

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENCE IN ALBANIA

RESEARCH STUDY

Tirana, 2019

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Pleasant reading,
Albanian Women Empowerment Network

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Abbreviations

AWEN	Albanian Women Empowerment Network
GE	Gender equality
GBV	Gender-based violence
DV	Domestic violence
VAW	Violence against women
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
ITG	Interdisciplinary Technical Group
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics in Albania
CEDAW CONVENTION	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
ISTANBUL CONVENTION	Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
SC	Steering Committee
MJ	Ministry of Justice
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
(MSWY) MHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
NGO	Non-Government Organisation (Non-profit)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
NAP	National Action Plan
ASP	Albanian State Police
GADC	Gender Alliance for Development Centre
SIDA	International Development Cooperation Agency
NSGE	National Strategy on Gender Equality
UNDP	The United Nations Development Programme
UN WOMEN	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
DCM	Decisions of the Council of Ministers

Executive Summary

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in Albania, the same as all around the world, mainly affects girls and women and any attempts to combat it require an understanding of its prevalence and nature through reliable, systematic and comparable data. The data are necessary for measuring the spread and consequences of IPV in adolescence, for monitoring the state response to it and evaluating the policies for combating it. The requirement for high-quality administrative data is also in line with the international commitments to combat violence against women, as determined in the Directive 2012/29/EU (The Victims' Rights Directive) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (The Istanbul Convention).

The main purpose of this research study is to present an overview of the intimate partner violence in adolescence, by providing a comprehensive analysis of the appearance of the phenomenon and characteristics of intimate partner violence between the ages 16-19 in Albania, from a gender perspective. Furthermore, the research study aims to identify the risk factors at individual level (*use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs*), family level (*domestic violence*) and community level (*community safety*) which foster victimisation and/or the exercise of violence among the teens.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which is described as the control of one person over another person through physical, psychological, sexual, financial and/or digital abuse, has long-term health, psychological, educational and economic consequences for people who have experienced and survived it, or continue to be in a violent relationship, as well for the entire society.

The participants of this study were 1036 young people aged between 16-19, students of the country's high schools, 428 of whom were boys and 593 girls, and 15 participants did not specify their gender. 56 percent of the respondents lived in urban areas and 44 percent in rural areas. 2 percent of the young people belonged to the Roma and Egyptian communities. The entire study has been analysed from a gender perspective.

Main findings of the research study on violence in intimate relationships among young people aged 16-19:

- Among adolescents who have been in an intimate relationship, 22 percent report to have experienced violence from the partner.
- IPV among girls who have been in an intimate relationship is reported to be 28 percent, whereas among boys 20 percent.
- 3 times more girls than boys are physically abused (18 percent girls vs 6 percent boys). 20 percent of girls versus 8 percent of boys are threatened or humiliated.
- Domestic violence, exposure to violence, tolerance to violent behaviour, use of substances, customs and prejudices double the probability of experiencing violence in intimate relationships in adolescence.
- The probability of entering the cycle of violence in intimate relationships in adolescence is almost tripled among young people who have experienced domestic violence.
 - The data indicate that 43 percent of the young people who have been victims of domestic violence are also victims of intimate partner violence, versus 16 percent of those who have not experienced domestic violence.
 - Adolescents who have in their circle victims of violence or perpetrators are almost twice as likely (24 percent) to be victims of violence than those who do not have in their circle any victims or perpetrators (13 percent).
 - Among adolescents who consider violence to be somewhat acceptable, the percentage of victims is higher, 36 percent compared to about 18 percent who consider violence as unacceptable.
 - Those who have consumed substances more frequently result to be perpetrators and/or victims of intimate violence. 27 percent of substance users are victims of IPV compared to 16 percent of non-users.
- 82 percent believe that girls and women are more often victims of violence than boys and men. Furthermore, 89 percent consider violence against women and girls as a serious issue in their communities.
- 35 percent know at least one girl violated by her partner and 38 percent of them know one girl who has suffered from domestic violence.

- About half of them report being little or no likely to tell someone if they are the victim of a psychological, physical or sexual violence. They generally talk rarely to their parents, but even more rarely about intimate relationships. Such conversations continue to remain a taboo for the Albanian society, but on the other hand, parents continue to exercise control over the adolescents' life.
 - The data show that about 40-45 percent of the young people talk rarely or very rarely with their parents.
 - About 60 percent talk with their parents about their future plans.
 - 58 percent never talk with their parents about their intimate relationships and about 19 percent of them talk very rarely.
 - Over 80 percent say their parents want to know whom they socialize with and where their children are.
- The study revealed the controlling behaviour of adolescents towards their intimate partners.
 - 64 percent consider controlling their partner's activity on social media as acceptable.
 - 52 percent consider acceptable to determine in whose company their partner should be.
 - 38 percent consider shouting out at their partner when they are alone as acceptable.
 - 28 percent of them consider ignoring the partner and refusing to talk to him/her as acceptable.
- About 90 percent say their neighbourhood is a safe place to live, they feel safe at home during the night, they feel safe when spending time in the neighbourhood during the day and feel safe at school.
- 75 percent believe that criminal activities occurring in their neighbourhood are carried out by persons living outside their neighbourhood, but other 25 percent believe they are carried out by persons living nearby.
- 75 percent agreed or totally agreed with the statement that gender-based violence is caused by the use of alcohol and drugs, versus 24 percent who were against or totally against this statement.

- 77 percent of them agreed with the statement that violence is permissible in case it is used for self-defence.
- 34 percent declared to have been involved at least once in an intimate relationship, and 19 percent of them refused to answer.
- The average age reported for starting an intimate relationship is about 16 years old, with the boys entering an intimate relationship at the age of 15.8, about one year earlier than girls (16.8 years old).
- The data show that 54 percent of girls and 32 percent of boys who have been in intimate relationships had used no protection during sexual intercourse.
- Almost 1 in 2 high-school young people interviewed have tried alcohol or smoking in their life and 1 in 10 interviewees have tried marijuana/or cannabis.

Why this research study?

Intimate partner violence in adolescence is an issue never studied before in Albania. There might have been students' papers, but they are unknown. As far as violence against women and domestic violence is concerned, in 2017, in absolute terms 3.243 violated women have reported to the relevant bodies (Institute of Statistics, 2018). The highest percentage of women who have reported domestic violence is in the district of Tirana, with 36 percent of the total, followed by the district of Durres with 14 percent, whereas the district of Kukes and Dibra have the lowest percentage, with 0,9 and 1,5 respectively of women who have reported, this maybe because of the low reporting culture and prejudices that prevail in these districts (ibid. INSTAT, 2018).

Intimate partner violence among adolescents is associated with consequences such as: psychological distress, low grade-point average and disciplinary problems (Fincham, Cui, Braithwaite, and Pasley, 2008). Many studies around the world have found that boys and girls have been victimized by intimate partners (Brooks-Russell et al, 2013). Also, the relationship between domestic violence and the violent behaviour among adolescents and victimization in their relations during adolescence has never been observed. Other previous quantitative research studies, mainly in the USA, indicate that there is a strong correlation between victimization, the exercise of IPV and the use of alcohol or various substances (Temple and Freeman, 2011). Data on such factors could be found in Albania, so we included them in our study. Adolescents' perspective on violence is an important indicator on the presence of intimate partner violence among the youth (Reed et al, 2011; Temple et al, 2013), because the way they think about this phenomenon increases or decreases the risk of IPV appearance (McDonell et al, 2010). This is also an issue not addressed, about which there was a lack of studies in Albania.

Research Study Objectives

The main objective of the research study "Intimate partner violence in adolescence" is to present an overview of violence among the young people in Albania, by providing a comprehensive analysis of the appearance of the phenomenon and characteristics of intimate partner violence between the ages 16-19 in Albania. Another objective of this study was to

discover the risk factors at individual level (*e.g. the use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs*), at family level (*e.g. domestic violence*) or at community level (*e.g. community safety*) which foster victimisation or the exercise of violence among the teens. Lastly, the aim of the study was to provide an overview of intimate partner violence among the adolescents from a gender perspective.

Methodology of the research study

For the realisation of this study, with the aim of collecting all the available information about this phenomenon at national level, two research methods were used: 1) The quantitative research method and 2) The qualitative research method.

Quantitative methodology of the study

For the purpose of this study, a survey was carried out at national level with the participation of 1036 persons aged 16 - 19 years old, attending public high schools in Albania during the academic year 2017 - 2018. A sampling scheme which enabled a full representation of this age group from all around Albania was used in selecting the respondents.

Sampling

Selection of the respondents was carried out according to the PPS method¹ stratified as per geographical regions. As sampling frame was used the list of public high schools (comprehensive and vocational), which served as primary sampling units, whereas the number of students enrolled in schools served as size measurement unit. According to the PPS, the algorithm used gives a greater opportunity to schools that have a larger number of students, or, to put it differently, the more populated schools have a higher possibility of selection than the less populated ones. The total list of schools includes 397 public high schools and information on the number of students enrolled in that school.

Table 1. Type of school involved

Type of school	Involvement
High school	Yes
Artistic Lyceum	Yes
Vocational high school	Yes
Private	No
Other (specialised education)	No

¹ Probability Proportional to Size

During the first phase, 100 sampling units (corresponding to 87 schools²) were randomly selected, in proportion to the number of enrolled students, stratified as per three statistical regions: Middle, North and South as determined by INSTAT for national surveys. Afterwards, a total of 10 interviews were carried out for each sampling unit selected, a reasonable number to preserve the balance between the sampling structure and accuracy.

Table 2. Sampling division by region

Region	District	Number of schools	# of interviews
North	Dibra	7	100
	Durres	7	70
	Kukes	2	20
	Lezhe	7	70
	Shkodra	6	70
Middle	Elbasan	9	110
	Tirana	20	270
South	Berat	7	70
	Fier	5	70
	Gjirokastra	3	30
	Korça	9	110
		5	50
Total		87	1040

The total number of interviews carried out is 1036, as 4 of them were excluded.

The system for selecting the grade and class (e.g. Grade I, Class A) was parametrized with the two variables “grade” and “class”, for which the random selection was executed three times. In the third phase, after selecting the school, grade and class, the interviewer selected the 7th student to interview, starting the count from his left, until reaching the number 3 of interviews in that class. The 10th interview is carried out in the selected class of the senior year (third grade). If the selected person was under 16 years old, or refused to participate in the survey, the person next to him would be selected. The ten selected students were later gathered in a room, and after having been explained the purpose of the survey, were left to complete the questionnaire independently. **The margin of error for this study is $\pm 3,4$ percent, with a confidence interval of 95 percent.**

² PPS algorithm to the required parameters selected 87 schools, in 11 of which more than 10 interviews were carried out.

Criteria for participating in the research study

All the students 16 years old and above who attended public high schools in Albania during the academic year 2017 - 2018 were suitable for participating in the study.

Data collection method

A questionnaire previously used by a 4-year-long study conducted in South Carolina, the United States of America was used in this study. This study aimed to examine the developmental trajectory of victimization and intimate partner violence among adolescents in the rural part of that area. This questionnaire has been adapted to the Albanian culture and context and later implemented on a stratified, random national sample of teens aged 16-19, attending public high schools in different regions of Albania.

The questionnaire measures the attitudes and perceptions of public high school students to domestic violence and violence in intimate relationships; their experience with violence during their life and their peers'; views on acceptance of violent behaviour in intimate and family relations; their attitudes and experiences with the use of different substances such as tobacco and alcohol; and their views towards various aspects of intimate partner violence.

The questionnaire includes 11 sections:

1. **Safety.** This section includes questions about safety in the neighbourhood, such as *'My neighbourhood is a safe place to live in'* or *'I feel safe in my house at night'*. The measurement was carried out in the Likert scale from 1- 'totally agree' to 4- 'totally disagree'.
2. **Adolescents' perspective on violence** includes statements on the different opinions on what may generate violence or contribute to violent behaviour, such as: *'Violence may be the only way for people to get what they want in life'* or *'Girls/women are violated more than boys or men'* with various options from 1- 'totally agree' to 4- 'totally disagree'.
3. **Adolescents' experience with violence:** this section includes questions on the attitudes and experience with domestic violence, such as: *'Do you think that violence against women and girls is a serious problem in your community?'* with options ranging from 1 – 'A serious problem' to 4- 'Not a problem at all' or *'Was any of the girls you know personally violated by her family members'* with options ranging from 1- 'Yes' to 2- 'No'.
4. **Adolescents' experience with intimate relationships:** this section includes questions about their experience with intimate relationships, including questions such as: *'How old were you when you first had sexual intercourse'* with options ranging from 1 – '11 or earlier' to 8 – '18 or later'.

5. **Adolescents' points of view related to behaviour in intimate relationships** includes questions on the attitudes to possible behaviours manifested by partners in an intimate relationship, such as: *'Determine who they may socialize with, and who they may not'* or *'Slap or hit him/her'* with options ranging from 1 – 'absolutely unacceptable' to 5 – 'totally acceptable'.
6. **Their experience with intimate partner violence:** This section includes questions about their experiences with intimate partner violence, such as: *'Have you ever felt threatened, humiliated or controlled by a partner in an intimate relationship, 'If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months'* or *'Have you ever been forced by a partner to have sex when you did not wish to do so, If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months'*, with options ranging from 1- 'Yes' to 2- 'No'.
7. **Adolescents' experience with tobacco, alcohol and drugs:** This section includes questions about some risky behaviours that young people may manifest during the age of 10 or earlier up to the age of 17 or later, such as: *'How old were you when you first smoked a cigarette, even if it was just a puff'*, or *'Did you have more than one or two sips of beer, wine or any other alcohol'* with options from 1- 'Never' to 9- '17 or over 17 years old'.
8. **Family and friends** is a section which includes questions related to the respondents' perceptions on what they think about the family or the group of friends which they usually spend their time with, such as: *'Think about a boy/girl or group of friends who you stay with, can you tell us whether they: Get into trouble (dangerous activities)'* or *'Have a good performance at school'* with options ranging from 1 – 'Not at all true' to 4 – 'Totally true'.
9. **Family** this section includes the respondents' experience in their family, with questions such as: *'Have you ever been afraid your family members could put your life at risk?' 'If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months'* with options ranging from 1 – 'Yes' to 2- 'No'.
10. **Getting Help:** this section includes questions such as: *'Whether the person you are in an intimate relationship with is threatening, humiliating or trying to control you, or 'If the person you are in an intimate relationship with physically hurts you, what are the chances you tell: one or both your parents, a friend, a doctor with options ranging from 1- 'Not likely' to 4- 'Very likely'.*
11. **Demographic information** a section that includes questions related to age, gender, nationality, etc..

Data collection

The data for this study have been collected during the period March - May 2018. All the interviewers involved in the study, a total of 24, received formal training on the manner how the data would be collected by the adolescents. The interviewers were provided with the names of the respective schools, classes and addresses, where they were supposed to physically appear in order to gather the data from the adolescents. The interviewers informed the selected young persons on the purpose of the study and read the definitions on some of the topics elaborated in the questionnaire/survey. This research study's protocol required the preservation by all means of anonymity of the person participating in the study. The questionnaire was self-administered by the participants from the beginning to the end. At no time did the interviewers interfere or control its completion.

Data processing

The data were analysed using the IBM SPSS 20 statistics package. The *chi-square* statistics test was used for testing the statistical relationships between categorical variables. Simple proportions were used to estimate the prevalence, while numerical variables were compared using student's *t - test*. Only the statistically significant results have been included in the report. A statistical significant level of 95 percent was used in comparing proportions. In creating youth profiles based on a set of questions, they were used separately or in combination.

Qualitative method of the study

The qualitative research method enables us to provide complex descriptions of how individuals perceive or experience a particular issue, influenced by the behaviour, beliefs, thoughts, emotions or conflictual relationships with other individuals. This research method is very effective in identifying the social factors such as the social norms, gender roles, domestic violence, etc. When this method is used together with the quantitative method, it may contribute to an objective and macro-level interpretation and understanding of a complex reality of a given situation and the implications of the quantitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Marshall, 2003).

With regards to the qualitative approach as a technique in this study, the **focus groups** were used. This technique is effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented (Kelly, 2003; McLafferty, 2004).

Selection of focus groups' participants was carried out in cooperation with the representatives of AWEN partner organisations operating at national level, by means of the "purposive"

sampling, meaning that members of the age group 16-19, public high school students, were selected to take part in this study, who were believed would enable collecting the best possible information on this phenomenon. The data collection method was based on note-taking by the interviewers and voice recording, upon approval, during the interview which lasted for about 60 minutes.

A total of 6 focus groups were realised in this study, which consisted of 8-10 participants, public high schools students aged 16-19 years, from the regions of: Tirana, Korça, Vlora, Lezha, Peshkopi. In order to make sharing of perceptions and experiences as easy as possible, the focus groups were divided by gender. A total of 49 persons, of which 23 girls and 26 boys participated.

The participants were also informed on the study and their right to participate. From the selected group there was not any one who refused to participate. No identification data of the participants were collected, only their age and the rural or urban place of residence was required. Upon the youth consent, the focus groups were audio recorded for the purpose of transcribing the data collected during the conversation. The data were transcribed and grouped under the data analysis sections. During the interviews conducted with the focus groups, participants were addressed a number of questions which followed the logic of the questionnaire, such as: 1) their attitudes and perceptions to domestic violence and violence in intimate relationships; 2) their experience with violence during their life and their peers'; 3) views on acceptance of violent behaviour in intimate and family relations; 4) their attitudes and experiences with the use of different substances such as tobacco, alcohol or drugs; 5) and their views towards various aspects of intimate partner violence.

Limitations of the study

This study has some limitations. First of all, the data are self-reported, and as such, the degree of under-reporting or over-reporting related to the topics addressed in the study can not be accurately determined, although the data throughout this report have been consistent. Also, only data collected from adolescents were used in this study, and no data on this phenomenon were collected by parents/custodians or teachers who are often aware of cases of victimization or intimate partner violence. Furthermore, the results of this study represent the young people 16-19 years of age attending public high school, and consequently they do not represent all the youth of Albania. According to official data of INSTAT, participation of pupils in the public secondary education during the academic year 2017-2018 is 88 percent. Whereas data from other studies outside Albania have shown that the young people not attending school are more inclined towards violent or risky behaviour than those who attend school. There is a very low representation in the study of adolescents belonging to other communities, such as Roma or Egyptian community (2 percent of participants).

Literature review

Intimate partner violence

The term *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)*, describes the control of one person over another person through physical, psychological, sexual, financial and/or digital abuse, which has long-term health, psychological, educational and economic consequences for people who survived it. Previous researches indicate that IPV has substantial social and economic costs for the entire society (Hess and Del Rosario, 2018). Such costs are related to health problems, lost productivity and criminal justice costs (Hess and Del Rosario, 2018). In addition to these direct costs, the IPV victims often experience other effects, such as lost educational opportunities, diminished ability to work, and loss of control over the choice and timing of childbearing (Hess and Del Rosario, 2018).

Intimate partner abuse has multiple effects, and that is why it is critical to develop programs and policies against IPV, that increase safety and economic security for the people. IPV is a human rights' issue and a very serious issue for the people's public health. IPV often involves children also. Based on the reporting of Albanian battered women in the study (Haarr, 2013), about 87 percent of them reported that their children witnessed domestic violence and about 43 percent reported that domestic violence had caused learning problems for their children. Further in the same study, women themselves reported that 31 percent of their children lived in fear, 19.2% reported that their children had been hurt or injured by domestic violence and 5.5% reported that their children had left home to live with relatives (Haarr, 2013).

