommendation 2: 

*Establish the system for the administration of juvenile justice in Albania.*

The establishment of a well-functioning system of the administration of juvenile justice is an urgent need for the juveniles in conflict with the law and compliance of Albania with international human rights standards. Lawmakers and governmental officials at national and local level shall tackle this issue more seriously by dealing with juveniles in conflict with the law on case by case bases, in order to answer to their specific needs.

Recommendation 3: 

*Establish a juvenile - friendly justice system (Juvenile Courts).*

The establishment of a juvenile friendly justice system should be accompanied with a better engagement of the professionals such as social workers and psychologists in order to establish a flexible case management system. The inclusion of professionals in this system would give a further possibility to the application of alternative measures, followed with the evaluation of the improvement of juvenile behaviour, counselling and advice, based on successful models of behaviour modelling, strengthening of family ties and support, public awareness etc.

Recommendation 4: 

*Formulate and implement new effective programmes for the prevention of child and juvenile delinquency.*

The study of the child behaviour in schools by experts and professionals would make possible the formulation and implementation of new effective programmes for the prevention of child and juvenile delinquency. These programmes would not only analyse information and data on factors that influence problematic behaviour observed at different stages of children and juvenile development but in return they would intervene at early stages to eliminate such factors. In any case the inclusion of social workers and psychologists in such programmes would facilitate the overall process of identification of risk factors, prevention, treatment and elimination of anti-social behaviours that appear at early stages of child or juvenile development.

Recommendation 5: 

*Policy-makers shall allocate more funding to services for children and juveniles in conflict with law.*

The policy-makers shall plan and allocate more funding to services for children and juveniles
in conflict with the law. The budget planning and fund allocation shall be balanced and shall take into consideration on one hand the need to deal with causes and factor of juvenile delinquency and on the other hand the need for well-established interventions and services for children and juveniles in conflict with the law. In our opinion many policy-makers lack awareness on the importance of early interventions to eliminate the causes of juvenile delinquency and thus choose not to fund early treatment programs that, in long-term would be beneficial for juveniles and taxpayers in Albania.

Recommendation 6:
Reorganise and reform the child protection system in Albania.
The situation of children and juveniles in conflict with the law underlines the need to establish a more functional system for child and youth care and protection. Although specific components of this system may function, they haven’t been inclusive and do not take into consideration the need for a better geographical distribution and new services. This system needs to be reorganised and reformed in order to answer to every child and juvenile in need for care and protection.

The establishment of a functional and effective child protection system would be highly beneficial. It would help to provide support for the normal development of the child and resources to meet basic needs such as health care, education, social services and protection from violence, factors that often stimulate criminal behaviour.

Recommendation 7:
Establish a unified and harmonised system of data collection and analysis on juvenile delinquency.
In researchers opinion the Ministry of Justice has a direct responsibility to prepare a unified and harmonised system of data collection and analysis on juvenile delinquency, both at local and national level. Such a system would be a valuable tool for public policy intervention and would help to follow up and analyze juvenile delinquency in Albania.

Recommendation 8:
Apply new models of communication among peers and teachers in schools
The Ministry of Education and Education Authorities shall introduce modules and courses in the school curricula related to behaviour management and social interaction among peers and teachers. New models shall be applied within school curricula or as extra-curricula activities in order to train and communicate to children, juveniles and teachers non-violent attitudes among peers or among children and teachers. This would require further training of teachers and educators throughout the country.

Recommendation 9:
Carry out further in-depth research analysis on criminal policy towards juveniles in conflict with law in order to improve public policies.
Faced with a reality where there is a lack of harmonized and partially insufficient data on juvenile delinquency it becomes evident the need to carry out further in-depth research analysis on criminal policy towards children and juveniles in conflict with law. Such a research
would not only assist the justice system to reform itself into a more child-friendly system but it would have a tremendous impact on public policies for juveniles in Albania. Further research on criminal policies would pave the way for improved analysis and recommendations towards the age of criminal responsibility, the justice system reform and the application of appropriate alternative measures.

**Recommendation 10:**

*Strengthen the cooperation among state institutions and civil society.*

Central and local government shall cooperate with all actors of civil society and professional organisations concerned with child / youth care and protection. Together, they should plan and offer support and services to juveniles and families in need. Their cooperation should ensure that is made available throughout the country to as many young people as possible.
Annex 1 – List of interviewees

For the city of Tirana

1. Ilir Zhurka – In charge of children’s issues in the Police District of Tirana
2. Ogerta Manastirliu – Director of social services department, Tirana city hall
3. Gladiola Musabelli – Head of children’s rights sector, Tirana city hall
5. Elona Haska – Specialist in the department of justice for juveniles, ministry of justice

For the Block area

1. Viola Sterio – Community liaison officer
2. Musa Bregasi – Community liaison officer
3. Guri Ocelli – Community liaison officer
4. Qirjako Dhima – Community liaison officer
5. Jeta Seitaj – Head of Municipality Unit No. 5
6. Ana Koka – In charge of social supports, Municipality Unit No. 5
7. Ilir Sula – Chief of Police Station No. 2
8. Perparim Alimuça – Chief of criminal police, Police Station No. 2

For the Bathore area

1. Hasan Kukeli – Head of administrative unit of Bathore
9. Qani Lami – Chief of criminal police, Police Station No. 5
2. Ramazan Xhediku – Specialist of criminal police, Bathore
3. Shkelqim Cakani – Specialist of criminal police, Bathore
4. Agim Cani – Mayor of Kamza
5. Luljeta Prenci – Principal of the secondary school in Bathore
6. Antigona Zhuri – Project coordinator in Global Care
7. Sose Bari – Secretary of administrative unit of Bathore

For the Kombinat area

1. Irfan Dashi – Head of Municipal Unit No.6, Kombinat
2. Arikla Cela – Social worker, Head of Municipal Unit No.6, Kombinat
3. Blerina Hysaj – Lawyer, Head of Municipal Unit No.6, Kombinat
4. Rexhep Cullahi – Community liaison officer
5. Rustem Murjia – Community liaison officer
6. Perparim Zenuni – Community liaison officer
7. Nebi Ismaili – Community liaison officer
8. Dritan Dorda – Former chief of the criminal police, Police Station No. 6, Kombinat
9. Petrit Gjokaza – Chief of the criminal police, Police Station No. 6, Kombinat
10. Perparim Zenuni – Specialist of the police, Police Station No. 6, Kombinat
11. Robert Losha – Specialist of the criminal police, Police Station No. 6, Kombinat
12. Gjin Vakikaj – Chief of section of police, Police Station No. 6, Kombinat
13. Rajmonda Prifti – Head of the Center for women and children, Kombinat

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