

National Report on the Situation of Children's Rights in Albania 2013-2014



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Dear readers,

The 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important event not only for Albania, but for the entire world as well. This convention came after a deep revolution in the way adults thought about children – they are considered neither a possession of adults, nor an extension of parents, but as independent individuals with full rights. The ratification of Convention by Albania in 1992 served as a milestone for the creation of democratic values and treating children as citizens entitled to full rights.

When we talk about the rights of children, it is normal to imagine children who are happy, playing games and entertaining, who have a chance to be educated, socialized and accepted by friends and teachers, who are part of a community that appreciates, protects, and looks after them, and who are living in a country focused on vulnerable children or at risk.

However, this is not the situation in Albania, yet. Children suffer from grave violation of their rights and their wellbeing is rarely discussed as a priority issue by politics and society. Furthermore, when we talk about specific groups of children such as children with disabilities, children in blood-feud, children on street situation and children with HIV/AIDS, the programs are often far from understanding, achieving and addressing the rights and needs of such groups.

Although, a series of initiatives are taken to meet the needs and rights of children – such as giving an additional bonus to families benefiting from economic aid program for each child at school age, the initiative to protect and care for children on street situation, the initiative to prevent the institutionalization of children in orphanages, etc. -we are conscious that such initiatives are not enough. There is still much to do to build a social protection system which first protects the most vulnerable children and families.

The reports on the situation of rights of children in Albania, drafted by SAPCR, aims to go beyond political lectures and highlight the remaining challenges, difficulties and gaps that still prohibit children from fully enjoying their rights.

SAPCR plays a very active role to become the children's voice and represent directly all children, especially the most marginalized. Promoting direct participation of children in all decision-making processes should become a priority to all institutions at central and local level to ensure respect for their rights and that the programmes are child-oriented.

The exercise of rights of children is a work that influences their lives today; it makes them have a happy and healthy childhood, and at the same time, it makes the children become responsible adults, sharing values for themselves, families and communities thereof.

Therefore, let us join forces and get involved as institutions and society to provide the best protection of the rights of our children towards the European family integration.

Erion Veliaj
Minister of Social Welfare and Youth

Dear readers,

Protecting children's rights is a primary task of state institutions at central and local level which requires a sound legal basis, and also professionals working hard and be in contact with children. In this 25th Anniversary of the Convention on the "Rights of Child", we might list many important steps taken through the years, such as legal and institutional improvements, child protection programs, strategies, action plans, and public policies addressing children issues.

It is not enough to foresee the rights of children in Conventions and laws, but they need to be fully implemented to all children on equal manner. The rights of children can and should be exercised by combating poverty, providing health care, education for all, and providing social services to children and families in need.

Children need special protection by the state. Any institutional delay in reacting against the violation of children's rights would risk their physical, emotional and psychological safety. In this aspect, Albania needs to consolidate the institutions monitoring and controlling how the legal framework is implemented, the quality of child services and above all they should identify the gaps of children rights protection system. For many years, this role has been played by national and international civil society organizations in Albania. Besides the work of civil society, the state institutions working in this field need to be strengthened.

The periodic report of SAPCR on the situation of children rights protection in Albania, whose preface I have the privilege to write, is useful for highlighting the achievements and future challenges, and clarifying the real tasks of local and central institutions in terms of children rights protections.

No reason can justify the lack of response and coordination among the institutions in case of violence against children, blood-feud children, exploited or children on street situation, etc. The funds are never enough to invest in children and their future, but we have all the possibilities to capitalize on our financial resources and to coordinate the initiatives of government with the initiatives of our local and international partners, and above all, to channel all our energies for more concrete actions and less abstract work.

Adoption of laws should not be a reason to rejoice, just because we have well-written the next law, if we do not implement it; strategies and action plans should not be viewed as the next task to be completed within the time limits; the coordination and the meetings among the local and central institutions should not be seen as a race to avoid responsibilities. Children are sincere, likewise parents should be sincere when they work with them and show dedication thereto.

In conclusion, I would like to thank SAPCR for giving me the opportunity to write a few words on the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Child in this periodic report. This professional report will be useful to me and to my colleagues in our future work, using it as map for better orientation as to where the support and intervention of the Albanian Parliament is needed.

All those, contributing every day for children, merit gratitude for their noble work and for the investment they are making in the future of society. A society that respects and guarantees children rights are safer and healthier today and in the future.

Thank you!

Prof. Dr. Vasilika Hysi
Chairperson of Sub-commission for Human Rights
Albanian Parliament

List of Abbreviations

SAPCR	State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights
GDSSS	General Directorate of State Social Service
RDSSS	Regional Directorates of State Social Service
IECD	The Institutions for Executing Criminal Decisions
SILSS	State Inspectorate for Labour and Social Services
CPC	Criminal Procedure Code
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CC	Criminal Code
NAC	National Adoptive Council
MSWY	Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
MI	Ministry of Interior
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIA	Ministry of Interior Affairs
CRU	Child Rights Unit
CPU	Child Protection Unit
APC	Action Plan for Children 2012-2015
NDHR	National Demographical and Health Research

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Introduction

November 20, 2014 is a special day in the history of children's rights all over the world as it marks the 25th anniversary of the Convention on Rights of Child, the mostly ratified Convention of the United Nations, which raises children and their rights on the pedestal of universal human rights. Our country adhered in this Convention on 27 February 1992 and has ratified three optional protocols thereof. This anniversary represents a unique opportunity to analyse the impacts such documents had on the exercise of children's rights in Albania and to create a platform for reflection about the fulfilment of children's rights in Albania in the future.

To commemorate this important moment, the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights (SAPCR) decided to present the National Report on the Situation of the Rights of Children 2013-2014.

This is the third report by SAPCR. The Report is in line with one of the main functions of the Agency, based on its legal mandate, which is monitoring the implementation of frame Law 10347 "On the Protection of Children's Rights". This law, together with the Council of Ministers Decision (CMD) which complements it¹, and the Action Plan for Children 2012-2015 (APC) are the main cornerstones for the protection of children's rights in Albania. To make this function more complete, CMD No. 267, dated 12.04.2012² gives SAPCR the right to collect data from a number of institutions at local and central level to draft periodic reports, based on the Action Plan.

Different from the previous reports, the 2013-2014 Report has a new approach for monitoring the situation of children's rights. It is not limited to analysing the implementation of the identified objectives in the 2012-2015 APC, but it casts a broader view on the situation of children's rights to have a complete understanding of the situation and its problems.

This is due to several reasons: firstly, the priorities on children's rights embedded in the 2011-2012 APC do not take into consideration the changes made both to national and international level in the field of children's rights. The change of government brought changes in priorities as well. The new Albanian government, which started work in 2013, has a renewed program with objectives and priorities related to children that are not fully reflected in the APC. Such is, for example, the priority given to the work with children on street situation. Furthermore, no revision mechanism is foreseen for the APC during its term, thus limiting its effectiveness as a guiding document of policies and measures to exercise children's rights.

Secondly, APC is not the only Albanian government guiding document on the children's rights. In 2012, Albania was evaluated by the Committee on the Rights of Child (CRC) which gave our country a list of recommendations in all the fields of children's rights to be implemented progressively, based on which Albania will be once again evaluated in 2017.

The CRC recommendations are another fundamental document, based on which the progress of accomplishing the children's rights will be evaluated. Therefore, to identify achievements and

¹ CMD No. 263, date 12.04.2012 "On determining detailed rules for collaboration between institutional mechanisms and nongovernmental organizations, to implement the country policies for children's rights protection";
CMD No. 264, date 12.04.2012 "On the procedures for controlling and imposing sanctions by the State Agency for the protection of children's rights";
CMD No. 265, date 12.04.2012 "On creating and operating the mechanism for coordinating the work between the responsible state authorities for referral of cases of vulnerable children, and its relevant procedure". CMD No. 266, date 12.04.2012 "On coordinating mechanisms on a central and local level for issues of children's rights protection";
CMD No. 267, date 12.04.2012 "On the Types, Ways of Information Exchange and Statistical Data Required by the Agency and Responsible State Structures, on a Local and National Level".

² Council of Ministers Decision No. 267, date 12.04.2012 "On the Types, Ways of Information Exchange and Statistical Data Required by SAPCR and Responsible State Structures, on a Local and National Level"

progress, the APC objectives and CRC recommendations are taken into consideration. Both such documents, as a reflection on the situation of rights, are useful to measure the progress and gaps.

This shift in approach brought also a change in methodology of data collection and analysis. Therefore, state institutions are gathered to give their contribution beyond the APC framework.

The point of view of children has also been taken into consideration in drafting this report through two ad hoc consultations which were organized in collaboration with our partners, and the results of previous consultations with children organized in collaboration with the Agency³.

In addition, the report is based on a series of data on children's rights reported from civil society activists, which complement the view of data in relation to specific issues referred above in the text. To complete the monitoring view of children's rights, SAPCR, in collaboration with other partners, is finalizing a monitoring report on the government budget allocated to children issues.

The preliminary findings of such report have served as point of discussion with institutions that contributed with information and that have a role in fulfilling children's rights. It was done not only to evaluate the findings and the recommendations through an inclusive process, but also to consolidate accountability, to make the report a document which will be useful as a reflection tool on the measures which should be taken by these institutions to address the identified deficiencies.

Despite the changes and improvements included in this report and the efforts to reflect in the best possible way the situation on children's rights, we are conscious that there is still room for improvement and that we are far from an ideal situation. Therefore, our efforts to improve the approach and reporting methodology will continue to advance. A good opportunity would be the drafting of the New Action Plan for Children in 2015 with indicators that will allow an effective monitoring of children's rights situation in Albania.

The report is divided into five thematic chapters. Every chapter is structured to present the current situation, the progress made in every field, to identify the problems and challenges to the full realization of children's rights and to suggest also some recommendations from the point of view of children's rights. The first chapter focuses on legislative and institutional mechanisms for the protection of children's rights; the second chapter focuses on child social protection and protection from all forms of violence; the third chapter takes into consideration issues related to the right to development and education; the fourth chapter analyses quality and access to health services; and the last chapter analyses the issues related to legal protection of children in conflict with the law.

³13 December 2013, Hearing session with children on the MSWY budget, on children's issues in MSWY

19 November 2013, a meeting between the ministers of MSWY, MH, MES, MIA with children and discussing the problems they face in MSWY.

27 May 2014, A hearing session with children and parliament members in the Commission for Labour, Social Issues and Health, in the Albanian Parliament

1 June 2014, A meeting and discussions between the minister and children, in the context of June 1st

19 November 2014, A hearing session with children and the Minister of MSWY, vice minister of MAS, parliament members for 2015 budget.

I. REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Regulatory Framework

Albania has ratified the main conventions and protocols of the United Nations and Council of Europe which underline that children are entitled to full rights and because of their characteristics, physical and intellectual maturity, they need special protection and attention by families and state institutions (*Annex 1: International and National Legislation*).

Since 1992, Albania is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child. This step was followed by the ratification of other important documents in this field. The last one is the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child "On the Communication Procedure"⁴, the Council of Europe Convention "On preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence"⁵.

By ratifying the **third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child "The Communication Procedure"**, the Albanian government confirms once again that children are entitled to full rights and gives them the chance to seek redress to international level if the violations of their rights cannot find a solution within the country's legal system. In this way, the ratification of this new legal instrument ensures that the violations of children's rights receive the same treatment as the violation of human rights on an international level.

The third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child can be implemented without any difficulties within the legal and political context of Albania. This Protocol does not impose any new important obligation, besides the engagement to collaborate in the framework of communication and investigation procedures.

The purpose of the protocol is not to substitute the existing legal means of the country, nor to eliminate the need for analysis and change. More specifically, the purpose of the Protocol is to consolidate the protection and promotion of children's rights and fundamental freedoms in the country. However, even when the measures inside the country are strong sometimes they might fail. If this happens, access to international mechanisms provides secondary but necessary solutions. This procedure allows children to seek redress for the violation under consideration.

The Albania Parliament ratified with Decision No. 63 date 26.11.2013, the **Resolution "For the protection and respect for children's rights in Albania"**. According to this resolution, the Parliament deems as very important the state's duty to protect, respect and promote children's rights deriving from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe Conventions, other international acts ratified by the Albanian Parliament and the country legislation system. The members of Albanian Parliament are committed to improve the legislation on the protection of children, to encourage and monitor the government, activities of the institutions and law enforcement mechanisms to enable protection and respect for children's rights.

In November 2014, a group of MP-s created the **Parliamentary Group -Friends of Children-** which is focused on child rights.

⁴Law No. 86/2013, date 14.02.2013 "On Ratification of the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child "On the Communication Procedure"

⁵Law No. 104/2012, date 19.11.2012 "On Ratification of the Convention of the Council of Europe for "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence"

The scope of the **Council of Europe Convention on “Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”**⁶ is to protect all women, including girls less than 18 years of age from all forms of violence and preventing, legally prosecuting and eliminating violence against women and domestic violence. It aims to design an all-inclusive framework of policies and measures for protecting and helping all victims of violence against women and domestic violence. The convention does not apply only to gender-based violence but it also includes clearly domestic violence and provides protection for all victims of violence inside a family, including children.

The amendments approved recently to the Criminal Code under the Law no. 144/2013, dated 20.5.2013, provide a guarantee for an adequate protection of children from sexual crimes and economic exploitation. Such changes align the Albanian criminal legislation with the international legislation, especially with the Council of Europe Convention (Lanzarote) “*On the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse*”⁷.

Among the key amendments, we can underline Article 1, in which these are added: “*to protect the best interest of children*”. In addition Article 50 is amended as follows: “*e/1) committing a crime during or after the legal orders for protection from domestic violence are issued*”. The lawmaker, among others, decided to increase the penalties for crimes of child sexual abuse, with 15 years to 25 years imprisonment. In the Code, a new crime is added, specifically Article 107, which regards violence of sexual nature. Article 108 is fully amended to offer protection from sexual crimes for children 14-18 years of age. This crime comprises also the attempts to meet children with the intent to have sexual relations with them. Another novelty of the Code is sexual assault, including children, defined in the new paragraph C of Article 108.

Furthermore, child pornography is fully regulated in Article 117 of the Criminal Code, whose recent amendments consider possession, recruitment and other forms of pornography as a crime. As a table redress is given to the protection of children from economic exploitation. Article 124, paragraph C, the Criminal Code, is improved including all forms of child exploitations. According to the new article: “*Coercion, exploitation, inducement or use of children to work, provide incomes, beg or carry out actions that damage his/her mental and/or physical development, or education, is sentenced from two to five years imprisonment*”.

Recently, a section for juveniles is established in Ombudsman by the Law No.155/2014 “On some amendments and additions to the Law no. 8454, date .4.02.1999, “On the Ombudsman”. This is positive news for guaranteeing children’s rights in Albania, as finally our country has also a special office in the Ombudsman, which will handle complaints on the violation of children’s rights and supervise independently such violations.

⁶Law No.104/2012, date 19.11.2012 “On Ratification of the Convention of the Council of Europe for “Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”

⁷Law No.10071, date 9.2.2009 “On ratification of the Council of Europe Convention (Lanzarote) “For protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse”.

The Law No. 10347, dated 4.11.2014 “On the Protection of Children’s rights” and the secondary acts in application thereof, establish the institutional mechanisms at local and central level and how they interact to ensure satisfaction and the protection of children’s rights.

At central level, the following bodies are organized and function:

National Council for the Protection of Children’s Rights

The Ministry that coordinates the work for Protection of Children’s Rights issues

State Agency for the Protection of Children’s Rights

At local level, the following bodies are organized and function:

Unit for Child Rights at regional level (**12 CRU**)

Unit for the Protection of Child at municipal/communal level (**196 CPU**)

Mechanisms at central level

The mechanisms at central level have mainly policymaking, supervisory and coordination functions for the implementation of these policies.

National Council for the Protection of Children’s Rights (NCPCR)

NCPCR is an ad hoc advisory body established with the Prime Minister Order No. 238, dated 11.12.2013 “On the Establishment of the National Council for the Protection of Children’s Rights”.

The national council is chaired by the Minister of MSWY and it is composed of:

- Minister of Interior Affairs
- Minister for Education and Sports
- Minister of Justice
- Minister of Health
- Minister for European Integration
- Minister of Finance
- Minister for Economic Development, Trade and Undertaking
- Minister of State for Local Affairs
- Minister for Urban and Tourism Development
- Ombudsman
- 1 representative from the National Association of Municipalities
- 2 representatives from the civil society

The role of the NCPCR is important to provide and reflect regularly on how progress is achieved, that children live safe, healthy and happy and with hope for the future. The NCPCR through a coordinated inter-sectorial approach aims to have cooperation with the state institutions and civil society to work harder for the respect for and realization of children’s rights.

Following an open competition process, the consortium of associations “Together for the Full care of Child”⁸ and “Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”⁹ were selected as representative

⁸ “Bashkë për Kujdesin Tërësor të Fëmijëve”

⁹ “Mbrojtja e të Drejtave të Personave me Aftësi të Kufizuar”

associations of the civil society sector in NCPCR. The NCPCR members' term of office is 4 years, with the right of renewal, with the exception of members appointed due to their duty.

Now, with new members, the NCPCR convened its second meeting in October 3, 2014 to discuss on the necessity of taking real measures to observe children's rights in Albania, and the challenges for satisfying such rights. Taking into consideration the present situation in the country, the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Report and the indicators of priority 5 (The Guidebook for European Integration), the priorities to intervene were identified about the consolidation of child protection system, including adoption of the Protocol for Child Protection and Care, child-oriented budgeting, and functional coordination among local structures.

Minister coordinating the work for Protection of Children's Rights issues

The Minister coordinating the work for Protection of Children's Rights issues is the state body in charge of coordinating the children's rights issues with all responsible ministries. Based on the role and functions the Ministers play in the government cabinet of the current government, this position is held by the Minister of MSWY, who, through the policymaking instruments, drafts policies and government programs in the field of child protection, and proposes legal and secondary acts amendments to the Council of Ministers, and signing of international acts in the field of child protection.

The several initiatives launched by the Minister of MSWY are described in detail in the specific chapter, in particular in the social protection chapter. During this period, the Minister of MSWY has given priority to listen to children's voices for issues related to them and affecting their lives. The Minister, in collaboration with the Agency¹⁰, has organized five meetings and hearings with children of different ages and interest groups. They discussed on issues of their concern, but even about important issues, such as funding of necessary activities and services for the realization of children's rights during 2014-2015.

State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights (SAPCR)

SAPCR is a legal entity, dependent on the MSWY. It is the key institution whose aim is to supervise the legal framework on protection of children's rights and to coordinate actions for the protection of children.

Since 2014, SAPCR has a new management, whose focus is to consolidate the proactive coordinating role of the institution for child protection issues. This new spirit is reflected even in the new image of the Agency, with a new logo and a new website.

In compliance with the recommendations of the CRC, the SAPCR has consolidated its coordinating role for child protection issues. One of the main priorities of SAPCR for 2013-2014 was to build the child protection system towards a system that provides support and multidisciplinary approach to satisfy the needs of children and families. SAPCR, in collaboration with its partners, has carried out a series of activities to build the capacities of child units at local level (NMF and CRU) and to consolidate the multidisciplinary interventions in order to provide on-going protection to all children. In this context, SAPCR has assumed the responsibility to coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan "Support for families and children on street situation", based on the collaboration agreement between MSWY, the Ministry of Interior Affairs and some NGO-s. As part of this plan, in

¹⁰ 13 December 2013, A hearing with children for the MSWY budget, for children's issues in the MSWY

19 November 2013, A meeting between the ministers of MSWY, MH, MES, MIA and children with topic- problems that concern children

27 May 2014, a hearing session with parliament members of the Commission for Labour, Social Issues and Health in the Albanian Parliament.

1 June 2014, a meeting and a discussion between children and the minister in the context of July 1st

19 November 2014, Hearing with the Minister of MSWY, vice-minister of MAS, members of the Albanian Parliament for 2015 budget

12 June, the World Day against Child Labour, SAPCR did an awareness raising campaign for the protection of children against exploitation to beg and work.

In 2013-2014, SAPCR did a lot of efforts to increase the overall awareness on children's rights and strengthen the mechanism for the children's direct participation in decision-making at local level, to bring children's voices closer to responsible institutions and authorities to exercise Children's Rights. In the context of July 1st celebration, the International Children's Day, SAPCR organized "My day, my rights" activity. The purpose of this activity was to listen to children's voices, to increase awareness on children as individuals with full rights and to promote the importance of participation. During this activity, the representatives of Albanian government and children held a conversation to share ideas on issues which the children are concerned.

On the eve of June 1st, in the Parliamentary Commission of Labour, Social Affairs and Health, a hearing session was organized with children to listen their voices, their concerns about guaranteeing of their rights, their participation in decision-making process related to child issues. The SAPCR has strengthened its collaboration and consultation with civil society stakeholders, as organic part of its work.

SAPCR has satisfied its duty of international reporting on child protection issues. The SAPCR participated in the delegation that went to Geneva in April 2014 in the context of the Universal Periodic Reporting Mechanism (UPR) and answered to questions related to children's rights that were an important part among the concerns raised by the member countries of the Human Rights Council.