Generally, there are societies that accept and justify IPV, and unfortunately Albania is one of these countries. In a gendered ecological analysis in 49 low- and middle-income countries, including Albania, IPV is justified and accepted in certain situations by 36 percent of the people (Sardinha and Catalán, 2018). As we mentioned above, apart from the various consequences to IPV victims, this phenomenon also affects their children, if they have any. The latter, if witnessing domestic violence, are at risk of exercising violence in the future. A study carried out by (Forke, Myers, Fein, Catallozi, Localio, Wiebe, Grisso, 2018), found that adolescents witnessing domestic violence, in intimate relationships is associated with perpetration for boys and combined victimization/perpetration for girls. Overall, the study (Forke et al, 2018)

proves that there is an increased risk for perpetration or victimization during adolescence if you have witnessed domestic violence. The report prepared by IDRA and UN Women (2018) informs that 44 percent of the respondents to the study admit to having a friend or family member who has been subject to sexual harassment or sexual violence.

Gender-based violence has a range of negative consequences, ranging from the physical to the psychological and emotional ones for the victims and the perpetrators (Caldwell, Swan and Woodbrown, 2012; Cornelius et al., 2009; Foshee and Reyes, 2012). According to these researchers, IPV starts at an early age, often in the first intimate relationship and occurs without exception among all socio-economic, religious and cultural groups. IPV has been broadly conceptualized, including forms of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and persecution by the intimate partner (Breiding, 2014, World Health Organisation (WHO), 2012) The International Centre of Damage Control and Prevention (ICDCP, 2003) and WHO (2002) reach the conclusion that IPV is one of the main causes of injuries and many physical and emotional damages incurred among partners of different ages. WHO (2017) has declared violence against women as a global health problem of epidemic proportions. Existing literature suggests that different types of violence often coexist: physical IPV is often accompanied by sexual IPV, or is usually accompanied by emotional abuse.

More often than not, violence against women is committed by an intimate partner. It is a fact that of all women killed in different years in Albania, more than half died at the hands of a partner or family member. It is not an exaggeration but a fact that the overall greatest threat to women's lives is men, and often the men they love (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2014). A number of theories and approaches exist to understand the causes and risk factors for IPV. Researchers have identified dozens of risk factors that degenerate to IPV, (Finkel and Eckhardt, 2013), but they have been less successful in identifying the processes through which such risk factors foster IPV. In the last decade, there has been an increase of empirical studies related to IPV and theoretical models have been developed on these studies. A theoretical model that helps study this interactive process is the I3 model (Finkel, 2008). This model ascertains that there are three main processes that combine to trigger IPV (*impelling force*, *inhibiting force* and *instigating trigger*). From a socio-cultural perspective, IPV is a way of showing aggression by men to trigger fear and enforce a patriarchal social order in all important social institutions, including the workplace, health care, the legal system and the family. Girls and women in Albania live under the effect of domestic violence, norms and prejudices imposed for them, and the Kanun rules (CEDAW, 2016). In some regions of Albania, the code of conduct allows for forgiveness of the girls and women's murderers in the name of what is called "honour".

In the evaluation regarding violence against women, published by GREVIO in 2017, it was stated that the public opinion in Albania lacks a gendered understanding of violence against women and girls because in general they, including various experts, tend to view violence restrictively as a by-product of low socio-economic development (GREVIO, 2017), disregarding the widespread evidence that women's position in society and their susceptibility to violence are affected by a combination of political, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental considerations, and are not determined by economic factors alone. The same report (GREVIO, 2017) informs that there is a tendency in Albania to promote forgiveness under the pretext of traditional family values. Even worse, in Albania there is a tendency which transpires, for instance, in the actions of public officials in law enforcement and the judiciary who promote mediation outside any legal framework and without proper consideration for the safety of victims (GREVIO, 2017). On the other hand, another study carried out on safety in urban areas emphasises that, despite the various efforts of different stakeholders to create mechanisms and instruments on reporting violence against women and girls, there exists a common belief women and girls share, on keeping violent episodes private and putting up with violence in order to keep the family together (IDRA and UN Women, 2018).

Women and girls believe, to a large extent, that they should put up with violence in order to keep the family together. About 30 percent of Albanian women agree that the husband is justified in exercising violence against women if he has at least one reason (UNICEF, 2017). The same report (UNICEF, 2017) informs that in Albania, 31 percent of women who had ever experienced any form of IPV reported that their children live in fear, and 19 percent reported that their children had also been hurt or injured by the perpetrator (Haarr, 2013).

Many researchers believe that sexism and gender inequality in a patriarchal society are among the main causes of IPV (Bell and Naugle, 2008). Gender roles imposed by the society are taught to individuals during childhood, and these are believed to give men the power over women (Dobash and Dobash, 1977). Unequal division of gender roles leads to victimization and violence against women by men. Women victimization rates are higher in countries where strong sexist attitudes exist. The findings of many studies, which have contributed to the formulation of the feminist theory, show that families are more affected by IPV when men retain traditional attitudes of the sexual role and when there is great discrepancy among the spouses about accepting patriarchal values. According to Straus (1976, 1977), it is argued that the roots of violence stem not only from within the culture, but also from within the family structure. *Family conflict, social acceptance of violence, and gender inequality are hypothesized to interact and lead to the development*

and maintenance of IPV, which may then result in the continuation of family violence. The use of violence to address family conflicts is believed to be learned in childhood by either witnessing or experiencing physical abuse. This theory also suggests that power imbalances between husbands and wives may increase the amount of tension within the family, thus, increasing the risk of intimate partner aggression. Other studies have found that families high in conflict, with greater levels of stress or coming from lower socio-economic statuses have higher IPV rates (Johnson and Leone, 2005; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 2017).

From the individual perspective, researchers explain IPV through the theory of social learning, situational model or the personality theories. The social learning theorists hypothesize that IPV is initially acquired through modelling during childhood. According to Lewis & Fremouw (2001) this in turn results in the development of tolerance or acceptance of violence within the family. IPV is believed to be maintained if it serves a purpose or has been appropriately reinforced. Thus, positive outcomes following partner abuse may increase a person's expectations that future violence will result in similar outcomes, and consequently result in continued use of violence. This theory also emphasizes that direct reinforcement of violent behaviour is not required to maintain that behaviour. Instead, simply witnessing of violent behaviour may be sufficient in determining whether or not an individual will engage in future violent episodes.

Riggs and O'Leary (1989, 1996) developed a model to explain IPV. This model is composed of two components: 1) background factors and 2) situational factors *Background factors* include a history of witnessing or experiencing abuse, aggressive personality characteristics, prior use of aggression, psychopathology, and social acceptance of aggression as a means to handle conflict. The second component refers to *situational factors* that set the stage for violence to occur. Interpersonal conflict, substance use, relationship satisfaction, intimacy levels, problem-solving skills, personal expectations of outcomes to violence, and communication styles are all situational factors that are believed to be related to the onset of a violent episode. Riggs and O'Leary (1989, 1996) propose that *the interaction between these two components may impact the intensity of conflict within a couple*, and, thus, determine whether or not physical violence will occur.

Lastly, it is the personality theories that may explain psychopathology and personality characteristics of an individual which may make him violent. The personality theories emphasize the role of attachment, early childhood experiences, and impulsivity in IPV perpetration (Dutton, 1995; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). According to these theories, the propensity to perpetrate IPV in adulthood stems from insecure attachment and shaming arising during early childhood and later during adolescence. Individuals with this

attachment style are characterized by having a desire for intimate social contact while also experiencing a fear of rejection and distrust of others, resulting in frequent dissatisfaction with intimate relationships. These theories explain how a combination of different factors, such as genetic factors or peer experiences affect the formation of a violent individual, who is characterized by one of the different types of personalities, family only aggressive, antisocial and perpetrators (Bell and Naugle, 2008).

Intimate partner violence among adolescents

Intimate relationships among adolescents have attracted the researchers' attention ever since adolescence was distinguished as a developmental stage separate from childhood and adulthood. The one area that seems to have escaped the attention of researchers is the prospect of violence accompanying intimacy in adolescence. Such violence does not exist only among married couples as previously thought, but it exists among every couple having an intimate relationship (O'Keeffe, Brockopp, and Chew, 1986). Especially in the last decade, this phenomenon has been considered as a social problem open to be explored, studied and addressed.

The first research done by Henton and Cate (1983) only in one high school, since other 6 schools refused to be part of this study in California, the United States of America (USA) on intimate partner violence among adolescents, found that 12 percent of participants had experienced intimate partner violence (O'Keeffe, Brockopp, and Chew, 1986). Other studies suggest that dating violence among high school students is more widespread than previously believed, and may have serious developmental consequences. Adolescents are especially vulnerable to this form of violence since it may interfere with two tasks that are integral to healthy social development: 1) establishing caring, meaningful relationships, and 2) developing interpersonal intimacy (Powers and Kerman, 2006).

According to estimates made by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017), one in three (35 percent) women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. *Research with adolescents show that one in ten adolescents are victims experiencing physical, sexual or psychological violence in an intimate partner relationship* (Fry et al, 2013; Hickman et al, 2004; Mulford and Giordano, 2008).

This type of violence in high schools ranges between 9 percent and 57 percent (O'Keefe, 2005). According to Powers and Kerman (2006), based on data from the Centers for Disease Control (2000) in the USA using a national sample, reported that the average prevalence of dating violence for high school and college students is 22% and 32% respectively. According

to the IDRA and UN Women (2018) report, in Albania 38 percent of respondents reported to have been at risk of or exposed to sexual harassment or violence before or after the age of 15 (some have experienced both). Intimate partner violence among adolescents includes any kind of behaviour displayed by a girlfriend or boyfriend for the purpose of manipulating, exercising power and control over the other person, to make a person feel bad about himself or to make a person feel frightened of his safety (Network ODV, 2013). This type of violence has a number of consequences on their health, thus increasing the risk of depression and suicide (Banyard and Cross, 2008; Exner-Cortens, Eckenrode, and Rothman, 2013), low self-esteem (O'Keefe 1997), low academic achievements (Smith, White, & Holland, 2003), binge-eating disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, anxiety, substance abuse, risky sexual behaviour (Temple and Freeman, 2011), poor emotional well-being or unwanted pregnancy (Cornelius, Shorey, and Kunde, 2009; Fincham, Cui, Braithaite, and Pasley, 2008). *There is no proper study to date in Albania about the intimate partner violence in adolescence.*

Among the main risk factors contributing to the appearance of these behaviours is the use of substances such as tobacco, alcohol or drugs and the exposure of adolescents to violence in the family and the community. Many researches found that there is a significant correlation between the substance use and violent behaviour, with both boys and girls who have had episodes of alcohol, tobacco or narcotics use were being more likely to be victimized or to exercise violence (Mcdonell et al., 2010; Rothman et al., 2012; and Temple and Freeman, 2011). Meanwhile, exposure of adolescents especially to domestic violence is a robust predictor of IPV (Jouriles et al., 2012; and Wincentak et al., 2017). Furthermore, community safety is a factor contributing to the prevention of such behaviour. According to some studies, areas with a low economic level or residential instability have a higher rate of violence and crime (Buka, 2001; and Molnar et al, 2004).

Community safety

Studies conducted with young adolescents found that neighbourhood safety is one of the environmental factors contributing to the level of crime and violence. The neighbourhood where residents live is determinant of the person's economic, political and social status. It also has an impact beyond the family, in the health and behaviour of the residents (Ben-Arieh, McDonell, and Attar-Schwartz, 2009; McDonell, 2007). According to some recent studies, with the decline of the global economy, many neighbourhoods are depleted, and many of these are regarded as "urban war areas" or "toxic social environments" because they lack opportunities and have access to weapons trafficking and high level of community

violence. According to Buka and his colleagues (2001), young people living in urban areas experience higher levels of community violence, especially in those lower economic status neighbourhoods where murders often occur (Molnar, Gortmaker, Bull and Buka, 2004)

The social disorganisation theory suggests that contextual factors predicting IPV have an impact on the emergence of crimes and victimization. Of a special importance are the neighbourhood constituent factors related to the low level of economic status, ethnic heterogeneity and residential instability. According to this theory, the most disadvantageous neighbourhoods, ethnic heterogeneity and residential instability have a higher crime rate, because they have insufficient capacities to exercise formal and informal social control. This theory emphasizes that social processes existing between neighbourhood residents may influence the association between structural factors and crime. Such factors are collective efficacy, social ties, and cultural norms which if present in the community, the crime levels are lower despite the economic levels, including the impact on intimate partner violence (Pinchevsky and Wright, 2012). Also, the neighbourhoods with residents having a high level of responsibility and trust have lower crime and violence rates (Lynch, 2002).

Adolescents' views on violence and their experiences with violence

Adolescents' attitudes to violence influence victimization and IPV. Many researches found that the perspectives and beliefs that adolescents create about violence are of particular importance in the literature about this phenomenon, with them often seeing it as a norm and acceptable (Reed et al., 2011; Shamir et al., 2001; and Temple et al., 2013). If the youth believes that there is no excuse to violence, this shall reduce the IPV manifestation (McDonnell et al, 2010). According to Riggs and O'Leary (1989, 1996), adolescents who witness aggressive behaviour between their parents are more likely to view it as acceptable and justifiable, and consequently to be more likely to act abusively when conflicts arise with a romantic partner. This kind of viewpoint towards IPV is one of the most consistent predictors of IPV (Kinsfogel and Grych, 2004).

Researches have found that both women and men result to be IPV victims (Brooks-Russell et al, 2013). But especially girls aged 16-24 years are particularly vulnerable to IPV. Girls' victimization is also associated with a number of risk factors such as: the use of alcohol, the use of marijuana, or even sexual intercourse at a young age (Wekerle et al, 2009). Moreover, women suffer more negative consequences of violence, especially physical violence (O'Keefe, 2005). According to some studies, mutual aggression involves both women and men.

Teenage boys inflict more injuries to girls victims. Makepeace (1987), reports that compared to boys, girls are more likely to sustain injuries and require medical treatment as a result of the IPV. However, adolescent girls exercise more physical violence than boys adolescents, with violence rates ranging from 28 percent to 33 percent compared to the boys' violence rates ranging from 11 percent to 20 percent (Powers and Kerman, 2006).

According to a long-term study on adolescents' health, 2-3 in 10 adolescents reported to have been verbally and psychologically abused a year ago. Whereas according to Coker and colleagues (2000), in a study with adolescents in South Carolina, nearly 8 percent of adolescents reported being physically violent to a romantic partner. Interestingly, the rates of reported victimization versus perpetration were similar for boys and girls. However, when it comes to severe teen dating violence, including sexual and physical assault, girls were disproportionately the victims (Mulford and Giordano, 2008). Hence, *experiencing intimate partner violence during adolescence may increase the frequency of anti-social behaviours in particular among boys and victimizing behaviours in girls.*

Alcohol, tobacco and drugs and the relationship of these substances with intimate partner violence

The use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances has an impact on the everyday life of young people in Albania (IPH, 2013). The start of use of substances at a young age may turn into factor which affects the appearance of other problems during adolescence, and it may even cause their continued use and addiction in adulthood (IPH, 2013). Their continued use is linked to domestic and intimate partner violence. Many previous observational or cross-sectional studies, primarily in the US, found that there is a close correlation between substance use and victimization and IPV (Temple and Freeman, 2011). McDonnell et al (2010) in a study with adolescents on intimate partner violence, confirmed the fact that the use of alcohol was one of the factors having the highest impact in the appearance of risky behaviour among adolescents, including IPV. The use of alcohol also increases the appearance of risky behaviours, given that adolescents may make decisions and do things they would not do had they not consumed any alcohol. In Albania, men and boys dealing drugs or substance abuse was identified as a common problem that affects the personal safety feeling for women and girls (IDRA and UN Women, 2018).

Researches show that the youth, both boys and girls with a history of serious episodes with the use of alcohol, tobacco or marijuana were more inclined to exercise IPV. Rothman and

colleagues (2012), in a meta-analysis of 28 studies published prior to 2011 concluded that alcohol use significantly increased the risk for perpetrating teen dating violence (Temple et al, 2013) and has a direct impact in the creation of a more vulnerable context for the minor, thus increasing the possibility of being a perpetrator or even a victim of intimate partner violence (Fry et al, 2014). However, when the data were examined longitudinally, alcohol use was only predictive of subsequent perpetration of dating violence for adolescent girls, but that the strength of this association diminished as adolescents progressed through high school. Especially when young people go to university, the correlation between substance use and IPV is significantly reduced. According to the IPH report (2013), the percentage of young people using substances increases with age, with the boys more often than girls use substances and the difference increases with age.

Although it is not only alcohol, but rather the abuse with other substances that inflicts violence, studies indicate that it is especially alcohol that affects the frequency of violent behaviour and its severity. According to the INSTAT survey (2013) on domestic violence, it was found that the women whose husbands/partners consumed alcohol were three times more likely to sustain physical violence, and six times more likely to sustain sexual violence in their marriages/intimate relationship compared with the women whose husbands/partners did not drink alcohol. Hence, Reyes and colleagues (2012) reached the conclusion that the correlation of substance use with IPV is affected by adolescents' experience with domestic violence or having friends involved in IPV.

Family and friendships related to IPV

Adolescents are often reluctant to share their experience of IPV with adults, and prefer to talk more with their friends. Even though the young people involved in IPV have few friends to rely on (Wekerle et al, 2009), they prefer to talk about intimate partner violence with those few friends rather than seek the help of their families (Black et al, 2008). The lack of social support, both from the family and the young people's friends makes dealing with such situation even more difficult for them. However, Wincentak, Connolly and Card (2017) in a meta-analysis of 96 studies related to intimate partner violence and 31 studies on sexual violence among them, concluded that the family structure was not a factor contributing to the appearance of aggressive behaviour and victimization of adolescents in intimate relationships, but what influenced the most was the level of parental monitoring and exposure of adolescents to parental intimate partner violence. Adolescents growing up in a violent family are supposed to be inclined to IPV perpetration. Although empirical

studies constantly support the idea that domestic violence is one of the main predictors of IPV, it is still unknown how exposure to domestic violence encourages IPV. Research related domestic violence to IPV, by considering domestic violence as the intimate violence among parents or parental violence towards children which appear in the family simultaneously. If a child being exposed to domestic violence reaches the conclusion that violence is justified in certain circumstances and certain relationships, that child will have a more receptive attitude towards IPV. From a broader context, domestic violence has a significant correlation to IPV (Jouriles et al, 2012).

Adolescents spent a lot of their time with their peers and their impact on the lifestyle is extremely important. Various researchers in the field of developmental psychology emphasize that peers turn to be the centre of influence thus reducing somehow the parents' influence. The socio-ecological model theory developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) is an important basis for understanding the fact that adolescents are easily influenced by the social environment where they live and the individuals who are close to them have a lot of influence on their behaviour. They are in the process of building their identity and are in continuous need for role models and social acceptance. In this context, the group of peers may influence the timing for establishing the first relationships, entering into relationships itself or the intimate relationship quality. Peers may play an important role in managing conflicts within the relationship and the provision of support (Garthe, Sullivan and McDonnell, 2017).

There are few studies that analyse the relationship between the community factors and IPV among adolescents. However, existing data show clear connection between the level of violence in the community and the level of intimate partner violence among adolescents (Vézina and Hébert, 2007). McDonnell and others (2010) reached the conclusion that adolescents who had in their circle friends victims of violence or perpetrators, were more likely to become victims of violence or perpetrate someone else. Girls who had friends victims of violence were more likely to experience violence compared with boys who had friends perpetrators. They also noticed that in their sample, the girls more often than boys reported to have been victims of different forms of violence in intimate relationships.

