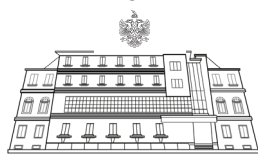




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UNITED NATIONS
ALBANIA



CATALOGUE

OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

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July 2020



Leave
No One
Behind



PARTNERSALBANIA
OR CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT



C A T A L O G U E
OF BEST PRACTICES FOR
THE PROVISION OF
S O C I A L C A R E S E R V I C E S

July 2020

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	6
“Hello ... Life”	8
Services for victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence	10
Multifunctional Community Centre “For the Family” (MCC “For the Family”)	12
Social services throughout the lifecycle of persons with disabilities	14
Safe Emergency Shelter Service	16
Personal and Social Autonomy Programme for Persons with Disabilities	18
Day Care Centre “Life in Development” Arrameras	20
Afternoon childcare alternatives for the children of mothers’ victims of trafficking and domestic violence - “Grandma’s Home/My other Home”	22
Lushnja Development Centre	24
Fighting Gender-Based Violence Service	26
Hospitality House “Santa Maria”	28
Community Service	30
Community-based service centre for children with disabilities	32
Day Care Centre “New Hope”	34
Community Centre for Persons with Disabilities	36

INTRODUCTION

Since 2017, The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has started the implementation of the UN Joint Programme “Leave No One Behind”, which is supporting the implementation of a newly shaped vision of the social sector in Albania, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the country’s aspirations towards EU integration. One of the results of the “Leave No One Behind” Programme focuses on supporting municipalities to effectively manage the provision of social services and promote social inclusion. In doing so, it shall contribute to the increase municipalities’ capacities in the provision of social services and scaling up those social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness.

To this end, the Programme has identified and promoted best practices in the provision of social care services in the Republic of Albania, implemented by Partners Albania for Change and Development.

Best practices were selected during November 2019-February 2020 via an open application process whereby about 200 public and non-public providers of social care services in all municipalities all over the country, identified through the State Social Services database, were invited to submit their practices related to services for individuals, families and groups in need.

The Call for Expression of Interest was widely promoted through online communication media as well as

e-mails to public and non-public service providers identified throughout the country, including 61 Albanian municipalities. By the end of the application process, 30 expressions of interests were submitted from public and non-public providers (NGOs), out of which 15 best practices were selected and introduced in this catalogue.

Selection was based upon satisfaction of criteria pre-established by experts involved in the initiative, divided into two categories: (1) Services as part of the social care services system; (2) Services quality and suitability. The main evaluation criteria included: (i) services are part of the existing social care services system provided in municipalities and address a particular documented priority; (ii) services have a direct and obvious impact on the targeted population; (iii) services are innovative and succeed in bringing together various stakeholders (including municipalities, civil society and other beneficiaries); (iv) services create opportunities for immediate replication or promotion in other municipalities; (v) practices implementation produce clear and measurable results; (vi) services respect individuals responsibility over their own lives and urge and encourage them in making decisions about their lives, etc.

The selected practices, hereunder presented, include:

CATALOGUE
OF BEST PRACTICES FOR
THE PROVISION OF
SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

SERVICE PROVIDER	NAME OF SERVICE	THE MUNICIPALITY WHERE THE SERVICE IS PROVIDED
World Vision Albania, Librazhd Municipality and Dibra Municipality	Hello... Life	Librazhd Municipality, Dibra Municipality
Woman Forum Elbasan	Services for victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence	Elbasan Municipality
Shkodra Municipality	Multifunctional Community Centre "For the Family" (MCC "For the Family")	Shkodra Municipality
'Help the Life' Association	Social services throughout the life cycle of a person with disability	Tirana Municipality
Initiative for Social Change - ARSIS	Emergency Safe Housing Service	Tirana Municipality
Down Syndrome Albania	Personal and Social Autonomy Program for Persons with Disabilities	Tirana Municipality
Caritas Shqiptar	Day Care Centre "Life in Development" Arrameras	Kruja Municipality
Organisation "Different & Equal"	Afternoon childcare alternative for the children of mothers' victims of trafficking and domestic violence "Grandma's Home / My other Home"	Tirana Municipality, Kamza Municipality, Elbasan Municipality, Shkodra Municipality
Lushnje Municipality	Lushnje Development Centre	Lushnje Municipality
The Women Centre "Light Steps"	Fighting Gender-Based Violence Service	Shkodra Municipality
Community Association "Pope John XXIII"	Hospitality House "Santa Maria"	Shkodra Municipality
National Association Education for Life	Community service	Tirana Municipality
Durrës Municipality	Centre of community-based services for children with disabilities	Durrës Municipality
Foundation OAZ	Day Care Centre "New Hope"	Mat Municipality
Pogradec Municipality & Pogradec Local Education Office	Community Centre for Persons with Disabilities	Pogradec Municipality

Service Name

“HELLO ... LIFE”

Service Provider

World Vision Albania, Librazhd and Dibra Municipalities

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Service description

“Hello ... Life” is a home-based specialized mobile service provided to children with disabilities in the remote rural areas of Albania. The concept of ‘disability’ is provided by a definition in the bio psychosocial model, which is an integral part of the disability services reform in the Albanian legislation. A ‘Mobile Unit’, composed of a team of professionals equipped with the necessary skills and infrastructure, offers free of charge qualitative services for children with disabilities in their residential place (home). The service is provided based on an Individual Development Plan (IDP) designed upon assessing the needs of the child and his family, which in turn is based on international standards of functional classification. It is designed in cooperation with other specialists who possess the know-how on or have functional responsibility for children and families and is agreed with the child’s personal assistant. The mobile unit provides home services for children once a week, for an average of two

sessions per week, each one lasting 60 minutes. During these sessions, the specialist devotes 45 minutes to the therapy with the child and 15 minutes to parent training, so as they themselves can perform simple exercises following the therapy. Parents simultaneously receive once-per-month counselling which aims at strengthening their mechanisms in coping with the situation in which they find themselves. Home-service duration depends on the level of difficulty and the barriers children encounter in developing their potential.

Professional service providers

Mobile service “Hello ... Life” is provided by a multifunctional team consisting of 2 psychologists, 2 social workers, 2 speech therapists, 2 physiotherapists and 1 project manager.

Service development history

World Vision Albania (WVA) is a Christian Relief, Development and Advocacy organization. In 2018, it conducted the first national study on disability prevalence, which evidenced that there are about 70 thousand children with disabilities in Albania (10.4%), 92% of whom have no access to specialized services. Under these circumstances WVA introduced, in June 2017, the social programme “Hello ... Life” which in April 2018 started in Librazhd municipality and further, in April 2019 in Dibra municipality.

Innovation

The combination of several elements, such as the co-creation of services in cooperation with local institutions; providing services in rural areas and thus more difficult to intervene; involvement of the family/personal assistants as key actors in the service; investing in raising specialists’ capacity and paying attention to their emotional well-being, make “Hello ... Life” an innovative and easily applicable model. In the pandemic situation of Covid-19, the service brought innovation through providing online exercises and advice based on the Individual Development Plans and,

while Albania is adapting to the new normality, mobile teams are beginning to practice the model of “Therapy in the yard” to continue providing family service.

Advantages

The main advantage of the model is the provision of specialized home-based services for children with disabilities living in remote rural areas who, due to their residential place distance, cannot receive them in multifunctional community centres. Another advantage is that it does not treat the child separately but works with all the elements of the fundamental triangle that affects the child’s life: child, family, and community.

