



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2011

Tirana, January 2012

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## Dear friends of ALO 116,

Every time someone helps us, gives us courage, supports us, listens to us, stays closer to us by giving hope, our immediate human reaction is to Thank Them!

It is for this reason that we would like to open this report with an Acknowledgement for all those participants, institutions, partner organizations, media, parents, teachers, students and volunteers who have given us their support and stood by us during all the time.

Special thanks go to UNICEF, which continuously supports ALO 116 services. At the same time we would like to thank AMC, VODAFONE, EAGLE MOBILE, AKEP, ALB-telecom which continue to support us by providing to all children, parents, teachers and all the other organizations working with children, the possibility to contact us for free 24 hours per day, everyday of the week, through the year.

Through your help and support, you have given us the opportunity to answer to 138.153 calls from children, parents, institutions, and all those involved in providing help regarding children's issues during the year 2011.

The main Mission of ALO 116 is to protect children's rights whenever they find themselves in dangerous situations, and to provide appropriate access that guarantees more services under the frame of an effective, protective and preventive system.

Various issues and problems have been reported to ALO 116 during this year. Interpersonal relationships between partners, affective problems, family relationships, violence and abuse, bullying, issues with teachers, academic issues, begging, substance abuse, issues



regarding the use of internet etc. have been some of the issues with which our counselors have been faced with at ALO 116.

We would like to take this chance to express our gratitude to all the children, teenagers, and other people who have shown faith for our work and professionalism. At the same time, we would like to thank our partner institutions (public and private), which by their cooperation and adequate intervention have provided a long-term support and treatment for the children and families referred by ALO 116.

In order to be closer to children, parents, teachers and professionals in this field, we have set-up our official internet website: <http://www.alo116.al>

This website address is another opportunity, which allows everyone to gain access to information regarding our services, and activities that take place at ALO 116, and at the same time to be in contact with our counselors who work and provide their assistance at ALO 116.

Our Hotline can also be followed via facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Linja-Kombetare-e-Keshillimit-per-Femije-ALO-116/>

Thank You!

**ALO 116**

# PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF ALO 116

# 1. Principles and Standards of ALO 116

## 1.1 Respecting the individual Rights:

### Principle

ALO 116 recognizes and respects the rights of young people, children and their families, by providing professional services in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### Standards

- ALO 116 presents in writing its vision and mission, which based on the Child's Rights Convention.
- ALO 116 has developed sustainable policies by clearly determining its role so that the beneficiaries of the services and other partners who provide services shall know what to expect from it and what to provide.
- ALO 116 communicates with children in accordance to their age group, and by respecting and listening carefully to every single child.
- ALO 116 handles all incoming phone calls (including test calls) from children, youngsters and people concerned on children's issues, with the same importance and dedication.
- ALO 116 has developed a sustainable policy of non-discrimination in regards to its services and employment policies.
- ALO 116 provides trainings as well as professional supervision for its employees and volunteers, to further develop their skills and competence regarding the handling of every call with respect and constructive approach, including the test calls as well.
- ALO 116 has set up a special system that allows the monitoring of the quality of responses provided by its counselors.
- ALO 116 applies policies and formal effective procedures to assess different complaints and thus improving services based upon these complaints.
- ALO 116 is always sensitive in regards to children's different needs.

## 1.2 Access to Service

### Principle

ALO 116 believes that each child must have direct access to all services provided for them.

### Standards

- This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for all children and adolescents all over Albania.
- Each call from landlines and mobiles to ALO 116 is provided free of charge for all the children in Albania due to our cooperation with these providers.

- ALO 116 develops specific strategies in order to promote the use of services by all children living in Albania.
- ALO 116 uses a strategy in recruiting its staff in order to recruit counselors who reflect the gender and cultural diversity of its clients.
- ALO 116 is also available to children, who do not have a phone, via mail or e-mail.

### 1.3 Child Participation

#### Principle

ALO 116 listens and acts based on child's voice. Their points of view and necessities must be the basis for establishing the services, tailored to their needs.

#### Standards

- ALO 116 uses a formal procedure to ensure children's safety in every aspect of their participation.
- ALO 116 promotes and supports the maximum participation of children in all the provided services.
- ALO 116 trains and supports its staff to facilitate the children's participation during different activities.

### 1.4 Confidentiality and Privacy

#### Principle

ALO 116 believes that all services tailored to children's needs must respect their right to privacy by assuring the confidentiality.

#### Standards

- ALO 116 has a Confidentiality Statement, which describes how the information gathered from the children, or others who have contacted our service, are kept confidential and private.
- ALO 116 informs the caller in which instances their information cannot be kept confidential, as for example when a child is in a life-threatening situation.
- ALO 116 trains counselors in order for them to explain confidentiality limits and the cases in which this principle cannot be applied to, always focusing on the child's best interest.
- ALO 116 applies a consistent policy in regards to the principle of confidentiality while managing all requests for information by the media.

## 1.5 Safety

### Principle

ALO 116 is fully focused in guaranteeing the safety and protection of the children who contact ALO 116.

### Standards

- ALO 116 has an internal policy in regards to protecting the children based on Child's Rights Convention, where ALO 116 emphasizes its commitment in guaranteeing the safety of children.
- Activities of ALO 116 are designed to be safe for the children and the community.
- During the different phases of recruiting new staff, ALO 116 applies standardized verification policies, in order to reduce the risk of employing personnel who might later abuse with the children.
- ALO 116 has a documented procedure that describes how a counselor must react to a child's concerns for help when maltreated.
- ALO 116 staff is trained to understand their rights and responsibilities in accordance to policies and procedures related to child protection.

## 1.6 Advocacy

### Principle

ALO 116 focuses on raising public awareness regarding children's rights as well as to change those policies that are harmful to children's rights.

### Standards

- ALO 116 has an advocacy plan, which determines the goals and objectives, and the correct steps to achieve these objectives.
- ALO 116 plan encompasses advocacy activities that encourage all the groups of society to take into consideration children's needs. This includes challenges to the existing legislation, as well as practices and beliefs that are widely accepted.
- ALO 116 advocacy plan encompasses the needs of marginalized children.