Fry et al (2014) observed that less than half of adolescent victims of relationship violence ever seek help. They predominantly disclose to informal support sources like their friends and then family. Hébert et al (2014) in a study with adolescents (14-18 years old) in Canada reached the conclusion that peers were the main source of support for the young people victims of intimate partner violence. Furthermore, they noticed some gender differences where the girls, according to them, were more likely to seek help compared to boys, but they were also more likely to offer support when they witnessed intimate partner violence

compared to boys. They also noticed that the young people victims of violence in other contexts were less inclined to seek help in cases where they were perpetrated by their intimate partners. Of 286 reported cases of sexual harassment and violence, only 16 percent asked for help and assistance (IDRA and UN Women, 2018). Most of them have requested help from their relatives and friends, whereas a very limited number went to the police (IDRA and UN Women, 2018).

Data from the studies speak clearly about the relationship between violence in the community and the family environment and the intimate partner violence. Although there are not yet many studies analysing intimate partner violence among adolescents in the Albanian context, findings of studies on domestic violence in Albania (Haarr, 2013) and communities (Qirjako et al, 2013) provide us with sufficient data on the size and presence of the IPV instigating factors among adolescents. According to the results obtained by Haarr (2013), it was found that 28.6% of participants believed that children could be slapped for the mistakes they made, while 7.7% said that they beat their children with a belt or hard object. A study about violence against children in Albania (UNICEF, 2006) found that every second child at home and every third child in school stated that violence against them was justifiable.

Adolescents beliefs and attitudes towards intimate partner violence

Beliefs and attitudes about the violence outcomes largely influence the exercise of IPV. Hence, if a person thinks that violence has positive effects, this facilitates the use of violence. Exposure to maltreatment and violence in childhood significantly raises the risk for both perpetration and victimization across a range of contexts (Grych and Swan, 2012). Goncy et al (2017) confirmed the findings of other previous studies that, *adolescents who were aggressive in their intimate relationship were also aggressive in other settings*. Showing of aggression when it turns to be a “normal” pattern of interaction, may become a sustainable behavioural trait throughout life. Adolescents victims of IPV were either victims or perpetrators in other types of relationships as well (ibid. P. 65). Likewise, tolerant beliefs and attitudes towards violence interact positively with experiencing intimate partner violence among adolescents (McDonnell et al, 2010).

Other studies related to intimate partner violence and domestic violence in Albania indicate a high rate of intimate partner violence. According to the domestic violence survey conducted by INSTAT and UNDP in 2013, in Albania more than half of women

“ever” experienced domestic violence in their marriage/intimate relationships, and half of them were “currently” experiencing domestic violence (within the 12 months prior to the interview). Such a high level of domestic violence within Albanian families undoubtedly affects the violent behaviour of children and adolescents. This further has an impact on the establishment of a violent pattern as a “normal” manner of interaction also among girlfriends/boyfriends. Not only is the violence pattern inherited as a “functional” interaction pattern, but so are the patterns of asking for help. Various studies suggest that girls more often than boys are victims of intimate partner violence and that boys more often than girls are the perpetrators (McDonnell et al 2010; and Wincentak, Connolly and Card 2017). As emphasised above, adolescents coming from family or community contexts with a high violence rate in interpersonal relationships are less inclined to seek help (Hébert et al, 2014).

Adolescents’ beliefs and attitudes towards intimate partner violence are strongly influenced by the community, family, and friendship context of the adolescent. But what is more important is that even breaking the cycle of violence and reacting to violence seem to be affected by the same context. The more exposed adolescents are to violent behaviours in their environment, the more they become familiar with violence by accepting it as a reality, and the less likely they are to react when they are victims themselves or witnesses of violent behaviour.

Analysis of findings

Participants' Characteristics and Experience in Intimate Relationships

Demographic information

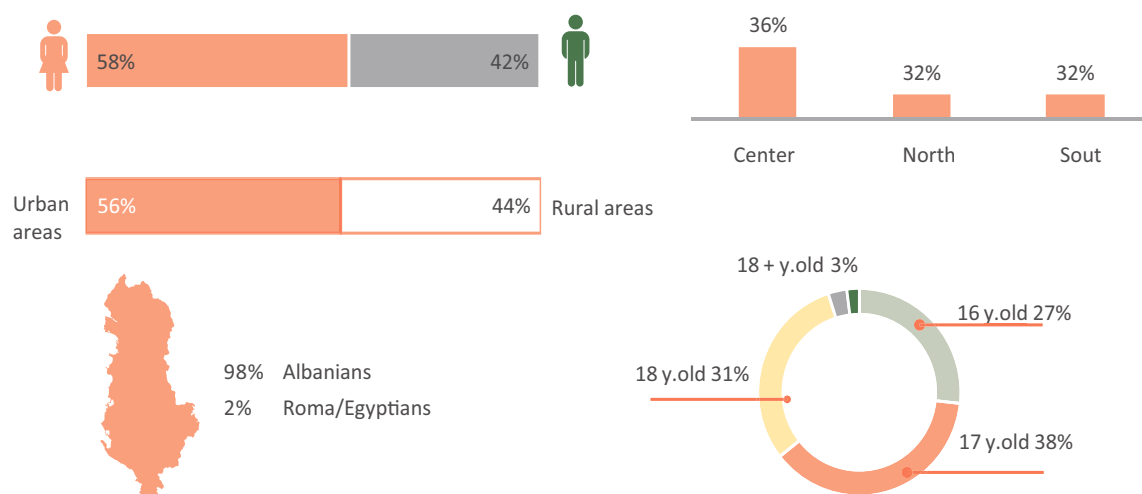
Demographic data were analysed by age, gender, ethnicity, class of high-school students, attendance, family income divided by the parents' gender and their educational level.

1036 young people participated in this study, of which 428 were boys and 593 girls, and 15 participants did not specify their gender. Age distribution shown in graph no.1 explains that 27 percent of the respondents were 16 years old, 38 percent were 17 years old and 31 percent were 18 years old. Only 3 percent of them were over 18 years. 56 percent of the respondents lived in urban areas and 44 percent in rural areas. 2 percent of the young people belonged to the Roma and Egyptian communities³. This data may be an indicator of failure to attend high school by the young people belonging to this community, with reference to the discrimination they feel and the other well-known issues pertaining to this community in the country.

Young people were asked about family income and the parents' employment. About a third of the children, 30 percent, reported that their family income varies between ALL 30.000 - 70.000 per month, 19 percent reported that their family income are less than ALL 30.000 per month and 17 percent reported that their family income are more than ALL 70.000 per month. About a third of young people said they had no information about their family's average income (33 percent).

³ Today in Albania, the Roma ethnic-linguistic minority and the Egyptian community are recognised, but there are no accurate data pertaining to their size. The general population registration of 2011 identified only 8.300 Roma and 3.368 Egyptians, about 3-4% of the total population. Data from the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians, 2016-2020, based on various studies conducted by the community organisations recognised by international institutions in the country, report for 18.276 up to 120.000 Roma and more than 200.000 Egyptians. If we refer to the latest figures, this community constitutes more than 10% of the total Albanian population and makes us believe that the youth of this community are not sufficiently represented in this survey.

Figure 1. Demographic distribution of the sample



The young people's parents had a high school degree, 49 percent of the fathers and 44 percent of mothers. 18 percent of fathers and 25 percent of mothers had primary education and an insignificant number had no education at all. About one fifth of the young people's parents had a university degree, 17 percent of the fathers and 18 percent of mothers. Data on the parents' education and employment speak of a representative sample of families in Albania, with reference to the official data of the census of population and housing of 2011.

With regards to employment, 36 percent of the fathers were employed in the private and public sector, whereas 26 percent were self-employed. Only 8 percent were unemployed or not involved in the labour market. Meanwhile, as regards the mothers, 36 percent were housewives and 8 percent were unemployed, 32 percent were employed in the private and public sector and 14 percent were self-employed.

This part of the study displays the findings and analysis of results of the questionnaire on intimate partner violence among adolescents of the age group 16-19 years, as well the findings from the focus groups. The questionnaire was composed of closed questions, and most part of the questionnaire allowed the participants to select the answers "I don't know" or "I prefer not to answer". These answers are included in the data analysis, but they are not included in most tables and figures contained in this report.

The research study results have been grouped in three parts:

- *Part one* provides the data with a number of variables related to the community safety, relationship of young people with their family and friends, their beliefs and attitudes towards gender-based violence.
- *Part two* examines the results related to the perceptions on violence and their experience with violence in general. This part further addresses the youth experience with intimate relationships and their perceptions towards behaviour in intimate relationships, as well as intimate partner violence. Part two closes with an analysis of how and what they think about the help they may seek from family members or friends in difficult situations.
- *Part three* analyses the young people's answers related to the use of alcohol, tobacco and narcotics. This part reveals the correlation between their use and the exercise of intimate partner violence.

All the findings of this study have been analysed from a gender perspective.

PART ONE

Intimate partner violence in adolescence

This part addresses the youth experience with intimate relationships and their perceptions towards behaviour in intimate relationships, as well as intimate partner violence. In this part, the young people are asked about the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and narcotics, and the correlation between their consumption and the exercise of intimate partner violence may be seen. An important section of this part is related to what participants think regarding the help they may seek from their family members or friends when they become victims of intimate partner violence.

Exposure of adolescents to violence

Exposure of adolescents to domestic violence, both parental intimate partner violence and violence towards children, significantly increases the appearance of aggressive behaviour and victimization of adolescents in intimate relationships (Wincentak et al, 2017). To calculate the level of exposure to various forms of violence, several variable used in the questionnaire were combined.

In this questionnaire, exposed to violence shall be considered every young person who:

- Knows a young person perpetrated by the partner
- Knows a young person perpetrated in the family
- Knows a young perpetrator

Figure 2. Exposure to violence through friends/acquaintances



The combination of variables revealed that *two in three adolescents know friends who are victims of their partner or family, and/or know a violent girl/boy.*

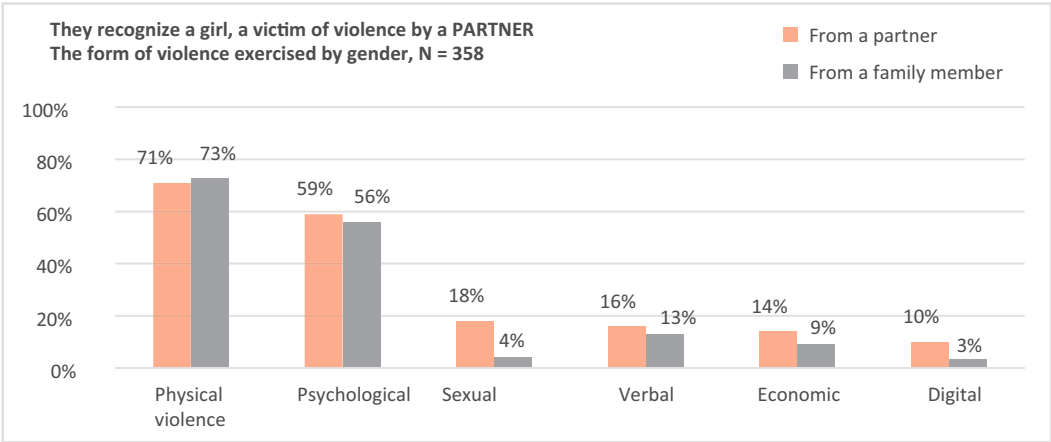
As it may be noticed from figure 2, the chances for young people to know girls victims of partner or family violence are higher than boys victims of violence. 38 percent of the young participants know at least one girl who has suffered domestic violence and 29 percent of them know one boy who has suffered domestic violence. Gender differences are much higher when it comes to intimate partner violence. The data indicate that *young people know 4 times more girls who have suffered intimate partner violence than boys who have suffered intimate partner violence.* This data matches almost all the findings of international studies on intimate partner violence (Jouriles et al, 2012; McDonnell et al, 2010; Vézina and Hébert, 2007). This finding also confirm the presence of violence against girls and women in our society. Even though, as previously pointed out, there are no studies on the intimate partner violence among young people, studies about violence against women in Albania reveal different realities for men and women, with the latter being more often than not the victims.

Furthermore, 23 percent of young participants state they know one girl perpetrator versus 34 percent of young participants who state they know one boy perpetrator. In addition, based on some longitudinal studies, IPV has a number of adverse outcomes (such as low self-esteem, anti-social behaviour, suicidal attempt, extreme weight control behaviour or substance use) on the health of adolescent girls, especially as they transit to adulthood (Ackard and Neumark-Sztainer, 2002; Exner-Cortens and others, 2013). Other researches show that IPV contributes to significant social and economic costs for the entire society (Hess and Del Rosario, 2018). IPV victims often lose educational opportunities, ability to work, and lose control over the choice and timing of childbearing (Hess and Del Rosario, 2018).

There are no data available to analyse whether exposure of young adolescents to violence has increased or decreased, however, the data speak clearly of a problematic situation and violence as an interaction pattern present in the young people's life, despite the high level of violence rejection by the participants in this study (about 75 percent as examined above).

With regards to the forms of violence that young people have encountered more often among their friends, exercised by their partner or family, the most frequently reported are the physical and psychological violence. Researches conducted in the USA also indicate that the most widespread form of violence to which young people are mostly exposed to is the physical violence and then the psychological and sexual one (Finkelhor et al., 2009; Finkelhor et al., 2011; Herrera and Mcloskey, 2001).

Figure 3. Forms of violence to which young people are exposed to – by the partner or the family



When asked about the forms of violence against girls, both from the partner or the family, adolescents reported that about 70 percent of cases of violence against a friend were of a physical nature, followed by psychological violence with about 60 percent. The above graph indicates that the direct or indirect witnesses of violence against girls once again admit that *girls are abused almost at the same rate by their partners as by their family*. Moreover, the forms of violence exercised against them do not differ substantially. Hence, the witnesses of violence against girls admit that about 71-73 percent of abused girls have experienced physical violence, both by their partner and their family and about 60 percent experience psychological violence.

Figures regarding partner physical violence do not differ much from those regarding physical violence by the family, but the psychological and sexual violence differed by 3 percent from the economic and digital violence.

Domestic violence is a phenomenon which includes all types of violence such as intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, spousal violence, violence against children, etc. In most of the cases it is the girls/women who suffer the consequences the most, especially those of physical and psychological violence (Foshee et al., 1999; Hornor, 2005; Molitor and Tolman, 1998). This study also reports of the same situation with 391 participants (38 percent) reporting to have known one girl victim of domestic violence and 358 participants reporting to have known a girl victim of intimate partner violence.

The youth experience with intimate relationships

Figure 4. Average age of establishing the first relationships

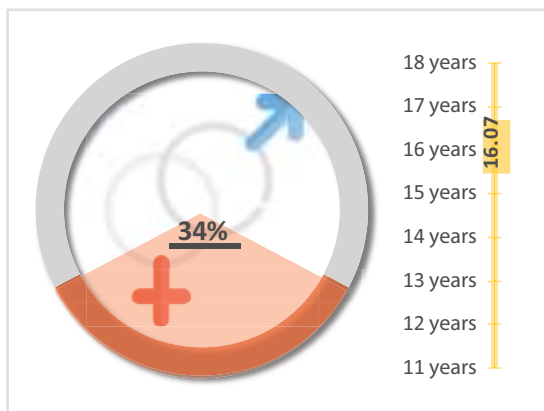
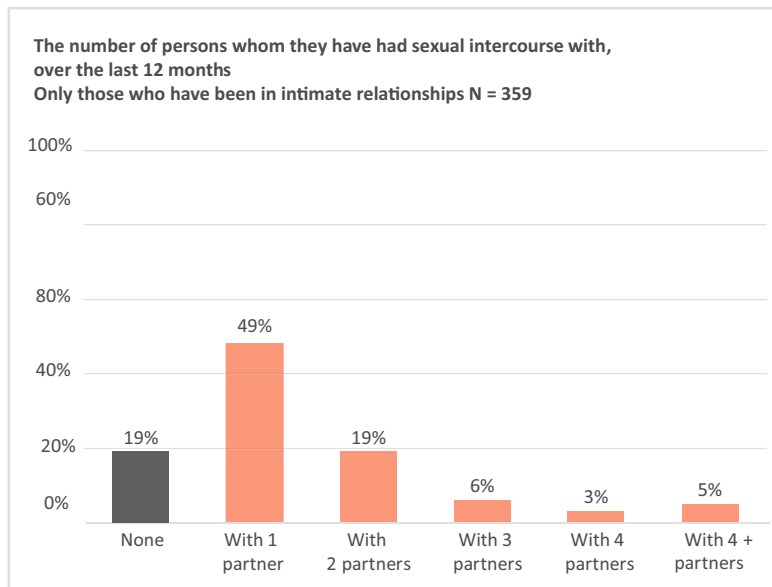


Figure 5. Number of intimate partners



The young people were asked about their experiences in intimate relationships. 49 percent declared to have been involved at least once in an intimate relationship, and 19 percent of them refused to answer. The average age when they started to have intimate relationships is 16 years old. Boys start their sexual activity one year earlier than girls (15.8 years old versus 16.8 years old). The average number of intimate partners throughout the life of a young person aged 16-19 year is 2 up to 3 (2.4 on average). Along the last 12 months, adolescents report that their average number of partners was 1 to 2 (1.4 on average), with boys reporting a larger number than girls, 0.8 for girls and 1.6 for boys.

The study reveals some really concerning data regarding the sexual and reproductive health among young people, especially among girls. More than half of girls (54 percent) and one third (31 percent) of boys have never used a contraceptive method, or have used only the withdrawal method. Failure to use the contraception methods exposes boys and girls to sexually transmitted diseases. Research conducted mainly in the USA report even more concerning facts, where in the last two decades only, about 1 million adolescent girls aged 15-19 years have become pregnant and about 90 percent of them were unintended. According to the same research, every year there are cases of sexually transmitted diseases, and one fourth of them are reported to be mainly girls aged 15-19 years (Cubbin et al, 2005). In our study, of all the young people involved in sexual relationships, about 62 percent use contraceptives or condoms.

