WOMEN'S COMMISSION
for refugee women & children

MAKING THE CHOICE FOR A BETTER LIFE

Promoting the Protection and Capacity of Kosovo's Youth

Report of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children
Mission to Albania and Kosovo 1999 - 2000

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MISSION STATEMENT

Since its founding in 1989 under the auspices of the International Rescue Committee, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children has sought to improve the lives of refugee women and children through a vigorous and comprehensive program of public education and advocacy. The Women's Commission is the only organization in the United States dedicated to speaking out solely on behalf of women, children and adolescents uprooted by war, violence or persecution.

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CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Prompted by the refugee emergency in the region and as part of ongoing advocacy on behalf of children and adolescents affected by armed conflict, between June 16 and July 16, 1999 the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (Women's Commission) conducted a field investigation of the protection and care situation of Kosovar adolescents in Albania and Kosovo. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR's) *Guidelines for the Protection and Care of Refugee Children* were used as guiding principles. The mission was originally intended to focus only on Kosovars in Albania, but shortly after arrival, it was clear that returns were taking place so quickly that the focus of the mission should be shifted to also include Kosovo itself. The Women's Commission returned to Kosovo two times – in November 1999 and February 2000 – before conducting an in-depth participatory research project in May and June 2000. The latter involved the mobilization of 24 adolescents and seven adults in five municipalities to engage young people in discussions about the issues that concern them, using a child rights and protection framework for analysis. The youth nongovernmental organization (NGO) the Kosovar Youth Council (KYC) was a main partner in this research, with funding from American Jewish World Service. It was also undertaken with the collaborative support of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and with support from UNHCR and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Gjakova/Djakovica and OSCE Rahovec/Orahovac. The results of this work are presented here.

This report is the first in what will become a series of four research studies addressing, through participatory research, the particular concerns of adolescents affected by war. It follows recent research and advocacy conducted by the Women's Commission on patterns and practices in international approaches to adolescents affected by armed conflict, which resulted in the study *Untapped Potential: Adolescents Affected by Armed Conflict.* The series of field research studies seeks to mobilize young people in assessing their own needs and strengths, at the same time engaging international and local organizations and governments working on their behalf. The studies will not only increase knowledge about adolescents in armed conflict, providing a comparative look at gaps and accomplishments in international protection of older children, but will also provide concrete direction for increased and improved services and protection to young people in the areas surveyed, as well as globally.

Notes on Language Usage – For the purposes of this report, the terms "child," "adolescent," "youth" and "young people" are used in the following ways: A "child" reflects the international definition laid forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as "every human being below the age of 18 unless the age of majority is attained earlier;" "Adolescents" among them are older children through age 17; "Youth" stretch from older children to young adults; and "young people" encompass the gamut. As described in Section VII, "adolescence" and "youth" take on distinct meanings in Kosovo relating to specific ages, events and developmental stages in an individual's life. The above terms must be seen in this context. For their protection, pseudonyms are used for all youth quoted in the report.

While the Albanian spelling is Kosova and the Serbian is Kosovo, the version used traditionally in English is Kosovo and is thus used throughout this document. When city and municipality names are used, both Albanian and Serbian spellings are included, with the Albanian first, followed by the Serbian and separated by a slash mark. Where one spelling is used, the word is the same in both languages. In the case of the capital city, Prishtina is used, as the Serbian spelling differs only with the use of an accent mark, which creates the sound "sh" in English. However, for simplicity, the names of the youth teams involved in the research project use only one spelling of the town from which they are from, depending on the main ethnicity of the youth involved. The self-identified "Gypsies" of Kosovo are commonly referred to as Roma, but include several groups or castes, such as Roma and Hashkalija. The Egyptians referred to throughout this report are among the Hashkalija, who speak Albanian and are Muslim. Some believe their roots to trace back to Egypt, perhaps as a result of their ancestors leaving India with Alexander the Great, whose army traveled to Egypt. Egyptians increasingly have self-identified as such, in part to differentiate themselves from Roma, some of whom collaborated with Serbs during the conflict.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"'Can we live with the Serbs?' Never!" one Albanian Kosovar adolescent said during a discussion at which young Kosovar refugees contemplated their return to Kosovo. Another countered, "But some of them helped us get to safety," and a third said, "No, no, you can't trust any of them."
Youth focus group discussion, Tirana, Albania, June 1999

"Never can we live together with Albanians," a Serbian adolescent girl said after being asked about the possibility of living in a multiethnic society in Kosovo. Another said, "Why not? We were friends before. We could be friends again." Likewise, in a separate discussion, one Albanian girl commented, "They killed and raped us; how can we live with them?" Yet another said, "It is difficult now, but perhaps for future generations, yes. If it happens, it will be the youth who will make it possible."
Adolescent-led youth focus group discussions, Kosovo, June 2000

Following the war in Kosovo, the international community provided unprecedented support to address the unmet needs of adolescents, but despite this assistance, young people are not being fully integrated into reconstruction efforts, with potentially devastating consequences for lasting peace and stability in Kosovo and the region. Thousands of youth benefited from much-needed psychosocial and education programs that helped them begin to pick up the pieces of their lives, and youth programming in the early stages of reconstruction built a foundation for addressing the future needs of youth and their communities. However, international and local actors have failed to adequately consult Kosovo's youth and fully include them in decision-making and initiatives for reconstruction and development. At the same time, many of the most "at-risk" youth are falling through the cracks of more mainstream programming interventions for young people. As the adults of tomorrow and as they continue to face the difficult challenges of recovery, how Kosovo's young people choose to address their circumstances and how others choose to support them will determine their success at building a better life for themselves and their communities. More than half of Kosovo's nearly 2 million people are under age 24. Failure to address youth issues means ongoing rights violations committed against, and increasingly by, young people, providing a legacy of conflict for future generations. It also means millions of wasted dollars spent on reconstruction and development assistance that does not respond to the urgent and emerging needs of youth or adequately support their strengths and critical roles in the recreation of Kosovar society.

Adolescent-led interviews conducted with nearly 300 of their peers, averaging 16 years of age, reveal that despite the deep ethnic divisions that remain in Kosovo, young people of different ethnic backgrounds share strikingly similar concerns. Albanian, Serb, Egyptian (Hashkalija) and Bosniac youth rank security and psychological and social (psychosocial) recovery as their top concerns. Most express a need to experience real freedom, and all face enormous challenges in accessing education and healthcare and in overcoming the debilitating effects of gender inequality. However, despite these significant areas of common ground, few young people appear prepared, even minimally, to acknowledge the experiences and suffering of their perceived opponents, and intolerance, violence and insecurity, both within and between ethnic groups, remain pervasive in their lives. Few also feel they have any real power to effect positive changes in their lives and communities. Most venerate their military heroes, and they continue to live in a wholly militarized environment, the abnormality of which has become the norm. However, young people need to make decisions and act to shape the environment in which they would truly like to live. Yet they have little first-hand experience of the peace they so long for and few tools at their disposal to help them take constructive action to create it.

Kosovar adolescents and young adults have directly experienced the brutality of civil strife and war, beginning not just with the bombardment of Yugoslav forces by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on March 24, 1999, but well before, in early childhood and adolescence. In their short lifetimes,

they have endured the systematic decimation of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual schools, marketplaces, health centers and governmental institutions, which deliberately violated their rights, undermined their well-being and placed their future security at risk. They have seen attempts at non-violent change succumb to war, and many adolescent boys and girls even volunteered to go to war.

During the conflict in 1999, ethnic Albanian young people in particular were the deliberate targets of war and persecution at the hands of Yugoslav forces. Children and adolescents were expelled from their homes, murdered, wounded, imprisoned, tortured, sexually abused, separated from family members, employed as soldiers, psychologically traumatized, orphaned and more. Approximately 23 percent of the persons remaining on the International Committee of the Red Cross Missing Persons list are aged 25 and under, primarily Albanian males. Children and adolescents comprised more than half of the 860,000 Kosovar refugees who sought refuge in Albania (444,600), Macedonia (344,500) and Montenegro (69,900) and the estimated 600,000 internally displaced Kosovars, who received little to no international humanitarian assistance during the conflict. International response to their assistance and protection needs in Albania was at best uneven, due in part to lack of emergency preparedness and poor coordination of assistance activities. Humanitarian assistance providers interviewed by the Women's Commission universally agreed that due to the quick end of the war and the refugees' rapid return home, Kosovar young people narrowly escaped deeper protection problems, such as increases in prostitution, trafficking, drug use and selling, criminality and lack of access to school and adequate heath care.

Today, young people's concerns about security are closely linked to their psychological and social concerns, as violence has caused a sense of loss, fear and hopelessness. They complain of general lawlessness and frustration over a lack of justice for crimes committed during and since the war. They also report fears about landmines and unexploded ordinance and express strong concerns about the widespread possession of weapons by youth (especially guns), particularly in Albanian communities, and criticize the limited efforts by parents, teachers and other authorities to address the problem. Albanian adolescent girls cite kidnapping, trafficking, sexual violence and exploitation as their number one concern.[1] Girls also continue to be exposed to sexual violence and domestic violence, and those who suffered sexual abuse during the war recover largely in isolation, in part due to deep cultural taboos surrounding disclosure of gender-based violence. Rural girls have difficulty accessing education opportunities, and all young people report little knowledge about reproductive and other health issues, but indicate a strong desire to learn more. Young people seeking to speak out against intolerance must do so at some risk to their own security, and youth in general need safe spaces to begin to discuss the root causes of their insecurity and identify viable courses of action.

For Serb and other ethnic minority youth, NATO's entry into Kosovo on June 12, 1999 marked the beginning of a rapid worsening of their situation, as tens of thousands fled vengeance attacks by ethnic Albanians, including abduction, beatings, murder, harassment and the destruction of homes and other property. Minority youth report as their top concerns lack of freedom of movement, the prevalence of weapons, loss of loved ones, hopelessness and uncertainty about the future. Many minority communities live in enclaves or villages and face on-going armed grenade and arson attacks by ethnic Albanians. Egyptian (Hashkalija) youth in particular fear beatings and harassment from Albanian youth beyond the perimeter of their protected neighborhoods, and in general, whether they are living with Serbs or Albanians, they are considered and treated as second class citizens. Many Serb youth distrust the activities of NATO allies working in Kosovo and do not feel represented by them. They are largely excluded from accessing civil society processes due to security problems and boycotts of these processes by adults in their communities.

United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) International Police records show that from January to August 2000, young people between the ages of 10 and 25 were responsible for 27.6

[1] While trafficking of Kosovar girls outside of Kosovo for sexual or other purposes has not been confirmed, trafficking of women and girls into Kosovo for the purposes of prostitution and sexual slavery is occurring. UNMIK International Police confirm that international workers and members of KFOR are among those who solicit prostitutes, and one U.S. serviceperson was convicted of the sexual assault and murder of an adolescent girl.

percent of a total 24,338 offenses, ranging from rape and murder to burglary and traffic violations. Supporters of juvenile justice report a strong need to rehabilitate and improve structures for dealing with juvenile offenders, a significant number of whom have been erroneously jailed by international law enforcement officials. Youth involvement in interethnic violence in Kosovo since the war has not been fully analyzed by any group or individual, and in general, further analysis is needed of the range of social, economic and other factors leading to juvenile crime in order to prevent it.

International donors have contributed an estimated $6 million for programs targeting youth since the end of the war, the majority of which has been dedicated to the formation of youth centers and other much-needed psychosocial and awareness-raising activities. But many initiatives that are critical to the future of Kosovo and that go well beyond the purview of youth sector NGOs alone have wholly left out youth. UNICEF reports, for example, that while youth are entering the workforce in large numbers, efforts to develop an economic recovery plan for Kosovo have not included a labor market or skills survey and discussion about linking economic development with appropriate vocational training has been limited and has not resulted in major programs. Decision-makers at all levels are also challenged to bring the most "at risk" youth and their concerns out of isolation to receive the attention they desperately need and deserve. These young people include, but are not limited to: adolescent girls, particularly survivors of sexual and domestic violence and those without access to school; out-of-school youth in need of skills training, employment and other activities; minority youth in need of increased support in all areas of their lives; young people living in rural areas, or who have migrated from villages to urban areas; boys (and some girls) engaging in criminal activities, including drug use, weapons possession and organized crime; internally displaced persons (IDP) and returning refugee youth; orphaned, widowed and single parent youth; and disabled youth.

Attempts at coordination among agencies working on youth issues faltered for many months following the war, and international interventions for youth contributed to competition among local youth organizations, rather than fostering much-needed cooperation. Youth NGOs and individual youth have undertaken a wide range of community-based initiatives but have not succeeded in organizing themselves to form a more influential, non-political voice for Kosovar youth. Interagency coordination has improved, however, due in part to the creation of a Department of Youth (DOY) within UNMIK, around which primarily international youth sector agencies began to organize. Recent UNMIK efforts to mobilize youth for municipal elections and to address the issues of tolerance and non-violence through a Youth Week event have improved leadership and direction for recognizing and supporting the capacities of youth as constructive civil society actors. Other initiatives, such as a youth-led Youth Congress planned for 2001 promise additional opportunities for bringing youth voices to the fore of public discussion. The DOY has pledged itself to promoting youth concerns, but it continues to require full backing within UNMIK, both financially and in terms of the central importance of its mandate to all UNMIK operations. UNMIK as a whole must provide stronger leadership in integrating youth into decision-making and in monitoring and reporting on the protection of children and adolescents in Kosovo, responding comprehensively to such mechanisms as the Security Council's resolutions 1261 and 1314 on children in armed conflict.

Offering adolescents and young adults alternatives to violence, promoting their respect for the rule of law, dealing with their specific protection, education, livelihood, health and psychosocial needs and promoting and supporting their leadership will contribute to their healing and provide a new path into the future for Kosovo as a whole. Many young people have worked hard to care for themselves and their families and to engage in activities to support the recovery of their communities. The participatory nature of research undertaken with youth described in this report led to further youth-initiated community-based action and confirms that with support and encouragement, young people can accomplish great things. Youth concerns and input must be seen as essential to all decision-making surrounding the reconstruction and development of Kosovo, and efforts are needed to encourage and maximize their participation in all decisions and processes that affect their lives. Their energy, resilience and optimism may ultimately offer one of the brightest glimmers of hope for a better, more tolerant and peaceful Kosovo.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority of the following recommendations were generated by Kosovar youth themselves and require a range of actors to respond, from the UN Security Council, UNMIK, KFOR, police, donors and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, to youth, parents and other community members.

A. Prioritize and Include Youth Issues in Decision-Making About Kosovo

1. Ensure that all decisions taken by UNMIK fully account for youth interests, in part by providing full financial and policy support for the Department of Youth (DOY) and municipal counterparts and by maximizing inter-departmental collaboration on youth issues and increasing youth participation in decision-making. Attention to "at risk" youth, education, employment and youth leadership, along with the promotion of non-violence and tolerance among youth should be prioritized. Efforts must be made to build trust among minority youth and to increase their access to civil and political processes where they are interested in participating. UNMIK should also create mechanisms by which full reporting to the Security Council on protection and assistance to children, adolescents and youth takes place.

2. Improve access to healthcare for adolescents by providing youth-friendly outreach and sensitivity training to healthcare providers, emphasizing gender sensitivity and youth access to confidential reproductive health information and services.

3. Collect and utilize comprehensive data on youth, including accurate numbers on, and information about:
   - out-of -school youth, especially girls and minorities;
   - youth in school, their interests and concerns;
   - former adolescent soldiers;
   - juvenile offenders, including the number of youth with weapons;
   - working youth, within households, on farms and in other areas;
   - Kosovo's labor force, skills needs and growing youth employment needs;
   - accurate population statistics, including youth of voting age;
   - IDP, orphaned and widowed adolescents and their educational, economic and social status;
   - youth victims of violence, including survivors of sexual and domestic violence;
   - youth health information, including abortion, STD and HIV/AIDS rates and other reproductive health concerns;
   - handicapped youth, their particular disabilities and their access to school and other services; and
   - youth activists and their issues and activities.

4. Focus the efforts of the Ombudsman for Human Rights squarely on the enforcement of the full range of children's and youth's rights, opposing impunity for abuses committed in the past and promoting the prevention of further abuses. The development of human rights policies within Kosovo, particularly within UNMIK, that address the rights of children and youth should also be promoted, taking every opportunity to engage youth in this process.

5. Mandate continued United Nations support for assistance to Kosovo through the United Nations Security Council, including targeted support for children, adolescents and other youth, particularly in the areas of security and support for their education and livelihood. The disarmament of civil society, including youth, should be a priority, and economic development policies should include plans for integrating young people into the recovering economy.

6. Donors should support policies and programs in Kosovo that develop the capacities and address the specific needs of adolescents and other youth, viewing them as essential to securing the future peace and stability of Kosovo and the region.

7. Youth NGOs and other national NGOs must continue to monitor the situation of youth, involve youth in programming and advocate for their protection and full participation in society. They also must take action to increase coordination among themselves and take the lead as advocates, including at a Youth Congress planned for 2001. They must take advantage of education opportunities and, with support from adults, define and create the communities, freedom and future they most desire.

B. End Insecurity

1. Create safe spaces for young people to consider and address the root causes of insecurity, including ethnic intolerance and gender discrimination. These spaces could include: discussions and activities in youth, women's and community centers; schools; seminars on human rights and peaceful conflict resolution; youth advocacy and a Youth Congress; music, art and writing; and other efforts.

2. Build community-based partnerships to develop a culture of non-violence and crime prevention among youth, bringing together KFOR, International Police, youth, parents, social workers, teachers, non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations and other community members, including:
   - direct community police work with youth for crime prevention;
   - creative incentives for decreasing weapons possession among youth and adults;
   - interaction with juvenile offenders to understand and address the full range of social, economic, political and psychological dynamics driving their activities;
   - confidential procedures for reporting and addressing crimes against girls and minority youth; and
   - increased personal communication between minority youth, KFOR and International Police to ensure concrete and consistent follow-up on youth suggestions for improved security.

3. Provide child rights and child protection training for KFOR, International Police and other international personnel in Kosovo, and establish independent monitoring mechanisms to ensure children's protection and the implementation and fulfillment of child rights standards.

4. Address crimes committed against persons of all ethnic backgrounds during and after the war.
   - Prosecute war crimes, including those against children and adolescents, through open and impartial trials in the Hague and in national courts.
   - Release Kosovar political prisoners.
   - Deepen efforts to determine the fate of missing persons, including adolescents and children.

5. Prevent sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, and the trafficking of women and girls for sexual purposes.
   - Raise awareness among youth in schools and through print and broadcast media about sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence. For example, girls and women should be educated about trafficking prevention and their internationally recognized right to freedom from sexual and domestic violence, as well as legal recourse.
   - Work to change societal attitudes that condone violence against women and girls while ensuring support to those who choose to speak out about crimes committed against them.
   - International workers and local citizens must refrain from soliciting prostitutes.
   - Apprehend and prosecute perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence.

C. Prioritize Education, Particularly for Girls

1. Reform the education system to include:
   - participatory and practical teaching methodologies;

- flexible schedules and high school equivalency programs for out-of-school youth; and
- revised curricula, including health, reproductive health, STDs and HIV/AIDS education; life skills; peace-building; conflict resolution; human rights; gender equality; and democracy and civics education.

2. Combine skills training with economic development initiatives to create jobs for a growing number of youth workers, including minority youth and young women, as well as parents.

3. Provide literacy, life skills and vocational training to all adolescents, including minority adolescents, and especially girls, who would like to complete primary school and need assistance generating a livelihood for themselves and their families.

4. Prevent youth drug use by raising awareness among youth in schools and through media outreach about the negative health and social effects of abusing alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana and other drugs.

5. Provide secure dormitories for displaced minority youth and university students requiring accommodation in order to attend secondary school or university in Kosovo.

6. Improve professional training opportunities through increased support to secondary schools, Prishtina University and specialized schooling, such as police and military academies or school for social work.

7. Provide secure transportation services to improve access to education for girls, particularly in rural areas, and for minority adolescents.

8. Reconstruct schools with wheelchair access for disabled students and encourage their learning in regular classes, with teachers trained to fully integrate disabled students into the classroom.

D. Support the Strengths and Contributions of All Kosovar Youth

1. Build the capacity of youth as strong civil society actors.
   - Increase youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels within UNMIK, interagency coalitions, NGOs and community bodies and involve them in the implementation and evaluation of programs and policies that affect them.
   - Provide technical and funding assistance to student councils and youth associations with a focus on community activism.
   - Prioritize the drawing in of particularly "at-risk" young people, including rural girls, in efforts to improve their communities and thereby their own lives, such as through child-to-child approaches.

2. Develop a youth advocacy movement in Kosovo with a clearly identified vision for addressing youth concerns and emphasizing youth leadership and responsibility in the creation of a peaceful, stable Kosovo.
   - Support youth-to-youth outreach and interaction at the community level across Kosovo to identify the range of issues concerning young people, including the most "at-risk" youth.
   - Support the implementation of youth-identified projects responding to these concerns.
   - Mobilize youth to inform a Youth Congress in 2001 working towards practical outcomes and solutions to youth problems, and raise awareness across Kosovo about youth issues.
   - Increase interaction among youth activists throughout Kosovo and develop a broad coalition of youth groups and organizations.
   - Organize Kosovar youth input into United Nations and multilateral decision-making, including at the United Nations Special Session on Children in September 2001 and in contributing to the annual reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on children and armed conflict.
   - Ensure the full participation of girls and minority youth in these activities.

3. Foster links among Kosovar youth and youth in other Balkan countries, Europe and globally, through involvement in regional meetings of youth associations, international training opportunities and international youth conferences.

4. Create opportunities for interethnic dialogue among Kosovar youth through youth center and advocacy activities within Kosovo and through international meetings outside of Kosovo.

5. Provide more opportunities for minority youth to communicate with one another through protected excursions from one enclave to another and increased access to technology, including e-mail and telephones.

6. Create access for minority youth to civil society processes through the use of technology, such as conference calling, satellite television, and video and by holding civil society meetings in minority areas on a rotating basis.

IV. BACKGROUND

With increases in Serbian nationalism fueled by former Yugoslav President Slobodan Miloševiæ, the autonomy of Kosovo was forcibly revoked in 1989, and control over Kosovo's security forces and judiciary was shifted to the central government of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). In May 1990, all Albanian Kosovars resigned from the Kosovo government in protest, and on July 2, 1990, they declared independence and two months later created a Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, followed by a referendum in September 1991. Approximately 87 percent of more than one million eligible Kosovar voters near-unanimously affirmed the call for an independent Republic of Kosovo. Kosovar Serbs boycotted the process, but the Albanians allotted them a representative number of seats in the parliamentary elections that followed on May 24, 1992. The LDK party (Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës - Democratic League of Kosovo), led by Ibrahim Rugova, was elected with a majority of votes and pursued a strategy of non-violence. Kosovar Albanians became the daily victims of human rights violations committed by Serbian authorities, especially in smaller towns and villages.

As ethnic divisions deepened in Kosovo and Yugoslav policies of repression against Kosovar Albanians increased, the rights of children and adolescents were deliberately violated. Communication and interaction among youth of all ethnic backgrounds became increasingly difficult as an apartheid-like system was created in Kosovo, which denied education and healthcare services to Kosovar Albanian youth and revoked employment from their parents in sweeping numbers. In 1990, the Serbian government mandated classes be taught only in Serbian. Albanian literature and history were for the most part removed from the curriculum, and funding for Albanian-language schools was cut progressively. In 1991, teachers and students were barred from entering their school buildings after mounting protests over the changes, and by the beginning of 1992, the majority of Albanian-language school and university classes were up and running in private homes.[2] The curriculum remained mostly the same, but Albanian Kosovars and supporters abroad paid the costs of education.

Kosovo's health facilities were placed under "emergency management" in the summer of 1990. Nearly 2,000 ethnic Albanian health workers were fired, and a parallel health system was established, which lacked resources and failed to provide children adequate medical care, including vaccination programs. Preventable diseases such as measles and polio increased. By 1999, healthcare access had improved, but

[2] While some primary school classes continued to exist in regular school buildings, they were relegated to afternoon and evening shifts and were sometimes physically divided, including with separate Serb and Albanian entrances. As testament to the Albanian community's commitment to education, by 1999, the parallel Albanian-language education system in Kosovo was serving over 266,000 primary school, 58,700 secondary and 16,000 university students.

without an official "health card" (a document provided to those who were officially employed in Kosovo), free healthcare in state institutions was unavailable.