# ALO 116 ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR 2011

## 2. Main activities of ALO 116

The services that ALO 116 has provided and will continue to provide include:

- ❖ **Active listening** of children and youngsters;
- ❖ **Informing** children, adolescents and youth, parents or personnel who work with children on the services provided by the hotline;
- ❖ **Psychological-education** on different topics: smoking, drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, characteristics that follow a child's psychosocial and physical development etc.
- ❖ **Treatment and immediate intervention** for children and youngsters in danger;
- ❖ **Emotional support** for children and adolescents during a crisis situation;
- ❖ **Cooperation** with governmental institutions and private organizations in order to provide the necessary assistance to children and families;
- ❖ **Provision of professional counseling over the phone** regarding topics concerning children and youngsters.
- ❖ **Case referral** to social services provided by the state and NGOs operating in Albania, depending on the needs of the children;
- ❖ **Assessment and impact analysis** on services provided by the Children's Counseling Hotline, in order to improve its quality for the children.
- ❖ Provides **alternative information** regarding public and private organizations, which are interested in children's issues.

### 2.1 Activities

Apart from the services provided at the hotline premises, during 2011 we have organized a series of events aiming at informing and raising the awareness of active members who are involved in protecting children's rights and at the same time providing information to children, adolescents and parents regarding services provided by ALO 116.

On 15th of February, we organized an event on “Child safety on the internet and Innovative Teachers’ Forum”.



This event was made possible by Microsoft’s office in Albania, the Department of Education and Science as well as UNICEF on the International Safer Internet Day. Among the guests during this activity were Mr. Myqerem Tafaj - Minister of Education and Science, Mr. Arsen Kurti - General Director of Microsoft Albania, Mr. Detlef Palm - UNICEF Representative in Albania, Mr.

Altin Hazizaj - Director of CRCA. During this important event, children from different primary schools tried and tested internet games, which were designed to protect them from the dangers of the internet.

The campaign of children’s safety on the internet, which took place during the International Safer Internet Day, aimed at attracting the public’s attention in regards to children’s safety while using the internet, and at the same time to raise awareness about the important role of teachers, parents and the community regarding this issue.

During this event, ALO 116 presented its role in informing and counseling children and youngsters who call the hotline, who bring forth their concerns during the use of the internet. Apart from this, the presentations were focused on the governmental and institutional initiatives, as well as on the actions for providing a safe electronic communication environment for children in our country.

**ALO 116 participated at the Children’s Fair organized on June 1, International Children’s Day.**

This fair was organized under the supervision of Mrs. Liri Berisha, President of “Children of Albania” Foundation, with the support of Vice Minister of Education and Science Mrs. Nora Malaj, UNICEF, Tirana Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

During this fair, which continued for three days, ALO 116 promoted its services by disseminating different awareness pamphlets and brochures for the children and parents, who were part of this fair.



On June 7<sup>th</sup>, a **Cooperation Agreement** was signed at the premises of the General Directory of State Police, between Children's Rights Center in Albania (CRCA) and the General Directory of State Police.

The purpose of this Agreement is the publication of "Missing Children", on the Global Missing Children Network (GMCN), in order to

assure timely interventions for finding and returning these missing children to their families or relatives.

"The need for cooperation in this field became evident during the "Missing Children in Albania" Seminar, where the International Center of Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC) based in the United States presented its work in establishing a "Global Network of Missing Children". Eighteen countries are participants in this global network, with representatives from both civil society and police forces, which work together in finding this category of children.

That same day the number **116-000** was officially established; this number corresponds to the Pan-European number of missing children in Europe. This number was made available to UNICEF and CRCA from AKEP (Postal and Electronic Communication Authority) since ALO 116 started to provide its services. At the end of the ceremony organized on this occasion, the cooperation agreement was signed between the General Director of State Police Mr. Hysni Burgaj and the Director of the Children's Rights Center of Albania Mr. Altin Hazizaj.



At the same time in June, an event was organized as part of the **International Day against Child Labor** at Youth Park in Tirana.

The event was organized by the coalition "United for Child Care and Protection" in cooperation with partner organizations one of which was ALO 116. The aim of this event was to entertain children and at the same time to raise awareness regarding the effects, that hard labor causes on

children's health and wellbeing.



During this event, people responsible for ALO 116 have distributed awareness material and at the same time have provided information to children, parents, professionals and by passers regarding all the services ALO 116 provides.

**During this event, the Children's Rights Center of Albania (CRCA/DCI, Albania), in cooperation with the Academy of Film Marubi and ALO 116-Albanian National Helpline for Children, conducted the screening of the movie "Anna".**

This movie was produced by Amnesty International in cooperation with CRCA/DCI, Albania. The movie is about a little girl in Tirana, who works together with her mother, in order that her older sister can continue her studies and the family can have something to eat. After the screening, there was an open forum regarding children's work as an important issue, and this phenomenon in Albania today.

**From April-July 2011, ALO 116 staff was part of the research team for Epidemiological Studies regarding the Abuse and Neglect of Children.** The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship parent-child and the different disciplinary actions used within a family. During these months, ALO 116 staff has met about 4.500 children and parents in many urban and rural parts of the country. Leaflets regarding information about ALO 116 were given out in every school and every classroom, and from the beginning of this study we have seen an increase in the number of calls from the areas visited by our staff.

The participation of ALO 116 staff in this study was organized in order for them to be placed at direct contact with the children. This has helped them to familiarize with children, to see their concerns and enter the world they live in.

The rise in the number of calls, as well as of the children and youngsters looking for services from the National Hotline for Children, had an impact on ALO 116 staff which during August undertook an effort for the improvement of data system and categorization of concerns referred to by the callers during the month of August. Under this frame ALO 116 aimed at improving access to data categories by reflecting the standards of the Child Helpline International.

**During September, the Children's Counseling Helpline was visited by a Board Representative from CHI-Child Helpline International.** The goal of this visit was to receive information on the hotline and assess the work conducted until that period. Different meetings were organized with the Supporting Board and Coordinating Board and with the representatives of the NGOs.

**During October, the head office staff of ALO 116, took part in the European Conference for Children's Hotlines, organized by the Child Helpline International.** The goal of this conference was the exchange of information and experiences gathered by the different agencies on identifying positive models on the application of the standards and the ranking of the new objectives on a global scale. In this conference, ALO 116 proved once again that the work and standards applied in Albania might create models and references for the similar agencies throughout western European countries.

On November 20th 2011 – Children’s Rights Center of Albania – CRCA / DCI Albania, ALO 116 in cooperation with Children’s Alliance-Tirana Region, “TAMAM”, “La Casa del Cuore” and sponsored by UNICEF, organized an event with and for the children in Tirana. This event aimed particularly those children who have dropped-out school, those struggling with social-economic issues and children suffering form trauma due to the Gerdec tragedy. This event was organized under the frame of November 20<sup>th</sup> – International Day of the Child’s Rights Convention (CRC).



