



Save the Children



CHILD LED GROUP VOICE 16+

ALBANIA



REPORTING TO THE COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

**Alternative report
[March 2022]**

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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List of Acronyms

BS	Business Sector
C	Community
CLG	Child Led Group
CG	Central Government
ESD	Education Sustainable Development
GHG	Greenhouse gas
LG	Local Government
NWMP	National Waste Management Plan
NSCC	National Strategy on Climate Change
S	School
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

1. Background

“Voice 16+” is a Child Led Group (CLG), that has been operating in some regions of Albania since 2000 with the main purpose of bringing at the center of the society the voice of children and monitoring child rights implementation in Albania. This group is supported by Save the Children in Albania. The first CLG was set up in Elbasan from SC, where a group of children undertook the initiative to design and write the Childs Right Convection in the children’s language. As a result, the group developed a child friendly version of the CRC convention. However, writing the CRC in a child friendly language didn’t bring the change expected in the lives of children. After some reflections, the group decided to continue their mission by undertaking a number of activities at local and national level in promoting and monitoring children’s rights. As a result, such initiative was expanded in three other regions in the country, in Durres, Peshkopi and Burrel. Each group usually counts around 50 members and volunteers, aged 12-18 years old. Voice 16+ partner closely with children and adults as well as with various local and national governmental institutions and civil society organizations to conduct outreach work, monitor the implementation of children’s rights in Albania and advocate on behalf of children they represent.

The mission of Voice 16 + is: To raise awareness and empower children to have their rights respected in school, family and community and also to make them aware of their impact on decision-making aiming to improve the situation of children’s rights in Albania.

All group activities in Elbasan, Durres, Diber and Burrel are assessed, planned, organized and implemented by children themselves. In addition, problem priorities and entertainment, cultural and educational activities are set by children too.

Child rights monitoring, through reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism, is a key child led component where children from CLG have been engaged, with the support of Save the Children, using it as a tool for improving accountability. Save the Children in Albania, during 2021, has supported Child Led Group “Voice 16+...” to carry out “**UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**” alternative report with specific focus on Climate Change issues. Through this report children’s views and ideas on the realization of their rights were collected, addressing their main concerns related to Children’s Rights and the Environment, within the context of the project “Children Stand UP”.

Children Stand Up! - A joint project running both in Albania and Italy, the aim is to raise awareness on climate change among youth and the general population in Albania and Italy, and build networks connecting youth groups and schools in both countries. In Albania, they are working to: (1) promote an institutional environment open to child participation and awareness on issues related to climate change; (2) improve teachers' competences and provide quality environmental education program based on improved knowledge and tested methodologies and tools; (3) enhance students' engagement, which will translate in performing eco -actions.

[Blog](#) Albania’s “Children Stand Up” for Climate Action, [One Pager](#) “Children Stand Up”

UNCRC alternative report in overall intends to become a useful tool in discussions with politicians, policy makers and other stakeholders and it is expected to be used as a useful tool to advocate at local/central and international level for improvement of the child rights situation.

2. Methodology

The collection of data, necessary for the alternative report was collected based on a simple descriptive methodology, founded on structured focus groups interviews, conducted in a one-day workshop (November 13, 2021). 35 children of CLGs participated in the workshop. The main findings of the survey “Air pollution and its impact on children’s health, was shared with workshop’s participants. As part of workshop agenda, children were divided into 7 working groups, selected the most critical environmental and climate changes issues that have considerable impact on children’s life. Each of the groups analysed all the addressed issues, organized in two questionnaires, namely Questionnaire A” Environment “and Questionnaire B” Education”. (See Annex 1). Initially, children were informed about the most critical issues that stem from the study report “Air pollution and its impact on children’s health “, conducted by Save the Children in Albania.

Based on the data and evidence provided by the study report, there were 10 critical issues considered as the most critical risks regarding “Air Pollution and Environment” (group A), and 7 critical issues identified as the most influenced vis-à-vis “Environmental Education” (group B). As a result of group discussions, children chose 5 out of 10 in Group A, and 5 out of 7 in group B. Later each of the groups analysed in detailed each of the identified issues and provided arguments regarding the challenges as well as the most pertinent solutions.

In addition to what was described above, the findings were based also on periodic measures, realized within target schools’ environment, using pertinent monitoring devises to detect air pollution. The frequent measures proved that air pollution is critical in school’s environment, while children are confronted with different health problems, mainly of respiratory system as well as allergies of different types.