SAPCR represents Albanian state and reports to the Monitoring Committee of the Council of Europe Convention for Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, "The Lanzarote Committee". Since 2014, Albania is a member of the Board of Directors of the Lanzarote Committee. Recently, SAPCR has represented Albanian State in the Committee in charge of drafting the new Strategy of the Council of Europe for Children's Rights, in which committee it holds the position of the vice-president.

Mechanism at local level

The Law "**On Protection of Children's Rights**" aims to improve the child protection system in Albania, by creating Children's Rights Units (CRU) and Child Protection Units (CPU) as local government structures which are responsible for coordinating and implementing child protection services and cases management, in collaboration with a number of stakeholders from different fields operating at local level. CRUs operate within the administrative structures of the Regional Council as a specific unit or as a unit attached to other structures dealing with social issues. Currently there are 12 CRUs established and operating in all of Albanian regional councils.

CRUs have supported significantly the local government units in taking responsibilities for protection of children and therefore the number of new CPUs has increased considerably.

The Child Protection Unit (CPU) operates within the administrative structure of a municipality/commune, as a specific unit or as a unit attached to other structures dealing with social issues. It has the duty to identify and manage cases of vulnerable children living inside the unit jurisdiction. Currently, there are **196 CPUs** operating all over the country.

Number of CPUs in

Chart - Number of CPUs through the years

Source: SAPCR

Compared to 2010, when the Law on protection of children's right, in the entire country there were only 16 CPUS, while today there are 196 CPUs, it can be perceived that the process of setting up CPUs has progressed with fast steps.

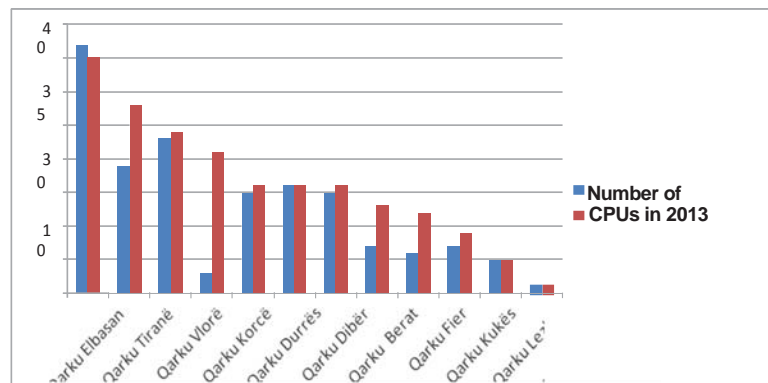
Currently, CPUs provide their services in 51 % of the territory. The progress of setting up CPUs has not been similar in all regions. The regions of Vlora and Durres cover almost entire territory with service, while the regions of Gjirokastra and Shkodra cover, respectively, 3 % and 15 % of the territory. The region of Elbasan has the largest number of CPUs, with 35 in total.

Chart - % of coverage with CPUs per region in 2014

Source: SAPCR

For 2013-2014 reporting period, it is important to stress the setting-up and operation of new CPUs in the Municipality of Tirana and Korça Region. Despite the delay, the Municipality of Tirana assisted in the process of setting up 10 new CPUs; one in every Municipal unit. The region of Korça is the last region which established a CRU in 2013 and according to the table below, it is possible to notice an immediate increase in the number of new CPUs in this region from 2013-2014.

Number of CPUs per Region in 2013 and 2014



Source: SAPCR

A series of activities have been implemented by SAPCR in collaboration with other partners for consolidating the capacities of the mechanisms at local level for the protection of children and other issues, such as: legal registration of unregistered children, managing cases of vulnerable children, working with children on street situation, specialized services for protecting children from sexual abuse, and multidisciplinary work for the protection of children.

In addition, the trainings have involved professionals from different fields, such as police officers, employees in the prosecution office, social services, labour offices; civil society activists etc. who have play a role in the protection of children, in the framework of multidisciplinary approach for the protection of children. In total about 250 professionals were trained during the activities organized by SAPCR. Many similar activities were organized by civil society organizations.

The training “*Child Protection Issues*”, based on a collaboration agreement between MSWY, Ministry of Interior, Faculty of Social Science and a group of organizations, is a big step towards increasing the professionalism in child protection services. This is the first professional training for child protection and the first 20 child protection employees were graduated in 2014.

It is important to create a network of child protection professionals who share their experiences and provide horizontal support for vulnerable children case management. Therefore, in September 2014, SAPCR organized two day training with the topic “*Consolidating the child protection network*”.

The smooth functioning of the children’s rights protection system depends especially on the local authorities that should know well their role and duties to provide care and protection for children and to coordinate their actions with other local stakeholders engaged in children’s wellbeing.

Local government leaders often do not pay the proper attention to the specific profile of CPU employee. However, under the legal terms, in some small communes and municipalities, the role of CPU is given to the social administrator. As a consequence of having multiple tasks at the same time, the work load is bigger and the time available is limited. Currently, there are only 32 CPUs having this function and the other 164 CPUs are run by social administrators. Furthermore, the change of leadership of local institutions, municipalities, communes, regions have brought also the change of CRU and CPU employees, too. Considering the direct role and responsibilities these structures have while working with children and their families, the problems are even more sensitive. Frequent staff changes impede the creation of a sustainable model for the protection of children’s rights that is an important element for the development of a national protection system. In these cases, new employees need training and capacity building. Often, lack of experience or even lack of qualification among the new employees results in a low work productivity.

Issues to be addressed

The existing legal provision should be reviewed and harmonized with the Law on Protection of Children's Rights and other international standards unified with the international instruments on children's rights.

More efforts should be done to ensure that the principle of children's best interest is integrated appropriately and applied consistently in all procedures, policies, programs and respective projects that are related to children or have an impact on them.

NCPCR should continue to perform its functions regularly, according to the time limits defined in the legislation, monitoring the work on children's rights and encouraging collaboration between the responsible ministries, local units and non-governmental organizations.

State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights should strengthen its coordination and monitoring role, to have sufficient authority and human, technical and financial resources to coordinate effectively the actions and the interventions for children's rights at national and local level.

The setting-up of Child Protection Units in all Albanian Municipalities should be a legal obligation to all new administrative units which will be established as a result of the territorial reform. The municipalities should also provide sufficient financial resources for child services. The new municipalities should preserve the human resources created in recent years and should create proper CPUs with more than 1 staff member.

Having transparent and inclusive institutional budget planning through public dialogue, especially with the participation of children, will support the fulfilment of children's rights.

Improving the database system to evaluate the progress made in children's rights.

Taking more active measures to promote the Convention on the rights of the child and the approved protocols will raise awareness on children's rights among institutions, the public in general, and children specifically.

Children's Contribution¹¹

Why is it good to be a child nowadays?

I feel free to act in different situations – I don't have a lot of responsibilities.

You are more protected from the family and the state.

We are the difference for the future. We are considered as hope for the future.

I have a positive belief that I will be the one to bring change in the future.

I feel I am at the peak of my mental and physical abilities – at the peak of development and energies.

When you are young you have fewer complexities.

Being young means to have the right to be entertained and play more than the adults.

Why is it not good to be a child nowadays?

Our ideas are not taken into consideration, we feel bad about this.

We lack freedom on everything we want.

Our rights are easily violated.

Everybody thinks we are not experienced enough to contribute.

We have little chances to be entertained, to play and show our talents.

We feel vulnerable to violence and injustices.

My parents are jobless.

If we had problems we do not know where to go to ask for help.

¹¹Discussion group directed by SAPCRme30 young people assembled in November, 2014, in Elbasan, facilitated by Save the Children

II. RIGHT TO FAMILY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

The right to family and social protection is one of the essential rights that is legally defined very clearly and one of the most important international instruments. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, in article 27, stipulates the rights of children to have an adequate standard of living. Article 26 defines the obligation that all state parties have to fulfill the rights of children and families for safety and social protection in compliance with national legislations. The committee on the Rights of the Child states: *“Growing up in relative poverty undermines children’s well-being, social inclusion and self-esteem and reduces opportunities for learning and development. All possible means should be employed, including material assistance and support programs for children and families, in order to assure to young children a basic standard of living in consistency with their rights.”*

Background

Data related to the situation of children

Monitoring and following up on the indicators of social protection and on the level of social exclusion of children is difficult because currently data are not collected and processed systematically for children in difficult situations in Albania. Researchers, evaluations and documents created during different interventions or programs bring to the attention the large number of children at risk from poverty, abuse, exploitation or violence. This chapter will present an overview of data, showing the factors of risk that Albanian children are exposed to.

Poverty is one of the main causes of social exclusion. According to the latest data from LSMS 2012¹⁰ poverty in Albania increased from 12.4% in 2008 to 14.3 % in 2012; the rates of macroeconomic growth have decreased showing that Albania has been hit by the global financial crises. There is a growth in that part of the population whose monthly consumption per capita is under 4.891 Leke (based on the process in 2012). For the first time, poverty increased more in the urban areas and data show that the scale of poverty decreased in the mountainous areas which have always had high indicators of poverty. This decrease can be as a result of the ongoing demographic migrations from the mountainous areas to the other regions. The 2011 CENSUS shows for the first time that the urban population is larger than the rural population in Albania, making 53.7 % of the population. The poverty gap and the severity of the poverty have been on the rise since 2008. The percentage of children living in absolute poverty is 20.1 %. In the rural areas, this percentage is larger with 21.4 %, while in the urban areas is 18.9 %. Families with more than 4 children have the highest percentage of poverty in the country with 49.6 %, while the age group of children 0-4 years old has the highest percentage of children living in poverty, 22 %.¹¹

Poverty poses a risk factor and is one of the basic causes of many observations. **Children in a street situation**, begging, living or working on the streets is now a very disturbing phenomenon. They live in unacceptable physical and social conditions; they do not go to school and often are subject to different forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.

For the first time in Albania, a research was made in 2013-2014 on a nation level to evaluate this problem. Data indicate that 2527 children live in street situation in Albania and more than 700 of them are in Tirana.¹² Boys, between 10-17 years old is the largest group, twice the number of girls.

¹⁰ Albania: Poverty Trend”, INSTAT, September 2013

¹¹ Albania: Poverty Trend”, INSTAT, September 2013

¹² Children in street situation – national research, ARSIS, GFK, UNICEF, SCiA, 2014

For younger children observations show that there is a more equal spread between genders. One third of children in street situation are teenagers between 15-17 years old, while children belonging to age group 4-14 years old make the majority.

Disturbing is the fact that 4 % of children in a street situation are 0-3 year-old infants. Usually they are under the company of their mothers but there are cases when they are left without any supervision. Most of the children belong to Roma and Egyptian communities¹³.

Besides children in street situation, there are other children who are forced to work and help families to come out of poverty. Data for children employed in the formal economy can be collected from the administrative data of the State Inspectorate for Labor and Social Services (SILSS). However, data for children who work in the informal economy can be collected only through research and surveys. According to data from SILSS for 201, there are 114 children employed in the formal sector of the economy. Most of employed children are 17 year old females. Most of children have been through high-school and have been employed in manufacturing companies.

In the mines of Bulqiza there are 32 children who collect chrome¹⁴; generally children are not exploited from third parties. They go out to collect chrome to fulfill their needs and their family needs. Many teenagers are involved on this activity for pocket money, even to buy cigarettes and alcohol. The first national research made by INSTAT (Institute of Statistics) and ILO/IPEC in 2010 on child labor showed that 8.2 % of children 5-17 years old are economically active.

Preliminary data¹⁵ from a research show that almost 22.5 % of 15-17 years-old boys and 14.5 % of girls of the same age declare that are currently working.

A special category of children who need social protection are children **on the move**¹⁶, a term that comprises children belonging to emigrant families, children in a street situation, trafficked children as well as Roma and Egyptian children. Children on the move in Albania is a category that is not well identified and addressed. In general, the current protection services do not fulfill the needs of children on the move.

Children in Albania face different form of violence inside their families, schools and communities. Domestic violence has a negative impact on women and children. Psychological violence is the type of violence which is more frequently reported from children¹⁷. About 61.69% of children have experienced at least one form of psychological violence in their lives.

The same high rate of for physical violence; 48.42 % of children have experienced at least one form of physical violence during their lives, and 59.45 % of children report they have experienced physical violence during the previous year. 11.4 % of children have experienced sexual harassment and 4.888% of children sexual violence involving contact at least once during their life.

According to a recent research on online child safety¹⁸, 85% of 1-18 years-old children have access to internet through home computers which in most of the cases are in their rooms. Internet cafes are widely accessible both in rural and urban areas. 44 % of children use internet to watch pornographic materials every day. Only last year, 47 % of 13-18 year old children were contacted via internet from unidentified persons who were foreigners in 40 % of the cases.

¹³ Children in street situation – national research, ARSIS, GFK, UNICEF, SCiA, 2014

¹⁴ Children in street situation – national research, ARSIS, GFK, UNICEF, SCiA, 2014

¹⁵ “budgeting for children” a research that is being made by the Institute of Contemporary Studies and State agency for the Protection of Children’s Rights , with the support of Save the Children

¹⁶ Terre des Hommes and Save the Children in Albania are currently working in this field

¹⁷ Cenko E., Hazizaj A., Haxhiymeri E., Çoku B. (2013), Violence against children in Albania. An Epidemiologic Study on Abuse against Children and Neglect (BECAN), CRCA Albania, Tirana.

¹⁸ Study on Online Child Safety, World Vision (2014)

Observations show that children have little information on safe information exchange over the internet and on the responsible structures where they should report their online incidents. Family members and friends are the first people children report a problem to, while it is not very probable that children will turn to teachers and police officers to seek for help or report a problem.

Service coverage

The current social protection system in Albania provides economic support in cash for poor families and people with disabilities and social services, mainly residential services for abandoned children and children with social problems. According to the administrative data for 2014¹⁹, 132.000 poor children belong to those families that benefit from the Economic Assistance. The largest number of families with children that benefit from the economic assistance scheme live in the northern areas such as Kukes and Diber, and less in Durres and Tirana.

About 17.698 children with disabilities receive the necessary services and payments defined in the legislation. Out of them, 9345 children are registered in the educational system. The new law for people with disabilities, approved in 2014, creates the necessary conditions for equal respect of human rights for all groups of people with disabilities, harmonizing the Albanian legislation with the

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The new law gives a basic and unique definition of a person with disabilities, based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), as a standard for World Health Organization. In addition, efforts are being made to reform the commission for evaluating and diagnosing disabilities in order to take the necessary measures for complete treatment of disabilities and lessen the impact on children's lives and their families.

However, connecting payments with the system of social service protection remains a challenge, and this is the case not only for poor and disabled children. Data from the social service map show that the number of service providers has increased from 120 in 2007 to 187 in 2012. However, there not yet any mechanisms to connect the different social protection elements in order to treat thoroughly children and families in need.

The network of care services is under reformation and currently targets different categories of children. The network of care services is at the core of the institutional activity of the State Social Service:

- x. Orphans and abandoned children;
- x. Children with disabilities (mental and physical);
- x. Children as victims of violence;
- x Children /infants as victims of trafficking;
- x. Children from families with social problems;
- x Children in a street situation;
- x. Repatriated children.

In order to support orphans, abandoned children and children coming from families with social problems there is the network of institutions for social care which is organized according to the structure below:

- x Residential Center for Children;
- x The center for Rehabilitating and Developing Children with Disabilities;
- x Day center for children with disabilities;
- x The center for hosting and rehabilitating trafficked infants, and victims of violence;
- x Day center for supporting children in need;
- x Emergency Transition Centre.

During May 2013-april 2014, the network of public and nonpublic social care institutions has provided treatment for:

¹⁹ Administrative data from the State Social Service

- x 596 children – in child care residential institutions. 287 of them were treated in public residential institutions;
309 children (in 12 non-public residential institutions, NGO-s);
- x 4697 children in care and community services provided by NGO-s Statistical Bulletin of SSS – 2013); Out of them:
72 children (in day centers in 3 public institutions in Durrës, Shkodra and Saranda);
102 children in total treated in 4 “Shelters for Victims of Trafficking and “1 “ National Center for treating Victims of Violence”;
50 children with disabilities in 6 Public Development Centers and 45 children in 3 day centers for persons with disabilities. 40 children in 5 Nonpublic residential centers – NGO-s for people with disabilities.

The need to shelter children remains high: only during January-December 2013, the residential institutions for child care have commissioned and shelters 117 children. Out of them, 100 children in public institutions and 17 in nonpublic institutions.

In contrast to previous years, this year the number of children abandoned in the maternity has been higher, 41 children who have been placed in all of the residential institutions. Of great concern are also children known as social orphans. They are not abandoned by their parents but they cannot stay with their families for different reasons: 76 of them were accommodated in the institutions of care in 2013. During 2013, 50 children left the public and nonpublic institution and returned to their biological families. In addition 46 adoptions took place in the public and nonpublic institutions of care.

In recent years efforts have been made to work towards a new child protection concept: transforming residential centers in the “**house-family**” model. House-family model is a valid alternative to avoid the consequences of institutionalization and collective living. House-families are characterized for creating positive elements which follow on the model of a natural family in order to provide to every person/child the optimal housing conditions, safety, human affection and solidarity which are necessary for a harmonious personal growth. In recent years two residential centers for children have been transformed and are operating in the house-family model: The House of Children 0-6 years old in Durres, where 20 children are provided with treatment in two “House-families” and the Zyber Hallulli Children’ House for 6-16 years-old children in Tirana which is transformed in 4 apartments for 46 residential children. Part of this residential network for child services are also nonpublic residential centers, NGO-s, which provide this service according to the “House-family “model for children in need. Below is a list of these centers:

SOS- Fshatrat e Fëmijëve- Tirana	69 children
SFI- Rreze Dielli – Tirana	08 children
“Orët Fatlume” – Elbasan	29 children
Vatër e Ngrohtë – Gjirokastra	14 children
Fillimet e Reja – Tirana	13 children
“Bijat e Dashurisë” Catholic Mission– Mollas Elbasan	07 children
“ Papa Giovanni XXIII’ Community- Shkodra	20 children

Temporary care service is new for Albania. The organization and provision of this service is a reform in the field of social services, based on the Strategy and Standards for providing care services for children who do not have parental care. 100 children have benefited from this service all over Albania²⁰. The analysis of the available data identified that the care services are provided mainly from families that are biologically related with the child (relatives).

²⁰ Administrative data from the State Social Service.

The service is limited by lack of capacities in some levels of care provision, support in residential care and the overall mentality of the population in relation to this service.

During May 2013-May 2014, based on the procedures implemented by the Albanian Committee of Adoptions (NAC) 41 children were adopted. Constant monitoring in the child residential institutions has identified problems in documenting children's development and their health conditions. Considered as a monitoring mechanism and an ongoing evaluation of the adoption process to the best interest of the child, NAC has made 50 post-adoption reports in the Albanian families.

Progress

Social protection

The government is undertaking some essential reforms which aim to increase the efficiency of the support programs and aim to provide thorough support to families based on existing models and practices.

The Economic Assistance Program (NE) is being reformed in order to identify better families in need, and to exclude abuse cases in order to channel the assistance towards those families that deserve it. The new scheme is being piloted initially in Elbasan, Tirana and Durrës, and in a second phase will be expanded all over the territory of Albania.

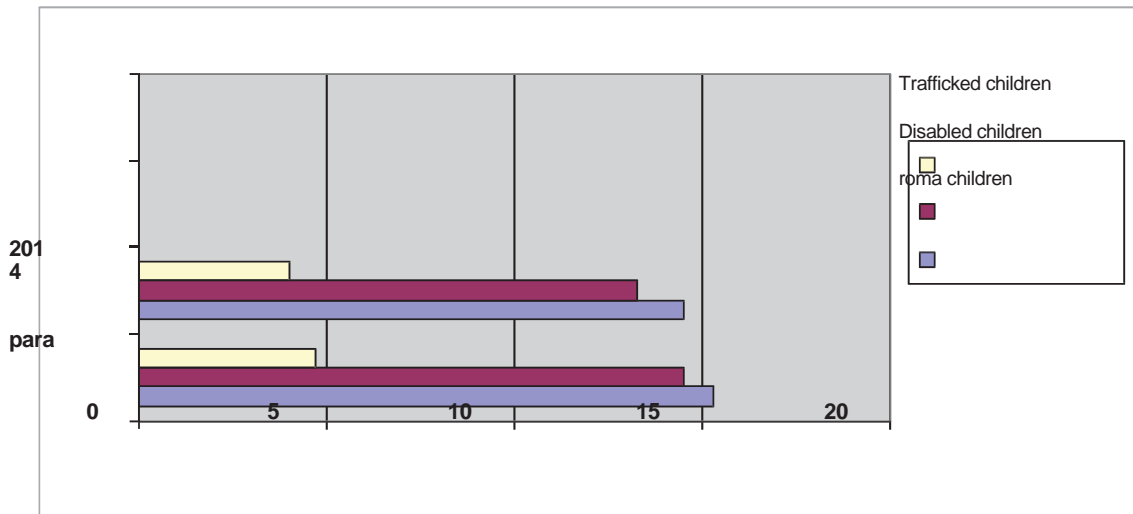
The new economic scheme, with the new criteria, has decreased the number of abuses. The table below shows that during the piloting months (May-June 2014) the number of families benefiting from the assistance has decreased considerably, showing that the level of abuse was high. By increasing the efficiency of the scheme, the government will have more funds available to improve the services for the real families in need.

