

NATIONAL AGENDA ON  
THE RIGHTS OF THE  
CHILD

2021 – 2026

(unofficial translated copy)

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# ACRONYMS

ALSS	Agency for Local Self-Government Support
AKCESK	National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security
AMA	Audiovisual Media Authority
APC	Action Plan for Children
AQAPUE	Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CPJD	Center for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency
CPW	Child Protection Worker
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
DCM	Decision of Council of Ministers
DFLA	Directorate of Free Legal Aid
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EA	Economic Assistance
EU	European Union
ITG	Intersectoral Technical Group
IECD	Institutions for the Execution of Criminal Decisions
ILO	International Labor Organization
IGIM	Interinstitutional Group for Infant Mortality
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
JCJC	Juvenile Criminal Justice Code
LGU	Local Self-Government Unit
LSSSI	Labor and Social Services State Inspectorate
MoESY	Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth
MoI	Ministry of Interior
Moj	Ministry of Justice
MoEFA	Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs
MoC	Ministry of Culture
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
NARC	National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021 – 2026
NARU	Needs Assessment and Referral Unit
NCCRP	National Council on Child Rights and Protection
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSDI	National Strategy for Development and Integration
NPEI	National Plan on European Integration
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHI	Public Health Institute

RDPE/LOPE	Regional Directorate of Pre-university Education/Local Office of Pre-university Education
SACRP	State Agency for Child Rights and Protection
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSS	State Social Service
SSI	Social Services Inspectorate
SLI	State Labor Inspectorate
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

# REMARKS

Dear collaborators,

The Government of Albania has always had in its focus the issues of child rights and protection. To achieve our goals, and fulfill our objectives in this area, I have the pleasure to present to you the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child 2021-2026.

The agenda represents an important step in realizing national and international commitments in the field of child rights. It addresses at the same time the most significant challenges in achieving results for our children, including those created due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This very important document was prepared through a comprehensive process and consultation, through the coordination of the efforts of all actors from the responsible line ministries, local government units, independent institutions, civil society and international organizations. The agenda provides a coordinated and unified framework of engagements between these actors, as well as serves as a practical guide for their activities and cooperation at central and local level

The document has a timeline of six years and is fully in line with many national strategic documents, is linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, as well as is closely linked to the latest European Union Strategy for children's rights

In this very important strategic document, we would appreciate the opinions given by the children, who participated in the meetings held in several areas of Albania, with participation from various groups. Their thoughts, ideas, comments and suggestions regarding the measures and objectives set out in the Agenda are reflected in this document.

The agenda focuses on all children, paying special attention to those who are most excluded from services and those most in need. Based on this, we aim to improve all services, their quality at all levels, we will enable protection from all forms of violence, we will realize their participation in areas related to them, as well as we will educate them as part of online protection, providing them with a healthier and better quality life, where they live peacefully and safely.



**Ogerta Manastirliu**

**Minister of Health and Social Protection**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document presents the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 of the Republic of Albania, approved by the Council of Ministers with Decision no. 659, dated 03.11.2021 "On the approval of the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child 2021-2026"

The active engagement of the members of the Inter-Institutional Working Group, set up especially for this purpose, enabled the drafting of the document in time. A thank you goes to:

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Ms. Elda Lezaj	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
Ms. Alma Baze	Ministry of Tourism and Environment
Ms. Olta Caca	INSTAT

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# PART I: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

## 1. Introduction and scope of the document

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The National Agenda for the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 (NARC 2021-2026) is a document created on behalf of the Albanian government by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in collaboration with the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, and in consultation with other responsible ministries, local self-government units, independent institutions, civil society organizations, and international organizations working in the field of child rights and protection. NARC is a commitment to achieving child rights in Albania between 2021 and 2026.

The National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020 (NSDI II), the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2017-2020, and a few other important national policies that are interconnected with developments in the area of ensuring child rights were all set to expire in 2020, and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) has decided to draft the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021 - 2026 based on the need for quality planning.

By addressing ongoing gaps and new challenges, as well as reflecting innovative perspectives, particularly those related to the European Union Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child consolidates and provides sustainability in the work done in the previous National Agenda on the Rights of the Child (2017 - 2020). This document, which adopts an intersectoral approach, serves as the foundation for coordinating efforts across ministries and sectors, as well as leading the national regulatory framework toward an aligned and effective children's strategy.

NARC is a document that was produced with the help of children, with their input and ideas taken into consideration.

In the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPS), national report presented in compliance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, Albania Universal Periodic Review, Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), and the European Union Strategy on the Rights of the Child, NARC presents a multidisciplinary and systematic framework, which should be integrated in all documents, plans, and other national and local activities related to children.

The four general principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guide NARC's work: Non-discrimination, best interest of the child, the right to survival and development, and participation. Of the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child is linked with SDG 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere, SDG 2 - Zero Hunger, SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4 - Quality Education, SDG 5 - Gender Equality, SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10 - Reduced Inequality, SDG 16 - Peace and Justice Strong Institutions, etc.

The Agenda confirms the commitment to implementing some key premises, such as all planning actions should be evidence-based, coordinated, and effectively monitored and assessed to ensure better overall results for children in a fair manner, all child services should be of high quality, adhering to child-friendly principles and standards and a human-rights-based approach, and resources should be efficiently allocated and managed.

The NARC consolidates and delivers the Children's Action Plan 2017-2020. The findings and recommendations of the monitoring and evaluation report of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2017-2020, which have been fully considered in assessing intervention needs as part

of this agenda, have been incorporated into this document. NARC is a strategy document that outlines state institutions' priorities in the domain of children's rights, as well as a unified framework for monitoring the Albanian government's progress toward achieving children's rights in all relevant sectors.

NARC has four strategic goals: (i) good governance to respect, protect, and fulfill children's rights; (ii) the elimination of all forms of violence and child protection; (iii) child and adolescent-friendly systems and services; and (iv) the promotion of children's rights in the digital world. The defined goals allow for the continuation of the previous National Agenda as well as alignment with the European Strategy, which includes the Council of Europe's priorities as well as the current Sophia Strategy.

The National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 strives to create a positive environment for children's well-being through access to quality services, positive participation practices, good parenting, the elimination of all forms of violence, and digital development. The Agenda's social impact will be seen in the family and beyond by children and adolescents. Because investment in childhood will determine future life phases, its benefit cannot be quantified in numbers.

NARC is an intersectoral strategy in all senses of the word. Children are the beneficiaries of every possible sectoral action area. Furthermore, one of NARC's key objectives is to coordinate and increase institutional responsiveness to child-related issues. This strategic document was created in compliance with the Law No. 18/2017, "On Child Rights and Protection," which, in addition to holding institutions accountable for protecting rights in accordance with their mandates, also establishes intersectoral coordinating roles in the field of child rights.

After analyzing in-depth indicative costs of current budgets (MTBP), funding for the execution of NARC has been specified in the State Budget, in accordance with the purpose of policies and the implementation of policy program objectives in this strategy. Budgeting for programs aimed at children and other vulnerable groups shall be done in the most efficient and transparent way possible, in order to secure equal rights and make child funding more transparent. All line ministries' programs, which will be part of this intersectoral strategy, will be affected by the budget effect.

In certain cases, the state budget is insufficient to meet all of the objectives, hence the NARC involves identifying the financial gap as well as proposing funding from partners and donors. Furthermore, funds and other forms of resources given by local self-government units and civil society are critical in carrying out local operations.

To address the need to channel financial and human resources at the local level toward ensuring children's rights, the NARC envisions the development of local social plans with a section dedicated to children's rights protection, which will translate the NARC's vision and priorities into concrete action.

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in collaboration with the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, will supervise the NARC's implementation in terms of data collecting, progress monitoring, and reporting.

UNICEF Albania made a significant contribution to the design of the NARC by providing technical assistance during the program drafting process. In at least 14 municipalities<sup>1</sup> across Albania, the MoHSP facilitated dialogue with line ministries, local actors, civil society organizations (CSOs), and children.