As the non-violent path paved by the LDK did not bear lasting fruit, support grew for civil disobedience, including student actions and the use of violence by the Kosovo Liberation Army, (KLA, in Albanian: *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*, or UÇK). From 1996 and prior to the recent war in 1999, the KLA claimed responsibility for killing 21 citizens in Kosovo – five policemen, five Serbs and eleven suspected Albanian collaborators. Armed attacks on Kosovar Albanian communities by Serb police also increased, creating large numbers of internally displaced persons and protests in Prishtina. Following the failure of several attempts brokered by the United States and other foreign powers to compel the Serb leaders to reach a peaceful solution with the Kosovar Albanians, NATO launched air attacks against Yugoslavia on March 24, 1999. The war with Serbia lasted 79 days and was brought to an end on June 10, when the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1244 and NATO suspended air strikes as Serb troops began to withdraw.[3]

A NATO-led international peacekeeping force – Kosovo Forces, or "KFOR" – entered Kosovo on June 12, 1999 under UN mandate and now numbers approximately 48,000. SC Resolution 1244 also authorized the Secretary-General to establish an interim international civilian administration, known as the UNMIK, initially led by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bernard Kouchner. UNMIK is charged with all legislative and executive powers, as well as the administration of the judiciary.[4] An International UNMIK Police force, known as the Civilian Police, or Civpol, is also deployed in Kosovo, and as of September 14, 2000, numbered 4,020 out of an authorized strength of 4,718 (which includes 1,100 special police).[5]

Kosovo's population is currently just under 2 million. An estimated 1.5 million Kosovar Albanians were displaced during the war as refugees or as internally displaced persons (IDPs) between March 1998 and June 1999. Approximately 841,000 Kosovar Albanian refugees returned to Kosovo in the first year following the war, the majority of them arriving by August 1999. In addition, between 100,000 and 150,000 Kosovars are poised to return over the coming year, mainly from European countries that are requiring them to leave. More than 150,000 Serbs went the opposite direction over the past year as they fled their homes fearing reprisal attacks by Kosovar Albanians. In June 2000, 13,900 refugees from Kosovo, including Serbs, Albanians and Roma, remained in neighboring countries, and the number of internally displaced persons registered for humanitarian assistance in FRY was 211,000, with 180,000 in Serbia and 31,000 in Montenegro.[6] Estimates of the number of ethnic minorities[7] remaining in Kosovo vary and include more than 100,000 Serbs; at least 30,000 Gypsies (including Roma and Hashkalija/Egyptians); up to 35,000 Muslim Slavs; more than 20,000 Turks; up to 12,000 Gorani; and some 500 Croats.[8]

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[3] Background information from BBC and US Information Agency websites, http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/special *report/1998/kosovo/newsid* 269000/269755.stm>; and *Kosovo Spring*, International Crisis Group Report, March 20, 1998.

[4] UNMIK promotes the establishment of substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo; performs basic civilian administrative functions; facilitates a political process to determine Kosovo's future status; supports the reconstruction of key infrastructure and humanitarian and disaster relief; maintains civil law and order; promotes human rights; and assures the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo. The four components, or pillars, of UNMIK are civil administration (United Nations-led); humanitarian assistance (UNHCR-led); democratization and institution building (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe-led) and economic development (European Union-led). A Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS), comprised of 20 departments, was also created to guide the administration of Kosovo and to ensure local involvement in this process. An Interim Administrative Council (IAC) and a Kosovo Transitional Council (KTC) also function, respectively, to guide the work of the JIAS and in an advisory capacity.

[5] "Bringing Peace to Kosovo," Status Report, UNMIK Sept 14, 2000, www.un.org/peace/kosovo/pages/kosovo_status.htm.

[6] Sources include: "Bringing Peace to Kosovo," Status Report, UNMIK Sept 14, 2000, www.un.org/peace/kosovo/pages/kosovo_status.html; US Department of State, *Kosovo Chronology: Timeline of events 1989-1999 relating to the crisis in Kosovo*, Department of State, Washington, DC, May 21, 1999; and *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo*, UN Security Council, S/2000/538, June 6, 2000, pp. 11-12.

[7] Some Serb Kosovars objected to the Women's Commission use of the word "minority" to describe their ethnic community in Kosovo, stating that "It is impossible to be a minority in one's own country." The use of the word minority throughout this report is intended only to refer to numeric population differences in ethnic communities within Kosovo alone and is in no way intended to diminish the standing of any ethnic group within Kosovo.

[8] *Assessment of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo, (Period covering November 1999 through January 2000),* OSCE, http://www.osce.org/kosovo/publications/ethnic_minorities/minorities4.htm.

Both the US and British Governments estimate the number of Kosovar Albanians killed by Serbian forces at approximately 10,000.[9] Approximately 120,000 houses were damaged or destroyed by war. A UNICEF assessment of 718 schools found that 446 had been damaged, of which 113 were completely destroyed and 147 were severely damaged. UNICEF reports that emergency repairs have been completed on 362 schools, including 37 in Category V, which were completely destroyed, and are now functioning normally.[10] In July 2000, UNICEF reported that 358,467 young people were attending primary, secondary and higher education in Kosovo, based on UNMIK figures.[11] Municipal elections were held peacefully on October 28, 2000, with the LDK winning the majority of votes throughout Kosovo and the Serbs boycotting the process.

V. RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST ADOLESCENTS IN KOSOVO MARCH – JULY 1999

Kosovar Albanians were the primary targets of ethnic cleansing by Yugoslav armed forces,[12] and adult males among them appear to have been the main targets for mass killings, but children, adolescents and women were not spared. Children and adolescents endured systematic forced expulsion from their homes; murder by gunshot wounds, burning and other means, including summary execution; wounding; torture; arbitrary apprehension, arrest and detention; gender-based violence, including sexual violence against girls in the form of rape, gang rape and sexual assault, at times in the presence of family members; the theft, loss and destruction of property; efforts to strip youth of their identity and nationality; exile as refugees and displacement internally within Kosovo; family separations; and loss of education and health services. In addition to experiencing these acts of violence and hardship, children and adolescents often witnessed horrific crimes against family members and friends. Refugees and especially those internally displaced within Kosovo also faced deprivation of food, healthcare, education and other forms of assistance and services. Inside Kosovo, some boys and girls were forced to hide at home, while mothers risked journeying outdoors in search of food and other assistance. Along with Kosovar Albanians, some Roma, Turks and other ethnic minorities were also targeted for these forms of abuse. The psychological toll taken on these children and adolescents and their wider communities is incalculable. In addition to their own fears and experiences, they suffered as part of an entire community under siege.

Adolescents, more so than younger children, bore the brunt of many of these offenses. Adolescent boys and girls were main targets for apprehension, murder and sexual violence. The effects on their health and well-being were thus also distinct. Adolescent girls, in particular, were placed at increased risk of reproductive health problems, early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Adolescents were profoundly affected by their parents' inability to protect them. Due to the loss of parents and the widespread destruction of infrastructure, many were forced to take on adult responsibilities without being fully prepared, including the care of younger children and work to generate a livelihood for themselves and their families. They thereby became increasingly vulnerable to economic and sexual exploitation and were forced to abandon education opportunities. Adolescents also participated, mainly voluntarily, in armed activities as soldiers. Many young men and women 18 years and older felt obliged to participate in the fighting as part of the KLA, and significant numbers of boys and girls under 18 also joined. Thus, many young people gained increased access to weapons and became actively engaged in the perpetration of violence, even if for the purposes of self-defense, or defense of the community.

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[9] *The Ethnic Cleansing of Kosovo, Fact Sheet based on information from U.S. Government sources*, US Department of State, June 4, 1999; http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/rpt_990604_ksvo_ethnic.html. ICTY has received reports of over 11,000 bodies and 529 gravesites, according to "Bringing Peace to Kosovo," Status Report, UNMIK Sept 14, 2000.

[10] Sources include: UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), "Developments Today," July 27, 1999 and "Bringing Peace to Kosovo," Status Report, UNMIK Sept 14, 2000.

[11] Of these, UNMIK estimated that 20,074 were Kosovar Serbs, 1,534 Turks, 6,294 Roma and 50 Croat.

[12] Testimonies received by the Women's Commission and other documentation indicate that acts of violence and other rights violations committed against ethnic Albanians and some ethnic minorities were carried out by a combination of armed, primarily Serbian, military, paramilitary, police and at times civilians, the latter also involving other ethnic minorities.

Kosovar Serbs and other minority young people not targeted by Serb forces feared NATO and KLA bomb and other armed attacks. Many lived in isolation and in hiding for periods of the conflict. Some witnessed rights violations against Albanians while others did not and have largely been shielded from the reality of their occurrence. The psychological toll of the war was heavy for minority young people, who endured the instability of war and lost family members, friends, homes and freedom during the conflict. Many young Serbs from Kosovo and other parts of Former Yugoslavia, who were required to join the Yugoslav Army at the age of 18, participated in the actions of Serb forces in Kosovo.[13] Upon NATO's entry into Kosovo on June 12, 1999 and as Serb forces retreated, ethnic minority children, adolescents and their families fled a spate of revenge attacks by ethnic Albanians that included murder, beatings, abductions and destruction of property. Children and adolescents were among those killed.

A Pattern of Expulsion and Abuse

Women's Commission interviews with Kosovar adolescent refugees and IDPs indicate a pattern of violence. The pattern involved predominantly masked perpetrators[14] arriving at the homes of ethnic Albanian families, threatening them, ordering them to leave, making demands for and taking money and then looting and/or destroying property. Sometimes threats and warnings from Serb neighbors or other Serb authorities preceded these rights violations. Other forms of violence often accompanied these actions, such as beatings and murder. Perpetrators at times threatened the lives of adolescents as a means to extort money from parents. Albanian families and individuals were often directed out of their towns and villages by Serb forces, who frequently said to them "Go to Albania," or "You wanted NATO? Let NATO protect you." Violence against Albanians and ethnic minorities also took place during flight from their homes.

Males and females, including boys and girls, were frequently separated from one another, and many males became the victims of massacres. Many girls and women were subjected to sexual and other violence, including murder. Some victims were burned alive, and many bodies were burned post-mortem, in attempts to destroy the identities of the victims and traces of the crimes. Still others were removed from killing sites and disposed of elsewhere to further eliminate evidence. These acts, including the use of masks, serve to thwart attempts by international criminal investigators to piece together evidence to convict perpetrators of war crimes. While Serb forces frequently destroyed physical evidence of war crimes, children, adolescents and adults were sometimes forced to bear witness to these crimes and carry forth the messages of terror to others.

[13] Prior to the war in 1999, fear of being forced to serve in the Yugoslav Army was a major cause of significant out-migration of teenage Albanian boys from Kosovo. Thousands of teenage males of other ethnic backgrounds in Former Yugoslavia, including Serbs, also fled forced recruitment to avoid being sent to war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo.

[14] Adolescents also said that some among the Serb forces did not wear masks and that at times, those who did removed them. They also reported to have recognized the voices of some of the masked individuals as neighbors. In these ways, they were able to identify some of the perpetrators.

Adolescents were the deliberate targets of rights violations during the war in Kosovo, and they continue to carry the physical and psychological scars of conflict with them. The 15-year-old boy who drew this picture depicted his family's expulsion from Kosovo as part of a Save the Children art project undertaken with refugee adolescents in Kavaje, Albania during the refugee crisis.

Adhurim K., a visibly traumatized 17-year-old boy from Pejë/Pec, described his ordeal of being expelled from his home, witnessing murders and fearing death:

"I've seen a lot. My life has been very difficult. I saw many people being killed in my neighborhood. A day before coming to Albania, some Serbian military wearing masks came into my house searching for money from us and telling us we had to leave. They told my father, 'If you want your children alive you'll have to pay 1,000 DM.' Because they wanted to kill me, my father was obliged to give them all the money we had. I saw them light my neighbors' house on fire as they were kicked out. Their son was inside. All the people from Pejë were gathered together to be taken to Albania. We were stopped some places on the way, and at one point they told us to raise three fingers to stay alive [explains that this refers to a Serbian symbol of 'victory' and 'long live Serbia']. Those who didn't were killed; shot dead immediately. There were lots of dead people on the road."[15]

Apprehension, Arbitrary Arrest and Detention of Kosovar Albanian Adolescents

The pattern of violence described by youth included the apprehension, arbitrary arrest and detention of thousands of civilians, including adolescents. Many of these individuals are confirmed as having been killed in captivity; others have been identified in Serbian prisons and elsewhere, and the whereabouts of others are still unknown. As described below, many adolescent girls were apprehended for the purposes of sexual violence, some of whom survived and others of whom were killed and/or are still missing. Young males, including adolescents, were randomly apprehended under Serb suspicion of being part of the KLA, or as potential candidates. They were either killed or detained and imprisoned, at times enduring beatings and torture while held.

In May 2000, the International Committee of the Red Cross published *Persons Missing in Relation to the Events in Kosovo from January 1998*, which lists information about individuals who went missing during the armed conflict in Kosovo, as reported by their families. Of the 3,368 individuals on the list at the time, 816 (or 24.2 percent of the total) were 25 years of age and younger. Most of them were Kosovar Albanian males, who were reported as having been arrested by Yugoslav forces or Serb civilians. More specifically, 21, or 0.6 percent of the total, were under 10 years of age; 39, or 1.2 percent, were between 10 and 14; 232, or 6.9 percent, were between 15 and 18; and 524, or 15.6 percent, were between 19 and 25. The significant number of civilian adolescents and young adult males reported missing is another indication that they were deliberate targets for persecution and death by Yugoslav forces, in addition to being the targets of arbitrary apprehension.

[15] Women's Commission interview, Tirana, Albania, June 24, 1999.

One young Albanian male from Gjakova/Djakovica described his experience with a missing family member: "My cousin lived in the Çabrati section of Gjakova, where the UÇK fought. Some days the Serbs would just take people randomly from the streets, accusing them of terrorism or whatever they wanted. They took my cousin on May 9, 1999, and no one has seen him since. He was 16, and he was not part of the UÇK."[16]

ICRC Kosovo representative Joy Elyahou told the Women's Commission that the number of missing women and girls is underreported, stating that female bodies have been recovered that were not reported missing by family members. The majority of females reported missing to ICRC are under 16 and over 23 or 24, which may indicate an unwillingness by families to come forward with missing persons reports on females between these ages, the reasons for which are not fully clear. As described below, many women and girls were abducted for sexual abuse and torture. Although exact figures were not provided, another ICRC representative told the Women's Commission that many of the Kosovar Albanian detainees released from Serb prisons thus far have been adolescents under the age of 18 and that a number of under-18 Kosovar Albanian males remain imprisoned in Serbia.[17]

Internally Displaced and Home-bound in Kosovo

Many young people fled their homes and remained internally displaced within Kosovo, in woods and in towns other than their own. Others stayed at home, where parents frequently hid their adolescent children. Without access to international assistance and protection, adolescents and their families faced the risks of violence and persecution and the challenges of survival on a daily basis inside Kosovo. Under these circumstances, adolescents relied upon each other for emotional support. With the upheaval also came a breakdown in social controls, and some adolescents became sexually active. Without access to reproductive health information or care, these young people were at increased risk of contracting STDs, and in the case of girls, of enduring risky pregnancies.

Maja L., a 15-year-old from Pejë, described her experience while internally displaced during the war: "During the war, we were forced out of our homes, and I lived with my family in the hills outside Pejë. It was very difficult and very scary. We had nothing, and we never knew when the Serbs might find us. Many gypsies helped the Serbs, and they knew where we were and sold us food. We were very vulnerable."[18]

Ilir K., 16, from Prishtina, lived in his apartment building for the duration of the conflict. He told the Women's Commission: "My family was one of several to remain in our apartment block during the war while everyone else had fled and all the other apartment buildings were empty. We were a group of families kind of in solidarity with one another, staying together, helping each other. There were several other teenagers in the building, too – both boys and girls. We could not go out for months. At most, I could sit on the stairs of the building for a while, but my mother made us stay inside. We heard the bombs – NATO's were the loudest. Serb military and police were just outside, and my mother was the one to go out and try to find food for us. It was very risky…. I had a relationship with one of the girls in the building during this time, and we had sex. It was the war; we were isolated; and we had only each other." [In a gesture of gratitude at the end of the interview, Ilir pulled a fresh bullet from the top drawer of his desk in his apartment, which he offered the Women's Commission researcher as a memento].[19]

[16] Women's Commission interview, Gjakova/Djakovica, November 1999.
[17] Women's Commission interviews, Gjakova/Djakovica and Prishtina, Kosovo, June 2000. The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights reported that 670 Kosovar Albanians have been convicted for crimes ranging from hostile activity against the state to terrorism, and nearly 200 more still await trial or appeals. Fourteen, including two minors, remain jailed without formal charges. From: "Lawyers Committee Urges President Koštunica to Address Fate of Kosovar Albanian Prisoners Detained in Serbia," news release, October 17, 2000.
[18] Women's Commission interview, Pejë/Pec, Kosovo, July 1999.
[19] Women's Commission interview, Prishtina, Kosovo, July 1999.

Gender-based Violence

None of the interviews conducted by the Women's Commission revealed first-hand testimony of gender-based violence in the form of sexual violence, yet the prevalence of such violence against women and girls was clear through testimony received through secondary sources, including reports from others working directly with survivors. In one instance, an ethnic Albanian girl from Pejë/Pec being interviewed by the Women's Commission declined to talk about the experiences of girls during the war because they were too difficult to discuss. Sexual violence against boys also occurred, as revealed through one second-hand account to the Women's Commission and other sources.

Several reports have documented the prevalence of sexual violence against women and girls during the conflict, which estimate that it was widespread and took many forms – rape, sexual assault, gang or collective rape, sex as "payment" and acts of human degradation. At times, torture accompanied these acts, and sometimes the victims were murdered following the sexual violence or for attempting to escape. Women and girls were also detained, sexually enslaved, forced to work and were used as human shields. Spontaneous individual acts of sexual violence, as well as collective acts, were perpetrated by Serb forces. Women and girls suffered this violence in their homes, along refugee routes and in a variety of sites after being abducted.

All documentation of sexual violence during the conflict in Kosovo, including that of the Women's Commission, revealed that the cultural taboos associated with rape in Kosovar Albanian society are so strong that speaking publicly about the violence may generate approbation and/or full rejection by family members and the wider community. For example, an ethnic Albanian girl who has been raped is unlikely to find a marriage partner if the rape is publicized, and a wife who had been raped may lose her husband. Thus, many girls, women and potentially boys and men who have survived sexual violence live with its effects in isolation, and the crimes are underreported.

It should not be assumed that women, girls, boys and men do not want to speak about their experiences under any circumstances. Rather, confidentiality, the appropriate environment and the availability of follow-up services are of crucial importance, as are anonymity and personal security, in addressing the needs of survivors. In the months following the war, for example, many women sent anonymous letters into an Albanian-language women's magazine called *Kosovarja* ("Kosovar Woman") describing their experiences of sexual violence at the hands of Serbian forces. Kosovar women and girls, and likely some males, read and discussed these testimonies. Women who have worked with survivors continually confirmed to the Women's Commission that the context for dealing with the effects of these crimes is what makes the difference for women and girls in attempting to receive help.

The documentation that does exist on sexual violence in the war in Kosovo describes the experiences mostly of "women," but also include examples of adolescent girls' experiences. Thus, "women" is also meant to include girls. Responses to violence against girls must take their distinct health, emotional, economic and social status into account, which is often different from that of older women. The motivations for sexual violence against adolescent girls is also in part distinct from that committed against older women. Acts of sexual violence against women and girls are perpetrated to harm, torture and degrade the individuals they are inflicted upon, but they are also intended to harm their communities, as a tool of war. The violence is meant also to undermine the power of males and to destroy family and societal structures, perhaps also in an effort to prompt some people not to return to their homes. Forcibly raping and impregnating unmarried adolescent girls, who may be rejected by their society and/or bear children of mixed ethnicity, also constitutes an act to potentially destroy the identity of the ethnic community as a whole. Sexual violence against males also seeks to undermine community identity, in addition to harming the individuals victimized.

A United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA) report completed April 27-May 8, 1999 in Albania to assess the level and nature of sexual violence among the newly arriving refugee population revealed

specific examples of the abuse, in addition to confirming the level of stigmatization involved within the Albanian population as described. The study did not reveal evidence of "systematized" sexual violence against women and girls, but documented what it called "collective sexual violence." OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission human rights officers interviewed Kosovar refugees in Macedonia and took testimony about sexual violence that occurred during the war and before as perpetrated by Yugoslav authorities and paramilitary fighters. Their work reveals multiple accounts of horrific sexual violence perpetrated against adolescent girls, as documented in *Kosovo/Kosova, As Seen, As Told*. Testimony for both studies came directly from women affected and first-hand witnesses. They include the following:

"At control points the soldiers would demand money, then jewelry, then tell the women to undress in order to verify that they were not hiding anything. When they had nothing left the soldiers would take their 'payment' by raping the most attractive women. Often they were between the ages of 15 and 25. In general, one to five men committed the rapes and the women were released immediately after."

"In [Berlenitz,] a group of 30 young girls was forced to follow the soldiers into a house while the mothers waited outside. For two hours the mothers listened to the screams of the young victims who then came out one by one. Some were covered in blood, others were crying and their heads were hanging low. Husbands and older brothers were killed separately."

"It is primarily the young women who are rounded up in villages and small cities. The soldiers take groups of 5 to 30 women to unknown places in trucks or they are locked up in houses where the soldiers live. Any resistance is met with threats of being burned alive. Gjakova, Pec and Drenitza were often indicated as places where kidnapping and collective rapes took place. The women were individually raped by many men, during a few hours but sometimes even for days. Women who were released have lacerations on their chests, evidence of beating on their arms and legs. Their backs also show signs of beatings and they were covered in dirt. Agonizing screams could be heard for many hours. Kosovar men who tried to interfere were killed on the spot. One woman was beaten to death in front of the door of the house where her daughters were being tortured."

"…about 500 'young and beautiful' women were selected by the paramilitaries and sent to Staro Cikatova where they were required to clean village houses for use as lodging. The women were kept in two houses and fed once a day. Each woman would be taken to a separate room where she was told to take [her] clothes off. When they refused they were beaten, harassed and raped. The women were released the next day. One 16-year-old woman was reported to have committed suicide by throwing herself into a well after having been raped."[20]

OSCE also reported cases of sexual violence against males used to "break down the physical, psychological and sexual identity of the victims." This sexual violence appears to have occurred most commonly in detention, often accompanied by other violence, and males were also frequently forced to strip in efforts to humiliate them. One Kosovar Albanian adolescent boy interviewed by the Women's Commission and the Kosovar Youth Council stated that his 36-year-old male cousin had been arrested and raped by a Serb police officer while in custody.[21]

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) report *No Safe Place* and the Human Rights Watch report *Kosovo: Rape as a Weapon of "Ethnic Cleansing"* document violence against women in Kosovo and cite cases of girls being taken by Yugoslav forces and then sexually assaulted and/or raped. Both reports state that rapes were often committed by two or more men and were brutal, involving biting and cutting. Few age statistics are cited, although the term "young girls" is used. *No Safe Place* reports that "The women who were taken were usually young and beautiful, usually under the age

[20] The first three quotes are from *Assessment Report on Sexual Violence in Kosovo*, D. Seranno Fitamant, UNFPA, May 1999 and the last from *Kosovo/Kosova, As Seen, As Told, An analysis of the human rights findings of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission, October 1998 to June 1999*, OSCE.

[21] Kosovo/Kosova, *As Seen, As Told*, OSCE and Women's Commission and KYC interview, Kosovo, June 2000.

of twenty-five… The youngest identifiable rape survivor is thirteen years old."[21] *No Safe Place* also confirms the fear of stigmatization among adolescents and youth, who may not be able to marry if they are found to have been raped. It states, "There was one girl in the village near-by, she was taken to a gynecologist before the marriage, to check that she was not raped. Luckily the doctor said she was not, so the groom's family agreed to the marriage."[22]

Burim D., 17, of Prishtina, explained that rape of women and girls is a horrific crime also because of the treatment of survivors in Kosovar society: "Attitudes towards rape here are so bad, it has to be the worst thing of all for anyone to have experienced, even beyond death."[23]

More hopeful, however, Kosovar Albanian adolescent girls and boys interviewed by the Women's Commission and the Kosovar Youth Council stated that attitudes towards girls and women who have been raped need to change. One male, 16-year-old former KLA fighter said: "They should not be treated badly by society. What happened to them was not their fault; I would marry a raped girl, as long as there is love between us." And a young adolescent woman said: "We need to help girls who have been raped to come out of isolation and be fully a part of society. We also need to increase gender equality."[24]

Adolescent Soldiers

As reported by Rädda Barnen, the total number people belonging to KLA forces in Kosovo in 1999 is estimated at 17,000, ten percent of them being under 18. Although the majority of child soldiers were 16 and 17 years of age, around 2 percent were children below the age of 16, most of them girls. Furthermore, children as young as 13 fought within the ranks of the KLA.[25] Most performed support tasks, but many also participated in armed combat, and some of these young people were wounded and killed. The Women's Commission and the Kosovar Youth Council interviewed five male former adolescent KLA fighters in Gjakova/Djakovica, who joined the KLA on average at the age of 16. They indicated that adolescents like themselves volunteered to fight against the wishes of their parents, and were often at first rejected by KLA commanders. Some joined during the conflict beginning in 1998 and others in 1999. The young people indicated that the number of under-18s in the KLA varied depending upon the battalion and the moment in the war but averaged approximately 30 percent of the total force. Estimates of 10 to 20 percent were also confirmed by a number of adult former-KLA soldiers.

