



Save the Children



Child Rights Situation Analysis Albania

**Tirana
July 2012**

Save the Children është një organizatë udhëheqëse e pavarur për fëmijët në botë. Ne punojmë në 120 vende. Ne shpëtojmë jetë fëmijësh; ne luftojmë për të drejtat e tyre; ne i ndihmojmë ata të përmbushin potencialin e tyre. Ne punojmë së bashku me partnerët tanë, për të frymëzuar përparime në mënyrën se si bota i trajton fëmijët, për të arritur ndryshimin e menjëhershëm dhe të qëndrueshëm në jetën e tyre.

© 2012 Save the Children

Të gjitha të drejtat të rezervuara. Përmbajtja e këtij botimi mund të përdoret apo kopjohet lirisht prej përdoruesve, por jo për qëllime fitimprurëse, me kusht që çdo riprodhim i tillë të shoqërohet me njohjen e Save the Children si burim.

Tiranë, 2012



Save the Children

Child Rights Situation Analysis Albania

**Tirana
July 2012**

Table of Contents:

Map of Albania..... 4

List of Acronyms..... 5

List of Tables and Figures..... 8

Executive Summary 9

Chapter 1: Introduction..... 11

Chapter 2: Country Context 14

Chapter 3: Right to Education..... 25

Chapter 4: Right to Protection 36

Chapter 5: Right to Health..... 49

Chapter 6: Right to Participation..... 56

Chapter 7: Disaster Risk Reduction..... 64

Overall Conclusions and Recommendations..... 67

Appendices:

Appendix A: List of Organizations and Work 71

Appendix B: Tools for Focus Group Discussions and Interview Templates 81

Map of Albania:



Figure I: Map of Albania

List of Acronyms:

Albanian American Development Foundation	AADF
Albanian Children's Alliance	ACA
Albanian Demographic and Health Survey	ADHS
Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution	AFCR
Albanian Leke	ALL
Albanian Red Cross	ARC
Antenatal Care	ANC
Austrian Development Agency	ADA
Bank of Albania	BoA
Child Labor Monitoring System	CLMS
Child Led Group	CLG
Child Protection Initiative	CPI
Child Protection Unit	CPU
Child Rights Situation Analysis	CRSA
Child Rights Units	CRU
Children with Disabilities	CWD
Children without Appropriate Care	CWAC
Children's Government	CG
Children's Human Rights Center of Albania	CRCA
Committee of Nationwide Reconciliation	CNR
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	CEDAW
Convention on the Rights of the Child	CRC
Corruption Perception Index	CPI
Country Annual Plan	CAP
Country Office	CO
Country Strategy Plan	CSP
Disaster Risk Reduction	DRR
Early Childhood Care and Development	ECCD
Economic Aid	EA
Employment Office	EO
European Commission	EC
European Convention on Human Rights	ECHR
European Union	EU
Focus Group Discussion	FGD
General Directorate of Prisons	GDP
German Development Cooperation	GIZ
Government of Albania	GoA
Gross Domestic Product	GDP
Human Development Index	HDI
Infant Mortality Rate	IMR
Injecting Drug Users	IDU

International Labor Organization	ILO
International Monetary Fund	IMF
Institute for Educational Development	IED
Institute for Execution of Penal Decisions	IEPD
Institute of Public Health	IPH
Labor Force Survey	LFS
Life Skills Based Education	LSBE
Living Standard Measurement Survey	LSMS
Local Government Unit	LGU
Maternal Mortality Rate	MRR
Millennium Development Goals	MDGs
Ministry of Education and Sciences	MoES
Ministry of Finance	MoF
Ministry of Health	MoH
Ministry of Interior	MoI
Ministry of Justice	MoJ
Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities	MoLSAEO
Ministry of Tourism, Cultural Affairs, Youth and Sports	MTKRS
Mother-to-Child-Transmission	MTCT
National Action Plan	NAP
National Council for Protection of Children's Rights	NCPCR
National Employment Service	NES
National Inspectorate of Pre-University Education	NIPE
National Institute of Statistics	INSTAT
National Registration Center	NCR
National Strategy for Development and Integration	NSDI
National Strategy on Pre-School Education	NSPE
Ndihma Ekonomike	NE
Non-Governmental Organization	NGO
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe	OSCE
Regional Education Authority	REA
Save the Children	SC
Save the Children Norway	SCN
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	STDs
Small and Medium Enterprises	SME
Social Business	SB
Social Inclusion Cross-cutting Strategy	SICS
Southeast Europe	SEE
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	SIDA
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	SDC
Terre des Hommes	TdH
Tirana Legal Aid Service	TLAS
Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency	TIKA

Under-5 Mortality Rate	U5MR
United for Child Care and Protection	BKTF
United Nations	UN
United Nations Children's Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Development Program	UNDP
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO
United Nations Population Fund	UNFPA
United Nations Volunteer	UNV
United States Agency for International Development	USAID
Universal Periodic Review	UPR
Vocational Education Training	VET
Vocational Training Center	VTC
Voluntary Counselling Center	VCT
World Bank	WB
World Health Organization	WHO
World Vision	WV
Yunus Social Business Albania	YSBA

List of Tables and Figures:

Tables:

Table 1: Population by prefecture, urban and rural areas, 2001 – 2011

Table 2: Human Development Index, by region

Table 3: Public funding in education, 2009-2012

Table 4: Illiteracy level and school attendance for children aged 8-18, based on location

Table 5: Teacher-student ratio reported by MoES

Table 6: Number of unregistered Roma children aged 0 to 18, based on parents' declaration

Table 7: Health expenditures over time (2008-2010)

Table 8: IMR and U5MR per geographical areas

Table 9: Ante and post natal care for women per geographical areas

Table 10: Adolescent-mother ratio

Table 11: Children's nutrition status in the region

Figures:

Figure 1: Map of Albania

Figure 2: Institutional mechanisms for the protection of children's rights

Figure 3: Trends in internal vs. external trafficking (2004-2010)

Figure 4: Welfare state system in Albania

Figure 5: Social protection for children in Albania

Figure 6: Main features of the social business fund

Figure 7: Origin of disasters

Executive Summary

Overview and Key Findings:

Over the past two decades, Albania has undergone major changes that are resulting in vital economic and social change; most social indicators for children have improved. These changes have been supported by strong economic growth and the development of child-friendly legal frameworks. The results can be seen in sound improvements in poverty, health and education, and in the overall standard of living of the population. Albania is moving towards its European Union (EU) integration, which has led to the sometimes speedy adoption of legislation and strategies required for accession, often with unsatisfactory consideration of existing capacity, budgets or the needed longer-term change of attitudes and practices. Sustaining gains, challenging disparities and reaching the “most difficult” segments of the population continue to be a challenge for Albania in fully reaching human rights goals.

As of 2012, the country remains one of the poorest in Europe, with growing inequality becoming a major concern. According to the 2011 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Index, (HDI) Albania ranked 70 out of 187 countries with a score of 0.739¹. Rises in living standards are mainly found in urban areas. At the same time, rural development is lagging, with the majority of people living in rural areas unable to benefit from economic opportunities. Although the number of people who are poor has fallen, from **25 percent** in 2002 to **12 percent** in 2008,² poverty persists exists due to its multidimensionality; some portions of the population still live in conditions of extreme poverty. Segments of the child and adolescent population continue to live in conditions of grave deprivation and social exclusion. Poverty is generally attributed to the low or very low level of income, but also its high morbidity rates and lack of adequate health care services, relatively high level of infant and mother mortality compared to other countries of the region, relatively high level of illiteracy, low level of civic participation in decision making and social exclusion of vulnerable groups.

Despite notable economic growth of Albania, sustaining equitable growth will be a challenge even without the global economic crisis. The crisis has exposed a dependence on remittances from abroad, a low level of diversification of trade and the need to enhance competitiveness. Barriers to investment include weak property rights, pervasive corruption and underdeveloped infrastructure. Furthermore, the forecasted reduction in economic growth and economic instability in the region as a whole adds to a rather bleak outlook for the coming years.

Quality health care, education, protection, participation and access to rights are not equally accessible to all children. Social exclusion is caused by several factors, including economic disparities, gender inequality, and differences between rural and urban areas. Ethnic minorities, especially the Roma population, continue to be the poorest and have benefited the least from the country’s economic growth. The establishment and functioning of child rights mechanisms at regional and local level has brought important changes, however, if they are not part of a unified national system, the impact they will have will remain fragmented. Ensuring collaboration and functioning of established institutions supporting child’s rights, increasing meaningful child participation and strengthening

1. UNDP, Human Development Reports, Albania, Country Profile 2011, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ALB.html>. High human development is defined as an HDI score from 0.800 to 0.899.
2. INSTAT, Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS), 2008.

evidence-based policy will remain key challenges ahead for Albania. Structures responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect are all but absent and the social protection system is unable to help children escape the conditions that create poverty.

Access to employment remains a chronic hurdle for Albania, as do high levels of employment in the informal economy (estimated to be as large as 50 percent of official Gross Domestic Product (GDP.) Youth³ fare disproportionately worse in the labor market with a staggering **25 percent** unemployment rate for the 15 – 29 age groups.⁴ Broad-based participation of children and adolescents in decision-making in Albanian public life remains weak. Success requires building the capacity of social groups, especially of adolescents and youth, to participate effectively. Social norms tend to underestimate the role that adolescents, girls in particular, can play in society; defined gender roles impact their needs, experiences and fulfillment of potentials. Domestic and gender-based violence is widespread and seen as a social norm.

The previous Child Rights Situation Analysis (CRSA) was conducted by Save the Children (SC) in 2009 and this updated version attempts to cover the period from 2009 to 2012. Its overall purpose is to analyze existing data on children so as to provide more up-to-date information on children's rights gains and to identify areas and gaps that ought to be addressed. In its efforts to strategically position itself for the future, the Country Office (CO) decided to review the situation focusing on the current conditions that affect children and youth in Albania and their capacity to enjoy their rights as recognized by the main pillars in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC.) Another aim of this CRSA is to further support the bolstering of SC's policy and advocacy efforts at national level, as well as expanding sights into the implementation of policy at community level in order to maximize its value and contribution.

This updated analysis has three broad sections. The first examines the broader contexts and frameworks in place to support national development and child rights. A second section presents the overall status and extent to which children's rights to education, protection, health and participation are met. This places the child at the centre of the analysis as a person with a clear set of rights. The final section provides broader suggestions and recommendations for SC.

A welcomed element to this updated CRSA was the invaluable contribution by children and adolescents from unique socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds who voluntarily participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) spread across different regions. These groups of children and adolescents were selected according to where SC is currently engaged in programming, but also covered areas where SC is currently not operating but general awareness of the child's situation in these locations deemed it important to investigate further. SC staff with solid experience in leading children through FGDs led and reported on each session.

3. United Nations (UN) provides the following definitions: child: 0-17; adolescent: 10-19; youth: 15-24; young people: 10-24.

4. INSTAT, Labor Force Survey (LFS,) 2012.

Chapter I: Introduction

I.1 Overview

This CRSA details a situation that has evolved since the previous assessment in 2009 and is intended as a contribution to the national knowledge base, useful to public and social sector professionals, community and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the general public.

Specifically, the report establishes the broader social, cultural, and legal framework of the country and provides a frame for understanding underlying challenges in the full realization of child rights in Albania. Findings from the 2009 CRSA that remain relevant today were retained in this report, with minor adjustments. It identifies which problems exist, where they are occurring, who is most affected by them, how widespread the problems are and what mechanisms exist (or are lacking) to address them. By applying a human-right based approach, the CRSA is used to gain an understanding of the extent to which children's rights are being realized or violated. It is also used to assess how and why this is happening, and what SC can do to address the issues. The human-rights-based approach implies that each child has the same universal, indivisible, inalienable, and interdependent rights. If any of these rights is not respected, it is essential to engage in a participatory process that leads to a better understanding of the problem and which removes barriers to their realization. The result is a synthetic analysis on the basis of new statistics, national policies, laws and trends, as well as research and studies conducted over recent years.

When it comes to the core areas of thematic investigation for this report, findings and analyzes are presented for education, child protection, health and participation. With regards to *education*, the school enrolment rate in Albania is considered against identified disparities in quality and access, shortcomings in the implementation of legislation and institutional weaknesses that prevent effective monitoring. Retention of students in schools is considered as one of the most worrying challenges; particularly for vulnerable groups. In *child protection*, attention was given to children without appropriate care, child labor, physical and humiliating punishment, children in contact with the law and wider social care and protection. The report found common concerns, such as inequalities in accessing protection services, persistent limitations within the national legal framework in ensuring right to protection and a child protection system that suffer from weak monitoring mechanisms as well as a limited capacities. Social protection responses are not fully rights-based and social welfare services show to have insignificant impact on poverty. In *health*, the under 5 mortality rate (U5MR) stood at 18 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2012 and remains short of Albania's MDG target of 14 deaths. The maternal mortality ratio remains very high with 31 deaths per 100,000 live births. Efforts to combat HIV/AIDS seem concerning, with estimates showing an increase in number of both diagnosed and undiagnosed cases. The Roma population face considerable difficulties in accessing health services. In *participation*, solid examples show optimism, however, the continued lack of institutional practices facilitating inclusive and holistic participation remain challenging. Political discourses addressing the plights of young people do not form part of any constructive political dialogue. A section on *Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)*, as part of SC's dual mandate, is also presented and show concerning findings.

This CRSA ends with preliminary conclusions and recommendations for SC's future programming in Albania, which will serve as guiding pillars for the CO in the elaboration of the new 2013-2015 Country Strategy Plan (CSP) and the 2013 Country Annual Plan (CAP).

I.2 Methodology

The process of updating the CRSA was done by SC over a 6-week period in the spring of 2012. The methodology for the report involved synthesizing existing statistical and other national data and a review of selected qualitative research across thematic areas. The desk review was based on data coming out from different documents and publications, directly or indirectly addressing children's issues, including: (i) Government documents and strategies on child related sectors, including the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) 2007 – 2013, sectoral and cross-sectoral strategies; (ii) Statistical information regarding main aspects of children's life such as household conditions and poverty; (iii) Reports and research findings of local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working with children or focused on issues affecting children; (iv) Reports of international institutions and organizations such as SC, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other UN Agencies, (v) Information from websites of international donor and civil society organizations on activities implemented at national and local level.

SC conducted personal interviews and consultation sessions with 21 key duty bearers, including Government and civil society. 44 parents were also consulted by SC. One distinct contribution to this report was the participation of 106 children and adolescents who voluntarily participated in FGDs. Their feedback and contribution helped firm up the thematic analyses and gave children and adolescents the opportunity to guide SC in its visioning for the future. Through FGDs, SC was able to corroborate literature review findings and reflect in the recommendations of the report the views of children and adolescents.

FGDs and interviews with children and adolescents centered around three objectives:

- To develop authentic human interest stories from children's experiences;
- To explore children's understanding of their rights and experiences;
- To identify and better understand issues of concern to children themselves.

All FGDs were conducted during May and early June 2012. Participating children and adolescents were in the age group of 12-18 years and included rural and urban groups as well as especially vulnerable children, including Roma and Children with Disability (CWD.) This CRSA was drawn up in a participatory manner by offering the chance to children and adolescents to introduce their ideas, dreams, concerns, and aspirations about how they would like to see their country evolve. Children and adolescents were asked four key questions, specifically:

- What do children and adolescents dream of for themselves, their community, and their country?
- What risks and obstacles do children and adolescents face in their daily life?
- Who can help them to tackle these risks and obstacles and how?
- What could be done to fulfill their dreams and make Albania a better nation for them?

Children and adolescents appreciated the chance to express freely their opinions and perceptions of their lives in order to inform decisions and actions which could be taken on their behalf. SC identified groups of particularly vulnerable children and adolescents who needed particular support to allow them to participate and to have their opinions duly taken into account, including street involved children, children and adolescents belonging to ethnic minorities, children in contact with the law and children with disabilities.

Various ethical research techniques were used during the course of the child participation exercises to avoid making the children feel vulnerable and to protect the children from any distress. Parents or other caregivers (or the schools or organizations helping to identify the children) were asked to give their consent to the children's participation in the groups. A Consent Form was used for this purpose. They were notified that they could opt out of the discussion at any time or refuse to respond to any specific question that might make them uncomfortable. They were informed that their responses would be confidential and that their responses would not be linked back to them in any way or form. They were also told that "nothing that was said in the room should leave the room."

A key limitation of the research methodology is related to the availability of reliable statistics in Albania. In the absence of regular governmental research, statistics vary significantly in all fields. Fully updated population data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) was not available at the time of this report; insufficient disaggregated data according to geographic locations, ages, sex and special categories and unavailability of quantitative data related to minorities in general and Roma minority and Egyptian community in particular were other areas of limitation. In some cases, the report refers to statistical information provided by specific studies, which presents limitations and could be considered as approximate.

Chapter 2: Country Context

2.1 Population and Demographic Trends

INSTAT carried out the 2011 Population and Housing Census in October 2011. Preliminary results⁵ show that the total population of Albania stands at **2,831,741**. According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census, the population of at that time was equal to **3,069,275**. The comparison of the figures shows that the population of Albania has decreased by **7.7 percent** in the past 10 years (Table I.)

ALBANIAN POPULATION BY PREFECTURES									
Prefecture	Persons (total)		Total population % 2011	Persons (urban)		% urban 2011	Persons (rural)		% rural 2011
	2001	2011		2001	2011		2001	2011	
TOTAL	3,069,275	2,831,741		1,294,196	1,521,907		1,775,079	1,309,834	
Berat	193,020	140,964	4.9	76,867	64,497	46	116,153	76,467	54
Dibër	189,854	136,630	4.8	37,952	35,739	26	151,902	100,891	74
Durrës	245,179	265,330	9.3	132,837	199,073	75	112,342	66,257	25
Elbasan	362,736	296,082	10.4	124,904	116,971	40	237,832	179,111	60
Fier	382,544	310,989	10.9	123,656	125,353	40	258,888	185,636	60
Gjirokastrë	112,831	75,172	2.6	44,013	37,610	50	68,818	37,562	50
Korçë	265,182	220,438	7.7	96,892	88,358	40	168,290	132,080	60
Kukës	111,393	85,239	3.0	27,318	29,046	35	84,075	56,193	65
Lezhë	159,182	135,609	4.7	49,287	74,084	55	109,895	61,525	45
Shkodër	256,473	217,375	7.6	95,907	96,328	44	160,566	121,047	56
Tiranë	597,899	763,634	27.0	380,730	536,998	70	217,169	226,636	30
Vlorë	192,982	184,279	6.5	103,833	117,850	64	89,149	66,429	36

Table I: Population by prefecture, urban and rural areas, 2001 – 2011

For the first time in the history of population censuses in Albania, the population in urban areas is larger than the population of rural areas. According to the preliminary results of 2011, **53.7 percent** of the population lives in urban areas and **46.3 percent** in rural areas.⁶ Rural-to-urban migration seems to be a continuing factor in the Albanian context and may represent a coping mechanism for poor rural families. Push factors for rural to urban migration may include poor infrastructure, inadequate education and health services, low access to markets and limited employment and income-earning opportunities.

According to UNICEF (2012,⁷) around **33 percent** of the population is under 18, of which **7 percent** under the age of 5. The adolescent population, those between the ages of 10-19,

5. INSTAT, Population Census, 2011, <http://census.al/default.aspx?lang=en>. **NB: final and complete figures will not be available before October, 2012.** Reported statistics are based on preliminary data. However, other figures have been reported by other actors, such as the UN, and this report has tried to incorporate some of these. INSTAT does not have at this time a demographic breakdown according to age and sex.

6. INSTAT, Preliminary Results of the Population and Housing Census, 2011.

7. UNICEF, The State of the World's Children, Children in an Urban World (2012.) http://www.unicef.org/sowc/files/SOWC_2012-Main_Report_EN_21Dec2011.pdf,

constitutes around **18 percent** of the total population. With roughly **46 percent** aged less than 25 years, Albania remains a country with one of the youngest population in Europe.⁸

2.2 Development Trends

Albania is the smallest country in the Balkan Peninsula with a surface area of 28,748 km.⁹ Although the overall number of people who are poor has fallen, from **25 percent** in 2002 to **12 percent** in 2008, poverty still exists due to its underlying inequalities, which in particular perpetuate the lack of development in marginalized groups. Poverty in mountainous areas stands high at **26 percent** (2008).¹⁰ The impressive economic progress of Albania has enabled solid progress towards combating extreme poverty and improvements in education, health and nutrition.¹¹ The positive trend in poverty reduction has been affected by remittances; the rural Northern areas of the country experienced the strongest pace of poverty reduction partly because of the ongoing outflow of new permanent migrants.¹² Due to improvements in life expectancy, per-capita and education, Albania has achieved “high human development” as measured by the UNDP HDI, moving up in the global ranking from 100th out of 150 countries in 1999 to 70th out of 187 countries in 2011.

Despite these important development gains, the country remains one of the poorest in Europe; its economy and society marked by a large measure of informality, the size of which is subject to diverse estimates, ranging from between 30 and 60 percent of GDP.¹³ A WB study suggests that **34 percent** of the poor in the Western Balkans (living on less than USD 5 per day) live in Albania.¹⁴ The overall percentage of the Albanian population living on less than \$2 a day in 2011 was estimated at **4 percent**.¹⁵

The available body of literature on child poverty in Albania is neither well developed nor analyzed. A recent UNICEF Albania commissioned report¹⁶ exploring poverty reduction and economic aid surveyed a representative sample of 3,400 families across Albania. The report states that **23 percent** of the surveyed families with children under 18 live below the line of absolute¹⁷ poverty, with **10 percent** below the line of extreme¹⁸ poverty. The survey argues that monthly cash aid provided by does not meet minimum needs.

The identification of vulnerable and socially excluded groups in Albania relies on data provided through the latest LSMS of 2008. The groups found to be at greatest risk of poverty and exclusion includes:

8. Official statistics related to the age structure show that in 2007 about 34.2% of the population belonged to the group age 0-19 years old (INSTAT, 2008.)

9. INSTAT, Albania in Figures, 2011.

10. INSTAT, Demographic and Health Survey (2008-2009).

11. UNDP Albania, Albania National Report on Progress Toward Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Special Edition, <http://intra.undp.org/al/ext/elib/download/?id=1058&name=Albania%20National%20MDG%20Report%20%2D%20July%202010%2Epdf>, 2010.

12. WB Albania, Urban Growth, Migration and Poverty Reduction. A Poverty Assessment, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/PGLP/Resources/Albania_PA_Grey_Cover_2007_FINAL.pdf, 2007.

13. GDP was estimated at US\$ 12.592 billion in 2010.

14. Dalaben, A, 'Impact of Financial Crisis on Western Balkans', conference on the Social Impact of the Financial Crisis, Zagreb, Croatia, 15 June 2009.

15. <http://www.gfmag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/333-albania-gdp-country-report.html#axzz1yQZ4D2te>

16. Urban Research Institute, National Center for Social Studies, Reforming Economic Aid: From Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction, Tirana, 2011.

17. Absolute poverty is a level of poverty as defined in terms of the minimal requirements necessary to afford minimal standards of food, clothing, health care and shelter.

18. Extreme poverty is the severe lack of material possessions or money.

- **people with low levels of education;**
- **the unemployed;**
- **large households;**
- **children and youth;**
- **Roma and Egyptians and**
- **persons with disabilities**

Poverty among the Roma¹⁹ and Egyptian minorities is the result of extreme social exclusion and social norms facilitating discrimination. Thus, Roma face low chances of acquiring higher education²⁰ due in part to discrimination, visible social barriers and the general lack of access to the labor market due in part to poorer educational achievements. Other causes of poverty and social exclusion are poor income and living conditions, lack of access to public goods and services, such as healthcare, public education and poor access to civic registration. The official number of Roma is disputed; the Government of Albania (GoA) claims 30,000 while Roma NGOs claim up to 120,000. According to UNICEF Albania, nearly **40 percent** of the Roma child population belongs to the group 0-6. Albania has not developed clear indicators and related statistics specific to Roma community in order to recognize and monitor their vulnerabilities.²¹

More effective law-enforcement responses to combating cross-border crimes has led to increased internal trafficking in human beings, including children. Main patterns of migration comprise internal migration that mostly affects the poor and remote Northeast areas (i.e. Tropoje, Kukes, Mirdite, Puke and Diber). Internal migrants are usually *young* unemployed or underemployed workers in agriculture. The second pattern affects districts that have both substantial internal migration and at the same time, face high rates of international migration (i.e. Tirana, Durres, Vlore, Fier, Shkoder and Korça.)²² Finally, international and internal migration is the pattern in the districts of Southern Albania (i.e. Saranda, Delvine and Devoll.) These patterns show a possible two-step scenario with migrants from Northern Albania moving first to the coastal area or to Tirana to accumulate enough resources to allow them to undertake international migration.²³

Albania's development has in part also been hindered by high rates of corruption. Corruption is highly linked with organized crime with Senior State officials involved in smuggling, contrabands, tax evasions and land grabbing.²⁴ The 2011 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (CPI) was 3.1, placing Albania 95th out of 183 countries ranked.²⁵ In comparison to its neighbors, Albania ranks at the bottom of the list.

Albania had one of the highest rates of growth in Europe on average during 2008-2011 and achieved a GDP growth of six percent. Still, per capita GDP at purchasing power parity is only 25 percent of the EU-27 average, less than of Bulgaria – the lowest-income European Union (EU) Member State. The impact of the international economic crisis on Albania was by and large mitigated by Albania's modest reliance on international financial markets. However, the Bank of Albania (BoA)

19. The level of poverty of the Roma population is estimated to be two times higher than among ethnic Albanians and the rate of unemployment is several times higher than that of non-Roma.

20. UNDP Albania, More than 60% of Roma aged 7-20 has never attended school. 55% of Roma under 15 are illiterate; non-Roma 2%. Roma children attain on average 4-5 years of education, compared to 11 of the non-Roma population, 2010.

21. Urban Research Institute, Reforming Economic Aid: from Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction, 2011.

22. ILO, Albania Youth Employment Action Plan, 2010-2013.

23. Ibid.

24. Skardziute, A. Corruption in Albania, Hertie School of Governance, 2010. <http://www.againstcorruption.eu/uploads/norad/Albania.pdf>

25. <http://www.transparency.org/country#ALB>

has reported that remittances and foreign direct investment declined by **7 and 23 percent** for the first half of 2010, compared to the previous year. A decrease in remittances is estimated to increase the poverty headcount by **1.1 percent**. Should further decline in remittances persist, coupled with slower growth, stagnant employment rates and other potential income shocks, the risk of reversal in poverty trends cannot be ignored. A WB publication²⁶ on the global outlook for remittances notes the ongoing debt crisis and high unemployment in Europe as a major source of economic vulnerability. Further, another WB report²⁷ states that the trend up to 2008 for poverty rates in SEE will most likely stagnate or even reverse as a result of the European economic crisis.

Albania joined NATO on 4 April 2009 and the country presented its application for membership of the EU on 28 April 2009. On 9 November 2010, the European Commission (EC) presented its Opinion on Albania's application. In the Commission's view, Albania had made progress towards fulfilling the Copenhagen economic and political criteria. However, Albania needs to further strengthen governance, improve the performance of the labor market, ensure recognition of property rights and strengthen the rule of law. The EC considered that negotiations for accession to the EU should be opened once Albania has achieved the necessary degree of compliance with the political criteria requiring stability of institutions that guarantee notably democracy and rule of law. In this regard, the Commission issued 12 recommendations.²⁸ Broadly these include that Albania undertakes the following:

- completes essential steps in public administration reform, including amendments to the civil service law and strengthening of the Department of Public Administration, with a view to enhancing professionalism and de-politicization of public administration and to strengthening a transparent, merit-based approach to appointments and promotions;
- strengthens the rule of law through adoption and implementation of a reform strategy for the judiciary;
- strengthens the fight against organized crime;
- Takes steps to reinforce the protection of human rights, notably for women, children and Roma, and to effectively implement anti-discrimination policies.

In view of the 2011 EC Progress Report on Albania, the Ministry of European Integration (MEI) developed an Action Plan²⁹ showing concrete and realistic measures to address the 12 key priorities. A gap analysis was also conducted which served to identify and formulate a set of measures, clear steps and responsibilities to be implemented and monitored. It includes the suggestions and recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee for European Integration, civil society, international organizations and the EC. Key measures planned in the area of human rights include the continued adoption of the action plan for children's rights, adoption of the law on persons with disabilities and enhancing the role of the Commissioner for the Protection on anti-discrimination by implementing concrete measures to increase awareness on gender-based violence. It has also pledged to establish a functional child protection system by completing the legal framework. Effective implementation of National Strategies on people with disabilities and Roma are listed as

26. <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/0,,contentMDK:21924020~pagePK:5105988~piPK:360975~theSitePK:214971,00.html>

27. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTALBANIA/Resources/SEERER_No2_Report.pdf

28. Open Society Foundation, Analysis and Recommendations for the Action Plan to address the 12 Recommendations of the EC Opinion, http://www.soros.al/2010/foto/uploads/File/OSFA%20-%20Analysis%20of%20Action%20Plan%20-%2012%20EC%20Recommendations%20-%20april%202011_EN.pdf, 2011.

29. Council of Ministers, Action Plan Addressing the 12 Recommendations of the European Commission Opinion for Albania, March 21, 2012.

key areas for action. In the areas of justice reform, the plan calls for the need to strengthen the protection rights of children and reducing their stay in detention. The monitoring and reporting of the Action Plan will be submitted by an inter-ministerial working group to the EC, as part of the regular input for the EC Progress Report in May and September each year.

2.3 Overview of Regional Disparities:

There is broad awareness of the GoA to address development disparities among regions and the even sharper disparities between municipalities and communes.³⁰ Rural and northern mountainous regions are the most deprived by all definitions of poverty. Part of this population has been excluded from access to services and employment, mostly because these services are mainly concentrated in urban areas.³¹

HDI data disaggregated by Regions (Table 2) measures human development disparities in terms of three main components: 1) life expectancy, 2) education (expressed as a combination of the number of adults who know how to read and write and the norm of elementary, secondary and tertiary school attendance) and 3) standard of living (expressed by per capita GDP). Regionally, Tirana continues to maintain a clear gap from other areas. Data from LSMS indicates that even if rural poverty has declined, the reduction has not been significant enough.³²

Area	Life Expectancy ³³ (years)	Literacy Rate (%)	Enrollment rate in education (%)	GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	Life expectancy index	Educational index	GDP index	HDI 2008
Tirana	77.4	98.5	83.1	9240	0.873	0.934	0.755	0.854
Coast	77.4	96.5	70.3	6748	0.873	0.878	0.703	0.818
Central	77.4	95.7	67.8	6389	0.873	0.864	0.694	0.810
Mountainous	77.4	96.1	64.6	4975	0.873	0.856	0.652	0.794
Total	77.4	96.5	70.5	6886	0.873	0.878	0.706	0.819

Table 2: Human Development Index, by region³⁴

2.4 Decentralization:

Albania's decentralization process aims at promoting a local voice in governance and improving public service delivery primarily to the rural population.³⁵ The main foundations governing decentralization in Albania are *Law No. 8652/00 "On the Organization and Functioning of Local Governments"* and *Law 8653/00 "On the Administrative and Territorial Division,"* both adopted in 2000. The above legislations determine the two levels of local government in Albania: communes and municipalities as the basic units of local government and the first level of government, and regions

30. The GoA adopted a countrywide Regional Development Strategy in 2007.

31. UNICEF Albania, *Children's Social Inclusion Policies and Financing*, 2011.

32. INSTAT, UNDP and WB, *Trends in poverty and Inequality 2002-2005-2008, 2009*.

33. Disaggregated data not available.

34. INSTAT, LSMS 2008.

35. <http://www.uri.org.al/uri/Projects/Decentralization/Decentralization.php>

as the second level of local government. Commune, municipality and regional councils are the representative organs of the local governments. Albania is divided into 373 first-tier local self-government units (65 municipalities and 308 communes.) The country is divided into 12 regions with the main function to coordinate planning and development.

The law on local government assigned functions of delivering public services that could be delegated by the central government. Strategies for regional development in all regions are prepared with the main objectives focusing on stable development and improvement in poverty reduction, education, health and governance. However, the functions of regional councils are not well defined as central government and first-level local governments seem reluctant to delegate functions to the councils.³⁶ Ensuring clarity on administrative and fiscal responsibilities will play a key role in fostering sustainable local development.³⁷

Despite the fact that implementation of the National Strategy for Children is perceived as a legal obligation of structures at the central level, under the decentralization process, local governments are involved in the institutionalization of the rights of children in Albania. The responsible structures are the Regional Education Directorates (REA), Directorates of Social Services and Regional Directorates of Policy. Regions lack their own sources of revenues, and are financed from central and local governments. From central government they receive conditional grants but the distribution is not always equal. Since 2009, a new development occurred in funding allocation that considers the population size, geographical indicator and overall socio-economic status of each region, aimed at ensuring equity in distribution.

When it comes to education and healthcare, local authorities have been given some discretion on the operations and maintenance of facilities but have no decision-making power over personnel. Social protection and poverty alleviation, although defined by the law as *shared functions*, are in practice implemented as *delegated functions*, over which local governments have no relevant discretion and which are performing as mere agents for delivery of a service that is entirely regulated, decided, financed and controlled by central government. Despite recent efforts made to effect decentralization in Albania with implementation of a new transfer (grant) formula (including an equalization factor) and assignment of new own sources of revenues, the level of local government expenditure per capita is still low and unevenly distributed among communes and municipalities.³⁸ Albania's social protection system is more focused on cash assistance with much less emphasis on community-based social services. NE benefits are delivered by social assistance sections in municipalities and communes and monitored and evaluated by MoLSAEO at the national level. According to the WB, Albania spends only **7 percent** of GDP on social protection and only **0.4 percent** of GDP on social assistance, the lowest in the region.³⁹

2.5 Key National Policies and Laws for Children

Albania became party to the CRC on 28 March 1992 and has also ratified the Optional protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict (December 2008) and on the sale of children, child trafficking and child pornography (2008). Albania suffers from no shortage of government

36. UNDP Albania, Albania National Report on Progress Toward Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, Special Edition, <http://intra.undp.org.al/ext/elib/download/?id=1058&name=Albania%20National%20MDG%20Report%20%2D%20July%202010%2Epdf>, 2010.

37. <http://www.lgp-undp.org.al/>

38. Urban Research Institute, Reforming Economic Aid: from Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction, 2011.

39. European Commission, Social Inclusion and Social Protection in Albania, a Synthesis Report, 2009.

strategies and plans to protect children's rights. These national programs aim not only to accelerate the implementation of child rights but also to mitigate disparities between regions, social and ethnic groups and children in special circumstances. Steps have been taken to enforce laws at the local level and to establish relevant structures ensuring implementation of newly passed legislation. The establishment of Observatory offices at the regional level and the monitoring of children's rights conducted by these offices help to orient local governments toward designing local policies and strategies to match the specific needs of children.⁴⁰

The **NSDI (2007-2013)** serves as a comprehensive set of sector strategies and is guided by a set of crosscutting strategies. The NSDI provides a number of national goals to be achieved by 2013. These goals are mainly related to economic and social development as well as to the promotion of Albania's regional and international integration. With the adoption of the NSDI, the GoA committed itself to achieve a number of policy objectives that contribute to the attainment of the following four goals:

- Achieve rapid and sustainable economic, social and human development;
- Develop and consolidate a democratic state;
- Establish the rule of law and fight corruption;
- Integrate Albania in the EU and NATO.

The **Social Protection Sector Strategy (2007-2013)**⁴¹ covers all the social protection policies of MoLSAEO. Its priorities include the improvement of cash benefits targeting the decentralization of social services and also the institutionalization of the relationship with NGOs. Strategy priorities⁴² broadly include:

- Residential care services to be transferred to local government units and switch gradually to community based services;
- Establish new community-based alternatives to existing residential care services;
- An increase in the variety and geography of services in accordance with community needs;
- An increase in the involvement of local government and civil society in the planning and delivery of social services;
- An increase of the responsibility of local government for the financing, guaranteeing of sustainability, and continuity of services;
- Drafting, implementation, monitoring, and improving of the standards of services for all groups in need to ensure quality and efficient services;
- Respect for the rights of groups in need, in particular children, the disabled and the elderly, meeting their needs and supporting their integration into social life;
- Promotion for the involvement of social businesses in the financing and delivery of community services.

The **Social Care Decentralization Framework & Action Plan** currently being considered by the GoA aims to move forward the reform process based on the above primary and secondary legislation and government strategic priorities to establish a sustainable nationwide social care

40. Feedback from the People's Ombudsman, Mr. Igli Totozani, Tirana, June 14, 2012.

41. <http://www.aidharmonisation.org.al/?fq=mesi&pos=1&mt=shfaqart&aid=191>

42. MoLSAEO, Social Protection Strategy 2007-2013, p39.

service system. A major challenge will be to ensure that the social welfare reforms underway are adequately resourced; complemented with economic and social policies that address disparities and are well tailored to the needs of children.

The **Social Inclusion Cross-Cutting Strategy (SICS) (2007 – 2013)**⁴³ focuses on poverty and social exclusion and as a crosscutting strategy, it is meant to be fully consistent with underlying sector strategies and in particular those policies and institutional arrangements described in these strategies that aim to assist vulnerable families and groups in the community. It outlines targets in the following main areas: raising incomes; increasing access to services and *special attention to vulnerable groups, such as children at risk, children with disabilities and Roma*. The strategy is a first step towards identifying important social policy areas that require improvement and promoting inter-ministerial cooperation and involvement of civil society in the process. However, the targets presented are limited, far from comprehensive, have very different – and sometimes no – timelines, and do not allocate clear responsibilities in terms of who should do what. The strategy does not address directly questions of institutional change in terms of the day-to-day work practices of the institutions responsible for services. The ultimate objective is to lay the ground for the formulation of a social inclusion action plan, a standard requirement for EU accession.

The Program of the GoA for 2009-2013 commit to protecting and promoting children's rights through *"...rapidly improving basic indicators of children's health to bring them up to the European levels. We will improve vaccination coverage for diseases threatening children's health. We will provide full access to pre-primary education throughout the country, as a pre-requisite to prepare children for primary school."*⁴⁴ The **GoA Action Plan for Children (2012-2015)** draws attention to two additional points:

- Strengthen institutional structures designed to monitor and report on the implementation of children's rights at both national and regional level;
- Promote, coordinate and harmonize inclusive policies on children's protection and social inclusion.

The Action Plan also covers the following pillars:

- The child's right to development and education;
- The child's right to healthcare and
- The child's right to legal protection

The program gives special importance to child protection as stated in the provision to carry forward the legislative and institutional reform for a protective and inclusive environment for children. The reform was concluded with the 2010 adoption on the "Protection of Children's Rights" and the creation of the State Agency for Protection of Children's Rights.

The adoption of the Law "**Protection of the Rights of the Child**"⁴⁵ provides for a complete legal and institutional framework, in accordance with the Albanian Constitution and the CRC. The law itself sets the anchor for institutional mechanisms guaranteeing development and protection

43. <http://www.aidharmonisation.org.al/?fq=mesi&pos=1&mt=shfaqart&aid=218>

44. For European Albania – Governing Program of European Integration, Government 2009-2013. Submitted to Parliament on 16.09.2009.

45. Law No. 10347, dated 04.11.2010, 'On Protection of the Rights of the Child.'

through a coordinated approach. The law will strengthen child protection systems by establishing Units for Protection of Children's Rights at local level to coordinate and implement services designed to protect children in cooperation with a number of stakeholders from various fields. The law sets the legal obligation for institutional cooperation and coordination at central at local level and will be regulated by secondary laws adapted by the Council of Ministers. The law provides for the establishment of the National Council for Protection of Children's Rights⁴⁶ (NCPCR), an advisory body to the Council of Ministers. In accordance with the government's program, it coordinates and formulates policies impacting children and monitors the implementation of the National Strategy on Children's Rights. Further, to ensure implementation the law, the State Agency for Protection of Children's Rights was established in 2011. Some of its key functions include:

- Monitor the implementation of the law and ensure coordination of future strategies and policies in child rights.
- Technical support to local government units and central governments structures, as well as Non-profit organizations involved with child rights.
- Coordinate with central and local bodies for the purpose of drafting reports, submitting information and statistics on the implementation of children's rights in Albania.

The GoA has recognized the need to integrate vulnerable ethnic minorities, especially since the social and economic inclusion of minorities is a priority that aligns with Albania's aspirations to EU membership. However, GoA has provided only limited financial resources to successfully implement the **National Strategy for Roma**⁴⁷ and the **2010-2015 Action Plan**.⁴⁸ The strategy broadly addresses the following formulated areas:

- Education and training;
- Cultural heritage and family;
- Economy and employment;
- Poverty reduction and social protection;
- Health and infrastructure;
- Public order, justice and civil administration

According to the 2011 EU Progress report on Albania⁴⁹, implementation of the Strategy on improving Roma living conditions continues to be slow, due to inadequate resources and insufficient coordination of institutions involved at local and central level. Despite efforts by the Roma Technical Secretariat⁵⁰ to strengthen the functioning of regional committees on planning and evaluation of social needs by including the National Action Plan for Roma Decade into their agenda, there continues to be a general lack of awareness at local level. There have been no specific budgetary allocations for the provision of critical social services for Roma. Despite all of these major frameworks, major obstacles to strategy implementation remain —there exists a significant gap between the political vision and the ability to implement that vision. There is too little monitoring, cross-referencing and continuity between all the different strategies.

46. UNICEF Albania, www.unicef.org/albania/nationalchildstrategy.pdf

47. OSCE Albania, <http://www.osce.org/albania/21232>, (drafted in 2003.)

48. http://www.romadecade.org/files/downloads/Decade%20National%20Action%20Plan_Albania.pdf

49. EU, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/al_rapport_2011_en.pdf, 2011.

50. Roma Technical Secretariat is the former Roma Monitoring Unit which until 2008 had operated under the State Social Services, a subordinate institution to the MoLSAEO.

2.6 Budgetary Allocations for Children:

Detailed knowledge of the national budget is hard to obtain and information on the budget cycle, trends in revenues and expenditure are normally in the hands of a small number of specialists in the Government.⁵¹ As a result, it is not possible to assess precisely to what extent resources are allocated specifically for the realization of children's rights. However, the 'Children's Social Inclusion Policies and Financing in Albania' report (2010) gives an overview of public expenditures benefitting children. It summarizes central and local government unit expenditures in education, health and social policies showing that between 2006-2010, the total public spending (central and local budgets) for children experienced a significant drop; **21.29 percent** in 2006 down to **12.7 percent** in 2010, with an overall drop in all sectors. Following the approval of Law No. 9936, dated 26.06.2008 *on the management of the budget system in the Republic of Albania*, substantial efforts have been made to use these documents as effective tools in the budget formulation and implementation process.

2.7 Reporting on Advances against CRC Implementation

The GoA submitted its first report to the CRC committee in 2005. However, the GoA did not meet the deadline for the second report due in November, 2009, which resulted in delaying the submission to February, 2012. The Committee is expected to present its key recommendations for Albania in the fall of 2012. A delegation of children from Albania presented and contributed with their own concerns and recommendations to the Geneva Committee in 2012.⁵²

Alternative reports by different civil society actors on the implementation of the CRC were prepared in 2009. Reports produced by the Albanian Children's Alliance (ACA,) the Albanian Coalition 'United for Child Care and Protection' (BKTF) and the Children's Human Rights Center of Albania (CRCA) were submitted to the Geneva Committee that year; however, given the delay caused by the GoA, the reports were updated and re-submitted in 2012.

Key issues raised by the various reports include:

- The continued lack of financial resources to guarantee the rights of the child at the central and local level;
- Structures responsible for establishing child protection institutions are not coordinated and systems remain weak;
- The only referral mechanisms established so far are the Child Protection Units (CPUs) at local level, which are mostly not supported with services;
- Children throughout the country do not have equal access to education or health services;
- Appropriate support systems for children without parental care and disabled children are lacking;
- High prevalence of violence and maltreatment against children in all settings;
- There is no comprehensive legal framework for children under 14 who commit criminal offences;
- Poor implementation of national care standards and poor inspections conducted by responsible authorities;

51. Urban Research Institute, *Reforming Economic Aid: from Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction*, 2011.

52. Report prepared following consultations with over 14,000 children and adolescents.

- The need to introduce violence prevention programs in the school curricula;
- The need to bolster support of activities organized by children and youth of the Roma and Egyptian communities and to recognize their full potential;
- Increasing awareness on emerging issues, such as violence related to new technologies, notably the Internet;
- Birth registration still remains a grave concern for minority groups;
- Capacity of the government at national and local level to be able to respond to requirements of EU accession and increased efficiency of policy implementation from a child rights perspective is of particular importance;
- A comprehensive system of data collection that allows for disaggregation by income level, geographic location, ethnicity, and gender has to be established.

2.8 Key Institutions for Child Rights

Various Ministries support and provide direct services to children in areas of child welfare, education, health, labor, justice and youth. A range of other agencies support the work of government Ministries through a mixture of service support, research, monitoring, advocacy and financial support. *Further information on individual Ministries can be found in the thematic chapters and Annex A.*

The People's Advocate (Ombudsman)

The People's Advocate (Ombudsman) Institution is independent to the GoA and aims to safeguard freedom and lawful interests of individuals from unlawful or improper actions or failures to act of public administration bodies. In December 2011, the Albanian Parliament elected Mr. Igli Totozani as the People's Advocate of the Republic of Albania. The People's Advocate Institution is composed of three specialized sections:

1. Section addressing complaints and requests towards central administration bodies, local government and third parties working on their behalf;
2. Section addressing complaints or requests against police, secret services, armed forces and the judicial power;
3. Section addressing complaints, which are not included in the first two sections, through collaboration with relevant NGOs.

In an interview by SC with Mr. Totozani,⁵³ the EC assigned to the People's Advocate a reporting role in order to influence the GoA's compliance with the 12 EU recommendations made for future EU accession. Although good progress has been made in establishing specialized sections within the institution, a section dedicated solely to children has yet to be established, however, this remains high on their agenda.

Through their partnership with citizens and civil society to monitor all rights violations across Albania, the People's Advocate office is able to bring to the attention of inter-ministerial working groups specific complaints made concerning children and youth. Based on these complaints, recommendations to State institutions are made; however, the challenge remains in seeing real efforts through action by concerned Government actors. When it comes to monitoring cases

53. People's Ombudsman, Mr. Igli Totozani, Tirana, June 14, 2012.

of abuse, efforts to date has primarily focused on pre-detention centers, prisons, shelters and institutions for children, including cases of child abuse in the community. One step to intensify their capability as a monitoring body can be seen through their ongoing work to establish Regional Offices, aimed at widening their presence and role.

Civil Society:

According to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Financial Intelligence Unit, more than 1,600 NGOs are currently registered with the tax authorities in Albania.⁵⁴ Active human rights NGOs represent more than **40 percent** of NGOs while there is an almost equal presence of NGOs focusing on the promotion of democratic rights, economic development and environmental issues. The analysis shows that more than 30 percent of human rights NGOs focus on women's rights, more than 20 percent on vulnerable groups, 30 percent on children and youth and the rest in minority rights and human rights in general.⁵⁵ However, many existing NGOs are becoming inactive due to lack of funding; geographical coverage has also diminished as most NGOs remain based in Tirana. Even those NGOs that are able to gain funding are still very limited in resources and unable to function at full capacity. Corruption, bad governance, poverty and development disparities, unemployment and related phenomena are rife.⁵⁶ With a number of donors leaving the country, EU funds are becoming increasingly the major source of financial support. Well-established NGOs enjoy significant media coverage, particularly on issues that are likely to generate political debate. However, public skepticism over NGOs' objectivity and independence remains high.⁵⁷

2.9 Key Development Actors:

Key development actors are actively involved in establishing an enabling environment to respond to the needs of children by technically and financially supporting policy development, programming and implementation of response strategies for children. The key international development actors providing support to Albania's efforts to ensure the rights of children include: (detailed list included in Annex A):

UNICEF: Governance for children, transformation of residential care, health, ECCD, basic education and social protection. Children in contact with the law, adolescent and youth development.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Education (primary, secondary, ECCD, teacher education, higher education.)

UNDP: Strengthening the Government's strategic planning capacity, statistical support including social statistics; public administration reform, brain gain, social inclusion; youth employment; civil society participation, ICT in schools; gender equality, domestic violence, regional development and cross-border cooperation.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA): Reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and adolescent health, gender equality and domestic violence.

54. USAID, NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, 2010.

55. HDPC-EUCLID, Third Sector Development in Albania: Challenges and Opportunities, 2009.

56. USAID, NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, 2010.

57. Ibid.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV): Volunteerism; contributing towards two joint UN programs: Empowering the Vulnerable Minority Communities of Albania with UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF and Youth Employment and Migration with ILO, UNDP, UNICEF and IOM. Youth empowerment.

WB: Social protection; capacity building initiatives for improvements in the production of quality poverty statistics (in cooperation with UNDP).

World Health Organization (WHO): Social inclusion, including mother and child health care for vulnerable groups; Roma access to health; mental health and mental disability; HIV/AIDS.

International Labor Organization (ILO): Youth employment, employment statistics and design of active labor market policies.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE): democratization, rule of law and human rights; legislative and judicial reform, anti-trafficking and anti-corruption, media development, promotion of good governance, the development of civil society and police assistance.

EU: Institution building and cross-border cooperation. Social inclusion, including support to prisons, vocational and educational training. Cross-cutting issues, including minorities, equal opportunities and gender equality.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID): Rule of law and governance, inclusive economic growth. Policy reform and private sector-led growth.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): Democratization and decentralization; social inclusion; Roma; People with disabilities. Support to Albanian Vocational Education Training (VET) system.

Chapter 3: Right to Education

Overview:

The GoA has committed itself to providing access to ‘education for all’ by 2015. However, basic education enrolment has declined since 2003;⁵⁸ according to UNICEF Albania, while the nationwide school drop-out rates are less than **1 percent**, children from some remote regions, such as Kukes, are 16 times more likely to drop out of school than urban children. Official drop-out figures may be as much as 2.5 times higher than what is officially reported, since school principals often report fewer drop-outs to avoid a reduction in teaching staff.⁵⁹

Clear disparities exist in education. Disadvantaged groups, such as Roma and children in the rural north, have lower access and the quality of education remains variable, with rural areas showing worrisome trends, in part due to inadequate infrastructure and unqualified teachers. Reforms in the education system have resulted in higher levels of primary school enrolment and literacy. Inconsistency in data and the absence of updated disaggregated demographic statistics, especially among vulnerable and excluded groups of children, remain a concern.

The **National Strategy on Pre-School Education (NSPE 2009–2013⁶⁰)** aims at broadening the provision of pre-school education, by improving not only academic performance but also services for vulnerable children in rural areas and children from the Roma community.

Boosting budgetary allocations, building capacity of teachers, achieving zero drop-out and strengthening school-community partnerships are areas of importance for Albania. The GoA, in the Action Plan for Children (2012 – 2015,) sanctions its commitment to child development and education. The action plan draws attention to three main points:

- a. Creation of an environment conducive to child development from an early age;
- b. Provision of inclusive and quality education for all children;
- c. Increasing participation of children in indecision-making in and outside the school;

The **Law on Pre-University Education**, adopted by the Albanian Parliament in June 2012, gives special attention to education for children in contact with the law,⁶¹ children of minority backgrounds and children with special needs;⁶² mandatory education for children aged 5-6 will ensure a smoother transition from kindergartens to schools. This law encourages greater school autonomy, both financially and in human resource management and development, by developing school-based policies, attempting in such a way to challenge a top-down approach in education. Child⁶³ and

58. Demographic and Health Survey (2008-2009)

59. UNICEF Albania, Albania Country Profile, 2010.

60. Approved in July 2009.

61. Law for Pre-University Education nr. 69/2012, Article 17: MoES in cooperation with respective institutions will ensure that school aged children receive education service in pre-detention and detention institutions as well as in care institutions.

62. Law for Pre-University Education nr. 69/2012, Chapter XI, Articles 63, 64 and 65 constitutes inclusive education as the main alternative for CWD. Opinions of parents are decisive in deciding the type of education they choose for their children (mainstream vs. special schools.) The participation of parents is crucial in the technical groups (REA assessment groups and others tasked to develop Individual Education Plans) who provide advice, guidance and support to the education of CWD. Cooperation among relevant local structures, i.e. education and health, is promoted as a mean to support the enrollment and advancement of CWD in mainstream education settings.

63. Law for Pre-University Education nr. 69/2012, Article 36, Children's Governments (CG) is an organization which protects and promotes the rights of students. It operates in accordance with Ministerial guidelines. The head of CGs in secondary and tertiary education is selected by children through anonymous voting.

community⁶⁴ participation in decision making, as part of school life, is reinforced by being brought to a higher level of importance. The law foresees some the right of the child to complain on incidents of violence or maltreatment in school settings through the creation of a Commission of Ethics and Behavior in schools nationwide.⁶⁵

3.1 Expenditures in Education

Public funding in education has shown an average annual increase, but the expenditure remains well below international standards. Merely **58 percent** of public spending in education is allocated to basic education; an average of **18 percent** is allocated to secondary education, whereas **19 percent** are allocated to higher education (Table 3.)⁶⁶

Year	GDP (Million EUR)	Ratio Public Expenditure in Education GDP (%)	Ratio Public Expenditure in General Secondary Education GDP (%)	Ratio Public Expenditure in Vocational Secondary Education GDP (%)	Ratio of funding in education to Public Expenditure (%)	Ratio of funding in education GDP (%)	TOTAL expenditure in education GDP (%)
2009	8.634	2,2%	0,5%	0,2%	11%	3,8%	4,6%
2010	9.383	2,4%	0,5%	0,2%	12%	3,9%	4,8%
2011	10.544	2,3%	0,5%	0,3%	13%	4,2%	5,2%
2012	11.640	2,3%	0,5%	0,3%	14%	4,3%	5,3%

Table 3: Public funding in education, 2009-2012

It is difficult to obtain official figures on how expenditures are distributed across sectoral needs and priorities, but anecdotal data shows that most of the government's budget in education is dedicated mainly to teacher's salaries and development of infrastructure. Little remains for investment in ensuring quality. From consultations with government agencies, such as the Institute for Educational Development (IED) and the National Inspectorate for Pre-University Education, expenditures dedicated to improving the quality of learning, development of quality curricula, fostering of diversity in schools and education-related research to inform development of new policies is almost the same as it was 20 years ago. The enhancement of the school financial autonomy will be an important mean to invest in children's quality of learning⁶⁷ and is embodied in the new Law for Pre-University Education.

64. Law for Pre-University Education nr. 69/2012, Article 34, Boards of Education are composed of parents, students, teachers, representatives of local government and community members. The Boards contribute to the functioning of the institutions and report on its activities to the parents' council. The main duties of the Boards are to approve the annual and mid-term plans of the educational institution; to approve the plan of expenditures and curricula that is drafted by the educational institution. The composition of the Board, its rights, other duties and the process of its members' selection are defined in the Ministerial guidelines.

65. Law for Pre-University Education nr. 69/2012, Article 33, Commission of Ethics and Behavior is composed of teachers, parents and students. The Commission's duty is to investigate any complaints made and propose to the Director any follow-up measures.

66. GoA, MoES, Albania's Answers to EC Questionnaire, April 2010. http://www.mash.gov.al/File/Integrimi/ALBANIA-ANSWERS_TO_EC_QUESTIONNAIRE-Chapter_26-P_3207_3288.pdf

67. Consultation with Robert Gjedia, Head of National Inspectorate in Pre-University Education

3.2 Access and Net Enrollment in Education

Pre-school education for children aged 3-6 is offered in 1,761 public kindergartens. The NSPE (2004-2015⁶⁸) introduced "pre-preparatory classes", aiming that by 2015, all 5 year-old children in Albania will attend such classes and make a smooth transition to school. The overall net enrolment ratio in preschool education remains low at **59 percent**. Girls' enrolment is believed to be even lower.⁶⁹ In urban areas, the enrolment rate stands at **68 percent** and in rural areas **46 percent**. The net enrolment ratio in *basic education* is reported at **86 percent**, with slightly lower figures for girls, at **82 percent**.⁷⁰ Experiences from the field, especially in remote areas, show that regular attendance throughout the school year is interrupted for several months, due to poor road infrastructure and inclement weather conditions. Roma children, who do not possess birth certificates, are denied their right to education. However, MoES issued an official guideline in 2010, which now grants Roma children the right to enrol and receive free textbooks in basic education. During 2001-2010, about **34.4 percent** of Roma children 7-18 remained illiterate since they have never attended school; the average years of schooling for Roma children are 5.6 for males and 5.3 for females. *Secondary education* is organized into three years and is optional and available in 455⁷¹ schools. Most students completing basic education and who do not enrol in secondary schools become either unemployed or self-employed in the agriculture sector. The attendance ratio from basic to secondary education is reported at **89 percent** by MoES; NGOs report a rate of **84 percent**, slightly lower for girls, at **82 percent**.⁷² Further review of available literature also points at correlations between school attendance and actual experiences of poverty. For example, in the study⁷³ commissioned by UNICEF Albania with a representative sample of 3,400 families with children under the age of 18, due to lack of interest and opportunity to attend school, about **12 percent** of children from the poorest families in this survey, aged 11-15 years, do not attend school regularly.

3.3 Vulnerable Groups:

Roma

The vast majority of Roma parents have declared in various studies that⁷⁴ they face difficulties with their children's education due to economic hardships. Difficulties in buying books and other school items, the lack of adequate clothing and poor nutrition tend to force Roma children to stay away from education. According to MoES, the official drop-out rate for Roma children is high, at nearly **4 percent**.⁷⁵ Egyptian children's tendency to attend school is higher than that of Roma children; the official drop-out rate for Egyptian children is **3.4 percent**.⁷⁶

Poor living conditions make it extra difficult for Roma children to attend school and to complete their homework. Internal migration of some Roma families, weak comprehension of Albanian, early marriage for girls and discrimination all contribute to the current realities. In many cases,

68. Addendum to the Albanian National Education Strategy on Integrated Early Childhood Development

69. UNICEF, The State of the World's Children, Children in an Urban World (2012.) http://www.unicef.org/sowc/files/SOWC_2012-Main_Report_EN_21Dec2011.pdf,

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. Albania: Review of Human Resources Development, European Training Foundation (ETF), 2010.

73. Urban Research Institute, National Center for Social Studies, Reforming Economic Aid: From Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction, Tirana, 2011.

74. UNICEF Albania, Mapping of Roma Children in Albania, 2011

75. MoES, 0 Drop-Out Action Plan, 2011.

76. Ibid.

Roma children drop out of school before the end of the academic year and many abandon school altogether, contributing to an overall literacy rate for Roma children of only **34 percent**. Table 4 shows the illiteracy rate of Roma children, according to the findings of a household survey conducted in various Roma communities across Albania.

District	Number of children (8-18 years)	Illiteracy level	Do not attend school	Percentage
Shkoder	102	81.4	95	93.1
Beltoja	11	81.8	11	100
Peshkopi	16	68.8	15	93.8
Kukës	16	87.5	14	87.5
Fushë Ali	8	25	7	87.5
Shupenza	5	100	5	100
Farka/Tirana	24	50	21	87.5
Qafë e Vishës (Himara)	4	75	4	100
Gjirokastra	12	41.7	11	91.7
Vrion	7	57.1	6	85.7
Kavaja	6	83.3	6	100
Total	211	72.5	195	92.4

Table 4:⁷⁷ Illiteracy level and school attendance for children aged 8-18, based on location

Children with Disabilities

Lack of reliable statistics on CWD remains an issue; there are an estimated 120,000 children with some form of disability in Albania⁷⁸. MoES unofficially reports to have 2,123 CWD enrolled in basic education, out of whom, 736 attending special schools.⁷⁹ According to MoES, the official drop-out rate for CWD is high, at **7 percent**.⁸⁰

MoES reports that about 103 CWD benefit from home schooling. Despite the fact that Inclusive Education and Vocational Education are spelled out by MOES as opportunities to facilitate access to education and employment for CWD, very little progress is observed in the field. A variety of practical issues hinder CWD participation in basic and secondary education, including limited capacity of teachers on disability issues, lack of assistant teachers in situations of overcrowded class rooms, poor infrastructure, lack of proper transportation, discrimination and bullying from older children, school staff and parents of other children. Poor cooperation between professionals of different disciplines and between different sectors of local government, the lack of teaching materials and adjusted school programs for CWD remains as ongoing hurdles for CWD to realize their right to education. Education professionals do not give high importance to early intervention and REAs are not taking concrete steps to include CWD in preschool education. Cooperation with parents of CWD is not well understood by education professionals. The law for Pre-University Education anticipates the regulation of most of the above mentioned issues.

77. UNICEF Albania, Mapping of Roma Children in Albania, 2011

78. Save the Children, "I am Like You," 2003. (Although the source of information is quite old there is no other source of information to withdraw the number of CWD in the country.)

79. ADRF 2011, Monitoring report of the implementation of the action plan of the National Strategy on People with Disabilities in 2010

80. MoES, 0 Drop-Out Action Plan, 2011.

SC interviews⁸¹ with 25 CWD and their parents show that families often fight for economic survival and cannot dedicate sufficient time to their children's development. Many of these children need free transportation to attend schools, since not all the families can afford to pay daily transportation costs. Parents of CWD raise the need for services where children can receive specialized care. The interviewed parents confess to high levels of discrimination in their neighborhoods. On the other hand, they feel safe in the school and feel supported by the teachers and peers. Most of the CWD interviewed feel insecure to stay on their own in the playground or to even walk in the street without their parents.

Children in Contact with the Law

Children in contact with the law compose a group of neglected children who are missing out on education services, both in detention and pre-detention institutions. Despite the fact that a MoU was signed between the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and MoES in 2008 to offer free basic education in the Institutes for Execution of Penal Decisions (IEPD), education classes are running only in the IEPDs of Kavaja and Korca. Three other IEPDs, in Vlora, Tirana and Lezha do not have a teacher appointed and lack basic infrastructure and teaching materials. MoJ⁸² reports the number of juveniles aged 14-18 years in contact with law to be increasing every year, therefore, the need to offer formal education is obvious in order to support their chances for reintegration to society. As reported by the General Directorate of Prisons (GDP) in 2008, the total number of juveniles convicted was 408, increasing to 411 in 2009 and 656 in 2010. The GDP similarly reports that the number of juveniles held in pre-detention have increased on an annual basis since 2009.⁸³

Children Affected by Blood Feuds

Blood feuds, the centuries old custom, banned during four decades of communist rules, has plagued Albania by locking away hundreds of families, including children, who cannot go out in the public for fear of a bloody settling of scores. The Committee of Nationwide Reconciliation (NCR) reports in 2011⁸⁴ that around 5,000 people are affected by blood feuds. Albeit the murder of women and children is prohibited, most of them are forced to hide themselves or remain isolated. More than 900 children in Albania cannot go to school for the same reason. A few of them have been assisted by REAs through the Second Chance⁸⁵ program, by providing home-based education, but still it is very difficult to continue to provide productive results in their education under such conditions.

3.4 Quality

The overall literacy rate is reported at **99 percent**⁸⁶ with a slight decline among the population living in mountainous areas where the level of literacy is **97 percent**.⁸⁷ Despite that illiteracy rates are low, the International PISA exam results for 2009⁸⁸, ranks the performance of Albanian

81. FGDs conducted in Gjirokastra and Korca, June 11-15, 2012.

82. Mo J, Annual Statistics 2009, 2010, <http://www.justice.gov.al/>. Figures for 2011 are not available.

83. General Directorate of Prisons official data (<http://www.dpbsh.gov.al/?fq=brenda&m=shfaqart&aid=272>) 2009 (70,) 2010 (93,) and 2011 (99.)

84. SETimes.com, 13/10/2011

85. The Second Chance Education has not produced visible results. The number of children isolated remains at about 900. The newly approved Law for Pre-University Education foresees possibilities for distance learning.

86. UNICEF, The State of the World's Children, Children in an Urban World (2012,) http://www.unicef.org/sowc/files/SOWC_2012-Main_Report_EN_21Dec2011.pdf,

87. INSTAT, Demographic Health Survey, 2008

88. OECD, PISA 2009, Results: Executive Summary (Figures are based on the latest PISA exam of 2009. The next PISA exam will be repeated in late 2012.)

students significantly below the average of OECD standards.⁸⁹ A strong correlation is reported to exist between PISA exam results and children’s place of residence (i.e. urban vs. rural), socio-economic backgrounds, school autonomy, student-teacher ratio, teachers’ level of education and available teaching resources. The PISA results rank Albania at the bottom in Europe, at the same level with Argentina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Panama and Peru.

Academic year	Ratio teacher-student		
	Basic Education	Secondary	Vocational Secondary
2007-2008	16	20	14
2008 -2009	17	16	12
2009 -2010	16	16	11

Table 5: Teacher-student ratio reported by MoES

From observations and unofficial reporting of REAs, in remote villages, the teacher-to-student ratio may be 5-7 children per teacher; in Tirana schools and in other main cities, there are classes that accommodate more than 40 children (Table 5.)

The number of combined classes is increasing, especially in the mountainous northeast. High teacher-student ratio in urban schools can easily contribute to the risk of school dropouts or hidden drop outs, especially for slow learners, those coming from families with low economic background, Roma and Egyptian children and CWD.

Despite investments in improving infrastructure, these changes are obvious only in schools located in main cities of Albania. From an assessment conducted,⁹⁰ improvements are necessary in schools, especially amongst those in smaller towns and villages. Needs in infrastructure for pre-university education include: (1) *Kindergartens* - buildings, furniture and supply of teaching materials is poor (2) *Basic education*-physical infrastructure does not meet the current standards (especially in rural areas) and (3) *general high schools and vocational schools* show lack of laboratory equipment and insufficient space.

Children and adolescents of Burrel, Rogozhina, Cerrik, Korce, Vlora and Gjirokaster expressed in FGDs with SC⁹¹ that their schools are poorly invested in and under-resourced; there is lack of laboratories and heating systems in the winter. In addition, road infrastructure is another factor that slows down school attendance and performance of children, especially in villages or small towns. In Cerrik, about 100 children in basic and secondary schools find it difficult to attend due to long distances between schools and homes, which involve about 3 km of walking. In the village of Rripal/Burrel, school attendance in the winter time is nearly impossible for several months due to long distances, as well as the need to cross a river where there is no bridge. These problems affect mainly young children and adolescent girls. In addition, CWD and their parents in Korca, Vlora and Gjirokastra express the need for free transportation in order to attend schools. Only a few SC project schools are partially accessible for those in wheelchairs, with a ramp constructed at the main entrance, but this is not enough to make the building entirely accessible.

89. OECD average points are 493 in reading 493 in math 496 and 501 in science.

90. “Infrastructure Projects Facility in the Western Balkans” funded by the European Union, 2010

91. FGDs conducted the first two weeks of June, 2012.

Teacher training is offered through in-service teacher training and pre-service teacher training in teaching colleges. The IED set up in 2009 a draft to better orient policies in the in-service teacher training at country level and the National Inspectorate of Pre-University Education (NIPE) established in 2009 new measures to inspect teaching quality with the aim of providing recommendations for improvement to MoES. Surveys with teachers show that the teacher training system is not able to respond to changes in the society and in the education system, since the main training subjects delivered in the in-service training activities are too subject-oriented. Teaching colleges involve little, if at all, training about how to address the specific needs of students. *The above is further reinforced by the perceptions of children and adolescents consulted by SC, who claim they like to have trained and friendly teachers, who do not use psychological and physical violence against them.* The main concern expressed by children is that teachers do not fully understand the various forms of violence and harassment. Parents view it important to have teachers who accept and respect diversity, as well as model such values to their children. Consultations with the IED show that teacher training needs to be oriented toward addressing the needs of Roma and CWD in particular, by incorporating more key aspects around non-discrimination, equity and gender.

3.5 Safety and Wellbeing

*Although most children consulted by SC saw education as one of the most important rights that children have, schools were described by the majority of the children **as their least favorite place to be** due to violence of teachers and/or peers, poorly equipped classes, discrimination based on ethnicity, poverty and disability.*

Parents find education of their children of a high value which can guarantee a good future for them. Thus they are willing to contribute to the education of their children, but field experiences show they have no power to oppose any problem they may have with their child's education. *From consultations with parents of Roma and CWD in Korca, Vlora and Gjorakastrë, it is obvious that since they come from poor backgrounds, their cooperation with the schools remain very weak. They have to face a mentality of parents whose children are not Roma or CWD, who refuse to accept that all children have the right to be in the same class.*

Children themselves, as one of the main agents of change, are required by law to participate in decision-making on issues concerning them in schools, through organizing themselves in Children's Government (CGs). The reality country-wide is that CG representatives are selected by teachers, not by their peers, and in the vast majority of schools they are not operational. This is due to a lack of importance adults give to child participation, as well as the lack of understanding of the concept of 'meaningful child participation.' In some schools supported by NGOs, CGs are empowered to influence the school environment, yet much needs to be done to increase the representation of vulnerable children from poor family backgrounds, especially those from ethnic minorities and CWD.

3.6 Early Childhood Care and Development

Child development at an early stage of life has a critical role for good health, growth, success in education and in life. Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) encompasses all the processes that socio-emotional, cognitive, motor, and communication development of children from birth to school-going age. Nutrition, caring families and communities, support for early learning

and psycho-social development, and access to health care are among the necessary conditions for young children's survival and well-being, and for their healthy development into well-functioning adulthood.

Commitments by GoA to Albania's youngest children flow from the National Plan of Action for Children, 2012-2015. This document addresses their right to development, from pre-school and up to primary education. Further, it lays out various core areas in need of further attention, including: strengthening communication and transparency of LGUs and cooperation amongst institutions at local level in order to better respond to children's needs. The promotion of alternative forms of support for Roma and CWD are some of the special measures this action plan puts forth, aimed at ensuring that central and local government structures will provide better services for children under 6.

Access and Quality

The division of institutions providing services for young children addresses two main groups of children: children under 3 and children between the ages of 3-6. Apart from issues surrounding enrolment rates at preschool age (3-6 years,) some positive attention has been evidenced by MoES through the investment in *infrastructure and application of standards to measure achievement of children*, developed in cooperation with UNICEF Albania and SC. Localized interventions by UNICEF Albania (in mountainous areas) has provided needed access for children at preschool age primarily through community-based programs.

Although meaningful interventions at the 0-3 group are crucial to future education and development, the actual situation is quite different and challenging. Provision of care and development for this group age is offered mainly in nurseries. The very few nurseries existing in the country are located in main cities and towns. Nurseries do not exist in villages. In Tirana, there are 29 nurseries accommodating about 2,000 children, a number which is far too low compared with the real number of children under 3 currently living in Tirana⁹². In cities such as Shkoder, Durres and Fier, there are about 2-4 nurseries, while smaller towns have only one nursery, with a capacity to accommodate not more than 50-70 children. There are no official data on the percentage of children 0-3 attending nurseries in the country.

The responsibility to administer nurseries is assigned to the Local Government Units (LGU,) including municipalities or communes. The only responsibility of the Ministry of Health (MoH) is to provide guidance to nurseries on nutrition issues. LGUs lack funding, and expertise to address children of this age. UNICEF Albania carried out a study in 2011 with LGU representatives and staff in nurseries of nine cities⁹³ and towns (excluding Tirana⁹⁴) which raised a number of very important issues around administration and service provision. The report notes that (I) the infrastructure is very poor and underinvested due to limited financial means of local government; (II) (excluding

92. Anecdotal data from consultation with employees in General Directorate of Nurseries in Tirana.

93. Berat, Kavaja, Elbasan, Puke, Fier, Rreshen, Rubik, Shkodra and Durres.

94. The situation in nurseries in Tirana is presented quite differently in this study. Seen from the perspective of parents, they choose to send children in the nursery due to: (1) the payment is affordable compared with other alternatives of care; (2) food is very appropriate with children's age; (3) they trust in the institution and its staff; (4) they appreciate the care and development provided; (5) staff applies development and education programs for children (still parents of children with special needs ask for further staff qualification to respond to their children's pace of development) and (6) they report good dialogue with nursery staff.

Tirana) there is a total lack of knowledge and application of standards⁹⁵ in nurseries and LGUs; (III) there is a lack of appropriate toys, learning materials and playgrounds; (IV) the arrangement of furniture provides no opportunities to promote playing and other development activities for children (very often children 0-2 are kept inside; (V) staff is not trained on the importance of holistic development of children (including development of children with special needs);⁹⁶ (VI) nutrition standards developed by MoH are not known and not respected and kitchens are poorly equipped; (VII) LGUs lack professional staff to provide technical support, training activities and monitoring of nurseries; (VIII) there is almost a total lack of psychologists or social workers; (IX) there is a total lack of knowledge of staff on how to develop and apply development/education plans for children at different ages or for those with special needs and (X) poor communication and practices of communication amongst staff. In addition, low salaries of nursery staff compared to teachers of preschool education give them no motivation to provide good services.

Although the tuition fee in nurseries varies from 2,500 – 3,500 ALL⁹⁷ (around 18- 25 euro/month), poor families in villages, and Roma communities, cannot afford it. The majority of these families rely on Economic Aid, (if they are successful to benefit from it due to loads of procedures and documentation that the process includes), which varies from 800-7,800 ALL per month⁹⁸ (around 5.8- 56.5 euro/month.)⁹⁹

95. According to the General Directorate of Nurseries in Tirana, the achievement of standards that are officially obligatory for all nurseries include (1) staff selection, (2) staff training and qualification, (3) nursery' organization and administration, (4) staff level of interaction with children, (5) physical environment, (6) healthy food, (7) children with special needs, (8) collaboration with families, (9) documentation in the institution.

96. In some towns, staff reports that their last training dates back nearly about 10 years and was provided by SC. This coincides with the ECCD training program conducted by SC in 2001 on holistic development of children 0-6.

97. Urban Research Institute, National Center for Social Studies, Reforming Economic Aid: From Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction, Tirana, 2011.

98. *ibid*

99. *ibid*

Chapter 4: Right to Protection

Overview

Abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, neglect, poverty and social exclusion are considered some of main human rights violations facing children and adolescents in Albania. Social protection systems are not oriented toward providing care to the most excluded groups. Interventions by civil society came as a need to fill a vacuum in social policies and these interventions have contributed to the development of programs and models aimed at supporting children by preventing risks and provision of child-friendly services. In the framework of the implementation of child protection policies in Albania, measures have been taken to build structures responsible for child protection and to create referral mechanisms to maximize a functioning protection system. Although coordination between central, regional and local levels, and with NGOs, has improved, divisions of tasks and responsibilities of relevant bodies are not clearly defined. CPUs, initiated and funded by SC, Terre des Hommes (TdH) and World Vision (WV) constitute major building blocks of the current system. CPUs operate at local level as part of a referral system for children at risk. Progress has been demonstrated, but further efforts are needed to fully implement and maximize existing legislation and policies to ensure effective child protection with equity. Some of the main challenges CPUs are faced with include:¹⁰⁰

- Poor coordination at local level and difficulties if service provision due to a lack of a committed budget;
- Ensuring confidentiality in case management;
- The lack of alternative services for child care and family support
- Lack of community awareness of the role and mandate of CPUs.
- The link between the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights and the State Social Service should be better defined, especially what concerns social services.

An Action Plan urges LGUs to take over the financial responsibility related to the transformation of existing residential institutions and the establishment of services. A child allowance system was introduced in March 2011 for families benefitting from economic aid; however, the existing scheme has not been functioning properly as payments to eligible families are too low to have any significant impact.

4.1 Legal Frameworks

Lots remain to ensure that standards and structures can fully support the practical implementation of current legislation.¹⁰¹ Through the NSDI (2007 – 2013) and the Action Plan for Children (2012 – 2015,) the GoA seems firm in its commitment to child protection. The law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child was adopted in November 2010 and establishes institutional mechanisms to ensure respect of the rights of children by the family, state and third parties at central and local level. The law provides for the establishment of a National Council for Protection of Children's Rights as an advisory body to the Council of Ministers (Figure 2.) The State Agency for Protection of Children's Rights is tasked to ensure coordination of actions in the field. Child Rights Units (CRU) have been established in 9/12 regions and Child Protection Units (CPUs) are functioning

100. BKTF, *Situation Analysis on Child Protection Systems in Albania, 2011*.

101. BKTF, *Situation Analysis on Child Protection Systems in Albania 2011*.

in only 28¹⁰² municipalities and communes (out of 65 municipalities and 308 communes or just **7.5 percent** coverage.) A 2009 evaluation of CPUs in Albania by UNICEF and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) assessed CPUs to be a functional model. The evaluation shows measurable results on the positive impact of CPUs on family welfare as well as the coordination of networking at local level. Furthermore, a study by SC on the perceptions and opinions of 56 children aged 6-17 who benefitted from services of eight CPUs in urban areas revealed a positive opinion about the quality of services; most children surveyed stated these services did indeed have a positive impact on their lives.¹⁰³

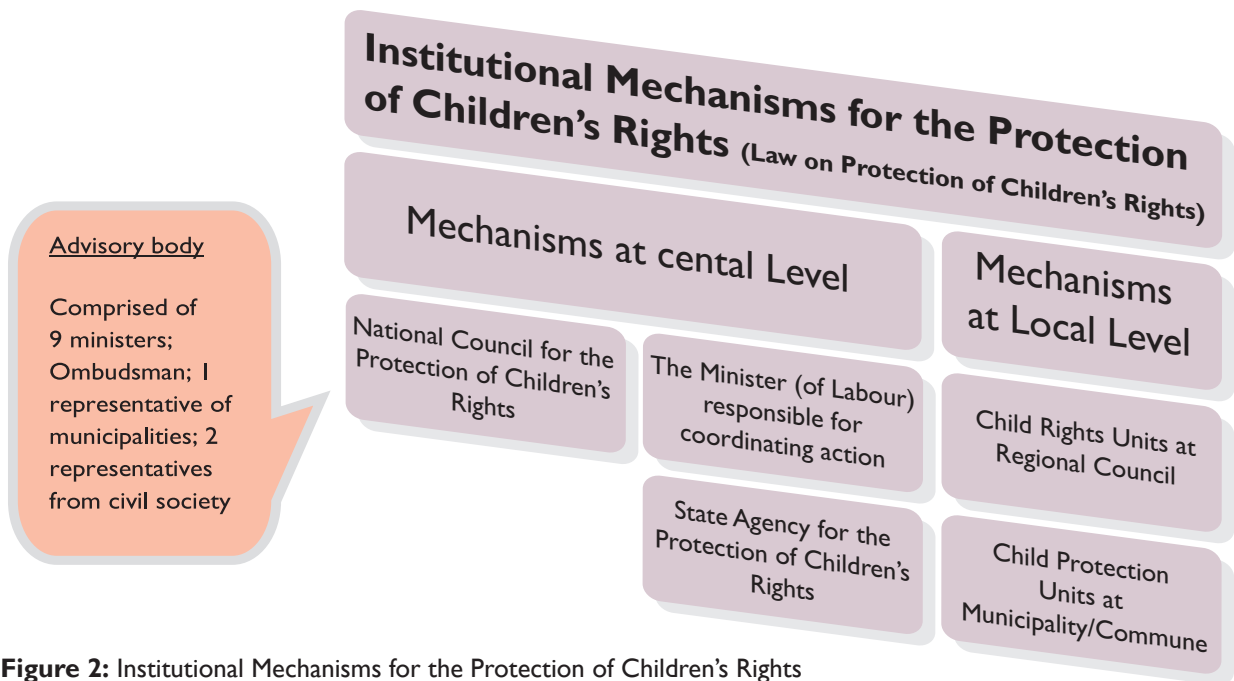


Figure 2: Institutional Mechanisms for the Protection of Children's Rights

According to the Head of the State Agency for Protection of Children's Rights (June 2012,) capacity building of staff in regards to data collection, analysis and standardization of data remain a necessity. Furthermore, capacity building is needed for CRUs at regional level and CPUs at local level in regard to identification, assessment and referral of cases of abuse, including case management. Although the Law on Protection of the Rights of the Child foresees the protection of children from physical and psychological violence, concerns remain regarding the use of violence against children, including use of corporal punishment. Work is currently underway by UNICEF Albania to develop an Operational Manual of Child Rights Mechanisms for officials of CPUs and CRUs with regards to the implementation of the law and related bylaws. A UNICEF sponsored training program in all 12 regions is planned for early 2013.

4.2 Birth Registration

According to a study conducted by Tirana Legal Aid Service (TLAS),¹⁰⁴ the main causes of children not being registered, before the amendment of the law on civil status (Law 10129, dated 11.05.2009 "On Civil Status",) were: lack of information on birth registration (e.g. within 45 days of birth,) after which the birth must be proved in a court of law and parents must pay a fine of 2,000 ALL;

102. The actual number is not clear as some representatives of MoLSAEO have reported a number of 58.

103. SC, Listen and Involve Us More: Participatory Assessment with Children on Child Protection Unit Services, 2011.

104. BKTF, Situation Analysis on Child Protection Systems in Albania 2011.

families living too far away from the registry office which may mean that travel expenses are too expensive for parents; children born abroad and parents not having all the documentation needed for the registration of the child. Instructions by MoES to all public schools to have Roma children enroll without presenting their birth certificates provided new opportunities for unregistered children to attend schools.

A mapping of Roma children in Albania, conducted in 2011, estimates that about **5.7 percent** of children, whose families participated in the survey, are not registered in the civil registry and thus remains invisible and excluded from services (Table 6.¹⁰⁵)

District	Number of unregistered children	Number of unregistered children (% of the total survey population)	District	Number of unregistered children ¹⁰⁶	Number of unregistered children (% of the total survey population)
Berat	38	10,6	Kurbin	4	1,1
Delvinë	0	0	Lezhë	3	0,8
Devoll	6	1,7	Lushnje	10	2,8
Dibër	1	0,3	Mat	0	0
Durrës	14	3,9	Peqin	0	0
Elbasan	21	5,9	Përmet	2	0,6
Fier	42	11,7	Pogradec	6	1,7
Gjirokastrë	12	3,3	Sarandë	13	3,6
Kavajë	7	1,9	Shkodër	41	11,4
Korçë	21	5,8	Tiranë	59	16,4
Krujë	44	12,3	Vlorë	7	1,9
Kuçovë	4	1,1			
Kukës	4	1,1	Total	359	100

Table 6: Number of unregistered Roma children aged 0 to 18, based on parents' declaration.

4.3 Children without Appropriate Care (CWAC)

According to SC, children without appropriate care are children who are not receiving suitable, continuous and quality care, nurture and guidance at a physical, emotional, social and psychological level, from either their families or from other primary care givers.

Child Trafficking and Domestic Violence

According to the US State Department "Trafficking in Persons" Report – June 2012,¹⁰⁷ Albania remains a source country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor, including forced begging of children. Albanian women and children continue to be subjected to sex trafficking within the country. For the first time, the GoA disbursed funding in 2011 to NGOs for the provision of shelter services to victims, providing the equivalent of approximately

105. UNICEF Albania, Mapping of Roma Children in Albania, 2011.

106. Table only reflects the results of a survey conducted with Roma families based on parents' declaration.

107. US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report, 2012. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192594.pdf> /

\$9,775 to three NGOs. The Serious Crimes Prosecution division reported investigating 27 human trafficking suspects in 2011, compared to 29 suspects investigated in 2010. GoA reported having identified 84 new trafficking victims via the national referral mechanism, compared with 97 victims identified in 2010. Reported figures by NGOs are usually much higher.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) drafted and approved the Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and Referral of Victims or Potential Victims of Trafficking in July 2011. This document puts the MoLSAEO/State Social Service in charge of the identification and referral of victims of trafficking.¹⁰⁸

The GoA supported the launch of a donor-funded national campaign entitled “Childhood is not Exploitation for Work” which targeted schools and at-risk children to raise awareness on forced labor; a national toll-free 24 hrs hotline for victims and potential victims of trafficking, ‘ALO 116,’ was launched in 2011.

The 2010 Annual Report of ‘Vatra Psychosocial Center’¹⁰⁹ states that most of the at-risk girls come from families with pronounced social problems, including families with divorced parents, single headed households and families experiencing domestic violence. Despite the fact that apparently victims of trafficking or potential victims come from urban areas, they belong mainly to families who live in rural areas, as many young people come to urban areas looking for better life opportunities.

Internal trafficking has become a matter of increasing concern for Albania. The GoA has prioritized this phenomenon in the **National Anti-Trafficking Strategy (2011-2013.)** But the treatment and protection of victims of internal trafficking is still a problem. Experts in the country have expressed concern that local police has not fully recognized internal child trafficking as a real issue; the norm is to view such cases either as exploitation for prostitution or child maltreatment. According to the Vatra Psychosocial Center, the trend of internal trafficking has steadily been increasing since 2004 (Figure 4.) The 2004 -2006 ratio of girls trafficked outside the borders of Albania, compared to exploitation within the country, has been 80-20 percent; for 2007- 2009 this ratio changed to 50-50 percent and in 2010 this ratio was 30-70 percent.

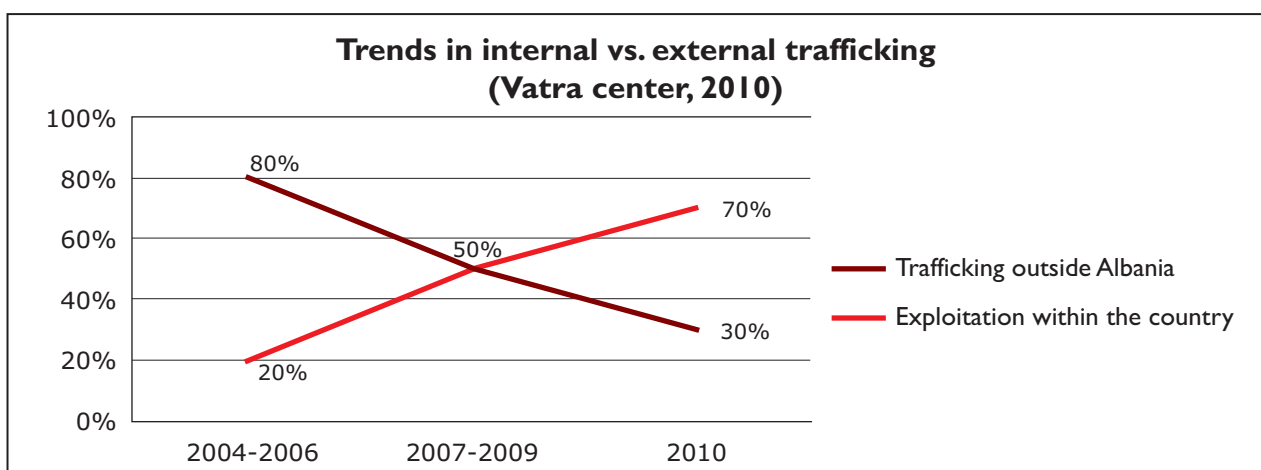


Figure 3: Trends in internal vs. external trafficking (2004-2010.)

108. “Vatra” Psycho-Social Centre- 2010 Annual Report.

109. Vatra is a non-profit organization created in 1999 and licensed by MoLSAEO. The Center provides direct support to women and young girls victims of trafficking and domestic violence. It provides rehabilitation and reintegration services to victims.

Ms. Iva Zaimi, the National Coordinator of the GoA for the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings, confirmed that the trend in cross-boarder trafficking in human beings has seen a decline, while internal trafficking has become a lot more evident.¹¹⁰ Also, it has been noted that trafficking is not related only to exploitation for prostitution, but also labor exploitation, begging or other forms, which constitute the current challenge in the fight against trafficking in Albania. Adolescents, especially girls, constitute the main target group of those at particular high risk.

Domestic violence remains a deeply worrying phenomenon in Albania. Viewed and treated as a family issue within a broader patriarchal socio-cultural context, domestic violence in Albania, differently from human trafficking, is extended across the country, affecting all strata of society.¹¹¹ Currently, there are only three Centers which are managed by NGOs that provide accommodation and rehabilitation services for victims of violence, including victims of trafficking. In September 2010, the GoA approved the Law 10329, dated 30 September 2010, which provides for the establishment and operation of a National Centre of Social Care Service for victims of domestic violence. Addressing domestic violence and human trafficking by the print and electronic media is another problem due to the fact that in many cases different media outlets have published personal data on the identity of victims, flagrantly violating their right to confidentiality, which as a result could likely jeopardize people's lives.

What remains a concern is the urgent accommodation of victims of violence who require Immediate Protection Order. Pursuant the Law, the Court has a deadline up to 48 hours to issue the Immediate Protection Order for the victims of violence over 18 years old and 24 hours for the minors. This deadline must be minimally 12 hours in order to give immediate priority to the protection of the victim and to her housing.

The Child Helpline 'ALO 116' has been one of the first aid and counseling services for children who want to speak about their problems. The Hotline staff is trained to refer acts of violence or other forms of abuse to appropriate authorities. During interviews with children who drafted the UNCRC alternative report, ALO 116, was mentioned as one of the few methods children use to address their problems.

Children on the Move

Due to rapid urbanization and people's migratory movements, accompanied and unaccompanied children are becoming more and more frequent. This phenomenon has brought out both negative and positive consequences for children. Key factors contributing to children on the move include economic hardships in the family, lack of employment, temptation to earn money quickly and gain access to better education and services. The qualitative study 'Phenomenon of Children on the Move in the Views of Children'¹¹² emphasizes both negative and positive aspects, such as acquisition of foreign languages, acquisition of technical skills and socialization skills and improved resilience in coping with difficult situations. The negative aspects include violence and abuse, forced labor and lack of access to health services. The report points out two major profiles of children on the move:

110. BKTF 2011 Situation Analysis.

111. Vatra Psychosocial Center, Annual Report, 2010.

112. BKTF, Phenomenon of Children on the Move: In the Views of Children," 2012.

- Children from very poor families belonging to the Roma community who move for economic reasons and associated with lack of key services for children in the destination areas. This move is quite frequent and shorter in duration.
- Children from families with a relatively better economic situation who move for better education and health services. The move is longer in time duration and less frequent.

Destination countries for these children are usually Kosovo, Greece and Italy. Regarding children accompanied by their families within Albania, key destinations include Tirana, Durrës and Saranda during the summer time. With regard to access to services, the interviewed children say that they have access to health and education services. They said they have attended school for some months or for a couple of years; the majority cannot read or write. The report emphasizes the risk of exploitation and a considerable part of children might face social isolation; drop out and quite often experience difficult working conditions associated with low wages.

4.4 Child Labor

SC views child work in its broader sense, as activities children undertake to contribute to their own or family's economy. The GoA Action Plan for Children 2012-2015 in regard to achieving its strategic goal of "protection of children from the worst forms of labor" links this goal with the attainment of 2 objectives:

- Strengthening of measures for prevention through guaranteeing an efficient protection for children exploited in the worst types of labor;
- Enhancing the role of the State Labor Inspectorate for children's protection and the improvement of the situation of children involved in labor.

Efficient protection of exploited children in the worst types of labor relates to article 12/b of the Penal Code "on the abuse and exploitation of begging and other types of work that damage the physical and mental health of the child". The law sets the minimum age of employment at 16 years and regulates the amount and type of labor that children under the age of 18 may perform. Children between the ages of 16 and 18 can work in certain specified jobs. While the law provides that the MoLSAEO is responsible for enforcing the minimum age requirements, it lacks resources to adequately enforce the law. The US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011 states most forms of child labor in Albania occur in the informal sector, although cases of child labor have also been uncovered in shoe and textile factories.¹¹³

According to the Children's Human Rights Center of Albania (CRCA,) estimates released in 2010 show that more than 50,000 children under the age of 18 worked at least part time. The majority of child laborers worked as street or shop vendors, beggars, farmers or shepherds, drug runners and factory workers. Research suggests that begging starts at a very young age--as early as four or five years of age. While the criminal code prohibits the exploitation of children for begging, the police rarely enforce this law.

According to BKTF¹¹⁴ the phenomenon of child labor remains widespread and is mainly caused by poverty. This is also supported by interviewed children in the Street Center in Tirana and children participating in FBSH's center (June 06, 2012.) Different reports cite different studies and data.

¹¹³ http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=186322#wrapper

¹¹⁴ BKTF, Situation Analysis, 2011.

According to UNICEF's State of World's Children Report (2011,) in terms of documented rates of child labor between 2000-2009 in Albania, the percentage of children aged between 5–14 years involved in child labor was recorded at **12 percent** (14 percent males and 9 percent females.) In a publication by the Center "Children of Today," the rate of child labor for children 5-14 years old stands at **23 percent**; however, ILO, referring to INSTAT data, declares that **32 percent** of children 6-17 years old work.¹¹⁵

The worst forms of child labor in Albania can be found among street involved children, trafficked in children, children involved in illicit activities, children working in the formal sector and children working in the agriculture sector. The main reasons for children being engaged in work include poverty, parents' unemployment or migration, disrupted family environments, poor school attendance, lack of schools near the residence area, expulsion from the school and general poor performance and dislike of the school.¹¹⁶

In a FGD with 12 (3 girls) children from the Center for Street Children in Tirana (June 2012), children show resilience toward turning back to street. One boy said "... I want to find a job, like cleaning the apartment building and with the money I would earn, I want to pay the rent and never turn back to street."

The ILO, in partnership with other actors, will continue to assist the GoA to mainstream the elimination of the worst forms of child labor through national strategies, by building capacity, by assisting in the full enforcement of legislation, through awareness raising and activities at the community level with at-risk children and their families through:

- Supporting the Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) in the identification of children, assessment of their risks, and referral of children in order to provide them with viable alternatives in three cities: Tirana, Korca and Berat through the Local Action Committees and four Multi-Disciplinary Groups.
- Prepare a National Report on Child Labor in Albania, including a National Plan of Action against child labor.
- Support multidisciplinary approaches in direct services to working children and children at risk through the provision of non-formal education; formal education, recreational activities; vocational training and nutrition.
- Conduct activities with peer educators in three youth centers based on the Life Skills Based Education (LSBE.)

4.5 Physical and Humiliating Punishment

The Report on Children's Rights in Albania to the UNCRC Committee, prepared by children with the assistance of BKTF (November 2011,) states that Albanian children are victims of discrimination, violence and maltreatment. Violence can be found in different forms in families and schools. *Children accept abuse by adults, be it their parents or teachers, because they consider it a form of education and an accepted social norm.* According to the "End All Corporal Punishment of Children" Global Initiative (2012,) current legislative frameworks in Albania do not prohibit all forms of corporal punishment in childrearing. The Criminal Code was amended in 2008 by Law No. 9859, with the insertion of

¹¹⁵ ILO, Albania Decent Work Country Program Document, 2008-2010.

¹¹⁶ ILO Albania, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/geneva/download/decentwork/albania.pdf>

article 124b: “Physical or psychological abuse of the child by the person who is obliged to care for him/her is punishable by imprisonment from three months to two years....” This prohibits only corporal punishment which reaches the threshold of “abuse” and is not interpreted as prohibiting all corporal punishment in childrearing.

During the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Albania in 2009, the GoA rejected recommendations aimed at prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children. Although the Law on Protection of the Rights of Children foresees the protection of children from physical and psychological violence, concerns remain regarding the exertion of violence against children, including the use of corporal punishment. This law remains to be fully implemented through effective functioning of bodies provided for in the law.¹¹⁷ Corporal punishment is explicitly prohibited in schools. Furthermore, the new Pre-University Education Law, passed by Parliament in June 2012, has sanctioned the Commission of Ethics and Behavior at school level to deal with complaints against inappropriate behavior of school staff.

In FGDs¹¹⁸ with both urban and rural adolescents, safe schools, free from any form of violence and abuse, appeared to be a primary area of concern. In Elbasan, Rrogozhine and Rripa, issues that disturbed children the most centered on violence at home, at school and amongst peers. Their vision is to live in a safe and protected environment, free from violence and abuse. As one 12 year-old adolescent male in Rripa said, “....boys are slapped more often than girls in schools; I wish this did not happen, but what can we do....” Similarly in Rrogozhine, one 17 adolescent girl said, “....yes violence is everywhere in our school, at home and the community...it is quite common here and there is no one who dares to speak up and no one who can end it....”

An alternative report of 2009 on the implementation of CRC in the view of children states that:

- Staff in residential institutions behaves inappropriately with children. There is lack of care and children report cases of physical and psychological violence.
- Roma children feel discriminated against due to the color of their skin and due to their ethnicity. The school environment is not welcoming and comfortable for Roma children.
- The voices of Roma children are not taken into account by schools in cases when they submit complaints against teachers.
- There are less cases of physical violence compared to psychological violence.

In a recent evaluation of SC’s anti-violence project,¹¹⁹ the report states that while children still experience violence at home, some parents did admit that violence does not solve problems they might face in raising their children, best illustrated by quotes such as *‘beating does not produce any solutions but rather exacerbates conflicts. If parents beat them, children will not understand their mistake and will repeat it. What do you win then? Both parents and children will get angry.’* The report also includes quotes made by children themselves, *“....physical violence has gone down but there is still teachers shouting at us... more frequently against children from rural areas.”* The latter supports other findings and analyses demonstrating the sharp inequities between people in Albania.

¹¹⁷Albania 2011 progress report

¹¹⁸FGDs conducted by SC in late May/early June, 2012.

¹¹⁹Di Maio, M and Buka, M. End of Project Evaluation, Violence against Children in Schools and Families in Durrës, Elbasan and Berat Districts, July, 2012.

4.6 Children in Contact with the Law

The GoA's Action Plan for Children (2012 -2015) states that juvenile justice has seen considerable progress in recent years. The MoJ is committed to a new sectoral strategy on juvenile justice with a focus on the legal barriers experienced by children. As reported in the EU Progress Report on Albania in 2011, a juvenile justice strategy addressing neglected aspects, such as the protection of child victims and witnesses of crime, and measures concerning offenders below the age of criminal responsibility, is pending.¹²⁰

The implementation of existing policies and the design of new policies in the field of juvenile justice will be addressed through the following strategic goals of the 2012-2015 Action Plan:

1. Protection of children in conflict with the law;
2. Provision of adequate protection for children under 14 in conflict with the law;
3. Protection of child victims and witnesses of crime.

There are two categories of children in contact with the law: those below the age of 14, who, according to the law, are exempt from criminal responsibility, and those above 14. The first category lack assistance and rehabilitation through social services, which are necessary since one of the reasons for which they are used to commit crimes is their age and the fact they are not going to be prosecuted. Regarding children above the age of 14, they have to deal with several other problems that make their situation even more difficult; the most acute of these problems is the fact that they are still seen mainly as delinquents and consequently criminalized by the representatives of various institutions, such as the police, prosecutor's office and courts.

Adolescent boys from the Institute for the Reintegration of Juveniles in Kavajë stated in FGDs¹²¹ the stigma associated with being convicted *"when I am out of here things are Ok with friends ... but not with adults. They judge me negatively."* Further, *"...an ideal Albania means sex, drugs and adventure"* states a 16 year old re-offender, who does not trust and believe in successful reintegration back in society. Others seem to be more positive for their future and state that *"an ideal Albania is one with factories and businesses employing young people... education and schools... public gyms and soccer fields where we don't need to pay... greener areas."* Many emphasized the importance of increasing salaries as a way to increase their wellbeing (living standards) and that is seen as a way to prevent children re-offending. One boy pointed out that efforts should be taken by the GoA to invest in their employment/education rather than building just building "fancy" prisons.

Probation services serve as an alternative to imprisonment, which enables children to remain in society where they can receive services. Alternatives to imprisonment are considered more effective for children's and youth's reintegration when accompanied by the provision of education and vocational training.

877 minors out of 5,779 cases are supervised by the Probation Office in Albania, offering alternatives to detention such as education through vocational training and community work.¹²² Probation services have recently been established and needs further support to be consolidated and empowered. The office is in poor physical conditions and lack premises to interview minors

¹²⁰ EC, Human Rights and the Protection of Minorities in Albania, progress report.

¹²¹ FGD conducted with 12 adolescent boys on June 6, 2012.

¹²² Interview with probation officer in Tirana, June 7, 2012.

and their family members. Due to funding and human resource constraints, the probation service has collaboration agreements with NGOs, such as the Legal Clinic for minors. The probation service makes use of restorative justice approaches – an alternative to criminal matters and a form of diversion from criminal proceedings. It provides offenders with an opportunity to accept responsibility, take action to repair damage and develop their capacities. This approach is piloted recently by the Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution (AFCR.) However, institutions such as courts- as reported by AFCR- are used to work with traditional practices and are not familiar with restorative justice norms.

4.7 Social Protection Systems in Albania¹²³

The social protection system, founded in 1992–1993, is made up of the Economic Aid (EA) program, the social insurance program, the social care program and the labor market development program. The EA program is designed to provide protection to people in need, those who are not capable of providing a decent living standard for themselves and their family members. The program rests on three pillars: 1) income supplementation (insured individuals are excluded), 2) maintenance of living standards and 3) provision of non-contributory benefits.

The Law on Economic Aid and Social Care defines the conditions under which government provides support to Albanian families, in general, and individuals, in particular, mainly those who are entirely without income and those with limited and insufficient income levels. The program provides cash transfers to beneficiaries, in accordance with appraisal of income from market and extra market sources (employment, assets, agricultural land, social security, remittances, etc.) in order to enable them to attain a minimum standard of living. The program (and that of social protection) is administered by municipal and commune employees (Figure 4.)

Social Protection System in Albania

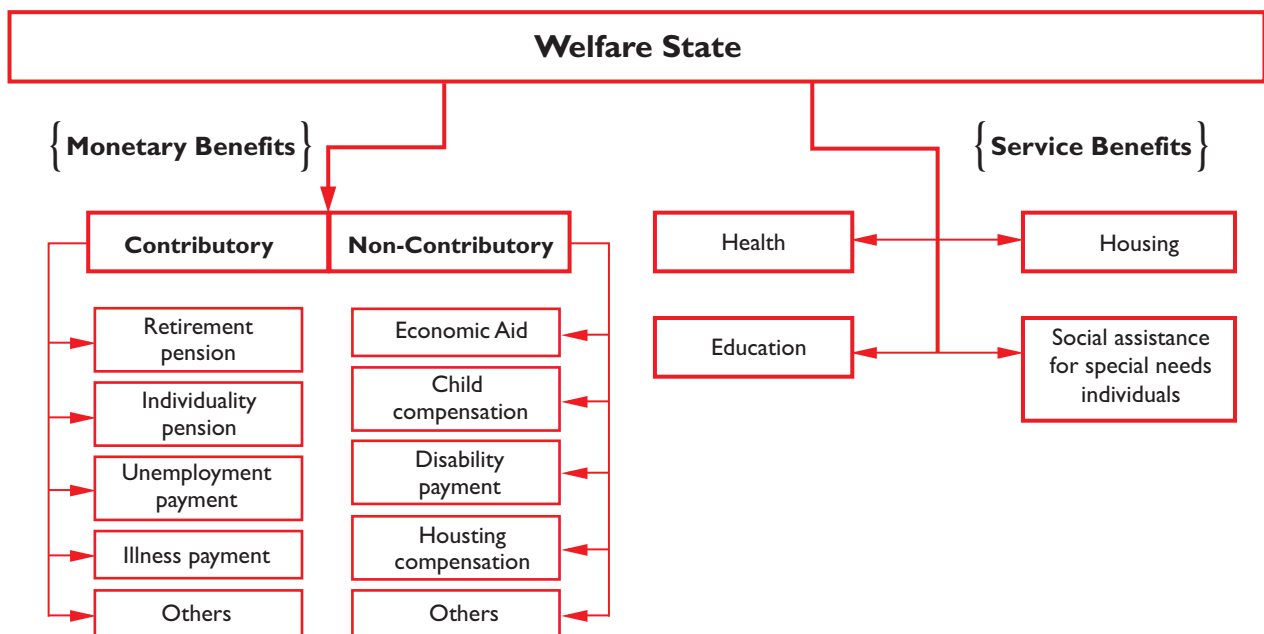


Figure4: Welfare state system in Albania

123. Urban Research Institute, National Center for Social Studies, Reforming Economic Aid: from Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction, 2011 (commissioned by UNICEF Albania.)

Beneficiaries of the program are highly exposed to social exclusion and are susceptible to manifold social disadvantages due to limited opportunities for adequate housing, quality education, quality health care and social participation. Beyond economic poverty, social exclusion through forced passivity threatens their fundamental rights and their chances to achieve their fullest potential and participation in society.

The scheme does not help households find a solution to their economic and social needs and it does not empower the poor to protect themselves from social exclusion. The amount of EA does not improve children's welfare (education, health care, housing conditions), and the current scheme does not take into account the diverse dimensions of poverty; in particular it does not consider child poverty. The latter can be illustrated what the Mayor of Cerrik stated in his interview with SC on June 05, 2012): "... **80 percent** of children in kindergarten #1 can hardly have 3 meals a day... breakfast to children is often skipped by their families."

Spanning the period 1993–2010, information shows that EA is ¼ of the minimum consumption per capita. In addition, the data show that one household (irrespective of number of members) may be expelled from the EA program if one of its members receives an old age pension or unemployment benefit payment.

EA is not harmonized with the provision of necessary social services for children in need, while services available to children from poor communities are of low quality, limited in number and poor in typology. Strengthening local government powers and capacities would enhance the opportunities for provision of quality educational, health and social care services for children. However, financial decentralization and increase in local budgets remain critical issues in the work of LGUs in Albania.

The social protection system is not oriented towards providing care and safety according to exclusion factors, causes and consequences; nor is it shaped to protect those rights of which children are deprived due to exclusion. Children growing up in low-income families are more at risk of social exclusion. Monetary poverty is often only one of the many dimensions of exclusion and deprivation that limits children's development. The above mentioned is also supported by 12 children (3 girls) participating in SC's Street Center in Tirana¹²⁴ – "...nothing will change when I grow up – same problems..."; "It's getting worse in Tirana... no opportunities for those educated... not to mention us who are poor and who nobody cares for"; "Only God can help with our problems, as for the Government..."

The UNICEF commissioned report of 2011,¹²⁵ states that the main reason for children not going to school is their parents' inability to afford the expenses. **32 percent** of all children (spread across 3,400 surveyed families,) accept that the main reason for not attending school is lack of resources to cover expenses. Children in families receiving EA have a higher probability of never enrolling in school, by about 1.3-fold. The situation for low income families with regard to meeting their children's basic needs is critical, firstly because children's well-being is compromised, and secondly because their future is damaged, since basic services are a serious investment for adult life. The quote from a child attending FBSH center best illustrates the above – "I don't go to school as my mom will smack me and I need to work."

124.FGD conducted on June 1, 2012.

125.Urban Research Institute, National Center for Social Studies, Reforming Economic Aid: from Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction, 2011.

Social assistance and state services for children and groups in need is made up of (i) economic aid, (ii) disability benefits, (iii) social care services (day care and residential care institutions), and (iv) social-medical care services (Figure 5.).

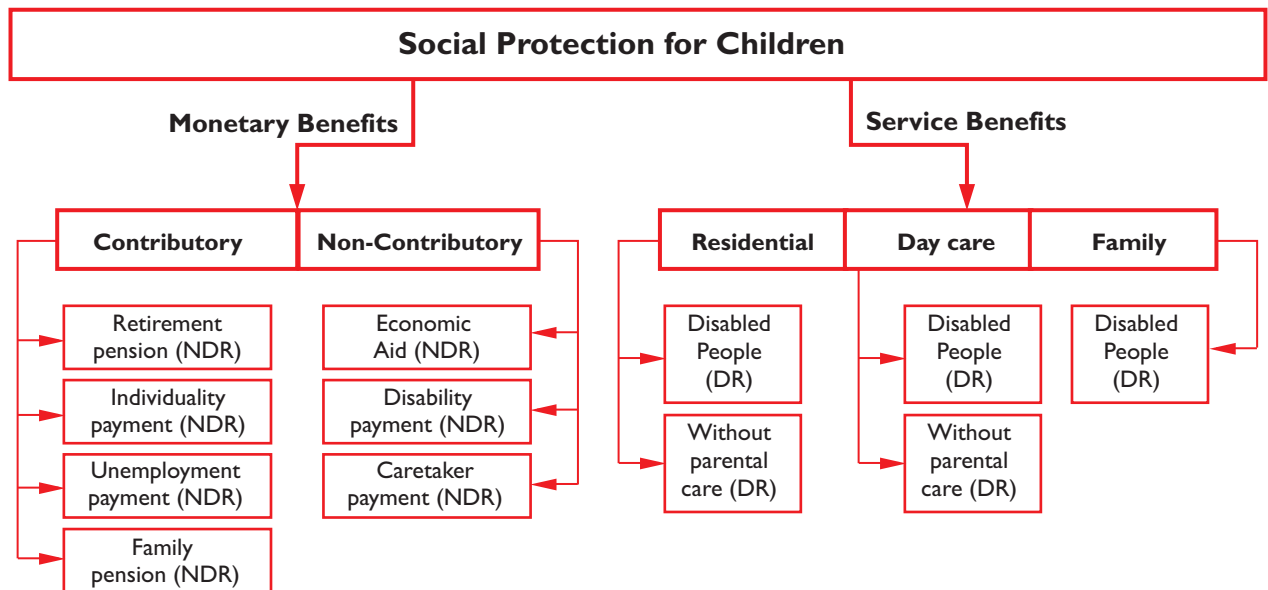


Figure 5: Social Protection for Children in Albania

Pursuant to the Law *On social aid and services*, people who need social care services are admitted into public residential institutions free of charge if their families do not have any income. Public services include social care services provided in residential institutions, on a daily basis or at home for disadvantaged groups. These services are financed by the central budget and independent budgets of local government bodies.¹²⁶ Social care for disadvantaged children is also problematic in cases where parents decide to place children under institutional custody due to economic conditions, where the role of social service structures does not consist in providing assistance to families so that they do not abandon their children: rather, it is limited to assessment of respective documentation.

Some key hurdles remain, including the inability of LGUs to create their own social budgets, which has rendered difficult the delivery of quality social services. The National Children’s Strategy and the Social Services Strategy are not in complete harmony with each other and do not ensure synergy of all inter-sectoral policies towards reducing children’s exclusion. Social policies designed to protect children and integrate excluded, at risk and children with special needs have not yet adopted a rights-based approach. The current statistical system does not ensure information on the true extent and depth of exclusion and its negative impact on the enforcement of the rights of the child.

In an interview with the Mayor of Cerrik (June 05, 2012), he states: “...there are 20 children from vulnerable communities who have serious health problems that need specialized medical attention. Sadly enough, these families cannot afford it and ask the Municipality for assistance. The Municipality is unable to help because of a very restricted budget.”

¹²⁶.UNICEF Albania, Children’s Social Inclusion Policies and Financing in Albania, 2011.

Digital mapping of social services¹²⁷ in Albania has been developed and aims at strengthening the identification of current services, types of services and locations. The geographic presentation and the typology of services helps identify gaps and integrate efforts of central and local governments with all actors involved in service provision. Looking at the services displayed in the map, most of the services are covered by NGO and are located mainly in urban areas.

In the framework of wider social welfare reform, the two main priorities for Albania are: -decentralization of services by increasing the role and responsibility of local governments and -deinstitutionalization of social services, through transitioning services to a broader residential model in the community. There are three key justifications for reforming social services in Albania:¹²⁸

- Human rights and international obligations
- Budgetary efficiency
- Contribution to economic growth

Albania is party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR,) UNCRC and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW.) By ratifying these Conventions, Albania is legally bound to implement relevant provisions. Albania has 27 residential institutions for children and adults, baby homes for children 0-3, development centers, service centers for the elderly and centers for adults with disabilities. Experiences in other European countries, including a number of studies in Romania, Moldova, Georgia and Kazakhstan show that expenditures in residential care are higher than foster care or supporting families to care for their own children. Research has shown that residential care is damaging to a child's development; adverse effects include poor health, physical underdevelopment, hearing and visual problems, delay in development of motor skills, speech and cognitive skills. Thus, children growing up with these deficits are poorly prepared to contribute to the economic development of Albania. Furthermore, GoA's strategic goal to reform the system of social service delivery for children emphasizes the need to extend the scope of child services and provision of alternative protection for children deprived of parental care. It calls for the need to harmonize policies on child rights through mechanisms aimed at protecting the right of the child at both central and local level; forging partnerships and cooperation between government institutions and relevant NGOs.

127. MoLSAEO, in collaboration with UNICEF, World Vision and the National Center for Social Studies, 2012, <http://www.sherbimeshoqerore.gov.al/intro.aspx>

128. Briefing note for donor meeting 11/04/2012 (UNICEF)

Chapter 5: Right to Health

Overview

Health is a basic pre-requisite for child development and a pillar to negotiate a number of life domains successfully – which, in turn, is tied to the attainment of rights and equity. Albania has made significant progress with respect to a number of issues in health, including boosting vaccination coverage, reducing U5MR and infant mortality rates (IMR) and improving prenatal and postnatal care. In other areas, progress has slowed down, including combating HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. According to UNDP Albania, health-delivery challenges in Albania are not so much a matter of inadequate resources, but rather a matter of how such resources are effectively utilized.¹²⁹ System-wide capacities in health administration remain weak, further impeding cost-effective delivery of health services, *especially in rural and mountainous areas*. Lack of key reforms in the health sector has resulted in the continued practice of bribing health professionals; *corruption remains high* at all levels of the health sector. GoA recognizes the need to *upgrade the quality of services and to improve access* (free of charge.) It is often the case that people are unable to access health services, which by law should be provided free of charge, mainly due to complex procedures and lack of access to required information. The Roma population face considerable difficulties accessing health services.

5.1 National Response

Reforms in health by the GoA focus on the need to ensure long term sustainability of cost effective quality health delivery. The long-term objectives aim at modernizing the broader system through investments in human resources, reforming financing and improving information systems. Major governance priorities in health includes planning for and measuring the performance of health institutions and professionals, incentive systems, better coordination and instituting more transparent and accountable systems of decision making. MoH has developed ambitious action plans¹³⁰ aimed at improving maternal and child health. The major components of these plans include improving pre and postnatal care, improving mother and child nutrition, ensuring essential health care for every newborn, ensuring universal child vaccination and prevention and early detection of complications to ensure that all births are safe. MoH has prepared an action plan¹³¹ aimed at meeting HIV/AIDS targets. Real implementation of this action plan is crucial to reverse current HIV/AIDS trends.

The **National Health Strategy (2007-2013)** pays particular attention to child and maternal health. The GoA Action Plan for Children 2012-2015 emphasize the right to healthcare for children through four overall goals:

1. Provision of essential healthcare for mother and child to reduce IMR;
2. Preventing malnutrition, obesity and overweight among children;
3. Prevention of contagious diseases and reduction of the main childhood diseases;
4. Control and prevention of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs);

General expenditures in health reached its peak in 2007 and 2009, with **6.9 percent** of GDP, which was reduced to **6.5 percent** in 2010 (Table 7.)¹³²

¹²⁹.UNDP Albania, Albania National Report on Progress towards Achieving the MDGs, 2010

¹³⁰.Action plan for maternal health, www.moh.gov.al,

¹³¹.Plan of action on HIV/AIDS and STDs, www.moh.gov.al,

¹³².WB, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.TOTL.ZS>

Health expenditures, total (% GDP) ¹³³	2008	2009	2010	Overall trend
Albania	6.7	6.9	6.5	Not stable
Global	9.8	10.6	10.4	Attempts to maintain the increase

Table 7: Health expenditures over time (2008-2010)

Reduced public spending in health may lead to cuts in spending of basic food and health care, employment of health personnel, deterioration in nutrition of pregnant women, as well as child mortality.

5.2 Access to Health

Despite GoA commitment to improve the situation in the health sector, access to health services remains a concern. According to data published by the WHO, Albania has the *lowest* number of doctors per capita in the region, 115 doctors per 100,000 citizens. In comparison, the EU average currently stands at 330 doctors per 100,000 citizens.¹³⁴

People with disabilities, youth (including youth with HIV/AIDS), Roma and people residing in rural and mountainous areas face the most difficulties in accessing health care. **Nearly 50% of the population have limited access to quality health services, including access to health institutions and/or access to quality services.** Despite the fact that every village or town does have a health clinic with appointed health professionals, in reality however, the presence of these professionals often remain scarce, since qualified health professionals live far from their working place. In such circumstances, there are mostly local nurses who provide health assistance, which runs the risk of being inadequate and often not relevant. This situation was confirmed by SC in FGDs with 20 mothers in Rripa. In child delivery cases, mothers are transported to the hospital in the nearest town, which this includes travelling over long distances on roads which are in very poor condition. Oral health services in schools are non-existent and very expensive for the majority of these families.¹³⁵

Three main forms of corruption constitute additional challenges to health services in Albania: i) informal payments to doctors and nurses; ii) misuse of power and iii) corruption in the procurement of drugs and equipment. Such realities only contribute to reducing the access of the poorest to adequate health care, especially for the Roma. It is reported that only **76 percent** of Roma, compared to **93 percent** of non-Roma, have been immunized against polio, diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. There are reports that Roma sometimes are forced to pay bribes to receive proper medical treatment. About **37 percent** of the Roma population¹³⁶ do not know where and how to register for a health booklet in order to benefit from free-of-charge services; consequently, about **5 percent** of Roma children suffer from severe and chronic diseases and **3 percent** with different forms of disability. The causes can be explained due to difficult living conditions, poverty, and poor access to services, low levels of education and socio-cultural norms and traditions (e.g. child marriage and early childrearing.)

¹³³.ibid

¹³⁴.UK Border Agency,Albania, County of Origin, Information Report, 2012.

¹³⁵. FGDs conducted on May 29, 2012.

¹³⁶.UNICEF Albania, Mapping Roma Children in Albania, 2011.

Poverty remains a serious factor which hampers children from villages and other remote areas to require specialized health services. This was reinforced in consultations with Municipal leaders and through FGDs with mothers of vulnerable communities. The Mayor of Cerrik conveyed¹³⁷ that *at least 20 children from vulnerable communities are estimated to suffer from serious health problems and who need specialized attention. Further, the Mayor in Rripa stated¹³⁸ that children get sick often, usually from poor hygiene practices and parents tend to care for their children at home without seeking proper medical assistance. Very often families cannot afford specialized check-ups so they ask municipalities for assistance, which on the other hand, is unable to help due to restricted human and financial capital.*

UNICEF Albania reports that access to health services is very much related to poverty, with strong implications also for children's status in nutrition.¹³⁹ More than **50 percent** of children with chronic diseases belong to the poorest families (3,400 surveyed,) living on 20,000-31,000 ALL month (equivalent to 145-225 EUR/month.)

5.3 Child Health and Survival

Child mortality is most commonly used to measure the state of children's well being. It is more easily definable and measurable than morbidity and assists in identifying high risk groups in a population. Analysis of trends in infant and child mortality in Albania is complex given that there are numerous sources of data, which are based on different methodologies - on birth and death registrations (administrative data) or death recall (sample surveys), or modelling that implies various assumptions. Different methodologies result in estimates, which at times are contradictory. Estimates based on household surveys are globally accepted as a reliable source of child mortality estimates; in the case of Albania, field implementation of the otherwise rigorous methodology is a matter of concern.

With respect to child health and survival, there is clear evidence that Albania ranks at the bottom of the list compared with its neighboring countries, despite that progress was recorded between 2000 and 2012.

Despite the fact that in 2012, the U5MR stands at 18 deaths per 1,000 live births,¹⁴⁰ down from 39 in 2000, Albania will most likely not be able to achieve the MDG goal of reducing U5MR to 14 per 1,000 by 2015. Additionally, this figure is the highest of what neighbouring countries report¹⁴¹ and the same scenario is echoed with the birth weight¹⁴² ratio, which for Albania is **7%** while in neighboring countries, the percentage is much higher¹⁴³.

The IMR fell from 35 in 2000 to 16 in 2012, but remains the highest in the region.¹⁴⁴ Sharp disparities¹⁴⁵ are reported between rural and urban areas and across geographical areas. The

137. Interview held June 5, 2012

138. Interview held May 29, 2012.

139. Urban Research Institute, National Center for Social Studies, Reforming Economic Aid: from Survival to Investment in Poverty Reduction, 2011.

140. According to UNICEF, the 2012 figure of U5MR ranks Albania at 108th among countries in the world; bottom in Europe.

141. UNICEF, The State of the World's Children: Children in an Urban World, 2012. (Serbia-7; Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro-8; Romania-14 and Bulgaria-13.)

142. Ibid (Percentage of infants weighing less than 2,500 grams at birth.)

143. Ibid (Montenegro-4%; Bosnia and Herzegovina-5% and Serbia-6%)

144. Ibid (Serbia-6; Montenegro-7; Bosnia-Herzegovina -8; Romania and Bulgaria -11.)

145. INSTAT, Demographic Health Survey (2008-2009,) 2010.

mortality rates in rural areas are double those in urban areas, while in rural mountainous areas the figures are even higher (Table 8.)

Geographical area	Urban	Rural	Mountainous
IMR	12	24	38
U5MR	13	28	42

Table 8: IMR and U5MR per geographical areas

The situation is quite different in urban areas with only a few cases of child mortality recorded in Tirana. Rates of child mortality were found to *correlate closely with the level of mother’s education (higher child mortality for lower education) and wealth (higher mortality for poorer families.)*

Declines in child mortality rates can be explained in part to the child immunization program of the GoA. The level of fully immunized children in Albania is high, at about **99 percent**,¹⁴⁶ a higher rate than in other countries of the same income level. *Children in urban areas are somewhat more likely than children in rural areas to have received all the basic vaccinations (97 and 94 percent respectively.¹⁴⁷)* Children in Central regions (**93 percent**) and children of mothers with basic primary education (**95 percent**) have slightly lower coverage than other children. Disparities are not only connected with geographical areas, as in the case of the Roma population it is also associated with mobility and lack of access to services. A survey conducted in 2011,¹⁴⁸ in Roma settlements in Tirana shows that immunization rates vary in different settlements. Roma children’s immunization rate is sometimes reported less than **80%**; while in the majority of the settlements, mothers do not recall what vaccinations their children have received. Figures show that about **58%** of Roma children have not received all the necessary vaccines.¹⁴⁹ Health authorities in Tirana report to have supported immunization activities, through door to door screenings for Roma families and children, as well as capacity development of health care providers to reach vulnerable groups with immunization and other child health services. However, there are no reliable data with regards to the health situation and care received by Roma newborns and breastfeeding mothers.¹⁵⁰

5.4 Maternal Health

The Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)¹⁵¹ in 2012¹⁵² was 31 deaths per 100,000 live births. Overall, levels of antenatal care (ANC) and delivery assistance are high (Table 9.) Reports show that almost all pregnant women (**97 percent**)¹⁵³ in Albania receive antenatal care from a health care provider at least once during their pregnancy. However, only **67 percent** receive antenatal care at least four times during their pregnancy. ANC is universal in Tirana, almost universal in coastal areas (**99 percent**), very high in central Albania (**97 percent**) and somewhat lower in mountainous areas (**92 percent**.) The proportion of births attended by health personnel is very high in both urban and rural areas (**99 percent**.)¹⁵⁴ Around **97 percent** of deliveries occur in a health facility and

146. UNICEF, The State of the World’s Children: Children in an Urban World, 2012.

147. INSTAT, Demographic Health Survey 2008–2009, 2010.

148. Save the Children, Survey on Roma and Egyptian Communities in Tirana, 2011.

149. These numbers stand as an approximation only.

150. Action plan for maternal health and Action plan for child and adolescent health, www.moh.gov.al.

151. Deaths of women from pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births.

152. UNICEF, The State of the World’s Children: Children in an Urban World, 2012.

153. UNDP Albania, Albania National Report on Progress towards Achieving the MDGs, 2010.

154. UNICEF, The State of the World’s Children: Children in an Urban World, 2012.

only 3 percent at home. There is, however, a significant difference in the percentage of deliveries occurring in a health facility in urban areas (**99 percent**) compared to rural areas (**95 percent**.)

Geographical area	National average	Central /Coastal	Rural/Mountainous
ANC	97 percent	97-99 percent	92 percent
Birth delivery in a health facility	97 percent	99 percent	95 percent

Table 9: Ante and post natal care for women per geographical areas

*Despite these impressive statistics, FGDs with mothers in the village of Rripa show quite a different story. Rripa women confess that due to marriage at a young age, young mothers give birth to their first children at the age of 17. In this village, women do not receive specialized ANC, but get advice from old women in the village. In addition, they know nothing about current contraception methods and they rely fully on the will of their partner about the number of children they are like to have.*¹⁵⁵

5.5 HIV/AIDS and Sexual and Reproductive Health

Albania remains a low HIV prevalence country.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the trend of HIV infection is increasing and estimates show a high number of undiagnosed cases. This emphasizes the importance of strengthening the National Surveillance System and to promote Voluntary Counselling Centers (VCT) to serve especially vulnerable groups. As of December 2011, 485 cases of HIV had been identified; 72 new cases were identified during 2011. More than **90 percent** of these infections occurred due to sexual contact. HIV transmission via infected blood has been confirmed in **3 percent** of the cases and Mother-to-Child-Transmission (MTCT) in **4 percent** of the cases. Albania's socio-economic context, and the vulnerability of at-risk populations, may contribute to further accelerate these figures. Available data reveals that about **70 percent** of positive HIV cases have been identified in persons under the age of 34;¹⁵⁷ youth between 16 and 24 years are other most at risk groups. Amongst youth, there is a general lack of access to adequate information, lack of access to proper sexual education and lack of youth friendly services, especially in rural areas, that contribute to their vulnerability. Diagnostic services and referral systems are inadequate. Confidential and voluntary counseling and testing is not a common practice among the population and most lab professionals in the districts admit that they feel unprepared to provide pre and post-test counseling to their clients.

MoH figures show that males are more affected by HIV than females. Women are especially vulnerable towards HIV due to social-cultural norms; they lack the power to negotiate the use of condoms. Among women, the most vulnerable categories are the wives of migrant workers, and girls and women who live in rural and urban surrounding areas. Stigma and discrimination in relation to HIV/AIDS are still very high in the Albanian society.

Knowledge and awareness of HIV prevention is low. The percentage of the population aged 15–24 years with comprehensive or good knowledge on HIV/AIDS is only **29 percent**. The proportion is higher for females (**36**) than for males (**22**). But, *knowledge is not transferred to positive behaviors. When comparing knowledge vs. behavior, 55 percent* of males and **25 percent** of females do use

155. FGD conducted on May 29, 2012.

156. Institute for Public Health, Progress Report on National AIDS Reporting January 2010-December 2012.

157. UNDP Albania, Albania National Report on Progress towards Achieving the MDGs, 2010.

birth control methods, such as condoms.¹⁵⁸ Conservative norms may increase the vulnerability of females toward the power of their male counterpart in this regard. Due to the low level of HIV/AIDS in Albania, measures are predominantly focused on promotion of protective behaviors among the general population, especially among adolescents and youth. The National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (2010–2015) states that the National HIV/AIDS/STDs Program is responsible for coordinating the efforts of government agencies, NGOs and international organizations for ensuring adherence to national policies. The National HIV/AIDS Program is located in the Institute of Public Health (IPH).

The use of family planning methods in the country¹⁵⁹ has been reported at **69 percent**, with withdrawal accounting for **58 percent**, while modern contraceptive methods is adhered to by merely **11 percent** of the population. Additionally, with a drop in total fertility rates, from 2.6 in 2002 to 1.6 in 2009, there are indications that modern methods of contraception are being used but figures show that the contraceptive prevalence rate has slowly increased.¹⁶⁰ Figures show that the adolescent mother¹⁶¹ ratio in 2009 was **3 percent** of the population of those aged 15-19 years (Table 10); figures are reported to be higher in villages and amongst poorer families.

Age ¹⁶²	% of girls who	
	have had a live birth	are pregnant with first child
17	0.5	1.7
18	2.7	1.2
19	8.7	2.8

Table 10: Adolescent-mother ratio

5.6 Nutrition

Nutrition status of Albanian children has improved gradually over the past decade.¹⁶³ Stunting among children under five has declined from **32 percent** in 2000 to **19 percent** in 2012. The proportion of children who are wasted has dropped from **11 percent** in 2000 to **9 percent** in 2012. Finally, the percentage of underweight children has decreased from **14 percent** in 2000 to **5 percent** in 2012; merely **2 percent** are severely stunted. **27 percent** of Roma communities claim that their children suffer from malnutrition resulting from poor diet.

Breastfeeding

The latest data show that only **68 percent**¹⁶⁴ of children under two months of age are exclusively breastfed. Exclusive breastfeeding drops to **39 percent** at 2-3 months and **18 percent** at 4-5 months of age. Thus, Albania ranks favorably compared with the figures from neighboring countries.¹⁶⁵

158. UNICEF, The State of the World's Children: Children in an Urban World, 2012. Bosnia and Herzegovina (M) 70 percent and (F) 57 percent; Bulgaria (M) 70 percent and (F) 57 percent; Montenegro (F) 66 percent and Serbia (F) 74 percent

159. INSTAT, Demographic Health Survey (2008–2009,) 2010.

160. UNDP, 2012 <http://www.un.org.al/subindex.php?faq=news&newsid=374>

161. Adolescent mothers who already have children or are currently pregnant <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.MTR.1519.ZS/countries>

162. INSTAT, Demographic Health Survey (2008–2009,) 2010.

163. UNICEF, The State of the World's Children Report: Children in an Urban World, 2012. Figures of 2000 come from INSTAT/IPH, Demographic Health Survey 2008–2009.

164. UNICEF, The State of the World's Children: Children in an Urban World, 2012.

165. Ibid (children exclusively breastfed in the first six months: Bosnia-Herzegovina- 18 percent; Montenegro-19 percent; Romania- 16 percent and Serbia-15 percent.

It could easily be suggested that this positive trend is indeed related with poverty and the inability of most of families to afford alternative infant food.

Stunting

Findings of the Albanian Demographic and Health Survey (ADHS¹⁶⁶) show that stunting occurs even among children under six months of age (**33 percent**). Levels of stunting decrease with age; around **12 percent** of those aged 48-59 months. Stunting is slightly higher among girls than boys, **21 and 18 percent**, respectively. Children in urban areas are slightly more likely to be stunted than those in rural areas. The percentage of children stunted varies also by region, ranging from **18 percent** in Tirana and the Central region to **28 percent** in mountainous regions. Children in the lowest wealth quintile are twice as likely to be stunted as children in the highest wealth quintile, **27% compared with 13 percent**.

Wasting¹⁶⁷

Overall ADHS results show that **9 percent** of all children under five are wasted, and **6 percent** are severely wasted. Looking at the differentials by background characteristics, it can be seen that *wasting is highest among children under six months (27 percent); higher among boys (11 percent) than girls (7 percent), higher in urban areas (11 percent) than rural areas (8 percent.)*

Underweight

Overall ADHS results show that **5 percent** of children under five years are underweight for their age and **2 percent** are severely underweight. *Children under six months of age (11 percent) are most likely to be underweight, along with children in mountainous regions (9 percent.)*

Obesity

Overall, **22 percent** of children under five are overweight or obese and there is surprisingly little difference by urban-rural areas (**22 and 21 percent**, respectively). *The highest levels of overweight are seen among children whose prior birth interval is 24-47 months and children in the lowest (poorest) wealth quintile.* Overweight was distributed across all age groups, but higher among children aged 18-23 months. Urban Tirana and the Central regions have higher proportions of overweight children, **24 and 25 respectively**.

Table 11 shows how the nutrition status of Albanian children stands in comparison to children in neighboring countries:

Country	% of children under five suffering from		
	Underweight	Wasting	Stunting
Albania	5	9	19
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	4	10
Montenegro	2	4	7
Romania	4	4	13

Table 11: Children's nutrition status in the region

¹⁶⁶.ADHS is a nationally representative sample survey designed to provide information on population and health issues in Albania. The ADHS was conducted by INSTAT and the IPH, under the lead of the MoH <http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/fr230/fr230.pdf>

¹⁶⁷.Wasting reflects the effects of acute malnutrition on children, usually resulting from food shortages or episodes of diarrhoeal or other illness that contribute to malnutrition.

Chapter 6: Right to Participation

Overview

For SC, the core purpose of child participation is to empower children first and foremost as agents of change by giving them the opportunity to navigate and influence actions and decisions that affect their lives.¹⁶⁸

A human rights-based approach recognizes children as individuals with the capacity to express views in all matters affecting them, and having them heard and be given due weight when decisions are being made. Under the CRC, children have the right to participate in the decision-making process and to influence those decisions in accordance with their age and maturity.¹⁶⁹ UNCRC Articles 12 to 17 specifically recognize the child's right to participation in all spheres of life. The UNCRC underscores that in order for the child to participate, the right to access information must be ensured. Parents or other legal guardians have a duty to provide appropriate direction guidance in the exercise of this right.

Albania has expressed its commitment and dedication to the MDGs, in which a critical component is creation of a healthy, prosperous and secure environment for young people and fulfillment of their potential. International experience demonstrates that simultaneous investments in development and participation can be an effective impetus in progress at a national level. All forms of ethical participation are a critical component in ensuring children's and young people's well-being.

The lack of institutional practices facilitating adolescent participation in decision-making is a matter of concern for the consolidation of democratic governance, as well the achievement of sustainable social and economic development. This is compounded with the lack of positive role models amongst national leaders, whom have failed to lead the way through positive and democratic means. Political discourses addressing the plights of young people do not form part of any constructive political dialogue.

According to SC's 2010 baseline assessment, "Measuring Children's Government Participation in the Middle School System,"¹⁷⁰ at the onset of the project in 60 schools the findings showed that:

- CG's ability to initiate independent actions that affect the quality of education they receive and the quality of social and cultural environment in their schools;
- Regarding involvement in formulating school rules or planning the optional curricula, CG's influence was almost insignificant.
- No CG had ever gotten involved in the process of planning the optional school curricula.

6.1 National Response

GoA's Action Plan for Children (2012-2015¹⁷¹) contains special measures related to the strengthening of communication and transparency of the local government with children in relation to education policies to be implemented at regional level. It states that student's government, as a legitimate

168. SC, Children's Participation – Moving Forward Together – Everyone Campaign.

169. UNICEF Albania, Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1998.

170. Ada Huibregtse, Measuring Children's Government Participation in the Middle School System in Dibër, Durrës, Elbasan, Gjirokastrë, Korçë and Vlorë, 2010.

171. The Right to Development and Education- Action Plan for Children, Chapter 4, 2012 – 2015.

body for students' expression and assembly at school level, should be independent. The Action Plan contains specific measures aimed at reviewing school regulations for increased independence; LGUs are asked to increase the number of awareness activities on children's rights, not just in schools, but also at the wider community level, with the participation of children and adolescents. Article 36 of the Law on Pre-University Education relates to Student's Government and aims to protect and promote children's rights. The Chairperson of Student's Government is elected by students through secret ballots. Other Articles contained in this law addresses code of conduct in education institutions and the general rights and responsibilities of students and parents.

By law, children are guaranteed the right to participation and access to information, but the 2011 report on Children's Rights in Albania to the UNCRC Committee, drafted by children¹⁷² presents the following from consultations held with children:

- *An additional problem for us is teachers who lack professionalism, who are corrupt and threaten to give students lower grades in order to get them to pay for private lessons;*
- *No one asks for our opinion at school when they make decisions on our rights. They don't even involve the students' government. Many children, parents, teachers, and employees of central and local institutions do not even know the children's rights according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Even those who do, fail to follow them.*
- *We as children do not have any information on how much money the government spends to meet our needs*

Similarly, feedback received by SC during FGDs with 12 children in Rripa village¹⁷³ attests to the persistent lack of opportunities:.....*here, nothing takes place. Dont' even ask about that. Even balls are missing.*"

6.2 Empowering Children and Adolescents to Influence Decisions

There is a wide spectrum of actors operating in Albania to empower children and adolescents to have a voice in decision-making. SC has been at the forefront in facilitating meaningful participation for many years, with cross-cutting programming on participation in education, child protection and CRG. A Strategic Evaluation Report of SCN Programs in Southeast Europe (SEE) in 2010 concluded child participation to be one of the strongest elements of SC's programs. It continues to enable children to feed into decisions that affect them in schools and to manage and run their own organizations and activities. Its work with the Child Led Groups (CLGs) has attempted to influence decisions at municipal level and have leveraged positive investments for schools. One group was consulted during the development of the National Strategy for Youth and CLG representatives contributed with feedback to the annual reports on the implementation of the National Strategy for Children. Their input was also included in the UNCRC Alternative report in 2009 and representatives of CLGs in Elbasan are annually invited to contribute with inputs on the priorities of children during Municipal annual budget review meetings. Lastly, representatives of two Youth Centres have brought issues related to young people to municipal councils in both Kuçova and Cerrik. As of 2011, the two youth centres in Kuçova and Cerrik have become part of their respective municipal structures; receiving modest funds from local authorities.¹⁷⁴

172. <http://www.scalbania.org/html/n095.html>

173. FGD held on May 29, 2012.

174. Byrne, Celebivic, Razic-Ilic, Skari, A Strategic Evaluation of Save the Children Norway's Programmes in SEE, 2010.

UNICEF Albania also works with young people to ensure their views are heard and considered in government policies and programmes. Many initiatives have enabled young people to have their say in public decision making and have achieved concrete results. Youth Parliaments have been established in 12 regions. Similarly, WV Albania support groups of adolescent peer educators in 10 regions of Albania through building life skills, introduction to child rights, community mobilization and advocacy at local and regional level.

Recommendations made by children in 2011 were presented as part of Albania's contribution to the UNCRC Committee in Geneva. Some of the key recommendations made by children include:

- Establish a Children's Advocate Office.
- Strengthen students' governments
- Support activities organized by children and youth in Roma and Egyptian communities;
- Ensure a better future (economy, education, accommodation) for all children
- Institutions should respect and implement children's rights based on the UNCRC
- Ensure transparency of budgets for children

6.3 Youth Participation in Employment

The National Youth Strategy (2007-2013) provides general guidance on how to make youth participation through employment central to national policy-making by recommending that employment-related sectoral and other crosscutting strategies assign priority to youth employment and empowerment.¹⁷⁵ According to the experiences of the Ministry of Tourism, Cultural Affairs, Youth and Sports (MTKRS) on the implementation of the current Youth Strategy, the main issues that Albanian youth face are primarily related with employment (not only for vulnerable groups but also students graduated abroad) and the continued lack of career orientation and participation in society.¹⁷⁶

According to a study carried out by ILO and the National Employment Service (NES) in 2009,¹⁷⁷ the most requested occupations by youth are in the service, trade, construction, manufacturing industry (garments and shoes,) transport and communication sectors.

Labor market data suggest that the strong and sustained economic growth experienced by Albania in the last decade led to an expansion of the private sector, an increase in domestic demand and foreign direct investment. Despite this progress, participation in decent employment remains a pressing challenge. Strong economic growth did not result in employment creation and over the past decade, the youth unemployment rate has been consistently higher than that of adults: throughout the period, employment growth remained sluggish, with strong negative peaks in 2001 and 2009.

- In 2009, it accounted for **13.8 percent** of the total labor force; **13.3 percent** after the first quarter of 2012¹⁷⁸.

175. SC interview with Mrs. Envina Zavalani; Youth Specialist in the General Directorate of Policies for Youth, Tirana, June 19, 2012.

176. Ibid.

177. Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children in Albania and Save the Children in Kosovo, Feasibility Study of Job Access Program for Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians and other Marginalized Youth in Kosovo and Albania, 2012.

178. INSTAT, LFS Data, quarter 1, 2012.

- Youth fare disproportionately worse in the labor market with an **astounding 25 percent** unemployment rate¹⁷⁹ for the 15 – 29 age groups against labour force participation rates being as low as 52 percent for men and 40 percent for women.

Infrastructure problems, lack of stimulating measures by the government and the slow pace of private sector development are reasons behind underdevelopment in some parts of the country. In 2009-2010, the highest unemployment peaks were recorded in the district of Lezha (24.3 percent), Shkoder (23.9 percent) and Kukes (23.3 percent) and the lowest in Tirana (8.3 percent.)¹⁸⁰ The share of young people employed informally is approximately **70 percent** of all young workers.¹⁸¹ The probability of being an informal worker is significantly correlated with being young, male and with low educational attainment.

Feedback from adolescents demonstrates the importance of participation in employment among young people. *In the Kavaja institute for example, 12 adolescent boys in contact with the law dream of a future where they are trained, able to find decent employment and freedom to support themselves and their families. However, as one adolescent conveyed... "With a decent job here in Albania, life is so unaffordable so I better go abroad,"¹⁸² which signals a felt of lack of opportunities. Further, a statement such as "Why does this Government invest in building prisons for minor ... they should build factories and employ us instead..." show a degree of anticipation in support of the Government, however, when asked if they felt the Government or other actors would be able to offer real support, the answer was always negative. Similar feedback on the need and interest in employment opportunities for young people was also documented from FGDs held with 38 urban adolescent boys and girls (24) in Elbasan and Rrogozhine. Among the group in Rrogozhine, notions of feeling useful, being able to contribute and to be successful as an adult, associated with employment, came out as quite evident in the informal discussions held there, especially among girls. The group did, however, believe their future prospects of employment in Rrogozhine to be rather difficult if not impossible, due to no meaningful opportunities and relatively poor socio-economic standards. Many mentioned Tirana as an alternative place to seek better opportunities.¹⁸³*

Data on the Albanian youth labor market indicates that¹⁸⁴:

- a. Education is a strong determinant of both labor market performance and poverty risk. Young people with low educational attainment experience higher inactivity and unemployment rates and lower employment rates.
- b. A strong feature of the Albanian youth labor market is the men/women and rural/urban divide: young women are more exposed than their male peers to inactivity, unemployment and vulnerable employment, whereas youth living in rural areas are more likely than urban youth to be inactive, unemployed or to be working in precarious conditions and to be poor.
- c. Young women, especially Roma and individuals with disabilities are well outside the labor market. Only a minimal number of people with disabilities benefit from employment services or vocational training and remain invisible from society.

179. The youth unemployment rate was 13.0% in 2008 (Albania: Review of Human Resources Development, European Training Foundation (ETF), 2010.

180. European Training Foundation, Albania: Review of Human Resources Development, 2010.

181. ILO, Analysis of the youth labor market in Albania, 2011.

182. FGD in the Kavaja institute, Kavaja, June 6, 2012.

183. FGD with urban adolescent boys and girls in Rrogozhina (not part of SC interventions to date.) June 6, 2012.

184. ILO, Analysis of the youth labor market in Albania (2008-2011.)

- d. Employment in the informal economy remains pervasive, with approximately **70 percent** of all young workers exposed to it. Work in the informal economy appears to be the only opportunity to earn a living for many young people both in rural and urban areas. This affects mostly young women, who are much more at risk of being in vulnerable employment compared to their male peers (**65 and 51 percent**, respectively). Compared to young men, young women dominate in agriculture jobs (**59 and 39 percent**, respectively).¹⁸⁵
- e. Most young people in Albania face a troublesome transition from education to work due to the mismatch between education outcomes and labor market requirements and lack of decent work opportunities.
- f. The economic and social policies pursued to date had little impact on youth employment. Little attention was paid to addressing the constraints enterprises faced in creating more and better jobs.
- g. Enterprises face a number of constraints to productivity, both endogenous (i.e. management capacities, technology and equipment; skills base of the workforce and access to resources) and exogenous (i.e. effective state institutions and policies, an enabling business environment and a properly functioning judicial system) that will need to be addressed in the medium to long term.

The current **Employment Strategy (2007-2013)** is centered on the promotion of an active policy on employment through the establishment of a modern system of employment services, the development of employment promotion programs, the improvement of the VET system, the reduction of informal employment, the improvement of conditions of work and the support of social dialogue.¹⁸⁶ Specifically, the establishment of a modern system of employment services includes the improvement of staff competencies in treating clients, better allocation of human resources, the improvement of contacts with enterprises and the review of the geographical coverage and extension of employment services.¹⁸⁷ The *Employment Strategy* details actions needed to improve employment opportunities for youth, potential and returning migrants, persons with disabilities, women and Roma population groups.

The **National Action Plan (NAP) for Youth Employment (2010-2013)**, led by MoLSAEO seeks to promote the notion of “Decent Work” for youth through four priorities:

- a) Governance of the (youth) labor market;
- b) Young people’s employability and empowerment;
- c) Involvement of the private sector in providing job opportunities and
- d) Inclusion of disadvantaged youth.

The **Sectoral Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training (2007–2013)** foresees the improvement of employment and VET systems through a series of interventions including the establishment of a computerized employment service, development of partnership relations with different actors in the labor market, particularly the private sector, establishment of a qualitative VET system and provision of vocational qualifications in line with market demands.

¹⁸⁵.Ibid.

¹⁸⁶.See MoLSAEO, Sectoral Strategy on Employment and Vocational Training (2007-2013), Tirana, 2007.

¹⁸⁷.Currently the employment offices do not cover rural areas.

NES and Regional Employment Offices

Albania's public employment service is a relatively new structure and is not yet in a position to deliver effective services for jobseekers, with the exception of handling formal procedures and referring registered unemployed people to Vocational Training Centers (VTC.) Recent research by the European Training Foundation (ETF) in 2010 shows that NES currently performs mainly two functions: registration of job seekers and job offers and some mediation services along with cash payment of unemployment benefits. There are 12 Regional Employment Offices (EO) and 24 Local Employment Offices, which provide employment advisory services along with professional training support to access the labor market. According to a NES study in June 2011, employers ranked the expected employability skills that candidates should meet:

1. Know to use efficiently material, equipments and other technical means
2. Communication skills and work in team
3. Capacity to learn
4. Planning and management skills
5. Decision making and problem solving skill
6. Literacy and numeracy skill
7. To understand written documents and write clearly

VET:

A lot of interest has been invested in the Albanian VET system over the past decade and several development partners, such as GiZ and SDC, have been active in the field for quite some time through various large-scale projects and programs.¹⁸⁸ From **75 percent** during communist times, enrolment in VET is currently down to **12–13 percent**.¹⁸⁹ The number of vocational schools decreased from 308 in 1990 to 41 in 2010. Instead of enrolling in secondary VET, some young people attend short courses at VTCs, and some higher professional courses are offered by universities. There are at best sporadic rather than systemic efforts to train vocational teachers and to cooperate with businesses. Initial efforts to decentralize VET governance and strengthen the capacities of regional actors have been made, with regional VET committees established in Durrës and Elbasan. However, the current legal and budgetary frameworks do not yet allow much freedom and innovation at these levels.¹⁹⁰

There are 10 public VTCs located in main urban areas of the country: 2 in Tirana and the others in Durrës, Elbasan, Korca, Gjirokaster, Shkoder, Fier and Vlore. There is one mobile training center serving the northern part of the country. Most participants (**77 percent**) belong to the 16–34 age groups.¹⁹¹ The majority of trainees are young unemployed jobseeker referred by grassroots NGOs and Regional Employment Offices. The main “clients” of public vocational training centers are:

- (i) Unemployed men and women who decide to specialize in one of the vocational courses offered to improve their chances of employment,

188. In close cooperation with other donors and projects, namely of the EU, Germany and Austria, the AlbVET project supports the Albanian Government in reforming its VET system. AlbVET works at all levels, i.e. with individual training providers, local and regional authorities, but also with the central government and its institutions. <http://www.albvet.al/web/index.php?lang=2>

189. Albania: Review of Human Resources Development, European Training Foundation (ETF), 2010.

190. Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children in Albania, Save the Children in Kosovo, Feasibility Study of Job Access Program for Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians and other Marginalized Youth in Kosovo and Albania, 2012.

191. Albania: Review of Human Resources Development, European Training Foundation (ETF), 2010.

- (ii) Registered jobseekers referred by Regional Employment Office after an initial screening and assessment of their capacities, interests and market skills in demand,
- (iii) Other unemployed persons coming from vulnerable groups, such as Roma and Egyptians, trafficked women and adolescent girls, disabled people who are target beneficiaries of social programs implemented by NGOs and funded by donors.

The Albanian VET system lacks a number of elements that would help to strengthen the links between VET and the labor market and increase the relevance of VET provision. This includes various types of skill needs analyses to inform overall VET planning, but also to design qualifications, curricula, teacher training and assessments for specializations at different levels of competence. New skills are needed in order to support Albania's economic structure, which has gradually been shifting from agriculture towards industries including processing (food, textiles, leather shoes, wood and paper), construction, trade, and hotels and catering. The minimum enrollment requirement is to be 16 years of age, have mandatory education and be able to present valid ID card or passport. The Roma and Egyptian often do not meet the education requirement, and often demonstrate lack of literacy and numeracy skills. Fees charged for courses are quite low and yet often unaffordable by the unemployed people in general and Roma and Egyptians in particular (min 8 Euros and max 200 Euros). There are free courses offered to vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptians, trafficked women and adolescent girls, returned migrants, low income families and disabled people. The VTC in Tirana reports that most of Roma and Egyptians have attended the courses regularly and the instructors are motivated to support them, despite the difficulties faced as regards lack of numeracy/literacy skills and/or general lack of education.¹⁹² Public VTCs do not assist or follow up the trainees with employment opportunities.

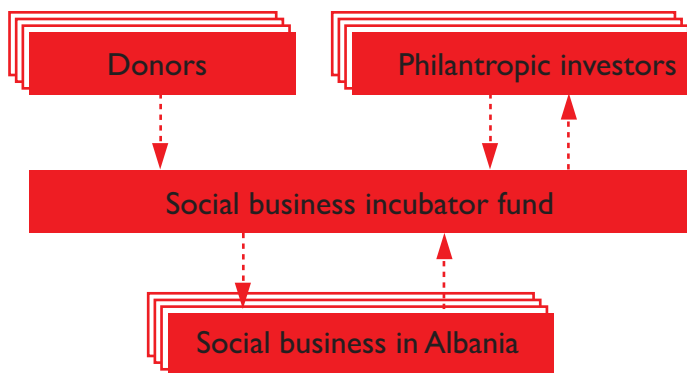
Social Business:

Social Business (SB) represents a new approach to tackle development challenges in Albania; in recent times various actors have introduced the concept, which from an Albanian context, is innovative. The office of Yunus Social Business Albania (YSBA) was established in April 2012 to initiate and scale up SBs throughout Albania. A SB is a cause-driven business and must be financially sustainable and mission-oriented. The success of the business is not measured by the amount of profit made in a given period, but the impact of the business *on people*.

YSBA's program includes various activities, of which the first two, incubation and investment, are the most important:

1. Social business **incubator**: consulting, coaching & network-building for social business projects
2. A social business **fund** (Figure 6): investment for the best social business projects
3. Partnerships with **local authorities**: create "social business municipalities"

¹⁹² Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children in Albania, Save the Children in Kosovo, Feasibility Study of Job Access Program for Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians and other Marginalized Youth in Kosovo and Albania, 2012.



Main features of a SB Fund

- **Goal:** Identify and finance high potential entrepreneurs and ideas to build successful social businesses
- **Source of Funds:** donations or non-interest bearing, non-recourse loans
- **Investment in SB:** predominantly long-term soft loans and/or equity
- **Use of proceeds from investment:** Reinvestment into other social businesses; investors' loan principal - but no interest - repaid between 6th and 12th year
- **Annual management fee:** coverage of operational and administrative expenses of fund team

Figure 6: Main features of the social business fund:

SB challenges the traditional norm of a “donor-driven” approach and seeks to leverage social and human capital from within. All profits generated from the business are re-used and re-invested in a capital fund to foster a multiplier effect, i.e. as more income is secured over time; the output is accumulated in a pot that can be used to grow the business and possibly increase capacity and human resources to run it.

Chapter 7: Disaster Risk Reduction

Overview

Albania does not yet have a National DRR Platform to support cooperation of key development actors around the national DRR agenda. Albania is highly exposed and vulnerable to natural and man-made hazards. These hazards are mainly manifested in geologic, hydro-meteorological and biophysical hazards (Figure 7.) A number of factors contribute to the country's vulnerability, including: high degree of poverty, increased population density and rapid urbanization, development in disaster prone areas as well as low capacity of institutional agencies.¹⁹³ Vulnerable groups are disproportionately exposed to hazards, such as low-income groups in drought-prone areas with poor infrastructure. DRR systems remain centralized and regional and local governments do not receive sufficient funding. Current legislation does not encourage community participation in DRR.

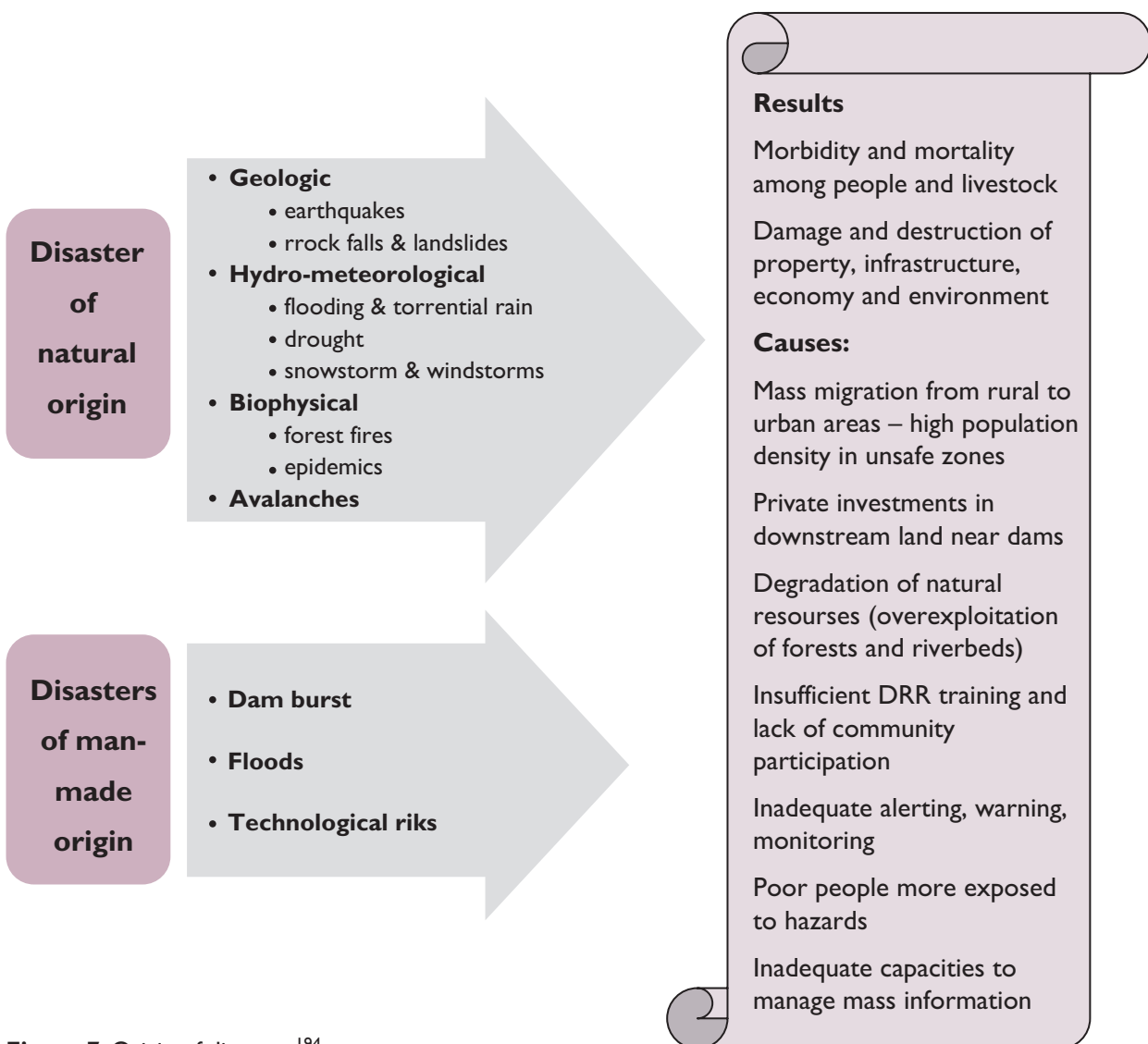


Figure 7: Origin of disasters¹⁹⁴

193. www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/86599/Albania.pdf

194. UNDP, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Disaster Risk Reduction Capacity Assessment Report for Albania, 2011

National Response

Although DRR is addressed in some policies or action plans, DRR is not yet fully integrated in sectoral and/or multisectoral plans. The key legislation dealing with natural and made-made disasters in Albania is the Civil Emergency Law that dates back to 2001 which focuses primarily on response rather than on prevention and risk reduction and in defining the institutional structure for civil emergency response at central level. The law was revised in 2011 and is now called the law on 'Civil Protection.' The current law refers to the participation of civil society through volunteer services and gives reference to the Albanian Red Cross (ARC) as the main civil society partner. However, the participation of civil society is narrowed to disaster response.

The law does not give any responsibility for municipalities to conduct risk assessments; however, it mentions risk assessment to be conducted at local level,¹⁹⁵ giving the responsibility for it to local government units in cooperation with regional and local responsible institutions. In terms of budgetary allocations, the State budget serves as the key financial resource; different Ministries are tasked with ensuring their annual budget covers emergency planning and response; however, there are no set percentages or amounts provided. The Department of Civil Emergency Planning and Response is established within the MoI, which is responsible for ensuring coordination between all ministries and institutions in disaster management.

Further, the law does include a section on 'Education and Training' as well as one on 'Public Information'. However, the general population lacks awareness of DRR – as a result, risks and vulnerabilities are not well understood. This can be evidenced in the following quote made by a 15 year old adolescent boy in Rrogzshine: “..... risk reduction? What is that?.....in case there's an earthquake tomorrow and I am here at school I have no idea where to go and what to do. I will need to fend for myself...”¹⁹⁶

The ARC is the main NGO partner on DRR in Albania. It operates at both central and local/district levels. It is comprised of volunteer teams. Although ARC is quite active, support for community-led DRR remains inadequate, due in part to incomplete legal and regulatory frameworks and low capacity of local actors. Public awareness of specific risks and community participation in planning and response have been encouraged through the production of leaflets, posters, hazard maps and other educational materials, and the presentation of information through media. Such activities are coordinated by the Directorate for Civil Emergency Planning.

According to UNDP Needs Assessment for Albania in 2011, the following should stand as guiding priorities for the country in moving forward in accelerating the country's capacity in DRR:¹⁹⁷

- I. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance warning
 - Early warning systems;
 - Ensure country situation analysis for disaster risk assessment
 - Establish a National Disaster Observatory

195. www.unisdr.org/2005/mdgs-drr/national-reports/Albania-report.pdf

196. FGD conducted on XXXX

197. UNDP, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Team, Report for Albania, April, 2011.

2. Promote knowledge, innovation and education to ensure a culture of safety and resilience at all levels
 - There is a need to boost localized awareness campaigns on DRR, with the participation of all people.
 - Insert disaster preparedness and health emergency preparedness into the curriculum of primary and secondary schools
 - Train teachers and young people in DRR, disaster preparedness and health emergency preparedness. Promote youth volunteerism.

3. Reduce underlying risk factors
 - Illegal housing and non-respect of urban planning.
 - Better use of land and safe infrastructure (none of the buildings are checked for resistance to earthquakes. Many schools and hospitals are not monitored.

In FGDs with children and adolescents, it was quite apparent that DRR was a new and unfamiliar concept. All interviewees lacked awareness about DRR and who they could seek out for help or even information. Their understanding was more on response rather than prevention. Similarly, in conversations with some parents and teachers, when asked about their role in the event of an emergency situation, such as earthquake or fire, no one had an answer or knew how they would act. Children and adolescents in particular raised their concern that in the case of a fire, they would be left on their own, as one girl said: “...if something was to happen tonight we would be on our own...let’s hope for the best.” The latter demonstrates notions of vulnerability.

Overall Conclusions and Recommendations:

Albania has made tremendous progress toward building a society caring of children. Continued growth over a number of years has led to a reduction in poverty and an improved HDI. The rate of key policies aimed at protecting the rights of children and adolescents witnessed in recent times represent a solid basis for national policies and programs. Yet there remain important obstacles for children in Albania. Effective implementation of national legislation, policies and programs can only be assured through mobilizing of and strong collaboration between Government, NGOs and other civil society. Parents as primary duty-bearers of their children have an obligation to ensure their children's rights fulfillment and to seek support where necessary. Accelerating actions aimed at reaching the most marginalized – the poorest, who in many occasions, continue to remain invisible, will continue to be priorities for Albania.

Reforms need to be focused on a systems-wide capacity development approach. Government structures are unable to respond adequately to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups due to limited financial and human resources, as well as inefficient institutional capacities. By strengthening the capabilities of individuals and organizations and capacities within the enabling environment, capacity development helps lay the foundation for meaningful participation in national and local development processes.

Future goals and strategies of SC ought to be supportive of the priorities of the NSDI (2007-2013,) especially the strategies for justice, social inclusion, social protection, health, basic education, and youth. This alignment ensures that national partners can readily relate to the intentions of the program and integrate them into the overall national development effort.

Failure to give more attention to social inclusion might also prove problematic, both for eventual EU membership, as well as for Albanian society. If attention to the political and economic objectives of the EU accession process is not matched with sufficient attention to the social agenda, there is a risk that the EU requirements for social inclusion will not be met.

This CRSA suggests various areas in need of support:

Expand pre-school (3-6) education opportunities which are equally accessible throughout Albania and promote **access to high-quality basic and secondary education**, ensuring that quality education is available equally among rural and urban areas and families of different income levels.

Advance developments in inclusive education by addressing vulnerable groups and discrimination, including development of education programs that address children's different learning needs and equipping schools to make them fully accessible for children with varying physical and intellectual needs.

Implement integrated health programs with focus on rights and access by providing targeted initiatives, especially in rural areas, for vulnerable groups—poor families, single mothers, young people, including the most-at risk adolescents – which ensure these groups' equal access to quality primary health care.

Provision of integrated childhood (0-3) and motherhood services should be integrated into the primary health care system. Access to and quality of services for mother and child should be included at all levels, especially in rural areas. The availability of ECCD facilities is insufficient, especially for the youngest children (under the age of 5 years), distribution is uneven across the country and the quality of services is poor.

Promote child protection and social services focusing on children most at risk by supporting the building of a system of statutory services that protects vulnerable children from abuse and reconnects children to relevant health, education, law enforcement, legal and other social services. Functional referral mechanisms must be built, training of the police on child rights and on specific aspects of child protection, such as communication, cooperation with CPUs, should be promoted in order to guarantee the child's best interest. Children under the age of 14 must be referred to social services and CPUs in order to mitigate risks of reoffending. EA, together with related protection services, should enable individuals to challenge their economic and social status. EA should be complemented with necessary social services, in particular services for children, including education, protection, recreation, health care, participation and development. A special place could be given to combining EA with food packages, especially for the age group 0–3.

Reduce inequities and target the most vulnerable:

Policies and interventions need to be designed specifically to address those who are difficult to reach. The analysis indicates that some children are significantly more disadvantaged than others. Children from minorities, disadvantaged areas or families in poverty, especially among those residing in rural and mountainous areas, face multiple obstacles to reaching their full potential. Understanding the situation of the most vulnerable children and the factors behind their marginalization and then targeting initiatives towards these children need to be an integral part of the national development agenda. It is therefore necessary to:

- Ensure that strategic information on the rights of the most vulnerable children is made available and used by all those involved in the fight against childhood poverty. This includes the collection of reliable data, disaggregated by sex and other relevant variables to show existing disparities, and the use of these data in the formulation of policies and strategies to reach marginalized children and ensure the removal of barriers to their access to basic services. There are currently a number of areas in which sufficient data on the most marginalized children are not available, especially for CWD and Roma children. Also, information relating to the nature, extent and causes of violence, abuse and exploitation within and outside the family environment and the situation of children with disabilities need further understanding.
- Ensure that existing social protection programs are effectively reaching the most vulnerable households. These protective measures give households the flexibility to cover categories of expenditure which can be crucial to them (such as transport or basic material needs) as a pre-condition to benefit from other social protection schemes, which focus on access to specific basic services.
- Social protection strategies and approaches to the provision of quality, accessible basic social services are needed in order to reduce current inequalities and to prevent them from becoming more severe as the country continues to experience rapid yet unevenly distributed economic growth.
- A Child Rights Commissioner in the Office of the Ombudsman should be established to successfully monitor and handle cases.

Accelerate community participation

Given the varying capacity of Government authorities, particularly at the sub-national level, to implement and monitor programs for children, civil society and local communities play a critical role both in creating demand for rights and supporting the authorities to expand service delivery.

It is also important to recognize that children have the right to participate in matters that affect them and need to be empowered and supported to participate in designing and implementing measures for the reduction of poverty, including having insight to finances for children at local level. Local communities have a strong role to play in both identifying the vulnerable children and providing support to them. Intergenerational dialogue should be promoted, including strengthening the role of fathers.

Accelerate employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth:

Young people, those with low levels of education, women, youth with disabilities, youth living in rural or remote areas, and Roma youth have been identified as the groups of unemployed people who require specific support. There is a need to design packages of support measures for individuals with the ultimate aim of integrating them into the labor market. The formation of innovative partnerships and approaches to facilitate sustainable entry to the labor market ought to be perused and eventually scaled up.

Accelerate youth development and participation, including role in DRR:

Recognizing adolescents and youth as distinct groups in society, with particular needs and capacities which stem from their formative age, should be reflected in adolescent and youth-friendly policies and programs. SC can provide inclusive platforms and forums for open and meaningful dialogue among children and young people to discuss issues of importance to them and which can have meaningful influence on decision-making and program development. Potential collaboration with the Ombudsman's Office should be explored. Programs should provide structured and accessible leisure activities for young people through Sports for Development. Programs should pay particular attention in policy-making and design to vulnerable youth, supporting the forthcoming formation of the new National Youth Strategy planned in 2013. SC can explore youth participation in the context of DRR.

Implement social communication strategies:

The analysis highlights the importance and need of social communication strategies in sharing information and knowledge, promoting social and behavior change and mobilizing communities. The operationalization of communication strategies, for example in the area of violence against children and social norms around childhood, provides an opportunity to ensure scale-up of coordinated, focused and effective social mobilization and communication initiatives. Implementation of such strategies, however, needs to be tailored to the local context, using a variety of communication channels accessible to communities, such as community theatre, TV and radio networks. Such strategies are potentially a very important tool in improving child development outcomes that are closely linked to conservative cultural practices and attitudes.

Improve data collection, research and analysis is essential to establish a system that helps to analyze data and information in line with the global indicators for assessment of realization of child rights. Such a mechanism can serve to assess children's social exclusion as a baseline to design holistic and inclusive social policies. Research ought to be supported to better identify the specific constraints faced by children who have limited abilities and opportunities to participate.

Children's Key Recommendations

The following is a brief summary of main issues identified and prioritized by the groups of children and adolescents who took part in FGDs carried out by SC:

Education:

Children found that physical violence by teachers and administrators needs to be stopped as a priority to improve the school and make it a safer place, and recommended that there should be more respect towards them. Many children complained of discriminatory practices by teachers. Children noted that teachers need to have better communication and conflict resolution skills in cases where conflicts emerge between the students. In cases where conflicts emerge between teacher and student, the children criticized current methods of dealing with complaints of parents. They recommended that there would be better academic assistance to students who need additional help in understanding lessons. Finally, children recommended that they have more opportunities for self-expression, as well as more time for playing and sports.

Health:

Children, especially from urban areas, identified pollution and traffic congestion as concerning features within their communities, which they would like to change. Children recommended that there would be no industrial factories in residential neighborhoods, no street pollution, less cars and noise pollution, and no tobacco, as well as more green spaces and parks for children to play in.

Protection

Children reported the need to strengthen their protective environment and to live in a society free from all forms of violence. Their vision is to live safely and happily with their families. Employment was mentioned as a key area by adolescents to contribute to this regard. Addressing inequities between groups of children, discrimination and violence in schools and in the community are areas that concern them. Finally, children recommended a society conducive to their rights.

Participation

Children and adolescents surveyed by SC confirmed the lack of meaningful participation, especially in those areas where SC is not currently operating (e.g. Rrogozhine.) Adolescents in particular brought up their desire and potential of making a difference in their home community. The latter can be illustrated through the following quote made by an 18 year old girl in Rrogozhine: "...we can even prepare and distribute leaflets.... engage in any kind of activity, be it voluntary; just if you could tell us HOW. We can do many things if we knew HOW ...

Adolescent boys and girls feel they lack alternatives for meaningful recreation and few engage in voluntary activities promoting civic values. They feel the present situation is characterized by the lack of information of volunteerism among adolescents, including its benefits. Some of the contributing factors to this notion of 'disengagement,' according to some adolescents may include rural-to-urban migration, persisting high levels of unemployment, fragmented partnership between teachers, parents, the community and civil society groups on civic education programs.

DRR

Children from both urban and rural areas confirmed very low knowledge on DRR and would like to introduce the concept in their community.

Annexes:

- Appendix A: List of Organizations and Work
- Appendix B: Tools for Focus Group Discussions and Interview Templates

Appendix A: List of Organizations and Work

INSTITUTIONS	THEMATIC AREAS	DESCRIPTION	CONTACT DETAILS
UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES			
UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood • Education • Adolescence • HIV/AIDS • Protection 	<p>UNICEF in Albania focuses on a wide range of child rights, child protection and social policy issues. Following a child poverty conference in 2005, UNICEF has implemented a program that aims to develop a national methodology to measuring child poverty and exclusion from children's rights in cooperation with INSTAT and MOLSAEO. In the area of social statistics, UNICEF has been leading the initiation of DevInfo for better child rights monitoring at national and local level. They have further supported the production of two datasets, the Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 2005 and the Demographic Household Survey (DHS), 2008. UNICEF has also supported a feasibility study on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In terms of child protection, UNICEF is working to strengthen national child and family protection systems, in particular supporting municipal level Child Protection Units (CPUs) as an integral part of local social services. Future support to CPUs and the possibility of adding other referral services not directly related to child protection, such as issues of domestic or gender-based violence, issues affecting migrant or returning migrant families, and broader advice services for local communities are being discussed, in terms of an evaluation due to commence in June 2009. UNICEF continues to work on the transformation of residential care in Albania, intervening at a number of levels from policy advocacy through to individual institutions. UNICEF is also active in the field of juvenile justice and young people in conflict with the law, supporting the establishment of the probation service and expanding the range of alternatives to detention, in the context of wider work on youth-friendly services. The program aims to establish a juvenile justice system based on child rights that offers alternative measures to detention at the pre-trial, trial and post-trial stages and promotes prevention of juvenile delinquency and the social reintegration of offenders.</p>	<p>Address: Skenderbej Str. Volkswagen Bld. 3rd floor, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 2273 335 Fax: +355 4 224 3776 Email: tirana@unicef.org www.unicef.org/albania</p>
ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Participation • Basic services • Regional development • Environment 	<p>ILO focuses particularly on youth employment, employment statistics, and the design of active labour market policies. They work in cooperation with MOLSAEO and institutions (the Albanian employment agency) on developing tools to better identify those at risk (and better assess abilities to work) and redefine vulnerable groups that should be targeted by Active Labour Market Programs. Further, ILO builds the capacity of employers associations and trade unions. They also support the Ministry of Education with strengthening the quality of adult education and preventing early school leavers or child labour. ILO now cooperates with UNDP in the implementation of the MDG-F program on youth migration. Some of the focus of this in terms of spatial disadvantage may be relevant for future social inclusion programming.</p>	<p>Address: Rruga Durrës, No 83, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 2270 274 Email: topi@ilo.org www.un.org.al</p>
UNFPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equity • Youth and adolescents • Reproduced health 	<p>UNFPA focuses on reproductive health issues, which include HIV/Aids and youth health. UNFPA has supported the preparation of the social inclusion crosscutting strategy as well as the sector strategies of gender equality and eradication of domestic violence, and youth. Further, UNFPA looks specifically at aging and the social situation of the elderly population (including old age care issues). In all these areas, emphasis is given to improving data collection mechanisms and monitoring (i.e. gender statistics, census preparation) as well as capacity development for health providers on gender-based violence, and for youth on reproductive health and life style.</p>	<p>Address: Rr. "Donika Kastrioti", No. 1/1, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 235 520 Fax: +355 4 232 283 www.un.org.al</p>

UNIFEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Participation • Basic services • Regional development • Environment 	UNIFEM works in close cooperation with UNDP on improving gender equality and domestic violence legislation. Further, they work on statistical capacity development of gender statistics (systemizing available data and identification of gaps and the DHS 2008), new methodologies (i.e. time use surveys) in cooperation with INSTAT and MOLSAEO. Further, UNIFEM supports MOLSAEO to pilot gender responsive budgeting at national and local level. They also focus on promoting women's participation in politics.	Address: Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, P. 11/1, K. 3, Ap. B2, 1000 Tirana, Albania Tel/Fax: +355 4 225 5364 Tel/Fax: +355 4 227 1958 Email: lorna.mecani@unwomen.org www.un.org.al
WHO		WHO is involved in a range of programs offering support to strengthening health systems, as well as broadening statistical capacity regarding health. It has a number of programs which are directly linked to social inclusion, including mother and child health care for vulnerable groups; Roma access to health; mental health and mental disability; HIV/AIDs; and support for drug addicts.	Address: Rruga Themistokli Germenji, Pallati 10, Tirana, Albania Tel/fax: +355 4 226 6162 Email: office@who-albania.org www.euro.who.int
UNV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Children • Civil society • Culture & sports • Education • Electoral assistance • Emergency relief • Environment • Focus on food • Gender • Governance • HIV/AIDS • Health • Human rights • ICT • MDGs • Marginalized groups • Online volunteering • Partners • Peace & conflict resolution • People with disabilities • Poverty • Private sector • Youth 	UNV has a mandate within the United Nations to raise awareness of volunteerism and provide technical cooperation to developing countries in the field of volunteerism to fully explore its potential as a resource for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. UNV is contributing towards two joint programs under Delivering as One, <i>Empowering the Vulnerable Minority Communities of Albania</i> with UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF and <i>Youth migration: Reaping the benefits and mitigating risks</i> with ILO, UNDP, UNICEF and IOM. These programs build upon UNV's strong track record in Albania in the mobilization of local communities and in the facilitation of expert volunteer missions to the country.	Address: Office of the UN Resident Coordinator Skenderbej Street, Gurten Building, 2nd Floor, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 225 0205 Fax: +355 4 225 0286 www.un.org.al
UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and Rule of Law • Economy and environment • Regional and Local development • Inclusive Social Policy 	UNDP works on a range of programs including strengthening the Government's strategic planning capacity, statistical support including social statistics; support for trade promotions and new foreign investments, e-Government, public administration reform, extra-legality; brain gain, Human Development Report, the environment (climate change, biodiversity and nature protections, hot spots remediation), Roma inclusion; civil society participation, ICT in schools; security, and mine action; gender equality and women participation, domestic violence, regional	Address: "Skenderbej" Street, Gurten Building, 2nd Floor, Tirana, Albania Tel.: +355 4 225 0205 Fax: +355 4 225 0286 www.undp.org.al

		<p>development; and tourism promotion and cultural heritage, cross-border cooperation, media development. Many of these are ongoing and framed within a One UN approach.</p> <p>Of particular importance in terms of social inclusion are the following existing or planned One UN initiatives:</p> <p>“Supporting vulnerable communities in Albania” is a proposal currently being considered under the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, concentrating on support to specific Roma and Egyptian communities in Tirana, Elbasan, Fier and Durres, selected on the basis of having the highest number of Roma and Egyptian populations in the country and the highest poverty rate among both the Roma and Egyptian populations. The three broad objectives are to promote vulnerable minority communities in terms of participation in decision-making; access to basic services; and policies and institutional strengthening to promote social inclusion. Below, we suggest that the broad project methodology be extended to other vulnerable groups and regions in Albania.</p> <p>“Youth Migration” initiative. To support the integration of various youth employment policy objectives through coordinated action, four agencies of the United Nations Country Team of Albania designed a comprehensive Joint Program. The Joint Program, financed by the Spanish Government through the Millennium Development Goal Trust Fund (MDGTF) promotes decent employment for youth as a national priority and proposes to address disadvantaged youth from rural areas with targeted labour market measures aiming to minimize the risks of engaging in irregular migration through improved productivity, upgraded informal enterprises and better conditions of work.</p> <p>The World Bank and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are part of the UN Country team in Albania but not part of the One UN Program:</p> <p>The World Bank has a great deal of programming accompanied by loan agreements relating to the social sector, including social protection, pension system reform and poverty statistics. A social service delivery project aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of social protection and pension system through improved administration and long-term sustainability of the pension system and improved quality standards of social services. The next stage of this will focus exclusively on pensions although aspects of the social services planning component are relevant for some planned interventions discussed below. The World Bank also supported capacity building initiatives for improvements in the production of quality poverty statistics (in cooperation with UNDP). Three Living Standard Measurement Surveys (LSMS) have been supported and the 2007 Household Budget Survey.</p>	
<p>IOM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration Management • Counter-trafficking • Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration (VARRP) • Migration and Development 	<p>IOM is very active in the field of migration and support to returnees. IOM supported the development of the National strategy on Migration (with EC funds). IOM also supported the setting up of a readmission system for returnees. It further plans to conduct a local survey to identify existing opportunities for vocational training for returning migrants. It is also supporting a project aiming at tracing family of minor migrants and provides advices and referral services for migrants on labour migration policy and practice. Finally IOM also implements measures to prevent human trafficking. In the context of Albania’s status as a prospective candidate country for membership of the European Union, the work of the European Commission is of particular importance.</p>	<p>Address: Rruga “Brigada e Tete” Vila no. 3, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 257 836 Tel: +355 4 257 837 Fax: +355 4 257 835 iomtirana@iomtirana.org.al www.un.org.al</p>

European Commission		<p>The European Commission is actively supporting Albania as a prospective candidate country, not least through the IPA support program. IPA for Albania is worth some €498 m. between 2007 and 2012, of which some €440 m. is for transition assistance and institution building and the remainder for cross-border co-operation. The priorities for IPA 2009 have been set and the full list of programs and project fiches will soon be publicly available. IPA 2010 is currently being designed with a set of initial priorities under the four main axes of: Political criteria; Socio-Economic criteria; Ability to assume the obligations of membership; and Participation in Community programs. Thus far, Social Inclusion has not been included as a specific priority, although aspects have appeared in a number of projects, including support to prisons, vocational and educational training, and through cross-cutting issues including minorities, equal opportunities and gender equality. A project on drug addiction in Albania may also be considered by the EC. In addition, some time ago, the Government of Albania signalled its wish to join the 'Community Program for Employment and Social Solidarity' (PROGRESS) which would support capacity building, policy development, statistics, lesson learning and networking efforts in the field of employment, social protection and social inclusion.</p>	<p>Address: ABA Business Center, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, 17th floor, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 222 8320 Fax: +355 4 223 0752 Email: delegation-albania@eeas.europa.eu http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/albania/about_us/contacts/index_en.htm</p>
Swiss Development Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government leadership • Employment and the stimulation of income • Advancing social justice • Conflict prevention and management with the goal of making a contribution to the development of a social and market-oriented economy 	<p>The Swiss Cooperation brings to Albania Switzerland's comparative advantage and specific know-how in areas such as decentralization, vocational educational training, risk insurance and energy. Switzerland plays a leading role in the dialogue and cooperation between the Government of Albania and the international donor community and is recognized for its efforts to increase aid effectiveness. A visible contribution of this kind is the support to the Integrated Planning System (IPS) which harmonizes all donor and government activities in regards to Albania's development.</p>	<p>Address: Swiss Cooperation Office Albania c/o Embassy of Switzerland Rruga Brigada e VIII, Nd.23, H.9, Ap. I 1019 Tirana, Albania Phone +355 4 224 0102 Fax +355 4 224 0103 Email tirana@sdc.net www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/albania</p>
ADA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty reduction • Peace building & conflict prevention • Environment & natural resources • Gender • Water supply & sanitation • Rural development • Energy • Private sector development • Education and Science • Governance and Human rights • Public Finance Management • Health 	<p>Austrian Development Agency contributes to narrowing the rift between rich and poor; ensuring peace and preserving natural habitats. All progress depends on an adequate supply of water and energy. Education opens up new prospects for the future and building democratic institutions brings stability. All ADC programs and projects take special account of gender equality and the needs of children and persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Address: Rr. Mustafa Matohiti, Pallati ABAU, No. 1/7, P.O.Box 222/1, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 (0) 422 35 717 Fax: +355 (0) 422 34 546 Email: tirana@ada.gv.at</p>
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Democracy and good governance • Respect for human rights 	<p>Between 2009 and 2012, Sweden will help Albania make its public and local government administration more efficient at collecting taxes; make the police's fight against organized crime; to plan the use of its natural resources; to establish a nationwide property register to guarantee</p>	<p>Address: Embassy of Sweden, Rruga Pjeter Budi No. 56, Tirana, Albania</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural resources and care of the environment Social development and security 	<p>right of possession; to introduce an employment agency and making Albania's national debt office, which administers central government debt and internal lending, more efficient. SIDA is working with several other partners, including Norway, the United Kingdom and the World Bank, to support the implementation of Albania's plan of action for its engagement with the EU. Swedish government is supporting GoA to meet the EU membership requirements and achieve a greater democracy and increased respect for human rights, particularly for women, children and minorities such as Roma. Support will be provided to increase the influence from the citizens in order to reduce corruption; to develop the culture of membership in clubs and associations – as an important mean towards citizens' participation in society; to strengthen non-governmental organizations that work towards influencing decision-makers; to improve equality, so women can have a greater influence in politics; to combat child labour; and to ensure that environmental issues receive attention.</p>	<p>Tel: +355 4 238 0650 Fax: +355 4 238 0660 E-mail: ambassaden.tirana@foreign.ministry.se</p>
Netherland's Embassy		<p>The Netherlands Embassy in Tirana supports and promotes cultural exchange activities between the Netherlands and Albania.</p>	<p>Address: Rruga Asim Zeneli Nr. 10, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 2240 828 Fax: +355 4 2232 723 E-mail: tir@minbuza.nl</p>
British Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal opportunities Disability Gender Sexual identity Work-life balance Human rights 	<p>The British Council is the UK's international organization for educational and cultural relations.</p>	<p>Address: Rr. Skenderbej, No.12 Tirana (British Embassy building), Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 224 0856 Fax: +355 4 224 0858 Email: info@britishcouncil.org.al</p>
OSCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral reform Parliamentary support Rule of law/human rights Media development Civil society and gender Property reform Anti trafficking Economic and environmental governance Police support Civil registry modernization 	<p>The OSCE Presence in Albania provides assistance to Albanian authorities and civil society on promoting democratization, rule of law, human rights and on consolidating democratic institutions in conformity with OSCE principles, standards and commitments.</p>	<p>Address: Sheshi "Italia", Sheraton Hotel, 1st Floor, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 223 5993 Fax: +355 4 223 5994 Email: pm-al@osce.org www.osce.org/albania</p>
EU delegation in Albania		<p>The EU maintains diplomatic relations with nearly all countries in the world. It has strategic partnerships with key international players, is deeply engaged with emerging powers around the globe, and has signed bilateral Association Agreements with a number of states in its vicinity. European Union is represented by a network of 136 EU Delegations, which have a similar function to those of an embassy.</p>	<p>Address: ABA Business Center, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, 17th floor, Tirana – Albania Tel: +355 4 222 8320 Fax: +355 4 223 0752 Email: delegation-albania@eeas.europa.eu</p>

World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport, • Energy, • Private and Financial Sector Development, • Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, • Water Supply and Sanitation, • Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Governance, • Administrative Reform and Anticorruption, • Human Development 	<p>The World Bank is a source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world in order to reduce poverty and support development. WB comprises two institutions managed by 188 member countries: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). The IBRD aims to reduce poverty in middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries, while IDA focuses exclusively on the world's poorest countries. These institutions are part of a larger body known as the World Bank Group. Established in 1944, the World Bank is headquartered in Washington, D.C.</p> <p>WB in Albania provides support in areas of Transport, Energy, Private and Financial Sector Development, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, Water Supply and Sanitation, Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Governance, Administrative Reform and Anticorruption, Human Development</p>	<p>Address: “Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit” St. , Tirana, Albania Communications Officer, Ana Gjokutaj Tel. +355 4 228 0650 Fax: +355 4 224 0 590 Email: agjokutaj@worldbank.org www.worldbank.org.al</p>
USAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule of law and governance • Economic growth 	<p>USAID's programs in Albania strengthen democratic institutions, promote civil society, reduce corruption, promote gender equality and, at the same time, create a more favourable environment for inclusive economic growth— all necessary to move Albania forward more quickly towards greater democracy while meeting criteria that are essential to achieving its European aspirations.</p>	<p>Address: USAID/Albania, American Embassy, Rr. Elbasanit, Nr. 103 Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 224 7285 Email: tirana-webcontact@usaid.gov http://albania.usaid.gov</p>
Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA)		<p>TIKA works strengthening of social and cultural bonds; support to local governments in areas such as rehabilitation of water ducts networks, renovation of school buildings, restoration of historical buildings and monuments.</p>	<p>Address: Rruga e Elbasanit, Nr. 125/1, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 236 6416 Fax: +355 4 236 6418 E-mail: turkishembassy@albaniaonline.net www.tika.gov.tr</p>
PRIVATE BUSINESSES			
Rotary Club Albania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing with equipments, facilities and renovations/ rehabilitation of buildings in the sectors of health, education etc. • The main beneficiaries include, neonates, Roma, disabled, hospitalized and other in need youth and children. 	<p>The Object of Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise and, in particular, to encourage and foster:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service; 2. High ethical standards in business and professions, the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations, and the dignifying of each Rotarian's occupation as an opportunity to serve society; 3. The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life; 4. The advancement of international understanding, goodwill, and peace through a world fellowship of business and professional persons united in the ideal of service. 	<p>www.rotarytirana.org</p>
Vodafone Albania Foundation	<p>Education, health, environment and social welfare for people in need, disaster relief</p>	<p>Vodafone Albania Foundation makes social investments that help people to have fuller lives by sharing the benefits of developments in mobile communications technology as widely as possible; protecting the natural environment; and supporting the local communities in which</p>	<p>Address: Autostrada Tiranë-Durrës, Rr. “Pavarësia”, Nr.6 I, Kashar, Tirana, Albania</p>

		Vodafone's customers, employees and business partners live. Vodafone Albania Foundation aims to allocate grants to local organizations, including non-profit organizations and other civil society institutions in order to respond to community needs. Vodafone Albania Foundation also delivers donations in kind that are generated by the benefits and development of mobile communication technology.	Tel: +355 4 228 3072 Fax: +355 4 228 3331 Email: foundation.al@vodafone.com
Albanian American Development Foundation		Education for sustainable development and entrepreneurship; economic development – mostly in innovative business entrepreneur/development.	http://www.aadf.org
Albanian American Enterprise Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for Sustainable Development • Entrepreneurship • Leadership Development; Support for Cultural Tourism and Eco-Tourism 	The Albanian American Development Foundation (“AADF” or “the Foundation”) was created in 2009 by the Albanian American Enterprise Fund (“AAEF” or “the Fund”) with the support and encouragement of USAID and the United States Government. The Foundation will assist in the development and growth of a vibrant private sector for the benefit of a free and democratic Albania. The Foundation will continue the Fund's mission to make a meaningful contribution to Albania's economic transition and progress. It will serve as an enduring symbol of U.S. commitment to Albania.	Address: Rr. Deshmoret e 4 Shkurtit, “Green Park” Complex Tower 2, 12th Floor, Tirana, Albania Tel: + 355 4 222 2408 Fax: +355 4 222 3381 Email: i.schneider@aadf.org www.aafef.com
Foreign Investors Association in Albania	<p>The principal areas of FIAA's members activities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industries • Construction • Trading • Air traffic • Banking • Training • Bottling • Audit, Finance and legal services • Telecommunications • Information services • Insurance • Transportation • Water supply • Medical • Beverage • Housing development • Media 	FIAA was established by several Foreign Investors in Albania. Through the foreseeable future FIAA intends to consolidate the ties between government and the foreign business community through open and informal dialogue in order to attract more investors coming in Albania.	Address: Str. “Themistokli Ghermenji”, Pall. “Pegaso”, Kati 2, Tirana - Albania Tel/Fax: +355 4 222 5553 E-mail: fiaalb@albaniaonline.net www.fiaalbania.com
INTERNATIONAL NGOs			
World Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Health • Water 	WV partner with the people of Albania to improve their lives today and to help enact sustainable solutions for the future of their children, families, and communities. World Vision's child sponsorship program plays an important role in this partnership, with donors from the United States.	http://www.worldvision.org/our-work/international-work/albania

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergencies • Advocacy 	<p>World Vision also operates other programs that benefit communities in Albania. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the psychosocial and economic needs of children living and working on the streets through literacy programs, vocational training for parents, and increasing resources for children and their parents. • Improving health in communities throughout Albania by repairing land drainage and increasing access to clean water and sanitation. • Helping families increase their incomes through small loans and business skills training. 	
Terre des Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing Child Protection Units • Strengthening child protection within the education system • Supporting vulnerable communities (Roma) • Direct support to improving well-being and resilience of vulnerable children 	<p>TdH in Albania works to develop a child protection system against child abuse, neglect, exploitation and trafficking</p>	<p>Address: Rr. Donika Kastrioti, Vila 9/1, PO Box 7426, Tirana, Albania Tel/Fax: +355 4 225 8288 /2251679 http://tdh.ch/en/countries/albania</p>
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the Vulnerable • Supporting Families • Promoting Health • Providing Food and Water • Establishing Livelihoods • Responding to Emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to child and women's sexually exploited, addressing vulnerable women literacy • Addressing poverty (food, shelter), empowering children who missed schooling opportunities, through non-formal education • Providing men and women with opportunities to support themselves and their families through micro-loans and training. • Responding to emergencies such as famines, floods, wars, hurricanes, or earthquakes, by evaluating the greatest needs, and then developing plans to get help to the areas where it is needed most, and by coordinating with local governments to provide medical care, food, water, and shelter to victims of tragedies. <p>ADRA in Albania works on awareness and Braille literacy training, health education to children; health training for village mothers; training of doctors in neonatal care; providing free medical exams and medicines to neglected and underprivileged children; providing school opportunities for Roma children; school and hospital reconstruction and equipping; responding to emergencies.</p>	<p>Address: Rruga 'Bedri Karapici' Qyteti i nxënësvë (pranë dyqanit të lodrave 'Rikiro' ose pranë fushës së mjeshtërisë sportive) Tirana, Albania Email: adraelbania@gmail.com http://www.adra-te.org/pages/albania.html</p>
SOS Children Village in Albania		<p>SOS Children's Villages internationally work to make child care, education, and health care available to children and their families directly; to help families and communities to become strong so they can take care of their children better and organise child care, education and health care; to improve the policies and practices of the state.</p> <p>SOS Children's Villages started its work in Albania in 1992 and includes the provision of day-care, primary and secondary education, vocational training and counselling to support children, young people and families near the capital city of Tirana.</p>	<p>Address: Rruga "Pjeter Budi" Pallati "Klasik Konstruksion", Shkalla B, Ap. 16 Tirana, Albania Tel/Fax: +355 4 237 8517</p>

ALBANIAN NGOs WORKING ON CHILD RIGHTS

<p>Children’s Human Rights Centre of Albania – CRCA</p>		<p>The Children’s Human Rights Centre of Albania – CRCA works to promote the respect of children’s rights, to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation, to develop children rights in Albania and to increase child participation at national and local level, through lobby and advocacy, policy and legislation improvement; capacity building, information and research, and establishment of good models of services of child care and protection. For this CRCA promotes the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other national and international child-rights standards.</p>	<p>Address: Pall. Shallvareve, Vila mbrapa Fushave te Tenisit, Kati II, Tirana, Albania Tel: + 355 4 224 2264 Fax: + 355 4 224 2264 http://www.crca.org.al</p>
<p>ADRF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy Program • Resource Centre • Training Centre • Mobility Aids and Employment • Free legal aid • Support Program to the Convention – CRPD • Economic Empowerment for People with Disability • Employment for People with Disability • Inclusive Development Community • Albanian Disability and Development Coalition • SLID “Social and Labor Integration of the Disabled 	<p>ADRF programs target the increase of opportunities for people with disability to get integrated in the country’s social and economic life, through promoting and protecting their rights. Since its foundation, ARDF has functioned as a coordination center for undertaking major initiatives to impact on improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities in Albania. In order to fulfil its mission, ADRF work together with and without disabilities.</p>	<p>Address: “Bogdani” St.(former-A.Z.Çajupi) Ap.15 3d floor, Tirana, Albania Tel/Fax +355 4 226 9426 E-mail: adrf@albmail.com www.adrf.org.al</p>
<p>MEDPAK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive education • Legal advice • Provision of services 	<p>MEDPAK protects the rights of persons with disabilities through the recognition and enforcement of laws and regulations, training, community awareness of rights, lobbying for the adoption of laws, establishment of services for a dignified life for the all.</p>	<p>www.medpak.org</p>
<p>Albanian Helsinki Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring priority human rights areas; recommendations for improvements and reinstatements of violated rights. • Lobbying and advocacy for improvements in legal framework and law enforcement. • Raise the awareness and increase capacities of the state administration to enhance their accountability for correct enforcement of laws. 	<p>The AHC’s main mission is the observation of respect for the freedoms and rights of citizens and the reaction to violations for the purpose of their reinstatement; sensitizing citizens about the protection of their freedoms and rights; improving legislation and the practice of law enforcement through opponence and recommendations in the phases of the drafting of laws as well as of their enforcement</p>	<p>Address: Rr. Gjin Bue Shpata, Pll. 5/1, Ap. 4, PO Box 1752, Tirana Albania Tel/Fax: +355 4 223 3671 Email: office@greekhelsinki.gr www.ahc.org.al</p>

ALBANIAN MINISTRIES		
Ministry of Education and Sciences	<p>The Mission of the Ministry: To provide the quality in education system, integrated with research; as well as to provide equal opportunities for all Albanian citizens, focused on the formation of citizen's democratic consciousness and knowledge necessary to cope with the demands of market economy in accordance with national and European priorities.</p> <p>List of Institutions under the Ministry of Education and Science:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Education Directorates and Education Offices • National agency of examinations • National Inspectorate for Pre-university Education • Public Agency for Accreditation of High Education • National Agency of Vocational Education and Training • Institute for Development of Education • Centre for Albanologic Studies • Publishing House for University Textbooks 	<p>Address: Rruga e Durrësit Nr.23, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 2230 289 Email: ministry@mash.gov.al www.mash.gov.al</p>
Ministry of Health	<p>The Mission of the Ministry: Developing and implementing health policies based on GoA program and determine the directions of health sector development at nation level and regional level. Develop legislation in the area of prevention and protection of public health.</p> <p>Some of the main Institutions under the Ministry of Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University hospital centre "Mother Theresa" Tirana • Obstetrics-Gynaecologic University Hospital "Queen Geraldine" Tirana • Obstetric-Gynaecologic Hospital University "Koco Gliozheni" Tirana • Regional Directorate of Health in Tirana and 12 other regions of Albania • Institute of Public Health "Hulo Haderi" Tirana • National Centre for Blood Transfusion • National Centre for Child Rearing, Development and Rehabilitation in Tirana • National centre of Drug Control 	<p>Address: Bulevardi Bajram Curri, nr. 1, Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 2364663 Fax: ++355 2362937 Email: ministri@moh.gov.al www.moh.gov.al</p>
Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Youth and Sports	<p>MCTYS has a special sector that develops and coordinate the implementation of youth oriented policies. The Youth Sector under this ministry has developed the National Strategy for youth 2007-2013, and coordinates and monitors the implementation of this strategy, with MoH, MoES, MLSWEO, LGUs and agencies interested to promote youth participation.</p>	<p>Address: Rruga e Kavajës, nr. 1 Tirana, Albania Tel: +355 4 222 9072 E-mail: informacion@mtkrs.gov.al www.mtkrs.gov.al</p>
Ministry of Labour, Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities	<p>The Mission of the Ministry: To develop, coordinate and implement an effective labour system, social insurance and social assistance, in harmony with EU standards. This ministry develops employment and VT programs for people (including youth) and assists them in the employment process. List of Institutions under the Ministry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State social service • National employment service • National inspectorate of labour <p>The Agency for Protection of Children's Rights and the Technical Secretariat for Roma are also established and function under this Ministry.</p>	<p>www.mpcs.gov.al</p>
Ministry of Interior	<p>Moi develops risk disaster reduction and response strategies and actions plans, and coordinate with other governmental institutions to prevent and/or respond to emergencies at regional or country level.</p>	<p>www.moi.gov.al</p>

Appendix B: Tools for Focus Group Discussions and Interview Templates

The followings tools were used by SC during semi-structured FGDs and individual interviews with stakeholders. Templates used to consult stakeholders:

- Children and adolescents from urban and rural areas, most vulnerable children, children in conflict with the law, children with disabilities;
- Parents from rural and urban areas as well parents of children with disabilities;
- Duty bearers: State Agency for Protection of Children’s Rights, Roma Technical Secretariat, representatives of different ministries and REAs.
- Partner NGOs
- Local government representatives (Mayor and Head of Commune)

Focus Group Discussion: GENERAL GUIDANCE

Audience: Children and adolescent girls and boys (up to 19 years) old from rural areas (e.g. Rripe and area where we do not currently work.)

Aims:

1. To obtain children's views on the state of child' rights in the respective locations with focus on: the right to survival and development; protection, non-discrimination and participation in regard to their living environment (family, school, community)
2. To get their views upon practices that prevent children from having their rights achieved and the role of central and local authorities (schools, institutions, services)
3. To get their views on cultural and family related practices that have a negative impact upon their rights
4. Their hopes and vision (expectations) in becoming active citizens
5. Authorities/people/services they trust that can help solve their problems and the ones they don't

Suggested Size and Group Composition

10-14 children

50% -50% approx. presentation of boys and girls (as much as we can.)

Duration: 60-90 min

Ethical Issues: Consent (informed, oral, written; voluntary participation, safety; inclusive in terms of group composition (see consent form.)

SUGESTED QUESTIONS:

Key questions¹

1. What is children/adolescents' vision for themselves/their family / community/their country?
2. What problems/risks and obstacles do they encounter in their daily life and how do these disrupt their dreams from coming true?
3. Who can help them to tackle these risks/problems and obstacles and how?
4. What could be done to fulfill their expectations (make the m reality) and make Albania a better cou ntry for the m selves ?
5. What is children's/adolescents' understanding of emergencies (mainly natural disasters and/or wider armed conflicts/unrest? Where and who would they seek help from?

Supporting questions²

1. What makes you proud/happy of being a member of your community/ school?
2. What issues/practices do you consider unacceptable in this community/ school?
3. What do you do in your free time?
4. What skills would you like to develop? (Children younger than 16)
5. What vocational skills would you like to get? (Children over 16)
6. What places do you consider safe and dangerous and how do your protect yourself from these risks?
7. What worry you most at school/community and (if you work in the working place)?
8. What would you do differently if you were the Head of a commune/ mayor/prime minister?

CONSENT FORM

I voluntarily agree to participate in the interviews that Save the Children is conducting for the benefit of analyzing the situation of CR implementation in Albania.

I was explained and I understand that the interview is being conducted with the purpose of improving programme features and generating future programme ideas, in regard to improving the living situation of young children, families and their community.

I grant permission for the interview to be tape recorded and transcribed, and be used only by Save the Children office for internal use, for analysis of interview data.

Interviewer

Participant/s

Date

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Audience: Vulnerable Children (i.e. Center for Street Children)

Suggestion: Individual interviews/ small group discussion (up to 3 interviewees)

Aim:

1. To obtain children's views on the state of child' rights in the respective locations with focus on: the right to survival and development; protection, non-discrimination and participation in regard to their living environment (family, school, community)
2. To get their views upon practices that prevent children from having their rights achieved and the role of central and local authorities (schools, institutions, services)
3. To get their views on cultural and family related practices that have a negative impact upon their rights
4. Their hopes and vision (expectations) in becoming active citizens Authorities/ people/services they trust that can help solve their problems and the ones they don't

Size and composition of the group

Individual or 2-3 children in a group

50% -50% approx. presentation of boys and girls

Participation of children from minority ethnicities

Duration: 60-90 min

Ethical issues: Consent (informed, oral, written); voluntary participation, safety; inclusive in terms of group composition

SUGESTED QUESTIONS:

Key questions¹

1. What is children/adolescents' vision for themselves/their family/community/their country?
2. What problems/risks and obstacles do they encounter in their daily life and how do these disrupt their dreams from coming true?
3. Who can help them to tackle these risks/problems and obstacles and how?
4. What could be done to fulfill their expectations (make them reality) and make Albania a better country for themselves?
5. What is children's /adolescents' understanding of emergencies (mainly natural disasters and/or wider armed conflicts/unrest? Where and who would they seek help from?

Supporting and more detailed questions²

1. What issues/ practices do you consider as unacceptable for you in community/ school?
2. What do adults in your community think about the role of a girl in society?
3. What do you do in your free time?
4. What skills would you like to develop? (Children younger than 16)
5. What vocational skills would you like to get? (Children over 16)
6. What places do you consider safe and what dangerous and how do you protect yourselves from risks?
7. What health education programs for adolescents have you come across? If yes, can you mention what they are about?
8. What worry you most at school/community and (if you work in the working place)?
9. What are some of the issues that prevent children from staying in education?

Other detailed questions may be generated from social worker at the center.

Questionnaire no. _____

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Audience: Early Childhood Development (young mothers from vulnerable communities)

Suggestion: One to one interviews (project facilitator in Korça and Vlora and child with disability assisted by own parent/s)

Aim:

1. To obtain children's views on the state of child' rights in the respective locations with focus on: the right to survival; development; protection, non-discrimination and participation in regard to their living environment (family, school, community)
2. To get their views upon practices that prevent children from having their rights achieved and the role of central and local authorities (schools, institutions, services)
3. To get their views on cultural and family related practices that have a negative impact upon their rights
4. Their hopes and vision (expectations) in becoming active citizens
5. Authorities/people they trust that can help solve their problems and the ones they don't

Size and composition of the group of children & parents interviewed

50% -50% approx. presentation of boys and girls

Participation of children's parents from other minority ethnicities (if there is a combination of disability with belonging to an ethnic minority)

Parents of children from different backgrounds: (rural/urban), (low income/high income families),

Duration: 35-45 min

Ethical Issues: Written consent (*please find the form at the end of this questionnaire*); voluntary participation, safety; inclusive in terms of group composition

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS'

1. How do you see the future of:

- your children,
- yourself,
- your community,

(Alternative) What would you expect from your child once s/he turns 20 or 25 years old?

2. What risks and obstacles do you face in their daily life?

- How many children 0-5, do families in your community have?
- What is the youngest age that mothers in your community give birth to the first child?
- How do you make your living? Do you get any support from institutions and what/how?
- Do you know cases of child or mother mortality in your community? Why did it happen?
- Do all your children have birth certificates?
- Do you know your family doctor/nurse? How often you are visited at your home from them?
- Does your nurse discuss with you about breastfeeding and child nutrition?
- How many check-ups you usually do during pregnancy?
- Do you vaccinate your children?
- How often your children 0-3 get sick? Where do you go to get support? What kind of support?
- Have you registered your children in crèche or kindergarten? If not why?
- If yes, are you satisfied with the kind of care and education your children get in crèche and kindergarten? If not, what need to be improved?
- In case you are working, who takes care of your children?
- Do your children have any playing facilities in the community?
- Who you consult in case you need advice on how to educate and raise your children healthy?

3. Who can help them to tackle these risks and obstacles and how?

- Do you know cases where care providers/professionals do not pay the right attention to your children or other children in the community? To your opinion why this does happen?
- When you don't find the proper services or support from institutions, where do you direct your complaint?
- Who do you think is responsible to respond to your young children's needs? How?
- What kind of support you feel you are missing

4. What can governmental institutions do at local to fulfill your and your young children's needs?

(Alternative) What do you expect from the local government to help you meet your child/children's needs?

Questionnaire no. _____

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Audience: Children with Disabilities in schools or kindergartens and their parents

Suggestion: One to one interviews (project facilitator in Korça and Vlora and child with disability assisted by own parent/s)

Aim:

1. To obtain children's views on the state of child' rights in the respective locations with focus on: the right to survival; development; protection, non-discrimination and participation in regard to their living environment (family, school, community)
2. To get their views upon practices that prevent children from having their rights achieved and the role of central and local authorities (schools, institutions, services)
3. To get their views on cultural and family related practices that have a negative impact upon their rights
4. Their hopes and vision (expectations) in becoming active citizens
5. Authorities/people they trust that can help solve their problems and the ones they don't

Size and composition of the group of children & parents interviewed

50% -50% approx. presentation of boys and girls

Participation of children from other minority ethnicities (if there is a combination of disability with belonging to an ethnic minority)

Children from different backgrounds: (rural/urban), (low income/high income families),

Duration: 35-45 min

Ethical Issues: Written consent (*please find the form at the end of this questionnaire*); voluntary participation, safety; inclusive in terms of group composition

SUGESTED QUESTIONS'

1. What is child/children's vision for themselves, their family, community, and their country?

Supporting questions for children:

- What would you like to become when you grow up?
- Who do you think will help you?
- How are your relations with your teachers and adults in your community?
- How do you like your school or neighborhood to be?

For parents:

- What challenges/obstacles do you think your child/children deal with/face in their education? (Refik comment)
- Where you need to refer for help/support? (institutions, individuals, NGOs)

2. What risks and obstacles do they face in their daily life and how do they stop their dreams coming true?

Supporting questions:

- What do you think about doctors/nurses, or teachers or therapists? Do you think they are helping you when you need their assistance?
- Tell us how you feel when you play or learn with classmates and neighbor children? Are they nice and like to stay & play with you?
- What kind of help you need to attend school/health clinic/playgrounds? Are they far from your home? Do you feel you are safe in there?

For parents:

- Did you have any obstacle to enroll your child in school/kindergarten, or get the services you need for in municipalities, health clinics etc.? What kind of obstacles?
- Have you had any instance of your child being mistreated in school or neighborhood just for being different?
- Do you know cases of CWD not attending schools/being isolated at home? In your opinion why does this happen?
- What is the approach of the parents of the other children towards the CWD (in schools, in neighborhood)?
- Are there cases that you know, of discrimination of CWD children in school/ kindergarten/ neighborhood? How have you reacted when you heard about such cases?

3. Who can help them to tackle these risks and obstacles and how?
(both for parent and the child)

4. What can governmental institutions do at local or central level to fulfill CWD needs and make Albania a better country for them? (for parents only)

Questionnaires no. 7 & 1.0

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Audience: 7. Focus group with REA representatives and teachers
10. Meetings with Mayors and Municipal Leaders

Suggestion: One to one interviews with Municipal leaders (head of social department), with REA, Group discussion with teachers

Aim:

1. To obtain children's views on the state of child' rights in the respective locations with focus on: the right to survival and development; protection, non-discrimination and participation in regard to their living environment (family, school, community)
2. To get their views upon practices that prevent children from having their rights achieved and the role of central and local authorities (schools, institutions, services).
3. To get their views on cultural and family related practices that have a negative impact upon their rights
4. Their hopes and vision (expectations) in becoming active citizens
5. Authorities/people they trust that can help solve their problems and the ones they don't

Duration: 60 min

Ethical Issues: Consent (informed, oral, written); voluntary participation, safety; inclusive in terms of group composition

SUGESTED QUESTIONS:

Questions

1. What can be some of the achievements for children in your area of supervision? How was that achieved? (Municipality and REA)
2. What local or central government plans are in place for offering children access to free time, entertainment and cultural activities? What is the allocated budget for 2012/ for previous years? (Municipality)
3. What responsibilities do you have as Mayor / CPU worker / REA director / specialist in fulfilling the rights for children? (Municipality and REA)
4. How do you ensure children's participation in municipal/communal affairs, school boards? (Municipality and REA)
5. What services are available for children in your community? (Municipality)
6. Is there a system of complaining in place in the institutions you are in charge of? If yes, what are the procedures?
7. In case of emergencies do you have a plan of preparedness assist children? (Municipality and REA)
8. What are some of the issues that prevent children from accessing and staying in education? (Municipality, REA and teachers)
9. Are there mechanisms at national/district level to support children's school attendance? (REA, teachers)
10. How difficult might be for a disabled person to become teacher? (REA)
11. What opportunities are there in school curriculum for children to learn about and respect Human Rights (what about Children's Rights)? (REA, teachers)
12. What is the level of providing resources at schools with basic items/materials and who/which provide them? Do children/their parents pay for them?
13. Is there evidence of discrimination within classrooms (gender, racial, religious, socio-economic)? What form does it take? What is the impact?

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Audience: Representatives of Ministries, People's Ombudsman, Central Agency for the Protection of Child Rights

Suggestion: One to one discussions

Aim:

1. To obtain children's views on the state of child' rights in the respective locations with focus on: the right to survival & development; protection, non-discrimination and participation
2. To get their views upon practices that prevent children from having their rights achieved and the role of central and local authorities (schools, institutions, services)
3. To get their views on cultural and family related practices that have a negative impact upon their rights
4. Their hopes and vision (expectations) in becoming active citizens
5. Authorities/people they trust that can help solve their problems and the ones they don't

Duration: 60 min

Ethical Issues: Consent (informed, oral, written); voluntary participation, safety; inclusive in terms of group composition

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

Key questions

1. What are your main achievements in respecting CR in the last 3-5 years? (legislation, sector or cross-sector strategies, implementation of positive actions)
2. What do you consider the main gaps that your sector has identified and need support? Where do you think you can require such support?
3. How do you think is the budgetary allocation in your sector in regard to fulfilling the CR? What are the most important uncovered issues from your sector budget? And what issues are properly budgeted?
4. What are the sector plans/priorities for the next 3-5 years? How do they fit to EU accession requirements?
5. What areas do you see Save the Children can be more involved with its program work?
6. Is children's opinion reflected in the National Strategy for Children or in the Action Plan? If yes, can you please mention the kind of input by children?
7. Do you have any emergency preparedness plan for children (specifically vulnerable ones)? (focus on emergency related to natural disasters)

Suggestion: please collect any relevant (not older than 2009) sector or NGO publication such as research/strategy/policy/documentation reports as by sector

Questionnaire no.: 8 & 9

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Audience: 8. Meeting with group of representatives of NGOs & INGOs and coalitions (WV, TdH, CRCA, ADRF etc.),
9. Consultation with SC partner NGOs (MEDPAK, FBSH, ARSIS, AFCR)

Suggestion: Focus group or individual interviews

Aim:

1. To obtain children's views on the state of child' rights in the respective locations with focus on: the right to survival; development; protection, non-discrimination and participation
2. To get their views upon practices that prevent children from having their rights achieved and the role of central and local authorities (schools, institutions, services)
3. To get their views on cultural and family related practices that have a negative impact upon their rights
4. Their hopes and vision (expectations) in becoming active citizens
5. Authorities/people they trust that can help solve their problems and the ones they don't

Duration: 60-90 min

Ethical Issues: Consent (informed, oral, written); voluntary participation, safety; inclusive in terms of group composition

SUGESTED QUESTIONS:

Key questions

Supporting and more detailed questions

1. What are your initiatives for supporting the rights of children in?
2. What are the achievements in your work?
3. What difficulties/challenges have you encountered?
4. What is the cooperation with other organizations like...?
5. In your opinion, what might be the reasons for ?
6. What should be changed in order to achieve children's rights in....?
7. What and how are children's opinion reflected in your organization's strategy and the action plan? If yes, what input is incorporated?



Save the Children

Child Rights Situation Analysis Albania

Save the Children
Rruga Komuna Parisit, Pallatet 1 Maji, Vila Lami,
PO Box 8185, Tirane, Albania

Tel +355 (0)4 2261840/929, 2266227

Fax +355 (0)4 2263428

info.albania@savethechildren.org

www.scalbania.org