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<sup>1</sup> Dibër, Lezhë, Kurbin, Kamëz, Durrës, Librazhd, Korçë, Maliq, Tiranë, Elbasan, Shushicë, Kukës, Burrel.

## 2. The Reform Context and the legal & institutional framework

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Summary analysis of the situation regarding the policy goal in the framework of the Strategic Framework implementation.

### 2.1 Legal framework

- Law No. 18/2017 “On Child Rights and Protection”
- Law No. 121/2016, “On Social Care Services in the Republic of Albania”
- Law No. 37/2017, “Code of Criminal Justice for Children”
- Law No. 131/2020 “On the Social Worker Order”
- Law Nr. 10/2021 “Law on Asylum in the Republic of Albania”
- Law/ 2013 “On Foreigners”, as amended
- Law No. 139, dated 17.12.2015. “On Local Self-Government ”, DCM No. 691, dated 29.07.2015 “On the Approval of the Intersectoral Strategy on Decentralization and Local Government ”, as amended by DCM No. 783, dated 07.10.2020
- DCM No. 578, dated 3.10.2018, “On Case Management Referral Procedures, Individual Protection Plan Development and Content, Expense Financing for its Implementation and the Implementation of Protection Measures”
- DCM No. 353, dated 12.06.2018 “On the Functioning Rules of the Intersectoral Technical Group on Child Protection in Municipalities and Administrative Units”
- DCM No. 111, dated 06.03.2019 “On Rules and Procedures for the Return and Repatriation of Children”
- DCM No. 148, dated 13.03.2018, “On Determining the Cooperation Regulations between the Consulting Mechanisms and Institutional Coordinators, Child Rights and Protection Structures and Non-profit Organizations for the Implementation of National and Local Policies, as well as Necessary Child Protection Services”
- DCM No. 186, dated 04.04.2019, “On Employment Criteria for Child Protection Unit Workers and Staff Working with Children”
- DCM No. 636, dated 26.10.2018 “On Defining the Types and Way for Information and Statistical Data Exchange and Processing, required by the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, at the Responsible State Structures at the Central and Local Level”
- DCM No. 327, dated 02.06.2021 “On the Work Coordination Mechanism among Responsible Authorities for the Referral of Cases of Domestic Violence and Relevant Proceedings, for purposes of Supporting Violence Victims Rehabilitation”
- DCM No. 479, dated 17.06.2020 “On Some Addenda and Amendments to DCM No. 108, dated 15.02.2017, “On the Approval of the Regulation for Children’s Protection at Work”
- DCM No. No. 499, dated 29.08.2018, “On Adopting Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking”
- Decision No. 129, dated 13.03.2019 “On Identification, Immediate Assistance and Referral Procedures for Economically Exploited Children, including Children in Street Situation”
- Decision No. 207, dated 10.04.2019 “On Defining Competent Authorities and the Procedure for Fulfilling Obligations Assigned by the Court for Minors in Conflict with the Law”

- Joint Instruction<sup>2</sup> No. 651, dated 13.09.2019 “On Reporting Procedures for Cases of Children in Need of Protection”
- Order No. 367, dated 09.06.2020 “On the Approval of the Guideline “General Criteria for Participation in Activities, Consultation and Decision-making Processes related to Children and for Children”
- Instruction No. 556, dated 29.07.2019 “On Placement in Social Care Institutions for Children whom a Protection Measure has been Taken for”
- Instruction No. 394, dated 09.05.2019, “On the Organization and Functioning of the Multidisciplinary Committee and the Procedures for Meeting Alternative Care Service Standards for Children in Foster Families”
- Instruction No. 10, dated 17.05.2021, “On Registering and Supporting in Public Pre-university Institutions Children and Persons in Migration/Asylum Situation, Foreign Unaccompanied Children, Children Returned from Migration or Conflict Areas, or Children Victims of Trafficking, in the Republic of Albania”
- Instruction No. 262, dated 26.05.2021 “On the Approval of the Working Methodology for Case Management of Children in Conflict with the Law by the Child Protection Worker”
- Instruction No. 816, dated 27.11.2018, “On the Adoption of Service Provision and Operation Standards for Crisis Management Centers in Cases of Sexual Violence”
- Order No. 367, dated 09.06.2020 “On the Approval of the Guideline “General Criteria for Participation in Activities, Consultation and Decision-making Processes related to Children and for Children”
- Decision No. 624, dated 29.07.2020, “On Social Care Service Professionals Certification Requirements and Procedure”
- Decision No. 848, dated 28.10.2020, “On Accreditation Standards, Requirements and Procedures for Continuous Education Activities for Social Care Service Professionals and for their Providers”
- Decision No. 573, dated 24.06.2015 “On adopting Child Protection Unit Service Standards”
- Joint Order of the Minister of Education, Sports and Youth, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Health and Social Protection No. 292, dated 19.07.2019, on the approval of the regulation for the implementation of the cooperation agreement among the three ministries “On Identification and School Enrolment of all School-aged Children”.

## 2.2 Institutional Framework

Pursuant to Law No. 18/2017, “On Child Rights and Protection”, approved on 23.02.2017, the minister coordinating work for child rights and protection issues is the main responsible state authority.

Pursuant to Law No. 18/2017, “On Child Rights and Protection”, the National Council for Child Rights and Protection is an advisory body that is established upon the Prime Minister’s order, following the order of the minister coordinating work for child rights and protection issues.

The Sector of Policies and Strategies for Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, as part of the General Directorate of Policies and Development of Health and Social Protection, at the MoHSP, drafts policies and programs related to child issues.

For the purpose of exchanging information and facilitating their role, central and local state institutions work with the relevant ministry responsible for child rights and protection issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Joint order of three Ministries, MESY, MHSP, and MI, September 2019.

## 2.3 Strategic framework

- National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015 - 2020;
- Albanian Government Program for the Economy Reform 2019 - 2021;
- Policy Document on Social Inclusion 2016 - 2020;
- National Education Strategy 2021-2026;
- National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2019 - 2022;
- National Strategy and Action Plan on Social Protection 2020 – 2023;
- National Action Plan on Deinstitutionalisation 2020 - 2022;
- Primary Health Care Services Development Strategy 2020 - 2025;
- Action Plan on Mental Health Care Services Development 2013 - 2022;
- National Plan on the Economic Exploitation of Children, including Children in Street Situation 2017 - 2020;
- 4-year Report on the Implementation of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2017 - 2020;
- National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021 - 2030;
- National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan 2020 - 2025;
- National Strategy on Juvenile Justice and its Action Plan 2018 - 2021;
- National Sectoral Strategy on Health 2016 - 2020;
- Strategic Document and Action Plan on Sexual and Reproductive Health 2017 - 2021;
- National Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2021 - 2025;
- National Action Plan on the Integration of Roma and Egyptians in Albania 2021 - 2025.

### 2.3.1 Links with other strategic documents

#### **Links with the government's priorities - Well-being and public services for all citizens**

Links with NPEI and the EU legislation: 1) Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment, and sub-chapter: On Social Protection and Inclusion; 2) Chapter 23: Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, and sub-chapter: Fundamental Rights (Child Rights); 3) Chapter 24: Justice, Freedom and Security, and sub-chapter: Human Trafficking and Cybercrime and Online Fraud; 4) Chapter 18: Statistics.