**ALO 116 – National Hotline for Children’s Counseling was given “Best Idea” Award after participating in “Open Datathon Albania” marathon on December 20th, an event that took place for the first time in Albania.**

Hackathone is a global event, where groups and individuals gather in order to share statistical analyses from different backgrounds. The aim of this event is to raise large public awareness regarding the use of statistical data, as means to promote transparency and the democracy.

This was the first time Open Datathon Albania was organized in Albania. During this activity different approaches were presented to transform statistical data into comprehensible information for everyone. ALO 16 presented in this activity, how methodologies and statistical data can bring forth change and improvements in regards to children’s rights situation in Albania. Representatives from Albanian National Child Helpline - ALO 116, presented in front of a large audience data, statistics and analysis collected form everyday work at ALO 116.

At the end of this event, the jury and participants awarded ALO 116 with “The Best Idea” Award, for its presentation and work, which consisted on the assessment of different problems regarding children’s right and data that were previously collected and then presented during this event. There were 12 different organizations and individuals competing for this award from both Albania and Kosovo, most of which were experts in the fields of research, economics, IT and statistical analysis. This award came at a very important moment for ALO 116, because it did not only illustrate the achievements of the Hotline during a very short period, but above all, it stimulated the use of technology and new statistical analysis methods in the field of social society and children’s protection services.

Part of the award was also a symbolic grant of \$100 dollars, which was awarded to ALO 116, on the day it started its new campaign “Albania Donates”.

## “Albania Donates” Campaign



On December 21<sup>st</sup> 2011, ALO 116 - Albanian National Child Helpline (ANCH) officially started its new campaign “Albania Donates” at the New Years Market in Tirana, on Murat Toptani Street, where every citizen was welcomed to give their contribution in helping and supporting all children and adolescents.

Every citizen could purchase gifts with the ALO 116 logo on them, for their relatives and loved ones. This event, organized by ALO 116 and sponsored by UNICEF and CRCA / DCI Albania aimed at informing citizens regarding the achievements made so far by the only Children’s Hotline in Albania, where hundreds of children call everyday for counseling, information and referrals.

The main objective of this social activity was to raise awareness of the general public to help a large number of children from all over Albania, who in their most difficult moments have been able to receive answers on their situations, or ask for help in case where they were maltreated, abused or threatened, to find the needed protection in their everyday environment, to receive information regarding their different phases of personal development etc.

Albanian National Child Helpline is also a referral place for dozens of teachers, parents, social workers and psychologists who share with the Hotline, children’s issues and concerns the Hotline provides one of the numbers to report missing children.

# DATA ANALYSIS 2011

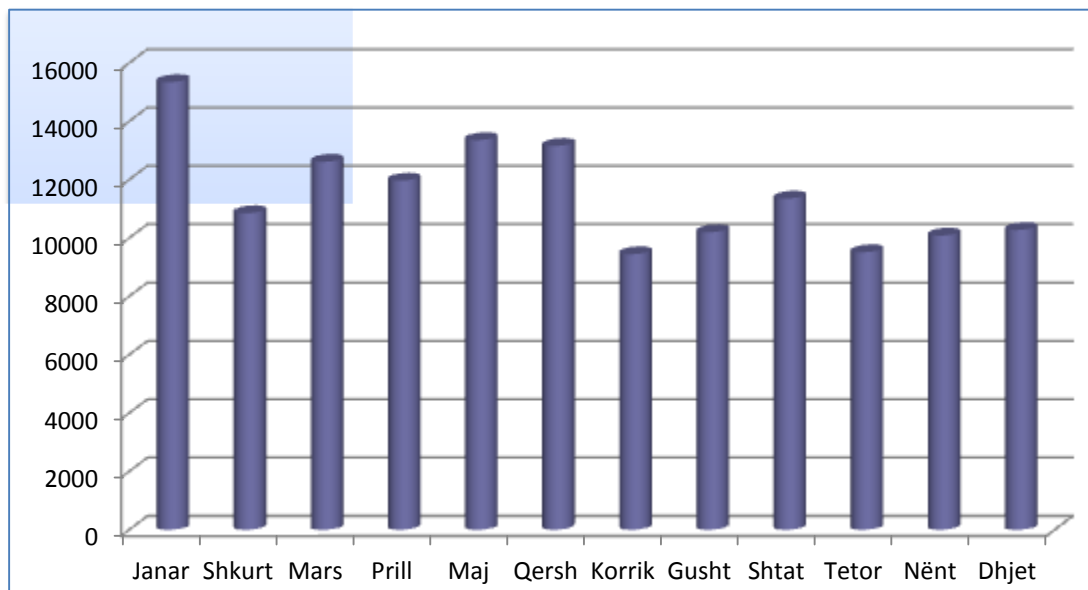


## 3.ALO 116 Data analysis

### 3.1 General classification of incoming phone calls

The total number of calls from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 – December 31<sup>st</sup> 2011, is **138,153**. Table 1 illustrates the number of received calls for this period, while Graphic 1 illustrates the same data graphically..

Table 1												
Incoming calls data to ANCH for the time period January – December 2011												
M	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	15,343	10,850	12,614	11,968	13,355	13,156	9,447	10,195	11,351	9,513	10,085	10,276
<b>Total</b>	<b>138,153</b>											