Figure 6. Use of contraceptive methods

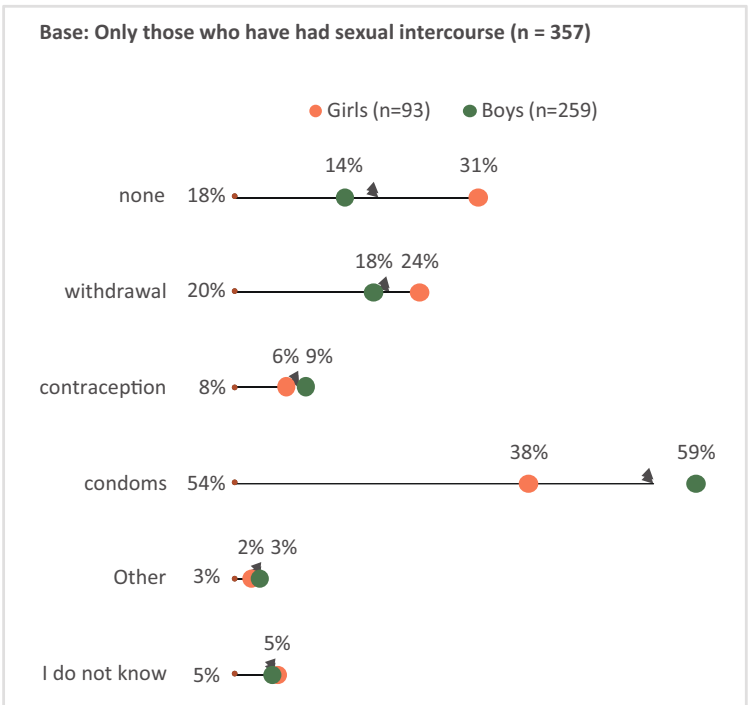


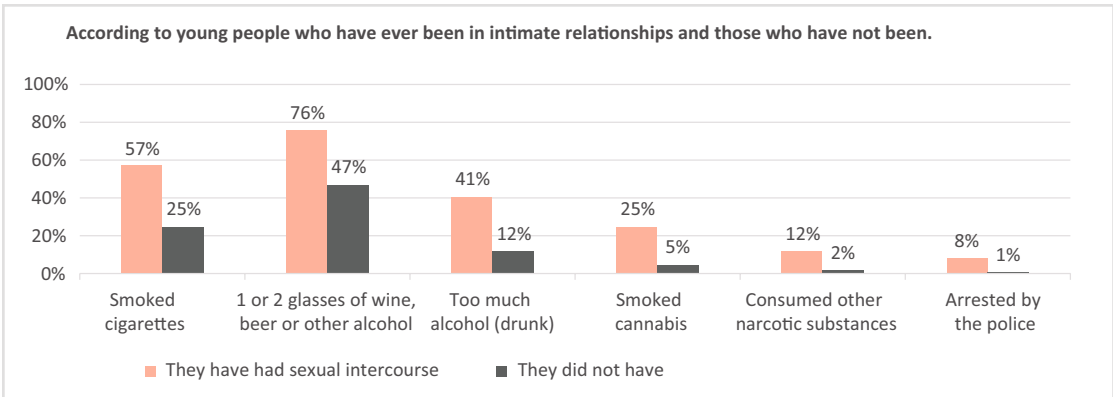
Table 3. Contraceptive methods used by young people

	Girls	Boys	All of them
None/Withdrawal	54 %	31 %	37 %
Contraception/Condoms	44 %	68 %	62 %
Other/I don't know	6 %	5 %	6 %

It may be noticed that *boys are more attentive to the use of protective measures during sexual intercourse*. 57 percent of boys have used a condom and only 39 percent of girls have used protective methods the last time they had sexual intercourse. There are gender factors contributing to this issue, such as the fact that boys start their sexual activity one year earlier than girls and are more inclined to change partners more often. However, studies show that there are many other factors which contribute to the youth involvement into intimate relationships, such as the family socio-economic status or the community safety (Billy et al, 1994).

Figure 7 displays data regarding the young people who have consumed narcotics, tobacco and alcohol, grouped into young people who have had sexual contact and young people who have not had sexual contact. The data indicate that the young people who have had sexual contact are more likely to try using narcotics, tobacco, and alcohol or to be involved in criminal behaviour and be arrested by the police.

Figure 7. Use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances in the last 12 months and their relationship to sexual activity



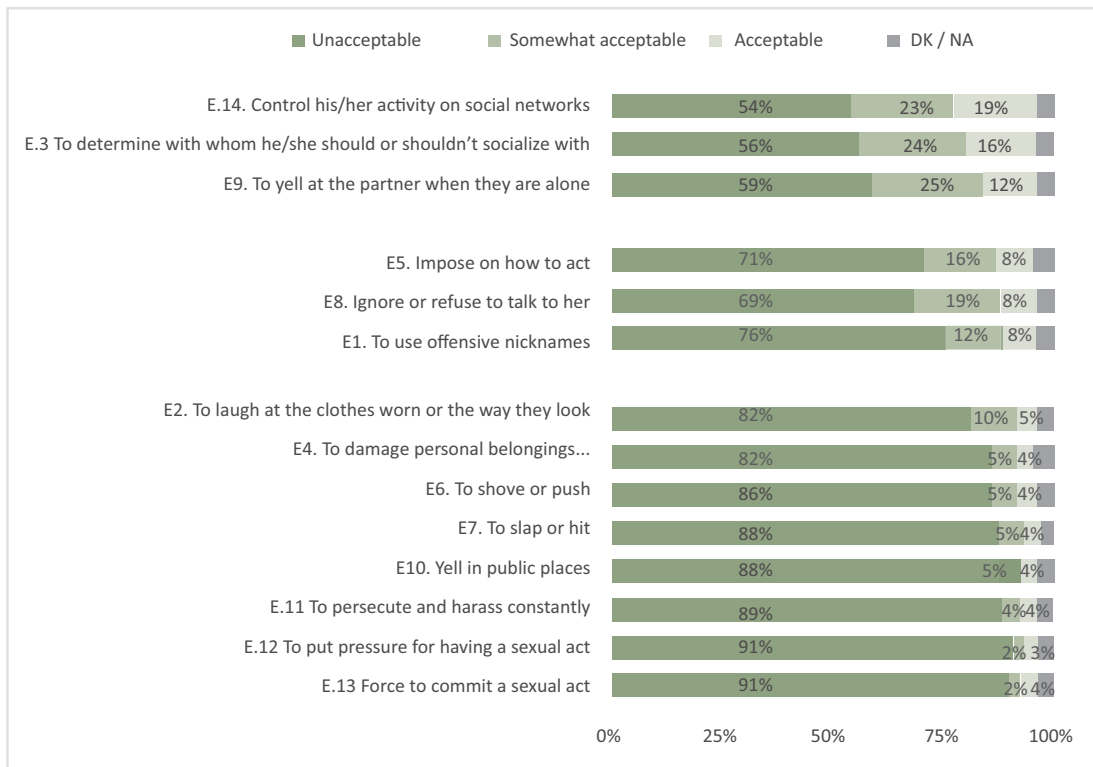
Youth perceptions towards behaviour in intimate relationships

Adolescents' attitudes to violence continuously show that they influence victimization and IPV. Based on the research, if the youth believes that there is no excuse to violence, this reduces the risk of IPV manifestation (McDonnell et al, 2010).

The young people participating in the study were asked how acceptable are to them a number of violent behaviours in intimate relationships. The questions measured mainly the young people's attitudes towards psychological and verbal violence, physical and sexual violence. On a scale one to five, they considered as acceptable and unacceptable each of the behaviours listed in the questionnaire.

Data were later grouped into three categories: 1) unacceptable, that includes totally unacceptable and unacceptable; 2) somehow acceptable and; 3) acceptable, that includes totally acceptable and acceptable).

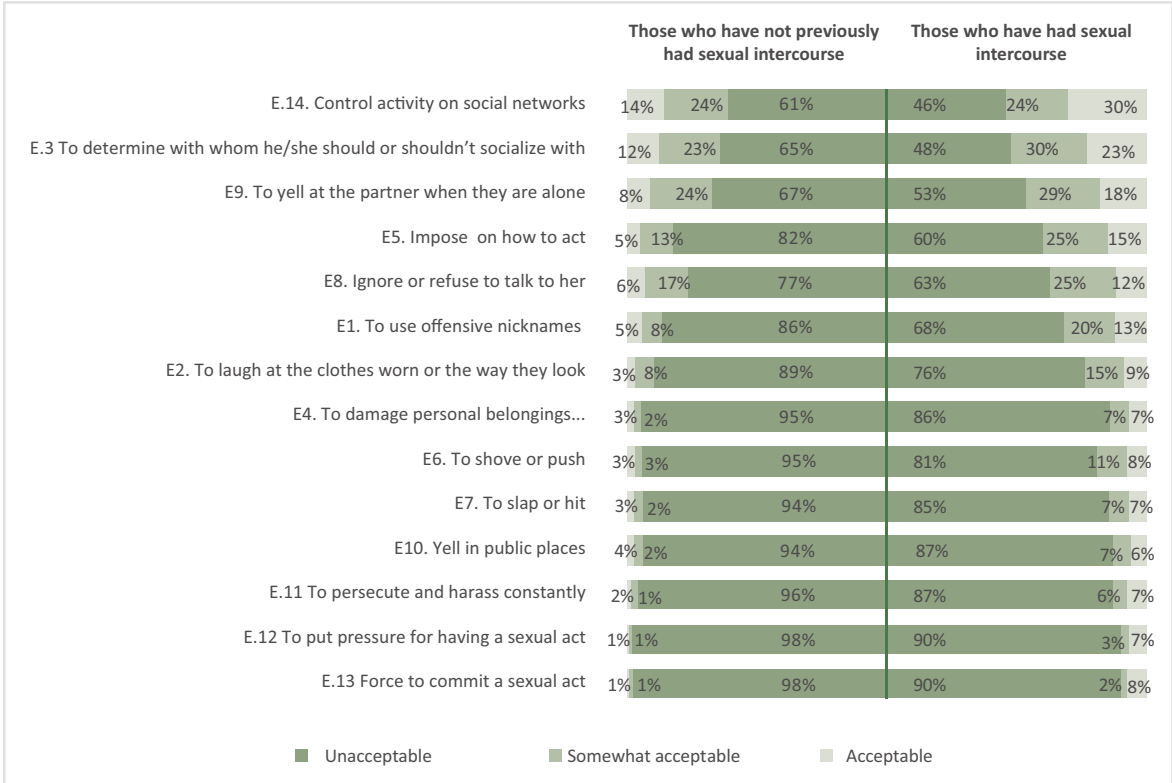
Figure 8. IPV acceptance by the youth



As it may be noticed from the above figure, about 95 percent of young people consider sexual violence as unacceptable. Over 80 percent of them consider physical violence as also unacceptable; “*shoving or pushing, slapping or hitting*”; and some behaviours related to psychological and emotional violence: “*to persecute and harass the partner constantly, yell at him/her in public places*”, “*damage personal belongings of the partner*”, and “*to laugh at the clothes worn or the way they look*”. This results match all the findings of many other researches, which have concluded that different approaches tend to make young people more inclined towards exercising violence or not (Reed et al., 2011; and Temple et al, 2013).

64 percent of young people consider acceptable controlling the partner’s activity on the social networking sites, 52 percent consider acceptable determining who the partner should or shouldn’t socialize with, 38 percent consider acceptable yelling at the partner when they are alone and 28 percent consider acceptable ignoring the partner and refusing to talk to him/her.

Figure 9. IPV acceptance among adolescents who have had sexual intercourse versus those who have not had sexual intercourse before



Acceptance scale of almost all forms of couple pressure increases when young people have been or are in an intimate relationship, as it may be seen in the above figure.

Such violent behaviours seem unacceptable among young people who have never had sexual intercourse. Whereas the young people who have had sexual activity start to see such violent behaviours as more acceptable.

Especially “controlling” behaviour such as “*checking on his/her social networking sites*”, “*who you may socialize with*”, “*becoming obtrusive*”, are considered as acceptable at a larger scale by those who have ever been in an intimate relationship than those who have never been in one. Respectively, 55 percent versus 38 percent, 53 percent versus 36 percent and 40 percent versus 16 percent have reported the above behaviour as acceptable.

Incidence of intimate partner violence among young people aged 16-19 years

The research data indicate that 22 percent of young people who have been at a moment in their life in an intimate relationship with someone, have declared to have been victims of at least one form of intimate partner violence (psychological, physical, sexual, etc.). It is worth pointing out that 20 percent of young people refuse to respond to whether they have ever been in an intimate relationship, which makes it difficult to make a complete estimate of the extent of violence in intimate relationships. McDonnell et al. (2010) based on other studies conclude that one in three adolescents have experienced some form of intimate partner violence during adolescence.

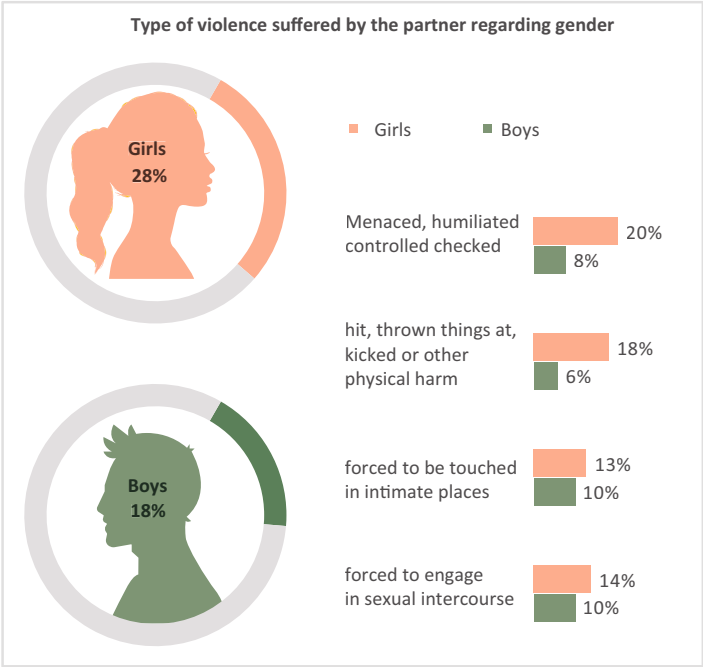
Figure 10. Incidence of intimate partner violence (IPV) among adolescents



The data also indicate that girls were victimized more than boys by their partners. Respectively, 28 percent of girls and 20 percent of boys have declared to have been victims of violence by their partner.

Similar results have been found by other researches in other contexts. Hence, Exner-Cortens et al (2013) noticed that even though victimization or infliction of violence on an intimate partner exists both in boys and girls, it is the girls who more frequently fall prey to physical and sexual violence by boys.

Figure 11. Type of intimate partner violence. Only those who are or who, at a moment in their life, have been in an intimate relationship



The *type of violence inflicted also varies depending on the gender*. Girls are threatened, humiliated (20 percent versus 8 percent) or physically abused (18 percent versus 6 percent) by their partners almost 3 times more than boys by their partners. Whereas sexual violence exercised by partners, as seen through either forced touching of intimate parts of the body, or coerced sex, is reported almost at the same rate by girls as by boys (13 percent versus 10 percent, a statistically insignificant difference).

Small differences were noticed as regards the dimensions of sexual violence. 13 percent of girls declare to have been forced to touch the intimate body parts of the partner and have been forced to have sex against their wish, 14 percent of girls and 10 percent of boys for both questions.

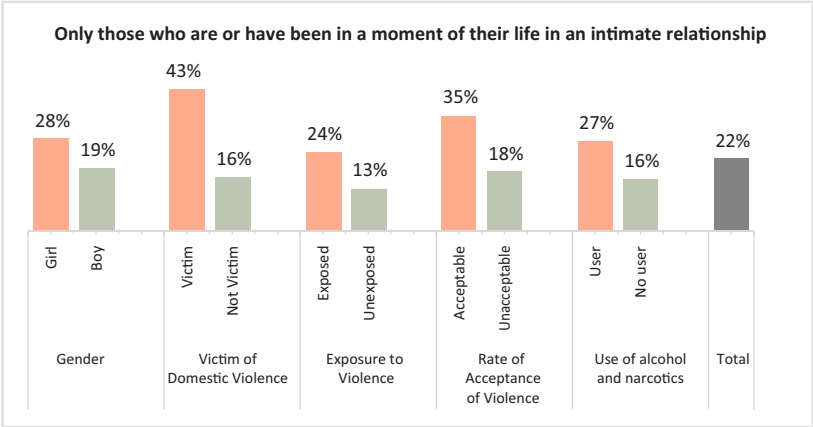
The group of young people who reported to have been at least once in an intimate relationship was further analysed to see whether there was a correlation between intimate partner violence and the other research variables.

Young people who have been victims of domestic violence are three times more likely to also be victims of intimate partner violence. Domestic violence determines also whether intimate relationships will be affected by violence As reported by many other studies (Brendgen et al, 2002; Lichter & Mcloskey, 2004) the data in this study suggest that 43 percent of the young people who have suffered domestic violence are also victims of intimate partner violence. Young people who have not suffered domestic violence are three times less victimized.

Exposure to forms of violence also plays an important role in our sample. Adolescents who have in their circle victims of violence or perpetrators are almost twice as likely (24 percent) to be victims of violence than those who do not have in their circle any victims or perpetrators (13 percent).

Findings related to the acceptance of intimate partner violence are also of interest. Tolerance to violent behaviour increases the probability of experiencing intimate partner violence. Among adolescents who consider violence to be somewhat acceptable, the percentage of victims is higher, 36 percent compared to about 18 percent who do not accept violence. An association may be noticed between the use of narcotics, where people who use them are 27 percent more likely to be victimized compared with those who have not used narcotics.

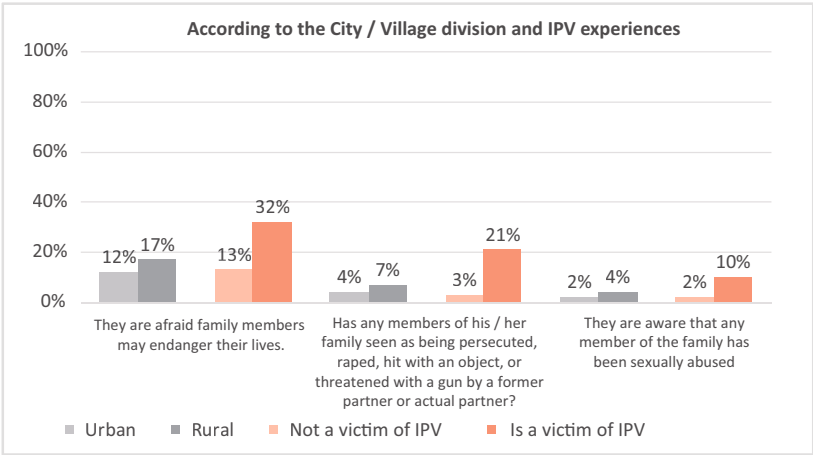
Figure 12. Incidence of intimate partner violence, according to the risk factors



Although the connection between those behaviour that we identified as risky behaviours and intimate partner violence was expected, the strong link between them is surprising. Most of them double the probability of entering the violence cycle: exposure to violence, violence acceptance level and the use of narcotics. Meanwhile **the data show that**

domestic violence almost triples the probability for young people to enter the cycle of intimate partner violence. Studies (Naved and Persson, 2005; Xu, Zhu, O'Campo, Koenig, Mock and Campbell, 2005) show that this phenomenon is more prominent in urban rather than in rural areas. But this comparison is made taking into account a number of factors, since IPV usually occurs more frequently in urban areas with a higher poverty rate, where crimes occur or were there live young people coming from families that belong to different communities such as the Roma or Egyptian community.