### 2.3.2 Links with the SDGs

#### **SDG 1: No Poverty - End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

#### **SDG 2: Zero Hunger**

#### **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being**

#### **SDG 4: Quality Education**

Target 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

### **SDG 5: Gender Equality**

Target 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

### **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**

Target 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, eradicate forced labour and, by 2025, end child labour in all its forms, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers

### **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**

Target 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions

10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

### **SDG 16 - Peace and Justice Strong Institutions**

Target 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

### **2.3.3 Links with the NSDI**

As a strategic document that foresees policies for ensuring child rights in the Republic of Albania, NARC 2021-2026 is totally under the umbrella and in accordance with the strategic objectives of the core strategic document "National Strategy on Development and Integration." NSDI 2015 - 2020 includes the following elements:

#### **Pillar 1: Good governance, democracy and the rule of law**

Strategic objectives:

4. Fight against organized crime, terrorism and trafficking

- Reduction of illegal trafficking and, in particular, human trafficking from/through Albania by 2020

#### 6. Strengthening human rights

- Enhanced integrity and assurance of human rights;
- Protection of rights of children in conflict with the law and children in legal proceedings;
- Ensuring social inclusion of all socially excluded categories.

### **Pillar 3: Investment in human capital and social cohesion**

#### Strategic objectives:

##### 1. Better opportunities and quality in education

- Improving access and increasing enrollment in pre-university education;
- Improving "Quality Education for All" service

##### 2. A stronger and more accessible health care system

- Improving quality of health care by ensuring full access for all Albanian residents based on a stable financial system

##### 6. Strengthening of social protection

- Mitigating and reducing poverty and absolute poverty;
- Improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities;
- Making sure that every child, elderly, and Albanian household enjoys equal access to functional and inclusive social care services, based on the principles of decentralization, deinstitutionalization and diversification

### **2.3.4 Links with the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child**

On international level, the NARC was designed in the same vein as the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child<sup>3</sup>, by including the six goals listed below in four of its policy goals:

1. Participation in political and democratic life: An EU that empowers children to be active citizens and members of democratic societies.
2. Socio-economic inclusion, health and education: An EU that fights child poverty, promotes inclusive and child-friendly societies, health and education systems.
3. Combating violence against children and ensuring child protection: An EU that helps children grow free from violence.
4. Child-friendly justice: An EU where the justice system upholds the rights and needs of children.
5. Digital and information society: An EU where children can safely navigate the digital environment and harness its opportunities.
6. The global dimension: An EU that supports, protects, and empowers children globally, including during crisis and conflict.

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<sup>3</sup> European Union (2021), EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child 2021-2024

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/lae/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12454-EU-strategy-on-the-rights-of-the-child-2021-24- en>

## 2.4 Achievements, analyses, and challenges

Child rights are human rights Every child in Albania, and around the world, should have the same rights and be able to live in a world free of discrimination, free of all sorts of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

All children have the right to a good start in life, to be reared in a happy and healthy environment, and to reach their full potential, according to the Convention. These rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent, and progressive for children as right holders. In any action related to children, the best interest of the child is the most important consideration. This encompasses the right to live on a clean and healthy planet in a safe environment, as well as the right to relax, play, and participate in cultural and creative activities, as well as the right to enjoy and respect the natural environment. Families and communities should also be given the necessary support so that they can assure the well-being and development of their children.

This section is based on an examination of various national and international documents, as well as an assessment report on the implementation of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2017-2020.

Albania has made great progress during the last two decades. Despite the government's and the general public's genuine commitment to children in Albania, there is still much work to be done in terms of realizing children's rights. The proper legal and policy framework is mostly in place, but financial underinvestment in child services, inability to timely allocate resources, and failure to promptly fulfill duties established by competent authorities have all impeded planning and implementation of services. Albania is presently and will continue to face critical threats in terms of potential natural disasters, public health, and environmental concerns, leading to the need and requirement for more appropriate infrastructure, more resources, and increased social capital.

### 2.4.1 Good governance as regards observing, protecting and fulfilling child rights

Albania has ratified nine basic international human rights treaties<sup>4</sup>, and Article 122 of the Constitution mandates that international treaties that have been ratified, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, become part of national legislation<sup>5</sup>.

Some provisions of the Convention are deemed insufficiently specified to be directly implemented, although the Convention should be applied where national legislation contradicts the Convention. To identify gaps and assure conformity with international tools, a full proactive review of child-related legislation may be required. The country has ratified<sup>6</sup> the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC), the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), as well as the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure. Albania is one of the few

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<sup>4</sup> They are: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW); International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance); and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). For the majority of these tools, an expert committee has been created to monitor the State Parties' implementation of the treaty provisions. Optional protocols relevant to special concerns have been introduced to some of the treaties. Please see <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> Please see: CRIN Albania: National Laws at: <https://archive.crin.org/en/library/publications/albania-national-laes.html>

<sup>6</sup> Please see: "United Nations Human Rights: UN Treaty Body Database" [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=173&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=173&Lang=EN)

European countries<sup>7</sup> that ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW).

In 2019, the government filed its Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and its national report reaffirms the country's commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms protection. In 2019, the Government presented to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) its fifth and sixth periodic reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols. Albania's legislation is being aligned with international treaties, although one of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's (CRC) Concluding Observations in 2012 said that the greatest hurdle to fully realizing child rights in Albania was the poor implementation of legislation and policies.

There has been progress in the last four years in terms of completing the legal and policy framework that attempts to promote and observe children's rights across all sectors: justice, social services, education, health, and culture. Following the adoption of Law No. 18/2017 "On Child Rights and Protection," as well as its 18 bylaws, which make it understandable and applicable by relevant institutions at the central and local levels, the legal framework on child rights has been written and finalized. Law No. 37/2017, "Juvenile Criminal Justice Code," was drafted and approved, introducing a new approach to the justice system by putting minors at the center, strengthening the justice system in accordance with the CRC principles as well as international norms and standards, and ensuring that children in contact with the law are protected in their best interest. Seven bylaws and five ministerial orders have been drafted in accordance with the Code, and the juvenile restorative justice integrated model piloting has begun in a number of municipalities, including Berat and Gjirokastra<sup>8</sup>.

The National Council on Child Rights and Protection, a collegial inter-ministerial institution tasked with developing state policies on child rights and protection across all relevant sectors, is reconfirmed and operationalized by Law No. 18/2017. It is made up of representatives from state institutions as well as civil society and children (who have observer status at Council meetings). The inclusion of children in the National Council was permitted under a special instruction. The National Council on Child Rights and Protection should work more closely with other mechanisms, such as the Integrated Policies Management Groups, to ensure that children's issues are prioritized across all areas of activity, particularly in light of the country's major reforms and priority areas for European Union integration. Engagement with the primary donors in the field of child rights should be restructured in order to guarantee that more support is provided on a consistent basis, based on agreed-upon needs and priorities (mapped on the National Action Plan for Children).

The State Agency for Child Rights and Protection (SACRP), which was founded in 2011, is an executive agency within the Ministry of Health and Social Protection that is in charge of coordinating, implementing, and monitoring the NARC. The SACRP is in charge of coordinating the integrated child protection system in accordance with national policy and monitoring the implementation of the Child Rights Strategy. However, the SACRP was given insufficient financial and human resources to carry out the responsibilities mandated by law. To perform its central role in the Albanian child rights ecosystem, the SACRP's structure, authority, mandate, and financial resources must be enhanced and expanded. The SACRP will continue to facilitate and coordinate an intersectoral approach in the drafting and implementation of regulatory frameworks to address social exclusion of children from Roma communities, children with disabilities, migrant children, and children in detention or institutional care. There is a pressing need to put measures in place (as outlined in this Action Plan) to avert a potential workforce crisis in child services by raising

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<sup>7</sup> The ICMW was ratified by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Turkey, and signed by Montenegro. Please see [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-13&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-13&chapter=4&lang=en)

<sup>8</sup> MoHSP, 2021. Four-year Implementation Report on the National Agenda for the Rights of Children 2017-2020, available at <https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/four-year-implementation-report-national-agenda-rights-children-2017-2020>

standards, qualifications, and capacities of young professionals, as well as giving experience to staff. Furthermore, the approach to management and professional capacity building and accountability should be addressed; staff morale should be improved through ongoing, extended, and regulated professional development; and existing barriers to good practices and full access to quality services should be removed.