Name	Year 2012	year 2013	May-June 2014
Families in need that receive N.E.	74,21	77,17 2	61,282
Number of children in families under NE	171,8 12	184,7 23	132,410

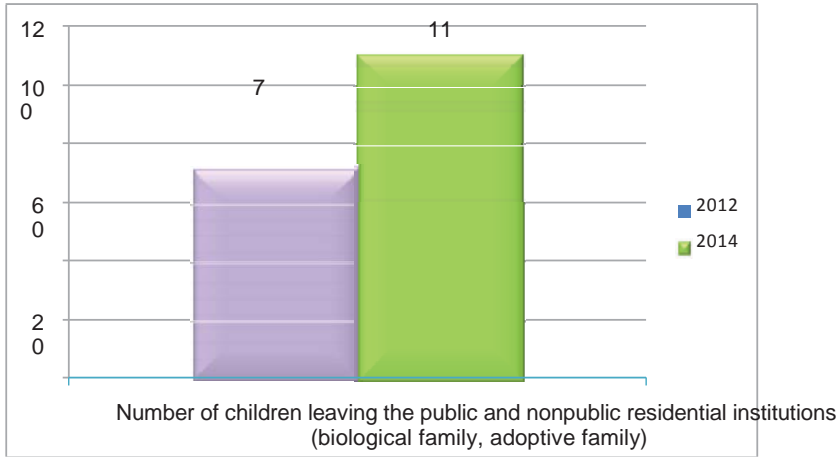
Social care services

MSWY has introduced a reform in the social service system which aims to consolidate and strengthen all the levels of government to plan, budget and monitor integrated social services that respond to children's real needs. In this context, steps have been made to improve the quality of service in the existing institutions, and at the same time work is being done to deinstitutionalize the care residential system. The purpose of the reform is to transform the residential services to other service typologies, such as house-families and creating new service typologies such as foster care, community services.

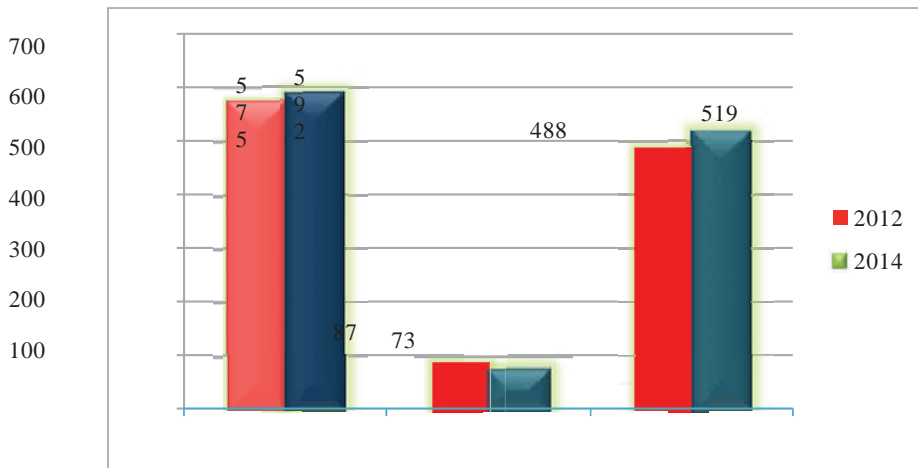
In comparison with data from 2012-2014, there is a slight increase in the number of children placed in public and nonpublic institutions (from 129 to 139). Data are collected for different time-lines: children staying in institutions for 1-2 years and 10 years. Good news is that both indicators have decreased for the public institutions: 115 children stayed for 1-2 years in 2014 compared to 121, and 14 stayed for 10 years in 2014 compared to 41 in 2012. There is an increase in the number of children staying 1-2 years in nonpublic institutions from 39 to 65 children. Less children from categories in need have been housed in institutions. It is not known whether this has resulted from a weak demand or because of a reduction in institutional capacities.



Another success, worthy to be mentioned, is the increase in the number of children who are leaving the public nonpublic institutions. This shows that measures taken to join families with their families, be them biological or adoptive families, are showing to be effective.



The chart below shows the number of children in residential institutions according to their status. Data show that the number of orphans in nonpublic institutions has increased. This can suggest lack of capacities or lack of an aggressive “reach out” strategy from nonpublic institutions.



Data show that 80 % of children in institutions are social orphans and the process to return them home has been hindered because of lack of family evaluations that should be made by Social Administrators on regional levels, and family support social programs from the local power. In this context, GDSSS in collaboration with the Regional Directorates of State Social Services (RDSSS) has launched the initiative to coordinate work and actions to identify and assess the socio-economic situation of families that have children in public institutions with the purpose of returning them as soon as possible in their families and spend as little time as possible in these institutions. Currently there are nine residential institutions which have submitted the lists of those families which have a potential to have their children return²¹. Based on the “Plan for the Deinstitutionalization of Children”, designed by GDSSS, the social workers of RDSSS will assess the conditions in the families and will work to strengthen them and the children in the institutions, in order to have children return to their family environment, safe and living a normal life. After children will return home they will be monitored in their family environment from RDSSS-s.

In order to improve the **monitoring** of public and nonpublic residential institutions for children, a complete and flexible system has been created in GDSSS with the data of all the beneficiaries in the network of residential institutions. This allows for a rapid identification of the situation and changes in these institutions. New methods that have been applied are monitoring to assess quality of service in these institutions, and the point-based system of child care standards based on quality indicators. The purpose of this method is to assess quantitatively with points (max 100) in order to measure more flexibly and rapidly the performance of the institution.

70% e of Social Care institutions for children respect standards and have improved their quality of service. They are:

- Fshati i Fëmijëve SOS Tirana;
- Children’s House Zyber Hallulli Tirana;
- SFI Centre, House family for children in Peza Comune in Tirana.
- Betania Centre Bubq F.Krujë;
- Orët Fatlume Elbasan;
- Bijat e Dashurisë Mollas Commune Elbasan.

30% of institutions should improve the quality of services and the living conditions of children. These institutions have been presented with a checklist of tasks. The inspectorate has taken extreme measures such as suspending the activity of an institution (for example Shtëpiza e Shpresës Elbasan)

²¹ According to order No. Prot 601 date 18.03.2014 issued by the General Directorate of State Social Service to all Regional Directorates to follow up and implement the plan for returning children to their biological families

Statistical evidences will be sent to the GDSSS, every month and once in four months. Periodic reports and records on the activities implemented by these institutions will be published in the annual reports and the Statistical Bulletin of the GDSSS. In one year, 57 child care institutions were monitored. 17 of them residential institutions and 40 were daily institutions.

Inspections in public and nonpublic institutions providing residential services for children, showed that institutions need to improve the quality of their services for children based on approved standards. Compared to previous years, there is considerable improvement in a good part of the centers where children and families participate actively. Some difficulties consist in operating multidisciplinary teams and addressing children's needs; following up and implementing the procedures for designing social care plans according to the approved format.

A problem remains going through the procedures to attain legal custody based on a court decision according to Guideline No. 1934. date 19.10.2007. To this purpose, changes in the guideline have been proposed.

Another challenge is the creation of an ongoing training and qualification system for human resources, including social workers, psychologists, nurses, physiotherapists, caregivers and even the parents of children.

Other Services

In order to supplement the context of social protection in Albania, MSWY has launched a three year program to establish the basis of an integrated system of social services in Albania. The program aims to institutionalize case management and social workers in communities to evaluate and address the situation of families in need. The social worker is the connector between the social service system and the families, and he/she will be able to address every case only if social services exist, are well planned and financed. These are the strategic objectives of the three-year plan for the social service reform.

The reform is having the first good results:

- x. A new and a clear approach for the social service system has been included in the new national strategy for Social Protection 2015-2020;

- x. In addition, the national strategy for Decentralization has even included suggestions related to the capacities of Local Government Units for planning and budgeting social services, enabling them to take more responsibility to provide services in their community.

- x In the beginning of December 2014, the Albanian Parliament approved the Law “For the order of the social worker”. According to this law no individual can work as a social worker in the public or private system of the Republic of Albania without being part of the social work order or without being equipped with the specific license of the profession issued by this entity.

Other social care services have been provided especially for different categories of families and children. With an intervention from MSWY and the support of the Ministry of Defense, a residence was established to shelter 53 families of the Roma community after they had been displaced from their previous houses. It was named the “Emergency Transition Centre”. The Administrative Council of State Social Service²² institutionalized this practice and decided to approve the establishment of the National Emergency Transitory Center for categories in need. In this context, the service providing structure managed and administered by GDSSS is supplemented with another service typology. The center will be used in the future as a transitory basis for persons or families coming from difficult socio-economic realities. The center will provide psycho social services according to social services standards, and the aim will be to strengthen and re-integrate these families in the community through a collaboration with institutions and partners for professional development, employment and housing. Collaboration with partners such as UNICEF and Terre des Hommes is based on the good operation of the center. Measures have been taken to enable children to attend the preschool education system and the Middle School.

The custody service was piloted during 2011 in two municipalities (Tirana, Shkodra). This practice was positive and the lessons learnt helped to expand the service even in other local units. Today there are 100 children under custody compared to 66 in 2012.

Adoption and its procedures are becoming easier and more effective. NAC managed to license before the end of 2013 all intermediary agencies of in the Field of Intercountry Adoption, accelerating the process and making it easier. In addition, in the end of 2013 NAC presented concrete proposals for legal changes and improvements that have to do with the issue of adoption inside and outside the country. These proposals have been sent to the Ministry of Justice and will go through the legislation design process that needs to be followed. The first meeting in 2014 with judges working in the family sections in the Regional Courts, with the purpose of raising awareness on eliminating delays in the legal process for “declaring abandonment and child adoption”, has accelerated the procedures that guarantee the best interest of children.

²² Decision No. 166/5, 18.03.2014

Collaboration agreement with donors

GDSSS has launched some collaboration agreements with business and actors from civil society who will contribute with donations to support groups in need;

- “Shqiperia Dhuron” initiative was promoted in Durrës in 13 December 2013 from the Minister of Social Issues and Youth and it was managed by GDSSS during the entire month of December 2013. Thanks to this initiative, the needs of 3500 families were identified and addressed. The families were given food packages thanks to the contribution of donors.
- “Friends of Social Service” Network is a concrete collaboration program between the state, business and civil society in order to increase the quality of services in the institutions that provide treatment to groups in need: the elderly, people with disabilities, victims of trafficking and domestic violence. 35 business, organizations and private entities have become part of this initiative.
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Special Categories of Children

Children in a street situation

Data taken from a national research for children in a street situation were used to design programs and interventions. Based on the agreement signed between MSWY and MI, SAPCR has coordinated the design of an action plan “*Help for children in a street situation*”. Its purpose is to protect children from all forms of abuse, exploitation and neglect through a thorough and integrated approach and a coordinated inter-sectoral approach with the institutions of social services, police, education, health, employment etc. to protect children and the consolidation of their families.

Interventions were planned in two phases:

The first pilot phase in Tirana. In its context three-party agreements have been created between the Agency, Leaders of the municipal units and organizations that support the CPU on the ground. So far agreements have been signed by all organizations and by the seven local units in Tirana. The other units are on the process of signing them. In 5 Municipal Units in Tirana, field teams have been set up which are composed by the Child Protection Officer in the specific municipal unit and a social worker from an NGO that has experience in field work (ARSIS, SHKEJ, FBSH). Collaboration is being established even with police stations in those cases when it is necessary. In the context of this initiative trainings for dealing with children in a street situation have been provided for **45 professionals**. The trainees include CPU employees in Tirana, police officers and civil society activists who are part of the field teams.

The long-term phase will ensure the continuity of these interventions on national level and will focus mainly in regions where this phenomenon is more widespread, such as in Shkodra, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Berat, Korça etc. The awareness building campaign “No to exploitation of children for begging and employment”, launched in 12 June 2014, is planned to be an ongoing initiative to inform the citizens on the exploitation of children in a street situation and to denounce this phenomenon. The hotline available to citizens since September 2014 to denounce these cases, marks the integration of a necessary mechanism to identify cases and to respond in time to this phenomenon.

Working children

SAPCR has advocated to have specific activities for this group in the Strategy “For safety and Health at Work 2014-2020”; more specifically terminologies related to basic concepts for a safe and healthy working environment are foreseen to be include in the curricula of elementary and junior high educational system.

Children on the move

For the first time in 2013-2014, ASHDMF, in collaboration with Terre des Hommes and Save the Children, was engaged to coordinate the implementation of MARIO program, focused on the protection of children on the move. Initially, the situation of children on the move in Albania was documented, providing a current legal, strategic and structural panorama as well as programs and capacities related with the issue. This analysis helped in the design of recommendations to influence change in the situation. The process has been all-inclusive to provide integrated participation and approaches. SAPCR will advocate and monitor in continuity the implementation of these specific recommendations for this category of children and the implementation of the other recommendations which are integrated with other child protection components.

For repatriated children and children a risk²³, GDSSS has established an intra-institutional collaboration with the General Directorate of State Police by signing the Joint Order to take measures to host and socially treat unaccompanied infants who come back or who are readmitted from other countries . Efforts are being made to design a three-party agreement between MSWY, MI and MFA. The latter one plays a crucial role in returning unaccompanied children from emigration.

²³ In accordance with the definitions and the tasks laid out in the “Strategy for the reintegration of Repatriated Albanian Citizens 2010-2015

Sexually abused and exploited children

Research show that the problem very often is hidden and that there are few reports in institutions. Almost all over the country there are no specialized services and programs with sustainable finances, with trained staff and professionals as part of an effective mechanism of intervention.

In support of the Social Service Reform, Terre des homes in collaboration with MSWY, SAPCR, ARSIS and with the support of the EU has launched a three-year project for setting up and supporting a child-centered integrated system which purpose is to protect children from all forms of abuse and exploitation. At present, training and capacity building has started for CPU-s, social administrators, educational staff, legal staff, prosecutors, and others to help in the identification and treatment of abused children, especially sexually abused children. As a result of this initiative, a multidisciplinary platform will be developed to manage cases that are related to sexual abuse and to the development of specialized services.

Children and members of the community from the vulnerable Roma and Egyptian communities will be treated to identify cases of children in need of protection in order to help them and refer them in the existing services.

Online safety

Online safety is a new challenge in children's wellbeing. Measures have been taken to provide a safe environment that protects children. State Agency of Information Society (AKSHI) in collaboration with the Ministry for Innovation and Information Technology and Communication (MITIK) coordinated the process for designing and approving the Code of Conduct²⁴ "For a safe and responsible use of electronic communication networks". Currently in Albania there are no clear standards and rules in relation to the categorization of commercial content. Online and telephone communication operators admit that they do not have control over the content provided on the internet. However, in the context of this Code, they give assurance that commercial content provided by or through them will be controlled and classified within an appropriate framework. The Commercial content shall be marked to show whether it is appropriate for people under 18 years old. According to this Code, entrepreneurs engage to help families and parents to use networks or internet services, by publishing the Parental Guidelines on their websites. The code of conduct for the operators is a first step. Foremost is the design of an appropriate legal framework to provide safe online navigation for children.

Changes in article 117 of the Criminal Code in May 2013 categorize retaining or using pornographic materials as a criminal offense. On 11 February 2014, The Minister for Innovation and Public Administration in collaboration with AKSHI signed two memorandums of understanding for collaboration between the State Agency for Computer Safety (ALCIRT), the Authority of Electronic and Mail Communications (AKEP), The Commissioner for the protection of Personal Data (KMDP) and Internet Service Providers (ISP).

ALCIRT²⁵ will maintain and administer the online portal which will be used by legal, public and natural persons to publish the addresses of those websites that have illegal content, in compliance with the legal framework which regulates their field of activity. The website will be used also by the internet service providers (ISP) to retain information with the purpose of closing the access of these websites on the internet according to the legislation in force. ALCIRT issues guidelines and orders for implementing the tasks specified above.

The safety and protection of children's online rights is integrated in the curricula of information technology and communication (TIK). TIK subject is being piloted in elementary education. This

²⁴ With DCM No. 182 date 13.03.2013 the government approved the Code of Conduct "For a safe and responsible use of electronic communication networks" between electronic communication operators which was signed in 7 February 2013 from the main electronic communication operators in the country, such as: AMC, Vodafone Albania, Eagle Mobile, Plus, Albania Association of Information technology (AITA) and ISP Providers: Albtelecom, Abcom, Abissnet, Tring Communication

²⁵ A Decision of the Council of Ministers, No. 482, date 16 July 2014 for "An addition to Decision No. 766, date 14.09.2011 of the Council of Ministers, "for Establishing the State agency for Computer Safety" (ALCIRT),

subject is an essential subject of the curricula and is used as "intra-subject" for all the other subjects of the curricula and helps in the development of digital skills among all students. "Student online protection and safety" occupies a considerable place under TIK subject.

The topic is further developed in the third and fourth scale of elementary education curricula, in grades 6, 7, 8, 9. The subject has the same title in these grades, but knowledge gained deepens enabling children to be protected.

Coordinating mechanisms and structures for children's protection

The institutionalization of structures for the protection of children's rights at different levels of local government has been very important in taking responsibilities for children's protection. Field observations and discussions with different interest groups show that after CRU-s were set up in the regions of Albania, the perceptions of the institutions and society in relation to children's rights changed positively. Intra-institutional coordination and interaction increased, even though not at the same pace all over the country.

About 67 % of CPU-s are active and report actively in the SAPCR. In general reports come from the CPU-s in the municipalities which have more experience. Reports show that CPU-s managed at least one case or no case at all during 2014. These figures show that there is still more work to be done by CPU-s, mainly to identify and refer children at risk. CPU-s report to SAPCR according to a predefined format. However, it has been confirmed that CPU-s document cases in different forms. This problem will be addressed in the new Guidelines for Child protection procedures which is expected to be approved soon and which will set unified rules for all CPU-s regarding the steps and the documentation process of case management

Meetings between multidisciplinary groups for solving cases have encountered problems. Although there is a greater awareness and collaboration between the local institutions and the CPUs for managing cases, often the former do not participate in meetings or discussions between the multidisciplinary groups. CPU-s have provided collaboration, mainly through individual meetings with local actors.

In 2013, the CPU-s which reported in SAPCR managed 1321 cases of children at risk and in 2014 about 1407 cases. Out of them, 703 are new cases for 2014. A child at risk is any child whose rights have been denied or violated. The cases managed are mainly cases of children at risk or victims of violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation. In general, victims of violence come from poor families and have faced situations of violence in the family, physical and sexual abuse, exploitation to work on the streets, trafficking and in many cases they have been neglected by their parents or caregivers in fulfilling their basic needs for survival.

The Albanian government started the Administrative-Territorial Reform which aims to reduce considerably the number of administrative units in the country and is on the process of designing the new strategy of decentralization, a strategy which will revise the governmental functions in the local level. In this context, SAPCR will advocate for stronger CPU-s, increasing the human and financial resources and capacities in order to provide a high quality service for children and families.

In order to build an effective and long-term child protection system it is necessary to have in place an all-inclusive and multidisciplinary protection system. This makes it necessary to have a clear description of the procedures for collaboration and the roles of all public or private institutions that work with children and have a responsibility in their protection, in the context of identifying, referring and managing cases of children at risk.

To this purpose, a guideline proposed from four ministers has been approved. The guideline is about the **procedures for intervention in the protection of children at risk** through a consultative and all inclusive process, based on the best practices reflected in the Protocol of the Child Protection Officer.

In addition, in order to understand better the challenges for creating an all-inclusive system for child protection, SAPCR, in collaboration with MSWY and with the support of UNICEF, is making an assessment of the child protection system in the country, which in turn will analyze the system of functions, the coordinating mechanisms, budgeting, the impact of the territorial reform and it will assess and will give recommendations for combining the child protection system with the Social Service Reform.

Issues to be addressed

The new social protection strategy should reflect important considerations on child protection through an integrated, all-inclusive and multidisciplinary approach.

The social protection strategy and the social service reform should underline the importance of effective policies which enable children to return home as soon as possible, be them biological, adoptive or foster families. Special attention should be paid to de-institutionalizing of 0-6 years-old children. The reform should consolidate the services that support families and its primary focus should be on empowering families and consolidating good parenting.

The economic assistance pilot scheme, with incentives for children's education and vaccination, should be expanded all over Albania.

At the same time standards should be designed to monitor the work for child protection.

Specialized services should be created to protect children from violence and sexual abuse, including specialized trainings for professionals, efficient child protection, avoiding re-victimization, and raising awareness on the problem.

The protection of children in street situation should include children in a street situation even from other regions, not only from Tirana, by expanding the implementation of the Action Plan. The collaboration between child protection institutions should be made clear by designing and adopting specific Guidelines.

The regulatory framework for online safe navigation for children should be consolidated and it is necessary to increase the awareness of children, parents and professionals on child safe online navigation. The curricular module on safety and protection of children's rights online should be given due consideration and it should be widely applied based on the evaluation results.