Figure 13. Relationship between Violence in Family Relations and Violence in Intimate Relations



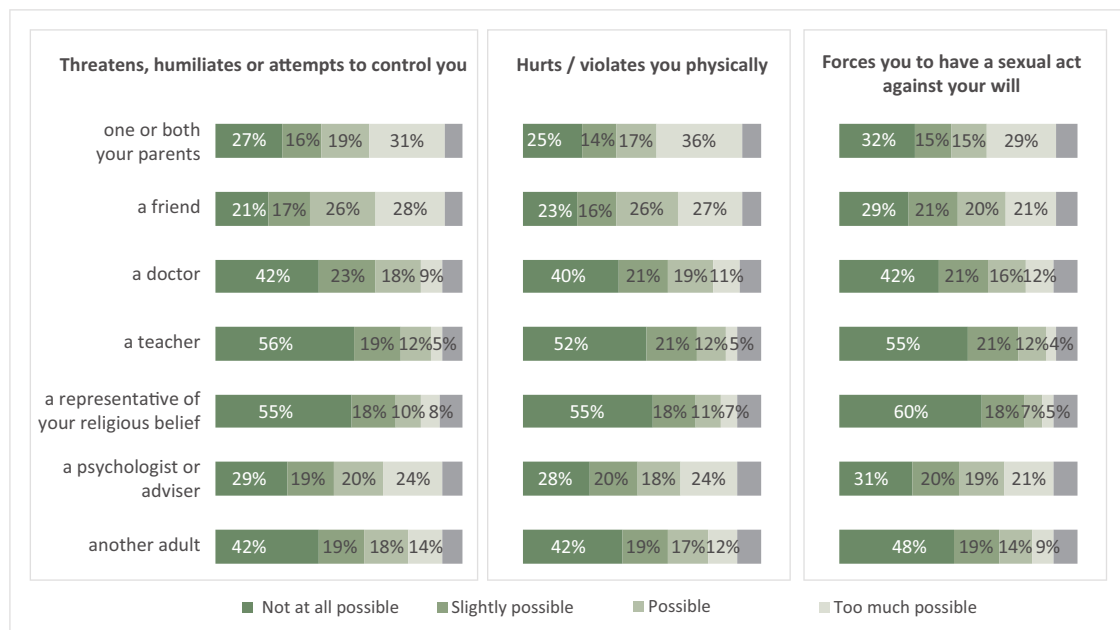
In the three question related to domestic violence exposure, it resulted that victimised adolescents are several times more in number than those who are not victims of intimate partner violence. 32 percent of intimate partner violence victims were afraid their family would put their life at risk, versus 13 percent of young people who were not IPV victims. 21 percent of them had seen their family members being victimized, versus 3 percent of those who are not IPV victims. 10 percent of victims know of family members being sexually abused, compared to 2 percent of young people who are not IPV victims.

The obvious association between domestic violence and intimate partner violence among adolescents is an indicator of great concern for the youth well-being and the influence of the family in modelling aggressive and protective behaviour on them. The violence cycle apparently does not remain within the family, rather it turns to be the main factor in generating the domino effect in spread of violence as an acceptable interaction pattern among the youth and later on at all the levels of the society.

Getting help from others in cases of intimate partner violence

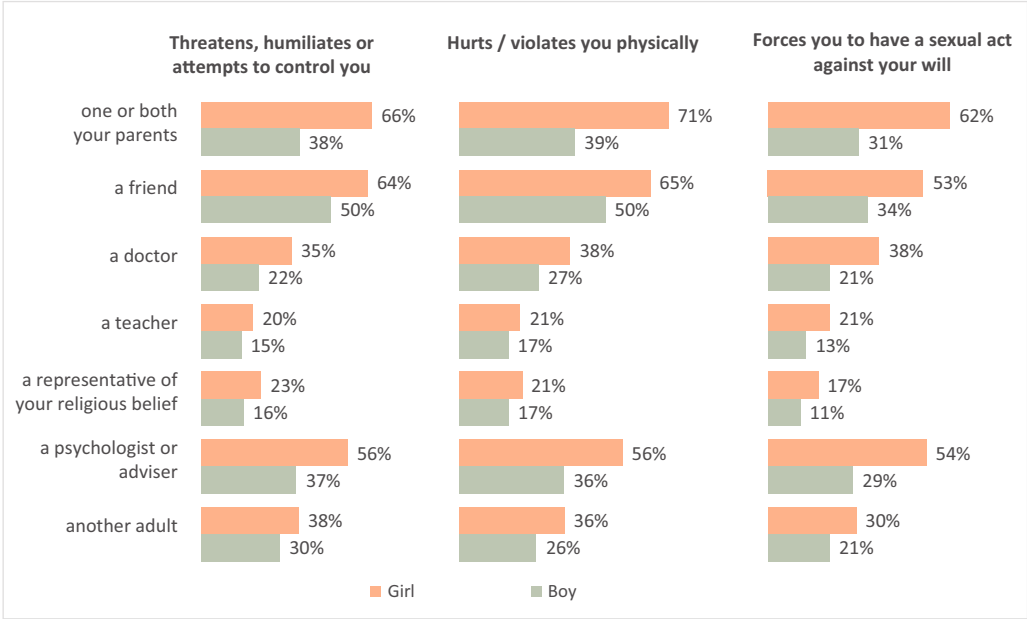
About half of the young people report being little or no likely to tell someone if they are the victim of a psychological, physical or sexual violence. As it may be noticed in the following graph, it is the parents, friends and the psychologist where the young people would seek support from. There are not significant differences between preferring the parents or peers. In the case of sexual violence, 44 percent of adolescents would rather go to their parents compared to 41 percent who would seek help from their peers and 40 percent to the psychologist.

Figure 14. Models of help-seeking in the case of intimate partner violence



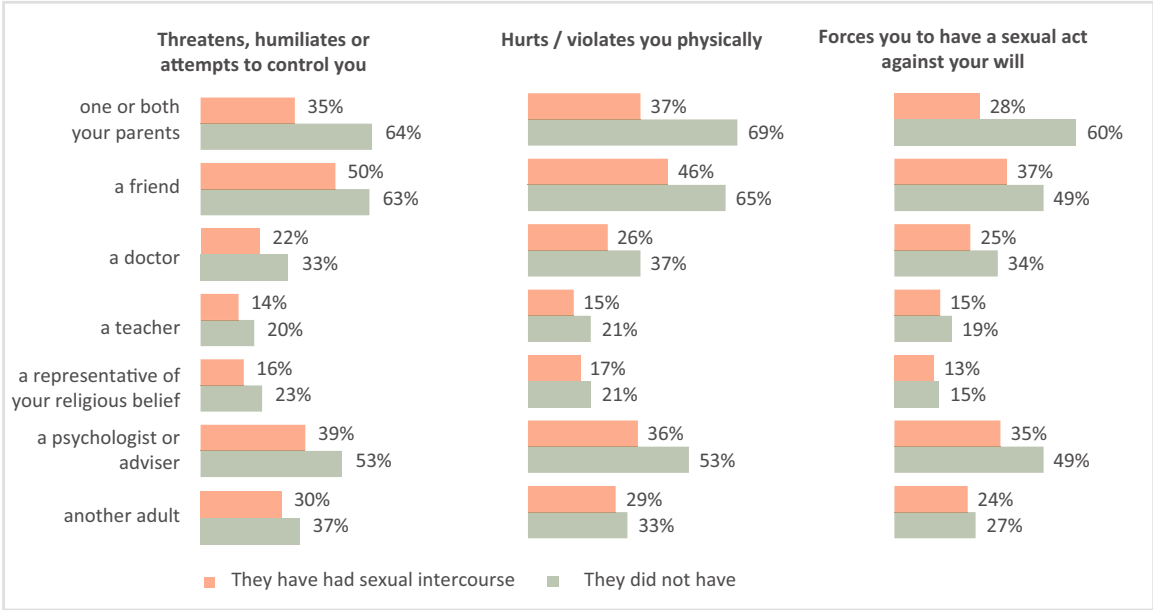
The data were also compared between boys and girls. As it may be noticed, boys are more likely than girls to not seek for help when they are victims of violence. The sample does not allow us the possibility to analyse only the violated boys, as their percentage was very low. Boys would first seek help from their friends. There is a sustainable difference for the three forms of violence.

Figure 15. Models of help-seeking in the case of intimate partner violence by gender



The data appear concerning when they were compared between young people who have had sexual intercourse and those who have not had sexual intercourse. As the data indicate, when young people actually experience or have experienced an intimate relationship, they become more tolerant to the forms of violence and more receptive to violent behaviour. What may be particularly noticed is a decrease in the percentage of young people would speak with their parents and a slight decrease of young people who would speak with the psychologist. The difference between friends and other groups becomes more distinct.

Figure 16. Models of help-seeking in the case of intimate partner violence by sexual activity



This data corresponds with other research in the filed of intimate partner violence (Garthe et al, 2017; Hebert et al, 2014; McDonell et al, 2010). Young people are more likely to seek the support of their friends when they are victims of intimate partner violence.

Data from focus groups

Young people participating in the focus groups told they had friends who had sexual intercourse as of 13 years old. They said that being in an intimate relationship is to a certain extend acceptable among adolescents and in certain cases, parents were also aware of their relationships, mainly the girls.

When asked about birth control methods, it could be noticed that a part of them did not have much information about such methods. Whereas some of them mentioned the contraception pills.

"My friend's boyfriend buys her a pill which she takes one hour before having sex." (Girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city).

"A friend of mine had an abortion in a private clinic, from that moment on, she is not happy and joyful, she doesn't talk as before (girl, 18 years old, Tirana)

Adolescents reported several cases of their friends who suffered violence by their intimate partner. The mentioned cases involved girls dating boys of the same age, or older, girls engaged to get married, etc.

"A friend of mine who is my age, is engaged to a boy 10 years older than her. Since she got engaged, her fiancée controls the kinds of clothes she wears, the activities she will attend, he doesn't allow her to come to excursions" (girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city)

"A friend of mine has been facing a great deal of psychological violence by her boyfriend. She feels very bad about the insults, resentments and threats she gets from her boyfriend. I think it's a question of mentality" (girl, 16 years old, Lezha, city)

"A friend of mine got pregnant when she was 15 years old and her parents had her have an abortion" (girl, 15 years old, Vlora, city)

According to the girls participating in the discussion, intimate partner violence had to be initially managed by themselves, and if they did not manage to solve the problem they would seek the help of their mother and/or elder sister, for those girls who had elder sisters.

If you have accepted a violent relationship, you should handle it, this is the choice you made... (Girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city)

If my partner exercised violence on me... depending on how much.. I would forgive him if this happened only once, if it persisted I would try to handle it myself, and if I could not, I would talk to my mother or sister. (girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city).

Some participants were more tolerant to form of couple control, such as control of social networking sites, or who the boyfriend/girlfriend socialized with.

"I would be very curious to check his activity on the social media, I would check it, but I would try to keep it secret" (girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city)

"It is not normal for partners to check on each-other. A relationship works well if there is trust." (girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city)

PART TWO

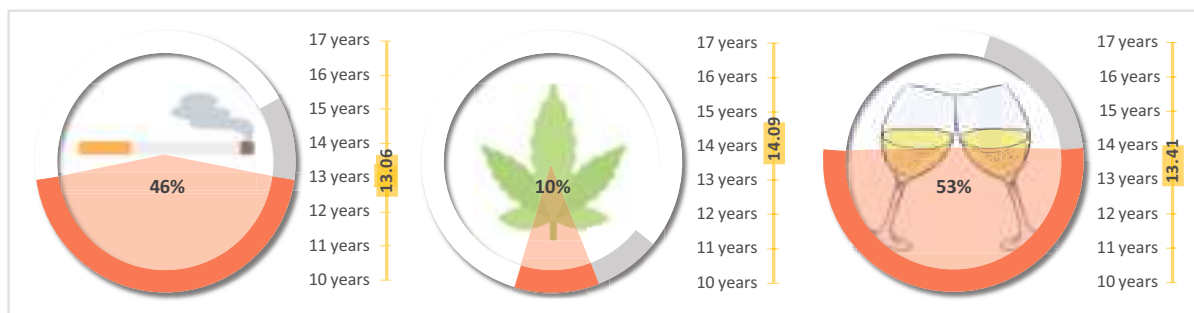
Risky behaviours

Part two of this study analyses the young people's answers related to the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and narcotics. This part reports on the correlation between their use and the exercise of intimate partner violence.

Adolescents' experience with tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

An important part of this study was also the measurement of the extent of substance abuse among the young people. Based not only on the survey results, but also on the data provided by focus groups, a great deal of tolerance in the use of alcohol in the family environment from a very young age could be noticed. In the focus group conducted with a group of girls in Vlora regarding the intimate partner violence, they stated that since 12 years of age, they had the right to drink alcohol at family celebrations.

Figure 17. Consumption of tobacco, cannabis and alcoholic drinks

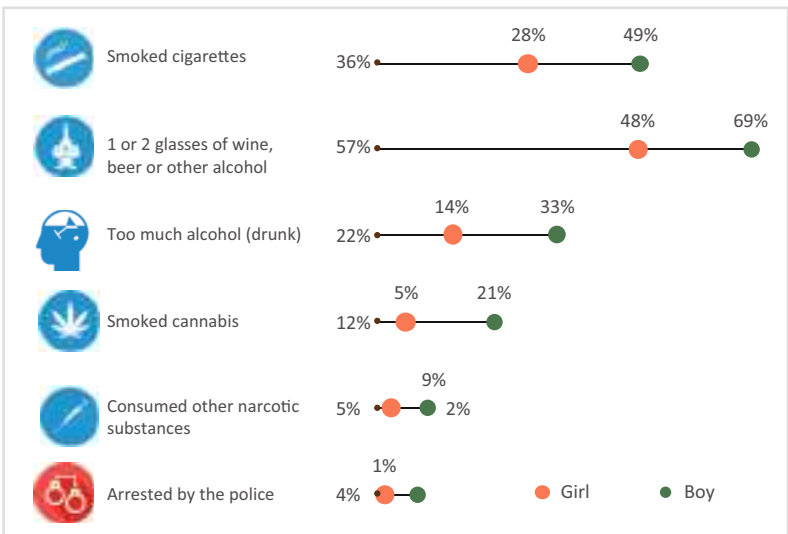


Almost one in two high-school students interviewed have tried alcohol or smoking in their life and one in 10 interviewees have tried marijuana/or cannabis.

When asked whether they had consumed alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in the last 12 months, it was revealed that more than half have consumed alcohol, 1 or 2 glasses of wine, beer or other type of alcohol and 22 percent stated they have got drunk. 36 percent of the

young people stated they have smoked cigarettes in the last 12 months, 12 percent have smoked cannabis and 5 percent have tried other narcotics. However, regardless of the percentage of the consumption of either alcohol, tobacco or cannabis, what puts them over a common denominator is the young age when the latter have been tried for the first time. Among the aforementioned habits, alcohol is the first to be started, at about 13 years old, followed by tobacco at 13 and a half years old, and the last is cannabis just after turning 14.

Figure 18. Use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances and arrested by the police, by gender, in the last 12 months



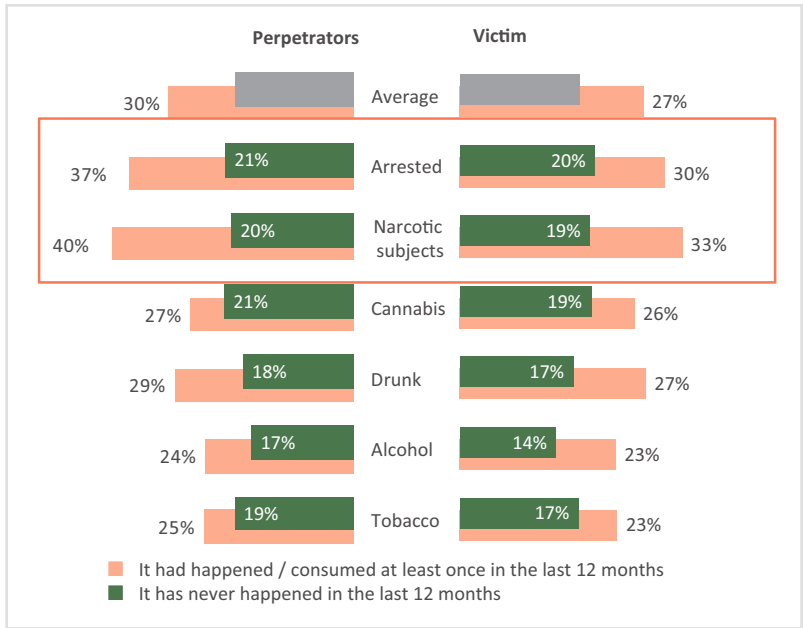
Analysed by gender, the data indicate that boys have smoked cigarettes, consumed alcohol and used other drugs more than girls. The differences are considerable in all categories.

Association between violent behaviour and the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

Young people are asked whether they have consumed narcotics and alcohol over the last 12 months, so they are not necessarily regular users of such substances. From an intersection of data with the perpetrators and the victims' features, it results that the use of substances over the last 12 years has a significant impact on the violent behaviour. Those who have used substances result more frequently to be both perpetrators and victims of intimate partner violence.

This finding is in line with the findings of many other studies which indicate that adolescents who use or abuse with substances are more likely to be involved in risky behaviour, such as the intimate partner violence (Temple and Freeman, 2011, Roberts et al, 2003; Tapert et al, 2001).

Figure 19. Relationship between the consumption of narcotics and violent behaviour



Such sustainable difference between those who have consumed and those who have not consumed narcotics in the last 12 months makes us believe that there is a correlation between the consumption of narcotic substances and violent behaviour. Moreover, this data corresponds to national surveys (INSTAT 2013, PHI 2014) and international studies (McDonnell 2010). However, further studies are necessary to explore this relationship.

Data from focus groups

A tolerance regarding the consumption of alcohol from a young age could be noticed during conversations with adolescents. So, the girls participating in the focus groups declared that it was acceptable to their family member for them to drink wine or beer in family celebrations since the age of 15-16 years.

"My parents have a winery and they have asked me to try the wine and get used to it. I have tried wine since I was 11 years old. When I was about 15 years old, I have had wine or beer at family celebrations". (girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city).

"When watching football matches, it happens that I drink alcohol with my parents... I have beer..." (girl, 16 years old, Vlora, city)

"My experience with smoking started when I was 13 years old, with my first cigarette, and now at 17, I have about 2 packets a day." (boy, 17 years old, Tirana).

Participants revealed various cases of their peers who have used cannabis, alcohol and tobacco. However, they stated that such behaviour is more widespread among boys rather than girls, even though there is no clear gender division.

"At the class parties, more than half of participants have got drunk... We have parties almost every month." (girl, 16 years old, Vlora, city)

"Once we were at the beach, and one of the girls had brought cannabis which she smoked together with the class boys... (girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city).

"I tried weed for the first time when I was 15, at a class party." (boy, 18 years old, Peshkopi, city)

"All of my classmates consume alcohol at parties that are organized. Some of our friends have been bad drunk and we could barely take them home." (Boys in the Tirana focus group)

"We have heard that when girls get drunk, they get in trouble, we have even heard they get raped" (boy, 18 years old, Tirana)

PART THREE

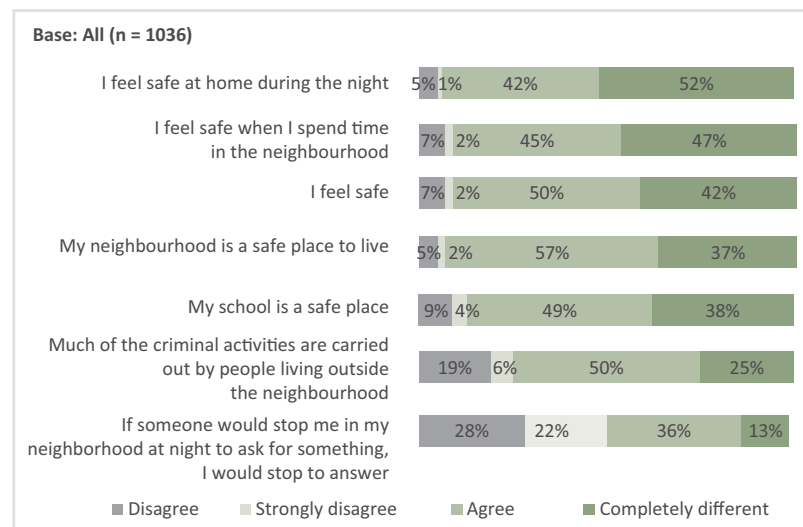
Security, relationships with family and beliefs about violence

This part provides data related to community safety, relationship of young people with their family and friends, their beliefs and attitudes towards gender-based violence.