Bashkim H. 16, from Gjakova/Djakovica, said that he was among three of 22 adolescents in his community, who as a group considered joining the KLA out of a sense of duty:

"The first time I tried to join was in 1998, and they didn't accept me. I tried again early in 1999, and that time I told them, 'Either you take me, or I'm going to kill myself.' I started in a guard position at night, and very slowly I worked my way up to the front line. When I first heard shooting my first two days on the line I was scared, but my friends helped me keep my morale high. During the fighting, I remember being with a friend who was injured, telling him to survive. He touched my face saying, 'I'm dying.' I remember every detail of that. He was a cook... After the war, the commander recognized that I was a good soldier, and I became part of the military police for a while, until UNMIK began its work. At night, sometimes I still dream that a live grenade has been thrown just meters from me, and I wake up yelling. But I know this is normal, and anyway, I don't care for my dreams. I'm willing to give my young life for the land that belongs to my grandparents. I didn't fight for glory, I fought for our freedom."[26]

[21] *No Safe Place, Results of UNIFEM Assessment on Violence against Women in Kosova*, DRAFT version, UNIFEM, Prishtina, April 2000.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Women's Commission interview, Pejë/Pec, Kosovo, July 1999.
[24] Women's Commission interviews, Gjakova/Djakovica, June 2000.
[25] Rädda Barnen, Children in War Database, www.rb.se/childwardatabase. The IOM in Kosovo had registered 16,024 ex-KLA soldiers as of October 20, 1999, 10 percent of them under the age of 18.
[26] Women's Commission interview, June 14, 2000, Gjakova, Kosovo.

Adolescent Albanian males are particularly susceptible to recruitment into armed fighting forces in the event of further outbreak of armed conflict. During the refugee crisis, it was not uncommon to see young Albanian refugees dressed up as KLA fighters. Today, young people, especially boys, continue to hero worship the KLA and glorify the war. On days of national celebration, many shoot weapons and lead raucous chanting and singing lauding the KLA.

Accounting for the Crimes against Children and Adolescents

Several sources have included documentation on the rights violations committed against children and adolescents during the war in Kosovo, including OSCE's *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen, As Told*, the U.S. State Department's *Ethnic Cleansing in Kosovo: An Accounting*, UNIFEM's *No Safe Place* and Human Rights Watch's *FRY, Abuses against Serbs and Roma in the New Kosovo*. While no source provides a thorough accounting of the differences between the experiences of older and younger children and girls and boys, many references are made to the distinctions and similarities. In the aftermath of this conflict, more must be done to recognize these distinctions and understand how they affect decisions made concerning recovery from war. In addition, these rights violations must be made a strong and clear focus of international and national efforts to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice. Human rights violations against children and adolescents must be universally recognized and condemned.

Mr. Peter Risley, a representative of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), informed the Women's Commission that ICTY is indeed investigating crimes committed against children and adolescents in Kosovo. He noted that ICTY is focusing on murder and persecution, including rape against women, which would likely include female adolescents. ICTY representative Florence Hartman told the Women's Commission that ICTY exhumations have been completed and that women and adolescents are among those killed but that more comprehensive information about the age of those killed will not be released.[27]

Crimes Against Ethnic Minorities

As described below, for Kosovo's Serbs and many other ethnic minority groups, the war intensified following the peace agreement in June 1999. In post-war Kosovo, ethnic minorities have been disproportionately affected by crime, and as described below, minority youth experience ongoing insecurity distinctly. In a wave of fear fueled by acts of vengeance and threats by Albanians in the days and months following the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo, thousands of Serbs, Roma and other ethnic minorities fled their homes in massive numbers. Between June 19 and October 31, 1999, thirty-one percent of the 130 persons kidnapped or disappeared were ethnic Serbs even though they made up only

[27] Women's Commission telephone interviews, August 8, 2000 and January 16, 2001. According to a press release issued by the office of the prosecutor on November 24, 2000, in 1999, the ICTY recovered 2108 bodies from 195 locations, and in 2000 it assessed a further 325 sites and exhumed 1577 bodies and incomplete remains in a further 258 instances. The release also states that ICTY will never be able to provide an accurate figure for the number of people killed because of deliberate attempts to burn bodies and conceal them in other ways. ICTY formally requested the Security Council to extend the Tribunal's jurisdiction to include crimes committed against Serbs and Romas remaining in Kosovo.

six percent of the population of Kosovo at the time. Between January 30 and May 27, 2000, Serbs were the victims of 105 incidents of arson, 49 incidents of aggravated assault and 26 incidents of murder. By contrast, Albanians, who comprise more than 90 percent of the population, suffered 73 incidents of arson, 90 aggravated assaults and 52 murders.[28]

VI. PROTECTION AND CARE OF KOSOVAR ADOLESCENTS IN ALBANIA

The more than 443,000 Kosovar refugees who fled to neighboring Albania between March and June 1999 found refuge in a country that itself was facing enormous difficulties – tremendous poverty and unemployment, armed civil unrest, lawlessness, the trafficking of women and girls for sexual purposes, widespread corruption and organized crime and significant hopelessness about the future. At the same time, the overwhelming hospitality shown to Kosovar refugees by the Albanian people is one of the enduring legacies of good will to come out of the conflict, setting a global example for the generous provision of asylum to those fleeing persecution.

More than half of the refugees were taken in spontaneously by host families, while the rest lived in one of more than 200 camps and collective centers that dotted the country from north to south. The number of host families created a major challenge for monitoring and ensuring the protection of refugees, especially children and adolescents and those separated from their families. The difficult socioeconomic and security situation in Albania also made adolescent refugees easy prey for organized criminals and other individuals seeking to take advantage of their vulnerability as refugees. The conflict left adolescents highly traumatized, and in the case of girls, who were sexually abused, potentially rejected by their families. Lack of education or psychosocial activities for some and insufficient camp security, particularly as refugee numbers plummeted with returns, also left many adolescents increasingly vulnerable to abuse.

Interviews conducted with more than 60 Kosovar Albanian and Albanian adolescent boys, girls and young adults in Albania and Kosovo in individual and group settings revealed that, with some important and encouraging exceptions, adolescents received at best uneven opportunities for education, targeted healthcare, psychosocial support and other forms of protection.[29] Lack of emergency preparedness and poor coordination of assistance activities contributed to the problem. Many practitioners working in the region during the crisis agreed that had the refugee situation continued for much longer, the protection of adolescents would have greatly deteriorated and had already begun to show signs of doing so. By the end of the crisis in June 1999, the refugees were running out of money if they had not already, and still relatively little was known about the situation of those remaining in host families. Moreover, adolescents had begun to be exposed to drugs, prostitution, trafficking and other criminal activity.

Uneven Access to Education

Interviews with young people in four regions living in five camps and collective centers and with host families revealed that formal and non-formal education opportunities for adolescents were not universally

[28] Sources include: *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo*, UN Security Council, S/2000/538, June 6, 2000, pp. 9 and 13; "Bringing Peace to Kosovo," Status Report, UNMIK Sept 14, 2000; and *UNHCR/OSCE Update on the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo, (Period covering February through May 2000*, UNHCR and OSCE).

[29] The Women's Commission conducted interviews with adolescents, adults and aid workers in, among other sites visited in Albania, the *Haslan Rusi Pallati i Sporteve* (Sports Palace) and Medreseja (Islamic School) camps in Tirana, the Rushbull camp in Durres and the Kavaje camp in Kavaje. Interviews were also held with adolescents living with host families in Tirana and Kruje, as well as with adolescents living in a camp in Kruje. Albanian adolescents whose families were hosting Kosovars were also interviewed in Tirana. In Kosovo, the Women's Commission interviewed adolescents who were home-bound or internally displaced during the conflict in Prishtina and Pejë/Pec, as well as aid workers and UN and donor government officials in these cities and in Prizren. Kosovo minorities, including two elderly Serbs, a Roma man and a mixed marriage family (Albanian-Serbian) were interviewed in Prizren, where they had taken refuge in a seminary with over 100 others, including some Albanians, and were guarded by German KFOR. The Women's Commission also followed the repatriation route of thousands of Kosovars through the difficult mountain roads of northern Albania across the border into Kosovo via Kukes, observing way stations and material assistance points along the way. The Women's Commission also observed the border crossing from Kosovo into Macedonia and had a brief tour of the Stankoviæ I camp in Macedonia.

available. While children of all ages may not have received rapid education interventions, adolescent education particularly suffered as the provision of primary education for young children and young adolescents, ages 6 to 14, was prioritized by UNICEF, which took the lead on education. In addition, the Albanian government was at first not willing to allow the refugees to enter Albanian schools due to fears of overcrowding; instead, summer schools were planned. While these catch-up classes included secondary school opportunities, refugee returns occurred so quickly that this plan largely became moot.

Reasons for adolescents not attending school or other education activities ranged from lack of availability or variety (e.g., formal vs. non-formal); lack of parental approval, especially in the case of girls; lack of tradition within many Kosovar Albanian communities for students to move onto secondary school, or even to complete primary school, especially in rural areas; uncertainty about the future and reliance on the future provision of summer school classes; the prioritization of other responsibilities, including finding jobs to generate a livelihood and care for other family members; and lack of interest. Ultimately, limited education for adolescents early on in the emergency undermined their protection and psychosocial well-being.[30]

However, some Kosovar young people did gain access to the public schools. For example, Medi H., 17, from Prishtina, found access to high school easily upon his arrival in Tirana, but said that some girls were not able to attend. He also said that religious education was promoted by the managers of his refugee camp, which was run by the Humanitarian Society of Quatar.

"We got here on April 1. First we went to the Sports Center, but then the Secretary for the Emergency moved us here, to Medreseja. There are 250 here, with over 30 adolescents. [The camp managers] try to get us interested in religion, in Islam, but I'm not interested in religion. I started going to school almost immediately, down the road. We were welcomed. Sixteen of us went to the high school – only four girls and the rest boys. All the rest of the girls who had finished their primary studies stayed behind. Their families didn't want them to go, and instead they concentrated on some kind of work in Medreseja. So, all of the boys went to high school. Classes five through eight go to the school [in Medreseja]. One through four go to a school nearby. You can choose to go to high school here, but there's too much religion. I don't want that. I just want a regular school. Here, they have one hour maths in the morning, then three hours of religion, then other subjects, too."

Not far from Medresja, in the dank, dusty and miserable Sports Palace Camp, in the center of town, adolescents were asked what they did with their time and if they had access to education or other activities. They laughed immediately and said: "We do nothing, just hang around. No one has come to do anything with us."[31] Similarly, adolescent refugees in Kruje, who were living in the Zahari camp stated that they did not attend school because it was too far and because their freedom was highly restricted by their parents and the people of Kruje, who the adolescents said didn't want them coming to town. Those in host families in Kruje, however, went to school.

In yet another scenario, in the camp in Kavaje, the refugee community set up what was likely the best camp-based school system in Albania for young people between the ages of six and 14 (again, not for older adolescents) before assistance from the Albanian government or international organizations was made available. The school's director described their work: "The school and activities here are better than in other camps. Other organizations have said they're great. We organized the school ourselves, without help from the government. Fortunately, teachers for all subjects were found within the refugee population. A Spanish association later helped us, as did Save the Children and the Soros Foundation. We put it all together quickly and without payment."[32]

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[30] Left with little to do and few places to monitor their protection as a group, in most refugee situations, older refugee children are more vulnerable to becoming engaged in criminal activities, forced military recruitment, economic and sexual exploitation and abuse. Boredom, lack of direction and hopelessness set in for older children, who would normally be actively making decisions about their immediate futures.

[31] Women's Commission interview, Sports Palace Camp, Tirana, Albania, June 18, 1999.

[32] Women's Commission interview, Kavaje Camp, Kavaje, Albania, June 20, 1999. The school director had also been an education official within the Kosovar Albanian parallel education structure.

Also, some international organizations took the lead in providing non-formal education services with a strong psychosocial component to young people, including adolescents, in the earliest phases of the emergency. For instance, IRC's non-formal education program had begun early 1999 as some thousands of Kosovar Albanian refugees had already fled to Albania and was expanded when the major refugee crisis began. It was designed to integrate community interests and skills to improve psychosocial supports for children and adolescents. Drop-in centers were created that were staffed by Kosovar teachers and a majority of youth workers, where they ran a variety of activities ranging from literacy, numeracy and sports and recreation, to art and music, and club and group organizations. The centers accommodated the half-day school schedule of many young people and were open to refugee and local community youth, as well as parents and other community members.

Psychological and Social Support

Like education, interventions for adolescents to assist in their recovery from the more unseen wounds of war were uneven, although in some ways more available than education. In addition to being welcomed by the Albanian community, refugees were assisted by many local and international organizations in creating or becoming involved in activities to boost their spirits and help take their minds off the war. Some organizations worked creatively to address typical manifestations of war trauma among children and adolescents. Young people with more serious psychological problems at times found help in Albanian hospitals, but many suffered alone, including girls who were the survivors of sexual violence. Everyday occurrences and routines posed healing opportunities for refugee adolescents, who had not only experienced armed conflict in the days and weeks prior to becoming refugees, but in the years before. For some, even seeing and speaking with an Albanian policeman, without fear of harassment, arrest or beating, was a revelation.

One psychologist who worked in Kukes during the height of the emergency reported to the Women's Commission that hyperventilation was extremely common among adolescent girls, and that the symptoms would pass after lying on a bed for a short time. Other young people described horrifying stories of surviving or witnessing a wide range of human rights violations, the memories of which lived with them daily.

Young people from Albania also suffered from recent armed conflict and lawlessness within their own country, as well as from the war in Kosovo. They imagined and internalized the experiences of Kosovar Albanians, who were targeted because of their ethnicity. A 16-year-old waiter in Tirana stated, "I don't have too much contact with the Kosovar refugees, but I am stressed by the situation; I put myself in their shoes."[33]

A positive example of psychosocial programming for youth includes Save the Children's project in the Kavaje camp that engaged adolescents in drawing activities. Their drawings at first included graphic descriptions of the events and suffering of the war, but later included more hopeful scenes of beauty and promise of a better future. Also, the Fondazione Paskali and the Albanian Ministry of Culture collaborated to engage dozens of Kosovar children between nine and 15 in art projects and expositions of their work in camps and at the International Center of Culture. In addition, IRC provided psychosocial care to refugee youth through a program that trained young people to assist their peers and other community members by providing them with information about common stress reactions that many of them were experiencing (trouble sleeping, helplessness, hopelessness, etc.). They also provided information and suggestions for addressing these reactions. The young people organized recreational activities as well, and the program blossomed. Some youth, for example, began to produce a teen newsletter that was distributed to four sites.

[33] Women's Commission interview, Tirana, Albania, June 26, 1999.

Amid much testimony about access to education, healthcare and other support, or lack thereof, in Albania, the number one response of Kosovar refugee adolescents to Women's Commission questions about what they needed to rebuild their lives was "to experience our freedom." One said: "First, we need to feel free. We don't know how to use freedom yet. And we also need to help those who need help."[34] In other words, they described a need to contribute constructively to their own healing and that of their community. Many were desperate to know the fate of loved ones and were nervous about their return to Kosovo. Young people said they knew they would need to work and provide for themselves and their families and that they were concerned about having opportunities to do so. They also stated a desire to continue with their education. They were experiencing tremendous pain, sadness and anger toward the Serbian and other minority populations, mixed with elation and veneration for their military heroes – the KLA and NATO. As NATO entered Kosovo, for most of these refugees, their desperation suddenly changed to an all-consuming desire to return home by any means necessary and as soon as possible.

Protection of Adolescents in Host Families

During the crisis, the protection of thousands of young people in host family situations was not adequately monitored by UNHCR during the crisis, which concentrated on providing humanitarian assistance to refugees in camps and collective centers. UNHCR experienced great difficulties gaining access to refugees in host families due mainly to their sheer number but also suspicion among host family members about their intent. Adolescents living with host families told the Women's Commission that receiving information about registration was difficult, which also made receiving humanitarian assistance and protection monitoring difficult. Indeed, not all those interviewed had been registered.

Although host families generously allowed refugees to enter their homes, they also benefited from the assistance the refugees received, and UNHCR paid them an amount of 1,500 Albanian Leke per person per month to offset their expenses. In addition to this, many refugees were paying rent to the host families, from 200-600 DM ($100-300) per month per family. In order to ensure that the humanitarian assistance was properly benefiting the refugees, that the that refugees' living conditions were acceptable and that they were not being abused or exploited by their host families, UNHCR needed to gain access to the families and especially to young people among them who were separated from their families. Therefore, in June 1999, as a starting point, UNHCR was working on a project to identify 400 host families living in the Tirana area, register them and act to monitor and ensure their protection.

All of the adolescents living in host families interviewed by the Women's Commission stated that they were very happy with their living situations and were very grateful to the families who took them in. Some had also met relatives for the first time. All agreed that despite the terrible circumstances of the war, a bright side was the opportunity for Kosovars and Albanians to break down negative prejudices held about one another after years of being separated by a border. Many created lasting friendships. However, reports from other sources, including UNHCR, indicated that some adolescent refugees in host families were being preyed upon for trafficking for sexual purposes, among other protection problems.

Separated Adolescents

In the chaos of flight, many families became separated, and some adolescents and younger children were on their own in Albania. Some had witnessed the murder of their parents, and others were unaware of their family's fate. Because no registration system was fully in place and the host family situation made it more difficult to identify separated children, the number of separated children was hard to quantify. While only 200 separated children had been counted by UNICEF workers as of April 1999, the number of children and adolescents separated from their parents and other family members in the conflict was possibly as high as 65,000.[35] While the burden on these young people to care for themselves and at times their siblings was enormous, their situation and protection were insufficiently monitored by UNHCR for

[34] Women's Commission interview, Kruje, Albania, June 23, 1999.
[35] Elizabeth Olson, *UNICEF Fears for the Youngsters Who are Fleeing Alone*, New York Times, April 9, 2000.

the reasons described. To aid in the reunification of families, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) instituted a Balkan Family News Network, an Internet-based system that permitted Kosovar refugees to voluntarily enter personal data into an online database. Family members seeking information about the refugees' whereabouts then accessed that information. In addition, the Kosovar Family Finder Project consolidated all family location information that had been made public into a database-driven directory. Ten thousand copies of the directory listing the locations of approximately 20,000 families representing 120,000 Kosovars in 23 countries were distributed in mid-June in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo.[36] While these initiatives helped family members to find one another, for some, reunifications came only after the war's end, or never, as thousands remain missing. Immediately upon return to Kosovo, Save the Children and ICRC also provided satellite telephone access to thousands of Kosovars so that families could receive news of one another. ICRC also continues to deliver messages for separated families.

One 17-year-old adolescent from Pejë/Pec described his odyssey out of Kosovo, separated from his family: "I've been in Tirana for three months. The Serbs separated me from my family. They said 'If you want NATO, you should go to Albania.' A host family took me and my sister in from the Sports Camp. I found my family when I saw them on TV; they had been sent to Montenegro. I didn't know anything about them until one month ago. My older brother is now here, too."[37]

In Albania, many local Albanian non-governmental organizations and Kosovars themselves struggled to care for young people separated from their families. In one instance, local women's organizations identified an 18-year-old woman in the psychiatric ward of a hospital in Tirana. She had been raped following the murder of her parents, and her five younger brothers and sisters whom she had cared for during their flight out of Kosovo were on their own in the Rushbull Camp near Durres. Kosovar Youth Council advocates, who organized themselves in the camp, also identified these young people as being particularly in need of assistance and worked to find them help.

Security

Adolescents interviewed reported multiple concerns about their personal security while refugees in Albania. For some, like the refugees in camps in Kruje, there was limited access to the town, as their parents did not want them wandering from the camp for fear of thievery, trafficking, assault and other criminality. Young refugees also reported that Kruje community members did not accept their presence. While adolescents in Tirana had more freedom of movement, they expressed worry for their safety, and girls especially were frequently required to stay close to their families for fear of trafficking and sexual abuse. Criminality was abetted by lack of targeted security to the thousands of refugees in host families, and many refugees in camps complained that it was too easy for people to move in and out of the camps in general. These security holes created opportunities for theft, trafficking and sexual abuse of refugee girls and women.

Fears over security only increased as repatriation began and many men and boys returned to Kosovo before other members of their family to survey the circumstances of return. This left many women and girls behind to guard the family's belongings and care for themselves while the numbers of refugees dramatically decreased. In one week at the end of June and early July, the population of the Sports Palace Camp dropped by half. Theft of refugee belongings increased during this time, and many camp managers worked to tighten camp security, which was appreciated by the refugees. International organizations also became the targets of ruthless criminality as many Albanians zeroed in on camps for looting prior to their closure. Consequently, efforts were made to close and consolidate camps as quickly as possible. A United Nations security officer told international non-governmental personnel that members of the Albanian

[36] The Kosovar Family Finder Project was coordinated by the International Rescue Committee in collaboration with the following institutions: Catholic Relief Services, Humanitarian Information Center, CARE International, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Mercy Corps International, CONCERN, ACTED, El Hillel, Med+Air, Caritas, *Shoqata Gruaja per Veprimtari Sociale*, ADI, International Organization for Migration, UNICEF, and AFOR/NATO.

[37] Women's Commission interview, Tirana, Albania, June 22, 1999.

criminal community were "circling [camps] like sharks," attempting to steal, loot and intimidate and had done so already at gunpoint. Security was also a grave concern along the repatriation route through the north of Albania, which was notorious for banditry, and upon entry into Kosovo, where thousands of landmines and unexploded ordinance awaited the returnees.

Medi H., from the Medresja camp in Tirana, reported on adolescents' concerns about security and methods for dealing with them. His experience also points to Albanian youth being involved in criminal activity: "There are good and bad people here. People are so nice, and then, for instance, I had a chain [points to his neck indicating a necklace], and these young Albanians came up to me and said, 'Give us that chain.' So I gave it to them. It was gold. That was better than being beaten up. I don't need the chain. Girls also need accompaniment if they go out, so I walk with them."[38]

Trafficking for Sexual Purposes

Reports emerged from UNHCR in early May 1999 that Kosovar adolescent girls and young women, particularly those living in host families near coastal towns, were being trafficked out of Albania by Albanian mafia sex traffickers.[39] By mid-June in Albania, little information was available from UNHCR corroborating or disproving the reports, though UNHCR Protection told the Women's Commission that a project to further investigate and address the situation was underway.[40] At the same time, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) released a study that concluded that criminal trafficking efforts had spread to the Kosovar refugee population and had specifically targeted adolescent girls and women living in refugee camps.[41] IOM was also working closely with local women's organizations, such as Useful to Albanian Women and Reflexione, which had been working for years to raise awareness about, and to end the trafficking of Albanian women and girls for sexual purposes to other European countries. Together with the Council of Europe and other groups, these organizations planned a comprehensive program for prevention.

IOM's study involved humanitarian aid workers and 150 randomly selected women and adolescent girls in camps in and around Tirana and Durres. Among the testimonies were accounts of the disappearance of two girls from Qerret camp near Durres and of girls being targeted upon their return from school by men pulling up in cars and ordering them to get inside. Thirty-seven percent of women interviewed said they had been approached or knew others who had experienced advances of this kind, and overall, those interviewed said that women who are trafficked are viewed negatively by society. An alarming 32.5 percent believed that if a woman is trafficked, it is always her fault. Only 50 percent viewed trafficked women as victims, while 17.5 percent viewed the women as immoral.[42] Furthermore, women and girls who had experienced sexual violence during the war were particularly vulnerable to traffickers as some of their families perceived them as burdens and often rejected them. Albanian traffickers were aware of the negative views held toward these women and sought to exploit them. For example, hospital staff in Durres told IOM that traffickers observe the hospital to track those Kosovars who are treated, including young women and girls. Women who travel without male protection were also noted as particularly vulnerable to trafficking.

All of the young people interviewed by the Women's Commission noted an awareness of the trafficking problem. Girls in particular feared being trafficked and felt unsafe walking alone. At the same time, no one interviewed reported a personal encounter with potential traffickers.