Results

Starting April 2018 to today, 84 children (32 girls and 52 boys) with disabilities, aged 3-18, have received 4,545 specialized physiotherapy, speech therapy and developmental therapy sessions; 136 family members (90 women and 46 men) of children with disabilities’ families have attended 1,025 counselling sessions through which they were informed and emotionally supported, and have increased their skills in developing children’s potential, and 6 children (4 girls and 2 boys) 9-13 year old are involved and regularly attend educational institutions. For more information on improvements of the beneficiaries of the service, refer to the link: <https://www.worldvision.al/hapat-e-pare-0>.

Sustainability

The service has been set up in cooperation with Librazhd and Dibra municipalities and operates as a special unit within the municipalities’ structures responsible for social services, therefore creating a model for providing community mobile services for children with disabilities. Another indicator of sustainability is the fact that some municipalities have chosen to apply for the Social Fund with this model and have won.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The service operates by virtue of a Decision of the Municipal Councils of Librazhd and Dibër and the Regional Council for the provision of social services in the area.

Replication

The legal basis, which derives from the applicable laws on social services, constitutes an important element, which enables the replication of the model. World Vision Albania owns the entire package for setting up and operating the “Hello ... Life” model, such as job descriptions, training package, beneficiaries’ databases, service documents forms, Individual Development Plan form, monitoring plan, etc.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Service Provider

Woman Forum Elbasan (WFE)

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Service description

Woman Forum Elbasan provides free community, residential and specialized services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence at regional and national level. Services include: (1) a Counselling Centre through telephone line and face to face for assistance and psychological treatment; social and medical service; information, referral to and mediation with public and non-public structures; (2) a Day Care Centre or Emergency Shelter, which provides accommodation, from a few hours to 2-3 days, pending Emergency Protection Orders (EPOs); (3) a Legal Aid office, which provides information and free legal assistance, drafts legal acts addressing courts in view of invoking court proceedings or public institutions in view of providing information indispensable for the judicial process; and ensures representation in the

Court for survivors of domestic violence; (4) Community awareness campaigns; (5) Increasing the capacities of social, health and police service professionals. In addition to the individual work with beneficiaries for their psycho-social and legal empowerment, WFE staff conducts periodic group meetings and empowering sessions that aim at empowering survivors breaking the chain of violence. The average time of involvement in the service of a beneficiary is one year.

Professional service providers

Services are provided by a multidisciplinary team consisting of 2 social workers, 1 psychologist and 1 lawyer.

Service development history

WFE was established in 1991 as a branch of the Independent Forum of Albanian Women, with the aim of protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality through educational, awareness-raising and advocacy programs, as well as providing psycho-social-legal services related to violence and other alternative services. 1999 saw the emergence of a counselling centre for the victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence in Elbasan Region, in response to the domestic violence highly recurrent in the region, as everywhere in Albania.

Innovation

WFE is the first and sole public and non-public provider in the Elbasan Region that provides integrated services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence, which also include the emergency shelter.

Advantages

- The provision of three types of services: (1) psychological counselling; (2) legal counselling; and (3) emergency shelter (the only one in the District of Elbasan), combined with awareness-raising campaigns;

- Ongoing fieldwork with community members and professionals in every local government unit of Elbasan Region increasing, on one hand, the credibility of the service by positively affecting the increase in the number of service beneficiaries and enabling, on the other hand, beneficiaries' reintegration into society.

Results

Since its beginnings, the service estimates a total of 19,086 beneficiaries, of whom: 12,369 have received face-to-face and lifeline counselling; 6,720 have received legal advice and 254, have been accommodated at the emergency day-care centre. Clustered by age cohort: 27% of the beneficiaries are under 25, 55% - 25-45 years old, and 18%, over 45 years old. On average, 50 beneficiaries are reintegrated into the community every year.

Sustainability

For 20 years the service has been consistently supported in all its components by various donors, with the Swedish Government being the strategic donor of over 18 years. State funding, in line with the existing legislation, would be a significant contribution to the further sustainability of the service.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

In cooperation with the local government structures of Elbasan Region (7 municipalities, the Regional Council, Local Police Directorate, Regional Directorate of Public Health, Local Education Office), WFE has established a Regional Network for the treatment of victims of domestic and gender-based violence, a mechanism that enables the combination of social services provided by NGOs and economic services provided by state institutions. This network shall remain operational until the referral mechanisms against domestic violence are established and act in compliance with the legal requirements in every municipality. In 2018, WFE established and made operational the referral mechanism for cases of violence in Belsh municipality.

Replication

WFE experience led to the establishment of the same type of service in three other cities in Albania, namely: in Durrës, by the Association of Women with Social Problems, in Shkodra, by the Association Woman to Woman and in Dibër, by the Association Agritra-Vizion. It is in the objective of WFE to establish this service in every city of the Elbasan Region, creating facilities for the survivors of domestic and gender-based violence.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

MULTIFUNCTIONAL COMMUNITY CENTRE “FOR THE FAMILY” (MCC “FOR THE FAMILY”)

Service Provider

Shkodra Municipality

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Service description

MCC “For the Family” provides integrated services that aim at improving the socio-economic conditions of families, mainly from the Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as poor and isolated members of other communities. These services, which purpose is the empowerment and integration of these families into the society, are implemented through an integrated system of community-based multisectoral services, including: (1) social protection to improve the socio-economic situation of families and individuals by treating and providing support to all family members based on individual intervention plans; (2) legal aid and registration at the civil status offices; (3) integration of children into the education system through identification and school enrolment, transport and accompanying to school, payment of kindergarten and nursery fees and provision of didactic materials; (4) increasing access to health care services by facilitating the healthcare visits and laboratory tests, provision

of health care cards, and reimbursement of medicaments; (5) employment and vocational training opportunities through referral and facilitation to benefit from vocational training and employment promotion programs; (6) housing and urban integration through support to benefiting from social housing programs. Services are provided in the centre and in the community, enabling close monitoring of the beneficiaries as well as ensuring the coordination of the services in the centre with those in the house, or in other public and / or non-public institutions. The average time of involvement in the service of a beneficiary is 6 months.

Professional service providers

The service is provided by 1 social worker, 2 teachers and 1 psychologist, under the supervision of the centre’s coordinator.

Service development history

The Multifunctional Community Centre “For the Family” was established in 2018 through a partnership between Shkodra municipality and UNDP for the implementation of the project “Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians - the incentive for social inclusion” (ESERE), funded by the European Union. The main beneficiaries are members of Roma and Egyptian community. The Centre is a very important functional part of the social service network in the community, composed of 12 “For Family” Community Centres. The network was set up by Shkodra municipality in view of providing social services, especially community-based services, to families and individuals in need in its territory.

Innovation

MCC “For the Family” has enabled, for the first time in Shkodra Municipality, the provision of integrated, sustainable and multifunctional community services, which focus at strengthening the socio-economic conditions of the family. Community Centres “For the Family” model, establishing a network of public community structures that covers a certain territory and provide services to all family members, represent another innovation.

Advantages

The advantage of this practice lies in the possibility to expand the range of services and to offer new services which are guided by the principle of inclusion, participation, equal creation and non-discrimination regardless of different abilities, gender, origin, affiliation, ethnic, etc.

Results

Within 18 months from its opening, MCC “For the Family” has reached a number of 1,540 beneficiaries. Important results of the centre include: enrolment of 182 children from Roma and Egyptian communities in nurseries/kindergartens/schools, and support to attend the learning process; 628 cases of health services for Roma and Egyptian families (medical visits, vaccinations, equipment with healthcare and vaccination cards, reimbursement of medicines); 72 cases referred for employment, vocational training courses and support to start small businesses; assistance to 205 cases for administrative issues (issuing of identity cards and family/personal certificates, marriage registration, civil registration and transfer of civil status of Roma families from the city of origin to the city of Shkodra).