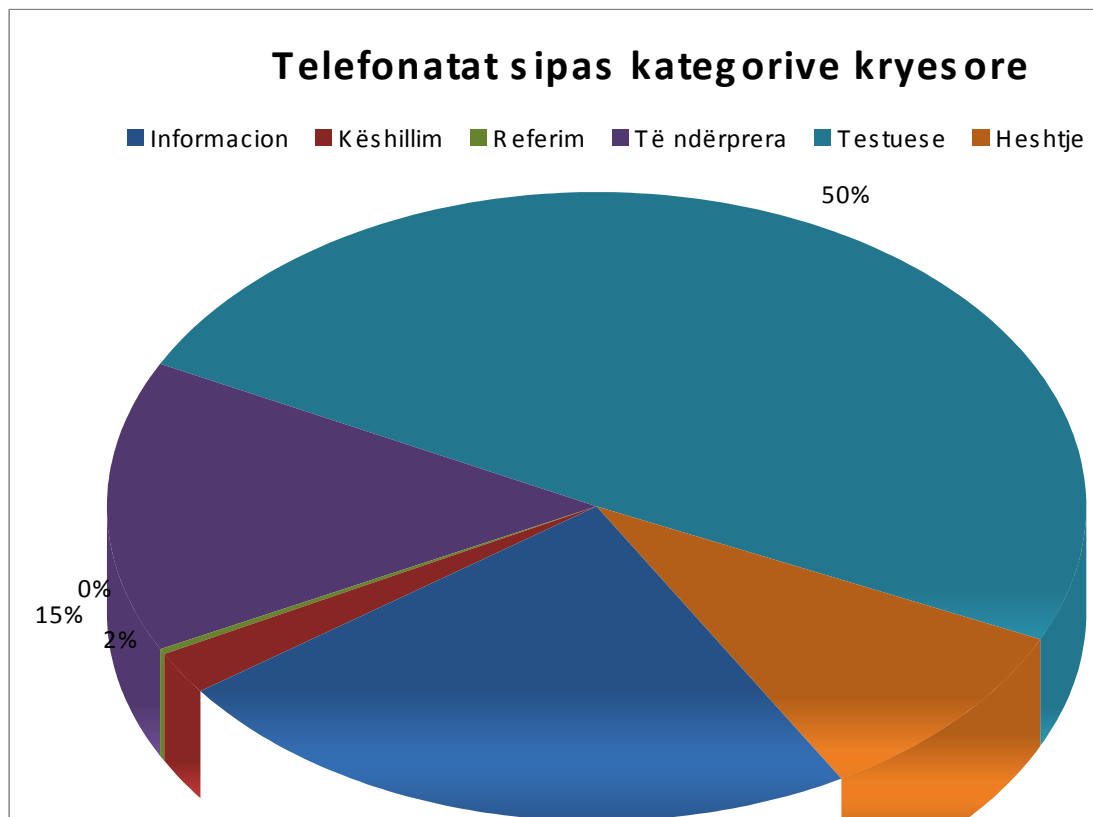
Every data from incoming calls is recorded in our qualitative and quantitative system at ANCH. This number does not represent the number of children calling, but rather the number of calls answered by our counselors. The number of calls has been different for each month. As it can be seen from Table 1, the number of calls during January was the highest one, while July is the month with the lowest number of calls received with only 9,447 calls.

On an average during one month there were 11,500 calls answered from all over Albania.

Based on the data received by our “Call Center”, ALO 116 can in this way apply a quantitative and qualitative classification of data and of the answered incoming calls. Below you can see a qualitative analysis of the annual data of ALO 116.

During 2011, the database of the registration of the incoming calls has improved based on the ALO 116 two-years experience in this field. **What is meant by improvement is the detailing of the data, their improvement and clarification of the different data categories.** By applying everyday work experience and CHI standards, it was made possible to make a full comprehensive qualitative data analysis.

Calls by Category	January-December 2011
Calls for information	32,101
Calls for counseling	3,355
Calls for referral	154
Calls interrupted	20,856
Testing	68,380
Silence / Non responsive	13,307
<b>Total</b>	<b>138,153</b>



The above graphic represents the major categories of incoming calls to ALO 116.

The testing category includes the calls made by children when they want to test the service, when they play music, make noise, or act aggressively. During this year, ALO 116 has been under frequent and systematic assessment from both children and adults.

## 3.2 Data analysis according to reported issues

### a. This is what happens when a child calls ALO 116

#### Service presentation

“Hello, this is the Children’s Counseling Helpline...”

The specialized professional working at ALO 116 awaits the call and makes an analysis on the immediate needs presented by the caller.

#### Careful listening

The counselor on the line establishes a helping relationship through careful active-listening, by understanding the expressed needs, by making the proper assessment of actions needed to be taken and preventive interventions, support and alternative assistance in order to solve the problem, and at the same time to raise a child’s or adolescent’s welfare.

#### Case referral to the appropriate services

In most cases, listening over the phone is only the first stage of the process, which provides a direct and specific intervention by other services, which are close to the area where the caller lives. A careful and sensitive listening, combined with proper specialized assistance as well as on the ground intervention can often result in a better management of the situation in which the emotional, psychological and physical welfare of a child or adolescent are in grave danger.

#### Following each case step by step

The intervention of institutions or organizations on the ground focusing on child protection can significantly reduce the repetition of abuse and other issues and ensure a long-term support for the child and his/her family. The counselor at ALO 116 provides cooperation and facilitation among the children, adolescents and families with professionals directly involved with these cases.

### b. Cases managed by ALO 116

Categories of issues reported	Number of cases
Abuse and violence	192
Exploitation for means of profiting	25
Children with basic needs	27
HIV-AIDS	16

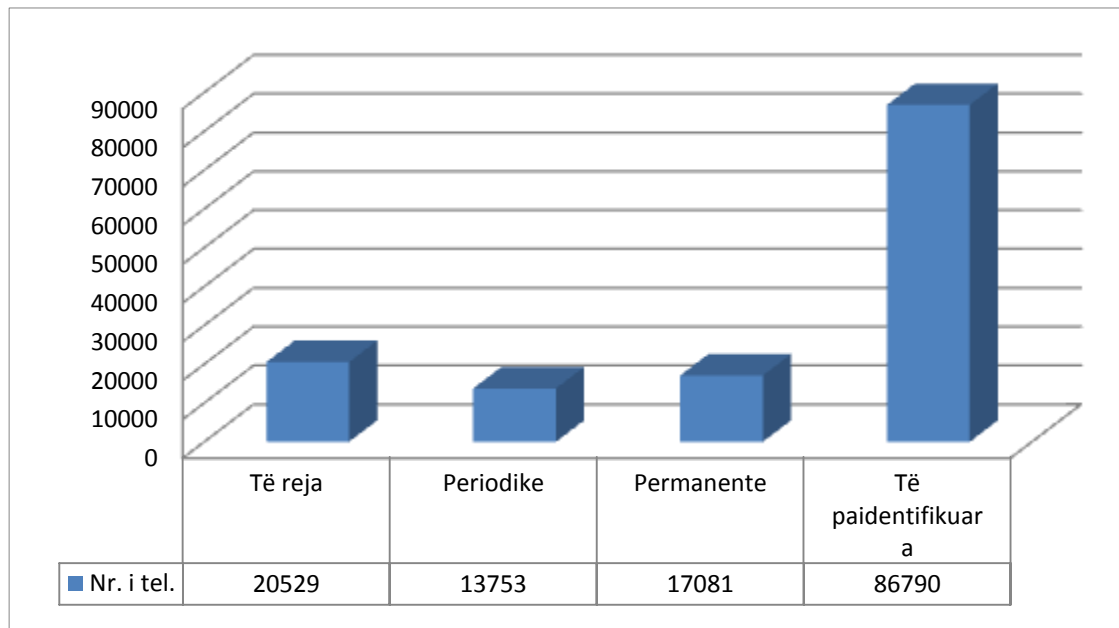
Interpersonal relationships	1327
Problems at school	361
Legal issues	23
Substance abuse	437
Children with special needs	11
Family relationships and dynamics	611
Sexuality	60
Mental / psycho-social health	102
Physical wellbeing	68
Discrimination	18
Internet and cell phone safety	16
Total (cases)	3,355

As it can see for the table above, children face many problems, concerns and issues. They are mostly related to personal relationships with friends, health, school and interpersonal relationship with other children and family members.