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[38] Women's Commission interview, Tirana, Albania, June 22, 1999.
[39] "Kosovo Refugees Forced into Prostitution," by Beverly Pisik, *The Washington Times*, May 6, 1999.
[40] Thousands of Kosovar Albanians were trafficked out of Albania clandestinely by choice in order to join relatives in other European countries. This and other factors complicate the process of identifying cases of trafficking, which is inherently difficult and dangerous. Among other things, women and girls fearing trafficking are often threatened not to speak about their circumstances, and international and local collaboration is required to track the movement of traffickers and their victims.
[41] *Trafficking in Kosovo Albanian Women from the Refugee Camps in Albania, a Report of the Fact-finding Mission to Albania, conducted between May 25 and June 9, 1999*, Draft version, IOM, June 1999, p. 5.
[42] Ibid, p. 8.

Albanian women's organizations and IOM stated that the typical scenario for trafficking women out of Albania in the past involved women and girls being sold to traffickers and also being duped into accepting marriage proposals from young men who then turn their unsuspecting, would-be brides over to prostitution houses in other countries. Some women were also abducted. Poverty and lack of education and economic opportunities for women in Albania, particularly in villages, has made them particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Thus, all practitioners interviewed by the Women's Commission agreed that had the refugee situation continued indefinitely, the girls and young women among them would have become increasingly victimized by traffickers seeking to take advantage of their vulnerability. As previously stated, the rapid rate of returns and the movement of males ahead of females to scout out the situation in Kosovo increased the risk of trafficking for women and girls left behind. During the repatriation, the Emergency Management Group (EMG)[43] surprisingly reported no reports of sexual offenses or trafficking attempts along the repatriation route. This may have been due to the sheer numbers of people making the journey at once or because the traffickers set their sights on other targets, including those inside Kosovo itself.

Adolescent Recruitment into the KLA

While many adolescent boys and girls did fight among the KLA forces during the war, few appeared to have been recruited from refugee camps in Albania during the conflict. While KLA soldiers, in and out of uniform, were visibly recruiting in refugee camps, none of the adolescents interviewed had been approached to join the KLA. Children and adolescents thoroughly venerated the KLA and NATO fighters, even dressing in their uniforms, but most said that even if they had wanted to join the KLA, they would not have been accepted. Their understanding was that the KLA does not accept under-18s. At the same time, they stated clearly that young people, especially males, who were 18 and older faced enormous pressure to join out of a sense of obligation to their people. Amid reports from news sources that adults, such as doctors and medical technicians, were being pressured and even forced to join,[44] some rumors circulated that under-18's had also been forcibly recruited. Several groups of young people cited a case of a 14-year-old who they had heard was abducted from the beach in Durres by the KLA to fight, but the report was unsubstantiated. Had the war dragged on longer without ground support and had the KLA begun to experience more massive losses, the pressure on refugee adolescent boys to join the fighting would have risen. The option may have become increasingly attractive as well if refugee adolescents had been left with few opportunities for practical education, employment and other assistance in Albania.

Healthcare

Health practitioners and advocates interviewed believed that the major health risks facing Kosovar adolescents in Albania were the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS, and more specifically in the case of adolescent girls, unsafe abortions. Despite these and other health concerns, conversations with health workers and adolescents revealed that few adolescents were accessing health services, despite availability, and that few healthcare services targeted adolescents specifically.

Concerns about STDs and unsafe abortion were directly related to adolescent girls' exposure to sexual violence in Kosovo and their potential exposure to sexual assault and prostitution, whether due to trafficking or by other means, in Albania. Health practitioners believed that girls becoming pregnant as a result of sexual violence or consensual encounters faced shame and rejection from their communities, and would often hide their pregnancies and not receive care or resort to unsafe abortion. Suicide was also a concern. With a breakdown in social controls in the refugee setting, girls and boys who had sex without protection were also at increased risk of disease, and in the case of girls, pregnancy. Practitioners thus emphasized that the provision of reproductive health information and care to adolescents was a clear priority.

[43] The EMG was composed of Albanian government ministries, Untied Nations agencies and donor governments.
[44] Marjorie Miller, "Kosovo Clashes Raise Fears in Refugee Camps," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 8, 1999.

Almost every adolescent interviewed stated that if they were sick they felt they could find medical attention, and indeed clinics were available to many refugees inside camps. With transportation assistance available, hospitals were also accessible to those in camps and host families. No general health practitioners described specific outreach to adolescents. Most adolescents were shy to talk about reproductive health concerns, but those who did stated that there was a need for more information and discussion among adolescents. There was a particular need to discuss sexual and reproductive health with rural adolescents, especially girls, who had been largely shielded from any information of this kind. Furthermore, Kosovar adolescents were at risk because there is no culture of using condoms for safe sex in Kosovo. There was also agreement that adolescents needing attention for reproductive health concerns would feel uncomfortable accessing care due to the risk of public exposure, shame or judgment.

Some in refugee communities argued that young people were not at risk of STDs or reproductive health problems because of tight social controls and protection against violence, in addition to a low incidence of HIV/AIDS in Albania and Kosovo. Health officials, however, argued that while Albania's isolation had shielded it from large-scale exposure to the virus, recent outward migration, international student exchanges, drug use, sexual violence and the arrival of refugees, international workers and military personnel increased the possibility of exposure dramatically. Although no statistics were available on Albanian prostitution and Kosovar involvement in it, Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) representative Zhaneta Shatri told the Women's Commission that a low level of prostitution is readily visible in Albania and that two weeks into the refugee emergency, the number of clients visiting prostitutes had virtually doubled. Customers may have included young Kosovar males.

While international organizations providing reproductive health services worked hard to provide a variety of care to the newly arriving refugees, their coverage was not complete, and their work was largely uncoordinated in the first eight weeks of the emergency. Minimum Initial Services Packages (MISP) kits and emergency contraception were made available to many refugee women arriving from Kosovo,[45] but none of the women or girls interviewed by the Women's Commission in any site were aware of them. Some organizations that provided health services, including reproductive health, included a deliberate focus on adolescents as part of their work, such as IRC, which worked with a small but significant number of adolescent girls and boys to provide reproductive health information, including about STDs and HIV/AIDS.

Other health issues affecting adolescents included generally poor hygiene conditions and care for those with disabilities and war wounds. Some camps were outright filthy and had little running water or sanitary facilities for washing. There was a high incidence of upper respiratory and skin infections. While host family conditions may have been better, little is known about them. The Women's Commission visited one host family home in Tirana where a refugee family of more than ten, including two adolescents, squeezed onto three or four dirty mattresses on the floor of a cold, damp basement to sleep each night.

Drugs also presented a growing health concern for Kosovar youth in Albania. Although drug use among refugee youth was not widespread, some humanitarian workers reported that it was on the rise, including the use of marijuana and small amounts of cocaine. Intravenous drug use also took place in Albania, and exposure to this was a potential risk. Again, health workers stated that, had the emergency continued, the possibility of youth becoming increasingly involved in drug abuse was highly probable.

Interventions For and With Youth

Where resources and attention were paid deliberately to support adolescent and youth capacity, young people accomplished great things – generating psychosocial support, basic services and protection among

[45] In the case of emergency contraception, the women had to have been exposed to the possibility of pregnancy within the past three days. The MISP kit is a set of activities that must be implemented in a coordinated manner by appropriately trained staff.

their peers. The work of UNICEF, through the implementation of Child Friendly Spaces and youth-to-youth programming, and that of the Albanian Youth Council and the Kosovar Youth Council are strong, positive examples of the power and value of supporting young people's right to participate in decision-making and activities that affect their lives.

Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) were implemented by **UNICEF** in camps and collective centers with the endorsement of the EMG and NGO partners. The concept involved the allotment of a specific amount of space where children and women could participate in sports and other recreational activities, as well as education and health programs, and receive other forms of psychosocial support in line with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and emphasizing child/youth participation. CFS also provided an environment for keeping tabs on protection issues facing young people as they come and go. Although CFS in camps in Albania were reportedly vibrant spaces, their accommodation of the needs of adolescents was not necessarily complete. Arguably, making space for them right next to a women's health area or activities for small children does not necessarily create the kind of space youth would feel most attracted to calling their own. CFS also did not necessarily attract the most traumatized young people, and thus, was not a replacement for other interventions. The evolution of the CFS concept continues, however, and one challenge includes making the concept function beyond the confines of a tented camp situation. Just weeks after NATO's entry into Kosovo, Save the Children adapted the concept in Prizren by immediately assuring the creation of an outdoor, mine-free zone, where young people could gather and play. UNICEF has also further developed the concept to become the Integrated Community Services Initiative, creating more flexibility in the adaptation of the spaces for children and adults.[46]

The formation of the **Kosovar Youth Council (KYC)**, with the assistance of the **Albanian Youth Council (AYC)**,[47] was one of the most exciting and productive developments in the response to youth during the refugee crisis in Albania. The AYC and KYC mobilized the constructive strengths of refugee and local adolescents and young adults and aided in their recovery. As refugees poured into Albania, the AYC created an emergency network from the network of youth groups and organizations it represents across Albania to help the new arrivals. Part of their outreach involved efforts to organize Kosovar youth in camps and towns and work together with them. Kosovar adolescents and young adults in Albania who were desperate to end their boredom and sadness began to work with the AYC, and together they acted quickly, with cooperation from other organizations, to form a network of youth operating in at least 45 camps and cities throughout Albania. The KYC branches took on a variety of tasks ranging from activities for youth (concerts, sports events, games, art and language courses), to creating lists of youth with special needs and taking action to address their problems. They also worked in the information tents at way stations on the repatriation routes, along with the international NGO the Balkan Sunflowers. The AYC held meetings to coordinate the disparate groups of youth activists, who also related to regional AYC counterparts, but the groups also took on a life of their own, generating more and more ideas and projects themselves. The Durres branch of the KYC competed for a hygiene kit distribution project with IRC, completed it, and went on to undertake an organizational development process with support from IRC, AYC and ANTTARC (Albanian National Training and Technical Assistance Resource Center). The KYC then returned to Kosovo prepared to function as an NGO, with a clearly defined goal and set of objectives.

UNICEF worked with the AYC to employ a y**outh-to-youth approach** in its work in several refugee camps in Albania, including Kukes, as a way to provide psychological relief for youth while at the same

[46] Child-Friendly Spaces Initiative, UNICEF Tirana, 1999. This Initiative calls for UNICEF to work in partnership with government, communities and NGOs in emergencies to provide a package of basic services for children and parents, relevant to their age, sex and developmental needs, including health, education, recreation and psychosocial support. The services may be offered all in one physical location or may be dispersed through the community depending on the circumstances. In either case, the Integrated Services area will serve as a recognizable place where children and adults can be equal stakeholders in an emergency program.

[47] The Albanian Youth Council is an umbrella organization that in 1999 served a network of approximately 60 youth organizations and groups, representing more than 800 volunteers in Albania. The AYC advocates for youth and coordinates training and technical support for its network. The AYC network includes six youth centers around Albania, supported by the Italian organization ARCI, where Kosovar refugee youth also participated in events and activities. The AYC in many ways also views its regular work in Albania as that addressing the needs of war-affected children, who have endured years of internal armed conflict, economic collapse and lawlessness, with limited international or national funds targeted for their support.

time protecting, supporting and empowering them. The goal of this approach was to address the needs and rights of adolescents in crisis, facilitate their participation and leadership as central actors within their communities and prepare them for the future return to and rebuilding of Kosovo. UNICEF and the AYC supported and mobilized youth participation through weekly meetings to exchange information and discuss and resolve problems, including the lack of camp activities. UNICEF and the AYC also worked together to establish "Kosovo Youth Council" branches in each camp. The Kosovar youth themselves then decided upon activities to implement, which included organizing sports tournaments and concerts in camps, cleaning up the camps, setting up camp schools, fundraising for the poorest families, disseminating landmines information, improving security in the camps and implementing psychosocial activities for younger children. AYC volunteers later told the Women's Commission that the latter activity focusing on providing psychosocial activities for younger children was extremely difficult and emotional, but rewarding because the young people were in such great need. The child-to-child approach was also used in the dissemination of information about landmines and unexploded ordinance, which was highly effective. Virtually every young person interviewed by the Women's Commission in Albania and Kosovo had received information about these weapons, and posters and other information were widely circulated – appearing in kiosks along the repatriation route and in school settings.[48]

Refugee Returns and Road to Recovery Inside Kosovo

The vast majority of Kosovars returned to Kosovo in what became one of the fastest voluntary repatriations in history. The population voted with its feet, and undertook the often arduous and dangerous journey despite security concerns in Kosovo and the high costs of transportation (about 600 DM/$300 for a small van). Their desire to return home, build a society and experience freedom at once presented concerns – for their safety due to the threat of landmines, destroyed infrastructure and public health concerns – and also opportunities to build a better future.

Some refugees, including children and adolescents, remained in Albania despite the massive return to Kosovo. The majority of them were particularly vulnerable and unable to return for a variety of reasons, among them physical disability, trauma, lack of money, no homes to return to and lack of protection or means to a livelihood, such as with the loss of a male head of household. These refugees, including those residing in host families, continued to need protection and assistance. Thus, the challenge to reach out to those in host families remained. Likewise, vigilance in the areas of drug use, trafficking, prostitution, school attendance and access to healthcare were ongoing concerns in relation to the adolescent population. The war-affected population of Albania itself also desperately needed continued attention through development activities, which among other things would have helped contribute to regional stability.

Adolescents returning to Kosovo were faced with difficult emotions and many choices about how to navigate moving forward. Adolescents were poised to move on as active, influential members of their society, and the most salient question concerning their situation at the time was whether they would be forced to work through their recovery largely alone, or whether they would be actively supported to ensure their own protection and well-being, as well as that of their communities. With ethnic tensions extremely high and threats to minority populations all too real – as the early post-war massacre of more than a dozen ethnic Serbians by an Albanian proved – there was an opportunity to promote tolerance while promoting the healing of a society which had endured terrible bloodshed and trauma. However, from the beginning of return, it was unclear to what extent the Kosovar Albanians would be tolerant of ethnic minority populations and work to minimize the level of violence in their society.

[48] Bertrand Bainvel, *Youth Participation, Refugee Camps in Kukes, Albania,* UNICEF 1999.

VII. ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN KOSOVO TODAY

In May and June 2000, the Women's Commission worked separately with the Kosovar Youth Council and two Serbian groups in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee on the "Promoting the Protection and Capacity of Kosovo's Youth" project.[49] In all, three adolescent-led research teams were created, each of which worked to engage other youth and key adults in their communities in answering the question: "What are the main problems adolescents and youth are facing today in Kosovo, and what are some solutions?" The Women's Commission, in consultation with the KYC and academic advisors, developed the research methodology, which involved research participants coming together for two- to four-hour sessions of focus groups, written questionnaires and individual interviews.[50] Each research team participated in shaping the design of the methodology by testing it and adjusting the questions according to their knowledge of the context in which they would be received.[51] (See Appendix for methodological materials).

In total, the teams organized 35 sessions and met with more than 300 adolescents and adults, including at least 135 female and 134 male adolescents and youth, averaging 15.94 years of age, ranging from 10 to 29.[52] The young people discussed issues relating to education, health, youth violence, mental health, gender, the prospect of a multi-ethnic Kosovo and definitions of adolescence and youth. Specific focus groups included (with some overlap in the categories): primary school students; secondary school students; out-of-school youth; working youth; adolescents in villages; IDP adolescents; Bosniac and Egyptian adolescents; ex-KLA adolescents; adolescents separated from their families; parents; and others. Individual interviews were also conducted with widowed adolescent girls with children; handicapped adolescents; teachers; doctors; an Orthodox priest; KFOR soldiers; Civilian Police officers; missing persons experts; and others. The adolescent researchers were extremely active in organizing the groups in the different towns themselves, and interviews took place in a variety of venues, from schools and private homes, to internationally funded community centers and outdoors, in the street. The teams also attempted to identify differences in responses along rural and urban lines, town to town, by ethnicity, age (younger and older adolescence and early adulthood), and in other respects.

The three groups involved in this project were not required to, and did not, interact with one another in the course of conducting the research. This is significant for several reasons. The security risks that remain in Kosovo for anyone, including children and adolescents, participating in interethnic activities cannot be underestimated. Thus, only where this risk was minimal to none, such as with the interethnic Gjakova-based research team created by the KYC, did young people of different ethnic groups work together directly as researchers. One Serb team worked in Gjilan/Gnjilane and the other in Rahovec/Orahovac and Hoca e Mahde/Velika Hoca, the former known as the Gnjilane team and the latter as the Orahovac team.[53] The divisions presented enormous challenges in conducting the research. They

[49] Funding for the project was provided by American Jewish World Service, the Women's Commission and the IRC, the AJWS and IRC portions of which involved a small grant directed to, and administered by, the KYC.

[50] Team subgroups that included one adult research advisor and two to four adolescent researchers carried out the sessions during which the adolescents took the lead explaining the project to participants, posing questions and taking notes. Attending the sessions was optional, and participants were informed that their identities would be kept confidential for their protection. All names of research participants used in this report are pseudonyms, apart from those of the researchers, who consented to their publication. Each focus group aimed to involve no more than 8-10 people.

[51] The researchers made only minor changes to the methodology to clarify the meaning of questions or make them more culturally appropriate and effective. One main difference in the way the Serbian and the mostly Albanian teams shaped the methodology involved an individual interview question on pre-war experiences. The mostly Albanian team chose to drop the question, feeling that the full realm of past experiences was too much to cover, whereas the Serbian teams chose to keep it and compared and contrasted their pre- and post-war experiences substantially in their conversations. In general, the methodology was designed to consider a range of child rights and protection concerns, guiding principles for which were derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNHCR's *Refugee Children: Guidelines for Their Protection and Care*.

[52] Average age is based upon records compiled for 261 of the total adolescent and young adult participants. Age and gender information was not recorded for a small number of participants. Total number of participants and average age of participants by team are: Gjakova, 159 persons, 15.5 years; Orahovac, 61 persons, 16.62 years; and Gnjilane, 41 persons, 16.63 years.

[53] The KYC-led Gjakova-based team mobilized 14 adolescent researchers – 12 ethnic Albanians (six girls and six boys, from both Rahovec/Orahovac and Gjakova/Djakovica), one Bosniac girl and one Egyptian girl – along with two adult research advisors. This team conducted research in the Gjakova/Djakovica, Rahovec/Orahovac, Deçan/Deçani and Pejë/Pec Municipalities. The Orahovac team was composed

required multiplying each input to accommodate the need for separation – from separate trainings, training materials, translators and translations, to separate vehicles, food purchases, research schedules, and ultimately, separate written team reports.[54]

While it is arguable that adjusting to accommodate community divisions only exacerbates them, it is clear that it would not have been possible to conduct the research otherwise. Few to no young people or their parents from any community, no matter how good their intentions, would have consented to participation. Full security would have been nearly impossible to guarantee for a mixed group needing to travel in and out of areas dominated by one ethnicity or another. In addition, few research participants would have responded to questioning by interethnic teams for reasons that are clear from their research findings. Despite the separations, reports of each team will be made available to all the teams in three languages – Albanian, Serbian and English – and the findings of each team are represented together in this report.

Responses to the written surveys that research participants used to rank their top concerns are highlighted in boxes throughout this section, in addition to being provided in full in the Appendix. Over 175 written questionnaires were returned to the research teams: 87 to the Gjakova-based team; 20 to the Gnjilane team; and 68 to the Orahovac team. Survey results are based on this sample. A ranking of 1 marks the biggest concerns, two the second biggest, and so on.[55]

Adolescence and Youth in the Post-war Kosovar Context

Understandings of adolescence and youth vary from culture to culture and are important for effective programming on their behalf. Thus, research participants were asked to describe how they characterize adolescence and youth in their society. Their insights and experiences revealed a range of definitions. For many, adolescence is marked by age and closely linked to the phases of formal education. For example, younger adolescents are 12-13 years old and in their final years of primary school. Fourteen to 18-year-olds are older, secondary-school-age adolescents. Those from 18-24 are seen as young adults or university-age. The term youth was used to describe a broader spectrum of ages and experiences, ranging roughly from 10-29. Other markers of the transformation into and out of adolescence and youth include:

- marriage, especially for girls, many of whom marry in their teens and are required to forego the completion of their studies;
- obtaining a driver's liscense (at 16);
- gaining legal majority and the right to vote (at 18); and
- beginning work (as opposed to going to school).

At the same time, in recent years, internal displacement, the need for jobs and educational opportunities, and in some instances, particularly among Albanian adolescent boys, the desire to not be recruited into the Yugoslav Army have caused many adolescents and young adults to take the unusual step to separate from their close-knit families and find work and schooling abroad or in other towns. In this way, they leave behind their adolescence. In another example, for adolescent ex-KLA fighters, childhood is definitely over, but at the same time, they do not necessarily feel that society considers them to be adults. Still

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of three girls, six boys and three adult research advisors and was formed with the help of UNHCR Gjakova. It worked only in the Serb sections of Rahovec/Orahovac and Hoca e Mahde/Velika Hoca. The Gnjilane team comprised one adolescent boy, one young woman and one adult research advisor and worked in partnership with IRC Serbian staff in Gjilan/Gnjilane, primarily in villages surrounding Gjilan/Gnjilane town. OSCE provided support to the work of the Gjakova-based and Orahovac teams. The Gjakova-based team conducted 18 research sessions; Gnjilane, 8; Orahovac, 9.

[54] It was the first time conducting research for most of the adolescent researchers involved. They started the process by attending two- to three-day trainings along with the research advisors that were organized and carried out separately for each team by the Women's Commission (and the KYC in the case of the mostly Albanian team). They covered human and child rights concepts, communications skills, research techniques and practical experience conducting the work. The teams reported that the trainings gave them the basic skills and self-confidence to conduct the work.

[55] The written questionnaires were anonymous and required only that respondents mark their age and gender. One component of the questionnaire reiterated the main questions of the focus groups to allow private and/or additional responses from participants. Another component asked respondents to rank in order of importance a list of 20 or 21 problems, also allowing them to add problems to the list. (The Albanian version of the survey asking participants to rank their concerns includes a list of 21 problems. The Serbian version lists 20 due to a translation error that omitted the problem "jobs for parents/adults.")

others, such as unmarried adolescent rural girls, who work and stay mostly at home are not fully considered to be adults, either. Young people also defined adolescence and youth as a time of physical maturation, or puberty, and as a time for learning and having fun. Yet most felt that as a consequence of war, young people in Kosovo have lost much of the innocence, hope and optimism that is often equated with youth. Decision-makers should take care to identify this group of older children and young adults in their cultural context and avoid needless exclusion of some adolescents and youth from attention due to unrealistic constrictions on the definitions of adolecence and youth.

Tolerance

Intolerance and violence are at the root of most problems facing young people in Kosovo today. How young people and those who support and care for them treat these issues will undoubtedly make or break the prospects for peace and stability in Kosovo and the region for generations to come. The profound ethnic hatred that exists in Kosovo today is felt no less by youth than anyone else.

In this climate, the research teams boldy, yet sensitively, asked participants whether they could imagine all ethnicities living together peacefully in Kosovo one day. A good portion answered an immediate, vehement "NO, NEVER!" Others said, "Only if the Albanians stop behaving like animals"; and "The Serbs are born that way; they will always be like that." Yet, others saw some possibilities. One said: "I don't know. It would be hard, but it's possible. Maybe in 50 years. It's too soon now." And another said: "For sure. People who did not commit crimes could live together." At the same time, all respondents voiced a hope for lasting peace. One young person said: "We don't want war. We want peace and to be together in peace."

Most of the nearly 300 young people who came together for adolescent-led focus groups said it was the first time anyone had asked them their concerns and opinions about how to improve their lives and communities.

But the gulf between peaceful co-existence and the reality of the hatred, pain and ongoing violence that divides young people and other Kosovars today is staggering. Many adults have taught young people to be prejudiced against those of other ethnic backgrounds, and the recent, horrific events of the war have strengthened the reslove of many who paint every individual of a different ethnic background with the same brush. Few young people today appear prepared, even minimally, to validate the experience and suffering of their perceived opponents. The pain, loss and anger that most feel is a significant barrier to seeing the realities of the "other side." Those who do see shades of gray amid the black and white have little space to express and discuss their opinions openly for fear of violent backlash from within their own

community. Kosovo is also awash with political violence unleashed within ethnic groups, and young people are not immune to threats and intimidation.

In one example, a 16-year-old Albanian youth activist wrote a story that was published in a Serb newspaper describing the need for Albanians and Serbs to build bridges between their communities. Although the story was not written on behalf of the adolescent's youth organization, it was reprinted in Albanian, and members of the organization received threatening phone calls. As a result, the organization's membership declined, and the adolescent who wrote the story was ultimately ousted. In another example, a Serbian adolescent boy whispered to the Women's Commission researcher only when separate from other research participants that he is "part of the [Serb youth] resistance movement." He also said that despite a Serb boycott of the election process, he would register if he could do so safely, but that going to Serb or Albanian registration points presented risks.