Sustainability

MCC “For the Family” is fully managed by the municipality, which provides financial support for the services out of its own financial resources. The number of services is scaling up also due to cooperation with civil society organizations, therefore better responding to the needs of beneficiaries. The building is property of Shkodra municipality, which covers the operating, maintenance and key staff costs, ensuring the financial viability of the service. Continuous development of employees’ capacities for the introduction, coordination and delivery of specific social services is another key element, which guarantees the sustainability of the services.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

MCC “For the Family” was established as a result of a partnership between Shkodra municipality, UNDP and other implementing partners. In view of enabling the provision of a full package of services needed for the empowerment of the Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as isolated and poor members of other communities, the centre cooperates with several NGOs, such as: Social Change Initiative ARSIS, Plan & GO, and Hope for the World.

Replication

MCC “For the Family” model is a valuable, functional and with potential model to be applied to other municipalities as well. With the approval of the standards for the social care services in multifunctional community centres, this service provides a very good model to be implemented by other municipalities in view of their functional tasks to establish social services closer to the community.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

SOCIAL SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE LIFECYCLE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Service Provider

“Help the Life” Association

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Service description

The accompanying rehabilitation services throughout the lifecycle line provides support and rehabilitation by means of specialized and differentiated programmes based on the priorities of the person with disability's biological age (physical and intellectual). The service enables the development of capacities from the first stages of the child's life, his/her education and inclusion, to the encouragement of the person with disabilities to be ready to develop an independent and dignified life. The service is open to beneficiaries 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The services offered in this line include: (1) Early identification and intervention for children aged 0-6, a model that engages and encourages the cooperation of a coordinated system of all stakeholders that contribute to the capacity building, education and improvement of the life quality of these cohort; (2) Rehabilitation services and inclusive education for children with disabilities aged 2-21, which offers the possibility of building the capacities, autonomy and inclusion of children with disabilities; (3) Independent living to support young people with disabilities

of over 24 years old, which provides support services and training for persons with disabilities to live independently in adapted apartments, in small groups and in the family, where the individual lives.

Professional service providers

Rehabilitation programmes are implemented by a multidisciplinary team under the supervision of the Technical Director and consisting of: 1 developmental psychiatrist, 4 clinical psychologists, 2 social workers, 2 speech therapists/speech-language pathologist, 1 physiotherapist, 2 specialized teachers, 1 social educator and 1 art therapist.

Service development history

Associations' programmes for the education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities began in 1998, with the opening of the Centre for Development and Integration of Children with Disabilities, based on the philosophy that services should be provided since the first months of the life of a child who is identified as having difficulties, and shall continuously accompany the person throughout his/ her life cycle. Subsequently, service package was enriched by programmes supporting children and families that rest on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Innovation

The line of accompanying rehabilitation services throughout the life cycle is one of the first and only models in the country, designed to encourage structured cross-sectoral cooperation between state structures at the local level and civil society organizations, in order to provide support services to the person with disabilities and his family, based on the needs of the person throughout his/her entire life.

Advantages

The service is provided by highly professional specialists, fully competent in their field of expertise; infrastructure (physical

conditions and logistics) adhere to the standards of service delivery, guaranteeing accessible, comfortable and encouraging setting for the beneficiaries; the service fully complies with the conditions, needs and opportunities of the beneficiaries. The model focuses on the person with disabilities and is offered as close as possible to the community where he/she lives.

Results

From the beginning, a number of 420 persons with disabilities have benefited from the service, of which 120 children aged 0-6, 215 children aged 6-21 and about 85 young people of 21-35 years old. With the extension of the service to other municipalities (Durrës and Vlora), 360 more persons with disabilities, aged 6-21, have benefited from it. By the end of the service line, the person with disabilities is able to enjoy the maximum of his potential, functions on the basis of this potential, is integrated into social life and is ready to live independently or even with little support, thus avoiding institutionalization or social isolation in the family.

Sustainability

Services provision is mainly supported by funds from national and international donors, as well as payments by beneficiaries. The association advocates with state structures at local and central level for the implementation of the legal framework to provide financial support to services as part of the social fund and the basket of social care services. Thanks to a very good cooperation with the municipalities, the association helps them to set up this model and to train other service providers to ensure its sustainability.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

In view of the implementation of this model, the Association has cooperated closely with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Municipalities of Tirana, Durrës and Vlora, the State Social Service, international organizations and institutions and businesses operators that have financially supported parts of the programmes of this model. Based on the needs of the beneficiaries, it also cooperates with local organizations and the Social Care Services Centres.

Replication

Besides Tirana, the implementation of this model has been extended to the municipalities of Durrës, Vlora and Kukës. "Help the Life" Association has prepared a training manual of 12 modules and provides technical assistance to all other service providers who wish to apply the model. It is also advocating with state structures at the central and local levels to include the model into policies and social action plans, in view of guaranteeing the social inclusion of persons with disabilities across the country to accessible, comprehensive and specialized services.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

SAFE EMERGENCY SHELTER SERVICE

Service Provider

Initiative for Social Change ARSIS

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Service description

Safe Emergency Shelter Service (SESS), offered at the multifunctional Centre “House of Colours”, is a community service providing temporary protection for children at high and immediate risk (street situation, victims of domestic violence, trafficking, exploitation, without parental care, unaccompanied, etc.). The service provides support for the operation of the child protection mechanism in the country. It begins with immediate assistance for children identified at high or immediate risk, providing protection, security and services that guarantee their highest interest throughout the entire period the state structures of social care services follow on all the procedures to resolve the case. The placement of the child in the emergency service is accompanied by a complete package of interventions coordinated with the Child Protection Officer and the responsible Structure of Social Care Services at the municipality. Over the years, SESS has developed from a simple shelter service to a

support service for children and their mothers in imminent danger, as an important component of the child protection mechanism. During their stay in the centre, both children and/or mothers are provided with food, hygiene, psychological counselling, health care services, sports, creative activities, etc. They are accommodated for a period lasting from 72 hours to 11 days (until a solution that guarantees children’s best interests is provided) according to the provision of the law on child rights and child protection.

Professional service providers

This service is provided by a multidisciplinary staff consisting of: 10 psychologists, 5 social workers; 1 nurse; 5 case managers and 4 teachers, social animators and support staff (4 drivers/logicians and sanitarians).

Service development history

Service was launched in 2010 as a pilot project of the organization “Initiative for Social Change ARSIS”, with the support of UNICEF and Tirana municipality, to provide immediate protection for every child in high-risk. The service, in cooperation with the State Social Services, has been expanded nationally to include any case referred from all over Albania.

Innovation

The safe emergency shelter service was launched as a new service in 2010, the first and only one at the national level. It is fully devoted to the needs of the child protection system in the country, which, by that time, was still in its early stages of development.

Advantages

The service reflects the best practices in the field and the international principles of equality, respect and guarantee of the child values and personality, the right to benefit and to

be protected, the protection of information about personal life, dignity and security and social integration. It is close to the community and vulnerable families and in direct contact with the responsible social care services' structures, the police and court structures.

Results

Since its inception, the service counts more than 1,000 children assisted by the protection service throughout Albania, the average number of beneficiaries being 100-120 per year. Only for 2019, after leaving the emergency service, 26 children accompanied by their parents (10 families) have returned to their families, of which 5 have been placed in rented apartments, whereas 4 families have been placed near the National Emergency Centre and 1 family at the National Centre for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence. 24 unaccompanied children were referred and transferred to residential centres and children's homes (public and non-public), while 18 unaccompanied children were returned to their biological families or extended family.