Community safety

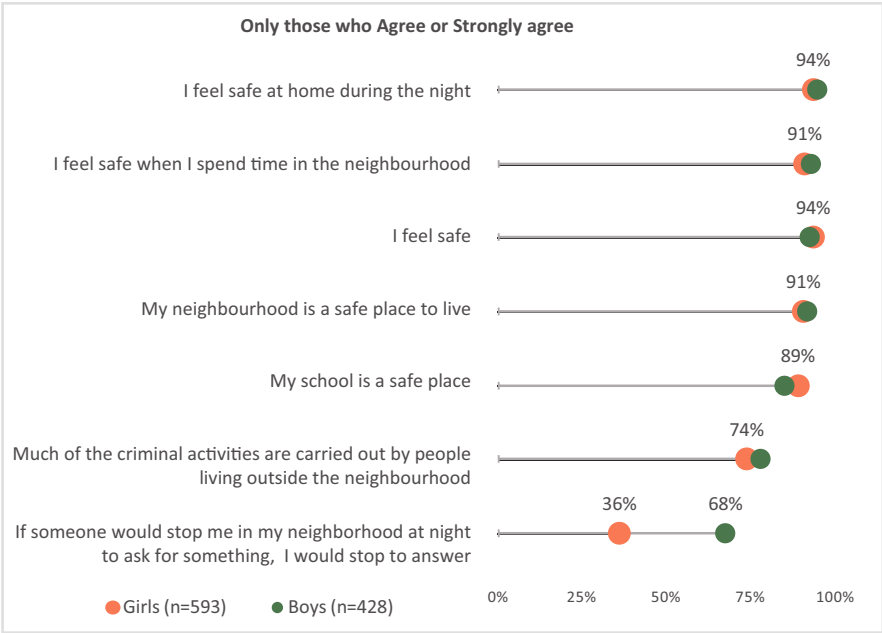
Adolescents were asked about how safe they feel in their environment, the neighbourhood, the community, school, etc., and 92 percent of them stated they feel safe at home and in the community where they live. About 90 percent say the neighbourhood they live in is safe, they feel safe at home during the night, they feel safe when spending time in the neighbourhood during the day and feel safe at school. 75 percent of them believe that criminal offences occurring in their neighbourhood are carried out by other persons living outside their neighbourhood, but other 25 percent believe they are carried out by persons living nearby. They were asked whether they would answer to someone stopping them overnight to ask for anything, and their answers are almost equally divided among those who would reply yes or no.

Figure 20. Perception about safety at home, community and school



Community safety was also viewed from the gender perspective. Classified by gender, the data indicate similar patterns among girls and boys in all the safety dimensions. Great differences among girls and boys are noticed in the question “*Would you answer to someone who stops you in your neighbourhood at night to ask for anything*”, since twice more boys (68 percent) than girls (36 percent) would stop to answer.

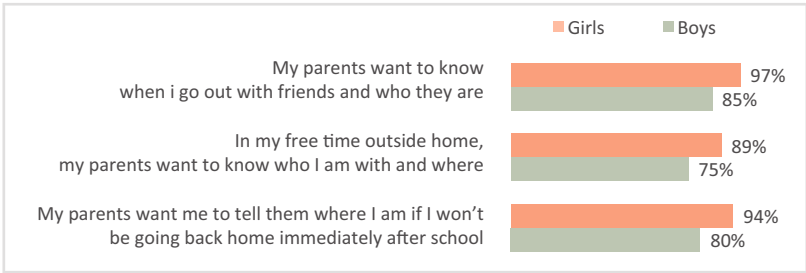
Safety 21. Perception about safety at home, community and school, by gender



Relationship with family and friends

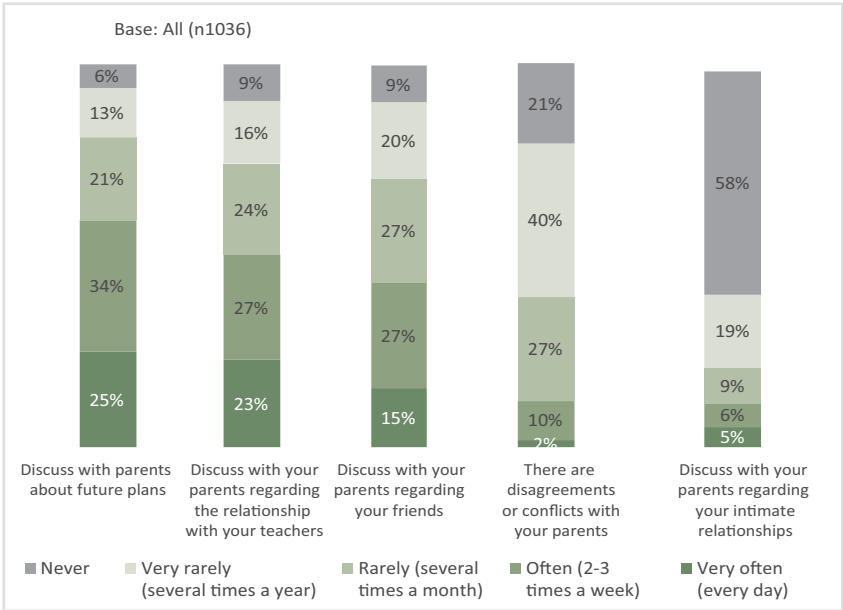
The relationship with the family is an important factor that affects the human development dynamics in all its life cycles. Especially during adolescence, this relationship becomes highly important. Nevertheless, both parents and children are in a period of reshaping their relationship, the transition from childhood to adulthood is often difficult to be understood by both parties and to be handled. While adolescents demand more independence, parents can not give up trying to control them. This seems to be the main source of conflict between them.

Figure 22. Parental control by gender



Over 80 percent of young people interviewed say their parents want to know when adolescents go out with friends and who are their friends, they want to know where their children are and who they socialize with. Many parents want to be informed if their children get out of their everyday routine. Due to different gender roles, the parents' control over girls is much stricter. Hence, the level of control on girls reaches 89 - 97 percent, while parental control on boys varies from 75 - 85 percent. These data are similar to the finding of several researches, which conclude that the parental monitoring level or the parents' persistence to exercise control on the young adolescents is high (Allison and Schultz, 2004; Holmbeck, 2018). These researchers emphasize that this is among the main factors contributing to the generation of conflict between parties.

Figure 23. Relationship with parents



Various researchers in the field of psychology devote special attention to the parent-adolescent relationship. Continuous parent-child communication, where both parties discuss with each other and both parties listen to and respect each other becomes crucial during adolescence. (Baumrind, 1991)

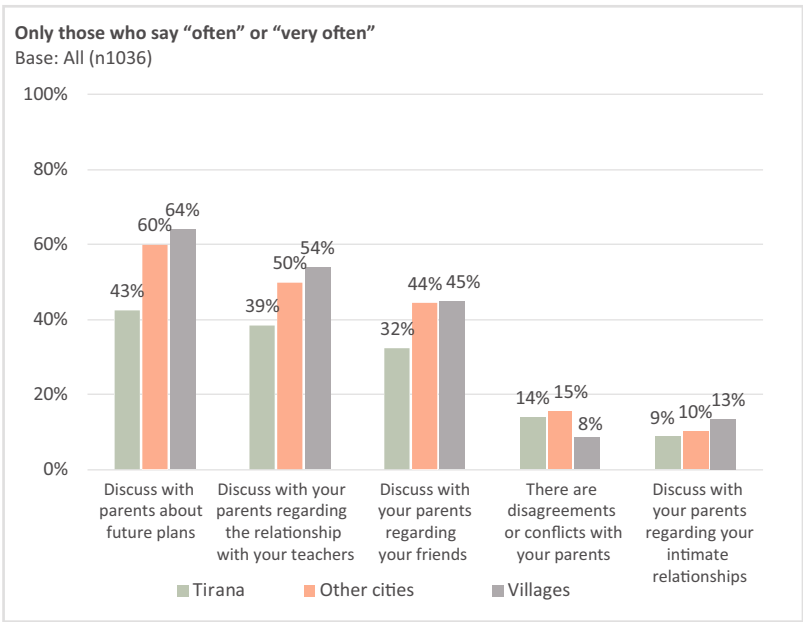
The data of our research show that about 40-45 percent of young people talk rarely or very rarely with their parents. 12 percent of them even state they have frequent conflicts with their parents. However, more than half of adolescents talk relatively often with their parents about their future plans, about their teachers or classmates. But on the other hand, 58 percent of young people never talk with their parents about their intimate relationships.

The girls participating in the focus groups stated they have a good relationship with their parents and consulted them often.

“I would talk with my parents about everything happening to me, be it a good or a bad thing.” (girl, 14 years old, Vlora, city)

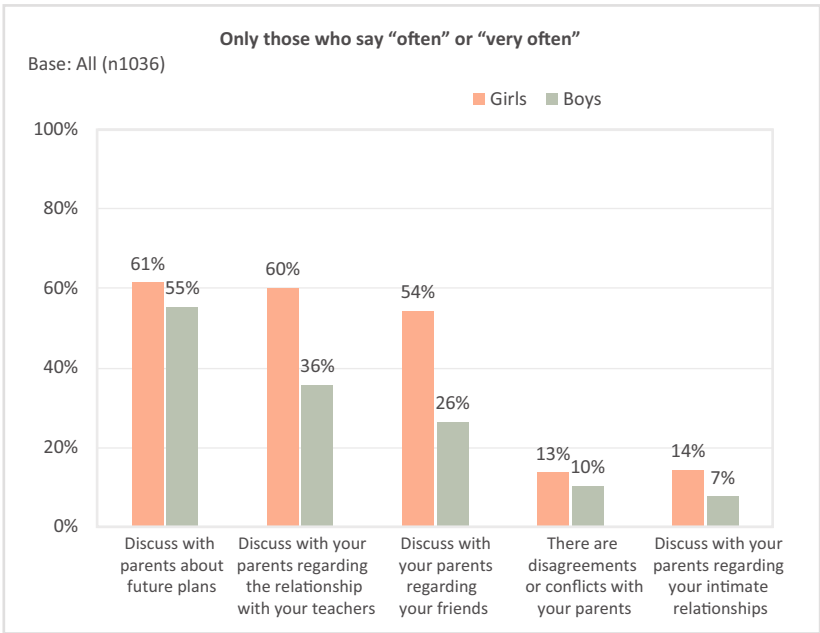
“I would rather talk with my mother and my sister. Even if I had issues with my boyfriend, maybe I would more talk with my sister, but with my mother as well.” (girl, 16 years old, Vlora)

Figure 24. Relationship with parents by region



The above figure shows the results of a combination of variables to see how the relationship with parents was, by regions, taking into account Tirana, other cities and rural areas. Young people living in Tirana seem to communicate less frequently with their parents than their mates in other cities or villages regarding issues such as the future, friends and teachers. Whereas intimate relationships continue to remain a taboo for all the youth regardless of their location. Only about 13 percent of them talk with their parents about their intimate relationships. Young people living in the other cities display slight differences from those living in the rural areas, but the youth of Tirana show significant differences from their mates when discussing the above mentioned topics, with about 12 - 13 percent less than the overall average, in almost all the questions.

Figure 25. Frequency of communications with parents



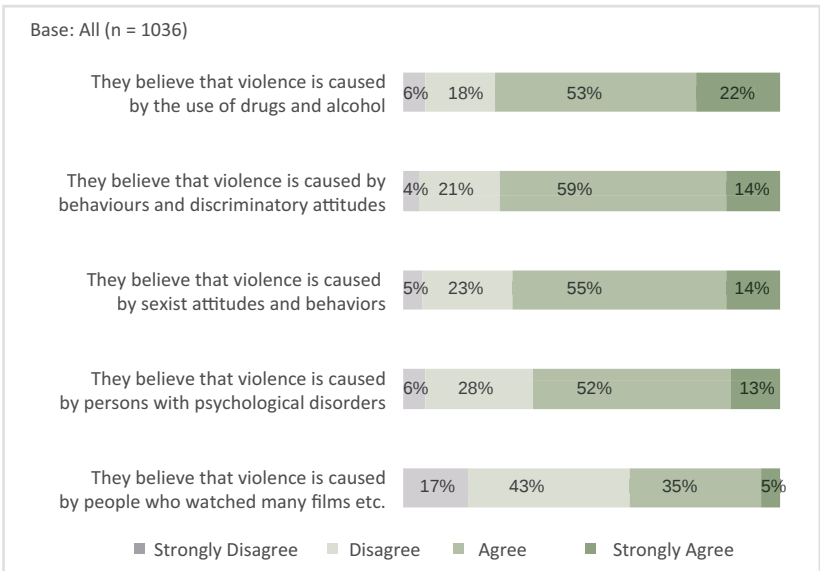
The results for the same questions were also compared between boys and girls. The data show that there are big gender differences in the parent-adolescent nature of communication. Hence, girls communicate with their parents about future plans as frequently as boys, whereas with regards to issues such as the teachers and friends, the percentage of girls talking relatively more often with their parents is almost double the one of boys. On the other hand, conflictual relations with parents appear the same in girls as in boys, with 13 and 10 percent respectively. Intimate relationships appear to also be a taboo, although the percentage of girls talking with their parents about that is higher than that of boys.

Adolescents' beliefs about violence

Young people participating in the study were asked about some perceptions related to the intimate partner violence. Initially, they were asked about their perception on what causes violence. Adolescents' perspective on violence is an important indicator on the presence of intimate partner violence among the youth (Reed et al, 2011; Temple et al, 2013). The way they think about this phenomenon increases or decreases the risk of IPV appearance (McDonell et al, 2010).

Based on these findings by international researchers, participants were asked whether or not they agreed with some of the causal factors of violence. 75 percent of the youth agreed or totally agreed with the statement that the use of alcohol and drugs cause violence, versus 24 percent who were against or totally against this statement. This finding is also supported by other researches which point out that especially the use of alcohol is one of the factors having the highest impact in the appearance of risky behaviour such as the intimate partner violence (Rothman et al, 2012).

Figure 26. Young people's belief regarding the causes of violence

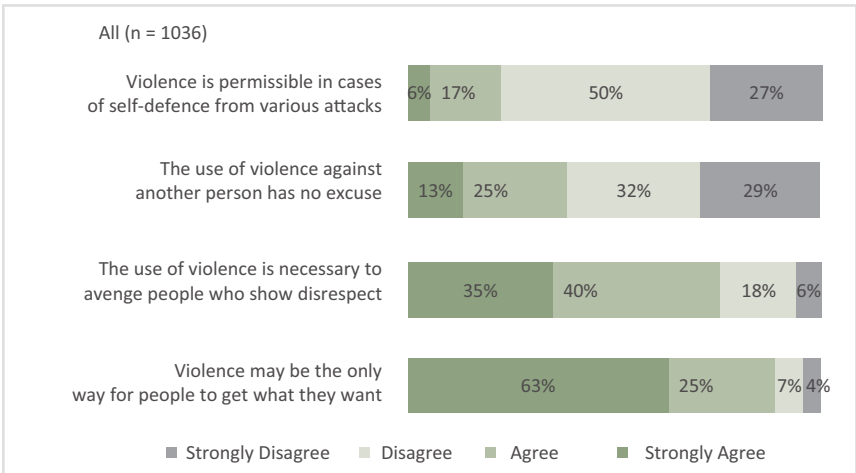


As many feminist theories point out that gender inequality and sexism within patriarchal societies are the main causes of IPV (Bell and Naugle, 2008), the data of this study also indicate that 73 percent of participants totally agreed with the statement that violence is

caused by discriminating behaviour and attitudes ($M=2.8$), 69 percent were of the opinion that violence is caused by sexism ($M=2.8$) and about 65 percent believed that violent persons have psychological issues ($M=2.7$). A smaller percentage, 40 percent of them ($M=2.7$), believed that exposure to violent movies, musical videos and TV programmes with violent content increases the probability for violent behaviour.

The study revealed that the vast majority of young people have a negative attitude towards violence. Nevertheless, 77 percent of them agreed with the statement that violence is acceptable when used for self-defence ($M=3.0$), whereas 61 percent agree and totally agree with the statement that there is no justification for using violence against another person ($M=2.8$). 75 percent of the young people state they are against and totally against the use of violence to get revenge against people who show disrespect ($M=2.8$) 88 percent of them disagree with the statement that violence is the only means to get whatever you want in life ($M=1.5$).

Figure 27. Young peoples' attitudes about violent behaviour

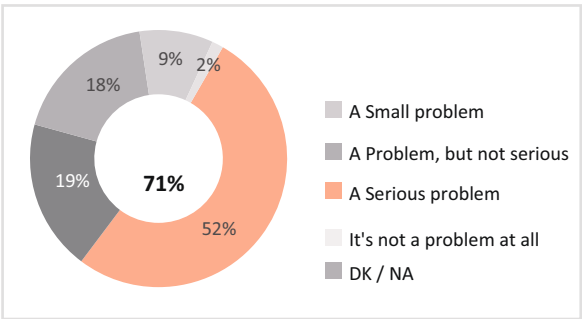


The vast majority of Albanian youth think that violence may only be used for purposes of self-defence in cases of assault. But more than half of them state that violence may by no means be used in any other case. Furthermore, about 90% of the young people disagree with the statement that people may get anything they want in life through violence.

Young people's attitude towards violence against women and girls

Judging from the high level of violence against women and girls in the country, supported by national studies (UNDP and INSTAT, 2013), the young people were asked about their attitudes regarding this group.

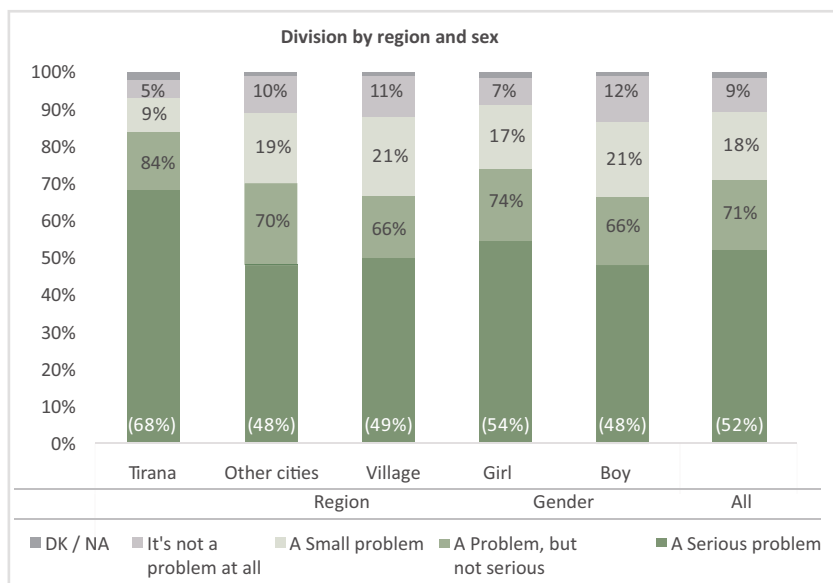
Figure 28. Violence against women and girls is a serious problem in the community



82 percent believe that girls and women are more often victims of violence than boys and men. 52 percent of the young people see violence against women and girls as a very serious problem, 37 percent think it is somehow a problem, and only 9 percent of them do not see violence against women and girls as a problem in the community where they live.