These examples point to the urgent need to create safe spaces for young people to explore and address the full consequences of prejudice and ethnic hatred in their society. Although the acts of hatred and violence already committed against communities may never be forgiven, the hope for non-violence and lasting peace in Kosovo lies ultimately in the hands of young people, who will rebuild their society.

Urgent Concerns in Common

Ironically, despite ethnic divides, the main problems identified by adolescents and youth of all backgrounds were almost exactly the same. Each group – Albanians, Serbs, Egyptians, Bosniacs – rank security and hopelessness, or loss and uncertainty about the future, as their top concerns, albeit from very different perspectives. Each group faces serious challenges to getting an education and to accessing healthcare, and each is constrained by the destructive effects of gender inequality. Despite perceptions that one side has won the war, few adolescents professed to feeling completely free. Instead, all expressed an urgent need to experience real freedom.

The municipalities covered by the Gjakova-based research team are populated primarily by ethnic Albanian Kosovars, with small populations of Serbs living in enclaves. Roma and Egyptians live relatively freely in these municipalities, although many live in small, isolated rural settlements outside the towns. Bosniacs also live relatively freely among the Albanian population in these areas. Rahovec/Orahovac is a starkly divided small hillside city populated mainly by Albanians but also by Egyptians and Serbs who live in small enclaves protected by KFOR. Not far from the Serb area further above the town and along a bucolic passageway lined with grape vineyards is Hoca e Mahde/Velika Hoca, also populated by remaining Serbs, many of them internally displaced from other parts of the town. The Serb population dropped significantly in Rahovec/Orahovac, from over 5,000 before the war to fewer than 1,500, including approximately 250 young people between the ages of 13 and 20. The adolescents in Hoca travel to the Serb area of the town to attend secondary school. In Gjilan/Gnjilane, few Serbs are left in the city center and virtually no adolescents are among them. Instead, there are about nine Serb villages and three mixed Serb/Albanian villages close to the town, where some Serb adolescents and youth remain. Egyptians who remain in Gjilan/Gnjilane town are relegated to two or three streets.[56] While the main findings about adolescents' concerns can be generalized to the wider population, the research revealed that youth concerns must be recognized and addressed in the context of local community dynamics. The specific events of the conflict and the remaining ethnic mix create a diverse set of local scenarios, which shape the issues facing youth and require distinct approaches to dealing with them.

[56] For a comprehensive source on the situation of Gypsies in Kosovo in the early months following the war see: *The Gypsies of Kosova, A Survey of Their Communities After the War* by Paul Polansky, November 16, 1999.

Security

Survey Results – Security: The top concern

Gjakova-based team: #1 concern: Violence/lack of security
#2 concern: Prevalence of guns and other weapons, such as landmines
#3 concern: Kidnapping, trafficking, sexual violence and exploitation
#4 concern: Drugs
#5 concern: Loss of family and/or friends

Gnjilane team: #1 concern: Limited freedom of movement
#2 concern: Violence/lack of security
#3 concern: Hopelessness
#4concern: Uncertainty about the future
#5 concern: Prevalence of guns and other weapons, such as landmines

Orahovac team: #1 concern: Violence/lack of security
#2 concern: Limited freedom of movement
#3 concern: Uncertainty about the future
#4 concern: Prevalence of guns and other weapons, such as landmines
#5 concern: Family separations

Overwhelmingly, the research revealed that security-related concerns are the biggest problems facing young people today in Kosovo. Discussions repeatedly confirmed that young people consistently put these concerns above other important issues, such as getting an education and maintaining good health.[57] For Serbs and many Egyptians, freedom of movement, fear of armed attacks and abductions are top concerns. For Albanians and some Egyptians and Bosniacs, growing violent crime in society, kidnapping, sexual violence and the prevalence of landmines and other weapons are the greatest concerns. Young people also linked security concerns closely to their psychological well-being. Many of the emotional concerns expressed by young people, such as hopelessness, uncertainty about the future and concern about family separations and loss, are a direct result of violence and insecurity. In many instances these feelings are compounded by a profound sense of frustration over injustice stemming from a lack of criminal responsibility for war crimes and more recent acts of violence. Youth criminality, particularly within the Albanian community, is another major security concern that is closely related to the social, economic and political effects of war.

The following sections detail some of the main security concerns facing adolescents and youth in Kosovo today: youth violence, juvenile justice; violence against minority youth; gender-based violence; and landmines and UXO.

Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice

Weapons possession – Nearly every discussion with adolescents involved in the research study revealed that teenaged males, and some females, are carrying weapons in Kosovo, especially in Albanian areas. Many research respondents said they witnessed other youth and even young children carrying weapons; several openly admitted to carrying weapons, primarily guns, themselves. Blerina, a 14-year-old Albanian girl from a village near Rahovec/Orahovac told researchers, "I carry a gun, since the war, because I don't feel safe; there are still Serbs in Kosovo." Another girl offered further explanation: "The problem is, we

[57] In approaching the research, the teams' intention was to focus on youth violence given reports of adolescent boys' and young men's growing criminality. While youth violence issues were revealed as serious, young people placed them in the context of urgent concerns about security in general.

are not sure if we are free. We don't feel safe."[58] Their village had been hard hit by massacres during the war, leaving few in the town who were not personally affected by loss.

The youth cited self defense as the principal reason for why young people were arming themselves in school, at home and in the streets. They claimed youth carry weapons to protect against attacks from other "bands" or gangs of youths, kidnappers, ethnic attackers and other criminals. Young people are also involved in vehicular violence. All of Kosovo -- where traffic accidents are the leading cause of death -- suffers from a tyranny of lawlessness on the roads.

But many adolescents involved in the research study described their reasoning for *not* carrying weapons. Visar, a 17-year-old Egyptian boy, argued that carrying knives is a mistake. He said: "If people do that they just create other problems for themselves. You might end up killing someone and then having to go to jail. Or if someone kills someone in my family, then I am forced to go and kill someone from that person's family. It just creates problems."[59]

Humanitarian aid workers in Gjakova/Djakovica recounted a chilling incident that occurred when Save the Children ran a "guns for toys" program. The program was designed to get children to exchange their water pistols for toys that represented less violent activities. In fact, some children under ten arrived for toys and turned in real guns. The weapons were turned over to KFOR, and the children got their toys.

The Women's Commission also witnessed firsthand the use of weapons by teenagers on the evening of June 25, 2000. On the busy main street of Gjakova/Djakovica, two teenagers pulled guns on one another and threatened each other. One, an ex-KLA fighter, later explained his actions as an attempt to scare the other individual in order to prevent an armed attack.

The possession of weapons by ordinary citizens, including parents, increases opportunities for young people to obtain them. Continued efforts are needed by international protection forces and communities themselves to remove guns and other weapons that are not held legally.

Juvenile Crime – Reports from police, United Nations and humanitarian assistance organizations concerned with juvenile justice issues confirm that a significant number of crimes are being committed by adolescents under the age of 18, and by young adults in their late teens and early twenties, mostly Albanian males. The victims are often their peers, including ethnic minorities and girls who are sexually assaulted and raped. Research also revealed that judicial, police and social service systems are not yet able to adequately cope with the realities of juvenile and other crime. According to police and social service providers, all crimes, especially sexual and domestic violence, are underreported and likely to increase unless serious preventive efforts are undertaken. In the face of rising drug and human trafficking by international criminal organizations operating in Kosovo, pressing youth employment needs and the ongoing miseries of recovering from war, halting the development of a culture of violence among Kosovo's young people is an urgent priority.

Statistics from the Kosovo Police Information System (KPIS)[60] indicate that crimes committed by young people range from pick pocketing, car theft and burglary to rape, assault and murder. For the period January 1, 2000 to August 22, 2000, UNMIK International Police records show a total of 6,723 offenses[61]

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[58] Gjakova-based research team and Women's Commission interview, June 26, 2000, Kosovo.

[59] Women's Commission and Kosovar Youth Council interview with Egyptian male adolescents and young adults in Rahovec/Orahovac, June 6, 2000. Blood vengeance practices in Egyptian and other cultures require the avenging of the murder of a relative by taking the life of another in the offender's family.

[60] The Kosovo Police Information System is part of Civpol and functions to collect crime information from 58 Civpol installations located throughout Kosovo. The information collected by the KPIS represents approximately 97 percent of reported incidents, with some data missing, primarily due to slow reporting from some areas, inconsistency in the quality of documentation and poor follow-up in documenting the status of cases. Many crimes go unreported. In areas where crimes are traditionally underreported, such as violence against women, the amount of existing data is telling. Reports of increases in crimes committed by Albanian adolescents against minorities due to parental pressure were not confirmed through this research.

[61] It should be understood that "offenses" are distinct from "incidents." Just as one traffic stop can result in more than one citation, one "incident" can contain multiple offenses. For example, an officer making a report about a victim who is kidnapped, raped and murdered would create a

committed by persons between the ages of 10 and 25. This comprises 27.6 percent of a total of 24,338 offenses recorded during this period. Of the offenses committed by youth, 197 were committed by 10-13-year-olds, for which 75 suspects were identified and six arrests were made (for arson, theft and burglary). Sixty-eight of these were Albanian males, and six were Serbian females. Most of the victims were Albanian, and crimes included murder, assault, accident causing death/injury, criminal damage, threatening behavior, traffic violations and rape (two), just to name some. In the 14-18 age range, 1,520 offenses are recorded for which 899 suspects were identified and 86 arrests made. Theft, traffic violations and assault are the most frequent offenses. Existing records of suspects include 822 Albanians and 17 Serbs (all males except for two females), and victims include 424 Albanians and 9 Serbs. Twenty-three female survivors of rape are included in the tally, for which 3 arrests were made, and one suicide of an Albanian adolescent girl is recorded. In the 19-25 age range, 5,006 offenses are recorded, the vast majority of which involve theft, threatening behavior, assault, traffic violations and accidents, and for which 322 arrests were made. Sixty-eight murder and homicide offenses are registered, along with thirty-seven rapes and two sexual assaults. Rape suspects include 17 Albanian males, one Serbian male and one of another ethnicity, and survivors include 23 Albanian females, one Serb female and three of other ethnicities.[62]

These statistics only paint a partial picture, as they likely under-represent youth involvement in criminal activities and do not describe the full dynamics of juvenile crime. Improved documentation and interpretation of the circumstances surrounding the crime would assist law enforcement and social service providers in their work to effectively address and prevent juvenile crime.

Juvenile Justice – Not all children or adults who commit crimes are prosecuted for their offenses, primarily because of lack of police, detention facilities and judicial capacity. In addition, when juvenile assailants are apprehended, they are not always treated in accordance with the law. For example, the police and KFOR have not consistently referred cases of juvenile offenders under the age of 14 to the Center for Social Work,[63] which has guardianship authority for children under the age of criminal responsibility (14). Instead, many of these and other child offenders have been incarcerated with adults,[64] because many law enforcement officials are unaware of the role of the Center for Social Work. A Task Force on Juvenile Justice[65] has confirmed that almost all young offenders are mixed in with adults, and consequently, the Task Force is working to address this and other juvenile justice issues. The Task Force has played a strong advocacy role for youth, helping to release young people erroneously detained and visiting those in jail to monitor their condition. It also organized a Juvenile Justice Symposium in the fall of 1999 that brought judges from all five districts in Kosovo together for an interactive training. The Task Force has also developed a juvenile code to improve the legal basis on which juvenile cases are processed and tried.[66] Many police officers claim to have trouble interpreting Kosovo law particularly when it comes to minors and say they would be aided by a specific list of crimes, along with distinct procedures for handling them.

Research did not reveal any work being done explicitly to identify and address the complex social, psychological, economic and political circumstances that have led to current levels of youth violence. Understanding the root causes of youth violence in Kosovo is critical to effectively prevent further juvenile crime. Without increased preventive measures, a culture of violence among young people will only rise due to several, often overlapping, factors:

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single case involving three offenses. In addition, some incidents reported, such as unexploded ordinance and demonstrations, are not offenses per se.

[62] From KPIS-generated *Juveniles 10-13, 14-18, and 19-25, UNMIK International Police, Period reported: From 01/01/00 to 22/08/00*.

[63] The problem also stemmed from the Center for Social Work struggling to rebuild following the war. Salaries for social workers paid by UNMIK are low and took a long time in coming. In addition, structural damage to most of the Center's facilities around Kosovo made it hard for the Center to function. As the Center has regained capacity, they have not had the police referrals to respond to, as that part of the juvenile care system had also broken down.

[64] For example, a facility intended to house juveniles in Lipian is instead being used to accommodate an overflow of adult offenders from other detention facilities.

[65] The Task Force on Juvenile Justice comprises international implementing organizations.

[66] The law in place now in Kosovo is that which was in effect on March 22, 1989, and where it is deficient, international humanitarian and human rights law takes precedence.

- the increased grip of organized criminal activity;
- the continued struggle to rebuild society's social, economic and political fabric;
- an ever-increasing need for jobs, particularly for young people entering the workforce; and
- gender discrimination, which impedes justice for crimes committed against girls and women.

Violence against Minority Youth

Despite KFOR protection, security risks for minority youth include armed attacks, arson, intimidation and beatings, primarily by Albanians. Adolescents fear kidnapping, trafficking and abduction for the purposes of sexual abuse and exploitation. These security conditions affect every aspect of their lives; minority youth live in mostly isolated, protected areas and have extremely limited freedom of movement. KFOR escorts are required to travel to school and health facilities, and most communities cannot cultivate their fields safely, go to stores or find gainful employment opportunities. While many of their families are separated, communication can be difficult and travel outside their communities is a great risk.

All members of minority populations face these problems, but young people and adults say it is worse for youth because they cannot do many of the things they need to do to build their futures as adults. At times, youth are also targeted for harassment and beatings by other youth. For the young people, minority youth and adults say, "Solutions cannot wait."

During Women's Commission work with the Orahovac research team, this community was shelled during the night. In Gjilan/Gnjilane, the Women's Commission arrived with the research team and IRC staff just minutes following a grenade attack on a Serb home close to the interview site in the Roma quarter. One young person described life in this environment as "like living in a cage."

In general, young people in minority communities say they need the protection of KFOR and the police, and many are appreciative of the efforts that have been made. However, they are not satisfied. Many feel that these forces favor Albanian communities and therefore do not do enough to prevent attacks or respond quickly enough when problems arise. Minority youth also fear reporting criminal activity perpetrated against them, as they fear reprisals for doing so. One young Serb woman expressed the sentiment simply by saying: "No one can protect us better than our own army."[67]

One adolescent boy, internally displaced and living in one of the Serb villages around Gjilan/Gnjilane town, said: "KFOR provides a feeling of safety when they are here, especially on the roads between villages where I need to walk back and forth to school. But when they are not there, I do not feel safe." At a secondary school in a Serb village in Gjilan/Gnjilane, teachers explained that KFOR does provide protection, but is inconsistent. For example, they said: "KFOR is supposed to escort two yellow school buses back and forth to school every day. Just last week, before one got to its final destination, with children on board, KFOR just left the route. We were forced to continue on alone, and that was not the first time! When we tell them, there is no explanation."[68]

In a more positive example, the Roma community in Gjilan/Gnjilane had high praise for the work of US KFOR Sergeant Roberto, who they claimed acted tirelessly to do his best to ensure their safety. He gained their trust to such an extent that upon his departure from Kosovo, the community protested for his return, and told researchers, "If you give us someone else like him, we will feel safe." Sergeant Roberto's personal commitment, open communication and follow-up with this community created trust that led to an increased sense of security and provides a lesson regarding the need for military and police forces to be as accessible as possible and express concern for all ethnic communities through active listening and follow-up action.

[67] Gnjilane research team and Women's Commission interview, June 2000, Gnjilane Municipality.
[68] Gnjilane research team and Women's Commission interview, June 2000, Gnjilane Municipality.

In Rahovec/Orahovac, Serbian youth said that it is too easy for Albanian young men to drive their cars into their quarter and harass them. Therefore, they want more protection on the periphery of their area of the town, and less in the middle of it. Young people here were tormented by their isolation coupled with their exposure to attacks.

Egyptians in Rahovec/Orahovac expressed feeling caught in the middle of the conflict between the Serbs and the Albanians. One young Egyptian man said: "Some Roma did commit crimes with the Serbs during the war, but *we* did not, and we want to live together with the Albanian community. We want to work. We have something to contribute. The worst thing is to be isolated. We want to be able to go outside this area and live without fear... The Albanians have a list. My name is not on the list, and the UÇK told me that I am free to go around. But we are not afraid of UÇK, we're afraid of Albanian youth, Rahovec rebels, even the little ones, in small 'bands.' We could try to go out, but they might beat us, and many people are missing. We might be disappeared forever, so we need to be careful."[69] They also said that they did not believe that violent attacks on them in their quarter in the past year -- grenade attacks, house burnings, abductions -- were orchestrated by ex-KLA members but rather by Albanian extremists from villages who pretend to be KLA.

Few of the Egyptian (Hashkalija) adolescent girls living in enclaves interviewed had had much schooling, but all were interested to learn to read and write. All longed for the day when people of different ethnic backgrounds will live together peacefully in Kosovo.

Just thirty minutes drive from Rahovec/Orahovac, many Egyptians continue to live relatively freely among the majority community in Gjakova/Djakovica, but some have recently been subjected to intimidation by young Albanian males and forced to flee their homes.[70] Civpol also reported to researchers that some Egyptian children are being harassed by a group of Albanian boys on their way to and from school. Bosniacs interviewed for the research project live relatively freely in the Pejë/Pec Municipality amid the Albanian population and do not live under special KFOR protection. However, young Bosniacs stated that they do fear generalized violence and vengeance attacks for speaking their native language openly, which is very close to Serbian.

Weapons stored by ordinary Albanian citizens help to fuel attacks against minorities, present a risk of accidents and support violent crime within the Albanian community. In addition, attacks against minorities may also physically harm Albanians. In one example, some IDP adolescents in Deçan/Deçani

[69] KYC and Women's Commission interview, Rahovec/Orahovac, June 6, 2000.
[70] Interestingly, members of the Egyptian community in Gjakova/Djakovica asked to participate in the research study did not agree to do so. The reasoning for the decision was not fully clear.

live 300 meters from an enclave of Serbs. When the enclave is bombed at night, there is a chance that they will also be hit by mistake, and the community must endure the stress of hearing this ongoing bombardment. The widespread presence of weapons and ongoing violence against minorities also create a freedom of movement problem for Albanians, albeit less than that affecting minority communities, as Albanian youth are regularly stopped at checkpoints by KFOR for weapons searches and as they pass near minority communities.

Gender-based Violence

Kidnapping, Trafficking and Sexual Slavery - The trafficking of women and girls from other countries into Kosovo for the purposes of prostitution and sexual slavery, and attempted kidnappings within Kosovo are on the rise. However, despite attempted kidnappings of Kosovar girls, no cases of women and girls having been abducted and then trafficked out of Kosovo for sexual or other purposes have been confirmed.[71] According to Civpol and NGO sources, there is no evidence thus far that Kosovar women or girls are being forcibly involved in the sex trade underway in Kosovo. All of the cases of adolescent girls being trafficked into Kosovo involved forced sexual slavery. International criminal organizations, lawlessness and the large presence of international personnel in Kosovo have contributed to these problems.

Despite unsubstantiated reports of trafficking of Kosovars, fears about kidnapping and trafficking in the past year have reached massive proportions among the population. The Women's Commission found a generalized fear of kidnapping among the adolescents interviewed, especially girls of all ethnicities, but most pronounced among Albanians. A number of adolescent girls also described incidents where they believe they eluded kidnapping attempts.

Inconsistent information and a rumor mill likely fueled the near hysteria that occurred in Kosovo in the fall of 1999 when fears over kidnapping enveloped the population. At that time, the Women's Commission heard conflicting reports from authorities on the scope and nature of kidnappings and their concrete link to trafficking. Some among the police and KFOR said it was confined to certain areas, others said it was widespread. Some said it involved children, others said no cases of this were reported. In the capital, Prishtina, girls and young women were visibly absent from the streets from early evening on. Adolescent girls and boys told the Women's Commission that girls were not going out at night in large part due to the fear of kidnapping and that they even feared for their safety traveling back and forth from school during the day.

While no cases of trafficking out of Kosovo have been confirmed since that time, there is evidence of attempted kidnappings, potentially for the purposes of trafficking. A Civpol task force on trafficking and prostitution monitors prostitution, sexual slavery and trafficking activities. The task force also conducts raids of brothels and provides assistance to women and girls in need, with help from other United Nations agencies and NGOs. Civpol told researchers that, in their experience the vast majority of kidnapping complaints they investigated were found to be unsubstantiated.[72] For example, one police officer reported that some Kosovar Albanian families have claimed that their daughters were kidnapped to legitimize unauthorized relationships between young men and women, including adolescent girls and boys. At the same time, other cases of attempted kidnapping that point to trafficking have been confirmed. In one example, a Carabinieri Special Forces commander based in Gjakova/Djakovica confirmed to researchers that his team has worked hard to thwart a "significant number" of kidnapping attempts by criminal

[71] Making the link between kidnapping and trafficking is extremely difficult. There must be evidence of the kidnapping in Kosovo and evidence of the person having been taken to another country, requiring international cooperation. Even if countries are cooperating, finding out where persons are being held can be very difficult; some are completely isolated and living in slave-live conditions.

[72] KPIS juvenile crime statistics alone document 272 reported kidnapping and missing persons cases between January 1, 2000 and August 22, 2000.

organizations from Albania, although comprehensive numbers or detailed cases histories were not provided."[73]

Civpol Criminal Intelligence told the Women's Commission that hundreds of women and girls have been trafficked into Kosovo through a variety of routes.[74] Civpol Criminal Intelligence officer Roger Rouse said that about 70-80 percent of the 200 women Civpol encountered in brothels in the Prishtina area were prostitutes from other countries, mostly Eastern European countries, including Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Russia. "A smaller percentage was forced into Kosovo, including at least three adolescent girls between the ages of 14 and 16. Some of the women wanted to stay and work. The girls wanted to go home," reported Mr. Rouse. He said that customers included Kosovar Albanians, NGO and other international workers, as well as KFOR soldiers.[75]

Several organizations are cooperating to address the issue, including IOM. At the time of interview, IOM had assisted 58 prostitutes, who represent only a small portion of prostitutes. Confidential safe houses run by UNHCR and NGOs serve as transit points for women, where they can find protection, food, medical care and psychological assistance as they decide what to do. Adolescents are expedited to their home countries for care. IOM has also launched a campaign to raise awareness among international peacekeeping forces, international workers and the general public about sexual slavery and trafficking in Kosovo. The campaign uses the slogan: "You pay for a night, she pays with her life."

Meanwhile, fears of kidnapping among girls and young women remain a huge concern, and female Albanian research participants ranked it their number one concern. Boys also cited kidnapping as a particular concern for girls, and some feared their own abduction.[76]

An Egyptian adolescent girl living in Gjilan/Gnjilane town described her experience attempting to walk to school one day this winter: "I was near my house on my way to school, which is about 100 meters from my home. Suddenly, a black car appeared, and three men wearing black masks opened the door and tried to pull me into the car. I screamed for help, and my neighbors and parents stepped outside. The men got away, even though KFOR soldiers were not far away… The car with the masked men came back again another day, outside my friend's house… I didn't report what happened to the police. I was afraid to. I am afraid of the kidnappers and afraid of what Albanians might do if I report such an incident."[77]

Although the kidnapping and trafficking of Kosovars is in a nascent stage, as organized crime takes deeper hold in Kosovo the potential for the situation worsening is clear. Improvements are needed in the area of public awareness and effective policing, including information sharing among authorities working on the issues. Given fears of retribution for reporting these and other crimes, women and girls need better, more confidential access to police authorities to combat the under-reporting of crimes and promote the apprehension of offenders. International workers and local communities in Kosovo would also contribute substantially to the prevention of trafficking and sexual slavery by refraining from soliciting prostitutes in Kosovo. Unfortunately, gaining universal agreement on a code of conduct for international workers, including the military, is difficult.[78]

Sexual and Domestic Violence – No full statistics exist on sexual and domestic violence in Kosovo, and, given cultural taboos and the sensitivity of the subject, research did not include direct testimony from

[73] Women's Commission and KYC interview, Gjakova/Djakovica, June 2000. Despite the need for coordination on this issue, NGOs and Civpol concerned with trafficking issues have noted a lack of sufficient information-sharing on the part of KFOR.
[74] Women's Commission interviews, June 2000, Prishtina, Kosovo, and by telephone, July 25, 2000, New York. Individual officers within Civpol have taken the responsibility to track and analyze patterns of trafficking and prostitution in Kosovo. The relatively short terms of service for police officers from a variety of countries make the consistent collection of data and increased knowledge about the issue more difficult.
[75] Women's Commission telephone interview with Roger Rouse, July 25, 2000.
[76] It should also be understood that when the adolescents describe their fear of abduction, some view it in the context of crimes of retribution, involving potential rape and murder, and others also make the link to potential trafficking for sexual purposes. The fear of abduction for retribution is particularly high among the minority adolescents interviewed.
[77] Gnjilane research team and Women's Commission interview, June 9, 2000, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kosovo.
[78] Among other reasons, KFOR is very decentralized in its command structure, and different units have differing views on the subject, making unified action in this area particularly challenging.

adolescent survivors of sexual and domestic violence. At the same time, many adolescents of all ethnicities believe that sexual violence, in particular rape, is occurring. As in other countries, it is likely that women and girls are raped mostly by people in the same community, often by someone they know. Civpol reports handling domestic and sexual violence cases, and UNMIK International Police statistics on crimes committed by 10-25-year-olds document 65 cases of rape and three of sexual assault over an eight-month period. Furthermore, crimes involving sexual violence, including in domestic settings, are known to be vastly underreported now as well as before the war.