Priority should be given to including and enhancing the access to social services for girls, children belonging to minority groups, children living in the rural areas and children with disabilities, especially regarding their approach to education, social protection, health and appropriate housing. Efforts should be consolidated to ensure children the right to give freely their opinions on all the issues affecting them and to attach their viewpoints due importance in schools and other educational institutions as well as in families.

Children's Contribution²⁶

How is like and what would the world surrounding you like to be?

The red heart stands for **love** which is very important because it influences our development.

The flower symbolizes the **family** with which every child is very connected. We want our family to be healthy and happy.

The blue child, with an arm extending over his head, symbolizes the child as a victim of **violence**, perpetrated by his parents at home or others.

These joint rings stand for premature weddings. Children should not be forced to marry. In contrast they should be educated, when they reach the appropriate age, to choose whom they want to marry with.

The computer shows children's hobbies such as Facebook which has become an inseparable part of them. However, internet should be set with a limit and a control for children because there might be things which are not appropriate for us.

The child surrounded by laughs symbolizes teasing and **discrimination** to children because of the color of their skin, race, gender and economic condition, etc.

The dove and the olive branch represent peace while the cage represents the deprivation of the rights of children affected by **blood feud**.

With this hand with a key we have tried to represent **theft**. Besides the damage it makes, it is the worst example among children, teaching them to earn things without working but taking them from others.

The drawn bottle is **alcohol**, which is one of the major causes of child domestic violence.

This is a drawing of the first aid kit to represent the health system. The comment "**not free here**" implies that we cannot take free services even though this is a legal right for us.

This is a **drug leaf** because children today are exposed to drugs since an early age because of bad examples surrounding them.

The morsel of bread together with a spoon represents lack of groceries – **poverty** in many families.

²⁶ Discussion group led by SAPCR with the participation of 20 youth, 12 November 2014, in Shkodra, **facilitated by World Vision**

III. RIGHT TO HEALTH CARE

Background

Convention on the Rights of the Child ratifies the right of children to receive quality and the highest level of health care. A child's right to health care is stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, according to which, "citizens enjoy equally the right to health care provided by the state, and everyone enjoys the right to health insurance"²⁷. This constitution commitment is supported by the principles of qualitative and all-inclusive health care services, which can be found in the laws "On Reproductive Health"²⁸ and "On Public Health"²⁹.

The public policy for providing appropriate services to guarantee health care for all citizens, is addressed in some national strategic documents, such as: Reproductive Health Strategy, National Action Plan on Children³⁰, Roma Decade Plan³¹, as well as the National Strategy for People with Disabilities³².

Under the frame of international documents, the support of the Action Plan in the National Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the active participation in meeting the Objective of the Millennium Development until 2015 (UN, 2000), where reduction in the mortality of mothers, infants and children, is the third development indicator out of eight regarding the primary health care of mothers and children.

Policies on mother and child health care aimed to improve continuously feeding as well as mother and child health care indicators, in order to improve their life performance. However, despite the efforts and achievements taking place so far, the health care system, and especially the system on mother and child health care, is facing critical problems.

Presentation of the mother and child health care indicators in this report comprises some challenges, taking into consideration the fact that there are some data sources, which are based on different methodologies – registration of births and mortalities (administrative data), or based on study models, or models that are based on different assumptions. There are different methodologies used in assessments, which in fact quite often result to be contradictory. Assessments based on studies on family, shall be accepted as a reliable source of assessments on infant mortality.

The National Health and Demographic Study (NDHR) in 2008-2009 has not been followed by other assessments in the current years to present continuously a clear picture on feeding and health indicators.

According to NDHR 2009³³ 4, infant and child mortality in 2008, 18 and 22 respectively in 1,000 births, are a bit higher than the same indicators in other central and eastern European countries. However, until 2012 infant and child mortality (up to 5 years old) was reduced, respectively 7.8 and 8.9 in 1,000 births. In the same year, mother mortality was 5.7 in 100,000 births, from 17/100.000 in 2008. NDHR also highlights the considerable differences for the families belonging to low-income groups.

²⁷ Constitution of the Republic of Albania, 1998, Article 55.

²⁸ <http://www.ishp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/P%C3%ABr-sh%C3%ABndetin-riprodhues.pdf>

²⁹ <http://www.ishp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Ligji-i-shendetit-publik.pdf>

³⁰ <http://mobile.ikub.al/LIGJE/PeR-MIRATIMIN-E-PLANIT-Te-VEPRIMIT-PeR-FeMIJe-2012-2015-1205040136.aspx>

³¹ <http://www.al.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Dekada%20e%20Perfshirjes%20se%20Romeve%20-%20Plani%20Kombetar%20i%20Veprimit.pdf>

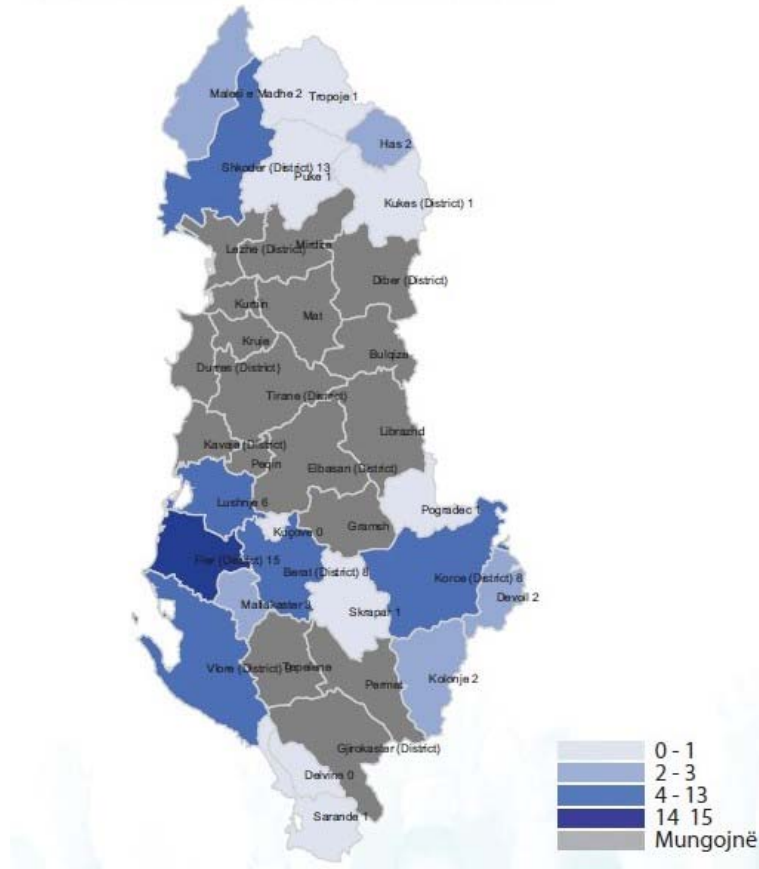
³² http://www.adrf.org.al/images/strat_komb_pak.pdf

³³ INSTAT & Public Health Institute (2010) "Health and Demographic Study in Albania 2008-2009, Albania

Thus, infant mortality of children in low-incomes families is nearly 40% higher than in families with high incomes. In 2013, mortality at the age of 1 was 7.9 in 100,000 births and mortality under 5 was 9.8 in 1,000 births³⁴.

Data on 2014 and prediction for 2015 have not been made available by the respective institutions. However, it shall be underlined that the situation is not the same in all the regions of Albania. In rural areas this indicator is higher than in urban areas, while in rural, mountainous areas it is even higher (see figure 1³⁵).

Figura 1: Numri i vdekjeve, (0-1vjeç) në nivel rrethi (2010)³⁵



³⁴ Ministry of Health, Administrative data, 2014

³⁵ Children's Rights Observatory (2012) "Children Poverty in Albania" Reporting Chart 1, UNICEF, Albania

For more information, Table 1³⁶ presents an overview of indicators regarding children, making a comparison among countries of the region.

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Macedonia	Serbia
Infant mortality (mortality in 1,000 births, 2010)	8.8	6	4	7	6
Mortality under five (mortality in 1,000 births, 2010)	17	7	5	7	7
Simple and severe development delays (under 5 years old, 2006-2010)	19%	8.9%	No data available	4.9%	6.6%

Thus, even though figures regarding infant and mother mortality in Albania have been reduced lately, they shall be continuously assessed by comparing them with different countries³⁷, representing these indicators in different areas of the country³⁸, as well as the progress to fulfil the indicators determined based on the Millennium Development Objectives 5 and 7.

Access to the main health care services is different for pregnant women and young children. More than 99% of pregnant women give birth in the presence of qualified medical staff and 97% of them makes at least one visit to the doctor before birth. However, a few of them, on average, 67% make four visits before birth. Only 54% of children suffering from diarrhoea, take hydration and continuous nutrition from the mouth and less than 60% take antibiotics when they are suspected of having pneumonia. There is no information available regarding the number of children who take vitamin A supplements³⁹.

Table 2 presents a regional comparison of access in main interventions on health and feeding for pregnant women in Albania and in four other European countries.

Table 2: Regional comparison of access level in the main interventions on health and feeding of pregnant women.⁴⁰

	Albania	Bosnia	Croatia	Macedonia	Serbia
Experienced midwives in birth	99.3%	99.9%	100%	98%	99.8%
Pregnant women receiving prenatal care (at least four visits)	66.8%	84.2%	No data available	93.9%	94.2%
Pregnant women receiving prenatal care (at least a visit)	97.3%	87%	No data available	98.6%	99%
Prevalence of anaemia in pregnant women (2005)	31%	No data available	No data available	No data available	No data available

³⁶ Source: UNICEF statistics (2012) according to countries; UNESCO, Institute of Statistics (2012); Ministry of Health in Albania (infant and child mortality).

³⁷ UNICEF, 2014, "Children Situation in the World", New York, UNICEF

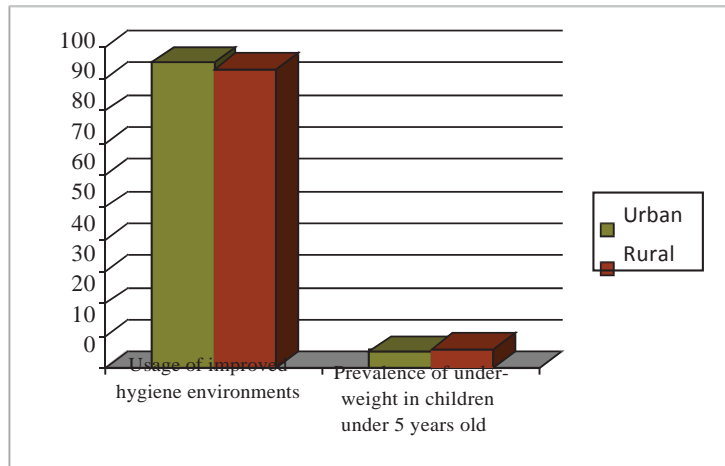
³⁸ INSTAT & Public Health Institute (2010) "Health and Demographic Study in Albania 2008-2009", Albania

³⁹ ibid

⁴⁰ Source: UNICEF statistics according to countries, 2007-2012; UNAID-iS, 2012; WHO database on Anemia, 2006

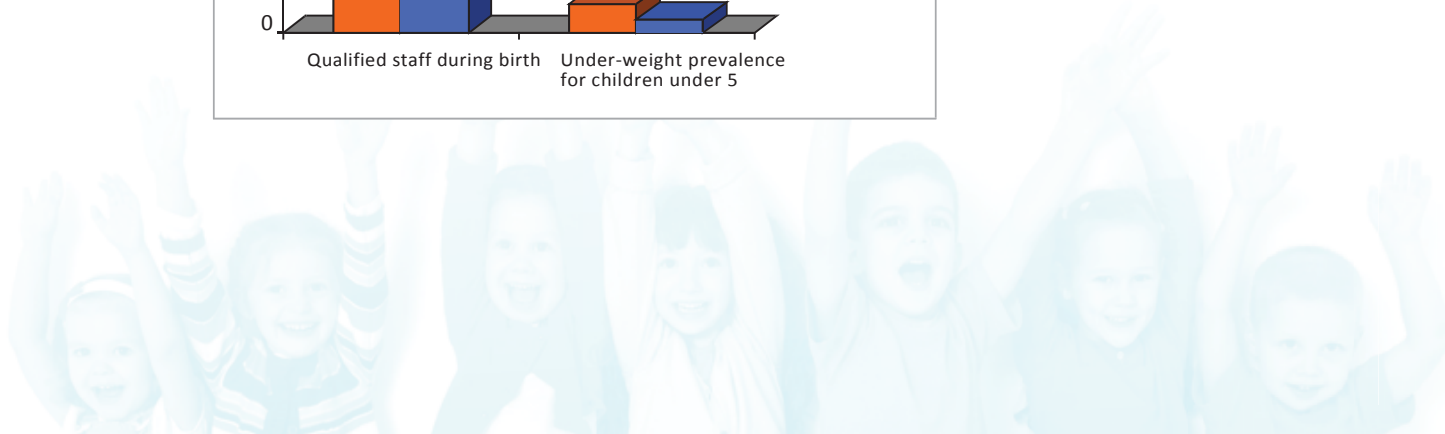
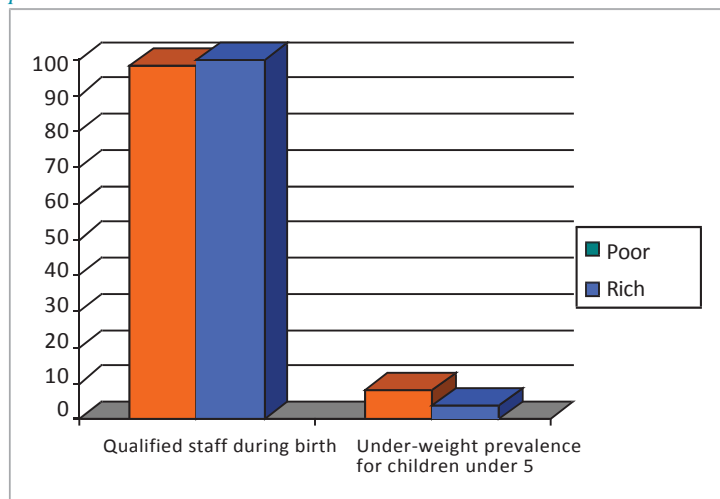
Inequalities between urban and rural areas are obvious regarding the weight of the newborns, where the low weight in birth can be considered as double in children coming from poor families compared to other children. Other health and feeding indicators suggest equality in providing services between urban and rural areas. We can refer to figure 2 regarding the hygiene and under-weight indicators in rural and urban areas in Albania.

Figure 2: Selected indicators (in percentage) regarding hygiene and health in urban and rural areas in Albania.



There is equality between rich and poor people regarding access to some main services of early childhood development, but there are inequalities regarding the weight of the new-borns. The number of poor children born under-weight is bigger than the number of rich children born under-weight – suggesting that poor pregnant women do not have equal access in the main health and feeding services. Figure 3 presents an overview of these selected indicators for the richest and poorest people in Albania.

Figure 3: Selected indicators (in percentage) regarding hygiene and health for rich and poor groups in Albania.



Health indicators between Roma and Egyptian population in Albania are lower than the rest of the population. Causes to be considered are poverty, difficult living conditions, and limited opportunity to use qualitative health care services, low educational level and lack of infrastructure.

A current assessment focusing on Roma children belonging to age group 0-6, identify that distance from Health Centers is a factor that makes access to this community difficult.

14.4% of health centres are over 2km far away from the Roma residencies. 61.7% of children have been vaccinated according to the calendar, nearly for 17% of children, the health staff has no information on their vaccination status. In nearly 68.8% of cases, children are in good health conditions, but this is not true for 5.4% of them⁴¹.

The study “*Reformation of economic aid: From survival to the investment in reducing poverty*”⁴² emphasizes again that the malnutrition of children in poor families and their health status remains problematic. 56.7% of families receiving economic aid, declare that they cannot cover their needs for nutrition, and 88.9% declare that they cannot cover the needs of their children’s health care services. The study shows that 29% of children suffer at least from a chronic disease and more than half of the children belonging to low-income families suffer from chronic diseases. Also, 50% of children suffering from chronic diseases and not receiving regular medical consultation belong to low-income families, which spend for their children health care service 1/3 of the average expenditures.

Issues related to healthy child feeding, even though being addressed quite late, they are considered as priorities due to the large impact they have on child health. As shown in table 3, the group of diseases deriving from malnutrition hold a specific place, relatively low for the age group up to 5 years old and it is considerably higher in the age group 5-14.

Table 3: Diseases, according to age groups.

Diseases/age groups	0 – 1 years	1 – 4 years	5 – 14 years
Endocrine diseases/feeding and metabolism	0,4 %	0,3 %	3 %

Source: Ministry of Health, administrative data, 2014

Regarding breastfeeding, this kind of feeding is considered to be more important than the artificial nutrition (table 4).

Table 4: Breastfeeding

	2010	2011	2012
Number of children fed only by breastfeeding	27,683	22,627	23,090
Number of children fed only by artificial nutrition	6,317	5,042	4,016

Source: Ministry of Health, administrative data, 2014

Children fed according to feeding practices for new-borns and children⁴³ are at low levels, only 19% of them are fed based on these practices, and girls - compared to boys - are highly unlikely to be fed based on the three recommended practices for new-borns and children feeding. At the same time, children in rural areas are highly unlikely to be fed based on these practices compared children in urban areas.

⁴¹ Hazizaj A., Elezi P., Ballo M., National Assessment 2014: Access of Roma children in education and health services in Albania, UNICEF / CRCA /YWCA / Observatory, Tirana 2014

⁴² UNICEF, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, National Centre of Social Studies and Urban Research Institute (2012) “*Reformation of economic aid: From survival to investment in reducing poverty*”,Tiranë

⁴³ INSTAT & Public Health Institute (2010)“*Health and Demographic Study in Albania 2008-2009*, Albania

Regarding the family wealth index there are some obvious differences. Thus, in families with a low wealth index, 17% of children are fed based on recommended practices compared to 23.6% of children in families with a higher wealth index.

Results of NDHR in 2009 show that the consumption of some important micro-elements, including vitamin A, iron and iodine of children between 6-59 months varies depending on some characteristics such as: residency, region and family wealth index. In this study, the specialists' group referred to measurement performed on "percentage of children who have consumed nutrition rich in vitamin A during the last 24 hours". It resulted that there are differences between areas of residency (urban Tirana 97.7% and mountainous areas 78.9%); (urban areas 90.2% and rural areas 86.4%) and family wealth index (the lowest 82.1% and the highest 94.4%).

The assessment in 2013⁴⁴ show that, based on values as boundaries of WHO, 21.6% of children of age group 7-10 are overweight and 7.7% are obese. Based on age groups part of the study, children of age group 7-8, 21.4% result of an overweight prevalence and 7.7% obese; for children of age group 8-9, 22.4% result of an overweight prevalence and 7.9% obese; while for children of age group 9-10, again the respective lowest values resulted between age groups, where 18.8% of them were overweight and 6.8% were obese. Overweight prevalence is obviously higher in children of age group 8-9, in urban areas compared to rural areas, and in males compared to females, boys compared to girls. Assessment⁴⁵ for children of age group 11-13-15 shows that 3.2% of them are classified as obese.

Issues regarding prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS are part of APC 2012-2015, even though Albania is still a country considered of low scale prevalence. The first case of a child diagnosed with HIV/AIDS was in 1997. Until December 2010, 21 children infected with HIV/AIDS have been reported. 15 of them were infected through vertical transmission from mother to child, while 6 children were infected through blood transfusion. So far, 3 of these 21 children have died from AIDS. Nowadays, children make up 5.3% of all the people living with HIV and 4.9% of infected people. These relatively low figures, in fact hide risks, due to the lack of effective monitoring and control systems.

Service assessment on mother and children up to 3 years old, in the primary health care, identifies the challenge of providing qualitative services in the following field: lack of reflection in instruments and practice of a holistic child development frame/perspective, lack of good parenting programs in the community, as well as lack of proper monitoring and service assessment indicators related to this service component⁴⁶.

Study on barriers to access reproductive health services in Albania⁴⁷ presents some difficulties in providing and receiving services in the context of infrastructure, work/services organization, not-integrated approach of services, health care staff capacities and community culture/attitudes regarding health care. This assessment emphasizes lack of friendly services for youth and limited opportunities for youngsters to meet their needs on health system information and services.

Despite the importance and continuous discussions on the reformation of health care system, public expenditures in this sector during the period 2011-2013 have had a decreasing tendency, from 7.65% to 6.93% of GDP. For the 2014 plan, this indicator is 6.64% - still decreasing. While for 2015, the medium-term budgetary program is planned to pay attention to this sector by 9.01% as expected values, or 36% higher than the 2014 plan. Table 5⁴⁸ presents a comparison of regional expenditures on health care in Albania and in four other Eastern European countries.