Based on an analysis we can reach to the conclusion that the issues on interpersonal relationships continue to be at high levels, as well as issues regarding relationships with other family members, which of course influence a lot on their everyday lives. A large number of calls are in regards to problems at school, and those related to smoking, alcohol and drug abuse. Adolescents often demonstrate an ever rising interest in regards to sexuality and at the same time psycho-emotional growth.

#### b. Calls divided by new and periodic calls

Calls by incoming flow	Number
New calls	20,529
Periodic calls	13,753
Permanent calls	17,081
Unidentified calls	86,790

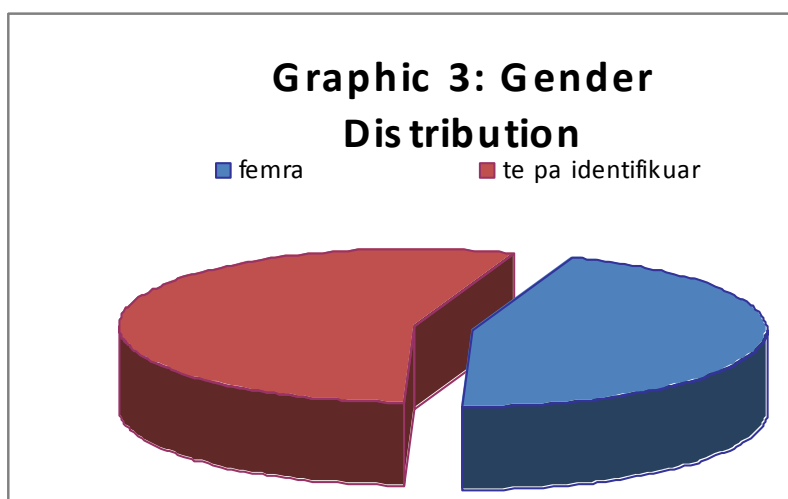


We see from the above graphic the callers of ALO 116 belong to different groups. Due to promotional campaigns and intensive engagement with the media, it is made possible that the number of new calls to ALO 116 increases.

Other callers stay for some moments on the phone for as long as their issues and concerns are resolved. At the same time, there are callers who feel the need for a long-term psychological training, or they become dependant on our counselors, and we categorize them as Permanent callers.

There is as well, another category of caller, who remains unidentified in regards to this categorization process.

### 3.3 ANCH data according to gender distribution

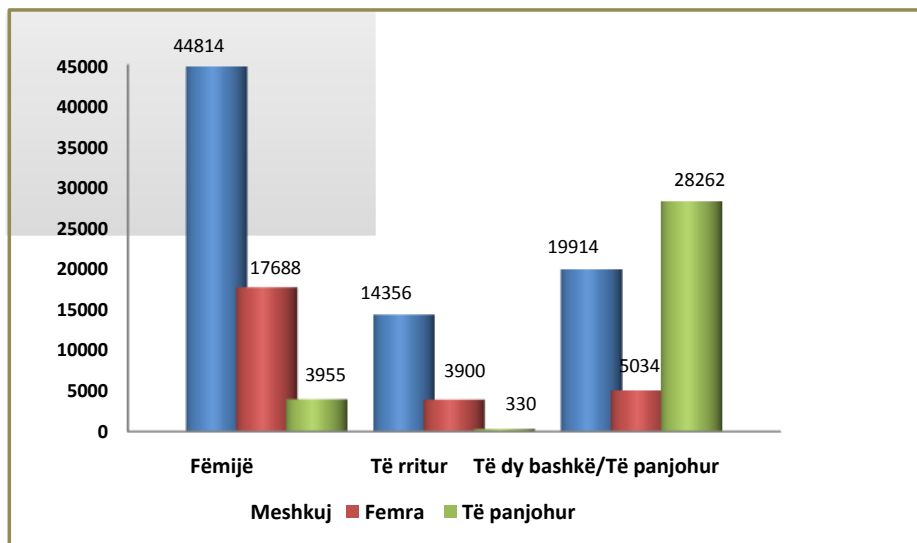


Graphic 3 shows the distribution percentage of all callers according to gender.

According to this graphic, most of the callers are males, with 57% while females make up 19%. Almost 24% of all callers do not declare their gender,

these accounts for calls where there is noise, background music or silence involved etc.

The graphic below shows the number of total calls made by children, adults, children and adults or unidentified persons, grouped according to their gender. As it can be seen from this graphic, most of the calls are from male children with a total number of **44,814** calls. At the same time, the number of children and adults calling together, when their gender is not identified, is also very high with a total number of **28,262** calls. A high number of calls has been made by male adults (here are included all those persons over the age of 18: parent, teacher, children's relative, professional, or anyone) reaching to **14,356** calls.



### 3.4 Ratio between age and gender of callers

	TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Unknown
	Number		
0 – 6	744	565	6
7 – 9	1,786	1,441	0
10 – 12	5,447	3,275	0
13 – 15	8,474	3,824	0
16 – 17	4,656	2,085	1
18+	8,389	3,147	12
Unknown	49,588	12,185	32,528
<b>Total</b>	<b>79,084</b>	<b>26,522</b>	<b>32,547</b>

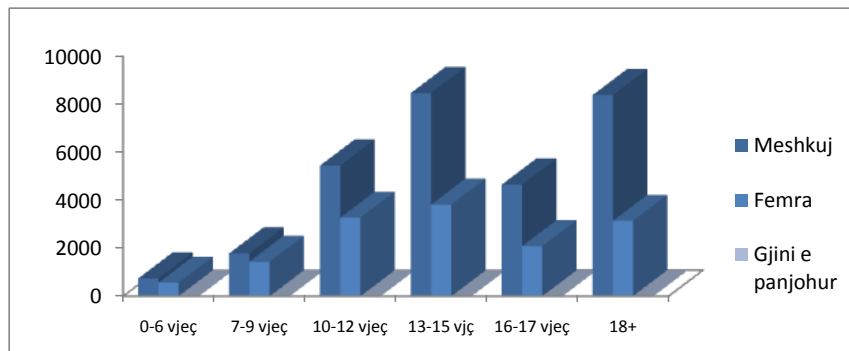
The above table analyses two important variables as far as data is concerned, such as age and gender. We see that callers between the ages of 13-15 have the highest number of all

calls for both male and female category. Despite to the age group, males call more often than females.