So far, better legislation has not been accompanied by the required increase in financial resources at the local and central level. Budgeting for children continues to be a difficult concept to grasp and put into practice. In this context, it is necessary to invest in capacities and provide adequate resources to build a budget analysis focused on children on a regular basis, as well as to enhance capacity for child-centered budgeting. The major goal is to increase budgets for child services while also developing tools to identify budget and expenditure situations as part of a meaningful accountability framework in the area of child rights.

Overall, improvements in legislation and policy have been accompanied by challenges in maintaining their impact on children's lives, primarily due to a lack of coherent sectoral data management systems and financial resources and capacities at the central and local levels for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data, including child-centered data. Despite the progress made in recent years in identifying more official statistical indicators focused on children, INSTAT, ministries and their subordinate institutions, as well as local government units, still have a lot of work to do in terms of producing, analyzing, and, most importantly, using data to implement effective policies and measures. It is clear that there is a lack of updated analyses on the situation of children, particularly vulnerable groups, putting their needs at danger of going unmet. In order to bring them closer to being used by all actors, the national program of official statistics should not only extend the number of indicators for children, but also mechanisms for disseminating and recognizing them.

Furthermore, there is still need for improvement in the coordination of national sectoral strategies with local plans, and different approaches to decentralization and responsibilities transfer appear to be used by different ministries. Divergent sectoral approaches make it more difficult to plan, develop, and manage measures at the local level. In recent years, the public sector reform has resulted in significant improvements in service provision, but planning continues to be hampered by a lack of data or a failure to use existing data, poor planning and coordination mechanisms, and insufficient consultation with relevant local actors, including children and parents. Municipalities have also failed to fulfill their obligation under Law No. 18/2017 to coordinate, monitor, and report on the implementation of all child rights at the local level. As a result, it is critical to establish a tool or mechanism that allows for the interaction and coordination of measures across all areas of activity aimed at children, including not just conventional sectors like education, protection, and health, but also recreation, the environment, and so on. Although the international initiative "Child-friendly cities" has begun in Tirana and Korça, it is critical that it be institutionalized at the national level in order to standardize its implementation approach and tools for other municipalities in the future.

Independent child rights institutions (the Ombudsperson, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, and the Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data) have shown professional growth and increased their efforts to address child issues. The Ombudsperson published special reports on the rights of orphan children, children in residential institutions, and child labor, as well as developed Standards for Children's Participation in the Child Rights Monitoring Process. It is critical to guarantee that independent human rights institutions have the appropriate financial and human resources to assure work continuity and methodology, and, above all, to promote services for children and their families/caregivers.

It is more vital than ever for the national and local civil emergency plans to be sensitive to the needs of children in order to reduce the impact of disasters on them and to enhance the resilience and capabilities of families and communities to avoid, survive, and recover from disasters.

In the context of this document, the child and youth consultation report<sup>9</sup> stressed children's demand for their parents to better implement the "right of children to be heard". Child inclusion mechanisms should be strengthened so that they are more sustainable and less sporadic. Adults' attitudes and practices (including parents, caregivers, service providers, decision-makers, politicians, and others) in all environments should be transformed to meaningfully include children, including children with disabilities, in decision-making that affects their lives, based on how children expressed their concern.

The National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security (AKCESK) is the responsible authority for cybersecurity, defining minimum technical standards for data and computer networks/systems security in the information society, with the goal of ensuring a secure electronic environment at the national level. In this regard, it designated online child and youth protection as one of the primary chapters of the National Strategy for Cybersecurity, in complete compliance with the government's political programs and in collaboration with other strategic partners. Furthermore, in accordance with current legislation, it has conducted awareness-raising campaigns and activities for various age groups across Albania since 2017, with the goal of increasing the level of security in the cyber-ecosystem.

AKCESK manages and maintains the unique online system on publishing websites with illicit content in accordance with DCM No. 141/2017 "On the Organization and Functioning of the National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security". In order to protect children online and combat violent extremism and radicalization, AKCESK has signed a cooperation agreement with AMA and CVE to establish adequate institutional access conditions and to detail procedural actions aimed at increasing efficiency and coordinating work among the parties. This agreement builds on the existing Cooperation Agreement between AKCESK and AKEP on partnership in the event of cybersecurity incidents.

#### **2.4.2 Elimination of all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, and harmful practices**

In Albania, there hasn't been enough research on child protection, and more child-focused research on domestic violence, violence in schools, and other institutions is needed. There isn't enough data on the extent and prevalence of child sexual abuse, child labor, and child exploitation. There are also scant data on numerous populations of children at risk or in need of protection.

At home, school, in the community, and in the virtual world, physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual violence occur. In the context of the country, online violence is a risk and issue that must be dealt independently owing to its unique features and characteristics. Child protection services have shown problems in the handling of many forms of violence against children, beginning with early identification, referral, and treatment. Children from the poorest groups of the population, children with disabilities, children in social care institutions, LGBTI teenagers, migrant or refugee children, as well as children from Roma and Egyptian communities, are all at increased risk of various forms of violence, including bullying, stigma, abuse, and trafficking. According to administrative police data from 2017, children accounted for 61 percent (70 children) of all cases of sexual abuse in Albania<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Report on focus group discussions with children and youths, during the consultation stage for the development of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 (August 2021), Drafted by Save the Children, Terre des hommes Albania, World Vision in Albania and Kosovo

<sup>10</sup> INSTAT, 2021b. Child, Teenagers and Youth Welfare in Albania 2016 - 2019 Tirana, available at [instat.unicef.2021.statistics.publication.en.pdf](#)

Law No. 18/2017 "On the Rights and Protection of the Child", and Law No. 37/2017 "Juvenile Criminal Justice Code," and Law No. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services in the Republic of Albania," which defined rights and services for all children, as well as mechanisms and responsible authorities. This law package introduces a new way of thinking about child rights and actual protective measures that responsible structures can take to prevent, rehabilitate, and protect children who are (possibly) victims of violence, abuse, and neglect<sup>11</sup>.

The legal framework analysis and alignment with Law No. 18/2017 has not yet been completed, resulting in the inability to implement many of the measures included in the previous Agenda on the Rights of the Child, such as developing and approving amendment proposals. Even when this analysis has been completed (for example, proposals to amend the Family Code regarding early marriage), there has been no progress in reviewing and approving them. In APC 2021-2026, there is a need to handle requests for specified legislation amendments from various sectors.

The CPR 2019<sup>12</sup> states that child protection institutions' financial and human resources do not correspond to their various legal responsibilities. Only 236 child protection workers were engaged in 2019 (52% of the required number), with only 45 (19%) working full-time in this position. The new law requires all child protection workers to have prior social work experience, yet only 78 of the 236 (33%) do<sup>13</sup>. The child protection structure continues to be hampered by a failure to employ CPWs in accordance with all legal requirements and a lack of sustainable investment in capacities, including the education and health sectors. In terms of its relevance, the principle of a multidisciplinary approach has been explicitly stated in the normative framework and is widely recognized. Coordination, on the other hand, remains one of the areas in Albania where behavioral, technical, and structural factors all play a role<sup>14</sup>. The majority of the time, coordination takes the form of information sharing rather than helpful and collaborative decision-making and job division. Meanwhile, in addressing child and family needs, case management is impeded by a lack of social care services<sup>15</sup>.

They noted in a report regarding focus groups discussions with children and youth during the consultation phase for the development of the Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 that not everyone around them has the necessary knowledge to ensure that they are protected from any type of violence. The major reasons include a lack of knowledge about the institutions in charge of children's rights and protection, as well as mentality as a key factor that stops adults from having the proper attitude and behaviors when it comes to child protection. Furthermore, they highlight the lack of engagement on the part of persons who represent child institutions in responding swiftly and appropriately to reported cases of violence. There is a significant lack of information concerning service provision, reporting, and service reception, according to children. Online, children also report a high level of insecurity and violence. Bullying, psychological violence, and threats are all common occurrences on the internet.