⁴⁴ Jolanda HyskaJ., BurazeriG., MersiniE. (2013) "Assessment of obesity in childhood age", Ministry of Health, Public Health Institute, United Nations, Tirana

⁴⁵ QirjakoG., BurazeriG., MihaliE., BukliM., AgolliE. (2014) "Healthy behaviours in children of school age 11, 13, 15" UNFPA, UNICEF, Albania

⁴⁶ Haxhiymeri,E., Hallkaj,E., Ndrijo,M., Boci,A. "Assessment of health care institutions' capacities, nurseries and residential care institutions for children of age group 0-3", UNICEF, Albania

⁴⁷ Hallkaj,E. Pipa,T. (2013) "Barriers to access to reproductive health services in primary health care", ACA/UNFPA, Albania

⁴⁸ Global database for health expenditures, 2012; UNICEF statistics according to countries, 2010; Public Health Institute (financing of EPI vaccine in Albania)

	Albania	Bosnia	Croatia	Macedonia	Serbia
Expenditures of citizens as a percentage of general expenditures for health	52%	28%	14%	36%	37%
General expenditures for health/person of equality of consumers (NCU/US)	541	928	1,410	835	1,250
Private expenditures on health (PvtHE) as % general expenditures on health	52%	29%	18%	36%	39%
General expenditures on health as percentage of GDP	6%	10%	7%	7%	10%
Percentage of routine EPI vaccination, financed by government	100%	No data available	100%	No data available	No data available

Not always the presence of laws and policies guarantee the expected results of early childhood development. In many countries, policies in papers and the situation in reality regarding access and provision of services do not coincide with each-other. For instance, the Albanian law encourages young mothers to breastfeed their infants during their first six months, but less than 40% of women do this for 6 months. Also, Albania has drafted a policy of providing iodized salt, but a quarter of the population does not consume salt to which iodine is added. Table 6 compares policies with the results on feeding and children's health in Albania.

Development policy	Results
Law is in accordance with the International Code: Exclusive level of breastfeeding (>6 months): Marketing of Food replacing Breastfeeding	38.6%
Albania has national policies to encourage the family consume of iodized salt	75.6%
Young children are required to benefit a (12-23 months): full-time course for immunization in childhood	Children with DPT 99 %

Source: UNICEF, statistics according to countries, Albanian government,

Progress

Reformation of the health care system, which aims to provide qualitative and all-inclusive services, is one of the basic objectives of the new government program. In this program, special attention is paid to the reduction of inequalities and the increase of health care service quality, by determining some essential changes in the funding aspect in order to cover the whole costs and the reduction of the financial burden paid by citizens, especially to those people coming from excluded social groups. Continuous protection and environment of mother and child health, even though not being addressed as a special component of the health reform undertaken currently, is considered to be a priority of the public health care policy.

For 2013, financing of primary health care has increased by 278.6 million ALL or 4.4%, compared to a year ago⁴⁹. One of the most important achievement realized during the period covered in this report, is of course the improvement of the regulatory frame on mother and child primary health care service. The approval⁵⁰ of guidelines and protocols on mother and child health care and feeding determine the best standards of care and practices.

However, the next steps that will follow these documents are quite important to improve health indicators. Their distribution at the health centre level, drafting of training manuals, training and update of other service orienting documents shall be drafted in continuity to achieve the implementation in practice for these documents.

Prenatal care	Postnatal care	Feeding	Monitoring
Prenatal visits for pregnant woman	Control visits to postnatal mother health care	Steps for a successful breastfeeding in the community	Monitoring visits of growth and development for children of age group 0-6 months
Gaining weight during pregnancy	Postnatal care for the newborn infant	Micronutrients additives to children	Monitoring visits of growth and development for children of age group 6-24 months
Vitamin and mineral additives for the pregnant woman	Management of mother's postnatal health problems	Feeding of child with infant formula	Monitoring visits of growth and development for children of age group 2-6 years old
Management of concerns and problems during pregnancy	Management of newborn health problems	Beginning supplementary nutrition to children	Monitoring of child development of age group 0-6 years old
Counselling on breastfeeding during pregnancy	Management of mother's postnatal concerns	Breastfeeding to mothers with HIV/AIDS	Follow up of growth based on the growth curve
	Threatening signs of neonatal period	Breastfeeding in case of mother diseases and her treatment with drugs	Assessment of hearing of children of the age group 0-6 years old Assessment of sight of children of the age group 0-6 years old

According to the approved regulatory frame, accredited modules for training service providers on monitoring of growth and feeding were drafted. Training of activities with 579 service provider beneficiaries (87 health centres) in Kukës, Shkodra, Tirana and Durrës are expected to cover the whole country in the future. 3 maternities were certified as “Child friendly hospitals”, out of 9 certified maternities in the whole country. Now, breastfeeding indicators are part of the surveillance for feeding children, drafted by the Public Health Institute and approved by the Ministry of Health in 2013.

Breastfeeding indicators are part of the Public Health Institute surveillance frame, approved in 2013. The fourth monitoring report on the practices of infant formula and industrialized nutrition marketing of infant and young children⁵¹ has as its main aim to consider the fact whether these practices were consistent with the Law on Encouraging and Protecting Breastfeeding. During this monitoring process some practices of the institutions providing mother and infant care, such as maternities, paediatric departments, children's counselling rooms, were monitored and analysed. Some law violations were identified in the promotion of formulas, a concern raised even by the Children's Rights Committee in

⁴⁹ ISDKSH (2014) Annual report 2013

⁵⁰ Ministry of Health, Order No.62/ 18.02.2014 and 157/ 26.04.2014

⁵¹ Centre for Healthy Childhood (2014) “The fourth monitoring report on the practices of infant formula and industrialized nutrition marketing for infant and young children”, Tirana, Albania

2012, highlighting the need to empower monitoring of the implementation of the law by the responsible authority – Health Inspectorate.

Educational curricula on feeding, drafted by the Public Health Institute and Education Development Institute are presented to students of 1-9 grades of elementary education. This kind of education is part of the “cross-curricular” modules. 20 schools in Kukës, Shkodra, Tirana and Durrës, have piloted these modules.

Nearly 300 open educational sessions and 10 events, where teachers, pupils and parents participated, were organized during 2013-2014. In continuity, the application of modules is expected to cover the whole country schools.

Line ministries⁵² are committed to implement the “Action Plan on Nutrition and Feeding 2013-20120”. This plan is drafted in accordance with the national capacities and the epidemiological profile of the country, and promotes public health promotion and protection. The Action Plan on Nutrition and Feeding has paid special attention to the control and reduction of overweight and obesity in Albanian population in general, and young children in particular, by planning a series of continuous intervention actions at the national and local level in order to meet this objective, in the context of an integrated approach to reduce risk factors, regarding chronic diseases, including obesity. Its progress budgeting and monitoring in the future shall be the subject to later reports.

During 2013-2014, in the context of improving perinatal care in regional maternities, the *assessment of mother and child care quality*, was conducted in Kukës and Durrës. The assessment was conducted through the approved instrument of Quality Assessment, and was followed by the trainings of the health care staff, and the drafting intervention plans in these institutions. The rooming (a practice that has never been present earlier) – placing the infant in skin to skin contact immediately after birth and the arrangement of individual birth rooms were established in Kukës, as a result of this process. Compiling a local protocol for the hospital, as a template of how to adapt the national protocols, was completed too. In Durrës, the strict following of all the steps regarding the normal newborn management and the correct filling in of partogram, were improved. In the future, budgeting of institutions (maternities) shall be consistent with the needs to realize the implementation of drafting action plans. Also, the continuous auditing of these interventions’ progress is essential to institutionalize and integrate them as components of the service provision system.

Percentage of vaccinated children based on the routine calendar remains to be over 97%. For all children born from March 1, 2014, the first two doses of polio vaccine shall be taken with IPV. This is an important element regarding the update of the calendar with the EU countries and increasing the vaccine safety.

Prevention of HIV transmission from mother to child is considered as one of the main components of the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS that are drafted by the working team. Preparation of PAINF national protocol and the manual on primary health care for this service, in mother and child consultation centres, aims to address the needs identified for improving this service making it accessible and reducing the transmission cases.

During 2013-2014, campaigns of December 1 have emphasized the prevention of the transmission from mother to child, by advocating it in the Parliamentary Health Commission.

During 2014, the National Program on HIV/AIDS in partnership with the Organisation of People who live with HIV/AIDS, have held meetings in Tirana and Vlora for managing cases of children who result to be positive with HIV. In the case of Vlora, this cooperation is extended with the Regional Office of State Social Service and the Child Protection Unit.

During the work of reviewing the basic package of primary health care services, special attention was paid to the presentation of the health component for teenagers to emphasize the service importance and specifics.

⁵² Understanding memorandum on nutrition and feeding, dated 18.06.2010 (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)

Issues to be addressed

Improvement of health care policies on children is stated through a better and more effective distribution of financial and human resources in the health care sector, aiming to provide equal access to qualitative health care services for all children, including children who live in remote areas, and Roma children.

Consolidating links between services targeting mothers and children, including paediatric institutions, and cooperation of these institutions with the ones on early childhood.

Improving child service quality in the three levels of care, through unification of standard guides and protocols for the follow up of child health.

Building knowledge among health care staff and capacities through continuous education of the whole health care staff working in these services.

Promoting Health and Education for the community and family, raising awareness and mobilisation of the whole society, mass media, etc., transmitting the message that the care for women and children is a priority and not only a responsibility of the health system.

Empowering services for teenagers, including health care service in schools.

Addressing malnutrition, focusing especially on the categories of excluded children, mainly children from poor families, as well as other groups.

Improving the quality of collecting and processing information and the qualitative indicators regarding children and teenager health.

IV. RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Background

Early childhood

International evidences support the importance of interventions in early childhood (0-6 years old) development and education, which has a great impact in future positive achievements among children. Still, in Albania, is missing an appropriate environment, especially for this age group. There are limited mechanisms to harmonize the multi-sectorial policy-making, in order to encourage the development of children less than six years⁵³. The Action Plan for Children (2012-2015) shall be considered as a strategic framework that identifies the needs and services of this aspect.

In Albania, services in early childhood development and education are divided according to age groups 0-3 and 3-6. Services in early childhood care and development of age group 0-3 are organized through nurseries (public and private). Administration of nurseries is a function fully exercised by the local power⁵⁴. Nurseries shall be determined as institutions that are responsible for the general growth, education and development of children of age group up to 3⁵⁵.

The document on hygiene-sanitary regulation in nurseries shall determine parameters of safety, infrastructure, hygiene and feeding. During recent years, the feeding component (menu) is updated and distributed to all the nurseries⁵⁶. Payment tariffs from families shall apply only for the meals consumed by children. This expenditure shall be subsidized by the local power units. The local government shares with the Health Inspectorate and the National Food Authority the function to monitoring the service provided in nurseries.

The number of nurseries and children that attend this service is unknown, even though the local power reports data to SAPCR (State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights)⁵⁷. For the first time data were provided for 46 Roma children registered in 9 nurseries in 2014⁵⁸.

In general, there is a lack of assessment in different service aspects in the nursery. In order to identify the service situation, studies of different focusing undertaken by UNICEF, are really helpful:

- X - Access to nurseries in Albania is limited, especially in rural areas.⁵⁹
- X - Services are generally related to the day care and not a single pedagogical practice is available.
- X - A staff limited regarding competencies and knowledge level is present.
- X - Documentation that organizes and orients the functioning of this service is quite old⁶⁰.
- X - Due to the dependency from the local power, the service functions as isolated from one unit to another, very limited experience regarding the sharing of positive experiences.

⁵³ World Bank (2014) “*Report of QSRMA – Development in Early Childhood*”, Tirana, Albania.

⁵⁴ Law No. 8652, dated 31.7.2000, “*On local power organization and functioning*”

⁵⁵ Hygiene-sanitary (26.10.1994) “*On nursery building and functioning*”, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment.

⁵⁶ <http://www.shëndetësia.gov.al/al/publikime/shendeti-publik/dokumenta-mbi-shendetin-publik>

⁵⁷ DCM No. 267, dated 12.04.2012, “*Types and manner of information and statistical data exchange, required by SAPRC and responsible state structures, at central and local level.*”

⁵⁸ CRCA, YWCA, Observatory (2014), “*National Study - Access of Roma children in education and health services*”, UNICEF, Albania.

⁵⁹ Rodríguez, A. M. (2013) “*The impact of early childhood care and development services on women empowerment in Albania*”, UNICEF Albania

⁶⁰ Haxhiymeri E., Ndrio M., Hallkaj E., Boci A., (2013) “*Assessment of health care institutions, nurseries and residential care institutions’ capacities of children of age group 0-3*”, UNICEF, Albania, November 2013

- X- Service is not fulfilling the children's rights and needs, not respecting the best standards⁶¹.
- X -Nurseries shall be assessed beyond a children's care service - as community referral points for the generations' good growth - but actually, they are not serving as an "entry point" for other services provided in the community for mothers and families.

Preschool education (public and private) is organized in kindergartens and preparatory classes, where children of age group 3-6 are educated and this kind of education is not compulsory. Preparatory classes function mainly in basic education schools and are attended by children of age group 5, who have not attended the pre-university education.

According to the sources of LSMS (2012), the main reasons that parents do not enrol their children in kindergarten derive from their belief that their children are still young and it would be better for them to be cared for in families (25% of parents), especially declared by parents of 3-4 year old children.

Based on the same database, the percentage of 3-5 year old children, not attending preschool education, varies as follows, 86.8%, 69.3% and 41.5%⁶².

Content standards, achievement standards, as well as programs regarding each age group are supportive and orienting documents to provide care and education for children in kindergartens. They encourage child development regarding physical health, learning approach, social and emotional development, cognitive, linguistic and motor skills development.

Inclusiveness of children is actually restricted by lack of equipment in kindergartens with furniture and didactic tools to realize different activities, by lack of appropriate indoor and outdoor environments for different activities, focus on "figures and writing", programs oriented to teachers and not to children's needs, lack of an all-inclusive/holistic institutional approach to children's needs, in and out of the institution (with other actors, children's families, or the whole community)⁶³.

Basic education begins at the age of 6 and ends at the age of 9. Citizens who reach 16 years old, but cannot finish the basic education, can finish it in part-time schools. For 2013-2014, the number of pupils that finished the basic education and that attend higher secondary education has reached 92%. Teacher-student relation for basic education is approximately 1:16. Private schools in basic education comprise 8.5%. Percentage of students that attend private education is 7.2% of the general number of students.

Changes in the population centralization map resulted in an increase of the number of students (especially in basic education) in schools in large urban areas and a decrease of the number of students in rural areas. From 1070 schools of combined classes (where there are 40 pupils in total), the possibility for centralization of a 9-year school, is implemented only in 321 schools.

Decentralization of educational institutions has impinged the quality of learning-educational process for 5243 pupils⁶⁴.

School dropout is an evident occurrence. Statistics generally reflect only that contingent of students that are enrolled, and then have abandoned school. The main concern remains the "invisible" children, who do not attend school and are not identified, because they are not registered in any state register. Beside this category, in the system, there are the "half visible" children and "children at high risk of dropping out of school", which is mainly composed of Roma-Egyptian children and other students from families with social and economic difficulties, etc. Physical *infrastructure* (conditions) of schools remains problematic.

⁶¹ Hallkaj, E., Binaj, I. (2011) "Service cost in nurseries of Tirana", UNICEF, 2012

⁶² Ravens, J.V. (2014), "Universal preschool education for 5 year old children", UNICEF Albania

⁶³ Information Centre for Child and Family Wellbeing (2014), "Practices of inclusion in Albanian preschool system", Save the Children, Albania

⁶⁴ Karameta, P. et al (2014) "Reform on Pre-University Education System" – Preliminary assessment report, Working group on pre-university education reformation, MES

Actually, 58 education objects are identified to be at risk of being ruined; 287 education objects require immediate interventions for serious problems regarding building structures; in 1231 objects there are signs of amortization, so interventions are required⁶⁵.

Regarding *teaching infrastructure*, demonstrative laboratories of physics, chemistry, biology and geography are available in public schools, but in many cases they are not functional. Malfunctioning of laboratories is a result of the insufficient quantity of laboratory tools and the necessary environments to establish laboratory classrooms. The laboratory tools provided by REDs (Regional Education Directorate) are not always consistent with the program requirements for these tools, or the needs that are actually present in schools⁶⁶. Also, due to the poor coordination between schools and REDs, as well as lack of funds, libraries are not supplied with new books that serve to encourage, motivate and draw children closer to books.

The current inspections of MES identify 1184 teachers more than needed in the whole country; 2065 are out of their profile and 1984 teachers do not have the right education⁶⁷.

Even though the actual model of *regulating the teaching profession* can be compared with the experiences of other countries, still it is facing some difficulties regarding tests on licensing, payment of practitioner teachers and lack of professional mentors. Furthermore, training education staff is conceptualized from persons and institutions as a facultative element. The annual planning of trainings is not based on national and/or local plans. Trainings are not planned according to professional standards and their content is not drafted to improve the professional competencies. In the training sessions, the interactive methods are mainly replaced by lectures. Training service is limited regarding the diversity of providing agencies, because universities are not included. This process suffers a very low adaptability towards the individual and team needs of teachers, in particular towards the new teachers. As a result, the learning process in schools is a mixture of old practices with new ideas, which are confusing and not well adapted⁶⁸.

Inclusiveness of children in education remains a challenge. Beside the improvement of the legal framework, there are still cases when children with disabilities are denied the right to be accepted in normal schools. The Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination has noticed the discrimination of children with disabilities, due to the failure of the respective structures to conduct an individual needs assessment of pupils through the Multidisciplinary Commissions, implementing the legal provisions that regulate the education of children with disabilities⁶⁹.

Observations and interviews conducted in a series of kindergartens and public normal schools in the country, as part of an assessment⁷⁰ focused on this topic show that, actually, buildings are not adapted and welcoming for children with disabilities. In the visited schools, beside the ramps placed in the entrance of the school, the other facilitating elements were missing. For this reason, children with physical disabilities stay in the first floor classrooms; the other floors are not accessible. The majority of kindergarten and school principals are unable to identify what is necessary to be adapted in the building, in order to enable the inclusion of different disability categories. The infrastructure of kindergartens and school buildings is a competence of municipalities and communes, which find the financial impossibility to be the main reason for lack of improved infrastructure conditions.

RED directors, state that in more than 60% of kindergartens and schools, the educational tools are not consistent with the needs of children with disabilities, and in more than 25% of cases, the educational tools and the conditions of equipment are partially appropriate.

⁶⁵ *ibid*

⁶⁶ Gjedia, R., et al (2013) “*Assessment report of the fields ‘Climate and ethics in School’ and ‘Pupils Care’*” IKAP.

⁶⁷ <http://www.arsimi.gov.al/al/neesroom/lajme/msues-për-shqipërinë-kapitull-i-ri-per-reformën-në-arsim&page=1>

⁶⁸ Karameta, P. et al (2014) “*Reform on Pre-University Education System*” – Preliminary assessment report, Working group on pre-university education reformation, MES

⁶⁹ Decision No. 92, dated 25.10.2013, Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination.

Such accommodations, like instructions using signs and educational materials in Braille for children with hearing and visual impairment, are not implemented.

The curriculum is highly “overloaded” for children of different disability categories, especially for children with intellectual disabilities.

Like in normal schools, in special schools, books adapted for children with disabilities are not available. Even teachers do not have a guide to adapt the curriculum for children with disabilities.

Pursuant to the Law "On Pre-University Education" No. 69/2012, the school provides *psychological service* and the supporting service of the social worker. Order No. 344, dated 19.08.2013, "On establishing the Unit of Psycho-Social Service" strengthen and reorients the functioning of this service. Actually, neither distribution, nor coverage of psycho-social service is clear.

This is due to the fact that the service is not established yet, or it is established not based on the order specifics. Due to infrastructure problems or the geographical location of schools, not all of the educational institutions are covered by specialists. Also, 25.1% of school psychologists are not employed in order to respect the criterion of the appropriate education, according to aforementioned order.

Almost in all the schools inspected by IKAP in 2013⁷¹, the collegial bodies are established: The School Board, Parents Council, Pedagogical Council, Students' Government and Discipline Council, but their functioning remain a continuous challenge. Lack of an efficient cooperation is an evidence of the lack of the proper functioning of educational institutions.

Actually, **secondary education** is provided as *general secondary education* (high school), *vocational education* and *oriented education*. High school comprises 3 academic years, while education in part-time schools lasts 4 years. The period of vocational secondary education is divided in two, three and four years. Oriented education includes foreign language schools and lasts 4 years, while the secondary education for arts and sports last 3 or 4 years.

The full-time secondary education is open to be attended by all students going through basic education, not more than 18 years old. The alternative education form (part-time) for this education level is open. Secondary education is provided: a) full-time; b) part-time; c) distant. Distant education form is not implemented yet. Attending of oriented secondary education is restricted by preferential criteria and mainly on merit.

The general secondary education has had a considerable increase in access during recent years, reaching the net registration level of 70% (INSTAT 2013). Inequalities in secondary education are obvious, 87% of the rich families attend this kind of education, compared to 56.5% of poor families. After some years of experience, the general certificate of secondary education has brought some improvements in implementation, while the new curriculum of comprehensive secondary school, high school, based on competencies, has not been conceptualized yet.

From 2009/10, the **Initial Vocational Education** (IVE) system is 2+1+1, in order to provide students the general education, and the vocational one (theoretical and practical), preparing them for the labour market and further education. IVE comprise vocational education schools and vocational qualification centres. Technical and vocational education and training are provided in 53 schools (44 public schools, including branches in the general secondary schools, and 9 private ones), mainly located in urban areas.