Sustainability

The service is provided thanks to funds from foreign donors such as UNICEF, the European Union, etc. It is provided, from the very beginning, in cooperation with Tirana municipality, which provides the facilities and spaces for service enactment and, since 2015, has dedicated a budget for operational costs. The positive practices identified during the pilot phase have been developed year after year, consolidating the service and increasing the support from public institutions and at the same time its sustainability.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The service is provided in close cooperation with the social care services structures at the municipality. The Child Protection Unit at the municipality, by virtue of the protection plan drafted by the cross-sectoral technical group, determines the protection measures as well as the need for this type of service for every child at high or immediate risk. SESS cooperates with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the State Social Service, the State Police Directorate, the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, the Coordinated Referral Mechanism against Domestic Violence, etc.

Replication

The service was developed as a pilot model based on a public - non-public partnership, and its positive practice has been embraced by Durrës, Shkodra, and Dibra Municipalities, as well as the Commune of Pristina. The safe emergency shelter service has also served as model to the emergency services at every residential institution, as well as for the designation of the first standards of emergency service in the country.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL AUTONOMY PROGRAMME FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Service Provider

Down Syndrome Albania

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Service description

The autonomy programme aims at increasing the personal and social autonomy of children, young people and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The person with disabilities is the leader of the autonomy service and takes responsibility and decides on his/her activities. This way he/she feels motivated to be independent, takes initiatives and identifies the need for outside support as well as the right moment to seek for that support. The programme comprises two services: Personal autonomy service for children aged 3-13, which is based on the service centre 'PRO PAK' and includes self-feeding, toilet training, dressing and undressing processes, self-care, care for common areas, etc. Service is designed on the basis of an assessment of the child and the set of specific objectives to be achieved

within a predetermined timeframe. The entire process is assisted by therapists and parents actively participate in the process in order to be able to continue providing the service at home. Social autonomy service for young people aged 13-28, a community-based service that aims at supporting persons with disabilities from early childhood to adulthood to acquire elements of independent living. The service enables teenagers and young people with disabilities acquire new skills related to the recognition of traffic rules, use of public transport, recognition of money and carrying out personal purchases, organize their leisure with artistic and cultural activities, etc. The average time of a beneficiary's involvement in the service is three (3) years.

Professional service providers

The following are professionals providing the social autonomy service: 1 field coordinator who is a psychologist/social worker; 4 field operators who are speech therapists, psychologists or social workers and 14 volunteers who are speech therapists, psychologists, social workers. 2 speech therapist operators are involved in the personal autonomy service.

Service development history

The service was launched for the first time in Albania in 2018, by a group of 15 young people with Down syndrome and with the professional support of 20 operators and volunteers. The initiative was supported by foreign professionals, who provided the service model, the right instruments and the intensive staff training. Thanks to the success and achievements in the first year of the programme, support to ensure its continuity for all young people with intellectual disabilities followed.

Innovation

The services, offered as part of the autonomy programme, have been implemented for the first time in Albania by

the Down Syndrome Albania Foundation, introducing an entirely new model. They combine practices in the centre with practices in the community, so as to ensure the practical empowerment of the beneficiaries.

Advantages

The service is offered in community and in the most natural environments, providing the persons with disabilities with an opportunity to learn by trial and, at the same time, be the decision-makers of the activities whereby they wish to attend. The programme places the persons with disabilities at the centre of the activities, increasing their sense of responsibility and the decision-making skills.

Results

About 40 persons with disabilities benefit every year from the services of the autonomy programme provided by the PRO PAK Service Centre. As of June 2019, 15 boys and 10 girls have benefited from the personal autonomy service for children aged 3-13, and 13 boys and 10 girls have benefited from the social autonomy service for young people aged 13-28. Through the participation in these services, every person achieves his/her maximum potential to live independently and according to his/her age.

Sustainability

From its start to now, service provision has been supported by grants from various donors. The involvement of 25 volunteers who devote their time to the service is a valuable asset that has enabled its continuity. Through the autonomy programme, some skills related to the independent living are developed over time and through a community-based approach, ensuring their maintenance and sustainability in the daily life.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

Down Syndrome Albania Foundation provides the service at the local level in cooperation with local institutions and is partially funded by Tirana municipality, through the UNDP RELOAD programme.

Replication

The model is easily applicable in other municipalities in all its elements due to its consolidated structure, vision and strategic plan, as well as the intervention method. The experts of the autonomy programme have prepared a manual for the operators working in this field in Albanian language.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

DAY CARE CENTRE “LIFE IN DEVELOPMENT” ARRAMERAS

Service Provider

Caritas Albania

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Service description

The day-care Centre “Life in Development” provides development and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities of all categories (and their families) in the area of Fushë Krujë, one of the areas with the highest number of persons with disabilities at the national level. The centre’s main objective centre is the development and empowerment of persons with disabilities, aiming at increasing their independence and employment opportunities, which would help them in fostering their dignity and shaping their personality within the community whereby they live. Beneficiaries receive services in the centre 5 days a week, from Monday to Friday, starting from 9.00 am to 14.00 pm, by developing various therapies such as: decoupage therapy, music therapy, gardening therapy, kitchen therapy, tailoring, painting, etc.

In addition, beneficiaries are provided with psychosocial treatment on a daily basis through individual and group therapies conducted by experts in the field. The centre provides information and counselling for the families of beneficiaries and services in the family too. Since most of the beneficiaries come from families with major economic issues, the centre provides transportation from their houses to the centre and vice versa. The centre also works and contributes to the promotion of the values of persons with disabilities which make them feel integrated and equally represented in the society. Every beneficiary can attend the centre for an undetermined period of time according to the needs for the service, as evaluated by the staff of the centre.

Professional service providers

The service is provided by a multidisciplinary team consisting of 3 social workers, 1 nurse, 1 gardening therapist, 1 kitchen therapist and 1 music therapist.

Service development history

The Day-care Centre “Life in Development”, part of Caritas Albania, started its activity in 2010. Upon the reconstruction of the premises and the adaptation according to the standards, the centre started its activity for 35 beneficiaries from Fushë Krujë and the surrounding area. The service has adopted the Austrian model of taking care for persons with disabilities by engaging them in acquiring a profession and training for an independent living.

Innovation

The employment of persons with disabilities is the main objective of this service, which is achieved by means of developing practical skills in view of performing various working processes, such as: preparation of candles, woodcraft, tailoring, gardening, etc. Afterwards, they move on to internships, which are offered by various

businesses and companies in the surrounding area, as a next step toward their employment.

Advantages

The service is offered in the indoor and outdoor spaces of the centre, which are adapted to the standards and needs of the beneficiaries. They occupy a large surface, which includes a working space, a sports space, a recreational park, etc. The centre has managed to build a very good cooperation with local businesses, which offer internships and several employment opportunities for its beneficiaries.

Results

About 45 persons with disabilities (and their families) from the area of Fushë Krujë and the surrounding villages are currently benefiting from the services of the day-care centre. 20 persons with disabilities who receive services in the centre have already completed internships in various local businesses and three (3) beneficiaries have been employed in two of these businesses. The centre has a very active and successful sports team, which is the reigning national champion in the disciplines of football and basketball at the Special Olympic National Games.

Sustainability

For 10 years now, the service has been supported with funds by Caritas St. Polten Austria. Taking into account the community's need for this service, future sustainability requires the presence of, as well as financial and material support, from local and central public institutions.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The centre is part of a network of associations and centres profiled in providing services for persons with disabilities. The centre cooperates closely with 2 high schools in Fushë Kruja by organizing periodic activities; it also cooperates closely with Kruja municipality in meeting beneficiaries' needs in cooperation with the local social office and other state structures.