According to a 2019 research involving children, roughly 14% of children surveyed experienced upsetting internet experiences<sup>16</sup>. In general, children are unintentionally exposed to sexual content

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<sup>11</sup> MoHSP, 2021. Four-year Implementation Report on the National Agenda for the Rights of Children 2017-2020, available at <https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/four-year-implementation-report-national-agenda-rights-children-2017-2020>

<sup>12</sup> Please see CPR 2019, pg. 29, and the Country Report for CRC, 2019, paragraph 27.

<sup>13</sup> MoHSP, 2020. Four-year Implementation Report on the National Action Plan for Children 2017 - 2020, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> CPR, 2019, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Terre des homes, 2020. Report on the implementation of the Law No. 18/2017, EU, ANTTARC.

<sup>16</sup> Dunja A., Gjergji O., Gvineria D., Hallkaj E., Verzivolli I., 2019. One Click Away: Children's experience of Internet use in Albania, UNICEF Albania and IPSOS Strategic Marketing. Tirana, available at [https://www.unicef.org/albania/sites/unicef.org.albania/files/2020-01/report\\_oneclickaway.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/albania/sites/unicef.org.albania/files/2020-01/report_oneclickaway.pdf).

on the internet via pop-ups. When something upsetting happens online, children prefer to turn to their peers rather than their teachers or childcare professionals. The new National Cybersecurity Strategy and Action Plan 2020 - 2025, which were adopted in 2020, include a chapter dedicated to children, which contains sub-objectives and actions aimed at improving online child safety. This is merely the first step in ensuring that the legislation on children is effectively implemented. Above all, it is critical to improve capacity for investigating and prosecuting crimes against children committed online<sup>17</sup>. The strategy is monitored by AKCESK, and the Interinstitutional Digitization Work Group receives reports on its outcomes.

Needs assessment clearly shows that children - both those with and without disabilities - are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of institutionalization because institutions do not provide an adequate environment for their moral, psychological, and emotional development. Residential care institutions are more concerned with physical health than with individual development services, and they are more likely to provide programs and services for orphaned children than for children who have been abused, exploited, neglected, or harmed.

Although there may be underreporting, school is an important part of a child's protective environment, and it has been noted that peer violence is not regarded a particular concern in Albania. According to the HBSC 2017/2018 survey, around 22% of children said they had experienced at least one instance of bullying at school, with boys reporting a higher prevalence than girls (respectively 24% versus 20%)<sup>18</sup>. These figures are significant, and they suggest that a policy dedicated to pre-university education in the area of preventing and addressing all forms of violence and abuse, including bullying and extremism in schools, may be necessary as a tool to support child rights and the establishment of a mechanism for preventing and reporting all forms of violence. Furthermore, increasing the number of psychosocial workers and security officers in schools will stimulate the development of a viable system to timely detect, prevent, and report violence, bullying, and extremism in schools.

Domestic violence cases can be identified and referred more easily through the health system. So far, there hasn't been much development<sup>19</sup>. Although legislation specifies how identified cases in need of protection should be referred, the health sector need practical guidelines and tools for these area specialists to adequately implement the child's best interest and case management steps.

During the consultation stage for the development of this document, data obtained from focus groups discussions with children and youth revealed a rise in the psychological violence they faced, which has repercussions for a child's life. More should be done to fight child abuse, according to children, by building more protective environments in schools, communities, and online. They believe that changing adults' attitudes toward children, as well as their upbringing practices and communication with them, will allow them to be better protected. Children should be informed about risks and assist in the development of protective mechanisms. Children recommended that cooperation among actors such as psychologists, schools, and parents is critical, as is the development of particular programs to fight bullying and promote tolerance, cooperation, and socialization among children<sup>20</sup>.

Despite efforts to align legislation with international treaties, the Council of Europe stated that measures implemented to assist and protect children in street situations in Albania have been

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<sup>17</sup> Cit.12.

<sup>18</sup> PHI Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, 11, 13, and 15 Years Old: Key Findings (2018). Tirana.

<sup>19</sup> MoHSP, 2021. Four-year Implementation Report on the National Agenda for the Rights of Children 2017 - 2020, available at <https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/four-year-implementation-report-national-agenda-rights-children-2017-2020>

<sup>20</sup> Report on focus group discussions with children and youths, during the consultation stage for the development of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 (August 2021), Drafted by Save the Children, Terre des hommes Albania, World Vision in Albania and Kosovo

insufficient<sup>21</sup>, and that children continue to be victims of prostitution, pornography, and sexual exploitation.

In a study of potential child victims of trafficking conducted by the OSCE<sup>22</sup> in 2020, substantial concerns with case management were noted, including ad hoc decision-making on trafficking identification, a lack of criminal investigations, and serious flaws in guaranteeing adequate child protection measures. In addition, it was found that there is a significant need to strengthen Albania's child protection systems in respect to child trafficking by training key stakeholders such as law enforcement officers, child protection workers, and schools.

Despite the fact that the Family Code (2003) sets an 18-year-old minimum marriage age, 11% of women aged 20 to 49 years old and 2% of men married at 18, and the rate of women 15 to 19 years old in reproductive age grew by 3.5% in 2017 - 2018 from 2.8% in 2008-2009<sup>23</sup>. Current data suggest that child marriage remains a big issue that has to be addressed promptly, despite the fact that it is not widely reported owing to gender inequality, poverty, and social exclusion.

With the most recent changes, stateless children in Albanian territory, abandoned children, adopted children, and most children born to nationals living abroad now have a right to citizenship. Children continue to encounter difficulties if their parents have irregular documentation, and as a result, the Roma and Egyptian communities are disproportionately affected, while children born abroad to Roma parents, particularly in Greece<sup>24</sup>, face additional challenges. Even repatriated children from conflict areas face challenges in resolving their legal status and obtaining citizenship. In order to simplify the national civil registration and birth registration processes in Albania and train staff to administer these operations effectively and without discrimination, new legal approaches aligned with international legislation must be approved. Documentation requirements should be simplified, and costs should be reduced.

A national electronic child protection data system, and as a result, a unified database that collects data on children who are beneficiaries of social protection programs, has yet to be implemented, making it more difficult to plan effective and sustainable child protection interventions.

Positive parenting programs have yet to be developed and implemented throughout all service areas. This is largely due to the earlier Agenda on the Rights of the Child's 2017-2020 Action Measures being written incorrectly, isolating the child as a beneficiary from the family. It is critical to adopt a new approach that is represented in all areas of action and focuses on enhancing parents' skills and eliminating harmful social norms for child rearing.

During consultations with children and youth, they stated that more opportunities should be created for meetings among groups of parents, psychologists/social workers, and children, allowing for the identification of attitudes and resolution of challenges that children face in regard to their peers and parents. They value the social worker's function as a key structure and figure in joint parenting programs, and believe that it should be included in larger awareness-raising activities.

According to the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, promoting an integrated protection system is connected to violence prevention and protection. All authorities and services should work together to protect and support children's best interest, with children at the center.

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<sup>21</sup> European Commission (2020). Albania 2020 Report

<sup>22</sup> McQuade A., Rexha J., Trimi A., 2020. A typology of child trafficking in Albania, OSCE

<sup>23</sup> INSTAT and PHI. 2018. Albania Demographic and Health Survey 2017 - 2018

<sup>24</sup> Hojsik M., Fremlova L., (eds), 2019. A synthesis of civil society's reports on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies in the European Union, Center for Policy Studies, CEU. Budapest, available at <https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3172/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-synthesis27-2019-eprint.pdf>

Preventive measures, such as family support, should be given special attention, especially to those who are in need.

By increasing efforts of the main institutions at the central and local levels to improve the normative, budgetary, and reporting framework, enhancement of specialist capacities, mechanisms, and services for addressing violence against children, and prioritizing specialized and integrated mechanisms and services for addressing serious forms of violence against children, Albania's child protection system should be inclusive, have an intersectoral approach, be budgeted, and be effective in child protection.