3. Rationale for discussion

Climate change will exacerbate environmental, economic, political, and social challenges, leading to potential further increase in inequality and discrimination in the countries in these regions already impacted by conflict crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Middle East is expected to be among the regions hit first and hit hardest by climate change. According to the Save the Children Report, [Born into the Climate Crisis](#), children born in the Middle East and North Africa will face the highest increase in climate threats in the world for river floods, crop failure, and drought. Children born in 2020 will experience 4.5 times as many river floods, 4.4 times as many crop failures, and 3 times as many droughts as someone born 60 years ago. They will be second in the world only to East Asia and the Pacific for heatwaves, seeing 7.2 times as many.¹ Children in Europe and Central Asia will experience 4.8 times as many heatwaves, 2.6 times as many droughts, 1.5 times as many river floods and 1.7 times the number of wildfires as their grandparents’ generation. While the impacts of climate change may be less dramatic in Eastern Europe, climate change will still disrupt the lives of millions of children through rising seas, flooding and other extreme weather events, and disruptions to agriculture. Additional climate stress on water resources and on the agriculture (expected increase in water demand in parallel with and expected decrease of water resources – farmers will suffer from declined land productivity) and energy sectors is likely to have consequences for individual countries and for the region as a whole. According to UNICEF, nearly nine out of ten children in the Middle East already live in areas of high or

¹ *Born into the Climate Crisis*, Save the Children, 2021. Available from: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/born-into-the-climate-crisis.pdf/>

extremely high-water stress, with serious consequences for their health, cognitive developments, and future livelihoods.

Despite a growing global concern on air pollution and environment protection, children's rights are consistently overlooked in relation to the environment. Environmental risks pose a major threat to children, whereas children are disproportionately vulnerable. Therefore, reporting on children's environmental rights will enhance standards & accountability.

Although there is no independent right to a healthy environment in the CRC, still the treaty does explicitly recognize environmental issues in two articles, respectively in article 24 (2) and in article 29 (1).

Article 24 (2), on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of health provides that: "States parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures to combat disease and malnutrition, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution".

Article 29 (1), on the aims of education stresses that the right to education must include: "the development of respect for the natural environment".

Linking the effects of environmental harm to a vast range of children's rights, including the rights to life, development, health, play, water, food, cultural life, and an adequate standard of living, will enable decision-makers to adopt more holistic environmental policies and standards considering the real-life conditions of children.

A growing body of guidance from the Committee and other human rights mechanisms identifies a wide range of provisions that closely relate to environmental protection. Linking the effects of environmental harm to a vast range of children's rights, including the rights to life, development, health, play, water, food, cultural life, and an adequate standard of living², will enable decision-makers to adopt more holistic environmental policies and standards considering the real-life conditions of children.

In fully alignment with the "Guidance on Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the child", Save the Children supported the conduction of the survey "Air Pollution and its impact on children's health". The findings are summarised below, section 4.

4. Air Pollution and its impact on children's health in Albania- a summary of study findings.

Dioxide carbon: In the 4 target municipalities, the data show that the level of dioxide carbon is as high as twice compared with the standard, either outside or inside buildings, which has caused that 10 to 20% of children suffer of asthma, headache, lack of concentration, dizziness, and nasal problems.

Humidity: Around 30% of teachers in the four target municipalities think that humidity is somehow a concern inside the school premises.

Unsuitable school infrastructure: Around ¼ of interviewed teachers declare that there is mold odor in classes, more often caused by water leakage from pipelines. Lack of lightening does not seem a critical concern, because less than 5% of interviewed people are of opinion

² Children's Rights and the Environment, Guidance On Reporting to the CRC, Terres des Hommes, <https://www.unep.org>

that classes are not sufficiently illuminated, while school heating stands by no means among the most critical problems. 35% of interviewed people confirm the lack of heating in winter.

Air quality inside and outside the classes: While outside the air quality seem within standards, inside the classes there is a certain proportion of teachers and pupils who think that the air quality is bad (7%). The air quality is also influenced by the dust, about which less than 10% of teachers consider a concern.

Sports and recreational facilities in schools: More than 50% of interviewed teachers think that sports and recreational facilities are lacking at schools, limiting children’s opportunities to exercise sports and other activities, which serve to their wellbeing.

More detailed information regarding periodic measurements are provided in the study report “ Air pollution and its impact on children’s health” .

5. Children’s arguments, remarks, and recommendations

Although children were informed about the survey results, they were of opinion that the “Environment” must be analyzed from a multidimensional perspective, not only in connection to climate change but also from the people’s responsiveness ‘point of view, demonstrated through environment protection and care.

Therefore, they suggested to organize discussions on two topics, namely “Environment” and “Education to raise awareness”.

5.1. Environment:

Regarding “Environment”, the following criteria of assessment, were established, notably:

- ✓ *The level of Dioxide carbon,*
- ✓ *The level of Humidity,*
- ✓ *Unsuitable school infrastructure,*
- ✓ *Air quality inside and outside the classes,*
- ✓ *Insufficient spaces,*
- ✓ *Lack of green spaces,*
- ✓ *Lack of sports facilities,*
- ✓ *Lack of recreational, development and entertainment facilities,*
- ✓ *Cleanliness of premises and hygiene and Garbage collection.*

35 children divided in 7 working groups, were asked to provide their views on each of the above-described concerns regarding three arguments, namely: The level of priority (from 1 to 5, where 5 is the maximal priority), Whether policies need to be revised, and “Responsible institutions, e.g. CG, LG, S, C, BS”.

The summary of children’s views is demonstrated into Table 1, below:

Table 1: Children’s views regarding Environment

Criteria of assessment	Points	Policies need to be revised		Institutions in charge of improvement				
		Yes	No	CG	LG	S	C	BS

1.Waste collection	29	5	2	4	7	1	3	2
In percentage	83	70	29	56	100	14	42	28
2.Lack of recreational, development and entertainment facilities	29	7	0	3	5	2	2	4
In percentage	83	100	0	42	70	28	28	56
3.Lack of green spaces	27	6	1	4	7	0	1	4
In percentage	77	85	15	56	100	0	14	56
4.Dioxide carbon	27	4	3	5	5	0	4	2
In percentage	77	58	42	70	70	0	56	28
5.Lack of sports facilities	26	7	0	6	6	1	1	1
In percentage	74	100	0	84	84	14	14	14
6.Unsuitable school infrastructure	24	3	4	6	5		2	3
7.Cleanliness of premises and hygiene	24	3	4	3	4	4	2	
8.Insufficient spaces	22	5	2	5	6	2	1	1
9.Humidity	21	2	5	3	5	2	2	1
10.Air quality inside and outside the classes	15	2	5		4	3	1	2
Max. points	35	7	7	7	7	7	7	7

Source of information: Children's discussion in workshop, 2021

Based on the number of points collected for each of the issues as per the data from table 1, it was concluded that the following issues are considered as the most critical ones (listed in the order of priority):

1. *Waste collection*
2. *Lack of recreational, development and entertainment facilities*
3. *Lack of green spaces*
4. *Dioxide carbon*
5. *Lack of sports facilities*

Children are strongly convinced that respective policies need to be revised for 4 out of 5 critical issues (except for "dioxide carbon"), while Local Government is perceived as a crucial stakeholder by more than 70% of participants. 40 to 60% of participants consider Central Government as an important actor, while the Community, School and Business Sector are seen as less crucial.

However, regarding the distribution of roles among key stakeholders, the evidence clearly demonstrate that children not only are aware of the environmental issues, but they are prepared to be part of solution. As long as they consider "Environment" as a policy making issue, it is obvious that Central and Local Government have to play the crucial role.

The fact that Local Government is perceived "vital" shows the increased awareness of the public regarding the Local Government duties and responsibilities.

Children are clear in the role that School and Community can and should play. They assess that “Community” can be involved in “Waste collection” and “Dioxide carbon” related issues, while “School” can somehow contribute to provide recreational, development and entertainment facilities.

Although children do not see any role for Business Sector to influence in the reduction of air pollution and other related environmental issues, they emphasize that Business Sector can effectively contribute to provide recreational, development and entertainment facilities as well as green spaces.

5.1.1. Waste collection:

Children’s final observations: Waste collection is a priority regarding “Environment protection”. There are policies in place, however there are very few measures adopted to implement it, therefore policies have to address measures that guarantee law enforcement. LG is the main institution that can monitor the situation as well as make decisions to implement policies.

Overall situation: Waste management in Albania is generally at a low level. The collection of municipal solid waste (MSW) is provided in most cities and towns but rarely in rural areas. The waste is mainly disposed of at municipal dumpsites. There are some managed landfill sites at Sharra, Bushat, Bajkaj, Maliq and Elbasan. In Elbasan there is also an incinerator near the landfill. The Sharra landfill is currently being rehabilitated because there is a plan to construct an incinerator nearby. There are no data available for industrial waste. In addition, people perceive an imbalance between the new legal framework that complies with EU standards and the limited human and financial resources and waste management practices available³.

Critical Issues: Since 2003, the legal framework is established based on EU standards. The Government has approved “the National Strategy and its National Action Plan of Waste Management:”, until 2025, which:

- ✓ defines the political direction regarding sustainable waste management.
- ✓ is based on governmental commitment to financing waste management.
- ✓ presents the main investment mechanisms in the waste sector.
- ✓ ensures separate collection of waste streams.
- ✓ encourages the development of businesses and markets for recycling and minimising waste.

Despite the progress as well as efforts, law enforcement remains critical, especially at local level. Based on Law No 139/2015 on Local Self-government, local government units are responsible for the implementation of legislation and achievement of objectives for integrated waste management according to the NWMP, while the area waste plans are not yet prepared for 12 districts.

Recommendations:

- ✓ prepare the area waste plans for 12 districts.
- ✓ raising public awareness related to waste generation.
- ✓ set up the promotion action for waste reduction.
- ✓ compiling regional waste management plans.

³ European Environment Agency, September 2018, <https://www.eea.europa.eu>

5.1.2. Re-creational, development and entertainment facilities, Green Spaces, Sports facilities and Schools Infrastructure

Children's final observations: Lack of re-creational, development and entertainment facilities, lack of Green Spaces at schools as well as lack of sports facilities are seen as impediment to improve quality education of children, including the extension of knowledge on nature, environment, and earth. They think that existing policies are obsolete, far from EU standards, that is why there is the need to revise and adopt comprehensive and relevant policies. According to them, still LG bears the responsibility, especially through cooperation with business sector,

Overall situation: Regarding quality in education, progress is made with the appraisal of the current policy framework and drafting of the new National Strategy of Education and Action Plan 2021 – 2026, covering the stages from pre-school to higher education, the implementation of curricular and legislative frameworks and the delivery of free textbooks to pupils in primary education.

However, financial constraints limit the effects of the improved policy framework. Albania's budget allocation to education is very low at 2.7% of GDP in 2021, 0.6-point percentage lower than in 2019- and 1.9-point percentage below the EU-27 average (2018 figures), thus falling short of the prediction of the current National Pre-University Education Strategy, which has foreseen a 5 % share of GDP devoted to education. The budget in 2021, expected to drop at 3.5% of the GDP, should be enhanced to support the efforts to modernise the educational system and ensure quality and inclusiveness in education for all pupils. The expected school financial autonomy has not progressed in 2020 as the sublegal acts and provisions for providing actual financial autonomy in the school were not developed despite the existing legislation.

The ministry, regional directorates and local education offices continue to make all decisions related to financial resources, and schools receive no discretionary funding, thus reducing their autonomy further. Even with limited budgetary discretion, schools' ability to reflect on their own policies and practices is crucial for making effective use of school resources, but the capacity for planning and self-evaluation remains weak in most Albanian schools.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Revise fund raising policy to establish a supportive environment for infrastructure investments into schools, guaranteeing that municipalities can exercise their competences regarding construction, infrastructure, maintenance, and utilities.
- ✓ Establish dedicated funds to back Environmental Policy at LG.

5.1.3. Dioxide carbon

Children's final observations: Children are aware of the risks that associate the high level of dioxide carbon across Albania. They are strongly convinced that policies need to be improved, whereas CG and LG alike have the central role.

Overall situation: In accordance with the World Health Organization's guidelines, the air quality in Albania is considered moderately unsafe. The most recent data indicates the country's annual mean concentration of PM_{2.5} is 18 µg/m³ which exceeds the recommended maximum of 10 µg/m³.

Contributors to poor air quality in Albania include oil and gas extraction, inefficient technologies to heating homes, cement production, and an increase in vehicle emissions.

Available data indicates that Tirana, Elbasan, and Korçë have consistently high levels of air pollution⁴. Regarding air pollution, Albania ranks 55/ 106 countries, 2020.

Albania has taken very important steps towards policy documents and action plans on climate change, involving especially energy and transport sectors, but also agriculture, forestry, waste management, etc.

The Paris Agreement was both a signal and a roadmap: a signal to the world that practices like deforestation and unsustainable energy use cannot continue; and a roadmap towards the goal of a zero-carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable future. Overall, if successfully implemented, the implications of the Paris Agreement for sustainable development will be profound and transformative.

As of July 2nd 2019, the Government of Albania was the first country in the Region with an endorsed Strategy on Climate Change, and related Action Plans on Mitigation and Adaptation respectively, representing a general cross-cutting strategy with policy objectives and concrete actions to:

- ✓ reduce GHG emissions:
- ✓ Become resilient to climate change

Implementation of Paris Agreement and the NDC target are in the core of both National Strategy on Climate Change (NSCC) and its Mitigation Action Plan (MAP).

In line with EU efforts on climate change and our respective obligations in the EU accession process, the Law “**Climate Change**” is approved.

On the other hand, the country endorsed the **National Strategy of Energy 2018-2030 (July 2018) as the main energy policy document mainstreaming the climate change**. The new strategic framework is based on two main pillars: (i) the development of reforms to foster market liberalisation and regional integration, and (ii) huge investment on sustainable development driven by participation in the Energy Community initiative and in particular at international level by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Furthermore, the Strategy foresees the preparation of the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan, as an engagement of the Republic of Albania at the Ministerial Meeting of the Energy Community, which preparatory work has started to ensure beyond the 2020 national targets and in line with the EU 2030 and 2050 agenda.

Recommendations:

- ✓ monitoring of air quality in line with EU requirements, in every municipality of Albania.
- ✓ control and reduction of discharges of gases to the atmosphere by motorised vehicles.
- ✓ control and reduction of dust caused by construction.
- ✓ planning for air quality management at LG.

5.2. Environmental education

Regarding “Education to raise awareness”, the following concerns were addressed:

- ✓ Inclusion of “Environment” into school curriculum.
- ✓ Provision of comprehensive and inclusive education on “Environment”.
- ✓ Awareness raising of children, teachers, parents, and their caregivers.
- ✓ Organization of extracurricular activities in schools, that deal with Environment.

⁴ WHO, 2021, <https://www.iamat.org/country/albania/risk/air-pollution>

- ✓ Awareness raising of communities on “Environment”.
- ✓ Knowledge and adoption of hygiene rules by children and adults, alike.
- ✓ Inclusion of local government to monitor the implementation of environment standards.

Children were asked to provide their views on each of the above-described concerns regarding three arguments, namely: The level of priority (from 1 to 5), Whether policies need to be revised, and “Responsible institutions, e.g., CG, LG, S, C, BS”.

The summary of children’s views is demonstrated into Table 2, below:

Table 2: Children’s views regarding Environmental education

Criteria of assessment	Points	Policies need to be revised		Institutions in charge of improvement				
		Yes	No	CG	LG	S	C	BS
1. Provision of comprehensive and inclusive education on “Environment”.	28	3	4	3	1	7		
In percentage	80	42	58	42	14	100	0	0
2. Awareness raising of communities on “Environment”.	27	5	2	2	6	4	6	3
In percentage	77	70	30	28	84	56	84	42
3. Knowledge and adoption of hygiene rules by children and adults, alike	25	2	5	2	6	4	6	3
In percentage	71	28	72	28	84	56	84	42
4. Inclusion of local government to monitor the implementation of environment standards.	25	7		2	6	3	4	1
In percentage	71	29	0	28	84	42	56	14
5. Organization of extracurricular activities in schools, that deal with Environment	23	4	3	5	3	4	1	
In percentage	66	34	42	70	42	56	14	0
6. Awareness raising of children, teachers, parents, and their caregivers.	22	3	4		1	7	5	

7. Inclusion of 17 3 4 3 1 7
 “Environment” into
 school curriculum.

Max. points	35	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
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Source of information: Children’s discussion in workshop, 2021

Based on the number of points collected for each of the issues as per the data from table 2, it was concluded that the following issues are considered as the most critical ones (listed in the order of priority):

1. *Provision of comprehensive and inclusive education on “Environment”.*
2. *Awareness raising of communities on “Environment”.*
3. *Knowledge and adoption of hygiene rules by children and adults, alike*
4. *Inclusion of local government to monitor the implementation of environment standards.*
5. *Organization of extracurricular activities in schools, that deal with Environment*

Children think that policies need to be revised only for “Awareness raising of communities on “Environment” and for “Inclusion of local government to monitor the implementation of environment standards”.

Even for “Environmental education”, in general they consider Local Government, an important stakeholder. School is perceived a key player especially for “Provision of comprehensive and inclusive education on Environment”, while central government is considered less important than Local Government, Community and School.

Interestingly, children rely on the role of community, especially to raise awareness on “Environment”, to promote the spread of knowledge and adoption of hygiene rules by children and adults, and to encourage the inclusion of local government to monitor the implementation of environment standards.

5.2.1. School Curricula

Children’s final observations: Despite the fact that children recognize the extensive attention devoted to Environment and Environmental issues, still there is the need to strengthen school capacities to provide a comprehensive and inclusive education process focused at Environment, its potentials versus Economic and social development of the country.

Overall situation: Environmental education in Albania has been given a boost recently, with increasing emphasis being placed on it by the country’s educational system. The formal education system in Albania is currently subject to massive reform. In this context several projects were and are still being implemented to improve the school curriculum from primary right through to tertiary level. Manuals and teaching materials for both students and teachers have been produced addressing different education levels and covering topics such as water, air, soil, etc.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Alongside the process of Quality Learning, a strategic goal of Education Strategy, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has to further invest to harmonize school curricula and extra-curricular activities, centred at environment protection and care.

- ✓ Parents as well as business sector have to strengthen cooperation with school, to support the organization of activities, aimed at the promotion of Environmental education, which at the same time will impact on citizens' awareness raising.
- ✓ Based on UNESCOESD World Conference, ESD should be a core component of all education systems at all levels by 2025.

5.2.2. Citizens' awareness raising

Children's final observations: Even though children recognize the extensive attention devoted to Environment and Environmental issues, still there is the need to strengthen capacities of all stakeholders, governmental and non-governmental alike, to raise awareness regarding environment protection. Although according to children's views, school is perceived as extremely important, still there is a big role to be played by CG and LG, too.

Overall situation: Informal education in Albania regarding environment is almost lacking. While information is rather poor, the few stakeholders already involved in "environmental issues" have limited possibilities to widen the cooperation and implement a coordinated and harmonized approach to sustain citizens awareness raising versus Environment protection and care.

Following the adoption of the Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development after the UNESCO World Conference on ESD, all the UNESCO member countries will create networks of actors who can implement the vision for ESD, not as a privilege, but accessible to all citizens.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Systematic, long-term adult education programme on the environment would be useful to raise local awareness (in rural communities) of the importance of protecting and sustainably using natural resources, and on the benefits of such environmentally friendly practices such as ecotourism and Eco agriculture.
- ✓ Support the further alignment, at global, regional, and national levels, of the education, environment, climate, sustainable economy, and other relevant development agendas, and enhance networking between different stakeholder groups in order to ensure that efforts are mutually supportive and complementary and support structural mainstreaming of ESD;

6. Concluding remarks

That children are more vulnerable to air pollution because they are more exposed to the pollutants and their underdeveloped organs are more susceptible, is an area of constant concern for policy makers, parents, and communities. However, children and their caregivers are often the least prepared to deal with the challenges of air pollution because of lack of knowledge. Therefore, through this report, children and their caregivers will be introduced to important concepts on air pollution and its effect on their health.

Despite the simplicity of the methodology utilized to collect and elaborate data, the report clearly argues that children from CLGs are well informed about "Environment and air pollution". They are aware that addressing environmental issues is the first and foremost critical step, alongside the education and provision of knowledge to stakeholders to involve them be part of problem solution.

Nevertheless, despite the project's significant achievements, the alternative report and other resource documents must be shared with all children through schools and other

channels of communication. Moreover, this information derives from children's opinions, who strongly rely on policy making institutions to bring in new measures that would positively impact on the improvement of the situation.

The alternative report can be used as a policy making tool, as it was meant to serve, especially to:

- ✓ Strengthen cooperation with Ministry of Education and its network to further develop school curricula as well as extracurricular program, aimed at the provision of quality education on "Environment, climate change and the impact on children's rights".
- ✓ Design and implement projects at local level, ensuring the ownership of local government to boost the broad public awareness of communities on environmental issues and their active engagement, associated with respective policy making measures to share financial and institutional responsibilities versus environmental problems solutions.
- ✓ Provide support to business sector to make it aware about the implementation of social responsibilities.
- ✓ Share and discuss alternative report with children across Albania through children's forums as well as other non-government mechanisms to ensure a broad awareness raising vis-à-vis environment and climate change, especially on its impact on children's rights.