Replication

The service is a model that meets the European standards and aims, first and foremost, at the integration of persons with disabilities through independent living and employment, easily applicable by any social care service provider should a good cooperation with local businesses be established.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

AFTERNOON CHILDCARE ALTERNATIVES FOR THE CHILDREN OF MOTHERS' VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - "GRANDMA'S HOME/ MY OTHER HOME"

Service Provider

"Different & Equal" Association

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Service description

Afternoon childcare alternative for the children of mothers who are victims of trafficking and domestic violence "Grandma's Home/My other Home" is a community service provided in the municipalities of Tirana (two houses) the municipalities of Tirana (two houses), Kamza, Elbasan and Shkodra. Alternatives operate as day-care centres for children of mothers who are victims of trafficking and domestic violence beyond the official opening hours of nurseries, kindergartens and public schools, from Monday to Saturday. During their stay at "Grandma's Home" children are provided with specialized care, food, personalized educational and entertainment activities according to their age, as well as development

and identified social-educational, psychological and medical needs. For school-age children, support is provided by a specialized staff of teachers who assist them in the preparation of their homework. This helps children improving their results and increasing their ability to work independently. As a community-type service, "Grandma's Homes" are located in cautiously selected areas, as close as possible to the children's families, so that they will be easily accessible for them. If necessary, in order to narrow the distance between the "Grandma's Home" and the children's families, the service provides safe transportation for children from kindergarten/nursery to the "Grandma's Home" and back. Children attending "Grandma's Home" belong to the age cohort from 6 months to 9 years old. The average time of benefiting from the service for a child is 40 hours per week. Service is provided for a period of time deemed indispensable for the child and the mother, with no time limits.

Professional service providers

"Grandma's Homes" staff consists of 16 professionals, of which: 10 teachers (5 main teachers/1 for each structure and 5 teacher assistants/1 for each structure); 5 social workers/1 for each structure in the role of administrator/manager; 1 psychologist and 1 part-time doctor and 1 driver wherever transportation for children is needed.

Service development history

The first two afternoon childcare alternatives were opened by the organization "Different & Equal" in Tirana municipality, in May 2017. The idea arose from the beneficiaries' need (victims of trafficking and domestic violence, mainly mothers) to address difficulties encountered in keeping up with their jobs. Being single mothers and without a support system, their reintegration process was extremely challenging, often exposing their children to neglect and abuse. Alternatives were set up to address this aspect and provide mothers with an opportunity to work, while their children were provided with care in a safe and healthy environment.

Innovation

This service is the first and only of its kind in the country to have set up a free of charge care model in the afternoon for children of mothers who belong to a vulnerable group such as victims of trafficking and domestic violence.

Advantages

The service is easily accessible by its beneficiaries; it is provided with quality and is focused on the individual needs and the best interest of the child, in every case. The service is provided free of charge and this makes it totally helpful for the mothers of these children, who are in the process of rebuilding their lives.

Results

Since its start, about 88 children have benefited from this care service, with an average number of 45 children per year. In Tirana municipality, 38 children (12 girls and 26 boys) have attended the service; in Elbasan municipality, 16 children (5 girls and 11 boys); in Kamza municipality, 20 children (11 girls and 9 boys) and in Shkodra municipality, 14 children (7 girls and 7 boys). Children who have attended this service show a significant and lasting improvement in their emotional and psychological well-being, in the learning process and show better school results. The number of children who display problems with malnutrition, physical and mental health has decreased significantly.

Sustainability

The service has been established and operates based on the cooperation with local government units, which also cover parts of the operating costs and in some cases offer the facilities for the operation of the service (Tirana, Elbasan and Shkodra municipalities). Other costs are covered by various donors.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The service operates in close cooperation with the Regional Education Directorate of Tirana and the General Directorate of Nurseries and Kindergartens (GDNK) at Tirana municipality, with the organizations “Another Vision” in Elbasan and “Global Care Albania” in Kamza, as well as Child Protection Units (CPU) in all four municipalities.

Replication

The model originally set up in Tirana was extended, within two years, in Kamza, Elbasan and Shkodra municipalities. Service operation is based on the standards of social care services for children in need in public and non-public day-care centres and on a series of documents necessary for the internal functioning, prepared by the organization, which can serve as a good basis for the successful replication of the service in other municipalities.

CATALOGUE

OF BEST PRACTICES FOR

THE PROVISION OF

SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

LUSHNJA DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Service Provider

Lushnja Municipality

Contact Information

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Service description

Lushnja Development Centre is a community centre providing therapeutic, rehabilitation, and educational services to maintain and increase social, physical and personal autonomy of children with disabilities aged 2 - 16. Services include developmental (educational) therapy, speech therapy, work therapy and physical therapy, as well as recreational and socialization activities. Service provision is organised in three different time slots. In the morning, service is provided for children not attending schools or kindergartens; around noon, for the children who attend schools or kindergartens with reduced hours and, in the afternoon, for children who attend schools or kindergartens regularly. The period during which a child continues attending services at the centre is based on the individual development plan according to which a child can receive

one or more individual or in-group therapeutic services, from one to several times per week. The circulation of the child from one service to another and the polyvalence of the specialised staff are the main features of this service model.

Professional service providers

The service is provided by a multidisciplinary staff consisting of: 1 supervisor, 1 social worker, 2 speech therapists, 5 psychologists, 2 physiotherapists and 7 supporting staff.

Service development history

Lushnja Development Centre was established in 2016 with the support of UNDP and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The centre was initially designed to serve only children from the city of Lushnja. After the territorial administrative reform, as a result of which 10 administrative units (former communes) joined the municipality of Lushnja, the Centre was tasked with providing social care services for children with disabilities living in the whole territory of the current municipality. The Centre started working with a staff of 6 employees, while today it has about 11 specialist employees and 7 support staff.

Innovation

The centre and its services were a novelty for Lushnja municipality. Prior to its opening, no public or non-public services for children with disabilities existed in the territory. The services provided by the centre are specialized and multidisciplinary at the same time, guaranteeing a multifaceted training and development for the children, preparing them for an autonomous living within the family, school and community. Another innovation the model has brought about is the intervention at a child's early age and as a result close cooperation with nurseries and kindergartens whereby the staff of the centre regularly goes to identify children with disabilities from an early age, especially those within the autism disorders spectrum. Thanks to this identification, children become part of the service and are treated with the adequate therapies.

Advantages

With the establishment of the development centre, children with disabilities living within the territory of Lushnja municipality receive qualitative services, free of charge and with quality infrastructure.

Results

During the four-year period of its operation, the centre has provided services to about 210 beneficiaries aged 3 - 16 (with an average number of 65 beneficiaries per year), out of which 41% are girls and 85% from non-urban areas. Based on the specific needs of each child, considerable improvement in their rehabilitation is noted. One of the main results of the centre's work is the fact that 61% of its beneficiaries, who did not attend educational institutions, although at school age, were able to integrate into mainstream schools.

Sustainability

From 2016 onwards, the centre's activity has been supported by the municipality in the framework of the responsibilities arising after the decentralization reform. In 2020, the municipality has received funding from the Social Fund to increase the number of the staff with three other specialists in order to better respond to the growing number of children with disabilities who seek and need to receive the services the centre provides. Cooperation with pre-schooling and pre-university education institutions as well as professional support offered to the parents has increased the significance of the service provided. These actions have increased community awareness on the existence of these services and their importance and, consequently, brought greater awareness of the municipality for a more sustainable support.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The Centre has close cooperation with schools and kindergartens operating in the territory of Lushnja municipality for the identification of children with disabilities from an early age. The centre continues receiving staff training from the UNDP.

Replication

Lushnja Development Centre is one of the first public community centres for children with disabilities established in Albania. The typology of services provided, the modality of service delivery, the cooperation with kindergartens, schools and parents along with lobbying and involvement of the business community and not only, have built a functional, sustainable and replicable model.