The majority of schools provides two to four profiles, and out of these, only a quarter provide more than eight vocational choices. Regarding the infrastructure, it is noticed that the environment of work departments in schools is outdated, and in many cases, teaching is provided in totally amortized buildings⁷².

⁷⁰ Save the Children Albania (2013), All-inclusive Education in Albania – Analytic Study, Tirana

⁷¹ Gjedia, R., et al (2013) “Assessment report of the fields ‘Climate and ethics in School’ and ‘Pupils Care’ ” IKAP

⁷² MSWY “Higher skills and good job for all females and males”, National Employment and Skills Strategy, 2014-2020.

The content of vocational education has shifted to service professions (economics, management, hotel, tourism, and ICT). However, processing of vocational standards and programs, oriented toward gaining competencies and presenting practices in entrepreneurship has not progressed. There are still existing post-secondary programs of vocational education and qualification for the secondary school graduates, which shall be available to respond to the increase of demands and enable persons to get in and out of the education and qualification process in different periods of their career.

The Number of children enrolled in the vocational education decreased by 38% during 2006-2011, and started to increase somehow during 2011-2012. This is partially a result of the demographic factors (number of students attending primary and secondary education had a decrease of nearly 10% during the period 2001-2010), but mainly a result of the poor achievements of the VE system. The attractive skill of vocational education is still poor, because it is conceptualized as the second best pathway to tertiary education, and not as a pathway toward the labour market.

The majority of students, who enrol in vocational schools, are people with very low results. Many of them think that it is easier to pass the class in VE schools. School directors accept the fact that more than 50% of the students graduated in VE, submit a request to attend universities and many of them enrol in private universities, even in profiles that have nothing in common with the profiles they attended in vocational schools.

Graduates in vocational schools are mainly males, especially during the current years, and such a thing demonstrates that the vocational education is mainly attended by them. The gender phenomenon, the very low number of girls compared to boys, is related to many reasons. Factors that discourage them (even their parents) not to choose the vocational education, are related to the radical gender stereotype of profiles and course, location of vocational schools, lack of transport, lack of safety in dormitories and the general social climate in VE schools.

However, even though the shift toward “new” professions/profiles in the service sector is expected to attract both boys and girls and to favour the inclusion of girls, the number of girls attending VE has decreased. In order to achieve positive results in the labour market for females, addressing the basic reasons of this tendency is necessary, especially in the sectors that are considered as a boost for the Albanian economy and to further increase in the coming years.

Education on career, as a mean to help students and their families to make decisions, is still insufficient. Still, there is not a tracing system for the vocational education, which would help to identify the career pathways for female and male graduates, including their employment, and/or the post-secondary or tertiary studies⁷³.

Progress

Children good growth in nurseries

The actual situation and needs for a change under the frame of organizing and providing services for children of age group 0-3 years old is reflected in an assessment report supported by UNICEF⁷⁴. Realized under the perspective of implementing child development standards and focusing on education, some recommendations to promote child care, development and education are presented in this report.

Recognizing the needs and problems of children’s services in nurseries is considered as a positive step, taking into consideration the “obscurity” so far in the service provided for this age group, under the

⁷³ MSWY “Higher skills and good job for all females and males”, National Employment and Skills Strategy, 2014-2020

⁷⁴ Haxhiymeri E., Ndrijo M., Hallkaj E., Boci A., (2013), “Assessment of health care institutions, nurseries and residential care institutions’ capacities of children of age group 0-3”, UNICEF, Albania, November 2013

frame of attendance and the quality of the services received.

In partnership with national and international experts, supported by UNICEF, physical standards of building nurseries that respond to the development needs of young children, according to contemporary standards⁷⁵ are drafted, but, actually they are not integrated into regulatory documents of the ministry of Health.

Care and development standards for children of age group 0-3 years old are developed by a group of professionals in the field, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Sports, supported by UNICEF, but they are still not approved by any of the Municipal Councils.

Preschools education

81,448 children have attended kindergartens (public and private) in the academic year 2013-2014. From 383 preparatory classes, benefit 9100 children. The number of children with disabilities, part of the public preschool system, was 319. The number of Roma children enrolled in kindergarten is 630, 39.2% more than 2011⁷⁶. Number of teachers in kindergarten is 4462, out of which 71% have university degrees.

The relation children/teachers in kindergarten is 18:1, while the relation for children /group in kindergarten is 22:1. The number of private educational institutions is 8.4% of the total number. The number of children attending private preschool education is 6% of the total number. Expenditures for the year reported regarding kindergarten represent 7.2% of the total budget on education⁷⁷.

The preschool education in Albania is undertaking some important reforms regarding access and improvement of quality in the preschool system. Under this context, MES has undertaken a series of measures, which aim:

- X Globalization of preschool years (age group 5-6) in Albania, as a component of the reviewed package to establish a set of preschool education standards, based on contemporary models. This undertaking that is expected to end in 2015 will be realized by multidisciplinary groups of specialists, supported by an international expertise;
- X Preparation of the preschool system curriculum;
- X Drafting of the teacher training package;
- X Specification of monitoring/assessing indicators of learning quality and results.

MES, MSWY and UNICEF have cooperated in improving the early inclusion of Roma children in preschool education in Albania, under the undertaken intervention “Every Roma child attend kindergarten”. The MES instruction⁷⁸ on the priority to include Roma children in kindergartens and the ongoing monitoring of attendance, made possible the registration of more than 300 hundred Roma children from September 2013 to September 2014.

Basic education

In order to improve the learning quality and to adapt to the tendency of our society towards development, as a knowledgeable society of the 21 century and taking into consideration the European

⁷⁵ <http://www.unicef.org/albania/Standartet-e-Cerdheve.pdf>

⁷⁶ CRCA, YWCA, Observatory (2014), “National Study - Access of Roma children in education and health services”, UNICEF, Albania

⁷⁷ World Bank (2014) “Report of QSRMA – Development in Early Childhood”, Albania.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Education and Sports, Instruction 21, dated 08.08.2014, “*On increasing the preschool education attendance by Roma children.*”

integration, MES, through the reform initiated in pre-university education, has declared the vision to change the curriculum, focusing on developing the key competencies for lifelong learning⁷⁹.

According to the new vision, students and their needs and interests are in the centre of the education, a radical change compared to the traditional system, which obliges students to adapt to it mechanically. The purpose of the reform is creating better potential conditions that students shall be prepared as active citizens in order to participate creatively and critically in the economic, social and cultural life of the country, and to be capable to adapt to the changes of circumstances of this democratic knowledge-based society, despite their individual possibilities and circumstances.

The new curriculum shall provide solutions that take into consideration the student's individual needs and styles, as well as their preliminary educational experiences, as a criterion to improve their level of achievement. It shall be drafted, implemented and harmonized with the main characteristics of age groups and depending on the children's learning capacities and willingness. The curriculum shall explain to students and parents the direction, level and destination of learning at different educational grades and levels, which are the basis for the coming grades and levels. Learning based on the reformed curriculum shall take place through situations related to learning contexts, that support and help in development of competencies⁸⁰.

In order to improve the *physical conditions/environments* in schools, building new schools and rehabilitating the existing ones, in 2013, 1336 education constructions have been built and reconstructed, out of which 359 are new objects and 977 are reconstructed objects.

In order to improve the quality of teaching, support with instructions on teachers' general standards improvement⁸¹ and the teachers' qualification criteria and procedures⁸², has continued with the new initiative of MES, "Teachers for Albania". This initiative aims to encourage the attraction of professionals to the system, but even the management of human resources in the preschool education, through the establishment of an online portal on employment.

Under the context of children inclusiveness, the drafting of an instruction that determines the organization of part-time basic education attendance has been developed⁸³. This instruction helps students that have reached sixteen years old and that have not finished the full-time basic education. In this context, the right to take the "second chance" for children up to seventeen years old has been reinforced, for all of them that have abandoned school, have left or have not attended and do not return in the full-time system, and do not attend even the part-time basic education.

In order to address school dropout, the agreement⁸⁴ signed by MES, Ministry of Interior, MSWY and Ministry of Health, is followed by specific instructions for the Ministries and the joint draft instruction is expected to be approved.

Another instruction⁸⁵ aims to guarantee the right to attend full-time basic education, within the age limits of compulsory education, to all the children who for different reasons are not enrolled in time, or who have left school for more than two years.

With the benefit of **Roma children's** inclusion in pre-university education schools, a database on the enrolment of Roma children's, with the age limits to attend compulsory education, is set up in kindergartens and schools, from 2010 to present. Roma children in compulsory education have benefited free books in the schools where they are enrolled.

⁷⁹ MES, Order No. 323, dated 07.08.2014, "On piloting the new curriculum in basic education institutions in the pre-university education system

⁸⁰ Karameta, P. et al (2014) "Reform on Pre-University Education System" – Preliminary assessment report, Working group on pre-university education reformation, MES

⁸¹ MES, Instruction No. 5, date 25.02.2013, "On general standards for teachers"

⁸² MES, Instruction No. 2, date 05.02.2014, "On teachers' qualification criteria and procedures

⁸³ MES, Instruction No. 29, date 02.08.2013, "On part-time basic education attendance procedures.

⁸⁴ Joint agreement (2013), "On the identification and enrolment of all the children of age groups corresponding to compulsory education.

⁸⁵ MES, Instruction No. 31, dated 02.08.2013, "On basic education attendance procedures for students that have attended at least two grades of basic education

MES, supported by different international and domestic actors has realized different initiatives focusing on Roma children and families, such as summer camps, food supply in schools, cultural activities and specific qualifications for teachers

In Roma communities' school boards, the inclusion of parents in collegial bodies has been encouraged. 98 Roma and Egyptian parents are part of the school boards (out of 63 schools, where Roma community is represented).

In order to improve the psycho-social service in kindergartens and schools, and to create a supporting environment, a multidisciplinary working group has been established by MES to draft a new manual on this service. Providing this service and strengthening the role of the social worker aims to improve this guide.

Initial Vocational Education

Albanian government has declared in the governmental program for the period 2013-2017 that it shall implement a new model to increase the economy during the next 15 to 20 years, based on the well-structured and processed policies, with a more comprehensive diversity, in order to boost economic growth at maximum, to guarantee its sustainability components, to increase the domestic product and the exports level, as well as to make available conditions for a large number of job positions in the most strategic economic sectors of the country.

Under this context, the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 has been drafted, which has been consulted with stakeholders. This strategy aims to create qualitative job positions and possibilities to enhance skills for all Albania males and females during their life cycle, and it is an important step of the IVE (Initial Vocational Education) system. Under the context of this strategy, policies aiming to improve the employment perspectives that shall have a large activity space have been drafted, while the programs shall consider these people, who are in a disadvantageous situation in the labour market, especially persons with a low education and qualification, such as: females, youngsters, other vulnerable groups and those people that live in rural areas. Designing a new frame to encourage employment shall guarantee the usage of the most effective policies and more resources in the labour market.

The National Employment and Skills Strategy objectives and products will function through the Action Plan and other thematic planning documents, which have already been drafted and are expected to be approved together with the strategy. The implementation of the Action Plan shall be supervised through the achievement indicators, which measure the results of the programs that are active in the labour market, shall determine the financial sources and the responsibilities for implementation.

For many years, vocational education has faced considerable lack of funds, even though the mass of funds determined for 2012 has increased by more than 28%. More than 2/3 (77.8%) of annual funds are spent to cover the staff costs, resulting in limited resources for improving equipment, modernizing the work departments and the preparation of the curricula. According to the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020, the budget planned by MSWY for vocational education/qualification shall increase from 2013 to 2020 with 69.46%, resulting in an annual average increase of 9.91%.

The increase of the budget on education of all the levels shall be based on the rates of developed countries.

Increasing the access for children 0-3 in care and development programs, in order to encourage the employment of parents, especially mothers; increasing gradual access for children 3-5 years old in kindergartens, by improving the efficiency of the system; improving access to vocational education in rural areas, even for girls; increasing access to basic education for children belonging to vulnerable classes, such as children in street situation, Roma and Egyptian children, children with disabilities or with special needs, and children that live in remote and isolated areas.

Improving the infrastructure in kindergartens and schools in accordance with building standards and providing basic materials to improve teaching.

Improving the commitment of the local government in order to provide qualitative child care service and developing nurseries and increasing access through budgeting or approving/implementing the standards in nurseries. Approving standards at national level for care and development for children 0-3 years old.

Using nurseries and kindergartens as an environment to help parents towards positive parenting models through trainings, consultations, etc.

Increasing quality in education quality based on teachers, by investing in professional qualification, teacher motivation and setting strict criteria for the teaching quality.

Improving the curricula for the secondary and vocational education based on competencies and facilitating the implementation of learnt skills.

Improving the psycho-social service in schools and linking the school system with the child protection system.

Establishing relations with faculties that prepare teachers in order that the practices, methodologies and the new curricula shall be included even in the subjects of teaching faculties. The strengthening of the interactivity between the vocational education and training system and industry and the vocational education orienting to the real demands of the labour market.

How is the world and how would you like it to be?

We have represented the **family** by a tree. Prosperity is not so considerable and obvious, because sometimes the family is not happy. Family is very important and prepares us for the future and shall be as united as possible.

The hospital is represented by a coin, because it is very corrupted and shall be free of charge, but actually you have to pay when you go to the hospital and not all the people have incomes.

A heart is used to represent **love**. It is half drawn because not all the people give love.

The book represents **education**. There are a lot of people that for different reasons do not attend school and we want to fix this, and the sad face shall be a smiling one.

A stick which is a symbol of violence is present. **Violence** is spread in too many different ways and this may have a negative impact on the future of the children.

The two crossed hands is a symbol for **peace** and we want peace to be found everywhere.

In the car is a child crying. Nowadays, a lot of children are being **trafficked and** violated and this is such a bad thing, so these cuffs mean that people who conduct these kind of things shall be sentenced according to the law.

We have drawn the **church** which can be even a mosque, and we do not want this to change, because it helps us a lot and we find support.

ALO 116 is a very good counselling line where we can refer to when we need.

A laptop showing **internet connection** that we are very keen on, but we have to change it because there are some images which are not appropriate for us. We want it to be safer.

⁸⁶ Group discussion chaired by SAPRC with the participation of 20 youngsters, in November 12 2014.

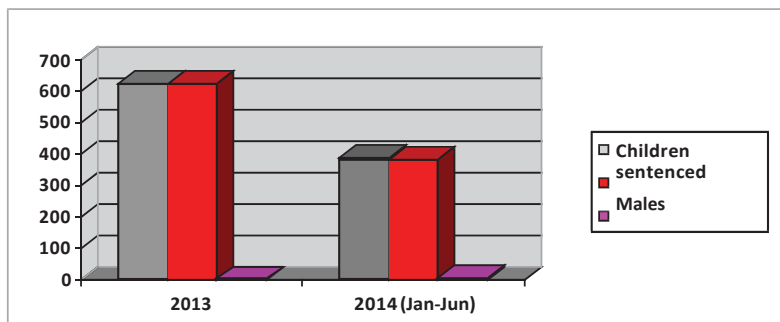
V. RIGHT TO LEGAL PROTECTION

Background

Children's rights have considerably improved through holistic legal and institutional initiatives and reforms, making them reach the European standards⁸⁷. Recently, the Ministry of Justice is designing the Juvenile Justice Strategy, which is an important step related to solving all legal issues regarding children in conflict with the law, children under 14 years of age, and children as victims and witnesses. Despite the design of this strategic document, the major challenge in practice is establishing a friendly justice system⁸⁸, which takes into consideration the interest of children and the implementation of preventive and protective measures, aiming the early identification of children with delinquent behaviours and their treatment outside the justice system.

Children in conflict with the law

During 2013, the number of children being reported, based on the statistics of the General Directorate of State Police, has been 1437 at country level, out of which 485 were in Tirana, 182 in Durrës, 118 in Elbasan, 145 in Fier, etc. The number of children sentenced, based on reports is 624, out of which 621 boys and 3 girls. Statistics show that 549 children are sentenced for offenses and 75 for criminal offenses. Most of them are boys, 546 and only 3 girls. Also, only 30 of them have not attended school. In 2014, during the first six months 386 juveniles have been sentenced, nearly 6.73% of the total number at country level. 382 of them are males and only 4 of them are females. Based on a comparative overview, we can say that there is no increasing tendency in criminal offenses during 2013 and the first six months of 2014.



⁸⁷ Report of the Committee for children's Rights

⁸⁸ Under this frame, the main issues are: i) keeping children in conflict with the law outside the justice system, ii) building a specialised justice system for the youth, and iii) building and functioning of a holistic justice system for the youth, which has as its main focus the restorative justice

Children in conflict with the law enjoy the right to be treated as humans, with respect for their dignity⁸⁹, the right to judicial and psychological assistance from the moment of their first contact with the police officers⁹⁰. However, sometimes the judicial process for juveniles is not appropriate and friendly to children. Their interrogation is performed in inappropriate environments, by police officers who do not have the right qualification and, in some cases, without the assistance of a lawyer or psychologist.

A positive step in this aspect is the approval of the Order No. 300, date 08.07.2013, of the General Director of State Police, on “Standard Work Procedures for juveniles treatment during the preliminary investigation phase”, aiming the determination and clarification of the procedures that shall be followed and implemented by the State Police workers regarding the juvenile’s treatment during the preliminary investigations phase⁹¹. Despite the rule that the juveniles shall be separated from adults, in the police departments there are no special rooms for the juveniles, and for this reason they stay in the same cell with adults. With the support of the Save the Children Albania organization, during 2013, some child friendly rooms for interviewing were established in 6 police departments in Tirana.

In 2007, with a decree of the President of the Republic of Albania, “special sections” for the juveniles have been established in the six Courts of the Judicial Districts with the largest number of issues. The establishment of these sections has improved the approaches on the justice process related to the juveniles in the judicial system.

In order to guarantee equal access in the justice system, the establishment of special sections in all First Instance Courts in the country and in the Courts of Appeal, is necessary. Even though trainings on children’s rights have been provided to judges, their training in the fields of communication techniques and child development phases, still remain a challenges. Training lawyers on child rights issues is also a need that has not been met.

The statistics of the General Directorate of Prisons show that in the first 6 months of 2014, the average number of children under custody was nearly 98 and the average number of children that perform their sentence in prison was nearly 16. In 2013, the average number of children under custody was nearly 84, while the average number of children performing their sentence in prison was 22. Information on the average duration of juveniles under custody or imprisonment is missing. The number of juveniles under custody remains a concern as well as the fact that the majority of them are in the custody for theft or crimes against private property.

Young F, is a child of a family with five children. He has attended four grades of education and then abandoned it. The family is in difficult economic conditions, because his parents are unemployed and they survive with minimal incomes provided by his two sisters who work in tailoring. The young is accused for “theft”, for which the Court has taken the measure of prison under custody.

The theft performed by the young includes the theft of a telephone, television set and a wallet with amounts to 5.000 Lekë. F sold these items at very low prices in order to guarantee his daily expenditures.

⁸⁹ Article 28, the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, Article 40/1 CCR (Convention on the Children’s Rights) foresees that “every suspected and accused child or for which is declared that he/she has committed an offense of the penal law, has the right of a treatment that develops in him/her the feeling of dignity and personal value, strengthen its feeling of respect for the human rights and basic freedom of others and that takes into consideration his/her age, as well as the will to help in the reintegration in the society, in order to for him/her to play a constructive role in the heart of society

⁹⁰ Article 35, 48-49, Code of Penal Procedure

⁹¹ This protocol was prepared by the Centre of Integrated Legal Services and Practices and Terre des Hommes, with the contribution of UNICEF, European Union and Save the Children Albania

For this offense, the young was arrested and stayed under custody for about 7 months. After this period, the Court of the First Instance decided a sentence of 1 year and 4 months in prison.

The treatment of juveniles under the custody/prison environments shall be in accordance with their capacities, education, social and economic situation, talent and skills. Special attention shall be paid to preserving, improving and resetting the relation of juveniles with their families. The medical staff shall visit every juvenile and periodically control all juveniles, based on a chart framed by the institution directorate. Important elements in juvenile education and rehabilitation are professional training and operational skills. To this purpose, professional courses in woodworking, plumbing, computing, foreign languages, etc., shall be organized. Actually, MSWY and MoJ have ratified the Cooperation Memorandum, in order to prepare the reintegration of persons detained and sentenced to imprisonment, through organizing vocational training in Institution for the Execution of Criminal Decisions (IECD), and creating opportunities for their reintegration into the society, after their release. The vocational training of persons detained and sentenced to imprisonment shall be realized through vocational training courses, taking place in special environments adapted for teaching and vocational practice in IECD. Vocational training courses in IECD shall be implemented by Regional Directorates of Public Vocational training.

The 9-year cycle compulsory education process for people with restricted freedom shall take place in the IECD. The learning process in IECD-s shall be realized based on the agreement between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and Sports, for cooperation in the education process in IECD. The curricula, plans, register and other documents are the same as in public schools, since schools in IECD are under their dependency. The enrolment of students in schools shall be realized based on the document that proves school has been finished. After finishing school, the juvenile will gain the certificate of the respective school where he/she has been registered. In total, 45 juveniles have finished the education cycle 2013-2014. Also, juveniles are employed based on the opportunities provided by institutions. In total, 9 juveniles have been active in employment activities.