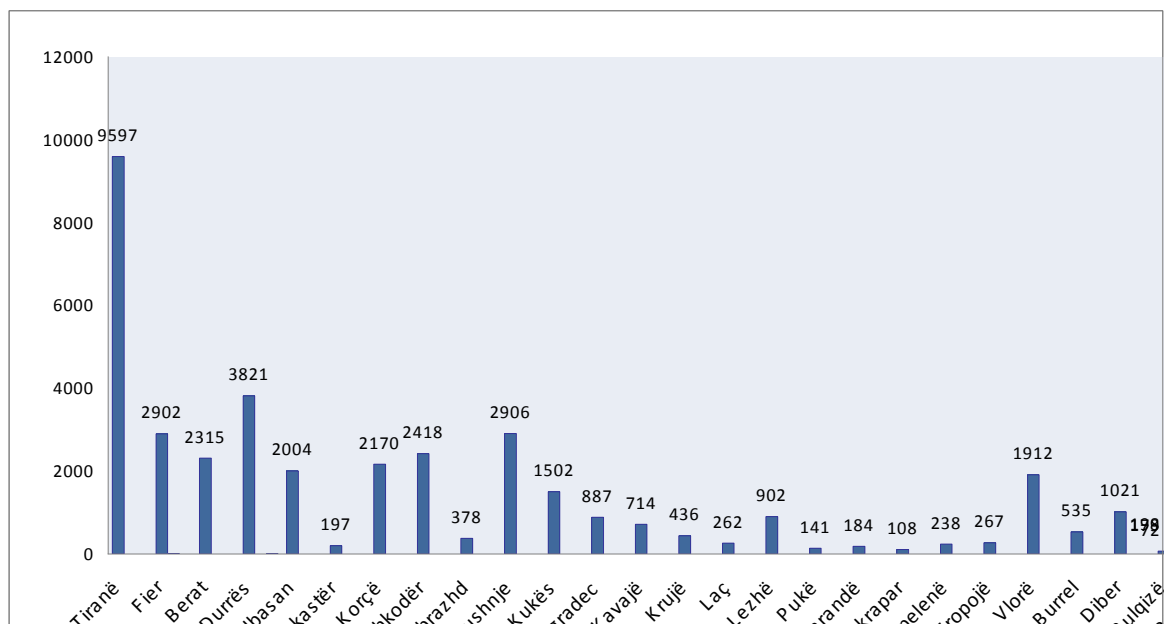
This happens for many reasons: because it is easier for male callers to access the service; they have and have earlier access to the usage of a phone etc.

The category between the ages of 0-6 years old, has the lowest number, be that for males or females. Very often, their calls are made possible by the assistance of another adult.

Accordingly, the number of male callers who do not reveal their age, remains high. Approximately 49,600 male callers have had access to our services this year and they have not revealed their age.



### 3.5 Data analysis of ANCH according to the geographical distribution



The graphic shows the number of calls according to the city and region from where children call.

The geographic distribution of incoming calls is from all over Albania, from urban areas to rural ones as well. Graphic shows that the highest number of calls is made form Tirana. Some other cities with relatively high number of calls are Durrës, Lushnja, Fier, Shkodra, Korça, Vlora etc. The cities with the lowest number of calls are Bulqiza, Skrapari, Puka etc.

It is important to point out there our services are recognized more year after year and thus the number of calls, from a geographical point of view has expended.

Children call our counselors to express their concerns and issues because they are sure that someone will be listening to them, and will make maximal efforts in order to try and improve their present situation.

### 3.6 Cooperation with public institutions and civil society organizations

One of the main roles of ALO 116 it to refer the cases. Since ALO 116 service operates via phone, the importance of the referral process is of great importance. The referral system is supported by a database where are registered all the governmental institution, non-governmental ones which are active in providing services for the children in need. All these institutions have been contacted and registered into this database in 2009, and their information has been updated, in relation to their status change, form staff or volunteers of CRCA.

Mainly we refer those cases for which a solution via phone can not be found. Such cases are those dealing with emergency response: abuse and violence cases, cases where there is a need for financial support etc. During 2011, we have cooperated with several agencies both public and private ones. The table below illustrates the classification of referred cases according to public and private institutions.

We have referred some girls and women over the age of 20 to hotlines dealing with counseling on this matter, who have reported different cases of violence and abuse by their husbands. Referrals have also been made for families with special needs which have expressed their concerns to ALO 116. Some of the organizations and institutions that have cooperated with ALO 116 are: (CPU) Children Protection Units, Albanian Red Cross, Free Legal Services, Terres des Hommes Foundation etc.

Referrals to non-governmental agencies in Albania	Referrals to governmental agencies in Albania	Total referrals
81	73	154



### a) Referrals to governmental institutions

Index of ALO 116 referrals to governmental agencies in Albania			
Referral	No. of referred cases	Referral	No. of referred cases
CPU	15	Municipality	4
District and city police	13	Governmental social services	4
State police	11	Department of education	2
Health clinics	11	Orphanages	2
Hospitals	7	National Center of Victims of Human Trafficking	1
Municipalities/mini-municipalities	6	National Hosting Center Against Family Abuse and Violence	1
Regional social services	4		

### b) Referrals to NGO's

Index of ALO 116 cases referred to non-governmental agencies in Albania			
Referral	No. of referred cases	Referral	No. of referred cases
Women and girls counseling hotline	28	The media	2
National center-rearing, and child development and rehabilitation Kombinat	10	Center for positive psychotherapy	2
Counties Red Cross	5	Social center for women Durres	2
Red Cross – Main Offices	3	Press	1
Bethany Social Service	3	Free Legal Services, CAFOD	1
Terres des Hommes	3	“Pëllumbat” center	
Caritas Albania	3	Help for children, Berat	1
Center for law and civic initiative	2	“Don Bosko” center	1
National center for psychotherapy	2	SOS Association, Shkodra	1

## 4 Data regarding missing children (ALO 116-000)

During September 2010, CRCA/DCI Albania was invited to be part of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children Network (ICMEC). The member countries of this network are: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Great Britain and the United States of America. In November of the same year, ICMEC together with CRCA / DCI Albania organized a workshop presenting the global network of missing children, and the means by which this network can assist children and Albanian families.

Based upon data of the first trimester since the opening of ALO 116, resulted that 4% of children stated that running away from their families was the only solution to solve their problems and so ALO 116, as one of the newest members of International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children Network, after consulting with UNICEF and CRCA, agreed to activate the phone number 116-000, which corresponds to the Pan-European number for missing children in Europe.

Albanian Helpline for Missing Children (116-000) provides the best models in: re-enforcing the legislation; cooperation between public and private agencies; psychological support for children, parents or other people who report a missing child; lobbying and advocacy at the institutional level; 24/7 service of the 116-000 hotline to report a missing child or a runaway child; education and public awareness support; follow up on each case by using an advance communication network; support in order to create a unified public system for missing children at an international level; higher standards in order to improve all services aiming the children at risk etc.

In 2011, ALO 116 000 has been focused on two main cases, which were referred to Albanian National Missing Children's Helpline. Both cases were referred by the media to ALO 116-000 services. One of the two cases was resolved due to the cooperation with the State Police, while the other case is still open and ongoing.

## Case: A.L.

**Initials:** A.L.  
**Age:** 14 years old  
**Citizenship:** Albanian  
**Nationality:** Albanian

In the month of July, after some information received from the media regarding a girl who had run away from home, supervisors of Children's Hotline contacted the girl's family. According to the family, A.L. had left home without giving any details to where she was heading. A.L. had left behind a hand-written letter where she stated that she had taken some poison and was heading towards the mountains near the village.

ALO 116 staff, responsible for following this case, after having been informed of the situation regarding the girl's relationship with the other members of the family, received further detailed information which were then shared with the police for finding her by providing at the same time 24 hour service access to 116-000 number. After a weeklong search by the police, the young girl was found in one of the outskirts of Tirana.

## Case: Mateo Bejaj

**Name:** Mateo  
**Last Name:** Bejaj  
**Age:** 15 years old  
**Birthplace:** Fitore, Vlorë  
**Nationality:** Albanian

Mateo Bejaj, 15 years old, living in the village Bishan in Vlora has yet to be found, even though the police had began a standard investigation. 6 months have passed since he ran away from home, and besides the information collected by ALO 116 and passed on to the police, there is still no trace of Mateo.

Every hour that passes, puts his life in greater danger. For this reason The Children's Human Rights Center of Albania and Missing Children Hotline – ALO 116 has provided an intensive inter-agency cooperation, by using any means of communication and cooperation, in order to collect the most information in regards to Bejaj's case. Children's Counseling Helpline - ALO 116 is available 24 hours a day, 7 day a week by calling 116-000, where every citizen, can report anonymously, if he

has sufficient information in order to facilitate the search for 15-year-old Mateo Bejaj.

# CASES ON CHILDREN WHO CALL ALO 116

## CASE ONE

**Name of referring person:** Ema  
**Child's initials:** K.S  
**Age of child:** 13 years old  
**Location:** Berat  
**Date:** 21.12.11

### Family composition

The child with initials K.S is 13 years old, and lives with the father, and aunt and the 5-year-old brother. The mother of the children had passed away.

### Case background

Ema calls in to report the case of a 13-year-old child named K.S. She is a relative of this child. K/S has been living home alone for two years.

His mother passed away 4 years ago, and his father together with his little 5-year-old brother have moved in with their aunt. The father has not been taking care of his child for the past two years; he has neglected his needs for food, clothing, schooling etc. According to Ema, the child has had some problems with the law because of stealing. That is the reason why he is considered a problematic child by those surrounding him.

K/S lives in Berat in his home. He does not attend school, often is feed by his relatives, asking them for help; but some other times he has to steal in order to provide food. His father is disappointed from him and does not want to take care about him anymore.

Often times during an argument with his son the father has bitten and mistreated his son in different ways. Two months ago, he beat his son while "dragging him on the floor". Some people got involved and gave shelter to the boy the day of the incident.

The boy suffers from asthma, and every month is obliged to go to the city hospital to receive oxygen. Often times, doctors have noticed signs of abuse on his body, eyes, yet they have taken no measures, while knowing very well the reason for those markings.

He is registered as in the seventh grade, but he rarely attends school. Teachers just pass him despite his seldom attendance.

Ema has tried many times to speak to the father of the child, and to try to convince him to take care of his child, but he continuously refuses to do so. The father has acted aggressively towards Ema by yelling and telling her it was not her business and not to interfere in his decisions.



Ema's husband has asked not to interfere any longer, even though he feels sorry for the child and would like to be of help to him. From time to time, relatives help the child by providing food and clothing for him whenever they see that he is in miserable conditions.

### **What had ALO 116 done?**

After a careful collection of data regarding this case, ALO 116 referred this case to the city's CPU. K/S' case is still an ongoing one, but they have worked with him intensively. Thanks to a useful cooperation with Berat's CPU, but also due to the continuous assistance of ALO 116, they have put together a work plan, which is monitored by CPU staff.

Every new information regarding K/S case is referred to CPU services, which carefully elaborate and verify the information being provided regarding this case.

The latest information reveals that the child is attending school regularly, he now lives with his father, and relations between father and son are now calm and constructive.

The family has received food aid, considering the very harsh financial situation it is going through.

At the same time, a support network has been created for this child thanks to the cooperation between the CPU staff, the father and aunt, the Director of Regional Education Directory, the teachers and the school principal.

## CASE TWO

**Name of referring person:** J.Xh  
**Child initials:** F  
**Age of child:** 17 year old  
**Location:** .....Shkodër  
**Date:** ..... 14.11.11

This case was referred to ALO 116 by one of the staff of the municipality of Shkodra. She was informed about ALO 116 from the police and decided to ask for assistance regarding a 17-year-old girl, who at the time was being assisted at the police station in Shkodra. This girl had been abandoned by her parents. Based on the information provided by the staff of the municipality J.Xh., the girl had continuous conflicts with her family. They complained that the girl smoked, had an aggressive behavior and often left home without telling where she was going and when she would be back, without asking for permission from her parents.

Her parents abandoned her, and refuse to take her back home. On the other hand, the girl herself refused to return to her parents' home. The police asked for assistance by the municipality on this case, in order to provide shelter for this girl.

J.Xh declares: *"We tried to find a short term solution in order to find shelter for this girl, but in our city we have not been able find a shelter. We though you could help us get in touch with a center which moght provide shelter for this young girl for a few days until the family's situation is calmer."*

### **What ALO 116 did in this case?**

After collecting all the necessary information, ALO 116 took these measures:

- a) Immediately contacted the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity.
- b) Contacted and reported this case to the Regional Directorate of Social Services.

The case referral was successful.

Thanks to the cooperation with these institutions, we were able to provide a temporary shelter for the girl at "Village of Peace" center. At the same time, psychological and emotional support was provided to the girl, as well as implementation of a long-term plan for her and her family.

## CASE THREE

**Name:** S.  
**Age:** 13 years old  
**Location:** X

### Family composition

S. is 13 years old and lives with her parents in a village in the northern part of Albania. Her parents have an age difference of 22 years between them. She has two younger brothers, for whom she provides full time care.

### Case background

A call comes to our hotline but no one speaks. Heavy breathing can be heard, and a little while longer, you can hear a faint voice. She would like to express much more, but she is frightened and shy. She gives her information after a few more calls. She has never had a chance to speak to anyone about things so important to her.

After a short pause, she says -“My father doesn’t love me, he beats me, he whips me with a belt and doesn’t allow me to attend school”. After this, I hear her voice, and she starts to cry and tremble. She continues to tell her childhood story:

“My father has never loved me, ever since I was a little girl, I remember him being distant. He only loves my brothers, and he is never satisfied with me. I take care of all the housework, because my mother works all day long. My father has been married three times, he does not love anyone. He has even beaten his own mother. With my mother and me, he does the same. He beats me when my mother is not home; he hits me with anything at hand, shoes, whip and other objects. I have black marks on my body, and for this reason we have even gone to the police, but they have kept him for a few days, and than he has returned”.

She speaks of her efforts to be loved and supported by her father, but according to her, these efforts are useless. She has only felt hate and distance from her father for years. Sometimes, she feels guilty, but she does not know what she can do in order for these things never to happen again in her family.

Sometimes her father will not have any contact with S, this makes her feel better than when he is around the house. She plays the parental role for her two brothers, she feeds them, dresses them, cleans the house and works throughout the day. There are times that she does not go to school as her father does not allow her to.



She expresses great love for her brothers and for her mother and the opposite feelings for her father. She has friends, but she almost has no free time to enjoy her childhood.

It has been years since she last played with other kids, and time is not enough even for her to do her homework. There are teachers who support her, but also some others who make fun of her clothes. Someone told her she dresses badly, and this has made her deeply sad; she cried and refused to go to school for several days. She wishes her friends would not have negative thoughts in her regard, but she cannot change their opinions. She says, she feels often lonely and without any support, and thus life does not have any meaning.

She has thought to take her own life (something she has only thought to, but never acted upon). There are times she feels life is beautiful to live, and other times where she feels a deep dread and thinks otherwise.

She knows she is loved by her mother and her brothers, but the suffering caused by her father is unbearable for her. She asks to the counselors different questions such as: is it fair what is happening to her?! are there other children who are beaten and suffer just like me?! She insist on an answer to these questions and requests a swift solution to her situation, which she does not receive right away.

After talking to ALO 116 she expresses her feelings: "I like talking to you, even though I am scared my father might hear me. I feel better, I have people who listen to me, and sometimes I am ashamed that I feel and say such things about my family....."

#### **What ALO 116 did in this case?**

- a) *Emotional support*
- b) *A three-month counseling period.*

Support is very scarce for her and her need for encouragement is great. Making sure she understands that she is an intelligent girl, that she is doing a lot for her family, are some of the elements which make her feel better about herself, and this why she is freed from the guilt she feels.

The discussion between her mother and the ALO 116 counselor, allows her to speak more freely, and she feels this way she is receiving the great support that she needs. She says she feels better and not guilty when she speak with the psychologist. In her latest calls, she says she is learning to spend a little bit more time for herself, to read, or to just sit down and think about her desires, school, her friends or even a close friend. Either way, these moments for S are scarce, most of the time, she must face things, which she cannot change, and which are beyond her control. She does not want the conversations to be brief, nor does she want anyone to interrupt her .....

She believes, these calls would be very beneficial for her two brothers as well. She says, they do not understand much, but they feel sorry for their sister.

### *c) Referral*

The girl's mother was an important and active catalyst during her consultations with the counselor because she herself was part of the same cycle of abuse exerted by the head of the family towards the other members of the family. The girl's mother has been referred to the Counseling Center for Women and Girls.

## CASE FOUR

*Case: A. J*

*Age: 7 years old*

*Location: Kolonjë, Lushnjë*

ALO 116 receives a call from a 35-year-old mother of a 7-year-old boy. She speaks about her 7-year-old son who is in the first grade. Her son has serious hearing problems. This element hampers him reach the same academic level as the other classmates, and at the same time in building interpersonal relationships with other children at school

At the moment his mother and father are unemployed. The latter rarely works because his fingers were severely injured during an accident, and has forgone through surgeries in the stomach and foot.

The child has been seen by doctors at the French Hospital and at the Mother Teresa Hospital in Tirana, and doctors on both visits have told the family the child must use a hearing device. The family is in dire financial situation, and cannot afford to buy the hearing device for the child.

ALO 116 in cooperation with Albanian Community Assist - ACA (an organization operating in Tirana) was able to contact a partner foundation in London, which in return was able to provide the hearing device needed for the 7-year-old boy.

**ALO 116- National Child Counseling Center is a free service for children 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, which provides:**

- Active listening to all children calling
- Psychological counseling
- Information regarding children and youth rights
- Adequate referrals to other services depending on individual cases.

This service focuses on children in need such as: violated, abused and maltreated children, children of the streets, children who are exploited to work, children who are in conflict with the law etc. This service does not exclude parents, teachers, educators or people who directly work or are interested in children's right and well being.

**ALO 116, is a national service in aiding children, provided by CRCA/DCI Albania – Children's Rights Centre of Albania:**



**ALO 116 is sponsored by UNICEF:**



## **ALO 116 is supported by:**

- Albanian State Police
- Postal and Electronic Communication Authority



## **And these phone companies operating in Albania:**