Service Name

FIGHTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SERVICE

Service Provider

The Women Centre “Light Steps”, Shkodër

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Service description

Fighting Gender-Based Violence Service works for the protection of the rights of women, children and young people and socio-economic empowerment and reintegration of victims of domestic violence (VDV) in three areas: 1) Individual services, specialized and free of charge, for victims of gender-based violence (women and girls). The service includes psycho-social and legal support, field accompaniment (receive services at public and non-public institutions, looking for houses to rent, etc.), employment, housing, vocational training courses and a library for victims of gender-based violence. The service is also provided for the children of the victims, who are provided with psychological support; attend the day-care centre, vocational training courses, etc. The Bar-Restaurant Arti'Zanave has opened as part of the centre, which serves not only for the employment of the victims of domestic violence, but also as a socialising place for women in general. 2) Community services, which include awareness raising meetings on gender-based violence prevention. 3) Work with

public institutions, aiming at making them more responsible on their duties. As far as this latter is concerned, the Centre is member to the Coordinated Referral Mechanism (CRM) and the Interdisciplinary Technical Team (ITT), in support of VDV at the local level.

Service development history

Fighting gender-based violence service was started in 2003 by the international organization COSPE-Italy, with the opening of the first Women's Centre in Shkodra, in a situation when there was a lack of social services in the territory of Shkodra. Over the years the service has become increasingly specialized in addressing complex issues of abused women, such as: marriage settlements, Emergency Protection Orders (IPO) and Protection Orders (PO), emergency housing, employment, vocational training, etc. In 2003, before the adoption of Law No. 9669, dated 18.12.2006, “On Measures against Domestic Violence”, the centre set up the first inter-institutional table for the coordination and provision of the highest quality services for cases of domestic violence in Shkodra municipality, with representatives from the municipality, police, prosecutor's office, court, regional hospital, and other NGOs.

Professional service providers

The service is provided by a team of 2 social workers, 2 psychologists, and 2 lawyers.

Innovation

The experience acquired over the years by the Centre and the need to find sustainable solutions, led to the opening of Bar-Restaurant Arti'Zanave by the Women's Centre in 2020. It serves the employment and socialization of women with socio-economic problems, as well as to cover part of the costs of the service. Three women with socio-economic problems are employed at the Bar-Restaurant.

Advantages

Supporting the economic empowerment of VDV and their

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

children is one of the advantages of the service. Once the psycho-social support in the emergency phase is exhausted, special attention is paid to building proper capacities for the creation of economic independence, as well as finding and creating employment opportunities. Close cooperation over the years with local institutions as part of the CRM on domestic violence in Shkodra, Vau Dejës and Puka municipalities, is another important advantage for the sustainable provision of service.

Results

In 17 years of its operation, over 2,000 people have benefited from the fighting gender-based violence service, with a number of about 100 beneficiaries per year. Some of the results related to VDV include the elimination of domestic violence in cases of marriage dissolution and obtaining a Protection Order, reducing violence in cases where women continue to live with their abusers, through provisions of psychological support in the family including the abuser, as well as increase of their independence.

Sustainability

The costs of the service are covered by the implementation of projects funded by various donors. The social business Bar Restaurant “Arti’Zanave”, an activity of the Women’s Centre, supports the service with a part of the income, guaranteeing its sustainability. An important element of sustainability is the voluntary work of professionals who continue to provide psycho-social services even in periods of lack of financial support from donors.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The Women Centre ‘Light Steps’ closely cooperates with various public and non-public service providers at the local level, such as: Social Service Directorate, State Police, Vocational Training Office, Regional Employment Office in Shkodra, Puka and Vau Dejës, international, national and local organizations, such as SOS-Children’s Villages, Woman to Woman, The Door, Puka Youth Centre, Northeast Unemployed Woman Puka, Pope John XXIII, etc. The centre cooperates also with private businesses for the employment of VDV.

Replication

In 2015, after the experience in Shkodra municipality, the service was extended to Puka municipality, with the creation of the Women’s Chamber. In January 2019, in cooperation with the Directorate of Social Service in Vau Dejës municipality, a Social Centre was established, whereby, in addition to various socio-economic activities, services against gender-based violence are also provided. The centre is assessing the possibility of providing such service in other municipalities of Shkodra Region, such as in Fushë-Arrëz and Malësi e Madhe.



Service Name

HOSPITALITY HOUSE "SANTA MARIA"

Service Provider

Community Association "Pope John XXIII",
Shkodër

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Service description

Hospitality House "Santa Maria" is a shelter providing protection and rehabilitation for victims of domestic violence. Main service's beneficiaries include adult girls and mothers with children, identified as victims of domestic violence. The service model aims at being as similar to family life as possible, offering a protected environment, rich in effectiveness, which takes into account the uniqueness of every individual by appreciating different skills and abilities and stimulates personal autonomy. The service operates based on the model of sharing life directly with persons admitted to the service, according to which service providers share their daily lives with the beneficiaries being fully available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Services provided include housing, food, health care, psycho-social support, referrals for employment or vocational training, referrals for legal issues, education and specialized services for children, socio-cultural activities and anything else normal in the life of a family. This way, in addition to addressing the problems of domestic violence and related trauma, the

service simultaneously meets several needs such as, empowering the individual and the family, education for the future, economic independence and reintegration in both family and community. Support is also provided for a medium-term transition phase immediately upon leaving the shelter. The average time spent in a shelter is 12 months.

Service development history

For 20 consecutive years, the Community Association 'Pope John XXIII' is helping girls and women in situation of violence, providing a relationship of trust, help, and psychological and spiritual support. In January 2018, the shelter officially opened as a newly specialized and dedicated service for victims of domestic violence, in response to the ongoing requests for housing and accommodation for victims of domestic violence, along with their children.

Professional service providers

The service is provided by 2 psychologists, 1 social worker and a personal assistant.

Innovation

Such a long-term service for victims of domestic violence is provided by no other public or non-public service provider in the northern region of Albania. The goal has not been to set up a residential institution, but to include, in an extended family, all girls and women with their children who are in difficult or violent situations, making them feel accepted, with dignity, protected, equal and see towards the future.

Advantages

Life in the shelter is completely dominated by co-existence that has a very familiar nature, whereby each member plays its own role within the large family; whereby everyone is accepted, and no one is excluded. Everyone

strives not only for the personal well-being but also for the collective well-being of the family, helping each other overcoming painful stories or past traumas.

Results

Since its start, the centre has provided services to a total of 27 beneficiaries, including 2 girls, 9 women, and 16 children. The beneficiaries are mainly from Shkodra, Malësi e Madhe, Puka and Vau Dejës municipalities. The cases handled at the Hospitality House have been successful as they have all resulted in an improvement of the beneficiaries' situation and none have returned to the starting state.

Sustainability

The service is financed by the Community Association Pope John XXIII based in Rimini, Italy, which has been operating with long-term projects in Albania for 20 years, placing social justice at the centre of its mission "until the last are the first". Continuity of the service is also ensured by the readiness of the missionaries of the Community Pope John XXIII, who have chosen to share their lives with people in need.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The centre is in constant cooperation with the office of the local coordinator for cases of domestic violence in Shkodra municipality. The Social Service office of the municipality continuously monitors the execution of the Protection Order issued for the service's beneficiaries, whereas the Child Protection Unit monitors the progress of the children accompanied by their mothers with a Protection Order. Through partnerships with civil society organizations, such as the Association 'Woman to Woman' or the Albanian Organization of the Order of Malta (Malteser), providing support services such as child education, legal aid, etc. is now possible. The shelter is part of the Regional Committee for the Fight against Human Trafficking in Shkodra municipality.

