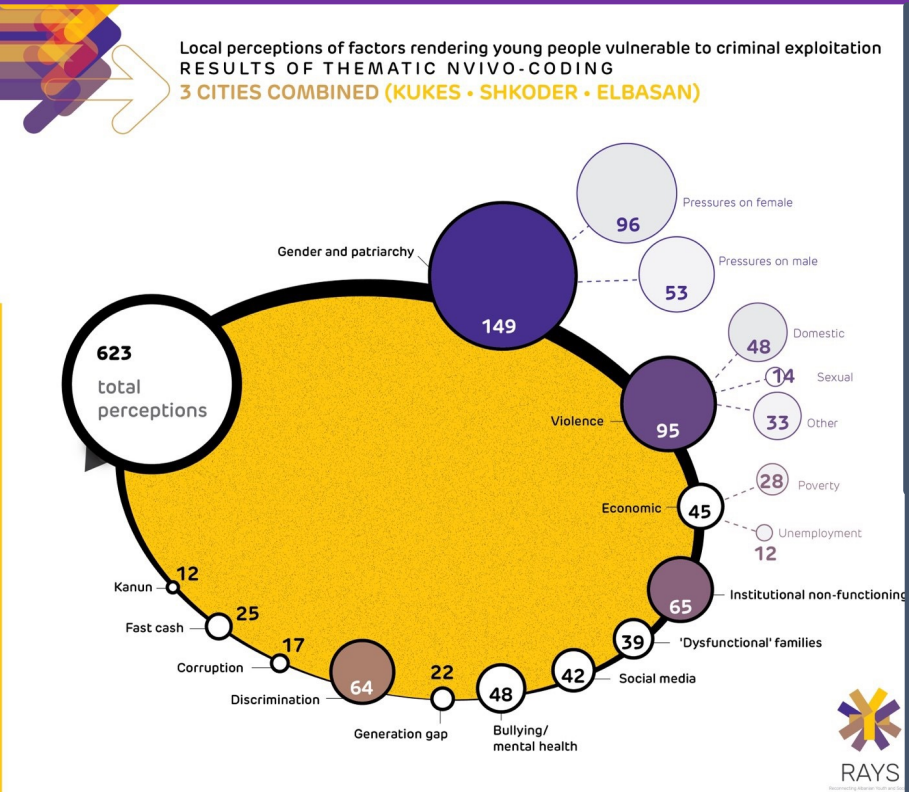
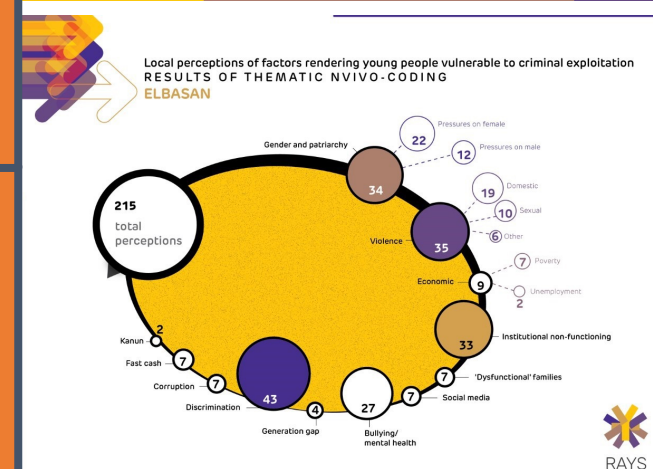
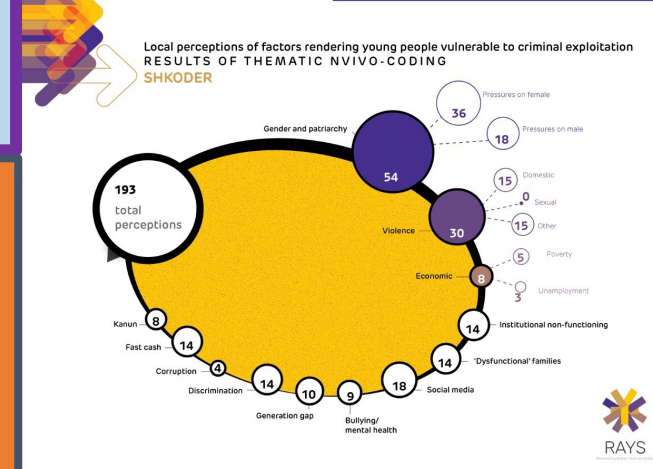
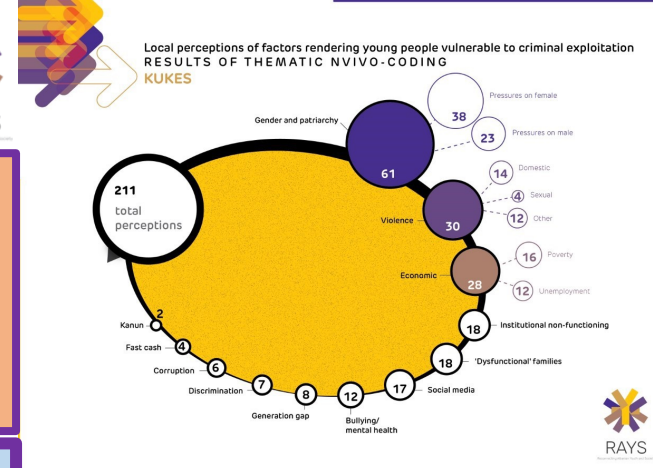


Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

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Context: in late 2021 and early 2022, the team conducted a systematic, focus-group study of local perceptions and knowledge on young Albanians' risks of, and vulnerability to, SOC exploitation as well as on locally available protection and support structures in Kukës, Shkoder and Elbasan (areas previously identified as high-risk for young people). The main aim was to generate better insights about local understandings of risk factors and recourse available to support young people considered at risk in the local communities. Additionally, the study aimed to elucidate local experience with, and perceptiveness towards, participatory music-based activities as feasible engagement and intervention tools with young people, as planned pilot projects aimed at strengthening their resilience against criminal exploitation. FGDs were conducted with young people (14 to 16 years of age), parents/carers (a mixed group; and a women's only group); and with professionals working with young people in their communities, in the cities of Kukës, Shkoder and Elbasan – three municipal centres of Albanian regions that have been associated with heightened risks of criminal exploitation. In all, more than 200 local stakeholders participated with 14 to 33 per group – considerably larger than originally planned.

Data analysis: NVivo software was applied to code, transcribed and translated, 45 hours of FGDs. Coding was conducted along overarching themes identified (with multiple sub-themes, respectively): a) the local understanding of risk factors; b) institutional issues & experiences with participatory arts; c) 'music', encompassing 'media, music, culture, and identity'; d) 'family and gender roles'; and e) 'crime and social status'. Apart from quantitative findings about local understandings, the qualitative discourse analysis revealed some unexpected social norms and value orientations as underpinning risks. The findings translated into recommendations and guiding themes which, in turn, informed specific tasks set for the PAR (participatory action research) and FAM—concept led, music based intervention activities.



Selected findings

1. Patriarchal gender relations exerted pressures and obligations on both young men and women in ways seen to heighten risks of criminal exploitation.
2. Domestic violence was found to be a strong risk theme identified in nearly all but the mixed parents' groups (evident strongly in the women's only groups).
3. Internal structures of social exclusion related to strong risk perceptions (identified along ethnic; rural-urban; return migration; familist prejudices and 'social honour' concepts).
4. The high valuation of family values ('familism'; social honour) simultaneously posed risks for those falling outside the norm (e.g. divorced, single mothers and their children)
5. 'Open door' vs. 'closed door' discussions about the reintegration of deviant children suggested a societal favouring of boys over girls; and indicated.
6. And much more!

Resulting Guiding Themes (for FAM / PAR applications)

1. Gendered identity constructions; masculinity and vulnerable masculinities; gendered forms of exclusion and effects of domestic violence.
2. Mattering, belonging, social status anxieties.
3. Other boundaries of social exclusion/inclusion (e.g. ethnic; rural-urban internal migrants; environmental; return migrants; familist prejudices and 'social honour' concepts).
4. The role of the family / generational divide.
5. Experiences of bullying / mental health issues