Despite progress made regarding juvenile treatment in the penitentiary system, one of the most concerning issues is the duration of investigations beyond the foreseen legal time frames. According to penal legislation, the procedural time frames are the same for both adults and juveniles, in the investigation and judgment phase⁹². When determining the security sanctions for juveniles, the court shall take into consideration the request for not interrupting the educational process⁹³ and arrest sanction shall be determined when every other sanction is inappropriate⁹⁴. A result of data analysis is the fact that the calculation of the average period for a juvenile to stay in the custody is difficult, while there are no alternatives against the arrest sanction to imprisonment when the offense is at a low risk.

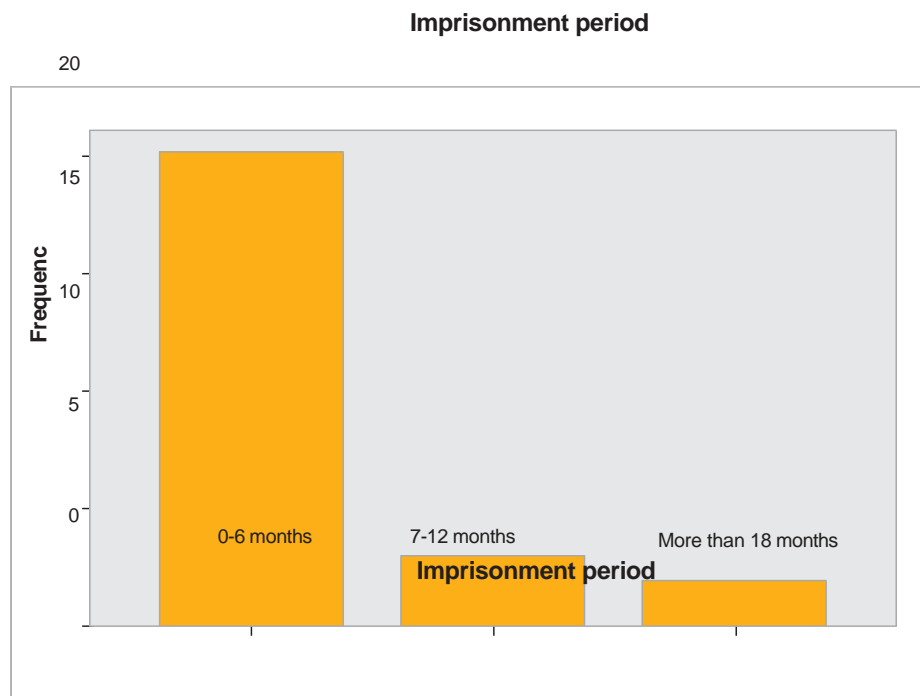
⁹² Article 323, the Code of Penal Procedure

⁹³ Article 229/3, the Code of Penal Procedure

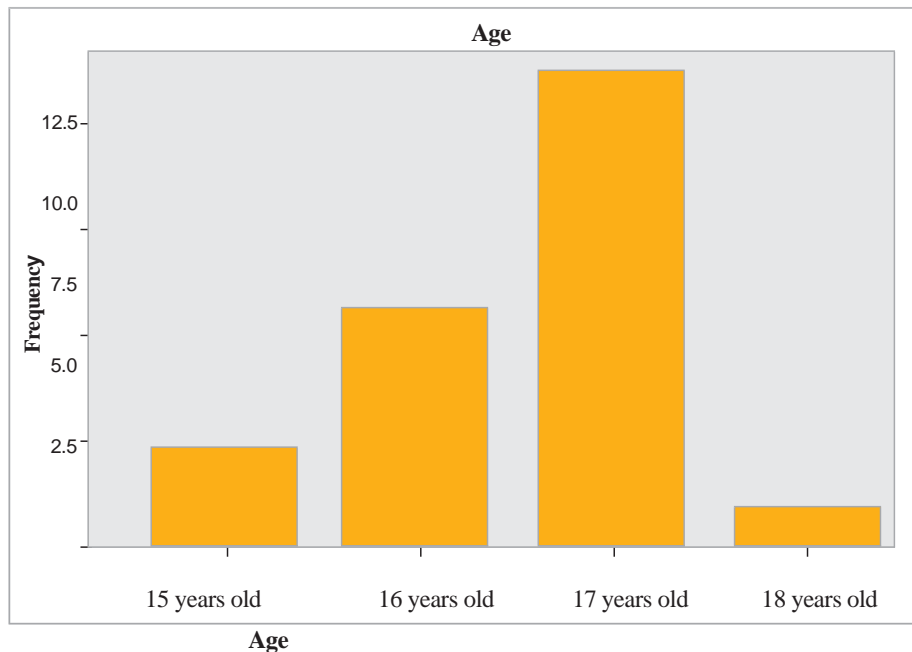
⁹⁴ Article 230/1, the Code of Penal Procedure

Under this context, it is important to determine accurately the types of alternative measures to be given against the security measure of arrest to imprisonment in the penal legislation, the role and services provided by the probation service and an approach that includes the family and community context. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a special legislation shall be provided for children: special chapters in the Criminal Code (CC) and Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), or a special code. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has undertaken the initiative to draft a special chapter for juveniles in the CC and CPC. In this legislation, the issue of respecting procedural time frames for juveniles shall be adjusted.

According to data on penitentiary system study in Albania, conducted by Save the Children Albania in partnership with the Centre of Integrated Legal Services and Practices and ARSIS, as well as interviews with of 25 children in IECED Kavaja, have shown that the average period of custody is 0-6 months and only for 2% of them it is more than 18 months.



Also, 12% of the children are of age group 15, 4% of 18 and the rest in the categories from 15-18.



The treatment of the sentenced juveniles in the Institutions for Executing Criminal Decisions (IECD) is based on a Special Institution Regulation. In 2009, in Kavaja was established an IECD for sentenced juveniles, which serves as a custody institution for the juveniles coming from other districts, such as: Elbasan, Durrës and Kavaja. This institution provides rehabilitative educational programs, vocational training, sport activities and entertaining activities, in accordance with the international standards. The new law on the Treatment of Sentenced People and the General Daft Regulation of Prisons, which are still in the approval phase by the Ministry of Justice, regulate the treatment of juveniles in the custody environments.

The treatment of juveniles includes their preparation for reintegration⁹⁵, a purpose that shall be at the heart of treating juveniles in the justice system. This shall be realized by the education staff in the institution, as well as their cooperation with the vocational training centres and different NGOs. Depending on the age of sentenced juveniles, the challenges for the reintegration, firstly are related to their reintegration in schools and secondly, with the provision of a supportive and protective network in a child's community, drafting programs at local government level and employment. Under these conditions: i) support for the IECD staff and/or probation service to facilitate the reintegration process of juveniles; and ii) establishing a clear referral system for local power actors, drafting joint documents for their coordination, as well as building supportive community-based services, still remain challenges for the future.

Since 2008, the alternative sentences, which include: semi freedom, suspending imprisonment decision execution and probation, or working for public interest, or home stay, have been implemented for juveniles⁹⁶.

⁹⁵ The penal legislation foresees the building of educational and social programs, which aim the preparation for the release of the juvenile, especially during the last 6 months of the sentence

⁹⁶ Law No. 10024, Dated 27.11.2008, "On some changes and amendments" in the Law No. 8331, Dated 21.04.1998, "On execution of penal decisions", DCM No. 302, Dated 25.3.2009, "On approval of the Regulation 'On organization and

Since the beginning of the Probation Service, the total number of people placed with a decision of the court in one of the imprisonment sentence alternatives is 1684. As it can be understood by this evidence, there is an awareness of the application of the sentence alternatives for juveniles, who comprise 18% of the total number at country level. During the first six months of 2014, the number of children sentenced with alternative sentences is 241, out of which 7 girls and 234 boys. While in 2013, the number of children sentenced was 325, out of which 3 girls and 323 boys. Based on a comparative overview of the average of two years 2013 and 2014, during six months, an increasing tendency of the number of alternative sentences given by the court for children in conflict with the law can be noticed. Types of alternative sentences given by Juvenile Courts, during 2013-2014, have mainly been for public interest, during a probation period with the obligation to participate in a vocational course. The juveniles, sentenced with alternative sentences were guaranteed the right to protection and confidentiality in the personal record. The implementation of sentences takes into consideration the age, physical and mental well-being, development, personal and social capacities and circumstances.

The Probation Service with the support of OSCE, has drafted the “Assessment System for Juveniles and the Youth in Major Age”, in order to assess their level of risk. At the same time, in the General Directorate of the Probation Service, the “Juvenile Sector, Community Services, Probation and Statistics”, which inspects the work of local offices with the purpose of preserving the standards of the service provided, the increase of their quality and the implementation of the legal framework, has been established⁹⁷.

Since the establishment of the Probation Service in 2008, the number of regional probation service offices has increase from 6 to actually 22. These offices are located in Tirana, Tropoja, Vlora, Berat, Dibra, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokastra, Kavaja, Korça, Kruja, Kukës, Kurbin, Lezha, Lushnje, Mat, Përmet, Pogradec, Puka, Saranda, Shkodra.

The General Directorate of the Probation Service with the support of UNICEF, in October 2014, launched the program “Google mapping”, by which the identification of local probation service offices and welcoming centres with which they can cooperate in the implementation of the alternative sentence for juveniles, was made possible. This program will help for an effective management of juveniles in conflict with the law, to whom the alternative sentence “work in public interest” was given, and will improve the cooperation between courts, local units and probation service.

According to the Order of the Prime Minister No. 100, dated 21.02.2014, “On Approving the structure and staff of probation service”, the number of probation service staff is increased from 104 to 134 workers qualified in the justice field, social work and psychology. Based on these figures, the average number of probation service staff in each local office is 2-3 workers, except the local office in Tirana, which has on average 15-20 workers, because of the large number of cases being followed. In every case, the local staff are not sufficient for the follow up of cases of children sentenced with alternative sentences and for the provision of qualitative services, taking into consideration the burden of each office, as well as the lack of specialization of these workers in the treatment of juvenile cases.

Despite the progress made so far by the Probation Service, lack of appropriate environments in function of protecting juvenile privacy during his/her interview, still remains a challenge. Actually, juvenile interviewing has been performed in the same premises as adults and in the presence of other persons, sentenced with alternative sentences or probation service staff and workers, who do not have the right qualification for the treatment of these cases. The residence distance from the Probation Service offices makes the juveniles find it difficult to be present, because this may bring some extra costs for him/her and his/her family taking into consideration the fact that these children come from families in economic difficulties.

Giving alternative sentences by the court, especially for juveniles is of paramount importance. First of all it requires an effective cooperation of all the actors involved: probation service, prosecution, court, central state bodies and local government unit bodies, NGOs, etc. Awareness for the court to give alternative sentences

functioning of the test service and determination of standards and procedures, for supervision of the test of alternative sentences”

⁹⁷ Order No. 2, dated 11.01.2012, “ On approval of Test Service structure and staff”.

and the establishment of local probation service offices in the whole country, to provide support for juveniles during the whole time of sentence, is needed too.

The establishment of cooperation bridges between probation service and employment offices, aiming the automatic inclusion of this category as job seekers and the vocational training centres, which enable the provision of free vocational courses for this category, is of special importance. A continuous support for probation service is necessary, taking into consideration the burden of every specialist, thus the number of cases that a single specialist follows and the specific needs that the follow up of a juvenile case represents. In order to facilitate the meeting of the obligation to be present at the Probation Service, the extension of local offices to be closer to sentenced persons in this service, is necessary. Finally, the practice of binding Cooperation Memorandums with the Regional Education Directorates in the Probation Service Local Offices, aiming to guarantee the establishment of special programs for this category of juveniles, as well as their inclusion in the education process in cases when the alternative sentence includes the obligation for the education process attendance shall be implemented for the juveniles that have difficulties in attending education programs.

Children of age group 14 in conflict with the law

According to Criminal Code (CC), juveniles under 14 years old are excluded from the prosecution, but they may be subject to educational or rehabilitative measures. According to Article 46 of the CC, for children under the age of criminal responsibility, the Court shall make the decision to send these children in educational institutions. These measures are not applied in practice because of the lack of the institutions determined by the law.

In the court decision for the juvenile with the initials G.F, 13 years old, the District Court decided as a measure the educational measure and sending the juvenile in an educational institution.

According to the respective data on this case, it results that the charge deposited in the prosecution was “Theft committed more than once”, based on the Article 134/2 of the CC. During the process, the appointed lawyer was present, while the child and his legal caregivers were not summoned to be heard. Based on the Order of State Social Service, the child was in a residential institution. The Court has not taken into consideration this fact and at the end of the process, it was decided to place the child in an “educational institution”.

Children at the age of 14 are treated by the justice system in the same way as children, who have criminal responsibilities, and not as a category in need for the social protection.

The right to legal and psychological assistance shall be guaranteed starting the first contact with the police officers. However, the limited human resources and more concretely the existence of only one psychologist in the Regional Directorates of Police Officers, creates the conditions that the psychologist becomes available by non-profit organizations. The statistics available in the database of the State Police correspond to the juveniles in conflict with the law. There are no differentiated statistics and gender-based for children under the criminal responsibility age and for the inclusion of the latter in the offense after reaching 14 years old. Referral by the police workers in the State Social Service or in centres headed by non-profit organizations happens only in cases when contacting parents is not possible and when the juvenile is considered to be in a situation of risk.

From the data collected by interviewing 25 juveniles in the IECD in Kavaja, regarding their inclusion in criminal activities under the criminal responsibility age, 32% of them have been in the police department for different causes, before reaching the criminal responsibility age⁹⁸. This shows that the preventive intervention for children under 14 years old that have criminal behaviours, there is a tendency to decrease the criminal activities to the juveniles over 14 years old.

Whereof, the addressing of this issue in the Penal Code, Code of Penal Procedure, the establishment of the supportive services and an identification system, referral and treatment by the police officers to the

⁹⁸ Xhafellari, M., Gjoni, O., 2013 Children under legal responsibility. Tirana: ARSIS/CILSP/Save the Children

children protection staff for the provision of necessary protection, are of priority. Actually, with the support of the social society, the Ministry of Justice, SAPRC and MSWY are reviewing the drafting of a legal package that will fill this gap.

The changes proposed impact the Penal Code, Code of Penal Procedure, Law on the Protection of Children's Rights, etc., as well as the drafting of a Joint Guide of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and the Ministry of Interior, for case management under the criminal responsibility age that have committed offenses.

Juvenile victims/witnesses

The protection of children as victims and witnesses shall be sanctioned in a general manner, under the frame of the right of the child for special protection⁹⁹. The protection of the child moral and dignity from the illegal damage is not stipulated under the context of the child as a victim¹⁰⁰. Taking into consideration the fact the children as victims/witnesses are fragile and require special and appropriate protection based on their age, maturity level and the special individual needs, it is necessary to undertake all the measures to prevent and to protect them from being damages, including intimidation, revenge and re-victimization. The need to avoid the re-victimization is essential in cases when the child is a victim of severe abuses, such as sexual abuse, when the child repeated interviewing by different authorities obliges the child to experience the abuse trauma again and again.

Despite all these elements, the good functioning of the state bodies and the strengthening of inter-sectorial cooperation between courts, police, prosecution, social and health services, teachers, local government bodies, health care structures and NGOs, shall be guaranteed. Also, children as victims/witnesses and their family members shall be provided access to professional assistance during the whole judicial process, as well as referral to the health care centres and social intervention programs.

Diversion measures

The diversion measures are not stipulated in the Albanian legislation. However, since 2011 the implementation of mediation¹⁰¹, which is a practice aiming the restorative justice, has begun. Under the circumstances of a legal gap to implement the diversion measures, some issues remain to be solved, such as: addressing it to the Code of Criminal Procedure and Criminal Code, the determination of diversion measures, the role and mandate of the decision-making structures, as well as drafting and implementing training programs for professionals involved in this process.

Free of charge judicial assistance

The legal framework to provide free of charge judicial assistance¹⁰² and determination of concrete responsibilities for state agencies and the public ones in the implementation of the judicial assistance standards was approved in 2011. The State Commission for Judicial Assistance (STJA) was established, and later it approved the necessary sub-legal acts to enable the implementation of the judicial assistance. During 2011, STJA has refused 27 application requests for judicial assistance (14 penal issues and 13 civil issues) due to lack of documentation. During 2012, STJA has approved the provision of judicial assistance for 8 cases (5 penal cases and 3 civil ones). Taking into consideration the number of children in conflict with the law, and taking into account that many of the crimes have their roots in the poverty phenomenon, in which the family is found, the number of cases that have profited free of charge judicial assistance is still low compared to the needs.

Despite the effort to establish a system of providing free of charge judicial assistance, there is a lack of information for the establishment and functioning of STJA, for the content of the law and sub-legal acts, for the legal assistance beneficiary categories, the application procedure and filling out the documents. STJA has not created a webpage where it can publish necessary information for interested people and for the judicial assistance providers themselves. Access to the free judicial assistance is

⁹⁹ Article 54, Constitution of the Republic of Albania.

¹⁰⁰ Law "On the Protection of Children's Rights"

¹⁰¹ Law No. 10385, dated 24.02.2011, "On mediation for solving conflicts".

¹⁰² Law No. 10039, dated 22.12.2008, "On Judicial Assistance"

restricted by the presence of STJA in Tirana. This makes the follow up of procedures for free of charge judicial assistance to the residents in remote geographical areas very difficult.

Issues to be addressed

Many of the circumstances that make children be in conflict with the law are of a social origin. Often, children that commit offenses come from a family context with social and economic problems, such as poverty, divorce or domestic violence. In order to fulfil the aim of re-integrating the child and to make him/her pay a constructive role in society (according to the Article 40 of Convention on the Rights of the Child), a good cooperation and coordination between the justice system and the social protection system is important. The justice system acting alone is not able to guarantee juveniles rehabilitation and re-integration, and nor the prevention.

Children's custody shall be used as an exceptional measure only in cases of a high risk, and not as a normal practice. At the same time the alternative sentence shall be promoted and the children's imprisonment shall be used as the last alternatives.

All children suffering the sentence in the institutions for the execution of criminal decision IECD, as well as children part of the alternative sentence, as a probation service shall have access in a mechanism of complaints, where they can submit complaints related to their deprivation of freedom, detention / deportation and treatment conditions.

For children of age group of 14, taking protective measures "in the interest of the child", based on the fact that these children shall be considered as children at high risk, due to the factors pushing them to have a conflict with the law, is very important. The task of assessing children's needs and planning necessary protective interventions and care shall be led by the social worker/child protection worker, who cooperates through an inter-sectoral approach with other actors at the local level. These procedures shall be based on the child protection procedures.

The child right to be heard in judicial issues, in an appropriate and friendly manner for his/her age, including civil and penal issues, as well as the administrative procedures that influence children based on the child age and maturity, shall be guaranteed.

In order to promote the provision of alternative sentences for juveniles and their re-integration in society, the drafting of community integration, the further strengthening of probation service offices through capacity building/improvement of probation service staff is necessary.

The achievement of the sustainable integration and re-integration programs aiming the decrease of the recidivism level for children included in the custody system.

Children as victims and witnesses shall be provided with legal assistance and other effective and appropriate assistance since the first phases of proceeding and during the judicial process, according to the Criminal Procedure Code. Drafting of training and rehabilitation programs for children as victims/witnesses and the provision of supportive services.

All necessary measures shall be undertaken for the implementation of the law and the functioning of the responsible structures in order to guarantee the right to judicial assistance, as a constitutional right, especially for children who have limited possibilities to use in a pro-active way the protective judicial instruments.

Children's Contribution¹⁰³

How is it and how would you like the world around you to be?

Through the heart we represent the family, the love we give and receive. But, there are families that, for different causes, their children do not receive the needed love and warmth.

The blossom flower is used as a symbol of friendship, which is very important for us.

The book is a symbol for the school, which is very important since we learn and prepare ourselves for the future. However, we want schools and teaching to be improved.

Through a tree we represent the environment, which is important and shall be preserved and kept clean.

The child with a box in his/her hand represents children who are exploited for work. Through this bird, we want to say that the child shall be free and protected by every kind of abuse and violence.

By drawing a bottle of alcohol and cigarette, we want to make an appeal to children to be as far from the negative effects of alcohol and cigarette as possible.

Police is the body that protects children and the place where they can report the violation of their rights.

The gun is a symbol of blood feud, which shall not exist anymore and the help of institutions is needed to eliminate this phenomenon.

The mouth and ear symbolize the respect that we must show for each-other, and when somebody speaks the others must listen to him/her.

The child playing, tells us that the **game** is very important for us and it is important to have some space for us to do this.

The Facebook logo represent the time spent by children in the social networks. We want to put a limit and control children, and encourage them to spend more time playing in nature.

The sad face of this child shows his/her emotions expressed through crying, because he/she was exposed to violence, or due to other reasons. This is the world around us and we would like that all these institutions mentioned earlier help us for a better country and future.

¹⁰³ Discussion group headed by SAPRC with the participation of 20 youngsters, in November 12 2014, in Shkodra, facilitated by World Vision.