Replication

This service meets several needs at once. It is based on the wish to help people in need and on the collaboration with institutions and other organizations that provide services to victims of domestic violence. For these reasons, it can be easily applied by other organizations that have in the focus of their work family services, gender equality issues, empowerment of vulnerable families, etc.

CATALOGUE

OF BEST PRACTICES FOR

THE PROVISION OF

SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Service Provider

National Association Education for Life

Contact Information

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Service description

The community service set up by the National Association Education for Life is provided through Eden Centre and the Little Angels Centre. Beneficiaries include vulnerable families undergoing deep economic and social difficulties, mainly those of the Roma and Egyptian communities, children and young people living on the streets, children at risk of abandoning school or those who have already dropped out, children outside the social protection system, young people at risk of drug use and dangerous/antisocial behaviour, girls getting involved in early marriages and young people who want to increase their competencies and skills in order to bring about a social and economic change in the community. They consist in: (1) Centre Community services for children aged 3-14 and which include educational activities such as classes for the illiterates, school support, pre-literacy activities, equipment with the necessary school materials, psychological care, health and hygiene care, healthy meals, as well as orientation, referral and support for enrolment in

kindergarten, nursery and school; (2) Centre Community services for young people aged 15-21, such as: various social and educational activities, trainings, assistance with school didactic materials, enrolment in vocational training courses, employment orientation, entertainment activities outside the centre, direct assistance in special cases and artistic activities according to talents and abilities; (3) Services for families, such as: guidance, counselling and employment support, health care, support for administrative and legal issues, training/informing sessions for positive parenting, as well as direct assistance in emergency cases.

Professional service providers

Service in both centres is provided by a multidisciplinary team, which consists of: 2 psychologists, 7 social workers, 1 educator, 1 educational assistant, 1 support teacher, 1 financier and 2 cooks.

Service development history

Community Service of the National Association "Education for Life" started in 2003 with the opening of the Community Centre Eden in the Administrative Unit No. 11 of Tirana municipality, which has served over the years a significant number of vulnerable families in Administrative Units No. 1, 2 and 11 in Tirana. In 2008, the Community Centre 'Little Angels' was opened in the Administrative Unit No. 9, which has carried out its activities mainly in the Administrative Units No. 8 and 9. The service model has improved over the years with a direct impact on the lives of vulnerable families, so that they could reach their full potential for a better quality of life.

Innovation

Services offered with the aim of Improving Development in Early Childhood, age 0-6, are services provided for the first time at the local level by a Community Centre. Another innovative service includes "Mobile Kitchen", an activity focused on cooking lessons and socialization in the community, offered by the staff of the centres in the homes of the beneficiaries where they cook together.

Advantages

The 17 years of experience of the National Association 'Education for Life' in working with vulnerable communities and their needs, as well as providing direct services to address these needs, is one of the advantages of the service. The variety of direct services provided and the ease of receiving services from the beneficiaries, are the elements that make this service more effective and with an immediate impact.

Results

Over the years, the service has increased the capacities of around 1,200 children and young people in building a positive perspective about their life, has empowered about 750 women in increasing their autonomy, gaining respect on their rights and their important role in the family. The service has also improved the skills of around 450 families for the upbringing and care of their children and for a better quality of life.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the service is ensured through projects supported by grants from various donors, public and private entities. The long experience as a community service provider has influenced the establishment of a strong link with the beneficiaries, building donors' trust and referral of the centre as a strong bridge between local institutions and the community. Support to community leaders on the initiatives they undertake has empowered them to independently address the problems and the needs of their community.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

Through the Community Centres, the National Association Education for Life, is part of several national networks that serve to strengthening the links between local government, civil society and beneficiaries, such as: The National Network of Centres for Children in Street Situation; The National Network for Comprehensive Child Care; The BRIDGE Network (United Response Against Trafficking), and The Alliance for Education. They represent an important mechanism by which means beneficiaries problems are addressed to the relevant institutions. They advocate and lobby for the protection of human rights and increase collaboration for the provision of high efficiency social care services.

Replication

Service programmes offered at both community centres are based on several easily applicable features by other providers, such as: provision of services in accordance with the Albanian legislation, established protocols for working with children and standards of community centres, service delivery based on needs assessment of vulnerable communities, and setting up of community centres close to the community that benefits from their services.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Service Provider

Durrës Municipality

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Service description

This community-based services Centre for children with disabilities aged 2-21, works with children and their families to ensure inclusion in kindergartens, schools and the community. The Centre provides:

Direct services for children with disabilities on behavioural issues, communication, autonomy, education, and academic and motor skills. The service is provided from Monday to Friday, through group and individual programmes.

Training for the families of children with disabilities to work with their children at home and advocate for their inclusion into the education system and the community. Parents also have the opportunity to benefit from counselling sessions from the centre’s psychologist.

Awareness raising opportunities for the community to support the inclusion of children with disabilities. The Centre organizes a series of awareness raising activities

to spread the message of inclusiveness and independent living in the community.

The average time of inclusion in the service of a beneficiary is 2 sessions per week. All cases addressed at the centre attend services that are tailored to their age and development level throughout their lives.

Service development history

The Centre was established in 2016, in response to the need to provide services for children with disabilities and their families in Durrës. To this end, Durrës municipality has cooperated with the organization Save the Children that, through a 3-year project implemented in partnership with the “Help The Life” Association, did provide for the restoration of the premises whereby the Centre would operate, training of the staff, delivery of services for children and their families, and the creation of a network of collaborators. Upon completion of the project that laid the foundations of the Centre, its administration was completely assigned to Durrës municipality which has provided maximum support to maintain the set standards.

Professional service providers

The services are provided by a multidisciplinary staff consisting of 1 social worker, 1 psychologist, 1 speech therapist, 1 physiotherapist and 2 developmental therapists.

Innovation

The Centre is the only one of its kind in Durrës offering this model of public services, whereby the whole family benefits the services. The creation of self-help groups with children with disabilities and their siblings, who meet every month with the centre’s psychologist sharing common emotions, feelings and experiences, is a new element of the service.

Advantages

This service’s model has the advantage of focusing on the whole family and its support. Particular attention is paid to the

relationship with the siblings of children with disabilities, not only by informing them about the child's difficulties, but also by understanding the complexity of family relationships and the ways they can be helped in cooperation with other local partners.

Results

Since its opening, 116 children and young people with disabilities (35 women and 81 men) and their families have benefited from the services of the Centre, with a total number of 75 beneficiaries per year. Divided by age cohort, 13% of the beneficiaries are aged 2-5, 40% are 6-10 years old, 32% belong to the age group 11-15, and 15% are 16-21 years old. Improvements in the areas of social inclusion, behaviour, visual performance, personal autonomy, communication, and fine and gross motor skills are noticed in the beneficiaries. With regards to the parents, improvements on the level of understanding of their children with disabilities, their difficulties and abilities, as well as increase of their knowledge on the possibilities to advocate for the rights of their children are noticed.

Sustainability

The centre's expenses are budgeted in the mid-term budget of the municipality for the period 2019-2021 and shall continue to be included in the future. Meanwhile, cooperation with "Save the Children" continues, covering the costs for the purchase of a part of the working materials, the organisation of some activities and the increase of the staff and parents capacities to ensure the sustainable development of their children.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

In order to meet any need encounter by the beneficiaries, the Centre has entered into cooperation agreements with other public and non-public service providers at the local level, such as: Regional Health Directorate, Education Directorate, Vocational Training Centre, Mental Health Centre "Towards Development", etc. World Vision has often been a supporter of the centre's activities in view of meeting the needs for awareness rising and entertainment activities.

