

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

01.06.2017 – 31.05.2021

YEAR 2 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT JUNE 2018 - MAY 2019

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General Information

This report is presented to the Programme Steering Committee and it provides a summary of the Leave No One Behind (LNB) programme's main achievements during the implementation period of June 1st, 2018 – May 31st, 2019.

The LNB programme, financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is a four-year programme (2017-2021) implemented by UN agencies under the management of UNDP. The implementation arrangements are formalized through a Standard Administrative Agreement on May 31, 2017, covering the period of June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2021. Its main goal *is to empower the vulnerable persons in Albania to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives.*

Executive Summary

The Government of Albania is committed to address social protection and inclusion, with a particular focus on the most marginalised groups with high proportions of them living close to the poverty line. The government structures at central and local level often fail to address adequately the needs of vulnerable groups due to limited resources and capacities on implementation of social inclusion programmes and policies as well as incomplete legal framework.

Leave No One Behind (LNB) programme (2017-2021) funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by UN agencies under the management of UNDP is a response to government's efforts to social inclusion of VGs. Its main goal *is to empower the vulnerable persons in Albania to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives.*

LNB programme focuses on three interlinked outcomes:

- Empowered persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians, and vulnerable women, to request and have access to social services, as a pre-condition to improve their lives
- Enabled municipalities to effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion
- Strengthen capacities of national institutions to implement their policy framework, to fund and provide social services

LNB has completed its second year of support to Government of Albania, at central and local level, and is half-way through the programme implementation. Continuous support in capacity building, advocacy, research, technical assistance has started to yield first results in achievement of programme outcomes and overall goal. Concrete results are achieved at several levels:

- (i) **at community level:** Vulnerable groups are empowered on their rights and entitlements to social services and are mobilized for a meaningful participation in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms supported by the programme (Local Social Dialogue Groups, Forums of

Persons with Disabilities, Youth Voice Network) to advocate for their rights at central and local level which are taken into account in local social care plans and the public agenda of the government. 5,668 R&E, PwD, women and youth engaged in forums and debates with local authorities on issues of their concern such as access to social care services, employment, health and inclusive education.

- (i) **at local government level:** Sixteen municipalities¹ (26%) have developed and costed social care plans which respond to the needs of vulnerable men and women and have strengthened their capacities in service delivery; municipal staff know the new legal provisions about integrated social protection at local level and are strengthened into different aspects of social care services planning and delivery. All 19 municipalities under LNB programme have capacities to use the MIS for social care services and 30 % of those started to populate the system. For the first time, one municipality² allocated funds for supporting out-of-school children. New innovative models of integrated social services are implemented in 3 municipalities³ and community-based services for persons with disabilities are being implemented at 7 municipalities⁴ providing models of quality service delivery for vulnerable groups. Over 2,138 R&E, PwD, women and youth received quality social care services.
- (ii) **at policy level:** legal framework on Social Enterprises is completed and the Social Enterprise Fund along with the Social Fund are both funded with public funding and become operational. For the first time MoESY has included in the budget support scholarships for drop-out or out-of-school children. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Sciences are reviewing their existing national policies and action plans, an important step also to better align these policies with the EU accession agenda.

During the second year of implementation the programme has picked up full speed, which - to some extent - is slowed down in the last quarter due to uncertainty surrounding local elections.

To maximize support and avoid overlapping, the interventions of UN agencies created synergies with other ongoing initiatives in the country and provided inputs for the new upcoming social protection programme to be funded by EU.

Gender balance has been ensured through equal representation of women and girls participating in project activities and accessing inclusive services whereas good governance principles were showcased in project activities and promoted with relevant stakeholders at central and local level.

Institutional partnerships with relevant stakeholders were consolidated at central and local levels and continuous consultations and coordination mechanisms are in place to ensure their commitment in ensuring sustainability beyond implementation of project activities.

¹ Tirane, Durres, Korce, Shkoder, Vlore, Mallakaster, Sarande, Shijak, Malesia e Madhe, Librazhd, Maliq, Permet, Ura vajgurore, Fier, Pogradec, Bulqize

² Durres

³ Kruja, Fier and Lezha

⁴ Diber, Kruje, Tirane, Ure Vajgurore, Vlore, Korce, Permet



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United Nations Country Office

"Skenderbej" Street, Gurten Building, 2nd Floor, Tirana, Albania

Tel.: +355 (4) 2250 205, 2250 224, 2250 234

Chapter 1: - Introduction

1.1 Context:

Albania has demonstrated commitment to increasingly address social protection and inclusion, with a focus on the most marginalised groups. However, advancing social inclusion and protection remains a necessity for Albania to comply with EU accession requirements, especially *acquis* Chapter 23 on human rights. While there is increased government commitment to finance social care services, there is still no clear indication that the current social policies have achieved a visible impact on the extent of coverage for vulnerable populations at a time when social cohesion and inclusion remain only partially addressed. Like other ECA countries, Albania has in place a relatively well-established social protection system.

The latest Communication from the EC to the EU Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Albania 2019, issued on 29 May 2019 notes the progress in the implementation of the national strategy on social protection for 2015-2020⁵. Yet, current investments in social protection remain low and awareness of the role that the social protection system plays in the overall national development is missing. The report also notes that the social care services are currently undeveloped, underinvested and lacking in many areas.

Regarding the cross-sectoral document on social inclusion policy (SIPD) for 2016-2020, the progress report notes that little progress has been made in setting up the necessary structures at central level or clarifying arrangements for implementing the policy. The Report noted also that poverty data, produced by the new EU SILC (statistics on income and living conditions) system of data collection in place since 2016, are not yet published. MIS for social care services is operational and capacity building for local government units and the regional offices of state social services has started on its use.

The landmark Law on Social Care Services (2016) received continued attention in 2018-19, with secondary legislation approved to provide guidance to local authorities on planning and delivery of social care services. Efforts should be scaled up to ensure implementation and appropriate allocation of financial resources to support the already adopted Law on social care services, the Law on the rights and protection of the child, and the 2017-2020 national agenda for children's rights. In 2018, Albania adopted the decision "on the functioning of the Social Fund". This decision stipulates that sources of funding for the social care services must be provided from the state budget, municipal budgets, donations and other sources.⁶ The Social Fund Mechanism was activated by the government in April 2019. The MoHSP adopted the LNB methodology for social care services grants as transitory measure to distribute funding from the state budget to municipalities. In this regard, a public call for proposals to fund municipalities' social services was launched by the MoHSP in parallel with a similar call launched by the UN's LNB programme.

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-albania-report.pdf>

⁶ *ibid*

The public spending for social inclusion programmes remains modest. A recent review on local and central public budget spending on social care services conducted by LNB programme in 2018 revealed that the share of this sector's budget to GDP decreased from 1.40% in 2017 to 1.32% in 2018. Cash transfers continue to constitute about 95% of social protection sector's overall budget. When stripped of cash transfers, the social services budget constituted 0.40% of the whole government budget in 2018. Nevertheless, there is a pattern that shows that local governments are committing increasing resources to social care services at a level that is comparable to that of the central government. Regarding the social and economic disparities, there is scarce information available to indicate the trend even due to the still ongoing transition in the system of measuring and reporting countrywide data. LSMS is no longer applied while the SILC survey data are not yet available.

Albania's framework legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities remains partially compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Persons with disabilities continue to face difficulties in accessing education, employment, healthcare and social services and in participating in decision-making. There are also widespread difficulties in removing environmental and infrastructural barriers that hinder mobility. The number of assistant teachers for children with disabilities in the pre-university education system increased to 944 in the 2018/19 school year (compared to 700 at the end of the 2017/18 school year), but the new assistant teachers need more tailor-made training. The first progress report for the implementation of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities is launched early in 2019.