The data were further grouped by gender and region. The analysis revealed that there were no differences in the perceptions of girls and boys participating in the study, on the importance of violence against women and girls in the community where they lived. Meanwhile, differences were noticed in the perceptions of young people from different regions.

Figure 29. 'Violence against women and girls is a serious problem in the community' belief.



A higher percentage of young people from Tirana were of the opinion that violence against women and girls was a serious problem (84 percent) compared with the young people from other cities (70 percent) and villages (66 percent). Furthermore, with regards to domestic violence, 92 percent of the young people believe that family members have no right to hurt or humiliate the other family members. However, 31 percent of them think that domestic violence is the problem of only that family where violence is occurring.

Data provided by focus groups

Findings from the analysis of discussions in focus groups consisting of boys and girls revealed the same situation regarding community safety, and shared the same attitudes and beliefs towards violence.

With regards to community safety, the participating girls and boys stated that they feel safe in their community both during the day and at night. However, when asked about specific situations, the girls participants said they generally feel safe, but not as safe when they return home late in the evening along unlit roads, at building entrances or other dark places. There were no such comments among boys, in none of the focus groups.

"I feel safe in my neighbourhood, however, when I return home late in the evening I am afraid walking along unlit roads, or at the building entrance... I am not afraid during the day" (girl, 17 years old, Vlora, city)

"I like going out with my girlfriends at the bars around Blloku on Friday or Saturday, as I think they are really lively, but my parents won't allow me, and they advice and inform me about various difficult situations my peers go through." (girl, 16 years old, Tirana).

Participants in focus groups stated that there was violence in the community they lived in. However, there were people among them who believed that the violence level was not such a serious problem. They reported different cases well-known in the community, but also other cases less known in their community or their social circle. Participants believed that violence could be used in cases of self-defence, but they stated they were against violence and that it should not be used against girls. They also think parents should not use violence on their children, but more often than not parents use violence against their children.

"Violence is present in Dibra families. There are boys and girls in our schools who I believe are battered at home, because they have bruises." (Peshkopi, boy 18 years old)

"I do not think I may provide a generalised judgement. Personally, I do not see it as a really serious problem. I think there is a lot of attention towards women and girls by institutions, awareness campaigns have been organised that have somehow strengthened women and have made them more capable of reacting. Maybe more violence exists in the remote areas, whereas here it does not seem to be much of a problem. (girl, 15 years old, Lezha, city)

"The use of social media is also a means of violence. Somebody may open a fake account and damage the person in question. The attitude towards victims of violence is also discriminatory. Even on the social networking sites, people search for the fault in women and girls and the reason for abuse they gave to boys and men. In various cases of violence in Lezha, the community blames the women." (girl, 16 years old, Lezha, city)

Some of the participants saw violence against women and girls as somehow widespread in their communities. They mainly spoke about physical and psychological violence. Despite the identification of interventions made by the civil society organisations regarding women empowerment, some of them considered violence as a phenomenon occurring mainly in the isolated rural areas.

"To my opinion, it is a serious problem. But none of us is able to make an appropriate assessment, for as long as we have not experienced violence ourselves. Physical violence exists especially among the boys, whereas among girls the psychological violence is more dominant. I have witnessed forms of psychological violence, social isolation and bullying." (girl, 17 years old, Lezha, city). Some of the girls from Tirana shared the same opinion.

"Women and girls are judged, and they are expected to be more of a family and work supporters rather than life protagonists. Given that women and girls are prejudged more, this may contribute to increased levels of violence against them. Prejudgement and discrimination against women may make a woman feel incapable and have poor self-esteem. Lack of self-esteem makes her more exposed to violence." (girl, 18 years old, Vlora, city)

"The community has a big influence on people's behaviour. Our society expects girls to stay at home and do the housework, and it is very difficult to do otherwise within this community. Mothers themselves influence their girls to adjust to the community's expectations. (girl, 17 years old, Lezha, city).

"It seems to me that both genders prejudge each-other. Due to the inferior position girls and women are left in the society, they are seen more as an object, and often as a sexual object. This makes the girl more exposed to violence. It seems to me this is the reason why women judge men also, and they do not feel safe. Every year, we organise a show in our school against gender-based violence." (girl, 17 years old, Lezha, city).

Focus groups participants also expressed their intolerance to violence as a mode of interaction. Despite the fact that they reported numerous cases of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, they were against any form of violence.

"To my opinion, violence is a breach of human rights, nobody has the right to hurt another person for any kind of reason. (girl, 16 years old, Lezha, city).

"Violence should be used for self-defence, however, I am against violence and I think it should not be used against women or girls." (boy, 18 years old, Peshkopi).

Discussions, reflections and suggestions on intimate partner violence in adolescence in the Albanian society

Discussions, reflections and suggestions related to intimate partner violence among adolescents

The research study findings indicate that intimate partner violence during adolescence is rooted deep into the family and the young people's experiences of exposure to violence during their life. Findings speak clearly of a strong correlation between experiencing domestic violence and accepting and/or exercising it by the young people themselves when they enter into intimate relationships. The connection between people who have experienced domestic violence and their involvement in IPV was visibly alarming and the figures are nearly the same as in other Albanian and international surveys related to violence against women and girls. Young people who had been exposed to domestic violence were more likely to be victims or perpetrators in their intimate relationships.

Although young people were not tolerant towards violent sexual and physical behaviour and a number of controlling behaviours by their partners, it could be noticed that a large part of them considered the controlling behaviour as acceptable, both as regards the social networking sites and determining who the partner may socialize with. They further believed that discriminating attitudes, norms and behaviour were among the main causes of IPV. Young people who had been in an intimate relationship were more receptive to violent behaviour compared with those who had never been in an intimate relationship. As compared to girls, boys spoke less of a violent experience.

Peers, parents and the psychologist were the persons whom young people would share an experience of physical, psychological and sexual violence with. The percentage of young people who would ask for help decreased significantly among young people who had been or were currently in an intimate relationship as compared with the others who had never been in an intimate relationship before.

About half of young people who had had sexual intercourse used no protection during sex, with girls more often than boys. This really concerning data is an indicator of the poor level of sexual education among the Albanian youth. Furthermore, according to the witnesses provided by the focus groups, the risk for sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies is ever present in the young people's life. Unintended pregnancy was not included as a question in the questionnaire, but rather in the girls' focus groups and they revealed numerous cases of their friends, who in the majority of cases had an abortion in private clinics.

At the age of about 13-14 years old, a part of adolescents start to consume alcohol, tobacco and a small percentage of them use various narcotics. What is concerning is the fact that young people who reported to have used tobacco, alcohol and narcotics in the last 12 months also constituted a higher percentage of IPV victims and perpetrators compared with young people who had not used substances in the last 12 months.

The data also indicated that the parent-adolescent relationship was dominated by parental control. Young people talk more often with their parents about their future plans rather than their intimate relationships. Girls talk more often with their parents than boys.

Young people feel safe in their neighbourhood, however, only half of them would stop to give information to a stranger during the night.

The above data, and especially the fact that 22 percent of the young people who had ever been in an intimate relationship report to have been victimized, recall for urgent adoption of strategies and policies so as to avoid this phenomenon with major personal, domestic and social consequences. The data further indicate the urgency of sexual education with regards to the use of protective measures. But discussions related to the unwanted abortions ring an alarm bell on the failure of the Albanian state to monitor the private clinics throughout Albania.

Suggestions for action regarding intimate partner violence among adolescents in the Albanian society

Suggestions for deeper scientific research

The issue of intimate partner violence must be studied at all its dimensions and the age groups it affects. The strong interrelation between the domestic violence experienced in the family and the intimate partner violence during adolescence is an important aspect which must be analysed and addressed. Vulnerable and marginalised groups must be studied with priority, also based on their actions, such as school drop out and early marriages. Other longitudinal studies which analyse the experiences of victims of intimate partner violence would enrich the information framework necessary to better understand their impact on the young people's life. Moreover, the state institutions, the academy and the civil society organisations must take on a greater responsibility in the avoidance of domestic violence and teenage dating violence.

Suggestions for Policies, Laws and Strategies

IPV is a preventable phenomenon. Intimate partner violence in adolescence may be a risk factor for future domestic violence. The focus of the studies so far has been the domestic violence and its impact on women and children. Intimate partner violence among young people is an issue not yet studied thoroughly. While intimate partner violence is a crime being reported by both the victims and the police, the intimate partner violence among adolescence almost goes unreported.

May intervention be done through early prevention? Parents are among the main actors who must become aware of what adolescents are experiencing and should treat such phenomenon as a serious problem for the future of their children. Adolescents do not want to report or talk about IPV neither.

The entire Albanian society must understand the importance of IPV and must develop programmes which prevent such behaviour. It is of high importance for such phenomenon to be treated in the light of social and economic factors or the norms present in the Albanian society. By handling intimate partner violence and discussing the issue as a society, we may prevent not only IPV but domestic violence as well. It is about time not only for the researchers but also for policy-makers to give priority and include the measures for the prevention of IPV during adolescence in their agendas. The data of the survey showed that

IPV is a serious problem happening during adolescence and involves a large number of young people, and as such requires public attention at national level.

The policies and practices developed in this respect may influence not only schools, but also the youth organisations in order to promote and support the development of healthy relationships based on respect and dignity. Laws and policies can provide the foundation for a comprehensive approach to intimate partner violence. While a great number of laws and policies against domestic violence and violence against women are in place, implementation is still lagging behind. The situation is even more alarming when it comes to laws and policies against IPV in our country. Measures to strengthen effective implementation should include training of officials who handle cases of domestic violence, but also IPV cases at all ages, including among adolescents, setting up mechanisms for impact monitoring and assessment, as well as ensuring the best accountability and coordination. Committing adequate human and financial resources is also essential. Moreover, laws and policies can often play a positive role in changing attitudes and behaviours in the long term, especially when they are accompanied by complementary strategies such as awareness-raising on ending violence. Once laws are in place, they convey a strong message that violence against women or the IPV is not tolerated and that it is the right of every woman to live free of violence and protected by the state.

Proposals for strategies for the avoidance of IPV based on the best international practices

1. **Prevention strategies** focused on schools are necessary for the prevention of a number of factors contributing to the development of abusive behaviour among adolescents. This includes working directly with adolescents, including people who have an influence on adolescents, the use of media and communication channels. The school personnel is in continuous contact with the students, hence they should be the first to receive training and acquire the knowledge for handling different cases. The school personnel must prepare a safety, protection and counselling plan for adolescents in their school. Prevention programmes shall be integrated into special curricula and in extra-curricular classes. All such strategies must be tailor-made based on the ages and the socio-cultural context. The psycho-social school services must be strengthened, by increasing the number of psychologists and social workers with the aim of extending the psycho-social services provided not only to adolescents who seek help themselves, but also to handle the cycle of violence overall, especially among those who do not report it. An important preventive role at school is also played by teachers and other workers who may identify

various cases of young people involved in IPV, by monitoring their behaviour and providing help as appropriate.

2. **Strategies that may be applied as of secondary school.** Preadolescence is a period which may be used for developing healthy relationships, whereas adolescents are curious and start to explore the first intimate relationships or read about them. As a result, during this phase it is suggested to provide a strong support through various modules which should be treated during classes or in the meetings with the school psychologist. Such education would precede the risk factors which may lead to the development of violent behaviour.
3. **Youth inclusion, strengthening leadership.** The young people's voice is highly critical for a successful prevention of intimate partner violence. Young people have influence over their peers, especially the elder toward the younger ones. Social media is a possible platform for young people inclusion. Hence, the schools may create a space on the social networking sites for the young people who want to write about issues that concern them. Certain young people are strong advocates of issues that affect their lives, sometimes preaching good behaviour to adults as well. By treating young people as future leaders, they will develop capacities for inter-generational partnerships and positive changes in the community.
4. **Involvement of parents and the community in schools.** Parents or caregivers serve as a primary force and a role model to their children. Through their actions, they also affect local policies and the legislation. As a matter of fact, parents should be involved in many issues at school, not only regarding IPV. Parents' inclusion should be done through a special protocol, and should not be fictitious. Not only academic achievements should be discussed with parents, but also issues regarding the psycho-social development especially during the transition from secondary school to high school.
5. **More data on IPV among adolescents are needed in order to prevent the phenomenon.** In order to address IPV as a priority of public education and health and to advocate more the IPV prevention programs and policies, reliable data are needed on various issues related to this phenomenon, such as IPV prevalence and the dynamics in different regions; in-depth study of the impact of domestic violence and intimate partner violence in adolescence; the role of parental control in IPV prevention; measuring the opinions of parents and caregivers in relation to IPV. The data of this survey constitute a very good starting point for initiating the first preventive interventions, since most of the findings enable in-depth studies for other issues.

6. **Amendment of IPV-related policies at local level is possible.** Members of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) can play a key role in the IPV prevention. Given that the educational system representatives are part of the NRM, they must bring to NRM meetings concrete ideas and plans with regards to IPV prevention as well as know-how on the connection between IPV and domestic violence. Adolescents who are victims of domestic violence must be provided with orientation services at school by social workers and psychologists. IPV should receive a different consideration and should not be treated as bullying or sexual harassment. The change in local policies may start by making small steps such as, for example, informing policy-makers about this phenomenon and the current attempts to handle this issue. However, NRM provides an ideal platform for handling IPV, as it would prevent domestic violence which is the scope of NRM activity.
7. **The amendment of policies nationwide is also necessary.** Having in mind the difficult climate of the state budget, a strong political agenda and an extended coalition of allies against violence is necessary to succeed in the fight against IPV and further on, against domestic violence. Some of the international goals, such as the preparation of a resource package focused at IPV prevention easily accessible by schools, may be achieved through advocating at central and local level. The Ministry of Education and Youth should not remain indifferent to such phenomenon, but should take appropriate measures simultaneously with the academic aspects.
8. **A holistic approach may link the IPV prevention to other political issues.** Whereas the relevant policies and laws for the prevention or punishment of intimate partner violence and abuse among adolescents are missing and are necessary, it is yet believed that such policies would be insufficient for IPV prevention. The holistic approach emphasizes the importance of a safe and all-inclusive learning environment where respectful, equal and non-violent behaviours are taught and modelled. This positive approach links the IPV prevention to other educational initiatives such as the promotion of positive behavioural support and socio-emotional learning based on the experience of the developed countries.

Adolescence is a period of exploration, transition and social development and the prevention programmes should be adapted to this context. These programmes further aim at changing the violent behaviours and not merely the attitudes to IPV. Adolescents constitute a neglected group from the gender and socio-emotional perspective, though it is an important period in a person's life. Longitudinal studies need to be conducted for the development of effective prevention programmes, especially as regards the IPV risk factors among adolescents.

A number of prevention and intervention programmes are in place in the developed countries, which provide an opportunity to develop life skills and promote healthy, non-violent relationships. A large part of these programmes aim at changing and improving the IPV-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, focusing on making the young people able to establish good interpersonal relationships. These programmes are applied at family, school or community level. Especially those programmes of the developed countries applied at school level and focusing mostly on young people and their peers and aiming at altering not only the attitudes, but also IPV related behaviours, have resulted highly successful.

Various social programmes that should start as of 7th or 8th grade

Involvement in psycho-social programmes promotes expectations for a mutually respectful, mutually caring, non-violent relationship. Successful programmes not only provide the skills to establish safe and healthy relationships, but also provide numerous possibilities to practice and reinforce such skills. These programmes are implemented in schools in countries such as the United States of America, Sweden, etc.

But why should schools react towards IPV? Firstly, the school is an environment where the perpetrator and the victim interact with each-other more than in any other environment. Secondly, the school has the duty to protect its students against any type of violence that may threaten them. Thirdly, the school is able to address the adolescents' abusive behaviour more than any other institution. Last but not foremost, the school possesses all the authority necessary to implement rules and policies towards the students' behaviours, with a view of protecting them and its staff. Above all, schools must make efforts to promote healthy relationships and prevent IPV among adolescents, with a view to enhancing young people's health and guaranteeing safety and academic achievements.

Healthy relationship programmes for couples focus on improving relationship dynamics and individual well-being by improving communication, conflict management and emotional regulation skills. Provision of trainings on sexually transmitted diseases and contraception methods to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancy is very important.

The programmes suggested below have been taken from the publication: Preventing Intimate Partner Violence across the lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices, developed in 2017 by Niolon, Kearns, Dills, Rambo, Irving, Armstead, Gilbert.

One socio-emotional program with evidence of effectiveness is *Safe Dates*, focused on the promotion of healthy relationships and the prevention of IPV. This programme is originally developed for 8th and 9th graders, with 10 sessions of classroom discussions. The program

offers opportunities for students to learn and practice skills related to conflict resolution, positive communication, and managing anger.

Another example is the programme **The fourth strategy**, dedicated to adolescents healthy relationships. The program is named “The Fourth Strategy” to indicate that teaching youth about relationships is as important as teaching them the basic school topics such as reading, writing and arithmetic. This 21-session manualized curriculum focuses on: personal safety and injury prevention; healthy growth and sexuality, and substance abuse. These programmes are accompanied by awareness raising on IPV among adolescents.

Another programme for prevention of IPV among adolescents is also **the Healthy Relationship Programme** which is based on two principles: 1) Everyone deserves to feel safe and respected in an intimate relationship, and 2) there is no excuse to violence, never. This programme is provided to 7th-12-th graders. This programme initially addresses some questions to students of secondary schools, asking them about what a healthy friendship or relationship means to them. Afterwards, students learn about the difference between flirting and sexual abuse and the importance of imposing boundaries. Whereas high school students are presented with a broader picture of IPV and its prevention. The knowledge about sexual harassment and sexual attack are part of this programme curricula. Young people should be supported by all possible means in order to prevent IPV. They should be involved early in discussions that explain the concept of love so as to impose a new norm on what constitutes a healthy relationship. This programme requires students to look into traditional gender stereotypes and the role they play in IPV perpetration.

Possible results that may be achieved through such programmes are:

- Increased use and preservation of healthy relationship skills;
- Reductions in perpetration of physical, sexual and emotional IPV;
- Reductions in perpetration of peer violence, including bullying;
- Reductions in high-risk sexual behaviours;
- Reductions in attitudes that accept violence in relationships;
- Development of critical thinking about gender roles, stereotypes, media and the manner how these affect intimate relationships;
- Development and use of the means (such as online service lines) to help victimized or perpetrator friends;
- Increases in relationship satisfaction and well-being;
- Reductions in substance abuse;
- Reductions in weapon-carrying.

Engagement of positive examples and people

Promoting positive relationship expectations by condemning violent and unhealthy relationship behaviours among adolescents and young adults are critical to the prevention of IPV. Trusted adults and peers are important influencers in the adolescents and young adults' lives. Beliefs and attitudes about the acceptability of violence and about gender equity are predictive of IPV perpetration. Given that peers are the first source of support for young people in case of intimate partner violence, the provision of trainings for young people, with the aim of not only raising self-awareness, but also helping their friends in need, would provide support for the IPV victims. Peer training is conducted for the purpose of supporting and orienting perpetration cases towards supporting services. The data indicate how perpetrators and victims pertain to the same psycho-social context, hence they come from violent families and environments. There are a number of approaches that seek to influence the social context within which partner violence occurs by engaging influential adults and peers.

Men and boys as allies in prevention.

These approaches target men and boys and encourage them to be part of efforts to prevent IPV, including teenage dating violence. These approaches not only encourage men and boys to promote social norms that reduce their own risk for future perpetration, but also support potential victims by intervening and speaking out. These approaches often target men in peer groups, such as athletic teams or other types of teams.