### **2.4.3 Child-friendly and adolescent-friendly systems and services**

#### **Early childhood development and education**

The Education and Training 2020<sup>25</sup> Strategic Framework for European Union Member States' cooperation in the field of education and training is based on a lifelong learning approach and contains the following strategic objectives: 1) Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality; 2) Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; 3) Promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship; 4) Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training. Albania has implemented significant education reforms as part of the overall reform and democratization process, which have expanded access to education and improved learning outcomes, including decentralization of school governance and the adoption of a competency-based curriculum.

The early years of a child's life are crucial for their development and well-being, as they create the groundwork for learning skills that impact their behavior, learning, and health. Early interventions that promote child development during this key period improve all of our children's lives in the long run. Coordinated services for infants and young children up to the age of three years old should be a growing emphasis of national policy, research/studies, and financial support in Albania. According to the previous Agenda monitoring report, planned measures for this age group have yet to be implemented, and the majority of responsible institutions did not disclose any steps during the four years<sup>26</sup>. It's essential to rethink sectoral policies and intersectoral mechanisms in order to draft, implement, and monitor effective measures for this age group's children and their families.

Mothers are frequently the primary caregivers, particularly for pre-school children aged 0 to 6. Due to a lack of other options for childcare for this age group, many mothers choose to stay at home with their children rather than work. When the mother is a single parent and unable to get childcare, the situation appears to be much more difficult. The existing number of nursery schools and their capacity are insufficient to meet the demand. Some municipalities do not provide this service at all. In addition to expanding the number of public nursery schools and kindergartens (which parents prefer because they are more affordable than private kindergartens), it is critical to subsidize this payment for children from low-income families in order to increase access to this service and support parents' employment.

Pre-school education is managed by the local government following the approval of the New Administrative Territorial Reform in 2015, which has faced some challenges over the years, including a lack of local capacity to improve pre-school education quality, the development of inefficient planning mechanisms, monitoring and accountability, including financial

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<sup>25</sup> European Union, "Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020")," 2009.

<sup>26</sup> MoHSP, 2021. Four-year Implementation Report on the National Agenda for the Rights of Children 2017-2020, available at <https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/four-year-implementation-report-national-agenda-rights-children-2017-2020>

accountability<sup>27</sup>. According to the Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework, at least 95% of children (aged 4 to mandatory school age) should receive early childhood education<sup>28</sup>. Albania has made significant progress in this area, and ensuring that all children, especially those with disabilities, Roma, and Egyptian children, have access to pre-school education remains a top objective for all actors.

Instructions published at the start of each school year have continued to include guidelines for inclusion, enrolment of 5-6 year old in kindergarten, and preparatory classes. Local offices for pre-university education create plans and activities for inclusion. 77,858 children in pre-school education were able to access age-appropriate educational resources using the online interactive learning platform during the COVID-19 pandemic. 8 refugee/immigrant children were taught English using the online platform Akelius. Explanatory videos for several educational subjects were also developed and broadcast on the public channel, RTSH Shko, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Professional standards for pre-school teachers' general training, as well as pre-school education programs for children aged 3 to 4, were approved by the MoESY. Competency-based education concepts are blended with rights, gender equality, non-discrimination, and other factors in these regulatory documents. However, there is still work to be done in converting those guidelines into consistent procedures across the country.

Education for all has long been a key component of the Sustainable Development Agenda, but it received much greater focus in the 2030 Agenda, with the fourth target relating to: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"<sup>29</sup>. Inclusion in education is a component of SDG 4, and it entails creating conditions that allow all boys and girls, regardless of their abilities or characteristics, to continue learning together while also meeting their individual needs. Albania, on the other hand, spent only 3.3 percent of its GDP on education in 2019<sup>30</sup>, a lower percentage than its neighboring countries<sup>31</sup> and the EU average (4.6%) in 2018<sup>32</sup>. Between 2015 and 2019, primary education expenditures reduced by six percentage points, while expenses for upper secondary education increased slightly<sup>33</sup>; nonetheless, overall pre-university expenditures decreased in absolute and relative terms.

The signing of the trilateral agreement "On Identification and School Enrolment of School-aged Children" by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), and the Ministry of Education (MoESY) reaffirmed central institutions' commitment to establishing joint mechanisms for identifying out-of-school children and their integration into school. The Joint Decision No. 292, dated 19.07.2019, "On Identification and School Enrolment of School-aged Children" was approved in response to the initiative "Every Child in School" and other mechanisms for out-of-school children. It is critical that this mechanism not just be expanded out across the country, but also applied to upper secondary education in the future.

Although Roma students' access to education grew from 44% in 2011 to 66% in 2017<sup>34</sup>, their academic attainment remains low. According to research, Roma children do poorly in grade 5, getting an average of 29 points, compared to an average of 45 points in primary school students<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> MoESY & UNICEF, 2019. Appraisal of the Pre-University Education Strategy 2014-2020

<sup>28</sup> UNESCO, 2017. Albania Education Policy Review: Issues and Recommendations Extended Report

<sup>29</sup> United Nations (2015). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Retrieved from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication> accessed in March 2021

<sup>30</sup> INSTAT, 2021. Child, Teenagers and Youth Welfare in Albania 2016 - 2019

<sup>31</sup> UNESCO Statistics. Retrieved from <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>

<sup>32</sup> Eurostat. Total general government expenditure on education, 2018 Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Total\\_general\\_government\\_expenditure\\_on\\_education\\_2018\\_%25\\_of\\_GDP.png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Total_general_government_expenditure_on_education_2018_%25_of_GDP.png)

<sup>33</sup> MoFE, Annual Budgets 2015 - 2019

<sup>34</sup> UNDP, World Bank, Council of Europe (2017) Regional Roma Survey - Albania

<sup>35</sup> Retrieved as reference by MoESY, 2021. National Education Strategy 2021 - 2026 (DRAFT).

assessments. Children with disabilities, particularly girls with disabilities, continue to encounter difficulties in attending education. According to MoESY, the rate of children with disabilities who attend school improved from 75% in 2014 to 85% in 2018, however this only applies to the 57.6% of children aged 6 to 17 who get disability allowances<sup>36</sup>. Assistant teachers are provided only for children with disabilities that attend pre-university education. In the academic year 2020-2021, 1176 assistant teachers were recruited. In this academic year (2020-2021), the ratio of children with disabilities to assistant teachers is 3.7<sup>37</sup>. However, there is still work to be done in terms of transforming special schools into centers for providing services to children with disabilities, as well as supporting not just the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools, but also their qualitative inclusion in learning processes.

Children and youth expressed worry about school dropout during consultations for the new draft Agenda on the Rights of the Child, emphasizing the link between girls and boys and the issue of dropping out. They claim that Roma community children, who drop out of school to work, and children, whose parents are in difficult socioeconomic situations and decide to move abroad with their children, are the most affected. Children also consider that the attendance of 3-6 year old children in pre-school institutions is concerning. Due to a lack of infrastructure and transportation, many children in this age group who live outside of residential areas are unable to attend kindergarten. Vulnerable children (children with disabilities, children from Roma and Egyptian communities, children from low-income families, and so on) are frequently challenged by prejudice at school. Bullying, discrimination, and a lack of communication from other members of the school community are all issues they experience.

Since 2013, the reformed pre-university education curriculum has placed a greater emphasis on the learning process and the active participation of students in the acquisition of knowledge and competencies. In terms of learning and teaching philosophies and practices, the role of students, teachers, and principals in the process, as well as student attainment, external and internal curriculum evaluations show that the implementation of the competency-based curriculum is a process that has marked important achievements. Curriculum implementation is accompanied with issues that encourage teachers to continue their professional development in areas like student assessment, meeting the requirements of students with special needs, and employing Information and Communication Technology (ICT), among other things. Communication among actors, as well as the role of school leaders in implementing the competency-based curriculum, are both areas that need to be strengthened and encouraged<sup>38</sup>.

The education process also extends through art and culture with dedicated thematic in cooperation with public art and education institutions by creating joint projects between them. Beyond basic education and training, for a psychosocial development, children have the right and need to participate in various cultural and artistic activities. These activities take place both within school curricula and as part of the community, family and individually.

Culture and cultural heritage are a very important part of children education in the spirit of national identity, religious tolerance, recognition and interaction between cultures and minorities. The program "Education through culture", which includes cultural heritage, implemented by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth consists of a sustainable calendar of activities developed by schools and different groups of students, art institutions and

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<sup>36</sup> Please see Rogers J. Sammon E. "We all matter!" UNICEF (2018), Tirana, accessed at <https://www.unicef.org/albania/reports/t%C3%AB-gjith%C3%AB-jemi-t%C3%AB-r%C3%ABnd%C3%ABsish%C3%ABm>

<sup>37</sup> MoESY, 2021. National Education Strategy 2021 – 2026 (DRAFT)

<sup>38</sup> MoESY, 2021. National Education Strategy 2021 – 2026 (DRAFT)

culture, archeological sites, museums etc. This program aims to supplement the knowledge acquired in school, as well as the development of activities within school programs.

### **Social Protection**

According to INSTAT's 2019 Survey of Income and Living Conditions<sup>39</sup>, which was conducted in accordance with European statistical standards, 29.7% of children aged 0 to 17 are at risk of poverty. The link between poverty and a lack of opportunities for children to realize their rights is now well recognized. The best way to solve this complex phenomenon in Albania is to take an integrated approach that helps the entire family, including education for positive parents.

By September 2020, there are 88,321 children under the age of 18 whose families have benefitted from the Economic Assistance (EA) scheme, with 598 orphaned children receiving EA. The bonus scheme for every newborn has benefited around 32,000 children and families since its inception in 2019. Families now benefit from a 50% rise in the average monthly value of EA, from ALL 3,500 to ALL 5,600. For families with young children, additional EA subsidies are provided on a monthly basis in order to vaccinate and educate them. Families get monthly electricity compensation, as well as other benefits such as free textbooks, nursery school and kindergartens, social housing, and scholarships for their children, among other things. Approximately 63,510 families received twice the economic assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, 4,524 families who applied for economic assistance between July 2019 and March 2020 but did not get assistance because they were not eligible for EA were given allowances.

The Social Fund, which serves as a funding mechanism for the local government and a way of procuring social services for NGOs, provided help to 14 municipalities and 6 regions for new services. Only a few municipalities, however, provide services to children.

Additional servants, totaling roughly 131 in the EA management, monitoring, and evaluation sectors, were added to the municipalities' human resources. However, only 25 municipalities saw an increase in staff. Nonetheless, a dearth of local social professionals and, when they do exist, a lack of sufficient financial resources make early and proactive identification of cases of families in need of support and services problematic.

In Albania, there are nine public Social Care Institutions (SCI) for children, 18 private ones, and five development centers for people with disabilities (PwD). 223 (91 F and 132 M) children without parental care were reported in the residential system in 9 public SCIs in October 2020, with 76 children in 5 development centers for PwDs. In comparison to past years, the number of children without parental care living in residential institutions has decreased. Although 85% of children placed in public SCIs maintain contact with their biological families, their stay in the institution is longer than two years. The number of children in public SCIs who were returned to their biological families decreased in 2019. This decrease is attributable to the duration of court proceedings to determine whether children admitted as urgent cases would stay institutionalized or be returned to their families, as well as the local structures' insufficient efforts to empower the families of these and other children in institutions.

The National Deinstitutionalization Plan 2020-2022, which is expected to be extended to 2024, was adopted in September 2020, with the goal of supporting every child in care institutions or at risk of institutionalization with new alternative services, foster families, or specialized services. In development centers, special attention (prioritization) should be given to the needs of children with disabilities, beginning with a more detailed case assessment and the preparation of specific plans. The development and implementation of a service model for semi-independent and

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<sup>39</sup> INSTAT 2021. Survey of Income and Living Conditions..

independent living should remain the priority (for children over 14 years of age, including children with disabilities).

By September 2020, 379 children have been placed in foster families. The vast majority of foster cases are blood-related, with only ten cases being unrelated. No LGU has prepared or approved a list of foster families who are not related by blood.

Nonetheless, developing an integrated, effective, and inclusive social care system is the only way to provide new alternative preventative and reintegrating services in a healthy environment, in the biological or foster family, by maximizing the potential of children.

Furthermore, the deinstitutionalization plan has been included as a priority in Albania's Economic Reform Program 2021-2023, and the central government allocated a financial package to the two pilot municipalities of Vlorë and Korçë in March 2021 to accelerate the development of alternative child care services and the complete and irreversible closure of social care institutions. Planned interventions oriented towards family empowerment include psychosocial support for children and parents, counselling, parenting skills and family therapy, access to community services, legal and administrative support, professional training, and support for employment. Efforts to strengthen the system also include the development of a professional care model and evident improvement of the protection mechanism. All these efforts call for continuous financial support.

On the report of focus group discussions with children and youth, they addressed concrete cases of the peers, who struggled financially, but did not receive the necessary social assistance and support. Children stated that there is a lack of information regarding the NARU's supportive role for children and families. Children also said that the municipality should have a specialized staff that provides support for all families that need social and economic assistance. They believe that this service should be strengthened and reach the same level as in other countries, although they see it as nonexistent in the areas where they live.

Professionally, effectively and coordinatively addressing social protection and inclusion policies should focus on children in need for protection, children/youth with disabilities, victims of gender-based violence, sexual violence, and domestic violence, from Roma and Egyptian community, and the LGBT community. This should be made possible by strengthening structures at the central and local level, raising awareness of the public opinion, as well as expanding and providing different types of support services, financed by the central government through the social fund.

## **Health and nutrition**

The mortality rate of children under 5 years old in Albania is reported to be 11/1000 live births, and all children mortality indicators has a slight increase in the recent 3 years<sup>40</sup>. It is indispensable to review all clinical protocols and guidelines for the healthcare of pregnant women and children in the framework of primary health care (including antenatal and postnatal healthcare, nutrition of pregnant women and children, and child development), and neonatology in maternity hospitals in order to improve neonatal healthcare and implement neonatal screening to timely identify genetic diseases and other disorders in children.

According to the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) in Albania 2017 - 2018<sup>41</sup>, three fourth (75%) of children belonging to the age group 12 - 23 months old had had basic vaccination, 98% were vaccinated against diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus, hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae, 96% against polio, and 79% against measles. Less than 1% of children had had no vaccination.

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<sup>40</sup> INSTAT, 2021. Child, Teenagers and Youth Welfare in Albania 2016–2019.

<sup>41</sup> INSTAT and PHI. 2018. Albania Demographic and Health Survey 2017 – 2018.

All malnutrition indicators have improved from 2008-2009 to 2017-2018, although 11% of Albanian children belonging to the 6-59 months old age group are stunted, 2% are wasted, 16% are overweight, and 2% are underweight. Almost all (93%) children born during the two years prior to DHS 2017 - 2018 had been breastfed, but only 57 percent were breastfed within an hour after being born. 37 percent of children under 6 months old are exclusively breastfed.

There are no special health services for adolescents in Albania. It is urgent to create discrete health services for adolescents, particularly focusing on mental health and sexual and reproductive health services.

Access to services for youth with disabilities is a special issue due to lack of physical access and non-positive attitudes and practices of the healthcare staff to persons with disabilities. Adolescents have to go to the main healthcare service at the level of primary health care to receive contraception and/or advice on reproductive health.