At local planning level, some progress on the capacities of municipal officials to monitor and deliver on the local plans especially about the measures benefiting persons with disabilities, Roma & Egyptian people, youth, children and women as well as on their coordination with national sector-level authorities has been noted⁷.

Progress is made to facilitate implementation of the Social Housing Law as almost half of the much-expected secondary legislation has now been developed with support provided to MFE through the LNB programme. However, there are financial gaps to ensure proper implementation of the law.

Parallel to this, a comprehensive legal and financial framework on Social Enterprises is now in place and the registration process for social enterprises has started. This has created opportunities for more than 2,378 active NGOs (INSTAT, 2014) to apply for the status of Social Enterprises. It is expected that 150 people will be employed and possibly half of them will be women benefiting from the economic aid scheme. New Social Enterprises can take advantage of up to USD 7,000 grants from the government fund.

The European Union Delegation in Albania is designing a new sector programme on social inclusion to be included in IPA 2019, which is likely to focus on inclusiveness and effectiveness of social care services, pre-university education and employment opportunities for youth and adults in Albania.

⁷ ibid

The UN support is not only focused on integrated policy advice, but it extends support to Albania's roll-out of several reforms. In the framework of UN Albania's joint programme Leave no One Behind,⁸ UN agencies in Albania (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women) continue to actively support the articulation of the national policy and vision for the social sector, while at the same time designing and implementing concrete social inclusion measures.

1.2 Intervention logic

"Leave No One Behind (LNB)" aims to empower the vulnerable persons in Albania to have equal access to public services and opportunities, to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives.

Under the umbrella of LNB programme, the UN Agencies *continue* to support GoA in implementing interventions that aim at strengthening intersectoral and cross-sectoral vertical cooperation between central and local governments as well as intra-governmental cooperation in delivering, monitoring, collecting data and reporting delivery of specific social inclusion measures. This is one of the gaps within the current Social Protection sector which the LNB project is seeking to address in order to maintain GoAs commitment to mainstream the SDGs as expressed in the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2016-2020 (NSDI)

LNB programme focuses on three interlinked outcomes:

- Empowered persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians, and vulnerable women, to request and have access to social services, as a pre-condition to improve their lives
- Enabled municipalities to effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion
- Strengthen capacities of national institutions to implement their policy framework, to fund and provide social services

These are being achieved through an array of interventions at national and local level contributing to the achievement of all three outcomes and their deriving nine outputs. Since service delivery is realised mostly at local level, the project's interventions focus largely at local level provision. Two of the three outcomes reflect this thrust: (1) persons in need of benefiting from social protection measures are empowered by the project to demand and obtain meaningful access to the system and to contribute themselves to their social inclusion, and (2) municipal service providers have enhanced capacities to provide better services and to promote social inclusion. The third outcome reflects the project's concern with anchoring its interventions at system level: furthering development and implementation of policies relevant to social inclusion, including related funding.

The measures target R&E people and people with disabilities, by working closely with municipalities and relevant line ministries, under the close partnership with MoHSP. Attention is paid to building capacity and transferring knowledge created through UN agencies' interventions to the municipalities and the national institutions involved.

⁸ <http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/projects/leave-no-one-behind.html>

1.3 Synergies with development partners

LNB programme is expanding and deepening its interventions in partnership with its strategic partners and other development partners as foreseen in the LNB project document. The participating agencies continued work with national partners to implement interventions in target areas. The programme maintained a continuous collaboration and open discussion with the focal points at the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, Ministry of Finance to define the approach of interventions and ensure that the target groups are supported in a holistic way.

An analysis conducted in the first year of programme implementation suggested that an integrated approach was needed in certain municipalities to maximize and accelerate the impact of project interventions. This way, the 4 municipalities selected since the first year (Permet, Ura Vajgurore, Diber and Korce) are being targeted through a joint integrated approach through several interventions of the participating UN agencies. In addition to this analysis, consultations were carried out also with local actors in some of the municipalities (Berat, Bulqizë, Dibër, Durrës, Fier, Fushë-Krujë, Korçë, Kukës, Lezhë, Lushnje, Përmet, Pogradec, Prrenjas, Sarandë, Shijak, Shkodër, Tiranë, Ura Vajgurore, and Vlora) which revealed important information in better mapping their needs and capacities. Currently LNB is providing support to 24 municipalities in 5 main areas of support: Social policy (design/planning/monitoring); Institutional development; Capacity building of beneficiaries; Advocacy and Awareness raising; Community Social Care Services. (Annex 2: Overview of LNB Support). Three of these municipalities (Lezhe, Fier and Kruje) are benefiting directly from the specialized support of Ndihme Per Femijet (NPF) in addressing social inclusion challenges for R&E people.

A coordinated approach is followed for all project activities at subnational level therefore several joint actions are taken by the participating agencies and their partner organizations operating at local level, including setting up information sharing systems, networking, joint monitoring in target locations, communicating objectives and results in joint activities with local authorities and local development partners, etc.

In carrying out its actions LNB has coordinated and collaborated closely with all concerned UN agencies, SDC and several partner project initiatives. UN Albania country team, especially the agencies working on LNB, has engaged in talks with EU delegation and the team working on the proposal for the new sector programme on social inclusion to be included in IPA 2019, and has raised some of the issues that social protection and education sectors are facing in terms of system strengthening and better outcomes for vulnerable groups to be addressed in the new EU sector budget programme.

The programme strengthened coordination with other programmes and organizations working in the disability area such as World Vision (e.g. joint activities in Dibra), and several UNDP Programmes such as STAR 2 Programme, UNDP Youth for Employment Programme (disability employment funding), UNDP Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians.

The national dialogue maintained with different stakeholders working with municipalities ensured that there is a systemic approach when training municipalities around social care planning and there is a consideration of geography when planning the intervention.



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About the development and implementation of programme interventions focused on persons with disabilities, the cooperation with central government authorities (MoHSP) was strengthened. Under the lead of MoHSP, other line ministries assigned a specific structure/official responsible to coordinate, monitor and report on measures and actions for persons with disabilities at national level. Cooperation with municipalities has been positive ensuring engagement of staff in capacity building process, and adherence to the agreed responsibilities in the joint Memorandum of Understanding.

Chapter 2: Programme implementation

2.1 Impact level implementation

Goal: *Vulnerable persons and groups are empowered to have equal access to public services and opportunities to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives and hold them accountable.*

The Government of Albania's commitment to social inclusion and protection is embodied in a set of policy documents namely the National Strategy on Social Protection 2015-2020, and the Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-2020. While these two policy documents are in their third year of implementation, only recently MoHSP initiated the assessment of its progress and update of the action plan. On the other hand, poverty data produced by the EU – SILC (statistics on income and living conditions) are not yet published.

The assessment of three important policy documents, namely the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020, the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2020 and the National Action Plan for Child Protection 2015-2020 has taken place and indicate i) an overall positive trend for compulsory education enrolment of Roma children aged 7-15 years (currently at 66%) and compulsory education completion (43%)⁹ by Roma as well as improved access to civil registration; and ii) improved access to inclusive education for children with disabilities. There is an increasing trend of ca. 10% more children with disabilities who attend public education institutions during 2017-2018 compared to 2015-2016 while the number of assistant teachers¹⁰ at the same period increased 6 times¹¹.

Recently, there is noted an increased government commitment to finance social care services by resourcing the Social Fund through the central social protection budget in the amount of 100,000,000 ALL¹², an initiative launched in April 2019. Another positive development concerns the establishment of the Social Enterprise Fund (SE) in the amount 249,760,000 ALL which is foreseen in the Medium-term Budget Program 2019-2021 to support the start-up of 500 social enterprises which will create jobs for vulnerable groups. Both funds are expected to produce a positive impact on social care services at local level and social and economic integration of vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, public funding for social protection from central government to LGUs continues to remain low while a slight

⁹ EU Progress Report 2018

¹⁰ 700 assistant teachers

¹¹ 115 teachers

¹² This is an indicative amount reported by MHSP officials in the working group discussions.

decrease to 0.7%¹³ was noted in 2018 compared to 0.9% in 2017. Currently only 7 municipalities¹⁴ or 9% of them provide all required services which shows a limited coverage of needs in terms of typology of services, but also territory.

2.2 Outcome level implementation

LNB has completed its second year of implementation marking sustained progress towards achievement of its outcomes and overall goal. Concrete results are achieved at several levels:

- (i) **at community level:** Vulnerable groups are empowered on their rights and entitlements to social services and are capacitated to create lobbying and advocacy forums and become part of multi-stakeholder consultation mechanisms (Local Social Dialogue Groups, Forums of Persons with Disabilities, Youth Voice Network) to ensure accounting of vulnerability issues in local policy-making. The Forums of Persons with Disabilities have been quite vocal with local and central institutions on accessibility issues in public premises, transport, health care, employment, education, public information.
- (ii) **at local government level:** Municipalities have strengthened their capacities in service delivery and operationalizing social inclusion policies at local level by developing and costing social care plans which respond to the needs of vulnerable men and women. New innovative models of integrated social services, community-based services for persons with disabilities are being implemented at local level.
- (iii) **at policy level:** The legal framework on Social Enterprises is completed and the Fund for Social Enterprises is set up for 2019-2021 as well as the Social Fund and work is on-going to complete legal framework for the Law on Social Care Services and Social Housing, to enable their implementation at central and local level.

Outcome 1: The vulnerable population requests and receives adequate social services from local authorities that support their social inclusion.

During this reporting period LNB contributed to the empowerment of vulnerable people through capacity building and consultation structures, including:

1. Government institutions and vulnerable groups equipped with knowledge and information on (i) importance of children's education and procedures for vulnerable children's enrolment in the education system, (ii) people with disabilities organized in advocacy forums and lobbied for access to quality public services, (iii) deaf people informed on their rights to family planning and employment services and lobbied;
2. Capacities built in 20 schools (i) to design an early warning system (EWS) to identify and keep in school vulnerable children who are at risk of drop-out and (ii) to implement inclusive education methodology accredited by MEYS;

¹³ Financat Publike Vendore 2018

¹⁴ Assessment of Social Care Needs 2019

3. Implementation of the Swiss model of integrated social services model through an inclusive package of social services for R&E implemented in three selected LGUs with the potential of scaling up in other LGUs.
4. Design and implementation of new innovative service models for PWDs at local level.
5. Establishment and functioning of six Local Social Dialogue Groups (LSDG) ensuring public dialogue between municipalities and local stakeholders in developing and budgeting social care plans and ensuring that vulnerability issues are accounted for in local policy-making.

Output 1.1: Marginalized and vulnerable persons and groups throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are empowered to request social inclusion.

- A series of information sessions were organized to raise awareness on the rights and entitlements to public services for people with hearing and visual impairments: (i) **170** deaf women, their families and local government representatives from 24 municipalities were informed on their rights and entitlements for “Family Planning” and “Employment Services”; (ii) Tirana General Police Director and six Tirana police stations were sensitized on how the police, including traffic police, could communicate with deaf community members as part of info sessions “Protection from abuse and violence”, (iii) a multi-stakeholder event in mid-June 2019 showcased LNB results in awareness raising activities for this target group reached out for the first time in their lives with information on public services and the challenges they face to access public information and communication through the Albanian sign language, which is the main reason for their very low level of information on available public services. A set of follow-up actions were recommended.
- 90 women, youth and children with disabilities in three targeted municipalities¹⁵ were mobilized and capacitated to create forums to engage in lobbying, advocacy and in a sustained dialogue on local decision-making affecting access to quality services for PwDs. In addition, **1,050 PwDs and community members (39% women and girls)** participated in information sessions conducted in 55 administrative units and villages of targeted municipalities on the rights and entitlements and forums activists designed a platform of communication to voice their concerns to local and central government institutions on accessibility to build environment, public transport, access to health services, employment, education, assistive devices and better disabilities assessment.
- A training programme for DPOs in the areas of leadership, organizational development, management, technical skills, and advocacy identified by the CSOs/DPOs Capacity and Training Needs Assessment Survey is underway. 19 Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs) are identified through a Call for Expression of Interest and the training programme will start in autumn 2019.
- Intensive awareness raising campaigns were organized in four pilot municipalities¹⁶ (on the importance of children’s education, which reached out 102 parents and community members living in unfavourable economic situations (parents supported with economic aid, unemployed parents, R &E). A variety of communication channels was used including information leaflets in

¹⁵ Permet, Diber and Ura Vajgurore

¹⁶ Korçe, Durres, Lezhe, Shkodra

Albanian and Romani language on the criteria and procedures of children enrolment in the first grade. The video clip produced on school enrolment was promoted, shared and featured on social media, websites of public institutions, the policymakers and practitioners at central and local levels, MoEYS, Observatory, Regional Education Directorate, targeted municipalities, and received 15,000 views. A Calendar of 2019 featuring drawings from out-of-school children has been distributed across all 12 regions and in 190 institutions¹⁷ at country level, providing date-by-date information on actions that these institutions need to take as per the joint three-Ministry agreement on “Out of schools”.

- A school teacher training program on Early Warning System to prevent dropout was accredited by the Ministry of Education Sports and Youth and was delivered to 4 municipalities¹⁸ targeting school masters, teachers and psychologists. Schools were supported to include preventive measures for school dropout in school action plans and 20 of small grants aiming at supporting children at risk of dropout were provided to schools during 2019. Main results are listed below:
 - **300 teachers** and other school staff from **20 schools** enhanced their capacities in designing an early warning system (EWS) to identify and keep in school vulnerable children at risk of drop-out,
 - **200 teachers, school psychologists & school masters** were trained on the development of socio-emotional skills aiming at increasing the resilience of students at risk of dropping out.
 - **168 teachers & school masters** were trained on topics related to parents' involvement in school.
 - **120 psychology students** participated in workshops on the EWS system, the role of psychologist and the importance of socio-emotional learning for addressing students at risk of dropout.
 - **24 regional exchange meetings** to share experience, discuss challenges and lessons learnt (within project schools in the region) took place;
 - Baseline assessment on the current situation of school dropout provided a detailed picture of the main reasons behind this situation in 20 schools. On average 70% of students identified at risk were males and 30% were females.
 - **200 teachers & school masters** were trained in developing school action plans to address dropout.
 - **20 schools were provided with 2 practical modules/tools** on (i) strengthening parent-school relationship and (ii) with activities to improve socio-emotional skills of students necessary to prevent/address school drop-out.
 - **200 teachers (from 20 non-project schools)** received information on how to identify and keep in school students at risk of drop-out through peer training sessions provided by 40 project's schools teachers acting as peer trainers.
 - Documentation of challenges and lessons learnt are collected to be published and shared broadly with different stakeholders at school level, local level and national level.

¹⁷ 3 Ministries (Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth/ Ministry of Interior/ Ministry of Health and Social Protection), 12 Institution of Prefecture, 38 Regional Education Directories/ Educational Offices, 36 Regional Health Directories/ Public Health Directories, 61 Municipalities, 36 Directories of Police/ Police Commissariats

¹⁸ Berat, Korca Tirana and Durres

- A network of **30 journalists** was established, comprising new graduates in Journalism and young practicing journalists which were trained on social protection issues and engaged into an open and constructive dialogue with MoHSP and other institutions dealing with social protection and social inclusion issues. This was instrumental for the media to play a stronger advocacy role by developing several short stories¹⁹ and the best articles²⁰ published on a dedicated column established in the framework of the project.
- A community-based model for integrated SRH services is established in 11 districts²¹ with **68 health education teams** set up and supported to develop the respective work plans. Capacities of over **3,500 (25% men) doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, community mediators and activists** were strengthened on SRH and other important areas in support of the right to access health services by disadvantaged groups of R&E and PWDs.
- Civil Society Organizations were supported with inclusive SRH programs to reach out to vulnerable groups including drug users, men having sex with men and commercial sex workers. In collaboration with Public Health Institute, Regional Health Authority and CSO partners²² **438 clients**²³ were reached out with information sessions and tested for HIV/Hep B and offered pre and post counselling sessions and information.

***Output 1.2:** Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities throughout Albania and in selected municipalities are supported in their access to specific services.*

- The Swiss model of integrated inclusive social services continues to be implemented in three municipalities. The set of services is provided in compliance with the Law of Social Care Services and is based on the identified needs of R&E families and in close cooperation and coordination with the respective municipalities and service providers at local level. The beneficiaries of this intervention are families with complex long-term needs referred or assisted to have access to the following services:
 - **Access to quality and inclusive education: 300 school age children from R&E communities,** are continuously supported to access quality education. As a result, 79% of children had a successful school year; 85% of them have regularly attended school and 30% of them have improved their school performance.

100 teachers and directors from 10 nine-year schools are capacitated on "Competency Curriculum and Learning Situations in Multicultural Classes"²⁴, "Inclusive classes that encourage learning and inclusive education" and "Preventing the school dropout phenomenon by pupils at risk of dropping-out" with the aim to effectively build inclusive teaching and learning models for children with disabilities and children from R&E communities.

¹⁹ <http://pozitivi.org/mbrojta-sociale-zevendes-ministrja-perballe-gazetareve-te-rinj-si-duhet-te-funksioje-sistemi>

²⁰ <http://pozitivi.org/category/te-rinjte>

²¹ Berat, Kuçovë, Skrapar, Poliçan, Erseka, Korça, Devoll, Pogradec, Gramsh, Librazhd and Shkodra

²² Aksion Plus, Stop AIDS, and ACPD

²³ 376 injecting drug users, 92 MSM or sex work activities

²⁴ This module is accredited by Ministry of Education

- **Social inclusion: 190 R&E children** participated in 3 summer camps together with 110 other children from the community;
- **Access to employment opportunities: 32 R&E** are provided with counselling for employment and have been employed; 35 of them are supported to access VET courses, and 16 others to access local business for an internship;
- **Economic empowerment:** 80 families are supported with income generation schemes²⁵. Beneficiaries are households and parents of children supported through the project;
- **Community awareness: 42 R&E parents** raised awareness on education, early marriages, child abuse and parental responsibilities; **62 R&E** raised awareness on how to access social services at local level; **84 R&E** are informed about child nutrition including food and physical activity choices; **139 community members** have actively participated in a workshop for youth employment, and vocational training as a safe investment towards (self) employment; **318 children** have participated in 3 awareness raising activities organized for promoting children's rights especially the right to education.
- LNB partnered with Help the Life Association (a local NGO) for modelling and testing innovative support services for adults with intellectual disabilities to conduct an independent living in the community and for capacitating the implementing NGO to act as a community service centre for independent living. The service will be piloted with 10 youth and adults 25 years-old and above.
- 7 municipalities²⁶ have designed and developed new models of community-based services responsive to the specific needs of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. While all centres will provide community services for children with disabilities, each of them is developing a distinct typology of services corresponding to the needs outlined in the respective municipal social care plans. Dibra centre focuses solely on children with disabilities, Ura Vajgurore and Kruja will provide emergency services for survivors to domestic violence, Permet and Ura Vajgurore centres intend to also provide after-school help for children at risk of school dropout, Kruja centre will in addition accommodate a kindergarten for children at pre-education age, Vlora and Tirana will combine daily care services with residential care services for persons with disabilities. The municipal community centres in Diber, Permet and Ura Vajgurore have been fully refurbished and equipped and are now in process of recruiting staff. Rehabilitation works are ongoing in Kruja and Vlora facilities, the civil works project for Tirana facility is pending the municipal permit, while the civil works project for Korca facility is finalised and ready to be tendered.
- **20 schools and 158 teachers** in Durres, Tirana, Korca and Berat (5 schools in each municipality) strengthened their capacities in providing inclusive education based on inclusive education methodology accredited by MoEYS. They developed inclusive education plans and conducted activities aiming at reaching out parents and communities at large. A new manual on differentiated learning has also been developed to help teachers in providing inclusive education.
 - **6 schools received small grants** to carry out activities with a focus on inclusive education after a competition of project proposals presented by 15 schools.

²⁵ Three (3) of these activities are formal start-up business.

²⁶ Dibër, Përmet, Ura Vajgurore, Kruja, Vlora, Tirana and Korça

- 2 network meetings took place in Durres, Berat and Korca. Participants (teachers, school masters, social workers and psychologists) from 20 schools discussed about embracing diversity and providing access to learning for all students and how to involve parents in school activities. One final workshop with participants from all beneficiary schools and representatives of the Ministry of Education, Regional Education Directorates was organized to present results on inclusive plans of activities and jointly developed future directions.

Output 1.3: *The capacity of groups of Roma, Egyptians and persons with disabilities as well as CSOs and researchers is improved in holding municipal service providers accountable.*

- Six Local Social Dialogue Groups (LSDG) were established and are fully functional in 6 municipalities²⁷ to ensure public dialogue between local authorities and local stakeholders in developing and budgeting social care plans and ensuring that vulnerability issues are accounted for in local policy-making. The LSDGs for Korca, Maliq and Vlora presented the approved social care plans to other partners or service providers working on the ground who pledged their commitments on the implementation of these plans, whereas the LSDG of Librazhd discussed the draft social care plan before it is submitted to municipal council for approval. LSDG meetings in Mallakaster and Saranda fostered a discussion on the needs for services in these two municipalities. LSDGs proved to be central advocacy fora for the political buy-in of the social care plans in all municipalities. Roma and non-Roma youth as well as persons with disabilities are adequately represented in these fora alongside activists of NGOs working directly with all vulnerable groups and communities in need.

Output 1.4: *Vulnerable and marginalised persons and groups, including Roma and persons with disabilities, participate in the monitoring of national policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion.*

- **60 marginalised/vulnerable youth** in three municipalities²⁸ are capacitated on how to monitor the implementation of local social service policies, using innovative methods such as *peer to peer learning* and *reporters in the field*. As a result, 400 youth benefited knowledge and shared experience on social service policies at local level through 13 peer-to-peer learning sessions. 12 issues concerning social services were raised by the young reporters in the field using social media and other formats. Furthermore, the implementation of lobbying and advocacy plan of these youth groups is producing concrete results on improving social services for vulnerable groups, including improved access for persons with disabilities in municipalities of Kruja and Korça and increased participation of 425 youth on policy dialogue with LGUs for improving the social services for youth at local level.
- Work is on-going to finalize the model for monitoring the implementation of child rights agenda at local level. It comprises a desk review of major relevant national strategies specifically targeting children, mapping of available local plans and expected results related to children, assessment of

²⁷ Korca, Librazhd, Maliq, Vlora, Mallakaster and Saranda

²⁸ Pogradec, Korca and Kruja

the data availability at local level and identification of possible modalities for engagement of children to participate in planning and monitoring of actions for children at local level. The findings from this research contributed to identification of a list of indicators that were discussed with municipal stakeholders in Korca and Shkodra. The identified issues revolve around availability of data, functioning of institutionalised mechanisms of data exchange among different sectors at local level, the overall capacities for collection and utilization child rights data at local level.

- The Local Partnership Model on SRH and Rights in 4 regions²⁹ is strengthened and expanded to two new regions³⁰. Capacities of its members were strengthened in monitoring of the local work plans, communication and advocacy and in identifying key areas for joint interventions in the future.
- A "CSOs national advocacy" platform was established in 4 additional municipalities³¹ and the capacities of its members³², mainly youth CSOs (Youth Voice Network), were strengthened in advocacy on SRH/ ICPD/ SDGs/ EU Financial Instruments for Civil Society³³. They also attended info sessions organized by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth on two youth programs: European Solidarity Corps (ESC) and Erasmus. **500 young people** aged 15- 29 years reached out.
- Youth advocacy platform members were strengthened and improved on *monitoring the local policy makers* for the youth agenda in the three cities³⁴.

Outcome 2: Municipalities effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion.

Municipalities have strengthened their capacities in operationalizing social inclusion policies at local level and providing inclusive services:

- 9 municipalities³⁵ developed fully costed social care plans and 8 social care plans were approved by the municipal councils;
- 16 municipalities³⁶ were capacitated through training, mentoring and coaching of local staff on how to deliver quality services to vulnerable population and through the provision of models and international best practice;
- For the first time Durresi municipality allocated funds for supporting out of school children with school materials and transport arrangements;
- Staff of 18 municipalities were capacitated to use MIS;

²⁹ Elbasan, Vlore, Berat and Shkoder

³⁰ Kukes and Lezhe

³¹ Dibër, Lezhë, Pogradec and Maliq

³² 30 representatives

³³ 25 representatives of the organizations, members of "Youth Voice" network, in each of the trainings.

³⁴ Tirana, Pogradec and Maliq.

³⁵ Mallakaster, Sarande, Shijak, Malesia e Madhe, Permet, Ura vajgurore, Fier, Pogradec, Bulqize

³⁶ Tirane, Durres, Korce, Shkoder, Vlore, Mallakaster, Sarande, Shijak, Malesia e Madhe, Librazhd, Maliq, Permet, Ura vajgurore, Fier, Pogradec, Bulqize

- 3 municipalities³⁷ conducted public consultations for budgeting processes responsive to men and women's needs at local level reaching out vulnerable communities (R&E, rural women, unemployed people, PWDs);
- Capacities of 4 municipalities³⁸ were strengthened in setting up the system for identification and referral of children at compulsory school age;
- Capacities of the service providers working with people with disabilities were strengthened through formal trainings, study visits and mentoring support;
- A Baseline study on the needs for social care services was conducted in partnership with State Social Services;
- The 1st Call for Proposals for the grant scheme on Community Based Social Services was launched.

Output 2.1. Municipal and non-public service providers are strengthened in their capacity for providing and monitoring social services and promoting social inclusion.

- A clear methodology was developed for municipalities to map and monitor over time the coverage and distribution of social care services in their territories in line with the existing legislation on social care services. 65³⁹ representatives of municipalities⁴⁰ were trained on how to use the methodology and it was piloted in six targeted municipalities⁴¹ enabling them to insert all the required data on public and non-public social care services and map the available services on-site. The mapping reports will be available on the pilot municipalities' websites and the guidelines on how to use the methodology will be discussed in a national workshop. LSDGs which are already established in the 6 municipalities will also be a tool to monitor the coverage of social care services.
- LNB was instrumental in enhancing the interest of the Government on the issue of out-of-school children. A new Memorandum of Understanding was signed by three Ministries (MoESY, MoI, MoHSP) on October 23rd, 2018 aiming at identifying and enrolling in school all children at compulsory school age based on duties and responsibilities for each actor at local and central level. MoESY, MoI and MoHSP were capacitated to cross-check the lists of children at compulsory school age out-of-school system based on the Trilateral Joint Order for identification and registration in school of every child at compulsory school age. A Regulation on roles and responsibilities of the education sector institutions was signed by above three ministries as well. A system of SMS alerts is set up and capacity building program has strengthened capacities of **80 stakeholders** in 4 municipalities⁴² on their roles and duties for identification and registration in school of every child that is in compulsory school age group and the new Law no 18/ 2017 "On the Child's Rights"
- 4 groups of sectorial policymakers and practitioners at local level are created with the initiative and under coordination of the Prefect, focusing on identification of cases of out of school children

³⁷ Shkoder, Tirane, Korca

³⁸ Durres, Shkoder, Lezha and Korca

³⁹ 47 females and 18 males

⁴⁰ NARUs, CPUs, social administrators

⁴¹ Korca, Librazhd, Maliq, Vlora, Mallakaster, Saranda

⁴² Durres, Korça, Lezha and Shkodra

in 4 pilot Municipalities. A technical report for defining the financial needs for integration of out of school children in municipality budgets is compiled and has served for advocating with Municipalities in addressing the needs of out of school children. A positive example is Durres Municipality which allocated, for the first time, funds for supporting out of school children and discussions are ongoing to scale up this initiative in other Municipalities. The Ministry of Education based on the piloting and experience from the Durres pilot, is planning 50 million ALL in its budget for the academic year 2019-2020.

- MoHSP is supported to make functional MIS on social care services as part Social Protection MIS. Work started to identify and validate with national stakeholders the set of indicators that will be collected, inputted and processed in the system according to the existing legislation on case management practices and social care services delivery. Following selection of indicators, training materials have been developed including practical short video tutorials and as of February 2019 capacity building is provided to **200 staff** in 18 municipalities on use of MIS for social care services.
- A set of tools and guidelines were developed to support NARUs in compliance with the legal framework (i) a Guide for NARU specialists (CPU and Social Worker) based on the relevant legal framework; (ii) review of NARU staff job descriptions; (iii) a note on NARU: linking cash with care within NARU's work and addressing the structure issue; (iv) a guide on needs assessment for NARU - based on the toolkit for developing the local social plans; (v) the steps in case management including the Guide for Social Worker; the Guide for Social Administrators - The tools were discussed with national partners and field tested with selected municipal staff in Tirana and Durres. **250 municipal staff** have been trained on how to use these tools and will be presented in a national conference.
- The State Social Services was supported to assess the need for social care services at country level as per the responsibility assigned by Law on Social Care Services⁴³. The findings are presented in the *Needs Assessment Report for Social Services in the 12 Regions of Albania* which provides information on identified need and gaps for social care services at municipal, regional and national level. The Report establishes baselines regarding the need for social services, its distribution and disparities among regions, municipalities and among groups in need for services.
- 3 LGUs⁴⁴ were supported to conduct participatory practices for gender responsive budgeting 60 trainings and awareness meetings were conducted in these municipalities, reaching out **500 women** who were also engaged in the municipal participatory budgeting to articulate their needs and priorities. The participatory gender responsive budgeting process was monitored in three municipalities to assess: the number of women participating in town hall meetings; the number of issues/concerns raised by women and percentage of their integration to the final local mid-term participatory budgets 2019-2020⁴⁵. While data for Shkodra and Korca are still pending, data form Tirana show that **2,300 citizens (983 women)** participated in 10 hearing sessions and *283 women were quite active to an average level of "women to women" engagement of 1 to 3.5.* Average participation of women in the 10 public hearings was 42.7% with a level of 45% – 60%

⁴³ Article 33, Law no. 121/2016

⁴⁴ Tirana, Shkodra, Korca)

⁴⁵ Data for Shkodra and Korca are still pending. Data form Tirana: 2,300 citizens (983 women) participated in 10 hearing sessions. Average participation of women in the 10 public hearings was 42.7



in urban areas and 15% - 48% in rural areas and the average matching level of needs with priorities for Tirana is 69%.

- **16 municipalities** were supported to develop final social care plans, fully budgeted and consulted with different actors. 12 of them were approved by the municipal councils and accompanied by clear guidelines on the human resources and structures necessary to implement them. They were also supported to develop budget standard briefs providing information on planned and executed budgets, the financial potential of each municipality, budget allocations, etc.
- **70 employees** of municipalities, social staff and finance experts, of 8 municipalities⁴⁶ were trained on the new legislation on social care services and their tasks and duties as per the same law.
- **54 representatives** from 5 municipalities⁴⁷ including representatives from the decentralized government structures,⁴⁸ participated in a cycle of trainings held in Tirana by lecturers from the University of Applied Sciences of Lucerne in Switzerland on quality provision of integrated social services for the family, introducing new methodologies and relevant tools to provide family services.
- **38 social workers** from 3 municipalities⁴⁹ participated in two training sessions focused in the Counselling Cycle for Employment aiming to address labour market inclusion of marginalized groups.
- **15 representatives** from 8 municipalities⁵⁰ were capacitated through an exchange study visit, held in Lucerne, Switzerland as part of the LNB efforts to set up a model of integrated social services and to contribute to an effective implementation of the social care plans. The study visit provided an opportunity to learn on the design of models, mechanisms instruments for the delivery of community social services, the ongoing qualification of in-service social workers and on planning and budgeting for social care, provision of social services and the role of NGOs as providers of services within the system.
- **31 community centres' professional staff** of 5 municipalities⁵¹ attended a 2-day practical workshop on the management of challenging behaviours while working with children with intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders and learning difficulties and the empowerment of their parents as active agents in this process.
- **20 professional staff** (psychologists, speech therapists, social workers) in four community centres of Tirana municipality attended a vocational training course on ABA⁵² therapy techniques to capacitate them to deliver specialised services to persons diagnosed with autism spectrum disordersto improve language and communication skills, attention, focus, social skills, memory, and academics. The community centres are attended by 170 people with disabilities and 16% diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. There is reported an increasing trend of the number of people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders and as a result an increasing need for specialised services for this category.

⁴⁶ Bulqiza, Fier, UraVajgurore, Pogradec, Përmet Lushnja, Lezha and Kruja

⁴⁷ Fier, Lushnja, Pogradec, Lezha and Kruja

⁴⁸ Directorates of Education, Vocational Training Centers, Labor Offices, Regional State Social Service, State Police Directorates

⁴⁹ Lezha, Kruja and Fier

⁵⁰ Fier, Lezha, Kruja, Permet, Bulqiza, Ura Vajgurore, Dibra and Shijak

⁵¹ Lushnje, Pogradec, Sarande, Bulqize and Shijak,

⁵² Applied Behavior Analysis

- 2 Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the “Youth Voice” network of organizations and two new municipalities⁵³ to assist respective municipalities to plan and budget issues of youth interest (ASRH, education, gender, social protection and inclusion) at the local level. A survey was conducted with 600 young people to measure the perceptions and knowledge of young people on SDGs, SRH and health services offered by municipalities. Five intervention plan documents on the initiatives and programs for young people aligned with municipality action plans and budgets, Law on Local Governance, National Action Plan for Young People 2015 – 2020 were consulted and finalized in in five municipalities⁵⁴.

Output 2.2: Social services that have demonstrated their effectiveness are scaled up.

- ToRs are prepared, and Request for Proposal is launched for the identification of best practices across the country in social care services provision for vulnerable population which is expected to be complete by early spring 2020.

Output 2.3: A grant scheme is set up for municipalities to introduce innovative social services that draw on community mobilization.

- Following the finalization of the Guidelines of the Community-based Social Service Grants, including the selection criteria, 1st Call for Proposals was launched in April 2019 with deadline for proposal submission by municipalities until June 2019. Parallel to Call for Proposals launch, and in partnership with ASPA, LNB provided info sessions on the grants scheme and 3-day training workshop in project writing, and budgeting to 91 municipal staff of 49 municipalities.

Outcome 3: National institutions implement their policy framework for providing social services and adequately fund social services.

During this reporting period, LNB made significant progress in (i) supporting MoHSP to complete the legal framework on Social Enterprises and establish an operational Fund on Social Enterprises with an allocated budget for the period 2019-2021, (ii) in supporting MoESY to adopt a more inclusive budget approach to address the complex needs of out of school children. For the first MoESY has included in the budget support scholarships for drop-out or out of school children.

Further progress is made in providing support to complement the legal framework on Social Housing Social Care Services.

Output 3.1: The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth and other competent Ministries are supported in their implementation of policies and strategies relevant for social inclusion and in plans for funding and in the adaptation of policies and strategies based on monitoring data

⁵³ Pogradec and Maliq

⁵⁴ Durres, Permet, Korce, Diber, Lezhe

- MoHSP was supported to advance in the implementation of the reform of social care services. Technical support was provided to the inter-ministerial group⁵⁵ set up by the DCM in July 2018 mandated to work out the approach and implementation modalities of resourcing the social fund from the central budget. The DCM on the Social Fund modalities was approved in April 2019. It provides clear guidelines into how the Social Fund will be operationalised: from planning central budget, to formulas of allocation among LGUs and also integration with the national financial management system, so that the money can be properly accounted for.
- MoHSP was supported to review the Statistical Indicators Integrity Group (SIIG) guidelines in line with IPMG structure re-formatted in 2018 and compile a written rationale instrumental to issue specific Minister's Orders for setting up the Technical Secretariat of the Social Inclusion and Protection Thematic Group and for finally setting up the SIIG. Further support is currently being provided to INSTAT whose role as a co-chair of SIIG is crucial especially in providing the data for SIIG to monitor.
- MoHSP undertook the mid-term assessment of two National Action Plans: NAPPWD 2016-2020 and NAPCH 2020. Technical assistance was provided in designing the methodology including the data collection instruments and validating them with relevant stakeholders in participatory processes. The report on NAPPWD 2016-2020⁵⁶ was presented in mid-January 2019 to the National Council on Persons with Disabilities and served as a stimulus to announce 2019 as the Year of Accessibility.
- The Prime Minister Office issued in April 2019 an order for the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group⁵⁷ for "An accessible environment for all", composed by the deputy ministers of 7 ministries⁵⁸ and representatives from other public institutions⁵⁹.
- MoHSP was supported to organize the National Conference "The accessibility and challenges for inclusiveness" held on May 2019 and attended by 140 participants representing a diversity of stakeholders including Disabled People's Organizations and discussed accessibility issues, achievements, challenges, highlighted the importance of raising stakeholders' awareness on this topic and came up with recommendations for an action plan on improving accessibility legislation and standards and their implementation.
- MoHSP with LNB support and technical guidance by NAIS (AKSHI) improved a set of accessibility features of its website by PWDs, which was demonstrated in the last meeting of the National Council on Persons with Disabilities (January 2019), and the National Conference on Accessibility (May 2019). Further assistance in this regard depends on the MoHSP which has still to define the technical specifications for additional support.

⁵⁵ It is made up of Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Interior, the National Agency for Local Governance and co-chaired by deputy ministers of Finance and Health and Social Protection

⁵⁶ <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Raporti20i20Vleresimit202016-2018.pdf>

⁵⁷ The group is in charge to a) organize a national conference, b) based on the Conference recommendations, establish within June 2019 a plan of action on related legislation, standards and implementation, and c) establish within September 2019 a monitoring and awareness raising network at regional/local level.

⁵⁸ Health and Social Protection, Infrastructure, Interior, Education, Justice, Environment and Tourism, Finance and Economy

⁵⁹ The Construction Studies Institute, National Housing Agency, NAIS, Local Self-Government Support Agency, University of Civil Engineering

- In partnership with ASPA, a **3-day workshop with participation of 81 ministerial and municipal disability focal points** (82% women) representing 12 central institutions and 54 municipalities is organized to enhance their knowledge and skills on the rights of persons with disabilities, on mainstreaming disability in programmes and budget plans, monitoring and reporting on the implementation of measures affecting persons with disabilities.
- The Mid-Term Monitoring Report for the Child Rights Agenda / Action Plan was consulted with various stakeholders⁶⁰ including children and will be presented in the upcoming months at the National Council of Child Rights and Protection and Parliament of Albania, to then disseminate among relevant stakeholders. To support the regular monitoring and reporting of the Child Rights Agenda the Decision of Council of Ministers no. 636, dated 26.10.2018 is issued to endorse the indicators to be annually collected from the State Agency for Child Rights Protection from and various ministries and institutions.
- MoHSP is supported to review the Action Plan of the Social Protection Strategy 2015 – 2020 and update (i) the costed Action Plan and (ii) the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Strategy. To date, a road map of the process is developed to guide the process.
- MoHSP has approved the road map for the integration of the health and social services in the work of maternal and child health consulting services including universal progressive home visiting, Checklists for home visiting standards by the patronage nurse were developed and a technical working group is set up by MoHSP to support the development of training curricula for health professionals as well as oversee the planning and implementation of training sessions in 4 target regions⁶¹. A set of training materials⁶² were produced by the working group, approved by MoHSP and accredited by the National Center for Continuous Medical Education. 180 health personnel (doctors and nurses) were trained in 4 four regions on holistic care of children focusing on the most vulnerable, strengthened communication skills, expanded focus on child development, disabilities, gender, child protection and standardized universal progressive home visiting.
- MoHSP was assisted to design standards for services and associated protocols for community – based development centres for persons with disabilities, as well as provide training the professional staff on implementing these standards and protocols. The Programme is discussing the terms of reference on this topic and other related issues with the University of Applied Social Sciences of Lucerne, Switzerland.
- MoHSP has marked significant progress in completing the legal framework on social enterprises (SE). By endorsing the secondary legislation⁶³ to implement the Law on SE. Four relevant DCMs are endorsed⁶⁴. The Fund for Social Enterprises is set up in the value of 249,760,000 ALL for the timeframe 2019-2021 providing subsidies to social enterprises activity.

⁶⁰ national and local level (52 participants), civil society (32 participants),

⁶¹ Tirana, Elbasan, Korçe, and Vlore

⁶² Trainer's Guide on Home Visiting "To support families for the health and wellbeing of children"; Training Package on Home Visiting "To support the families for the health and wellbeing of children"

⁶³ (i) Registration of Social Enterprises, (ii) Ministerial Decision on Manual for the Promotion and Development of the Social Enterprises (iii) Ministerial Order "For the Determination of the Periodic Reporting Forms, on the activities exercised and the categories of the employed persons from the Social Enterprises".

⁶⁴ i) Registration of Social Enterprises, (ii) Ministerial Decision on Manual for the Promotion and Development of the Social Enterprises (iii) Ministerial Order "For the Determination of the Periodic Reporting Forms, on the activities exercised and the categories of the employed persons from the Social Enterprises" and (iv) "On the forms of supporting social enterprises, through subventions"

- Awareness campaigns on Social Enterprise legal framework under the caption “NIS- Work and Hope” have targeted three municipalities⁶⁵ informing a range of stakeholders including young people, women and disadvantaged groups on the opportunities and benefits offered by to social enterprise law as well as showcasing success stories of social enterprises in these municipalities which have provided employment and social inclusion of individuals experiencing difficulties accessing the labor market.
- INSTAT continued to receive support (i) to draft and enrich the child-focused indicators module which will allow for the reporting of a broader number of indicators on an annual basis, (ii) to conduct the secondary data analysis on demographic and health changes in Albania in 21 century following launching of Albanian Demographic and health survey 2017-2018 in December 2018, (iii) to inform and consult its Population and Housing Census 2020 questionnaires and approaches with consultations with interest groups involving persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities including Roma and Egyptians.
- MoFE is being supported to review the minimum standards for adequate housing solutions tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities. A technical report is drafted on the existing Design and Construction Norms and Standards which is consulted with the expert working group working on the secondary legislation of the Law on Social Housing. A set of minimum standards for adequate housing solutions is defined and presented to MoFE as part of the package of bylaws on the Law on Social Housing. So far 12 bylaws/DCMs are drafted and eight of them already consulted with a diverse interest group. Three of them are now endorsed by the Council of Ministers and entered into force while 8 other bylaws are work in progress.
- **72 participants of whom 28 local government** officials from 21 municipalities, engaged in a capacity building, experience sharing and consultation workshop on the first 8 bylaws drafted by MoFE with LNB support for the implementation of the Law on Social Housing.
- MoESY is being supported (i) to develop inclusive education policies and measures for an equitable education system for all children through dissemination of European best practices on inclusive education and ensuing recommendations generated at the conference in October 2018; (ii) to conduct the education sector strategy review which will feed into the new sector strategy, (iii) use the national competency-based curricula to improve the curricula programs and text books, (iv) to adopt a more inclusive budget approach by investing in early child development focusing on the most vulnerable children to break the cycle of exclusion. For the first time MoESY has included in the budget support scholarships for children who drop out or for out of school children with the aim of using flexible budgeting to address the complex needs of out of school children.

Output 3.2: The establishment of state funding mechanisms that support the development and scaling-up of innovative social services is supported.

No activities planned for this reporting period.

⁶⁵ Tirana, Shkodra, Korca

Chapter 3: Gender Equality and Good Governance

3.1 Gender Equality

LNB pays attention to keeping a balanced and non-discriminatory approach with respect to gender-sensitive planning and implementation of interventions. Mainstreaming these principles in implementation is especially visible in the results of interventions in three target municipalities (Fier, Lezha and Kruja) where girls and women constitute 50% of the total number of beneficiaries. These municipalities are supported through a model of Integrated Social Services which comprises inclusion in education, programmes of VET, and employment and income generation activities.

Besides, LNB also supports interventions that focus largely on vulnerable women such as those implemented in partnership with two local NGOs, which aim to inform and sensitise vulnerable youth and women with disabilities (severe hearing impairments) their rights and entitlements for them to claim and enjoy them.

3.2 Good Governance

Maintaining its attention towards local governments' transparency and accountability to citizens, LNB guaranteed that the local Social Care Plans developed through its support were carried out through a participatory approach that included several consultation sessions with citizens and CSOs (e.g. Pogradec, Permet, Bulqize, Ura Vajgurore, Fier, Mallakaster, Sarande, Shijak, Malesia e Madhe). Focused consultations were held also with representatives from 21 municipalities in order to consult the first phase of drafting the secondary legislation for the enactment of the new Law on Social Housing.

The same principles are observed and upheld across all major LNB programme activities including support provided to municipal gender-based budgeting exercises (in municipalities of Korca, Shkodra and Tirana), consultations with persons with disabilities on a number of issues at national level (such as on the monitoring of implementation of NAPwD) and at local level (in municipalities of Tirana, Vlora, Korca and Shkodra), focused consultations with women with disabilities (in municipalities of Dibra, Ura Vajgurore and Permet) and with youth including those from the Roma & Egyptian minority (in municipalities of Kruja, Pogradec and Korca).

3.3 Internal Monitoring

An Internal Monitoring Plan has been designed aiming to improve development effectiveness and efficiency of LNB programme, through reviewing performance, and using evidence to adjust programming for optimal results achievement. The monitoring plan has provided feedback on the consistency or discrepancy between planned and actual results. LNB programme conducted regular monitoring of programme activities to observe progress, to ensure quality of activities and inter-agency coordination and to identify bottlenecks and challenges to improve programme implementation. The Annual Work Plan and the M&E Plan were the key tools to support programme monitoring along with internal quarterly reports. LNB team held a meeting and consultation meeting with SDC M&E expert to streamline the M&E plan in terms of indicators and data collection to support LNB mid-term reporting anticipated for the end of 2019.

Chapter 4: Major challenges and mitigation strategy

4.1 Major challenges

LNB has faced major challenges at (i) policy level in terms of lacking institutional mechanisms to monitor and implement social inclusion and (ii) local institutions level in terms of capacities, resources and structures to facilitate implementation of social inclusion.

At policy level, the challenge of operationalizing the mechanism for the monitoring and implementation of SIPD (2016-2020) continues to persist since the first year of the programme. Initially the LNB plan foresaw the establishment of SIIG (Statistical Integrity Indicators Group) as part of the IMPG system. In 2018 the IPMGs were re-grouped as per a PM's order while UNDP continued to offer support in setting up the necessary structures for coordination. However, despite intensifying efforts, as of end May 2019, SIIG has not been constituted yet. There are indications that this may happen within Summer 2019.

Further and depending on the setup and functioning of SIIG, UNDP will support MoHSP to design and start implementing a national training programme for government officials on techniques and approaches for measuring and monitoring social inclusion. Linked to this activity, UNDP will support MoHSP to facilitate and coordinate the production of an annual social inclusion report that describes and analyses social progress in Albania. In addition, an annual social inclusion conference will convene which should provide a public platform to report on social progress and to learn from similar developments in EU member states. Therefore, any further delays to the previous actions is likely to affect the initiation of these activities. UNDP will continue to monitor the situation to be able to respond without delay. Also contacts with MoHSP and with INSTAT are being increased on this matter.

The support to INSTAT in processing and publicly presenting SILC 2016 – and later 2017 and 2018 - data was re-scheduled several times to lastly take place in November 2019. This affects programme implementation, specifically support to the measuring of and reporting on social inclusion indicators as per the SIPD, as well as designing targeted interventions and for the combined government and UN efforts to measure their impact to vulnerable population.

While the Social Fund mechanism is established through Decree of Council of Ministers, the mechanism was not enrolled for the 2018 fiscal year, but a transitory mechanism is being utilized to allocate some funding to the municipalities for social care services. There has been lack of clarity on its implementation modalities given the commitment from the government on development and approval of a good methodology for supporting LGUs in designing social care plans.

The monitoring process of a set of policy documents such as NAPPWD, NAPCH, etc. highlighted the need for stronger engagement of stakeholders to coordinate, collect data and share information across the institutions at central and local level particularly for issues on persons with disabilities.

At local level, municipalities, demonstrate limited capacities to build the necessary structures and system for social services to enable delivery of integrated social services as foreseen by Law of Social



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Tel.: +355 (4) 2250 205, 2250 224, 2250 234

Services. In addition, lack of the professional staff (social worker as a key figure of the system of social care services), weak NARU structures for case management, lack of adequate funding from municipal budgets, lack of knowledge of the social inclusion legislation and of policy framework in other related areas (education, employment, VET, health, housing) render difficult the implementation of social care plans designed by municipalities with the support of LNB.

At community level, CSOs have demonstrated scarce capacities in budget literacy and public finance management to scrutinize public budgets at local level and provide recommendations.

A continuous challenge for delivering integrated social services remains the “quick-gains mentality” of vulnerable families and the involvement of girls and women in activities as it takes time for their expectations to transform and be oriented on children’s education or youth (and self) employment opportunities.

In the last quarter the political instability has also created a challenging working environment at local level which is accompanied with staff demotivation and job insecurity in the municipalities run by opposition. As result, some of activities at local level has been slowed down and some delays have occurred in starting the operation of community centres in 2 municipalities (Permet and Ure Vajgurore).

4.2 Mitigation strategy

LNB has intensified its dialogue with the government to reiterate the importance of SIIG as an inter-agency mechanism in measuring and promoting social changes and social inclusion. Efforts are also made to better understand the factors hindering its establishment by engaging in discussions with INSTAT as the co-chair of the initially intended SIIG. In parallel, LNB is also monitoring the situation with the publication and analysis of SILC data. The remarks made in Albania’s EU Progress Report (discussed in Chapter 1) are expected to produce an impetus to the acceleration of solutions for both these matters.

LNB has provided technical support to MoHSP to conduct monitoring of policy documents building institutional capacities and mechanisms to take over this role in the future. Support is also provided to CSO to build their capacities to take over their watch dog role in monitoring local/central government performance and delivery of services.

In order to get the engagement of vulnerable groups the project is providing ongoing counseling and monitoring, in close collaboration with all local actors to increase their trust and see the long-term benefit for the development of their families by accessing the integrated services. Awareness raising activities is crucial to change their mentality and attitudes for breaking the poverty cycle.

Despite the tense political situation, LNB has closely monitored its interventions at local level and increased its presence on-site to ensure timely delivery of activities and compliance with work plan.

Chapter 5: Communication and Visibility

Please see Annex 3

Chapter 6: Updated action/activity plan and Finances

Overall financial delivery (disbursed and committed) till 31 May 2019 is 83.9%

	Funds allocated in USD	Disbursed	Commitments	Total Disbursed and Committed USD	Total Disbursed and Committed USD in %
UNDP	2,672,554	2,089,527	202,043	2,291,570	85.7
UNICEF	741,662	529,000	54,000	583,000	78.6
UNW	294,483	205,145	0	205,145	69.7
UNFPA	186,584	152,320	34,264	186,584	83.9
Totals	3,895,283	2,975,992	290,307	3,266,299	83.9

* Disbursed till May 2019 (cumulative)

* Committed till May 2019



**Leave
No One
Behind**

United Nations Country Office

"Skenderbej" Street, Gurten Building, 2nd Floor, Tirana, Albania

Tel.: +355 (4) 2250 205, 2250 224, 2250 234

Abbreviations:

ASPA – Albanian School of Public Administration

ASRH – Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health

CSO – Civil Society Organisations

DCM - Decisions of the Council of Minister

DPO – Disabled Peoples Organizations

EC – European Council

ECA - Eastern Europe and Central Asia

EU – European Union

EU SILC – Statistics on income and living conditions

EWS - Early Warning System

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GoA – Government of Albania

ICPD – International Conference on Population and Development

INSTAT – Albanian Institute of Statistics

IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

IPMG – Integrated Planning and Management Group

LGU – Local Government Units

LNB – Leave No One Behind

LSDG – Local Social Dialogue Groups

LSMS – Living Standards Measurement Survey

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

MIS – Management of Information Systems

MoESY – Ministry of Education Science and Youth

MoFE – Ministry of Finance and Economy

MoHSP – Ministry of Health and Social Protection

Mol – Ministry of Internal Affairs

NAIS – National Agency for Information Society

NAPCH – National Action Plan on Children

NAPPWD – National Action Plan on Persons with Disabilities

NARU – Need Assessment Referral Unit

NGO – Non-Governmental Organizations

PwD – Persons with Disabilities

R&E – Roma and Egyptians

SDC – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

SIIG – Statistical Indicator and Integrity Group

SIPD - Social Inclusion Policy Document

SRH – Sexual and Reproductive Health

STAR 2 - Consolidation of Territorial and Administrative Reform

ToR – Terms of Reference

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

VET – Vocational Education Training

VG – Vulnerable Groups

List of annexes:

Annex 1: Updated Performance Monitoring Framework (Programme log frame)

Annex 2: Overview of LNB Joint Work

Annex 3: Communication and Visibility