Family-based programs seek to involve parents and other caregivers in prevention of IPV. These programs operate on the premise that the family is central to the development of norms and values, and therefore amenable to interventions that promote acceptable behaviour. These approaches are designed to improve parental awareness and knowledge about IPV, change parental attitudes about the acceptability of IPV, as well as improve parent communication skills around IPV.

Potential outcomes of these programs

- Reductions in perpetration of IPV.
- Increase in parental/caregiver efficacy in resolving teen relationship conflicts and engaging in rule setting.
- Reductions in acceptance of intimate partner violence among adolescents.

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Appendices

Gender concepts used in this study

Verbal violence or Verbal abuse is defined as excessive and improper use of the privilege. Verbal abuse is the excessive use of language to undermine someone's dignity and security through insults and humiliation, in a sudden or repeated manner.

A few examples include: Aggressive outburst of anger, hooting, insults, invectives, innuendoes, teasing, scolding, screaming, threats, minimising and mocking the person, ordering to show control, working behind their back, refusal to share ideas, feelings, intimacy, thoughts and dreams with the partner.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is one of the most common forms of violence against women and girls and includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviours by an intimate partner. IPV occurs in all settings and among all socio-economic, religious and cultural groups. The overwhelming global burden of IPV is borne by women and girls, although sometimes they can be violent in relationships with men.

Physical violence (or physical abuse) consists in slapping, stabbing, kicking, hitting using various objects, pushing, beating, throwing, biting, pinching, choking, burning, confining, threatening with a knife or other weapon, refusal to help the woman when she is pregnant or sick, attempt to murder or murder.

Sexual violence (or sexual abuse) according to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence⁴ means engaging in non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration of a sexual nature of the body of another person with any bodily part or object; engaging in other non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a person; causing another person to engage in non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a third person.

Emotional violence (or emotional/psychological abuse) includes behaviour aimed at persecuting

⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/168064d3f6>

and intimidating the victim. Such behaviour consist in constant criticism towards the spouse or partner, ignoring her/his feelings, constant rejection of her/his opinion, public or private shaming and humiliation, threatening the spouse/partner for betrayal, threatening for abuse and abandonment, threatening to take away the children, isolation, verbal assault, continuous jealousy signs, hiding financial resources, confining at home without a job, constant insults and name-calling.

Economic violence (economic abuse) involves behaviours aimed at denying the individual's right to have and enjoy economic independence. Some of these behaviours include: denial of cash, denial of food and basic needs, refusal to contribute financially, isolation of persons, obligation to terminate employment or not to be employed, a situation which aims to increase control and power over the spouse or partner.

Digital violence: Digital abuse is the use of technologies such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behaviour is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated online.

Examples of partner digital abuse include:

- Tells you who you can or can't be friends with on social networking sites.
- Sends you negative, insulting or even threatening emails,

Facebook messages, tweets, insta or other messages online.

- Uses social networking sites to keep constant tabs on the partner.
- Puts you down in their status updates, etc.
- Sends you unwanted, explicit pictures and/or demands the partner to send some in return.
- Pressures you to send explicit video. .
- Steals or insists to be given your passwords.
- Constantly texts you and makes you feel like you can't be separated from your phone for fear that you will be punished.
- Looks through the partner's phone frequently, checks up on your pictures, texts and outgoing calls.
- Tags the partner in different pictures on the social networking sites without the partner's consent.
- Uses any type of technology to monitor the partner.

Dangerous activities. Includes a number of behaviours or participation in dangerous activities that harm the health, but also the well-being of an individual. For example, the use of tobacco, alcohol, or illicit drugs, involvement in violent behaviour during sexual activity.

Questionnaire

Survey on violence in intimate relationships among the Albanian adolescents aged 16 – 19 years

[To be completed by the interviewer]

Serial Number	
Name of school	
School code (4-digit)	
School location	1) City 2) Village
Name of the city or village	
District (1-12)	
District Name	
Date of Interview	____/____/2018
Name of interviewer	

Please do not write your name on this questionnaire. Hand this over to your interviewer upon completion.

Is the house you live in located in the city or village?
How long do you have to walk/travel to get to school?

1) City
2) Village
_____ minutes

Dear participant to the questionnaire

This survey is conducted by the Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN), in the framework of the programme “Protection and Promotion of Women Rights in Albania”, with the financial support of the Swedish Government. You must complete the questionnaire yourself, by reading the questions carefully. For specific terms, you should read the explanations in italics. Circle the respective codes for each answer.

SECTION A. ON SAFETY

In this section you will find some perceptions of your neighbourhood. Please indicate how much you agree:

		<i>Totally against</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
A1.	My neighbourhood is a safe place to live in	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
A2.	I feel safe in my house at night	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
A3.	I feel safe when spending time in the neighbourhood during the day	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
A4.	If someone would stop me overnight to ask for something, I would stop to answer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
A5.	Most of criminal activities are carried out by persons living outside the neighbourhood.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
A6.	I feel safe	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
A7.	My school is a safe place	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

SECTION B. YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON VIOLENCE

Listed below you will find different perspectives on the causes of violence or instigators of violent behaviour. We are interested in your attitudes. Please tell us how much you Agree or not with each of them, by putting x in one of the boxes in each line.

		<i>Totally against</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
B1.	Violence may be the only way for people to get what they want in life	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B2.	The main causes of violence are the use of alcohol and drugs.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B3.	Violence is permissible in cases of self-defence from various attacks.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B4.	Girls/women are violated more than boys/men.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B5.	Violence against women or girls is often caused by sexist attitudes and behaviour	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B6.	Most violent acts are committed by persons having psychological disorders.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B7.	The use of violence is necessary to get revenge against people who show disrespect.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

		<i>Totally against</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Totally Agree</i>
B8.	Discriminating behaviour and attitudes (separate explanation) are one of the main causes of violence in our country.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B9.	There is no justification for using violence against another person.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B10.	Violence is usually exercised by persons who watch a lot of movies, musical videos or violent TV shows, or who play violent games.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B11.	Domestic violence is the problem of only that family where violence is occurring.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
B12.	Family members have the right to hurt or humiliate you.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

SECTION C. YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH VIOLENCE

Below herein you will find some questions related to any possible approaches or experiences you might have had. Circle the number which according to you answers the question best.

C1. Violence against women and girls is a serious problem in your community? Please circle **one number**.

1 = Serious problem

2 = A problem, but not serious

3 = Somehow a problem

4 = Not a problem at all

C2. Has any of your friends that you know personally at school or neighbourhood ever been violated by the partner or ex partner (ex boyfriend/boyfriend, ex fiancée/fiancée, ex husband/husband)?

1 = Yes

2 = No

C2Y If Yes, what form of violence? [You may circle more than one answer]

A. Verbal violence

B. Physical violence

C. Sexual violence

D. Psychological violence

- E. Economic violence
- F. Digital violence/Social networks/Online games
- Y. Other_____

C3. Was any of the girls you know personally violated by her family members?
1 = Yes 2 = No

C3Y. If Yes, what form of violence?
[You may circle more than one answer]

- A. Verbal violence
- B. Physical violence
- C. Sexual violence
- D. Psychological violence
- E. Economic violence
- F. Digital violence
- Y. Other_____

C4. Have you ever known a boy who you suspect might have been violent on his partner or ex partner?
1 = Yes 2 = No

C5. Has any of the boys you personally know at school or neighbourhood ever been violated by his partner or ex partner (ex girlfriend/girlfriend, ex fiancée/fiancée, ex wife/wife)?
1 = Yes 2 = No

C6. Was any of the boys you know personally violated by his family members?
1 = Yes 2 = No

C7. Have you ever known a girl or a woman who you suspect might have been violent on her partner or ex partner?
1 = Yes 2 = No

C8. If you knew a person who is in an abusive relationship, would you tell an adult about that?
1 = Yes 2 = No

C9. Are you currently in an intimate relationship?

- 1) Yes, a girl
- 2) Yes, a boy
- 3) No
- 4) I refuse to answer

SECTION D. YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

(Keep in mind that no one will know about your answers)

If you have never had sexual intercourse, mark here ☐ and pass on to section E

D1. How old were you when you first had sexual intercourse? Check only one box.

11 or earlier	12	13	14	15	16	17	18 or later
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	☐ 8

D2. In your life, how many persons have you had sex with? Check only one box.

1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 or more persons
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6+

D3. In the last 12 month, how many persons have you had sex with? Check only one box.

No one	1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 or more persons
☐ 0	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6+

D4. Did you use alcohol or narcotics before having sex your last time?

- ☐1 - No ☐2 - Yes

D5. Did you or your partner use a condom the last time you had sex?

- ☐1 - No ☐2 - Yes

D6. What method did you or your partner use the last time you had sex to prevent pregnancy? [You may circle more than one answer]

- A. No method
- B. Withdrawal
- C. Contraceptives
- D. Some other methods
- E. Condoms

- F. Injection
 G. Other _____
 Z. I am not sure

D7. Have you ever had an abortion or obliged your partner to have an abortion?

- ☐ 1 - No ☐ 2 - Yes

D8. How many times have you been or have you got someone pregnant?

- 0) 0 times;
 1) 1 time;
 2) 2 times;
 3) 3 or more times

SECTION F. YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Have you ever experienced any of the following behaviours during the time you were in an intimate relationship with someone? If yes, indicate whether this has happened in the last 12 months? Please check only one box in each line.

	Yes	No
F1. Have you ever felt threatened, humiliated or controlled by a partner in an intimate relationship?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F1Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F2. Have you been hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt by your partner when you were together or afterwards?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F2Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F3. Has any of your partners ever made you touch the intimate parts of their body when you did not want that?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F3Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F4. Have you ever been forced by a partner to have sex when you did not wish to do so?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F4Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F5. Have you ever yelled at, humiliated or threatened you boyfriend/girlfriend in order to have your request fulfilled?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F5Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F6. Have you ever hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt your partner?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F6Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F7. Have you ever made your partner touch the intimate parts of your body when he/she did not want that?	☐ 1	☐ 2

		Yes	No
	F7Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
F8.	Have you ever made your partner have sexual intercourse when he/she did not want to?	☐ 1	☐ 2
	F8Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2

SECTION E. YOUR PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS BEHAVIOUR IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Below herein you will find a list of things that can happen in an intimate relationship.

		<i>Absolutely unacceptable</i>	<i>Unacceptable</i>	<i>Somewhat acceptable</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>Totally acceptable</i>
E1.	Set offensive nicknames to your partner	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E2.	To laugh at the clothes worn or the way they look	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E3.	Determine in whose accompany to be	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E4.	Damage personal belongings of the partner	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E5.	Impose on how to act	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E6.	To strongly shake or push	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E7.	To slap or hit	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E8.	Ignore or refuse to talk to them.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E9.	To shout out at him/her when you are alone	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E10.	Yell at him/her in public places	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E11.	To persecute and harass constantly	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E12.	To put pressure for having a sexual act	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E13.	Force to commit a sexual act	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
E14.	Control activity on social networks	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

SECTION G. YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Below herein you will find some questions regarding the consumption of tobacco, alcohol and drugs.

How old were you when...	Never	10 or younger than 10 years old	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 or over years old
G1. Smoked a cigarette , even if one single puff?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
G2. Had more than one or two sips of beer, wine or other alcohol ?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
G3. Had weed/ marijuana?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Have you ever done the following in the last 12 months? (Check one box for each line)

	Yes	No
G4. Smoked cigarettes?	☐ 1	☐ 2
G5. Consumed more than 1 or 2 glasses of wine, beer or other type of alcohol?	☐ 1	☐ 2
G6. Consumed a lot of alcohol (have got drunk or)?	☐ 1	☐ 2
G7. Smoked cannabis?	☐ 1	☐ 2
G8. Used any other narcotics?	☐ 1	☐ 2
G9. Forced to have sex without your consent?	☐ 1	☐ 2
G10. Arrested by the police?	☐ 1	☐ 2

G11. How often have you smoked in the last months? Circle an option.

1. None, I don't smoke
2. Less than one cigarette a day
3. Up to 5 cigarettes a day
4. About half a pack (10 cigarettes) a day
5. About a pack (20 cigarettes) a day
6. About one a half packs a day (30 cigarettes)
7. Two packs (40 cigarettes) a day

SECTION H. FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Think about a boy/girl or group of friends who you stay with. Can you tell us whether they...

		Not at all true	Rarely true	Occasionally true	Totally true
H1.	Get into trouble (dangerous activities)	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
H2.	Try to do the right thing.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
H3.	Have a good performance at school	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
H3.	Understand when you say no about something.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
H4.	Understand when you say no about something.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

Although it may have never happened in your family, do you think the following actions are sufficient to contact the police or other authorities? Check only **one of the boxes** in each line.

		Yes	No
H5.	Hitting a family member to the point of requiring medical assistance	☐ 1	☐ 2
H6.	Be forced to have sexual intercourse against their wish, even if only once	☐ 1	☐ 2
H7.	Continuous kicking, punching, hitting or slapping	☐ 1	☐ 2
H8.	Even if just one slap, punch, hit or kick	☐ 1	☐ 2
H9.	Set offensive nicknames to your partner or continuous insult	☐ 1	☐ 2

Please answer to the following statements

		Yes	No
H10.	My parents want to know when I go out with friends and who they are.	☐ 1	☐ 2
H11.	In my free time out of the house, my parents know who I am with and where.	☐ 1	☐ 2
H12.	My parents want me to tell them where I am if I won't be going back home immediately after school.	☐ 1	☐ 2

How often does it happen?

		Never	Very rarely (several times a year)	Rarely (several times a month)	Often 2-3 times a week	Very often Almost every day
H13.	How often do you have disagreements or conflicts with your parents?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
H14.	How often do you talk with your parents about your future plans?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

H15.	How often do you talk with your parents about your friends?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
H16.	How often do you talk with your parents about your relationship with your teachers?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
H17.	How often do you talk with your parents about your intimate relationships?	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

SECTION J. YOUR FAMILY

Below herein you will find some questions on your experiences with your family. Check one box for each line.

		Yes	No
J1.	Have you ever been afraid your family members could put your life at risk?	☐ 1	☐ 2
	J1Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
J2.	Have you ever seen your family members while being persecuted, abused, hit with an object or threatened with a weapon by an ex partner or a current partner?	☐ 1	☐ 2
	J2Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2
J3	Do you know whether any of your family members has been sexually abused?	☐ 1	☐ 2
	J3Y. If yes, has this happened in the last 12 months?	☐ 1	☐ 2

*Although it may have never happened in your family, do you think the following actions are sufficient to contact the police or other authorities? Check only **one of the boxes** in each line.*

		Yes	No
J4.	Swearing or making offensive comments	☐ 1	☐ 2
J5.	Slapping, punching, kicking or hitting	☐ 1	☐ 2
J6.	Slapping, punching, kicking or hitting to the point of requiring medical assistance	☐ 1	☐ 2
J7.	Forcing to have sexual intercourse	☐ 1	☐ 2

SECTION K. YOUR BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

Below herein there are some statements regarding certain situations that may happen in life.

		Totally against	Somehow against	Somehow agree	Totally Agree
K1.	When I make plans, I am sure I may realise them.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
K2.	I find it difficult to make new friends.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
K3.	I set important goals for myself, but rarely reach them.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
K4.	Failure makes me try harder.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
K5.	I feel insecure about my ability to do things.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
K7.	I am a conscientious person.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
K8.	I have friends because I am capable of making new friends	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
K9.	I give up easily.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
K10.	I do not feel able to solve most of the problems I come across with in life.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

SECTION L. GETTING HELP

L1. If the person you are in an intimate relationship with is **threatening, humiliating or trying to control you**, what are the chances you tell: *Please check only one box in each line.*

		Not at all likely	A little	Somehow	Very likely
a.	...one of your parents	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
b.	...a friend	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
c.	...a doctor	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
d.	...a teacher	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
e.	...a representative of your religious belief	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
f.	...a psychologist or adviser	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
g.	...another adult	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

L2. If the person you are in an intimate relationship with is **physically hurting/abusing you**, what are the chances you tell...? *Please check only one box in each line.*

		Not at all likely	A little	Somehow	Very likely
a.	...one or both your parents	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
b.	...a friend	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

	<i>Not at all likely</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Somehow</i>	<i>Very likely</i>
c. ...a doctor	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
d. ...a teacher	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
e. ...a representative of your religious belief	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
f. ...a psychologist or adviser	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
g. ...another adult	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

L3. If the person you are in an intimate relationship with is forcing you to have sexual intercourse without your consent, what are the chances you tell...: *Please check only one box in each line.*

	<i>Not at all likely</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>Somehow</i>	<i>Very likely</i>
a. ...one or both your parents	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
b. ...a friend	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
c. ...a doctor	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
d. ...a teacher	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
e. ...a representative of your religious belief	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
f. ...a psychologist or adviser	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
g. ...another adult	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

SECTION M. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

M1. How old are you? _____

M2. Your gender

1. Female
2. Male
3. Other

M3. How would you describe yourself? Please circle one number

1. Albanian (Born in Albania)
2. Albanian (Born outside Albania, e.g. Italy, Greece, UK)
3. Roma
4. Egyptian
5. Other: Specify _____

M4. Who are you currently living with? Please circle all the possible options:

- A. Mother
- B. Father
- C. Grandparents
- D. Stepmother or my father's partner
- E. Stepfather or my mother's partner
- F. Caregiver
- G. Caregiver
- H. Sisters or brothers
- I. Other (specify) _____

M5. How many times have you changed your place of living in the last 12 months?
_____ times

M6. Which grade are you at? Please check only one box.

10 th grade	11 th grade	12 th grade	99
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

M7. What is your grades average for the current academic year? Please circle only one of the options.

Lower than 6	6.1 - 7	7.1 - 8	8.1 - 9	9.1 - 10
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	5

M8. How many days were you absent from school during the last academic year?

- 1. Less than 3 days
- 2. 3 – 7 days
- 3. 7 – 10 days
- 4. More than 10 days

M9. Have you had any attendance issues during the last academic year?

- ☐1 = Yes
- ☐2 = No
- ☐3 = I don't know

M10. Have you had any disciplinary issues during the last academic year?

- ☐1 = Yes

❑2 = No

❑3 = I don't know

M11. Does your mother have any of the following titles/diplomas? 1. She does not have any diploma yet. 2. Elementary school diploma 3. High school diploma 4. Vocational school diploma 5. Bachelor's degree 6. Master's degree 7. PhD 8. I don't know	M12. What is your mother's job? 1) Employed in the public sector 2) Employed in the private sector 3) Self-employed 4) Unemployed 5) Housewife 6) Retired 7) Student 8) Other 9) I don't know/
M13. Does your father have any of the following titles/diplomas? 1. He does not have any diploma yet. 2. Elementary school diploma 3. High school diploma 4. Vocational school diploma 5. Bachelor's degree 6. Master's degree 7. PhD 8. I don't know	M14. What is your father's job? 1) Employed in the public sector 2) Employed in the private sector 3) Self-employed 4) Unemployed 5) Housewife 6) Retired 7) Student 8) Other 9) I don't know/

M15. To your knowledge, what is your the total income your family can earn in a month, from salaries, sales of goods, remittances, etc.?

- 1) My family gets economic assistance
- 2) Less than ALL 200 thousand old Leke
- 3) ALL 200.000 – 300.000 old Leke
- 4) ALL 300.000 – 500.000 old Leke
- 5) ALL 500.000 – 700.000 old Leke
- 6) ALL 700.000 – 800.000 old Leke
- 7) More than 800,000 old Leke
- 8) I don't know