Annex 1 Legislation

International Legislation

UN Convention "On Child Rights"

Convention No. 138, 26 June 1973, ratified by Law No. 8086, on 13.3.1996 "Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment of the International Labor Organization"

Convention No. 182, ratified with Law No. 8774, on 23.4.2001 "On the worst forms of Child Labor, 1999", of the International Labor Organization
Hague Convention ratified with Law No. 8624, date 15.6.2000

"Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption"

European Convention of the European Council, ratified by Law No. 9359, date 24.03.2005 "On relationships with children"

Hague Convention, ratified by Law No. 9443, date 16.11.2005 "n Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in Respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children"

Hague Convention, ratified by Law No. 9446, date 24.11.2005 "On the civil aspects of International Child Abduction"

Council of Europe Convention, ratified by Law No. 9642, date 20.11.2006 "On actions against trafficking in human beings"

Council of Europe Convention, Lanzarote 25.10.2007, ratified by Law 10071, date 9.2.2009 "Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse"

Council of Europe Convention, ratified by Law No. 10 424, date 2.6.2011 "On the Legal Status of Children Born out of Wedlock"

Council of Europe Convention, 25.1.1996, ratified by Law No. 10 425, date 2.6.2011 "On the exercise of children's rights"

Council of Europe Convention, ratified by Law No. 10425, date 02.06.2011 "On the exercise of children's rights"

Council of Europe Convention, ratified by Law No. 10424, date 02.06.2011 "On the legal status of Children Born out of Wedlock".

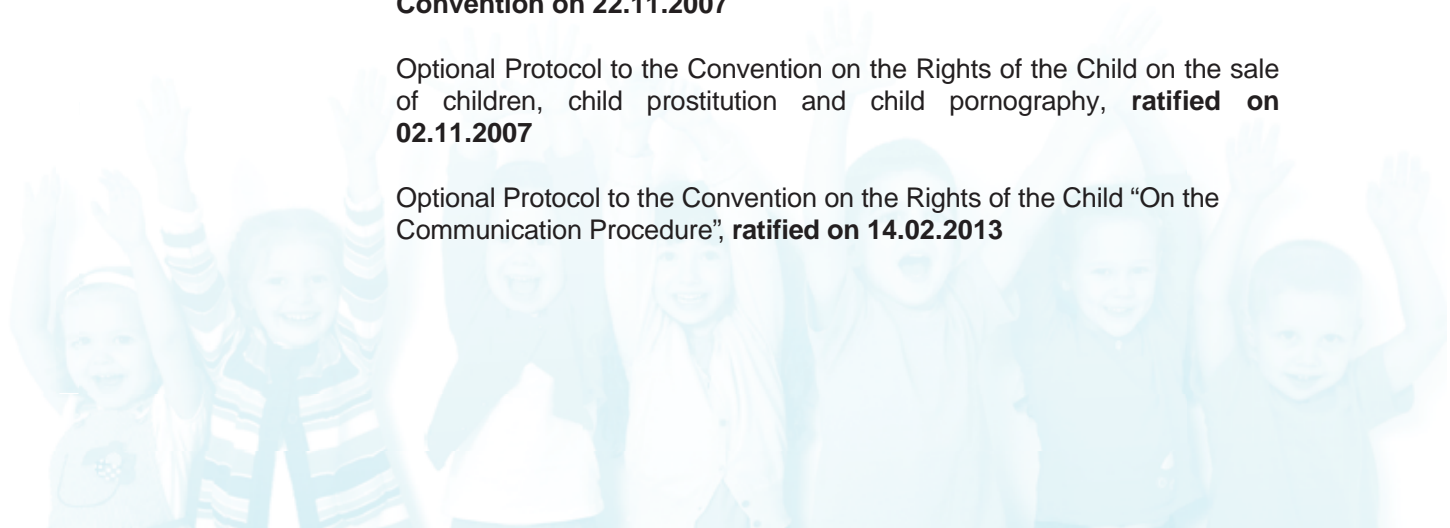
PROTOCOLS

Protocol to the United Nations Conventions "to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children", **ratified by Law No8920, date 11.7.2002**

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, **Albania adhered in the Convention on 22.11.2007**

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, **ratified on 02.11.2007**

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child "On the Communication Procedure", **ratified on 14.02.2013**



NATIONAL LEGISLATION

- Law No. 7905, date 21.3.1995** “The Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Albania”, amended
- Law No. 8116, date 29.3.1996** “The Civil Procedure Code of the Republic of Albania”, amended
- Law No. 9062, date 8.5.2003** “Family Code”
- Labor Code; Law No. 7961 date 12.07.1995**, amended by Law 8085 date 13.3.1996, and Law 9125 date 29.7.2003
- Law No. 23/2012** “On some additions and amendments to Law No. 7895, date 27.1.1995 “Criminal code of the Republic of Albania”, amended.
- Law No. 7952, date 21.6.1995** “On Pre-university Education System and the Guideline of the Minister of Education “On Eliminating Violence in Schools”.
- Law No. 7939, date 25.5.1995** “For migration”, amended
- Law No. 8328, date 16.4.1998** “On the Rights and Treatment of Persons Sentenced to Prison”, amended
- Law No. 8331, date 21.4.1998** “On Executing Criminal Decisions”, amended
- Law No. 8528, date 23.9.1999** “For encouraging and protection Breast-feeding”
- Law No. 8153, date 31.10.1996** “On the status of Orphans”
- Law No. 8872, date 29.3.2002** “On education and vocational education in the Republic of Albania”, amended
- Law No. 8876, date 4.4.2002** “On Reproductive Health”, amended
- Law No. 9355 date 10.03.2005** “On Social assistance and Services”, amended
- Law No. 9518, date 18.4.2006** “On Protecting Infants from Using Alcohol”
- Law No. 9669, date 18.12.2006** “For taking measures against Domestic Violence”
- Law No. 9695, date 19.3.2007** “On the Procedures of Adoption and the Albanian Committee of Adoption”
- Law No. 9952, date 14.7.2008** “On Preventing and Controlling HIV/AIDS-it”
- Law No. 10039, date 22.12.2008** “On Legal Assistance”
- Law No. 10173, date 22.10.2009** “On the Protection of Witnesses and the Collaborators of Justice”
- Law No. 10221 date 4.2.2010** “On Protection from Discrimination”
- Law No. 10237 date 18.2.2010** “On Safety and Health at Work”, amended
- Law No. 10347 date 4.11.2010** “On the Protection of Children’s Rights”
- Law No. 69/2012** “On Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania”
- Ordinance No. 29, date 02.08.2013, “On the Procedures of Attending Part Time Basic Education”.**
- Ordinance No. 31, date 02.08.2013 “On the Procedures of Attending Basic Education for Children who have not been at least through two Classes in basic Education”.**
- Order No. 344, date 19. 08.2013 “For Establishing the Psycho-social Service Unit”**
- Law No. 10454 date 21.7.2011** “On the Transplant of Tissues, Cells and Human Body organs in the Republic of Albania”
- Law No. 44/2012** “On Mental Health”
- Law No. 93/2014** “On Involving and Providing Access to Persons with Disabilities”

DCM No. 658 date 17.10.2005 “On the Standards of Social Services”;

DCM No. 659 date 17.10.2005 “Standards of Social Care Services for Children in Residential Institutions”

DCM, No. 195, date 11.04. 2007 “Standards of social Care Services for trafficked persons or at risk of being trafficked in residential centers”

Decree No. 6218, date 7.7.2009 “For creating criminal sections for judging infants in the District Judicial Court”

DCM No. 142, date 23.2.2011”For approving a “national action plan to combat trafficking of human beings” and the supplementing document “action plan for combating trafficking of children and protecting children who are victims of trafficking”

DCM No. 582, date 27.7.2011 “On approving the standard action procedures for identifying and referring victims/possible victims of violence”.

DCM No. 263, date 12.04.2012 “On defining detailed rules for collaboration between institutional mechanisms and non-governmental organizations, for the implementation of local policies for the protection of children’s rights”.

DCM No. 264, date 12.04.2012 “On the Procedures of Controlling and Sanctioning by the State Agency for the Protection of Children’s Rights”.

DCM No. 265, date 12.04.2012 “On the creation and operation of a mechanism for the coordination of work between the responsible state authorities to refer cases of children at risk, and the way to proceed”.

DCM No. 266, date 12.04.2012 “For the coordination of mechanisms on a local and central level for issues related to the protection of children’s rights”

DCM No. 267, date 12.04.2012 “For Types and Ways to Exchange Information and Statistic Data Required by the Agency and the Responsible state Structures, on a central and Local Level”

DCM No. 89, date 26.1.2012 “For Determining the Criteria, the documentation and the procedure for the Custody Service”

DCM No. 904, date 12.12.2012 “For defining the criteria, the procedures and the documentation for obtaining economic assistance, in pilot areas”

DCM No. 376, date 11.6.2014 “For some amendments and additions in decision No. 787, date 14.12.2005 “For defining the criteria, the procedures and the amount of the economic assistance”, amended



Annex 2 The List of CRUs and CPUs

The List of Child Protection Units¹⁰⁴

Region of Berat	District of Berat	Municipality of Berat	Robert Nazari
		Municipality of Ura Vajgurore	Nerita Heqimi
		Commune of Cukalat	Fatbardh Shahini
		Commune of Otlak	Boriana Sofia
		Commune of Poshnje	Dallendyshe Lalo
		Commune of Roshnik	Haxhi Arberi/ Luto Mara
		Commune of Velabisht	Laureta Papa
		Commune of Vërtop	Liljana Hitollari/ Ali Salillari
	District of Kuçova	Municipality of Kuçova	Majlinda Serjani
		Commune of Kozare	Marsela Sallo
		Commune of Perondi	Nertila Qorri
	District of Skrapar	Municipality of Çorovoda	Ritvana Hysenbelliu
		Municipality of Poliçan	Valeriana Dyrmyshi/ Aurora Qama
		Commune of Leshnjë	Valbona Gropa
		Commune of Potom	Rajmonda Dusho
		Commune of Qendër	Xhuli Hysi
Region of Dibra	District of Dibra	Municipality of Peshkopi	Anjeza Vokaj
		Commune of Arras	Gezim Daci
		Commune of Luzni	Ali Damzi
		Commune of Maqellarë	Isuf Osmani
		Commune of Muhur	Astrit Veshi
		Commune of Tomin	Majlinda Deshati
		Commune of Zall-Dardhë	Avdi Lushi
	District of Bulqiza	Municipality of Bulqizë	Flogerta Koci
		Commune of Zerqan	Vasfie Kurti
	District of Mat	Municipality of Burrel	Edlira Drici/ Blerta Hysa
		Municipality of Klos	Mehmet Limani
		Commune of Baz	Dylbere Cakoni
		Commune of Komsî	Violeta Tusha
		Commune of Lis	Hismet Barhani
		Commune of Rukaj	Flora Neziri/Edison Troci
		Commune of Suç	Manushaqe Shkajoti
Region of Durrës	District of Durrës	Municipality of Durrës	Olta Bajraktari
		Municipality of Shijak	Daniela Deda

¹⁰⁴ The List was updated on 20.11.2014

		Municipality of Manzë	Mrika Hoxha/ Ingrid Gargaj/ Dylbere Shehi
		Municipality of Sukth	Viola Ibrahim
		Commune of Gjepalaj	Englantina Reka
		Commune of Ishëm	Rabije Qevani
		Commune of Katund i Ri	Hajrie Gashi
		Commune of Maminas	Lumturie Picari
		Commune of Rrashbull	Arta Vila/ Ismete Serjani/ Muharrem
		Commune of Xhafzotaj	Merita Kodra/ Alma Berxulli
	District of Kruja	Municipality of Fushë-Kruja	Albana Sefa
		Municipality of Kruja	Elmira Dallaku
		Commune of Bubq	Ramazan Kaziu
		Commune of Çudhi	Saba Sejдини
		Commune of Thumana	Merita Qira
		Commune of Nikël	Anisa Topalli
Region of Elbasan	District of Elbasan	Municipality of Belsh	Blerim Tafani
		Municipality of Cërrik	Ilma Ago
		Municipality of Elbasan	Nadire Kreka
		Commune of Bradashesh	Xhevair Ibrahim
		Commune of Fierzë	Haziz Mema
		Commune of Graçen	Petrit Balliu
		Commune of Grekan	Astrit Elezi
		Commune of Gjergjan	Blerta Kullaku
		Commune of Gjinar	Dashuri Myrta
		Commune of Klos	Faire Vishkulli
		Commune of Labinot-Mal	Rexhep Boci
		Commune of Mollas	Marsida Broshka
		Commune of Papër	Eglantina Doko
		Commune of Shirgjan	Drita Cerri
		Commune of Tregan	Manjola Tashi
	District of Gramsh	Municipality of Gramsh	Arjona Bici
		Commune of Kodovjat	Kastriot Tafa
		Commune of Kukur	Kapedan Tarfo
		Commune of Kushova	Fatime Daja
		Commune of Pishaj	Thellenxa Llalla
		Commune of Poroçan	Gani Peja
		Commune of Shenepremte	Rustem Bici
		Commune of Sult	Hamit Dermyshe
		Commune of Tunja	Tefta Teto

	District of Librazhd	Municipality of Librazhd	Rexhep Shaka
		Commune of Lunik	Sefedin Kodraliu
		Commune of Polis	Robert Gjeli
		Commune of Qendër	Tefta Pepa
		Commune of Qukës	Ylli Kuka
		Commune of Rajcë	Zaide Çela
		Commune of Stebleva	Mirursh Toci
		Commune of Stravaj	Perparim Leka
	District of Peqin	Municipality of Peqin	Erdi Kosta
		Commune of Gjocaj	Fadil Salliu
		Commune of Pajovë	Zenel Gordumi
		Commune of Shezë	Elida Tabaku
Region of Fier	District of Fier	Municipality of Fier	Alma Agalliu
		Municipality of Roskovec	Alda Gjata
		Commune of Levan	Xheksila Hamataj
		Commune of Qendër	Rrapi Vogli
		Commune of Ruzhdije	Amarildo Gllava
	District of Lushnja	Municipality of Lushnja	Valbona Myzeqari
		Commune of Allkaj	Pandeli Cauli
		Commune of Fier-Shegan	Evisona Pepa
	District of Mallakastra	Municipality of Ballsh	Jonida Sulaj
		Commune of Fratar	Edison Zylalaj
		Commune of Hekal	Agron Hoxhaj
		Commune of Kuta	Shaban Sulaj
		Commune of Qendër/Mallakastra	Hajredin Serjanaj
Region of Gjirokastra	District of Gjirokastra	Municipality of Gjirokastra	Marjanthi Bedjava
Region of Korça	District of Korça	Municipality of Korça	Brikena Cucllari/
		Municipality of Maliq	Jonila Lilollari
		Commune of Gore	Bedri Bashllari
		Commune of Liqenas	Kristina Sekulla
		Commune of Mollaj	Erjon Bacalli/ Demirali Latollari
		Commune of Qender,	Jeta Shehu/ Stela Koca
		Commune of Vithkuq	Dhimitraq Gjylapi
		Commune of Voskop	Ira Akrobati
		Commune of Vreshtas	Albert Zenelaku
	District of Pogradec	Municipality of Pogradec	Besa Xhani
		Commune of Buçimas	Robert Çekiçi/ Ervisa baci

		Commune of Cerrave	Doriana Hoxha
		Commune of Udënisht	
		Commune of Proptisht	Besnik Xhyra, Shpetim Leka
		Commune of Trebinje	Neki Laraku
	District of Kolonia	Municipality of Leskovik	Leonora Kalavace
		Commune of Barmash	Qtesor Tafil
		Commune of Qender Erseka	Enton Cacani
		Commune of Qender	Marjana Kravari
	District of Devoll	Municipality of Bilisht	Diana Kapo
		Commune of Progër	Avni Dushi
Region of Kukës	District of Kukës	Municipality of Kukës	Morena Hoxha/ Lirie Bytyci
		Commune of Bicaj	Orjola Guri
		Commune of Shtiqën	Zeqir Halilaj
		Commune of Terthore	Ramadan Demaj
	District of Tropoja	Municipality of Bajram Curri	Valentina Nezaj
		Commune of Margegaj	Drilon Toskaj
		Commune of Llugaj	Shkurta Gjoka
		Commune of Bujan	Bukurie Ahmetaj
		Commune of Fierzë (Tropoja)	Majlinda Ponari/ Izet
	District of Has	Municipality of Krume	Shani Kastrati
		Commune of Gjinaj	Muharrem Thaci
		Commune of Golaj	Perparim Brati
Region of Lezha	District of Lezha	Municipality of Lezha	Anita Jaku
		Commune of Balldre	Emanuela Mirukaj
		Commune of Zejmen	Violeta Paloka
	District of Mirdita	Municipality of Rrëshen	Arselajda Pepkolaj
		Municipality of Rubik	Malvina Marku/ Gazmend Marku
		Commune of Fan	Zef Pjetri
		Commune of Kthella	Odetta Ndrejaj
	District of Kurbin	Municipality of Lac	Vilma Kola
		Municipality of Mamurras	Merita Krasniqi/ Deshira Kuqi
Region of Shkodra	District of Shkodra	Municipality of Shkoder	Rudina Kruja
		Commune of Ana-Malit	Xhemal Kopshti
		Commune of Postriba	Dashmir Shabaj
		Commune of Qelez	Nikoll Kolaj
		Commune of Qafë-Mali	Etleva Elezi
Region of Tirana	District of Tirana	Municipality Unit No. 1	Joana Filo

		Municipality Unit No. 2	Adriatik Zaka
		Municipality Unit No. 3	Ada Isallari
		Municipality Unit No. 4	Emine Kica
		Municipality Unit No. 5	Adelina Shehu
		Municipality Unit No. 6	Stela Prendi
		Municipality Unit No. 7	Denisa Bakiasi
		Municipality Unit No. 8	Mirela Biba
		Municipality Unit No. 9	Lorena Cela/Naxhie
		Municipality Unit No. 10	Rudina Qendro
		Municipality Unit No. 11	Kozeta Makaj
		Municipality of Kamëz	Dhurata Cali
		Municipality of Vora	Elida Karamuca
		Commune of Bërxulla	Dallendyshe Petku
		Commune of Bërzhitë	Elona Allmuca/ Luan Sallaku
		Commune of Dajt	Sami Kamberi
		Commune of Ndroq	Ivana Brahja
		Commune of Paskuqan	Hajri Lita
		Commune of Peza	Hysni Isaku
		Commune of Vaqar	Mirela Xhabafti
		Commune of Zall-Herr	Ada Qarri
	District of Kavaja	Municipality of Kavaja	Marjusa Cara
		Municipality of Rrogozhina	Ana Çeka
		Commune of Golem	Ilirjana Xhafa
		Commune of Kryevidh	Besnik Kaja
		Commune of Lekaj	Sabrie Gjini
		Commune of Luz i Vogël	Besjana Xeka
		Commune of Synej	Albana Salillari
Region of Vlorë	District of Vlorë	Municipality of Orikum	Klementina Curoj
		Municipality of Himara	Blerina Bala/ Antoneta Bollano
		Municipality of Selenica	Orjeta Mishtaku
		Municipality of Vlorë	Jonida Dhroso
		Commune of Armen	Kastriot Haxhiraj
		Commune of Brataj	Cane Seferi
		Commune of Horë-Vranisht	Lefter Qejvanaj
		Commune of Kota	Hava Rrapaj/ Jetnor Bejtaj
		Commune of Novosela	Ediola Doko
		Commune of Qendër (Vlorë)	Zamir Qezari
		Commune of Sevaster	Inxhi Zykaj/Nero Gjonaj

		Commune of Shushica	Ali Petani
		Commune of Vllahinë	Oljana Hoxhaj
	District of Saranda	Municipality of Konispol	Teuta Çokalli
		Municipality of Sarandë	Emanuela Cetri/ Anila
		Commune of Aliko	Stavro Çavo
		Commune of Dhivër	Thodhori Papa
		Commune of Ksamil	Valbona Oruci/ Bashkim Shuka
		Commune of Livadhja	Stamato Naci
		Commune of Lukova	Zamira Xhani/Nertila Hodaj/ Aleksandra Dhrami
		Commune of Markat	Vitori Muçaj
	District of Delvina	Municipality of Delvina	Anila Janku/Lorena Dizdari
		Commune of Finiq	Fotini Spiro
		Commune of Mesopotam	Eleni Shqevi



List of Children's Rights Units¹⁰⁵

Region	Name, Last Name
Fier	Shkelzen Bushi
Fier	Enerjeta Avrami
Berat	Redina Qafa
Berat	Vasilika Cela
Tiranë	Entela Lila
Tiranë	Lorena Totoni
Lezhë	Artan Palushi
Lezhë	Linda Maci
Dibër	Nevila Manga
Dibër	Zenulla Mehmeti
Durrës	Jonida Troplini
Durrës	Fatjona Muhametaj
Kukës	Elona Shaqiri
Elbasan	Najada Kokoneshi
Elbasan	Blendi Gremi
Gjirokastrë	Aurora Beci
Vlorë	Alma Myrtaj
Vlorë	Zhuljeta Kume
Shkodër	Jozef Serrmi
Korçë	Tatjana Gusho

¹⁰⁵ The list was updated on 20.11.2014





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