Replication

Every positive result achieved so far is closely related to the community service model the Centre applies, which can easily be implemented by other providers. The service is fully compliant with the policies and reform on the social protection for persons with disabilities and is fully responsive to the needs for supporting services that provide training and integration of children with disabilities. It also aims at ensuring concrete commitment of the institutions responsible for the provision of such services. For these reasons, the model serves as a good example that can be followed by other municipalities that do not provide this type of service.

CATALOGUE

OF BEST PRACTICES FOR

THE PROVISION OF

SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



Service Name

DAY CARE CENTRE "NEW HOPE"

Service Provider

OAZ Foundation

Contact Information

Address: Lagjia "Pjeter Budi", Rruga "Ahmet Xhetani", Nr. 14, Mat

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Service description

"New Hope" day-care centre provides specialized services and various therapies for children and young people with disabilities of different categories, aiming at developing and improving their living standards. The Centre is the only one offering these types of services (free of charge) for this target group in Mat and Klos area. The Centre is open every day for the beneficiaries from 07.30 to 15.00. Some of the beneficiaries who live in the rural areas leave the centre after consuming lunch, while some come to the centre at lunchtime, after finishing school. Taking into account the difficult economic conditions in which these children and young people families live, in addition to the psycho-social service, lunch and free transportation are offered to the beneficiaries, as well as take away supporting equipment, such as wheelchairs, various materials that parents can use while children are at home and toys for therapeutic purposes. Special attention is paid to the work with the parents of

the beneficiaries, who often come to the centre and see how specialists work with their children so as to follow on the same at home, in order to preserve or further enhance their children essential skills.

Service development history

The "New Hope" day-care centre was opened in 2008 and started its activity with full capacity in 2011. The centre was established by OAZ Foundation, a humanitarian organisation offering assistance to vulnerable groups in Mat municipality since 1994. Work at the Centre started with a group of 10 children and young people with disabilities, a number that has increased from year to year thanks to the positive results and the trust built in the community.

Professional service providers

The service is provided by a staff consisting of 12 employees: 1 social worker with Master's degree as support teacher, 2 psychologists, one of whom also with a Master's degree as support teacher, 1 sociologist, 1 paediatric nurse, 4 educators, 1 cook, 1 caretaker and 1 manager.

Innovation

The very existence of the Centre and its work with children and young people with disabilities is a novelty for the area whereby it operates. The main initial goal of the Centre was getting these children and young people out of the "prison" of their homes and allowing their parents some extra time for themselves, because someone else was taking well care of their children. Nowadays the Centre offers specialized services and has changed the lives of many families.

Advantages

The main advantage of the service is its combination with other services provided by OAZ Foundation for

the families of the centre's beneficiaries and other groups in need in the community, such as financial assistance or support with food packages. The Centre is widely recognized by local and regional public institutions, as well as the community of the area, for the services and the support it provides to the children and young people with disabilities and their families.

Results

One of the main service's results is breaking the taboo prevailing in the area that a person with a disability is "a disgrace" and must stay indoors. More than 200 children and young people with disabilities aged 2 to 30, from the city and surrounding area, have benefited from the service since the opening of the Centre, with an average number of 35-40 beneficiaries per year. About 100 children or young people nowadays are no longer part of the Centre as some of them are fully integrated into society, 47 of them attend the regular school without any difficulty and only 6 of them continue to attend the school with the support teachers.

Sustainability

Services' sustainability, from the financial point of view, is ensured through the support of the OASI Foundation in Switzerland, which covers the running costs of the day-care centre and staff salaries. An important indicator of sustainability is the support provided by Mat municipality that, through a decision of the Municipal Council, has accorded to the Centre a space whereby to operate, free of charge, until 2028 and is committed to cover part of its administrative costs.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The Centre maintains close cooperation with schools in order to coordinate work for children who attend the school and the Centre and share information and effective teaching techniques for children. Cooperation have been also established with the Medical Commission for Assignment of Work Ability (MCAWA), vocational training course providers, local businesses, health centres, etc., aiming at helping children and their families as much as practically possible.

Replication

The service can be easily implemented in other areas too. In every municipality there are or can be established premises to serve as day-care centres for children and young people with disabilities, professionals can be trained to provide services, and work with local businesses can be established, which, with a little perseverance and initiative, can turn into supporters and very good collaborators.



Service Name

COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Service Provider

Pogradec Municipality and
Pogradec Local Education Office

Contact Information

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Service description

Community Centre in Pogradec is a day-care centre for children and young people with disabilities. It serves children at an early age and those who attend or not educational institutions. The services provided aim at supporting children in gaining personal autonomy and integrating, as early as possible, gently and fully, in regular schools, while the services for young people aim at enhancing their degree of independence and occupational skills. One of the characteristics of the service model provided by the Centre is the combination of intensive and long-term educational support with physical, occupational and communication training and rehabilitation services, either in-group or individually. The average time of service varies from one to four hours per day, whereas the duration and type of the service varies according to the identified needs of the beneficiary. Parents of children and young people are

supported with trainings and informing sessions so that the progress achieved in the centre is maintained and continued at home. The centre also provides training on specific technical issues for assistant teachers in schools.

Professional service providers

The service is provided by a multidisciplinary staff consisting of 3 social workers (including a speech therapist and a physical therapist), 1 psychologist and 4 teachers, under the supervision of the centre's director.

Service development history

The history of the centre traces back to 1994 with the creation of special education classes under the Education Office in Pogradec. In 2016, Pogradec municipality, with the support of UNDP, modelled these community services for persons with disabilities, reorienting the centre's goals, increasing the typology of services, extending the geography and expanding the range of beneficiaries, regardless of their educational status. Currently, the Centre successfully operates thanks to the close cooperation of the Directorate of Social Services in Pogradec municipality with the Local Education Office.

Innovation

The organisation of joint activities between children and disabled young people and their peers with no disabilities and the close cooperation of the Centre with their parents, public schools and civil society organizations are a new working pattern the Centre is implementing since 2016. This pattern has succeeded in changing mindsets, mitigate discrimination and increase the social inclusion of beneficiaries in the mainstream schools and in the community.

Advantages

An enhanced working culture of the staff for the assessment and address of the needs of the beneficiaries through a systematic consultation with parents and other actors outside the centre, increases the effectiveness of the service and creates advantages for the centre.

Results

Since 2016, the centre has provided services to 80 persons with disabilities, with a number of about 50 beneficiaries per year. Beneficiaries are of different age groups (44 beneficiaries aged 2-14 years, 22 beneficiaries aged 15-20 years and 14 beneficiaries aged over 20 years), different living areas (37 beneficiaries from rural areas and 43 beneficiaries from urban areas) and different ethnic communities (13 beneficiaries from the Roma and Egyptian communities). These services have a direct impact on persons with disabilities. It has helped them to recognize their rights and how to claim these rights, adapt to the community life, build their social life and increase their ability for independent living and/or autonomy.

Sustainability

The number of users of the Centre has increased as a result of the improved quality and increased typology of services, making the Centre an important institution for families of persons with disabilities, as well as a resource centre for supporting teachers of primary and secondary educational institutions. The successful co-existence of education services with social care services has strengthened the conviction of stakeholders interested in the benefits of multi-sectoral interventions for persons with disabilities and is a guarantee for the continuity of this service model.

Collaboration with other stakeholders

The Centre closely cooperates with local public and non-public stakeholders, including civil society organizations in Pogradec, such as organizations of persons with disabilities, the association "Me, the Woman", the association "The Intellectual Woman", etc., in view of exchanging information and organising joint activities that serve the activation and socialization of its beneficiaries.

Replication

This service's model is efficient and easily applicable in every local government unit whereby social care services and educational services are willing to coordinate and complement their activities.

CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES FOR THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES



