

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

01.06.2017 – 31.05.2021

SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT JUNE 2018 - NOVEMBER 2018

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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 **1 June – 30 November 2018**.

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 and to have a voice in public decision-making affecting their lives.*

As per the Standard Administrative Agreement, four financial instalments in the total amount of CHF 8,000,000 will be received by the Albania One UN Coherence Fund.

Chapter 1: - Brief context update:

Advancing social inclusion remains a necessity for Albania not least in a context of a country whose development goals are aligned with its ambition for EU accession. There has been an increased government commitment to finance social care services. However, there is still no clear indication that the current social policies have achieved visible impact on the extent of coverage on vulnerable populations while social cohesion and inclusion remain only partially addressed at this level.

One of the major targets of programme is to ensure that Albania has a fully funded system of social care services at decentralized level. The Law on Social Care Services approved in November 2016 provides the basic instruments for the administrative and financial arrangements at central and local level, which is a budgetary line to be established and managed by the municipalities. Being central to implementation of law on social care services, social fund has managed to be high in the agenda of the government, which approved in August 2018 the establishment of an inter-ministerial group composed of Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Interior, the National Agency for Local Governance, co-chaired by deputy ministers of Finance and Health and Social Protection, and has mandated (DCM 100, 16 July 2018) such group to work out the details of how Social Fund will work: from planning in central budget, to formulas of allocation among LGUs and also integration in the national financial management system, so that the money can be properly accounted for). The same DCM also calls for establishment of a technical group composed of technical people working in the above-mentioned Ministries. The LNB is providing support to the inter-ministerial group to decide upon the approach and implementation modalities of resourcing social fund from the central budget

Secondary legislation necessary for the enactment of the Law on Social Care Services has been developed using technical expertise and in consultation with groups of interest. This is instrumental for the proper implementation of the system of social care services and for all the capacity building and social care provision included in the LNB programme.

While public spending for social inclusion programmes is still too modest, a recent review on local and central public budget spending on social care services conducted by LNB programme revealed that in spite of an increase from past years, in 2017 the budget allocations for social inclusion and social protection are

largely inclined toward an increase on personnel costs. The same review noted that the budget for the social protection sector alone, at the central level, marked a slight increase of 0.9% in absolute figures compared to 2017. However, 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. A closer look at the social care service related expenditure, excluding the cash programme, reveals that the local governments spend slightly less than 0.9% of their budgets¹ in social care services. Only around half of that *originates from discretionary sources*. A look at the draft 2019 budget confirms that the same trend is projected to be maintained even for the coming year. 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 (only in relative terms, since in absolute terms central government financing for social services is 6 times higher than local financing in 2017). For instance, in 2016 the state budget financed 54% of total spending at local government level. In 2017, the ratio of financing was reversed, with local government financing from discretionary own sources amounting to 56% of total spending. In absolute terms, the total funding increased both for state budget and own funding sources, but the latter increased at a much higher magnitude between 2016 and 2017. Regarding the social and economic disparities, there is scarce information available to indicate the trend. This may be largely due to the still ongoing transition in the system of measuring and reporting countrywide data, from the previous LSMS to the new SILC.

At national planning level, following the first progress report on the implementation of the National Action Plan on Roma and Egyptians prepared earlier this year, the first progress report for the implementation of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities is also being completed and will be launched by early next year. At local planning level, the situation with the municipal action plans and the inclusion of vulnerable groups is currently being assessed. However, 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 noted while the LNB programme is largely attending to it through specifically tailored training and other activities.

Progress is made to facilitate implementation of the Social Housing Law approved in May 2018 as almost half of the much-expected secondary legislation has now been developed through support provided to MFE through the LNB programme. The full package of almost 40 legal and sub-legal acts is foreseen to be completed by late spring 2019 which will be subject to government review mechanisms prior to final approval and enforcement.

Following the approval of a package of six by-laws which help in the implementation of the Social Enterprise Law, MHSP has made progress in developing the necessary legal and financial mechanisms to enable its operationalization. Currently three pieces of secondary legislation are being issued.

The National Council on Persons with Disability was reconstituted to reflect the re-ordering of ministerial portfolios created by the post-2017 elections government, and the disability focal points were appointed. The Council is expected to convene by January 2019.

¹ These data hold true for the years in review, i.e. 2016 and 2017.

Chapter 2: Programme implementation

LNB has embarked on 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) to ensure accounting of vulnerability issues in local policy-making;
- (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
- (iii) **at policy level** by further completing the legal framework on the enactment of the Law on Social Care Services, Social Enterprises and Social Housing, to enable their implementation at central and local level.

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)

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:

1. Vulnerable groups equipped with knowledge and information on their rights regarding (i) importance of children's education and procedures for children's enrolment in the first grade, (ii) people with disabilities capacitated to create lobbying and advocacy forums to access quality services, (iii) deaf people informed on their rights to family planning;
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;
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 of a service model for PWDs which combines residential care with services for autonomy and independent living and community-based (daily) services;
5. Establishment of six Local Social Dialogue Groups (LSDG) to ensure 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.

- Seven information days were organised in seven districts (including 24 municipalities) informing deaf women on their rights and entitlements for "Family Planning". 72 deaf women and 37 family members participated along with local government representatives.
- 90 women, youth and children with disabilities in three targeted municipalities (Permet, Diber and Ura Vajgurore) were mobilized and capacitated to create forums and engage in lobbying, advocacy and in a

sustained dialogue on local decision making affecting access to quality services for PwDs. In addition, 467 PwDs and community members participated in information sessions conducted in six administrative units of targeted municipalities on the rights and entitlements.

- Intensive awareness raising campaigns² were organized in four municipalities (Korce, Durres, Lezhe, Shkodra) on the importance of children's education, which reached out to 1.522 parents and community members living in difficult economic situations (parents supported with economic aid, unemployed parents, Roma &E). A variety of communication channels was used including information leaflets in Albanian and Romani language on the criteria and procedures³ of children enrolment in the first grade. One short promotional video clip was produced on how to enrol in school which was featured on social media, websites of MEYS, Observatory, RED, targeted municipalities, which received 15,000 views.
- A capacity building program on school drop-out prevention was designed and delivered in four municipalities (Berat, Korca Tirana and Durres) targeting school directors, teachers and psychologists. Schools were supported to include preventive measures for school dropout in school action plans. A series of small grants will be provided to schools during 2019. As a result of capacity building program:
 - **300 teachers** and other school staff from **20 schools** in four municipalities (Berat, Korca, Tirana and Durres) enhanced their capacities in designing an early warning system (EWS) to identify and keep in school vulnerable children who are at risk of drop-out,
 - **200 teachers, school psychologists school directors** have been trained on the development of socio-emotional skills aiming at increasing students at risk of drop out's resilience.
 - **168 teachers and school directors** have been trained on topics related to parents' involvement in school.
 - **120⁴ 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.
- Three short video-documentaries that showcase the modelling of integrated social services in the targeted municipalities of Fier, Lezha, and Fushe-Kruja are finalised will be broadcasted on different UN social media channels (Twitter/Facebook), as well as published in the LNB programme website.
- Coordination is on-going between MHSP and NAIS (AKSHI) to increase the accessibility of MHSP's website. Until now, three new accessibility features, primarily benefiting people with sight impairments, are being introduced in test mode whereas the feasibility of introduction of additional features is being further assessed and defined.
- 19 Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs) are identified through a Call for Expression of Interest to participate in a training programme to be developed for DPOs' in the areas of leadership, organizational development, management, technical skills, advocacy identified by the CSOs/DPOs Capacity and Training Needs Assessment Survey conducted during the first half of 2018.
- A group of graduating journalists (70 young people) is identified through information sessions in faculties of journalism in Albania to build their capacities to report ethically and effectively on the issues affecting poor populations and inform them on the social protection policies and legislation. A network of journalists will be established and capacitated to report critically on stories of vulnerable families and children in need or benefit from social protection.

² 40 information sessions

³ According to article 13 of Chapter IV "Primary Education" of the Normative Provisions on the Pre-University Educational System, 2013.

⁴ 5 males and 115 females

- A "CSOs national advocacy" platform is established in 3 municipalities (Fier, Durres and Permet) and the capacities of its members⁵, mainly youth CSOs (Youth Voice Network), were strengthened in advocacy on SRH/ ICPD/ SDGs.
- A community-based model for integrated SRH services is established in 10 out of 11 planned districts (Berat, Kuçove, Skrapar, Erseka, Korça, Devoll, Pogradec, Gramsh, Librazhd and Shkodra). Capacities of 39 participants in Shkodra representing doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and community mediators and activists were strengthened on SRH thematic areas and importance of accessing health services and the right to health services particularly of disadvantaged groups of R&E and PWDs. 8 health education teams are set up and supported to develop the field work plan for their communities in three health centres in Shkodra and in five rural Administrative Units (AUs).
- Key stakeholders such as the Institute of Public Health (National HIV Programme), Directorates of Public Health and Civil Society Organizations were supported with inclusive programs to prevent HIV and AIDS to reach out vulnerable groups including drug users, men having sex with men and commercial sex workers.

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 project municipalities: Fier, Lezha and Kruja (Fushe-Kruja). 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. Services are rendered in close cooperation and coordination with the respective municipalities and other service providers at local level. The beneficiaries of this intervention are families with complex long-term needs. These families are referred or assisted to have access to services meeting their needs and thus improving their chances for social inclusion. As a result, **185 R&E families** (targeted by the project) have better access to public services, including civil registration, education, employment, VET, housing, health and social care. The progress is more evident in the employment and education areas:
 - **Access to employment opportunities:** 18 R&E have been employed, 27 youth R&E people have been provided with counselling for employment; 15 of them have been supported to access VET courses, and 12 others to access local business for an internship.
 - **Economic empowerment:** 48 R&E have been supported for income generation;
 - **Access to quality and inclusive education: 300 R&E children** aged 6 – 15, have benefited assistance for quality education. As a result 95% of them have regularly attended school and 35% of them have improved their school performance.
 - 89 teachers and directors from ten nine-year schools were capacitated on "*Competency Curriculum and Learning Situations in Multicultural Classes*" with the aim to effectively build inclusive teaching and learning models for children with disabilities and children from R&E communities. 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;
 - **Community awareness:** 42 R&E parents raised awareness on education, early marriages, child abuse and parental responsibilities.

⁵ 20 representatives

- Work is initiated for the development of community-based services for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in 6 municipalities. Parallel to the rehabilitation works in four facilities expected to be finalized in next quarter (Permet, Ura Vajgurore, Peshkopi and Kruja), cooperation is on-going with Vlora and Tirana municipality, SSS and MHSP to design a service model which combines residential care with services for autonomy and independent living and community-based (daily) services for Vlora Development Centre and Tirana Development Center. In addition, in Korca, LNB is facilitating discussions between the municipality and the Ministry of Education to establish a service model which targets children with disabilities to complement the services provided at special or mainstream education institutions with community-based rehabilitation services.
- 20 schools and 120 teachers in Durres, Tirana, Korca and Berat (5 schools in each municipality) have strengthened their capacities in providing inclusive education based on inclusive education methodology accredited by the Ministry of Education. The schools have 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.

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 in the 6 municipalities of Korca, Librazhd, Maliq, Vlora, Mallakaster and Saranda to ensure public dialogue between local authorities and local stakeholders (communities, CSOs and representatives of vulnerable groups) in developing and budgeting social care plans and ensuring that vulnerability issues are accounted for in local policy-making. The scope of action for the group is developed and endorsed by the six municipalities and the first meeting of LSDGs is planned by the municipalities in early January 2019.

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.

- A Roma youth activist's organisation is empowered to raise awareness and build capacities of 60 marginalised/vulnerable youth in three municipalities (Pogradec, Korca and Fushe-Kruja) on how to monitor the implementation of local policies using innovative methods such as *peer to peer reporting* and *reporters in the field*.
- Work initiated to design a model to monitor the implementation of the Child Rights and Protection Agenda at sub-national/municipality level through a desk review of major relevant national strategies specifically targeting children, mapping of local plans and expected results related to children, assessment of the data availability at local level and identification of active groups of children at local level to be engaged at a later stage of the development model. The findings from this research will contribute to identification of a list of indicators that will be agreed with the municipalities and group of children to regularly collect and report on them.
- The Local Partnership Model on SRH and Rights in the regions of Elbasan, Vlore, Berat and Shkoder is strengthened and expanded to the regions of Kukes and Lezhe. Capacities of its members were strengthened in monitoring of the local work plans, communication and advocacy. They have identified key areas for joint interventions in the future.

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:

- 11 municipalities⁶ and their staff are capacitated to develop and cost their social care plans through participatory processes. Three of social care plans are approved by the municipal councils;
- 16 municipalities⁷ are 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;
- 3 municipalities have initiated 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 municipalities are strengthened in setting up the system for identification and referral of children at compulsory school age;
- Work progressed for designing the grant scheme: guidelines developed, and criteria established.

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 is 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. 65⁸ representatives of municipalities⁹ were trained on how to use the methodology which was piloted in six targeted municipalities (Korça, Librazhd, Maliq, Vlora, Mallakaster, Saranda) 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 finalized soon and consulted in a national workshop planned for mid-January 2019.
- LNB has been instrumental in renewing the interest of the Government on the issue of out-of-school children. A new Memorandum of Understanding was signed by three Ministries (MESY, MoI, MHSP) on October 23rd, 2018 aiming at identifying and enrolling in school all children of compulsory school age based on duties and responsibilities for each actor at local and central level. A system of SMS alerts is set up and capacity building program has strengthened capacities of 80 stakeholders in 4 municipalities (Durrës, Korça, Lezha and Shkodra) on their roles and duties for identification and enrolment in school of every child that is in compulsory school age group and on the new Law no 18/ 2017 "On the Child's Rights"
- MHSP is supported to make functional the MIS on social care services as part of the Social Protection MIS. Work started to identify and validate with national stakeholders the set of indicators that will be collected, entered and processed in the system according to the existing legislation and practices of case management and social care services delivery. Following a selection of indicators, MHSP in partnership with LNB will build capacities of municipality officials, SSS officials and service providers into populating

⁶ Mallakaster, Sarande, Shijak, Malesia e Madhe, Librazhd, Maliq, Permet, Ura vajgurore, Fier, Pogradec, Bulqize

⁷ Tirane, Durrës, Korçe, Shkodër, Vlorë, Mallakaster, Sarande, Shijak, Malesia e Madhe, Librazhd, Maliq, Permet, Ura vajgurore, Fier, Pogradec, Bulqize

⁸ 47 females and 18 males

⁹ NARUs, CPUs, social administrators

and using the information management system for social care services in Albania. It is expected that 5 municipalities under LNB will be reached by the training by end of April 2019.

- 11 municipalities (Librazhd, Maliq, Mallakaster, Sarande, Shijak, Malesi e Madhe, Permet, Bulqiza, Ura Vajgurore, Fier and Pogradec,) have developed and costed their social care plans through a participatory process with communities and civil society organizations, in compliance with the Law on Social Care Services. Three municipalities (Tirana, Vlora and Durres) have approved them by their municipal councils.
 - **195 employees** of municipalities of Tirana, Durres, Vlora, Librazhd, Korca, Bulqiza, Fier, UraVajgurore, Pogradec, Përmet Lushnja, Lezha and Kruja were trained on the new legislation on social care services and their tasks and duties as per the same law.
 - **80 representatives** of the above municipalities were capacitated to take all the necessary steps for developing social care plans, from the assessment of needs to planning of services.
 - **54 representatives** from Fier, Lushnja, Pogradec, Lezha and Kruja municipalities participated in the one-day training "Social Work and Empowerment of the Family / Community".
- Three municipalities (Tirana, Shkodra and Korça) were supported during the budgeting preparatory process to raise awareness and to ensure that the municipality plans and budgets respond to gender issues. Vulnerable groups participated in public hearings and voiced their needs and priorities by demanding to include them in the final budget decisions. The Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) process was organized in close partnership with the senior management of the municipalities, Directorate of Budget, Directorate of Social Protection and Inclusion, Directorate of Public Relations and Media.
- 10 trainings and 7 awareness raising meetings took place in 4 administrative units of the urban area of Korca Municipality and were attended by the Egyptian and Roma minorities living in these areas as well as unemployed women and young girls enrolled in vocational training courses supported by the Employment Office in Korca. These activities extended also in the rural areas. As a result, 137 women and young girls have benefited from training and awareness events, with a clear understanding on GRB and have defined a list of selected gender responsive priorities, which were shared with the Women Councillors' Alliance and presented in writing to the municipal council. A group of 12 most active women and girls was identified and coached to prepare *mini-watchdog* reports on the process of budgetary consultation taking place in Korca municipality until end of November 2018.
- 10 awareness community meetings on GRB process took place in 10 AUs in Tirana (five rural and five urban) reaching out 281 women and built their capacities on priority setting and act as multipliers for other women: one woman actively engaged three other women. Women constituted 42.7% in overall participation of citizens in 10 public budget consultations.
- 10 hearing sessions in 10 different AUs have been organized in Shkodra municipality during October 2018 following a joint plan with the Mayor of Shkodra. A qualitative and quantitative analysis was conducted on current practices in the municipality of Shkodra to determine the level, or lack thereof, of gender budgeting in this municipality; current and past local budgets were scrutinized to discern income, expenditure, and final beneficiaries.
- 31 community centres' professional staff of Lushnje, Pogradec, Sarande, Bulqize and Shijak, attended a 2–day practical workshop on the management of challenging behaviours while working with 166 children with Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorders and Learning Difficulties, and the empowerment of their parents as active agents in this process.
- Preparatory work started aiming at building capacities of the disability focal points at ministry and municipality level to understand and play their role as defined in the Law on Inclusion of and Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities. Two national consultants were selected to conduct a three-day training for 80 ministerial and municipal focal points divided in four groups.

- Memoranda of Understanding were signed between the “Youth Voice” network of organizations and five municipalities (Fier, Durrës, Permet, Lezhe and Diber) to assist respective municipalities to plan and budget issues of youth’s interest like ASRH, education, gender, social protection and inclusion at the local level. A survey was conducted with 500 young people in the above municipalities to measure the perceptions and knowledge of young people on SDGs, SRH and health services offered for young people by municipalities.
- Preparatory work started aiming at assisting the SSS in developing the methodology (and tools) for social care service delivery for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, to be followed by practical training on how to apply it.

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

No activities planned for this reporting period.

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

- Work has progressed for designing the grant scheme: the criteria for the allocation of sub-grants have been defined and the guidelines for the execution of the scheme have been drafted. **(Annex 4)**

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

During this reporting period, LNB made notable progress in providing support to complement the legal framework on Social Care Services, Social Enterprises and Social Housing to enable their implementation at central and local level

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.*

- MHSP was supported to advance in the implementation of the reform of social care services. In particular, technical support was provided to the inter-ministerial group¹⁰ 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. This led to the development of two proposals grounded on a comprehensive analysis of the legal framework governing the social assistance, social care services, decentralization and public finances and the functions of relevant institutions. The proposals are consulted with representatives of 11 LGUs that are being supported for the social care planning and other key partners. Final decision on the Social Fund modalities is expected by early 2019.
- MHSP was supported to progress in drafting the secondary legislation to implement the Law on Social Enterprises. Three relevant by-laws are endorsed (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”*.

¹⁰ 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

- Three awareness campaigns were organised and took place on Social Enterprise legal framework under the caption “NIS- Work and Hope” which targeted three municipalities¹¹. The campaigns reached out to a range of stakeholders including young people, women and disadvantaged groups by informing them on the opportunities and benefits offered by to social enterprise law and by showcasing success stories of social enterprises in these municipalities in the areas of employment and social inclusion of individuals experiencing difficulties to access the labour market.
- MHSP was supported to initiate the process to develop a draft National Action Plan for Elderly as part of the requirements and obligations deriving from the National Strategy for Social Protection 2015-2020, Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-2020. A working group is set up and a road-map is prepared as part of this process.
- MHSP was further supported to undertake the mid-term assessment of two National Action Plans: NAPPWD 2016-2020 and NAPCH 2020. LNB provided technical assistance in designing the methodology including the data collection instruments and validating them with relevant stakeholders in participatory processes. The draft report on NAPPWD 2016-2020 will be presented in mid-January 2019 to the National Council on Persons with Disabilities along with a set of recommendations, lessons learnt and challenges in implementation.
- MHSP’s focal points and the master trainers for home visiting were supported to initiate discussions and consultations on the operational standards and the road map for the implementation of the universal progressive home visiting.
- MESY was supported 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 held in 18 September 2018. Recommendations focused on revision of some of the articles of the Law of the Pre-university Education regarding the Inclusive education and the implementation of the law on accessibility in all schools’ settings, curricula, textbooks and flexible programs, trained human resources, adequate budgets that should respond to particular needs of individual students, assistive technology, etc.
- MEYS was supported to conduct the education sector review as well as the national competency-based curricula, which will inform the development of the new education sector strategy.
- MEYS was further supported to initiate public consultations on the drafting of a Youth Law in 12 regions in Albania with youth organizations and CSOs working on youth issues. The draft law is also available to be consulted in the official website of the MESY providing opportunity to all relevant stakeholders to provide their comments and inputs in writing online in addition to the U-Report channel.
- The drafting of subsidiary legislation for implementation of the Law on Social Housing¹² has progressed with first six draft DCMs designed whereas the rest of the acts expected to be drafted by spring 2019. Support to MFE is also provided in reviewing and defining the minimum standards for adequate housing solutions, tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities.
- INSTAT was supported to consult its methodology of Population and Housing Census 2020 especially the data collection and analysis on disabilities and minorities including R/E and gender-biased sex selection, with interest groups and other relevant stakeholders.

¹¹ Tirana, Shkodra, Korca

¹² Approved in May 2018

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.

Chapter 3: Internal Monitoring

LNB staff 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 monitoring methodology includes field visits of LNB staff, joint field visits with UN agencies and implementing partners, meetings with the representatives of LGUs and/or discussion with social services municipal staff, meetings with beneficiaries and internal quarterly reports of UN agencies.

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 reporting.

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. However, there are no clear indications as to when or whether a ministerial decision, constituting a legal act for the establishment of SIIG, will be issued within the frame of IPMG.

The support to INSTAT in processing and presenting SILC 2016 data was planned, in coordination with INSTAT, to take place in Autumn 2018 through a series of public consultations. After several delays in inputting and processing SILC data, INSTAT postponed their public presentation and consultations with interest groups to spring 2019 and possibly even later. This affects the programme as SILC is seen since the program design as an important mechanism to guide programme implementation and coordinate efforts with the government for targeting the interventions. On the other hand, SILC is instrumental in measuring the indicators of social and economic development and, as such, it is crucial for the SIIG functioning and for the combined government and UN efforts to measure the impact of their interventions.

At local level, municipalities, demonstrate weak leadership and 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 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, central government and other sources, lack of knowledge of the social inclusion legislation and of policy framework in other related areas (education, employment, VET, health, housing) and lack of procedures for participatory budget planning processes render difficult the implementation of social care plans designed by

municipalities with the support of LNB. The actual structures are not providing integrated social services as foreseen by Law of Social Services.

4.2 Mitigation strategy

LNB has developed its mitigation strategy to address the above challenges. **At policy level**, 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 addition, LNB has recommended to MHSP, which is the government agency responsible for the monitoring and implementation of SIPD (2016-2020), to consider the possibility of instituting a similar technical group to the SIIG, but not necessarily within the frame of IPMG. The group would have largely the same functions and structure and would be composed of the same members as initially SIIG was intended.

LNB is attempting to set up a dialogue platform with INSTAT and other actors which might be helpful to better understand the factors delaying the publication and analysis of SILC data. In addition, LNB has undertaken a series of research studies in social care services to establish baselines to measure the impact of its interventions.

At local level, LNB is providing technical support to municipal staff to raise awareness on Law of Social Care and the delegated functions to municipalities, guide the planning process of social care plans and budgetary planning processes combined with an intensive tailored capacity building to address capacity gaps in local government structures.

Chapter 5: Communication and Visibility

LNB programme events and activities kept featuring in different social media channels (Twitter/Facebook), reaching out to 93,746 visitors and amounting to nearly 29,036 clicks, including various awareness-raising activities on rights and services of vulnerable communities; series of trainings of municipality staff on social care plans, modelling of integrated social services, and coaching for employment; teacher training on quality education; two high level forums on inclusive education and social enterprises, amongst the most important. A guidance package on 'Laws and Policies on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' and several informative manuals and leaflets on municipal budgeting and quality education are produced and published in respective organizations' websites (**Annex 3**). Three short video-documentaries, showcasing the application of integrated social services model in three targeted municipalities, have already been produced, clippings provided below:

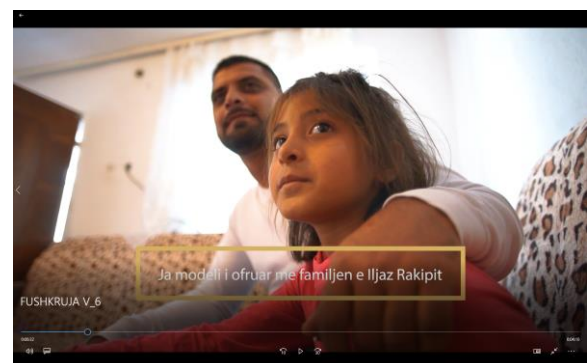




Figure 1. Videos showcasing application of integrate social services focusing on families from Roma and Egyptian communities.

LNB has a new and better structured webpage since October 2018, which now allows for additional features including dedicated spaces for news, stories, photo galleries, blogs and publications: www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/projects/leave-no-one-behind.html.

Chapter 6: Updated action/activity plan and Finances

Overall financial delivery (disbursed and committed) till 31 December 2018 is 61%

	Funds allocated in USD	Disbursed	Commitments	Total Disbursed and Committed USD	Total Disbursed and Committed USD in %
UNDP	1,515,482	643,749	327,738	971,487	64.1
UNICEF	420,562	199,242	43,500	242,742	57.7
UNW	166,988	64,581	35,964	100,545	60.2
UNFPA	105,803	39,211	2,789	42,000	39.7
Totals	2,208,835	946,783	409,991	1,356,774	61.1

Abbreviations:

AKSHI – Agjencia Kombëtare e Shoqërisë së Informacionit

ASRH – Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health

AUs – Administrative Units

CSO – Civil Society Organisations

DCM - Decisions of the Council of Minister

DPO – Disabled People’s Organizations

EWS - Early Warning System

GRB - Gender Responsive Budgeting

INSTAT – Albanian Institute of Statistics

IPMG – Integrated Management Policy Groups

IRCA – Institute of Romani Culture in Albania

LGU – Local Government Units

LNB – Leave No One Behind

LSDG – Local Social Dialog Group

MESY – Ministry of Education Sports and Youth

MFE – Ministry of Finance and Economy

MHSP – Ministry of Health and Social Protection

Mol – Ministry of Interior Affairs

NAPCH – National Action Plan for Children

NAPPWD – National Action Plane on Persons with Disabilities

PwD – Persons with Disabilities

R&E – Roma and Egyptians

SIIG – Statistical Indicator and Integrity Group

SRH – Sexual and Reproductive Health

SSS – State Social Services

List of annexes:

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

Annex 2: Leave No One Behind - Joint Work

Annex 3: Visibility and Knowledge Sharing

Annex 4: Community-based Social Services Grants (Guidelines for Application)