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UNITED NATIONS  
ALBANIA

# ‘Leave No One Behind’ Response to COVID-19 in Albania



Leave  
No One  
Behind

May 2020

‘Leave No One Behind’

# Response to COVID-19 in Albania

**COVID-19** pandemic is the most devastating global health crisis of our time. As the virus spreads, its social toll is affecting the most vulnerable people. The way such crises are managed, it can leave many more people behind, if the dynamics of social disparities are not taken into account.

The spread of the virus in Albania and the restrictive measures to contain it, like in most countries world-wide, has put a spotlight on the economic and social inequalities that places the economic brunt of the crises over the most vulnerable communities. In Albania, the Swiss Government-supported UN Joint Programme ‘Leave No One Behind’ (LNB) is working closely with Government of Albania and UN partner agencies to identify areas of emergency support, aiming to reduce the impact on the poorest and other vulnerable groups.

## 1. SUPPORTING INFORMATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING AMONG VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES ON COVID-19 PREVENTIVE MEASURES:



To ensure immediate support in response to government's efforts to suppress the transmission of the virus, ‘**Leave No One Behind**’ Programme stepped in to provide support to municipalities and programme partners with a comprehensive package of information about the virus, how to halt its spread, and other preventive measures. The information was collected from secure and official sources, such as WHO and the Albanian Institute of Public Health. Municipalities were advised to total or the outreach and provide vulnerable communities with this information either in the form of printouts, or electronically (via Email, Facebook). In addition, the preventive measures were also made available in the sign language through a video produced by the Albanian National Association of the Deaf.

(<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=502220253794329>)

## 2. ENSURING ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN SIGN LANGUAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS:

To guarantee access to information in sign language during COVID-19 for the community of persons with hearing impairments in Albania, LNB has collaborated with the Albanian National Association of the Deaf (ANAD) to ensure the constant provision of reliable and updated information. As a result, within the third week of COVID-19 outbreak, daily press releases delivered by the Ministry of Health on government's measures to contain the virus were accompanied with interpretation in sign language.

<https://www.facebook.com/PNUDSHQIPERI/videos/3552202471516480>

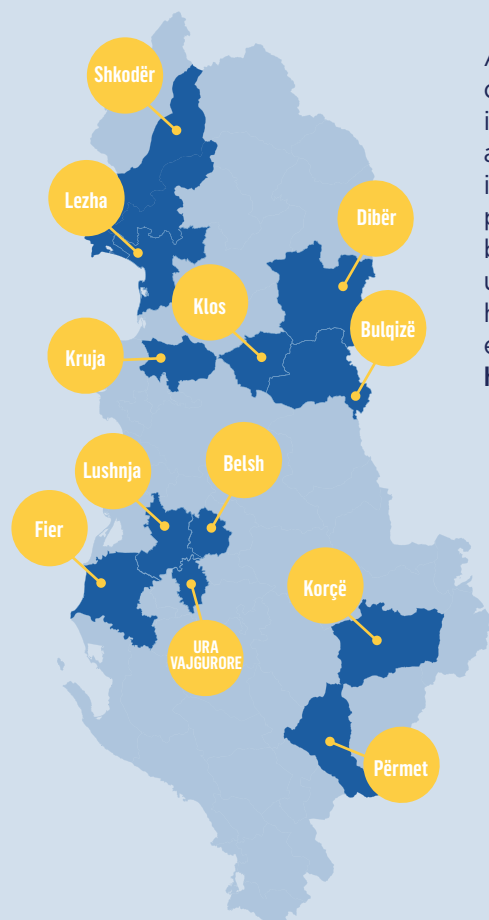
A **24-hours hot line** was established to receive requests and provide information and referral services through remote video calls in sign language provided via WhatsApp for this community. ANAD has produced so far **58 videos in sign language that have reached 61828 people**, explaining health issues and addressing social care needs of the deaf community in these unusual circumstances.



**58 videos**

**61828 people**

### **3. EMERGENCY SUPPORT TO THE MOST AT RISK VULNERABLE PERSONS AND GROUPS:**



Alerted on the dire situation of many households that have been deprived of the daily income as their activities have been interrupted because of COVID -19 restrictive measures, LNB activated its support rapidly to provide vulnerable communities in **12 municipalities** with emergency assistance consisting of packages of food, didactic materials, and sanitary products, benefiting Roma and Egyptians, people with disabilities, the unemployed, the elderly living alone, those with underlying health conditions, women headed households, etc., who require extra support to overpass this situation. So far, **1045 vulnerable households** have benefited from these emergency packages.



**1045 vulnerable households**  
have benefited from these  
emergency packages

### **4. SUPPORTING DELIVERY OF ONLINE SPECIALIZED SOCIAL SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:**

LNB has activated an online network of professionals of 8 development and community centers for children with disabilities, operating in the municipalities of Pogradec, Lushnje, Bulqize, Diber, Shijak, Ura Vajgurore, Përmet, and Saranda to enable them with methods and techniques for the provision of online specialized social services for these children during COVID-19. A designated national expert facilitates their online support and orientation. The professional staff were advised to set up virtual connections with the parents and to consult with them on the best ways to work with their children at home conditions. If virtual connection was not possible due to lack of adequate technological devices, or internet connection in remote and rural areas, they were advised to explore other ways to reach out to these families and provide them with printed working materials and guidance, respecting physical distancing and other preventive measures. Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease, 138 children with disabilities have benefited from specialized social services, of which 117 from online services, and 21 others from home-to-home visits.

<https://www.facebook.com/PNUDSHQIPERI/videos/160419031935780>

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POGRADEC

BULQIZE

LUSHNJE

DIBER

SHIJAK

URA VAJGUORE

SARANDA

PËRMET

## 5. ONLINE TRAINING FOR THE NEW PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNITY CENTERS:

LNB is providing interactive distance training sessions (via Skype) for 14 newly assigned professional staff of the development/community centers in the municipalities of Dibër, Përmet, Urë Vajguore and Bulqizë. The purpose is dual-faceted, firstly to enable them with methods and techniques to deliver online specialized social services, and secondly to continue to strengthen their capacities with advanced and new knowledge that will serve them in their daily work, once the situation returns to normal.

**14**  **newly assigned professional staff**

PËRMET

BULQIZE

DIBER

URA VAJGUORE

## 6. SUPPORTING ONLINE EDUCATION OF ROMA AND EGYPTIAN CHILDREN DURING COVID-19:

LNB joined the efforts of the Ministry of Education to support the online learning for Roma and Egyptian children. Online networks were established to ensure information sharing and connection between children-teachers-and parents during the online education process. Despite these efforts, it is a major challenge for many R&E children to access online schooling due to lack of resources, such as internet connection, relevant equipment or TV sets.

## 7. SUPPORTING ROMA AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES TO ACCESS INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT'S REGULATIONS RELATED TO COVID-19:

COVID-19 pandemic being far more than a health crisis risks leaving many behind. Therefore, in support to government's COVID-19 mitigation measures, LNB supported Roma and Egyptian communities in accessing all the necessary information on government's regulations and procedures for financial assistance during the pandemic, sanctioned by a decision of the Council of Ministers for self-employed citizens and businesses. Online support was provided to 193 self-employed R&E in the municipalities of Kruja, Fier and Lezha, to complete and submit application forms to benefit from the financial assistance. This was done in line with the model of integrated social services delivery already established in these municipalities.



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**193** self-employed Roma and Egyptian

KRUJA

FIER

LEZHA