Some Serbian young women in Gjilan/Gnjilane stated their feelings and fears about sexual violence bluntly, believing that since the end of the war, "Albanians have a license to rape and kill." Although it is unclear how many adolescent girls are survivors of sexual violence and/or other forms of physical and emotional abuse in the home, various attempts to ascertain the breadth of these problems have revealed that adolescents are among those victimized. Research on domestic violence conducted by UNIFEM in the spring of 2000 concluded that young girls are vulnerable to violence perpetrated by other women in the family and are particularly vulnerable to that perpetrated by boyfriends.[79]

Although finding help is difficult for all survivors of violence, it is more difficult for adolescents than older women, as adolescents may feel less empowered to seek help and are also afraid of stigmatization, which would prevent them from being able to marry. They may also feel they are to blame for what happened to them. Thus, information about the reality of the situation comes only to those closest to the survivors, in medical facilities and in other confidential settings. In one example, a researcher involved with a UNHCR assessment of the Kosovo Women's Initiative told the Women's Commission that during an interview with Kosovar Albanian women in a rural village, the women spontaneously spoke of the rape of her 13-year-old daughter as she was on her way to school. An adolescent Albanian boy from the same village allegedly perpetrated the rape, and the crime had gone unreported.

The presence of international personnel, including KFOR soldiers and Civpol, is also a concern, despite their mandate to protect the people of Kosovo. The tragic, and now infamous case of U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Frank J. Ronghi's conviction for sexually abusing and murdering 11-year-old Merita Shabiu stands as a horrific and urgent call for all peacekeeping troops and other international personnel to be trained in child rights and monitored in their enforcement of these rights.

Cultural attitudes toward violence against women, however, also contribute to the problem. For example, the UNIFEM study on sexual and domestic violence in Kosovo documented a lack of understanding about domestic violence and a tendency among Kosovar communities toward blaming females for crimes committed against them. One woman interviewed for the research study said of the rape of Merita Shabiu, "I blame the parents, she was obviously a bad girl." Another – an urban female doctor – said: "I feel sorry for the soldier. I bet she led him on."[80]

More needs to be known about the extent and nature of domestic and sexual violence in Kosovo, and its effects on young people. And most importantly, confidential, creative programs are urgently needed to assist women and girls in their recovery from domestic and sexual violence and to change societal attitudes, which ultimately condone these crimes and condemn women and girls to lives of isolation, shame and sorrow for crimes committed against them.

Landmines and Unexploded Ordinance

Millions of landmines and unexploded ordinance (UXO) continue to litter the landscape of Kosovo, and children and adolescents are among their primary victims. From June 1, 1999 to September 30, 2000, 516 people were injured or killed by landmines, UXO or cluster bombs, of which, 199 were between the ages of 10 and 19. In the early months following the war, the rate of injuries was higher and a higher

[79] No Safe Place, UNIFEM.
[80] Ibid., p. 37.

percentage of those affected were children and youth. Of those injured or killed, the high-risk group ranged from 10 to 25 years old, over 90 percent male, pointing to the need to focus education and prevention efforts on the youth population.[81] These weapons pose a huge security problem for children going to school, playing outdoors and accessing other services. They also present an economic problem, as many farmers cannot work their fields until these weapons are cleared. Collaborative efforts by international NGOs, UNICEF, local communities and KFOR to raise awareness about the dangers, prevent accidents and to remove mines and UXO have had far-reaching effect. Although many more mines and UXO need to be cleared, virtually every person interviewed reported having received information about the dangers of these weapons from radio, television, posters, in school or by word of mouth. KFOR also reported that the majority of people harmed by landmines and UXO are those who are informed about their dangers but fail to take heed.

Mental Health

Survey results: Mental Health

Gjakova-based team: #5 concern: Loss of family and/or friends
Gnjliane team: #3 concern: Hopelessness; #4 concern: Uncertainty about the future
Orahovac team: #3 concern: Uncertainty about the future; #5 concern: Family separations

Adolescents and youth suffered multiple traumas before and during the war and continue to experience a variety of war-related stresses in Kosovo today.[82] While most young people have found ways to cope with their problems, some are also not coping well. Many are experiencing profound hopelessness, despair, personal loss, uncertainty about the future, fear of violence, frustration over perceived injustice and anger about their predicament. Moments of fun and feelings of freedom – parties, bus excursions, soccer matches – are tempered by hard realities that many young people feel powerless to change. Their psychological and emotional well-being is closely tied to previous and ongoing security problems.

As most young Albanians have seen their conditions stabilize, as markets, schools and cafes function vibrantly, some of the fears, such as police brutality, have begun to diminish. In many respects, the world seems new and full of possibility. But as they try to look forward they are continually drawn to remembering the recent past. For most, the pain of loss and the brutality in the war is as fresh as the day it began. Some suffer in isolation, like the estimated thousands of girls and women who endured sexual violence in the war, but cannot speak openly about it for fear of rejection by their families and communities. One woman working on women's rights issues reported that attempted suicides among adolescent girls, who are likely survivors of sexual violence, are significant. Communities also experience suffering collectively, like Gjakovars, who lament and protest the imprisonment of over 140 of their sons, brothers and fathers in Serbian jails. Many families find no solace and closure without knowledge about the fate of loved ones disappeared during the war.

Some young people revealed specific symptoms of trauma, and many expressed deep fears of additional Serb attacks, especially those in villages and those who had witnessed violence. An adolescent ex-KLA fighter said his dreams are continually filled with episodes from the battlefield. Adolescent girls from a rural village where many men and boys were massacred and other violence took place described having nightmares about renewed Serb attacks. One young adolescent boy from an IDP camp also described his fear at the sight of Serb women and children being escorted by KFOR to their nearby camp. When

[81] *Detailed Statistics on Mines, UXO and CB in Kosovo, Draft Version for Mine Actors in Kosovo, 1 June 1999 – 30 September 2000*, ICRC in cooperation with IMSMA. Melissa Brymer and Rune Stuvland, "Child Mental Health and Psychosocial Services in Kosovo," Center for Crisis Psychology, Kosovo, March 2000, pg. 11.

[82] The preliminary results from the only large-scale study on the psychosocial impact of war in post-war Kosovo also confirmed this finding, as published in: *Child Mental Health and Psychosocial Services in Kosovo*, Center for Crisis Psychology, March 2000, pgs. 12-13. The authors cite the September 1999 US Center for Disease Control study in Kosovo. Although this study primarily targeted adults, the sample included individuals 15 years and older.

researchers asked, “Even Serb women and children scare you?” he said earnestly, “Women can kill, too, you know.”

Many Albanian youth are coping with the tragedies of war and oppression by organizing and engaging in cultural and sports activities and by celebrating the KLA’s military victory achieved with assistance from NATO. Many young people, particularly boys, hero worship former KLA fighters and NATO troops, proudly wearing KLA uniforms and spray painting KLA symbols and the initials of political parties led by former KLA fighters around their towns. Instead of seeing war and the loss of life as a tragedy brought on by war, many young people identify armed conflict with glorious liberation. Young people idealizing the call to war are vulnerable to recruitment should fighting recur, and many boys already have become emboldened to commit acts of violence within their own community and against minorities in the post-war environment. After hearing a former adolescent KLA fighter describe the horrors of fighting in the war in 1998 and 1999 in Kosovo, the Women’s Commission and adolescent researchers asked what he would advise other adolescents considering fighting in the event of another war. Without hesitation, he said boldly, “I'd say to them, 'If you have a drop of Albanian blood in you, Fight!'"

In minority Serb communities, hopelessness among youth is acute, and they maintain a profound lack of trust in international community actors from, or allied with, NATO countries. One year after the arrival of NATO peacekeepers, they feel that little peace has come to them. Many are deeply angry about the war and feel that equal attention is not paid to their community’s need for justice for war crimes. Isolation and a lack of freedom of movement are the biggest stresses for these youth, followed closely by family separations and a general uncertainty about the future. Most complain of having little to do, and many appear physically listless. They regularly think about whether it is better to leave or stay in Kosovo and have trouble envisioning their lives even a few months into the future. The situation is similar for isolated Egyptian youth. Some Egyptians are also in the difficult position of having to appear not to side with either Serbs or Albanians.

The process of engaging isolated Serb and Egyptian young people in the research project revealed some of these concerns. A notice posted in Rahovec/Orahovac one afternoon for three people to be involved in the research study produced more than 50 young people and adults who wanted to be interviewed the following day. In Hoca e Mahde/Velika Hoca, however, organizers had to return at least four times before the adults would convey the information about the project to young people, despite having promised to do so several times. Among other things, the adults protested the use of the term minority to describe Serb communities. In Gjilan/Gnjliane, there was great distrust among the Serb communities, particularly parents and community leaders, who insisted that they could tell researchers exactly what the youth needed: security and protection. Until all Kosovar Serbs have those things, many in the community saw no reason to allow the Women's Commission or adolescent Serbs to carry out research. The Orahovac research team described some of the major constraints to their research as “distrust in the aims of the research; lack of hope; and suspicion of the possibility of success.” A Serb priest who agreed to be interviewed stated: “Adolescents’ have been deeply in need for a year. Was this study deliberately carried out too late?”[83]

Beyond the passive resistance of isolated Serb and Egyptian communities, young people are deeply troubled by family separations and abductions of family members. They also complain about the lack of activities and possibilities for romantic relationships. One teenage girl cried when asked about her mother, who is living in Serbia in order to obtain medical treatment that she does not have access to inside Kosovo. A 12-year-old Egyptian boy cried about his missing father, taken suddenly during the “first war” in 1998, in Rahovec/Orahovac. He was also tormented by racism, as he said that Serbs harass him because his skin is light, saying to him, “Are you Albanian?” With some exceptions, Serbian and Egyptian young people complained that finding love is very difficult due to the high number of young people who have left Kosovo and the trauma that exists for those who stay. Only in one Serb village did

[83] Orahovac research team interview, Rahovec/Orahovac, June 2000.

the boys interviewed smile and say, “the girls here are the best thing about this situation.” Most everyone else felt the lack of people presented major difficulties in finding a girlfriend or boyfriend.

All communities in Kosovo are surrounded by the markings of war: mass graves, destroyed homes, fields of landmines, tanks, guns and troops, international assistance organizations and more. In this environment it is easy for anyone to quickly become desensitized to the abnormality of the setting, where a reliance on heavy weapons and a strong show of military might feels normal. Few minority young people were able to acknowledge that atrocities occurred at the hands of Serb forces during the conflict; many may simply not believe that they did occur. Instead, like most young people on all sides, they were quick to decry the sins of others and register feelings of great frustration about a lack of equal justice for crimes committed against them.

Without the prospect of real peace and freedom for all people in Kosovo, the hopelessness and anger felt by young people is likely to continue. Minority young people in particular do not believe that they can live much longer under their current conditions. According to their statements, real peace and freedom for Kosovo’s youth is impossible without justice for war crimes, information about missing persons, decreases in interethnic and other violence, increased freedom of movement and civic participation for minority communities, family reunifications, meaningful multiethnic dialogue and refugee and IDP returns home. Rightly, the UNICEF report also concludes that constructive interethnic dialogue between youth must take place around common concerns, as opposed to focusing on differences.

Health

Survey Results: Health

Gjakova-based team: #4 concern: Drugs
Gnjliane team: #7 concern: Drugs; #10 concern: Sex
Orahovac team: Not in top 10

Research questions pertaining to health were intended to determine the access adolescents have to health services and information, and any specific health problems they may be experiencing. Adolescents responded widely that they receive little information about health issues, but are interested in learning more. In general, access to health services for adolescents and others is fairly limited, particularly for minority and rural communities, and access to reproductive health services and information is particularly limited. Barriers to accessing health care named by young people included location of services, security risks, lack of medicines and attitudes towards doctors.

Access

Doctors reported few adolescents accessing health care services. Some adolescents did report having received information from the media and in school, but in general, health education is not adequately systematized and does not reach all young people. Many attending school said that they would prefer to have some of their study time dedicated to health education. Almost all respondents were interested in learning about a variety of topics relating to health, particularly infectious diseases and communication skills for improving relationships of all kinds. When asked about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS, many adolescents reported having heard that they exist, but few knew specific information about them or had any knowledge about prevention. At the same time, there were also cases of adolescents stating, “That’s a homosexual’s illness, and I am not in that group” and “The only thing I know about AIDS is that I am scared of it.”

Many adolescents in minority and Albanian IDP villages explained that visiting doctors or hospitals required traveling long distances, sometimes on foot, risking exposure to landmines and other threats. Even when young people made it to health clinics, they said basic medicines and other supplies were not

always available, especially in minority communities. In some cases, adolescents reported no access problems, especially in urban areas, but stated that they had not been to a doctor or dentist recently, nor did they go in the past. There are probably multiple reasons for this, including a lack of funds and access in the past, but there is also a tradition of simply visiting doctors for healing, not for prevention. In some cases, particularly among some Egyptian communities, traditional healing methods are preferred.

Almost all youth reported little to no exposure to reproductive health issues. Due to isolation and/or social stigma toward romantic relationships that do not involve the promise of marriage, as adolescent girls and boys become sexually active, they may not seek or find the information and care they need to prevent pregnancy and protect against STDs. Adolescent girls and women who are the survivors of sexual abuse also require access to confidential, non-judgmental reproductive health care. The International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee and Save the Children run reproductive health programs in Kosovo that target adolescents with youth-friendly information and opportunities for dialogue. The NGOs report that young people greatly appreciate the programs.

Egyptian adolescents in Rahovec/Orahovac are confined to their quarter, where there is no functioning health clinic. To get to a hospital they have to travel into Albanian areas in the town, which they are afraid to do without secure transportation. While some reported being treated well by Albanian doctors in the past, they expressed concern about being turned away or maltreated in the present climate. Although Egyptians in Gjakova/Djakovica declined to be interviewed, in general they move more freely among the majority population and have better access to health care. Bosniacs in Pejë/Pec are in a similar position. Serbs in Rahovec/Orahovac stated that they do have access to a health clinic, but that a promise by the Greek government to have it fully supplied and functioning with a medical specialist has not yet been fulfilled. They, as well as Serbs in the Gjilan/Gnjliane area, lack medicine and doctors and must travel through Albanian areas with KFOR escorts to get to a hospital. They said that KFOR will not always consent to taking them, even in an emergency, due to a requirement for prior planning of trips to hospitals. Lack of emergency health care and specialist services concern the young people as well as the whole community. The Orahovac team reported that the community attributes the death of three persons to inadequate emergency health services.

Drug use among adolescents – Adolescents in nearly every focus group raised concerns about a rise in drug use among their peers. Five survey respondents admitted personally to using drugs, and others described witnessing drug use among their peers. Many more did not have these experiences but expressed an overwhelming awareness of the spread of drugs, such as hashish and marijuana, into Kosovo. Use of harder drugs was not confirmed, although KFOR did tell researchers that a variety of drugs, including more expensive ones, such as heroin, are currently being smuggled into Kosovo.

Drug users interviewed felt that 50 percent of Kosovo's young people are using drugs, while those not using drugs believe that the problem is not yet that widespread. Adolescents commonly answered that young people are using drugs mainly due to curiosity; to escape from problems, including war trauma; and to fit in socially. The increasing import of drugs into Kosovo by criminal organizations is also a security issue for adolescents, as young people looking for jobs may be recruited by criminal organizations to become involved in the drug trade.

While drug use by KFOR troops was not confirmed through this research, some Albanian adolescents interviewed reported having been stopped by Italian KFOR soldiers, who searched their cars and allegedly asked them to obtain drugs for them. In a separate account, Serb youth in Rahovec/Orahovac relayed a story of Dutch KFOR soldiers involving an adolescent girl in drug use. Local NGO staff also reported having been asked by international workers to obtain marijuana and hashish for them, and in the summer of 2000, employees of a well-known international NGO were arrested for drug possession in Pejë/Pec.

There is a general confirmation among adolescent boys surveyed that they consume alcohol when they are with friends, at celebrations, parties, concerts and other events. One Serb adolescent boy in a village

near Gjilan/Gnjilane complained, "If you don't drink, it's like you don't exist, like you are still a child."[84] Very few adolescent girls claimed to drink alcohol, and there appeared to be no cases of chronic alcoholism reported among young people.

Smoking among adults and adolescents is rampant in Kosovo. They are smoking at young ages and in schools as well. It is not uncommon for teachers and school administrators to condone smoking in school and to themselves smoke in school. Adolescents and adults were not aware of the true dangers of smoking, although many young people who do not smoke registered frustration at having to suffer exposure to smoke, especially in school. Adolescents of all ages in Albanian areas are some of the main vendors of cigarettes in restaurants and along streets, which generates an income for them and their families.

Preventing adolescent drug and alcohol consumption and smoking is a key health priority articulated by adolescents. Adolescents suggest an awareness-raising campaign to warn youth about the negative consequences of these practices. They also support increased protection against drug smuggling and stated that adults, especially, need to set a good example by not abusing drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.

Education

Survey Results - Education

Gjakova-based team – #8 concern: Poverty; #10 concern: Getting an education
Gnjilane team – #8 concern: Poverty; #10 concern: Jobs for youth
Orahovac team – #9 concern: Getting an education

Key education issues today as voiced by young people themselves, parents, teachers and other decision-makers, include school reconstruction and facilities upgrading; equal access for girls, rural communities and minority populations, which involves addressing security and other issues; curriculum reform, maximizing flexibility and choice in coursework; teacher training and the introduction of participatory teaching methods; community commitment to education; and education for young people with special needs, such as the disabled, working adolescents and older girls who have missed out on education but would like to continue. There are approximately 400,000 students at all levels of school and 23,000 teachers. However, only 86 percent of school-aged children and youth are attending school.[85] While modernizing the education system, Kosovars of all ethnic backgrounds face a fundamental challenge of depoliticizing education and rebuilding a system that will embody the concept of education for all and provide safe spaces for learning. Among other things, this involves prioritizing equal access to education and teaching tolerance, human rights principles and civics to aid community healing and prevent further violence and instability. Skills training is also essential to the reconstruction of Kosovo's economy as adolescents are poised to enter the job market in large numbers.

Most students in Kosovo started a new academic year on November 1, 1999, after completeing catch-up courses to make up for the school year lost during the war. However, some Serb and Egyptian and Roma students have not been able to attend school at all, and those did started the new year late in schools created out of homes. The students face overcrowding and contend with security risks and family separations due to decreased access to education. Moreover, ongoing barriers to education for girls and many Roma and Egyptians remain. UNMIK established a Joint Civil Commission on Education (JCCE)[86] to preside over an interim and then transitional phase in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the education system. Reprinting textbooks and reviewing the curriculum, educational tools and teacher training were undertaken with a view to ultimately creating a new education system -- the New Educational Authority of Kosovo – a process that is still underway.

[84] Gnjilane research team and Women's Commission interview, June 8, 2000, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kosovo.
[85] OSCE, *Voters Voices*, survey conducted by OSCE Democratization Department, September 2000.
[86] The JCCE comprises a UNICEF education expert, four Albanian nominees, three from other language groups, and one UNESCO nominee.

Reconstruction, Facilities Upgrading and Teaching Supplies

There are 1,220 education facilities in Kosovo: 45 nursery schools, 1,044 primary schools, 97 secondary schools, 10 high schools and 24 higher education facilities; 66 percent of these facilities have been severly damaged from years of neglect.[87] Category 5 schools, which are the most destroyed on a scale of 1-5, are prioritized for reconstruction. They are all primary schools. Young people and adults complained that there are too few secondary schools, especially in rural areas, which was true before the war as well. Because of the destruction and internal displacement, particularly from rural to urban areas, schools are crowded, with 35-40 students in each class. Consequently, students want additional space and smaller class sizes. They also cited a need for laboratories and equipment for science classes, spaces for art, music, clubs, sports and other activities. Serb students in Rahovec/Orahovac and Egyptian students in Gjilan/Gnjilane described conducting sports activities indoors in hallways and in the street for lack of freedom of movement and access to other facilities. Albanian students explained that clearing landmines in outdoor areas would create additional space for sports activities.

Teachers and students in all communities have limited school supplies. Teachers interviewed in a Prishtina secondary school in March 2000 lacked basic supplies and stated that textbooks that had been promised were long overdue. "They said they were ready, but we haven't received them," they said. The lack of electricity and heat, especially in the winter months, make learning conditions at times unbearable. Still, students, teachers and parents showed great tenacity in keeping the schools going through the difficult conditions.

Curriculum Reform

All teachers and students agreed that serious education reform is needed. None reported having been consulted by any decision-makers involved in the reform process. Teachers in particular expressed fear that fundamental, sweeping changes would be rushed through, instead of a comprehensive curriculum being carefully developed. Among other issues raised, students complained that there were too many subjects to study – up to 14 – which does not allow them to concentrate fully on any of them. They expressed a desire to be able to choose subjects that reflect their interests and help create a career path for themselves. The range of academic interests and special needs is wide. For example, ex-KLA adolescents indicated interest in the creation of a military academy, where they could obtain higher education and enter the military as a career, having been professionally trained. Albanian adolescents in Rahovec/Orahovac requested Albanian language study, as many of them have mostly spoken Serbian for many years. Egyptian girls and boys in Rahovec/Orahovac requested training in literacy and job skills. Bosniac adolescents in Pejë/Pec want to be able to study in their first language – Bosnian – and study the Albanian language after school.

Many young people also identified English and computer skills training as valuable for working with international organizations. Still others requested the creation of affordable professional schools at the secondary and teritary levels in order to support the pursuit of specialized vocations. Almost all expressed the need for education that would lead to productive employment. For minority Serbs, Egyptians and Bosniacs in general, identifying issues for education reform in the short and longterm was difficult, as security concerns preoccupy their lives, and they are not able to envision their futures.

Nearly every school visited in the course of conducting research contained some form of nationalist imagery. From giant posters of the KLA emblem hanging in Albanian schools, to long pictoral sequences of famous battles fought by Serbian war heros in centuries past in Serbian schools, war imagery signifying the struggles, achievements and losses of each ethnicity's armed forces appears prominently, usually in the main entryways. Often, there is no other imagery displayed; no art projects by students, no maps of the world or any other items one might expect to see in a school, even given the difficult

[87] OSCE, *Voters Voices*, survey conducted by OSCE Democratization Department, September 2000.

conditions. While it is understandable that the activities of the soldiers in the war are lauded by the various communities, these reminders only reinforce the divisions between the communities and detract from the neutrality of schools, as places open to learning and expression of ideas. Therefore, curriculum reform must include the development of practical, participatory approaches to learning that empahsize realistic non-violent conflict resolution, tolerance and peace education. The most effective forms of peace education will be those generated by local community actors who lead by example, such as the Center for the Protection of Women and Children which provides seminars to secondary school students on communications skills and conflict resolution.

Teacher Training and Participatory Methodologies

Students in all communities complained that many teachers do not seem to care about education anymore, that they are not motivated. "Some professors don't deserve to have mark books in their hands," one young person said. They also expressed dissatisfaction with teaching methods that focus too much on theory and not enough on practice, requiring students to take a passive role in the classroom. At the same time, students praised the commitment of many good teachers and expressed remorse about the loss of teachers who were killed during the war, or who are no longer working in the schools due to internal displacement or because they have found better-paying jobs with international organizations. In Albanian communities, adolescents said that teachers and school administrators tolerate the presence of guns in school, which makes them feel unsafe and contributes to the feeling that the teachers do not care about quality education. They also remarked that smoking by students is tolerated in school and that teachers smoke themselves, setting a poor example for young people. Without strong incentives to continue school, many students fear that young people will lose interest and opt to work instead of finishing their education. Suggestions for improvement include teacher training in participatory teaching methods that improve the skills and motivation of the teachers, and as a result, that of their students.

Girls' Education

Research revealed that significant numbers of Albanian girls, and many Egyptian girls, are not completing secondary or primary school. Illiteracy in the female population older than 10 years old is 9 percent, whereas it is only 2 percent for men.[88] The reasons for this vary: for one, Kosovar society is very patriarchal, and girls' education is often valued less than boys'. Girls have less control than boys do over the decision to attend school, especially in rural areas. Also, secondary schools are less accessible in rural areas, giving rise to concern about the protection of girls traveling to school. Early marriage is another barrier, as girls are frequently expected to cease their studies upon marriage.

In general, many young girls do not feel encouraged to attend school. Although rural girls are more at risk of missing schooling opportunities, some urban girls are also at risk. Rural girls who attended school in their villages and are now living in urban centers due to the destruction of their homes appear to be continuing to attend school. However, those now in towns who did not previously attend school do not appear to be accessing education in larger numbers than prior to the conflict.

Some young people are beginning to think differently about girls' education. One ten-year-old boy said, "If my sister is a good student, and she wanted to go to school, but my father said 'no,' I would tell him to let her continue her studies so she can become a doctor or an engineer and bring prosperity to the whole family."[89] Participants believe that increases in education opportunities for girls will occur when parents' and society's expectations of girls, which involve them staying at home and doing housework, change. Some youth state clearly that Kosovar women and girls need to be emancipated and that support for women must be shown with action, not just words. Opening secondary schools in the villages would help girls to continue their education, as would safe transportation to school. Also, small economic development projects focusing on women and village infrastructure development would create future

[88] OSCE, *Voters Voices*, survey conducted by OSCE Democratization Department, September 2000.
[89] Gjakova-based research team and Women's Commission interview, Deçan/ Deçani, Kosovo, June 2000.

opportunities for girls. Hajdar Haxhikadrija, a veteran social worker with the Center for Social Work and research advisor for the study, stated, "Failure to allow girls to complete school is a form of violence against them, which must end."

Education for Minorities

Four Egyptian groups interviewed in Rahovec/Orahovac revealed an extremely low level of education among both boys and girls. Few completed primary school, some had never attended any formal schooling, and few can read or write. However, there is a strong interest, particularly among girls, in education. For example, girls currently attending a literacy course at a Women's Center, sponsored by the German NGO Malteser, love their classes and want to continue their studies. Most boys are also interested in education, but the older ones are more concerned with finding jobs and creating a future for themselves. They currently have no access to employment because they are confined to their neighborhood due to the threat of beatings or worse should they venture out. Bosniacs in Pejë/Pec are mostly concerned that they be allowed to study in their native language, in addition to learning Albanian. Egyptians asked for additional literacy, life skills and vocational training that could lead to employment and greater freedom of movement and association in Kosovo.

Serbian communities and the Egyptian community in Gjilan/Gnjilane report major difficulties with schooling. Many Serb students are internally displaced, and access to regular schools has been curtailed, and for many, cut off completely. Those in school face overcrowded classrooms, at times in makeshift home schools. Secondary school students in Hoca e Mahde/Velika Hoca must travel by bus escorted by KFOR each day to attend a secondary school created in a private home in the Serb section of Rahovec/Orahovac. This secondary school started late (November 29, 1999) due to a lack of basic equipment, such as chairs and desks. Consequently, it worked on an accelerated schedule to make up time and ran in shifts in order to accommodate primary and secondary school classes in the same building. Similarly, in Serb villages near Gjilan/Gnjilane, some students live 15 kilometers from the nearest school and require protected transportation in order to attend. University students have very difficult decisions to make about continuing their studies because of minimal financial support and a high demand for spaces in Serb universities. In one focus group with Serb secondary school boys in a Gjilan/Gnjilane village, all but one of the participants were internally displaced, and at least one was living separately from his parents who are living in Serbia. Such family separations are not unusal, and many adolescents are staying with relatives, friends and acquaintences in order to attend school. Students and parents suggested the creation of dormitory facilities for Serb students in Gjilan/Gnjilane, where they could get food and be looked after while they attend school.

Out-of-school Adolescents

Only 58 percent of rural youth between the ages of 15 and 18 attend secondary school.[90] In addition to rural girls and some minority adolescents and young adults, adolescent boys also face challenges to completing their education. Some choose to work instead of finishing their studies, many having done so in Albanian communities even before the war, due to the widespread firings of their parents. Out-of-school boys explained that they left school because their families need money, and they can make money by working. Still other adolescents are not attending school for reasons related to distress over the war. One NGO worker described his attempts to assist a widowed mother on the Albanian side of Rahovec/Orahovac, whose 13-year-old son refused to go to school because he could not cope with the loss of his father during the war. There are likely other young people in similar situations who need targeted assistance to deal with problems in order to return to school.

Out-of-school working adolescents expressed interest in computer courses and foreign language skills in order to qualify for work with international organizations. They also cited the need for jobs for parents, which would make it less essential for adolescents to work. Vocational training and professional schools

[90] OSCE, *Voters Voices*, survey conducted by OSCE Democratization Department, September 2000.

are needed for working young people who have not completed secondary school but are interested in improving job skills. Researchers also noted that young people and parents must come to value education differently, to see it as useful to the prosperity of society in many ways and not just as a means to earn an income.

Education for Employment

Large numbers of young people are poised to enter the labor force without the skills or education they need to generate a livelihood and without an economy equipped to support their contributions. A situational analysis on Kosovar youth recently conducted by UNICEF in cooperation with UNMIK's Department of Youth (DOY) makes the problem of preparing youth for viable employment a priority. It states, "There has been no official labor market or skills survey done for Kosovo, and…there has been only limited discussion about linking economic development with useful vocational education and none has so far resulted in any major programs."[91]

Employment is a priority concern for young people, who are struggling to reconstruct their homes and lives following the war. These young people are among hundreds who have taken to the street selling cigarettes in cities and villages across Kosovo in order to earn additional income for themselves and their families.

Part of the problem lies in an international approach to programming for youth which has responded to youth interests but has lacked a coordinated and comprehensive approach to short- and long-term planning for youth in the context of post-war Kosovo's overall labor needs. For ethnic minority youth living in areas completely dependent upon humanitarian assistance and facing vast unemployment, the situation is categorically bleak. Ongoing political instability, isolation for some, limited international investment, eventual decline in job opportunities with international organizations and few skills training opportunities that lead to employment may drive many young people of all ethnic backgrounds to leave Kosovo in search of work. Many others may be increasingly drawn into criminal activity. The inability of thousands of students to access or afford university education also contributes to a crisis in education and in securing an adequately skilled labor force.

Increasingly, education and skills training for adolescents and young adults must be linked to economic recovery plans, which account for growing youth employment needs and anticipate a wide range of skills required by Kosovar society. Girls must be fully included in these interventions. UNICEF highlights a suggestion to build on existing small-scale community enterprises, stressing that newly elected municipal leaders must take action in this area. Young people must also be encouraged to look beyond the popular subjects of English and computer training to consider a wide range of careers.

[91] Richardson, John, *Youth in Kosovo, A Situation Analysis,* UNICEF, in cooperation with UNMIK Department of Youth, 2000.

Disabled Adolescents

It is thought that the number of children with special education needs due to physical disabilities has increased in post-war Kosovo due to, among other things, war wounds, landmines and traffic accidents.[92] Although there are no specific statistics on disabled youth, Children's Aid Direct has estimated that as many as 23,000 Kosovar children could be disabled.[93] However, only a small percentage of disabled students are attending school, and facilities to support the disabled need modernizing.[94] There are only three schools in two municipalities in Kosovo responding to the needs of handicapped children, which enroll approximately 450 students.[95] In general, disabled children and youth lack social protection, and youth are particularly vulnerable to discrimination due to disability.[96] Access to learning, recreational and other facilities is difficult and sometimes dangerous due to discrimination and inadequate facilities, such as wheelchair ramps, for non-ambulatory disabled youth.[97]

Gender

Survey Results: Gender

Gjakova-based team: #10 concern: Gender equality (among males)
Gnjilane team: #10 concern: Adolescent marriage (among females)
Orahovac team: #4 concern: Gender equality (among males)
#8 concern: Adolescent marriage (among females)

Girls in Kosovo face high levels of gender inequality, which undermines the fulfillment of their rights. They have less access to education, especially rural Albanian girls and Egyptian girls. They are primary targets of sexual assault and domestic violence and receive limited assistance for their recovery. They have limited to no access to reproductive and other health care services and information.

Discussions over gender differences produced some of the liveliest discussions among adolescents, with boys sometimes raising more concern about the problem of inequality for girls than the girls. While there was wide agreement that gender inequality exists, that it is destructive for girls and that there is a need for change, some girls minimized the issues, instead focusing on other problems both boys and girls share. While the reasons for this were not clear, there was general agreement that change is needed at cultural and societal levels, especially in the minds of parents.

Females in Albanian Kosovar society are valued for their virtue, and for the most part, males control access to wealth and economic opportunities, education and political power. Families identify along the male line, and male heads of household are the primary decision-makers in families. Women and girls are not always aware of their rights and are frequently discouraged in their efforts to fulfill them, whether they concern getting an education, inheriting property, choosing to marry later in life or rejecting unwanted sexual advances and other abuse. Boy and girl adolescents complained of the tight control parents place over creating romantic and other relationships. Girls said that they need to ask permission from their fathers to go out, but that boys do not. Social mores dictate that most girls cannot have romantic relationships with males openly unless the couple is engaged. Girls who end an engagement or

[92] Professor Lynn Davies, *Education in Kosova: Report to the British Council.* The British Council, August 1999, pg. 24. See also: *Mind Over Matter (part one): Halit Ferizi and the Struggle Against Disability,* On The Record Kosovo, Volume 10, Issue 3/1, April 2000.
[93] Professor Lynn Davies. The editorial desk of *Mind Over Matter*, April 2000, asserted that even more are disabled in Kosovo: according to WHO, on average 3 percent of a population suffer from physical disability. Multiply that by seven to include family members, and there are over a quarter of a million Kosovars affected by physical disability.
[94] Ibid. See also: Professor Michael Daxner, *Education in Kosovo: From Crisis to Recovery and Transformation,* UNMIK Department of Education and Science, March 2000, pg. 3.
[95] Professor Michael Daxner.
[96] Halit Ferizi (President of HANDIKOS, the Association of Paraplegics and Handicapped Children of Kosova), *Mind Over Matter (part two): Battling the Apartheid of Disability: the View from Kosovo,* OTR Kosovo, Volume 10, Issue 3/2, April 2000.
[97] Ibid.

admit to having been sexually abused risk never finding a marriage partner. Thus, many young people resort to having hidden relationships, and few report being comfortable speaking openly with the opposite sex or their parents about sexuality. Despite these constraints, some girls said that their parents and communities have eased control somewhat, beginning before the war, but it is not clear to what extent this is true. Boys interviewed also expressed feeling constrained by the gender rules, having little freedom to date openly, for example. Egyptian girls described traditional customs where girls are pressed to marry young to males they do not necessarily know. They expressed a desire to end this practice, although they felt somewhat powerless to say no, should it happen to them. Serbian girls tended to play down gender differences and inequality, yet research teams reported that they do exist.

The loss of many males during the conflict also presents difficult challenges for adolescent girls who are widows and girls and boys who are orphaned. An estimated 10,000 people, mostly Albanian boys and men, were killed during and after the war, leaving many thousands more behind to cope with their loss, including orphaned children and some adolescent widows with children. In a patriarchal society, the impact on the economic, social, political and psychological status of women and children left behind is incalculable. Children who have lost their fathers but not their mothers are still considered to be orphans. In large numbers, women and their children must move forward and rebuild their lives. Women and children who have lost male providers need targeted support, in particular, with programs that assist in the reconstruction of their homes and help them earn a living, and also efforts to provide information about the fate of their loved ones. Efforts to empower women must take into account the emerging roles of adolescent girls and attempt to maximize their involvement in decisions made about their futures, including those that produce economic self-sufficiency such as the Kosovo Women's Initiative.

Serbian research teams reported that gender inequality also exists in their communities, but that young people do not necessarily see the problem. The Orahovac team reported: "Young people do not even see gender inequality because centuries of patriarchy have convinced youth that 'gender equality' is the way it is now… But gender inequality exists. No woman in Rahovec/Orahovac has been the director of a firm, the municipality president, a school principal, etc… Young people need education to see what gender inequality involves, and it's a long, strenuous journey, but it's worthwhile learning."[98]

Adolescent Participation

As much as the information generated from this study can help inform programming and policy for youth in Kosovo, the process and methodology of conducting it with adolescents as researchers presents important lessons about adolescent participation. Adolescent participation is necessary, possible and empowering for young people and their society.

The adolescents involved with the project began with little research experience or first-hand knowledge of the problems of their peers in neighboring communities. Some researchers started out believing the project was quite difficult and not particularly interesting, and in the end were surprised and delighted at their capacity to achieve what they did and how interested in the work they became. The one ethnically mixed team and isolated Egyptians in Rahovec/Orahovac worked together, putting their differences aside and listening to one other, showing tremendous maturity, courage and hope for the future of peace in this region. Similarly, the Serbian teams showed tremendous trust and courage in their willingness to become involved and reach out to community members who were often less than welcoming of their endeavor.

Each team was also very happy simply to have something to do. They said that without the project they would just be hanging around. Friendships were made, and all became inspired to do more and take on follow-up activities. They wanted to know what the next project would be. Research participants repeatedly thanked the teams for asking them their opinions, even when many of the questions were very difficult for them to consider and they did not always believe solutions were possible. For most, it was the

[98] Grkoviæ, Ranko, Zvezdan Bajoseviæ, Slaðena Grkoviæ, "Final Report of the Research Study of Adolescents' Problems in Serbian Communities of Orahovac and Velika Hoca," June 2000.

first time anyone had taken an interest in their thoughts, and they had a lot of important experiences and ideas to share. Researchers also recognized the variety of important contributions young people are making to help with their families' recovery and that of Kosovo as a whole.

The teams finished the project convinced that all organizations and institutions making decisions about the present and future of Kosovo must involve the opinions and support the capacities of young people, or they will miss out on a critical resource. Also, given the deep ethnic divides among young people, the research was a first step in the creation of dialogue among all of Kosovo's youth. Young people are often carrying their thoughts with them instead of constructively discussing them with others. The young people involved in this project are now more capable of fully articulating the range of concerns facing youth in their community, and their reports as well as this one are being shared across the groups. They can now decide for themselves what to do with this voice.

In the months following the research study, the Gjakova-based team did not disband, but initiated and implemented a variety of projects as part of the KYC, such as an anti-hate graffiti project and one for orphan children, as well as organizing student council elections in secondary schools. In doing this and other work they wrote project proposals with virtually no assistance from adults and won funding. The Serb teams by contrast did not go on to do work as teams but likely would have with additional facilitation and expressed interest in doing so. Some of their members also chose to leave Kosovo.

International and Local Responses to Adolescent and Youth Concerns

In the first year following the end of the war, donors have provided significant funds for program interventions targeting adolescents and youth in Kosovo. As detailed below, governmental, non-governmental and intergovernmental agencies and foundations have provided, at minimum, $6 million for youth-specific programs, and many more millions have been spent on programming that has not targeted youth specifically, but has nevertheless benefited them. Political will and concomitant resources, along with policy mandates for work with youth provided under international law and within implementing institutions, have combined to create this unusual opportunity for youth programming and further youth policy development.

While the magnitude of resources available for youth in Kosovo stands in stark contrast to attention paid to children and adolescents affected by war and persecution elsewhere in the world, continued youth programming and policy formation in Kosovo is extremely important in several respects. First and foremost, Kosovo's youth remain deeply affected by the consequences of war and ongoing insecurity, and appropriate interventions on their behalf are greatly needed to continue to help them and their communities recover and prevent further human rights abuses against them and others in the region. Youth interventions in Kosovo also provide opportunities for lessons learned that are useful for youth programming in emergencies and post-conflict situations in other parts of the world. Connected to this, attention to Kosovar youth also increases pressure on decision-makers to address the needs and protection concerns of war-affected children and adolescents equally in other parts of the world.

Highlights of some of the major interventions for youth in Kosovo are outlined here, including donor funding and policy, protection and program developments. The information provided by no means represents all interventions that have occurred, or are occurring with, and for, youth.

<u>Major Youth Donors</u>

The bulk of international funding for youth programming over the last year has involved large-scale programs designed to reach large numbers of young people. This has included the formation of youth centers and clubs, as well as other psychosocial programming, and a strong emphasis on the reconstruction of schools and landmine and other awareness-raising activities among young people. The following donors have provided some of the main sources of funding for interventions benefiting children and youth. Available documentation on grants that involved youth as one of several programming

components do not always specify amounts for youth programming, making the scope of funding for youth more difficult to track. It should be noted that local and international NGOs and local communities have also provided significant support for youth interventions on a smaller, yet highly significant scale in many cities and villages.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) activities that involved Kosovar youth have included the provision of technical support for psychosocial interventions in schools, mine awareness education and the training of government and NGO staff to help children and youth in need of psychosocial support. UNICEF has also worked with the UNMIK Department of Education and Science to reactivate and reform basic education. It has chaired the Task Force on Juvenile Justice and worked to secure the care and protection of abandoned babies and, as much as possible their mothers. UNICEF co-sponsored the Kosovo Youth Project with **UNESCO's Institute for Education, UNDP and Die Zeit-Stiftung**, which supported a survey and database of youth organizations and clubs (YOCs); the establishment of the Prishtina Youth Center; a youth group capacity-building project focused on the youth NGO the Post-Pessimists; and a series of local NGO funding projects. As of June 30, 2000, UNICEF had received $35.26 million of a requested $65.00 million for 2000.

The **United Nations Development Program (UNDP)** and **United Nations Volunteers (UNV)** have worked to help establish more coordinated, premeditated action plans for addressing youth and community concerns. UNV/UNDP have helped to establish an interagency working group on youth issues and worked to minimize destructive political action by youth.[99] UNDP has also pledged approximately $300,000 for a Youth Sector Conference – a "Youth Congress" – in 2001.[100] With the Dutch government, UNDP gives $2.05 million for the Community Integrated Rehabilitation Program (CIRP), which is implemented in part by **Catholic Relief Services** (CRS) for the establishment of youth councils and youth-focused activities. CIRP also supported community councils or "parent councils." UNDP's Village Employment and Rehabilitation Project (VERP), funded by the European Commission for 4.5 million Euros ($4.02 million), has targeted youth through employment sub-projects for reconstruction and environmental repair.

The **United States Department of State, Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM)** granted more than $3 million in 1999-2000 for psychosocial programs addressing at-risk individuals and communities and the specific needs of Kosovo's children and youth. Of this, $2.5 million supported IRC ($1.3) and IMC ($1.2) work to establish nine youth centers throughout Kosovo. IRC also received $1.7 million to address psychosocial needs (including those of youth) in at-risk, primarily rural communities hard struck by rights abuses and destruction. BPRM funded $10 million for the Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI), which is implemented by UNHCR and its NGO partners, and this support for women's self-reliance and economic stability greatly benefits their children.

The **United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI)** provided more than $70,000 in 1999-2000 for approximately 10 youth-related activities, including Youth Round Tables. USAID's **Displaced Children and Orphans Fund** also recently provided $750,000 to fund the Civic Participation Initiative, to be administered by Save the Children US and implemented by IRC in 2000-2001, and $750,000 went to IMC for the establishment of additional youth centers.

The **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)** contributed $1 million for the development of a book consortium and the production and distribution of school materials for primary and secondary school students and provided $550,000 for psychosocial assistance to Kosovar refugee children in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina from June 1999 to August 2000. CIDA has recently committed $10 million Canadian (US$8 million) for training of primary and secondary school teachers in Kosovo.

The **European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)** funded emergency rehabilitation of and equipment for primary and secondary schools, spending an estimated 9,381,865 Euros (US$8,372,927) in 1999.

[99] Burfoot, David, "Institution-building for Youth in Post-conflict Situations, Experiences of UNV/UNDP, Submission to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict," May 7, 2000. As of May 2000, more than 530 UN Volunteers (with more on the way) were committed to the reconstruction efforts of Kosovo. One UNV is the co-head of office for the UNMIK Department of Youth, and UNV human rights lawyers have also worked to draft legislation on gender-based violence.

[100] Of this, $80,000 will be dedicated to related youth project implementation.

The **Open Society Institute** established the Balkan Youth Initiative Fund 2000 as part of its effort to support the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe. In January 2000, the Fund began its work giving $2 million per year for a period of three years ($6 million total) to support sustainable community-based activities for socially excluded or otherwise at-risk young people between the ages of 14 and 21 in Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova and Slovenia. An estimated $150,000 has been disbursed for Kosovar youth since the start of the funding period.[101]

Youth Policy, Protection and Programming

Despite the availability of resources over the past year, support for youth in Kosovo is far from complete. While there are achievements, including the development of a vibrant sector of nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations within Kosovo working with youth and pockets of strong youth activism, pressing gaps in youth intervention remain at both the policy and program levels. The challenge to improve and sustain constructive work with youth is ever present, and there are lessons to be learned from the international and local responses made thus far. Action to identify and address youth concerns in the first months following NATO's entry into Kosovo was largely uncoordinated and did not respond to the full range of protection issues facing children and adolescents. Support for the participation of youth in decisions and interventions that affected them was inconsistent and divisive. International actors did not, and still do not fully understand and emphasize the value and importance of youth organizations and other young people coming to the table as equal partners in decision-making and program implementation.

Coordination, Leadership and Youth Participation

Save the Children and OSCE organized the earliest coordination meetings among international and local groups working with youth, but attendance was not consistent. Other coordination meetings focused on related program areas, including education, psychosocial and protection, but, again, efforts to assess and respond to children and youth concerns holistically were limited.[102] A number of participants in the early youth coordination meetings later stated that they were not more successful in part because they focused on information sharing and not measured, concerted action. Although important working relationships developed between organizations addressing youth concerns, such as IRC, IMC, UNDP, UNV and CRS, these collaborations were not enough to bring youth and child protection concerns to the forefront of all decision-making in Kosovo.

Within UNHCR, the relegation of children's and women's concerns largely to Community Services officers or to sectoral specialists, and the focus of the Protection Unit on legal and broader security issues, did not allow for strong leadership in the area of child and adolescent protection. Similarly, UNICEF worked hard to address a wide variety of child protection concerns but only recently conducted a situational analysis of youth, which can be used to inform a wide spectrum of interventions for youth. Instead of undertaking such an analysis in the fall and winter of 1999, a comprehensive study of youth clubs and organizations was done, which did not fully involve young people in the collection of data. The results of this work are interesting, useful and important, but when they were gathered, they were less of a priority than listening to the voices of young people and hearing their concerns in order to direct appropriate interventions for and by them.

[101] Women's Commission telephone interview with Kristin Whitehead, Open Society Institute (OSI), August 30, 2000. The activities encourage tolerance, understanding, interethnic dialogue, responsibility, self-reliance, volunteerism, leadership, democratic values, multiculturalism, non-violent conflict resolution, school-to-work transition and entrepreneurship. OSI also funds other programs that benefit Kosovo youth, such as the Step by Step program in 25 countries and a child abuse program for Kosovar refugees in Albania.

[102] Efforts by the International Save the Children Alliance to create an NGO Focal Point on Protection, or Protection Liaison Officer (PLO) were productive, but dropped off following the end of the PLO's term of service in Kosovo in October 1999. This effort reflected the principles of the "Reach Out" initiative launched in 1997 by UNHCR, which aims to reinvigorate support for the international refugee protection system, especially UNHCR's protection mandate, and emphasizes NGO input. Shaw, Jan, "NGO Focal Point on Protection in Kosovo," Prishtina, October 1999.

Many of the international organizations that entered Kosovo after the war clamored to find youth and youth organizations to work with, yet their support was uneven and contributed to divisive competition and a lack of coordination among local youth groups. Kosovar youth attempted to navigate the fast and furious post-war reconstruction scene and establish themselves in the eyes of donors, who sought out reputable and responsible groups to fund. When it was forthcoming, assistance to youth organizations was often slow, including among minority communities. Lack of regulations concerning local NGOs contributed to the slow pace of response and increased the competition for attracting donor attention. The Post-Pessimists, a well established, excellent and deserving youth organization, was given almost exclusive support from UNICEF prior to, and after, the conflict, when the local youth NGO and activist sector would have been better served with deeper efforts to assist it as a whole. Amid the infectious competition and lacking knowledge about one another, efforts within the youth NGO community itself to coordinate activities were not advanced, nor did those within the community feel a sense of control over their ability to further initiatives they felt were relevant. International efforts to coordinate the local NGO sector did not carve out a youth focus and were top-down, as opposed to being responsive and supportive of a range of strengths, interests and activities manifesting themselves in Kosovar communities.

Thus today, as initiatives are undertaken to support youth as civil society actors, relationships between international and local youth organizations must be more fully constructed; the issues better defined, both broadly and narrowly; and youth must be empowered to solidly take the lead in coalition. Real youth participation, involving youth NGOs acting on as equal a plane as possible with international NGOs and other entities, remains an important challenge to all concerned with youth and the sustainability and relevance of activities for and with them. Youth organizations must also take stronger steps to discuss issues and identify potential benefits of coalition building. At the same time, the voices of the majority of youth who are not organized around particular issues or activities must be increasingly heard in discussions among youth activists and others and reflected in follow-up actions.

On another level, the Security Council (SC) has not taken full advantage of all opportunities to address child and youth concerns in Kosovo, particularly given the passage of Resolutions 1261 and 1265[103] in 1999 and Resolution 1314 in 2000. The SC delegation that visited Kosovo in the spring of 2000 did not address children's and adolescents' concerns, and the UN Secretary-General's Report to the SC on the Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, delivered June 2000, contained little reporting on the UN's assessment of and targeted response to children, adolescents and older youth. By contrast, the Secretary-General's report to the SC on children and armed conflict in July 2000 mentioned important issues and initiatives underway in Kosovo regarding children and youth.

[103] Security Council Resolution 1261 on children and armed conflict, passed on August 25, 1999, reflects the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which was passed in 1989 and is the most widely affirmed international treaty in history, with all but two countries having ratified it. SC Resolution 1265 was passed on September 17, 1999 and condemns the deliberate targeting of civilians in armed conflict. The SC followed up on this resolution by unanimously adopting Resolution 1296 on April 20, 2000, which places the protection of civilians in armed conflict at the heart of the UN's future peace-keeping agenda. Resolution 1314 was unanimously adopted on August 11, 2000, reaffirming the responsibility of governments, rebel groups and the private sector to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are protected in times of war, as well as in peace. The resolution underlines the urgent need to end impunity for crimes committed against children, calling for special protection and assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons, especially girls. The CRC further establishes the human and humanitarian rights of children and adolescents, which are also ensured under other provisions in international law. Thus, most governments committing to bilateral or multilateral funding for war-affected communities have also committed to upholding the rights and addressing the needs of children and adolescents.

UNMIK - Department of Youth

Efforts to consolidate leadership and direction within the youth sector as a whole have gained momentum since February 2000, as steps were taken by UNMIK to establish an Administrative Department of Youth within the Kosovo Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS). "Co-Head" of office Bernardo Cocco has shown able and effective leadership in laying the groundwork for structuring the department and its purpose through a process of drawing together key stakeholders, who have become energized around its formation, as well as about specific issues facing young people in Kosovo today. In particular, UNDP, IMC and IRC worked closely with UNMIK to resurrect regular youth sector coordination meetings, which are now well attended and are organized on the basis of a rotating chair. This interagency group formed a working group on the establishment of the DOY, and contributed to a Terms of Reference for the department. Today, instead of a lack of coordination, there is increasingly healthy competition between those who will take the lead in moving key youth initiatives forward, and the discussion has changed to one of defining and understanding key youth issues in order to take concerted action.[104] Providing leadership for mobilizing young people to identify their concerns and create avenues for action at the policy and program levels is a top priority.

The DOY was created by splitting the previously established Department of Youth and Sports, and the new entity emerged with one newly appointed staff person and virtually no financial or other administrative or logistical support. Thus, early and immediate tasks have included securing these forms of support, in addition to the essential task of defining its emerging role based on real needs. Among other things, the Department will make policy recommendations to the Interim Administrative Council (IAC) and will identify groups with specific program development and implementation needs – especially minorities and young women.[105] Recent initiatives by UNMIK's DOY concretely address the critical need for increased leadership and action on youth issues in Kosovo today in several respects. Among other things, the Department has worked with OSCE to promote the registration of youth 16 and older. It organized a Youth Week, which is to become an annual event, with this year's theme rallying youth of all ethnic backgrounds to support non-violence. It also collaborated with UNICEF on a situational analysis of youth in Kosovo.

Given the deep ethnic divisions in Kosovo, developing a working trust for the Department among all ethnic communities, who may or may not feel that UNMIK or the international community represents them, is a challenge of the first priority. Thus, the degree to which national Co-Heads of Office, such as Driton Lajci, Co-Head of the Youth Department representing the Democratic Party of Kosovo (*Partia Demokratike e Kosovës*, or PDK), vigorously represent all ethnic communities will likely determine the overall success of UNMIK attempts to assist youth and establish the rule of law and representative governance in Kosovo. Youths of all ethnic communities must also take a leap of faith in working with UNMIK and other organizations in order for any intervention on their behalf to be representative and effective. Without these forms of cooperation and impartiality, policy or program interventions for and with youth will be very difficult to carry out and will be highly controversial. Another major challenge involves mainstreaming youth issues into all of UNMIK's activities and those of other key actors. To even begin to take on these challenges, the DOY must be adequately funded and staffed and must receive more than tacit respect within the JIAS structure. Furthermore, an enormous amount of work lies ahead in developing corresponding supportive structures at the municipal and community levels that are committed to actively supporting and involving youth.

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[104] The interagency meeting has also functioned as a forum for mediation and prevention. David Burfoot describes in "Institution-building for Youth in Post-conflict Situations, Experiences of UNV/UNDP, Submission to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict," that tension between student activists and law enforcement officials was quelled after a student leader voiced the problem to the group and a weapons exchange project was subsequently set up.

[105] UNMIK REGULATION NO. 2000/XX officially established the Department of Youth in July 2000 and, in addition to minorities and young women, names out-of-school youth, illiterate youth, unemployed youth, returning refugee youth, drug abusing youth, youth from single parent families, youth as single parents, youth with poor access to sanitation and health facilities and/or at risk of contracting disease as groups requiring specific programs developed to address their needs. The regulation defines youth as 15-24, corresponding to the World Health Organization definition of youth. It is important that the Department and others working in the youth sector further define youth in the Kosovar context, many urgent issues for whom exceed these age limitations.

Youth Program Interventions

While the creation of youth centers in Kosovo can largely be viewed as one of the major successes of post-war recovery and rehabilitation of youth, many other important activities for youth took place, and others still need to occur. Increased interventions are needed to reach young people who lack sufficient protection and are falling through the cracks of more mainstream youth and other programming. These youth include, but are not limited to:

- adolescent girls who have survived and/or currently endure, sexual violence and domestic violence;
- girls without access to education opportunities and other out-of-school youth in need of skills training, employment and other activities;
- boys (and some girls) engaging in criminal activities, including drug use and weapons possession;
- minority youth in need of increased protection, including security, education, healthcare psychosocial and other support;
- IDP and returning refugee youth;
- orphaned, widowed and single parent youth; and
- disabled youth.

Also, given a limited history of democracy and the level of violence and ethnic intolerance in Kosovo today, much work is needed to develop all young people in Kosovo as strong civil society actors, defining and upholding democratic principles, including human rights, gender equality, tolerance and non-violence. This development needs to go beyond the engagement of young people in political party activities or individualized skills building to strengthen community-based activism. Education and skills training for adolescents and young adults that is linked to comprehensive economic recovery and development plans must be prioritized.

Youth-generated Initiatives

According to the UNICEF/UNESCO/UNDP/Die Zeit-Stiftung Youth Project study, there are at least 280 youth organizations and clubs (YOCs) existing in Kosovo today, the majority in Albanian communities. Over 20,000 persons participate in Albanian YOCs and male participation outnumbers female participation two to one. Of the existing YOCs, 14.6 percent were formed in the last year, and they engage mostly in athletic, art and other cultural activities. Many Serb YOCs report that they are not functioning due to a lack of participants, lack of financial resources, lack of freedom of movement and the need to attend to higher priority needs, such as sanitation, food, medical care and employment. Only 11 percent of Albanian and three percent of Serb YOCs reported receiving foreign assistance, yet 62 percent expect to receive foreign assistance in the future.[106] Some of the most well known and active youth organizations not solely focused on recreational activities in Kosovo are the Post-Pessimists; the Kosovar Youth Council; Alternativa; the Young Ecologists; and the Scouts. There is also a long history of youth activism in Kosovo connected to the workings of the Communist and other political parties, and each of the major political parties active in Kosovo today has a youth section. The following represent just some of the many initiatives undertaken for and by young people in the past year. They are testament to the capacity of young people to accomplish great and useful things in post-conflict situations and represent the potential of young people to do more with the appropriate encouragement and tools.

- Kosovar Youth Council: In addition to conducting the participatory research study described in this report, the KYC initiated "Gjakova 2000" in August 1999 with support from USAID, which mobilized more than 2,000 young people to clean Gjakova/Djakovica, eliminate hate graffiti and raise the spirit of the community. KYC members and their families also returned to Albania in October 1999 to work with the Albanian Youth Council and UNICEF on a family soccer tournament to promote an anti-weapons message among youth. The KYC ran an AIDS awareness campaign and

[106] Fatfat, Mounzer R., "Final Report on Kosovo Youth Project," UNESCO Institute for Education, UNDP, UNICEF and Die Zeit-Stiftung, Prishtina, Kosovo, April 15, 2000, pp. 29-31.

park cleaning efforts in Pejë/Pec, and at the new year, launched Effimera,[107] involving a series of events organized by youth, including an ecological art project where young people created art from recycled materials. With funding from the Dutch NGO Cordaid, and in collaboration with the Balkan Sunflowers, the KYC worked with students in Gjakova/Djakovica to organize student councils. KYC members have also participated in several international meetings related to child rights and peace-building, and the KYC holds a seat on the executive board of the NGO Assembly of Kosovo, its representative being the only person under 30 years of age on the Board.

- Alternativa: This primarily Prishtina-based organization of under-20s was formed before the war as a youth initiative of the Center for the Protection of Women and Children. Among other activities, Alternativa organized a Run for Fun with the KYC and the Post-Pessimists in one of the first collaborative youth events following the war. Alternativa also received funding from USAID and has undertaken awareness campaigns to address a number of behavioral and health issues, including smoking, drug use and HIV/AIDS.
- Youth Community Interest Group – Ferizaj/Urosevac: Youth in Ferizaj/Urosevac have partnered with USAID/OTI's Kosovo Transition Initiative and OSCE to initiate a round table series. In three forums, high school students, youth representatives from political parties, young journalists and minority youth have discussed issues such as elections, voting responsibilities, elections monitoring, structures of the U.S. and British governments and tolerance. They have also initiated a park rehabilitation project.
- Contact Radio: This radio station calls itself the only independent radio station that broadcasts in Albanian, Serbian, Turkish and other languages in Kosovo, bridging information exchange across ethnic communities. One of its broadcasts is Graffiti, which is intended for Kosovo youth, and its broadcasters are youths. Based in Prishtina, young people of different ethnic backgrounds work together to program the show and take turns presenting shows in different languages. Youth also participate at the highest level of decision-making about programming for the station.[108]
- Motrat Qiriazi: This local Albanian women's organization provides financial support to 50 girls in the Prizren and Mitrovica regions and one in Krushe e Vogel so that they can attend school. The money goes to such things as bus fares and accommodation. Twenty-five girls in the agricultural village of Krushe e Vogel have also been sponsored to take driving courses so that they can operate tractors, which have been promised by an international donor. Another 60 women and girls have finished a six-month professional course in sewing and are producing hospital sheets and will soon repair military uniforms for KFOR soldiers.

Youth Centers – IRC and IMC established nine youth centers in Kosovo during the last year, with funding from BPRM, in addition to other sources. The centers are in Pejë/Pec, Prishtina, Prizren, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovica (south), Kacanik, Ferizaj, Podujevo and Klina. Satellite centers also exist in north Mitrovica and rural Kacanik. They have attracted thousands of young people and have provided space and equipment for a large variety of recreational, skills-building and social activities. English and computer classes are particularly popular. Some have also fostered interethnic contact, accomplishing some of the most difficult but most needed work in Kosovo. In Gjilan/Gnjilane, IRC youth center staff organized play groups between Albanian and isolated Roma young people. Bosniacs, Turks, Roma and Albanians all participate in activities in the five original centers operated by IMC. IMC and IRC have also worked closely together and with UNICEF to develop standards for the creation of youth centers and have sought to address the issue of sustainability in a variety of ways, including a push for the allotment of municipal space to accommodate the centers. They are intended to be community-based NGOs, with the principles of tolerance and non-discrimination among their core objectives.

Student Councils – In addition to the KYC student councils project, Catholic Relief Services has dedicated funds for the establishment of students councils in Prizren and in at least a dozen secondary

[107] According to the KYC, the name Effimera refers to the three-year gestation and emergence of a butterfly from a chrysalis, with fluorescent wings, shining as bright as the sun, representing a positive message for the new millennium.
[108] Contact Radio, Prishtina, www.contactnet.org.

schools, including in the Serbian areas of Rahovec/Orahovac and Hoca e Mahde/Velika Hoca. Sub-projects undertaken have included computer classes and school dances.

Youth Civic Participation – Several initiatives to be undertaken in the coming months are designed to address the critical need for young people to become further engaged in constructive civil society initiatives and to address the many specific needs of youth.

- Civic Participation Initiative (CPI) – The International Rescue Committee will be implementing this initiative, which is funded by USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans' Fund, and administered by Save the Children US. It seeks to strengthen the foundation for social and economic recovery in Kosovo by mobilizing adolescents of all ethnic backgrounds as agents of social change. It adapts the model of the Women's Commission/KYC research study, which was conducted in collaboration with IRC and served as a pilot project for the CPI. The CPI will create a corps of children and adolescents who will be mobilized in urban centers and in 30 rural villages to identify problems in their communities and undertake educational, recreational, service and advocacy projects to remedy them. In the process, parents and other community members will be involved with young people, and the youth will form linkages with government officials, professionals and others to assist in the development of appropriate responses to youth concerns.
- Youth Congress and Youth Advisory Body – UNDP's Emergency Response Division has funded an event to take place in 2001, which would bring youth issues to the center of public discussion. This Youth Congress will be preceded by months of work on the part of young people throughout Kosovo, who will engage in a process of identifying concerns and setting the agenda for discussion. The formation of a youth advisory body is envisioned as an additional outcome of this initiative, which would interface with decision-makers at all levels.
- Youth Week – This UNMIK initiative is intended as an annual event, the first of which is being held October 2 – 6, 2000. This year's theme is non-violence, and each year a different theme will be addressed. Young people around Kosovo are being supported in efforts to create events for the week, and proposals have ranged from a campaign to eliminate hate graffiti, to concerts and other events showcasing the graphic costs of violence and the alternatives.
- Elections – UNMIK's Department of Youth and OSCE worked together to engage young people 16 and over in becoming interested in registering and voting in the elections held in October. "Register Now/Win Now" concerts were held at IRC-established youth centers in Prizren and Prishtina with the help of KFOR and with local media involvement. Similar efforts were spawned in Mitrovica and Podujevo. Thousands of voter education brochures and t-shirts were distributed at the events.

Reproductive Health for Adolescents – IMC, IRC, Save The Children UK and the Center for the Protection of Women and Children have worked to increase knowledge about reproductive health among young people and to improve their access to services. Some have developed youth-friendly reading materials in local languages and have engaged young people in discussions about reproductive health, relationships and related topics.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The rights of children and youth in Kosovo were violated for many years as the Yugoslav government pursued policies of ethnic exclusion, particularly in the areas of education and health, from the late 1980s and through the 1990s. More than 700,000 children and adolescents were refugees and internally displaced persons during the war in Kosovo in 1999, and adolescents and youth were the deliberate targets of other rights violations. During the refugee crisis in Albania, humanitarian organizations and governmental authorities largely failed to address the specific protection and assistance needs of adolescents and youth, although some organizations and youth themselves made great strides in addressing their concerns through youth-to-youth activities, providing important lessons for future interventions for, and with, youth in emergencies.

More than 100,000 young people became or remained internally displaced following the war, and are in urgent need of support. Girls who have suffered sexual violence recover in isolation; adolescents are committing crimes; youth are seeking jobs to support themselves and their families; disabled young people need education and health services; minority youth live in isolation and constant fear. At the same time, while young people cope with these and other circumstances, regardless of ethnicity, they report that their main concerns continue to be security and the psychological and social consequences of war, including the loss of family members and hopelessness.

Interethnic hatred remains strong, and for most, the agony of war is still very fresh. Yet, all yearn for full freedom and peace, and all have tremendous capacities to improve their own lives and that of their communities. The creation of a non-violent, peaceful Kosovo, which values the rule of law and the rights and equality of all males and females, is substantially in the hands of youth. While Kosovo has received substantial resources to aid its recovery, including resources targeting youth, many young people are falling through the cracks of mainstream programming. Placing their concerns at the center of addressing the multitude of challenges in Kosovo will determine Kosovo's path to stability and the prevention of further rights abuses.

Kosovar Youth Council members undertook an anti-hate graffiti project during Youth Week in October 2000. With brushes and buckets of paint, they rode throughout three municipalities in a van covered with "tolerance, non-violence" posters and attracted groups of thankful onlookers as they stopped to remove hostile markings from walls.

IX. ACRONYMS

AYC	Albanian Youth Council
BPRM	Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (U.S. State Department)
CIDA	Canadian Agency for International Development
CIRP	Community Integrated Rehabilitation Program
Civpol	Civilian Police; UNMIK International Police
CPI	Civic Participation Initiative
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSW	Center for Social Work
DOY	Department of Youth
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
FRY	Former Republic of Yugoslavia
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IAC	Interim Administrative Council
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMC	International Medical Corps
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISU	Independent Students Union
JCCE	Joint Civil Commission on Education
JIAS	Joint Interim Administrative Structure
KFOR	NATO Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KPIS	Kosovo Police Information System
KTC	Kosovo Transitional Council
KYC	Kosovar Youth Council
KWI	Kosovo Women's Initiative
LDK	*Lidhija Demokratike e Kosovës* – Democratic League of Kosovo
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSI	Open Society Institute
PLO	Protection Liaison Officer
PDK	P*artia Demokratike e Kosovës* – Democratic Party of Kosovo
SC	Security Council
STC	Save the Children
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UÇK	*Ustria Çlirimtare e Kosovës* – Kosovo Liberation Army
UXO	Unexploded Ordinance
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNDP/UNV	United Nations Development Program/United Nations Volunteers
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
VERP	Village Employment and Rehabilitation Project
YOCs	Youth Organizations and Clubs

X. APPENDIX

WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE:

Please also fill out this written questionnaire if you would like. It is not necessary to write your name on this form, but please provide your age, sex and the date of the discussion. The questions are identical to the main questions to be asked in the focus groups with the addition of a short survey. *This written questionnaire is optional, but please take time to respond to the survey on the back of this sheet.*

Age: _____ Sex (circle): Male/Female Discussion date: ____/____/____

I. How does one become an adult in Kosovar society? What is "adolescence" or "youth?" Describe it. Has it changed from before the war? If so, how has it changed?

II. What are the biggest problems you and other young people face in Kosova/o today and why?

A. What are the biggest concerns facing adolescent girls in particular right now? Adolescent boys? (You may answer both questions, regardless of your sex).

B. Do you need and have access to health services and information (such as: care from a doctor or dentist, medicines you need, reproductive health information and care, a place where you can go and feel safe)?

C. Are you attending school? If so, where, and what is it like/what is the quality of the education? If not, why not, and how do you spend the majority of your time? What kinds of educational opportunities do you think would be most useful to you?

D. Do you feel safe? Are you or anyone in your family experiencing threats of violence from young people or others? What kinds of crimes are being committed that most concern you? Do you know of young people who are committing crimes or who are engaging in dangerous behavior?

III. If you could change anything about the way the international community is responding to youth and other concerns in Kosova/o, what would it be?

IV. Can you imagine a time when Serb, Albanian, Roma and other communities could live together peacefully in Kosova/o? If not, why not? If so, why? In either case, what would it take to make that a possibility?

V. What are your hopes for the future? Where do you see yourself in five years? What will you be doing, and what support do you need to accomplish these goals?

VI. Is there another topic you would like to comment on that was not raised in our discussion? If so, please describe.

SURVEY Age: _____ Sex (circle) Male/Female

Please rank the following concerns in order of importance to you (starting with 1, as the biggest concern/worry/challenge), being sure to add any others that are not already included on the list. Mark at least the top ten. Suggestion: Read the full list before responding.

Concerns:

Prevalence of guns and other weapons, such as landmines _____
Violence/lack of security _____
Limited Freedom of movement _____
Kidnapping, trafficking, sexual violence & exploitation _____
Uncertainty about the future _____
Hopelessness _____
Family separations _____
Loss of family and, or friends _____
Family relationships/generation gap _____
Gender equality _____
Adolescent Marriage _____
Getting an education _____
Poverty _____
Jobs for adolescents/youth _____
Jobs for parents/adults _____
Shelter/water/electricity _____
Illness _____
Sex _____
Sexually transmitted diseases _____
Pregnancy _____
Drugs _____
Others: _____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

Additional comments:
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS: (Please print clearly)

Name of researcher:_____
Interview location:_____
Date of interview: June/_____/2000
Time of interview: start:_____ finish:_____

A. Household Information

1. Name:_____
2. Age:_____
3. Sex (circle): Male / Female
4. Ethnicity (circle): Albanian/Serbian/Roma/Turkish/Egyptian/Other_____
5. Place of residence:
6. Home town/residence if not the same as above:
7. Length of time at current address:_____
8. Family members (names, ages, relationship to interviewee):

Name	Age	Relationship
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

9. Do you live with all of the members of your immediate family? If not, please specify why not.

B. Education:

10. Are you currently in school? If so, where? If not, answer question 19 ahead.
11. How often do you attend school?
12. What grade are you in?
13. How do you get to and from school? Is it safe to travel back and forth, and do you feel safe at school?
14. How many students are in your class?
15. How many subjects do you study at school? What is your favorite?
16. What subjects you would like to study?
17. Do you enjoy school?
18. If you could change anything about the education you are receiving, what would it be?
19. If you are not in school, when did you stop attending and why?
    a. Where and how do you spend your time?
    b. Would you like to attend school, and if so, what would you like to study?
    c. What would make it possible for you to return to school?

C. Livelihood:

20. How does your family support itself?
21. Do you have a job now? If so, what do you do, and how much of your time do you spend working? (This includes time spent working with your family, for example, doing farm work).
22. If you could do any job, what would you wish to do?
    a. What kind of training would you need to attain this job?

D. Health:

23. If you were to get sick, is medical care easily available to you? If so, where would you go? If not, what would you do?
24. When was the last time you visited a doctor, dentist and why?
25. Do you have any particular health problems or disabilities?
26. Do you have access to information about good health practices (e.g.: how to talk about different relationships, nutrition, childbirth, exercise, etc.) If so, please specify what and from where?
    a. Do you have any knowledge about sexual relationships?
    b. What types of health information would you find useful?

E. Safety and Security:

27. In general, do you feel safe? If so, why? If not, why not?
28. Do you feel you need additional protection from KFOR and the Civilian Police? If so, for what reasons and in what form?
29. Does anyone you know carry a weapon, and if so, why?
30. Have you received information about landmines and other unexploded ordinance? If so, from whom?
    a. Have you or anyone you know been wounded by these weapons?
31. Has anyone in your family been kidnapped or approached by individuals you suspect were interested in kidnapping you? Please describe:
32. Have you received unwanted sexual advances or other physical abuse, and if so, from whom?

F. War Experiences:

(Please be specific about places, times, the sequence of events, whom you were with and how you were feeling at those times).

33. Please describe your experiences during the war:
    a. If you were forced to leave your home, how did it happen?
    b. Did you experience or witness any crimes (abductions, murders, beatings, injuries, threats of violence, destruction of property, destruction of identity documents, rapes or other forms of sexual violence)?
    c. Did your family stay in Kosova or leave?
        i. If you left, where did you go? Did you have access to services – medical, food, shelter, education, other?
        ii. If you remained in Kosova, what was it like, and how did you survive? Did you have access to services – medical, food, shelter, education, other?
    d. Did you or other young people you know participate in military activities? If so, how did you or they get involved, and describe your knowledge of the experience?
    e. Were you or others you know detained for any reason?

G. Other:

34. Have there been any special activities organized for you, or by you, or other young people that you have particularly appreciated during the war or after? Please describe.
35. If international and local actors could do anything differently to assist adolescents and youth in Kosova, what would you suggest?
36. If you could send a message to the world about the situation of young people in Kosova, what would it be?
37. Can you envision a time when all the communities of Kosova could live together peacefully? What would it take to achieve this, and what are some specific roles for young people in this process?
38. Is there any other topic you would wish to discuss, and if so, please describe?

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