There is little information on the population's mental health status, especially in the case of adolescents, due to limited publications in this area. The "Health Behavior in School-aged Children" 2018 Survey<sup>42</sup> showed that 73% of the respondents reported a "very good" self-perceived health state. However, the annual increase to 60 percent (2016 - 2017) of the age group 0 - 14 years old that have mental health appointments in regional polyclinics and increase to 89 percent of hospital appointments for 0 - 24 years old<sup>43</sup>, combined with a high suicidal rate of 6.03 per 100,000 people from the 10 - 24-year-old<sup>44</sup> age group, should serve as an alarm to urgently address the situation.

Consultations with children suggested the increase of the number of psychologists and social workers in schools, and awareness raising of individuals on their role, especially in the case of children and youth. They think that periodic mental health checks should become mandatory, or discussion groups should be established for certain issues of school life. They propose tests and tools to see or identify students' issues. Moreover, the number of nurses in schools should increase in order to provide more services.

### **Child-friendly justice**

The following pieces of legislation have been adopted for purposes of improving the criminal civil legislation, as well as criminal and administrative legislation, in order to ensure child rights: 1) Juvenile Justice Strategy, accompanied with the Action Plan that contains objectives, activities, measuring indicators, clear deadlines and costs for a mid-term period 2018 - 2021. This strategy is the first policy document of the Albanian government that defines the basic pillars of the juvenile justice reform; 2) Law No. 37/2017 "Criminal Justice Juvenile Code", and Law No. 35/2017 "On Some Addenda and Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code". These amendments were made in line with the CRC and other international standards and norms that aim at protecting children in contact with the law based on their best interest. 3) The MoJ has undertaken legal initiatives regarding some amendments and addenda to Law No. 9062, dated 08.05.2003, "Family Code", as amended, and to Law No. 9695, dated 19.03.2007, "On Adoption Procedures and the Albanian Adoptions Committee", amended.

New concepts and institutions stipulated by the Code are both a novelty and a challenge for all juvenile justice specialists. Criteria on training, licensing, and accrediting different specialists pursuant to the juvenile code have yet to be drafted and agreed upon. The judicial reorganization of courts and prosecution offices is yet to be implemented, and it would enable the establishment

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<sup>42</sup> PHI. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children, 11, 13, and 15 Years Old: Key Findings (2018). Tirana.

<sup>43</sup> National report presented in compliance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21\* Albania] February 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/ALIndex.aspx>

<sup>44</sup> INSTAT, 2020. Child, Teenagers and Youth Welfare in Albania 2016 - 2018 Tirana

of sections in other judicial district, in addition to the ones that operated in 7 districts, namely: Tirana, Durrës, Korça, Gjirokastra, Elbasan, Shkodra, and Vlora.

Cooperation among justice system links and local government structures is of essential importance in fulfilling the institutional framework to implement the legislation on juvenile justice. The same cooperation should be horizontal among all institutions at the local level, in order to provide a holistic approach to children in contact/conflict with the law and their families.

Notwithstanding changes to the Family Code regarding adoptions, there is still work required to make the abandonment declaration mechanism functioning, to ensure the child's best interest and not hold children "hostage" in social institutions until they reach the age of majority, without returning them to the biological family or other relatives and, on the other hand, without placing them with an adoptive family.

The equal access of children to justice in Albania requires further child-friendly policies and financial investments, including capacity building and personnel provision, as well as adequate and specialized services to meet children's needs. The general lack of trust in the institutions and mechanisms prevents children from accessing the justice system; however, when poverty is involved, children have even fewer chances of turning to the justice system to demand their rights. Often, this overlaps with other factors, including disability, sex, or ethnicity.

The consulting report with children and youth shows on the facilities where children are questioned when taken to the police station. Children have stated that they know cases of their peers being mistreated in such facilities. They think that the facilities where children are taken in for questioning should be more suitable for children, the staff should be trained on communication, be friendly, and accepting toward the children<sup>45</sup>.

Long delays in court procedures; lack of a parent or legal guardian; lack of independent specialists for performing the psychological evaluation of the child - become a real hindrance to children's access to true justice. The social context of the child in conflict with the law, lack of family relations, poverty, and the insensitivity of court representatives lead to the execution of punishments that fail to account for the child's age and best interest. Despite the integration of international instruments into the internal legal system, considerable gaps remain, particularly as regards civil and administrative cases, and there is also a significant gap between the law and practice. The implementation of the JCJC requires additional measures, including human and financial resources<sup>46</sup>.

Further serious financial investments and human resources are required to ensure complete implementation of the Free Legal Aid legislation, adopted in 2018. The dashboard of child rights statistics indicates that only 3 children received secondary legal aid free of charge in 2019<sup>47</sup>.

In order to change this reality, public authorities must perform a critical review of the entire spectrum of child services related in any way with the justice system - this does not imply only the police or court, but also teachers, child protection structures, social workers, psychologists, and other community actors interacting with children involved in justice matters. The engagement of social services and the useful provision of social services to children, particularly children in

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<sup>45</sup> Report on focus group discussions with children and youth, during the consultation stage for the drafting of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 (August 2021), Drafted by Save the Children, Terre des hommes Albania, World Vision in Albania and Kosovo.

<sup>46</sup> See Bisha, E., Sulstarova, A., Shapo, Zh. and Ymeri, H., WebFactor: Assessment of the Legal Framework and Institutional Readiness to address Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse online in Albania, UNICEF in Albania/ Shapo Consulting (2019) Tirana, available at: [https://www.unicef.org/albania/sites/unicef.org/albania/files/2019-0/ENG\\_Webfactor\\_UNICEF%20Albania%202019.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/albania/sites/unicef.org/albania/files/2019-0/ENG_Webfactor_UNICEF%20Albania%202019.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> National Agency for Child Rights and Protection, Child Rights Statistics Dashboard, UNICEF Statistics (statistikafemijet.gov.al), Source: Ministry of Justice

conflict with the law prior to their release or re-integration, are crucial to the prevention of discrimination and unequal treatment.

#### 2.4.4 Promotion of Child Rights in the Digital World

Many opportunities have arisen because of the development of the digital world and the application of new technology. This online environment enables children to play, create, learn, interact, and express themselves from a very young age. Digital technologies allow children to participate in global movements and act as active citizens<sup>48</sup>. As part of a digital world, children attend an education that is constantly moving toward digitalization and labor market systems in the future. The use of digital devices may help children with disabilities learn, connect, and communicate by participating in recreational activities on the Internet, provided such activities are accessible.

Currently, there are no conclusive data from research confirming any substantial impact of ICT on learning outcome improvement. However, it is certain that the use of ICT during the teaching process helps build digital competence in students, which is crucial to their effective participation in the information society. The commitment to digitalize education has been stated in the SPUED, where the promotion of student's digital skills and the integration of ICT into teaching and learning constitute priorities, as also confirmed in the Government Program 2017-2021. Despite this considerable political attention to the value of ICT in education, many challenges remain.

Albania has taken significant steps toward extending ICT access to pre-university education institutions. Although not at sufficient levels, Albanian schools have been equipped with computers and accessories, local computer networks have been installed, and internet connection has been provided. In 2017, in pre-university schools, the computer-student ratio was 1:27, quite lower than the EU countries' standards, where there is 1 computer available for 3-7 students. On the other hand, the number of non-functioning computers amounts to 25 percent of the total, indicating a lack of maintenance, while the internet connection speed is generally below requirements. All of these factors pose the main obstacle to ICT usage in schools and should be addressed to ensure that teenagers are equipped with contemporary skills<sup>49</sup>.

Culture and cultural heritage are a significant aspect of teaching children about national identity, religious tolerance, recognition of, and interaction between cultures and minorities. The "Education through Culture" Program implemented by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, which also includes cultural heritage, comprises a consistent schedule of activities carried out by various schools and student groups in art and culture institutions, archaeological sites, museums, etc. This program aims to supplement the knowledge obtained in school and perform activities in the framework of school programs.

Based on the standards on ICT devices in schools, it is important for a plan to be drafted to increase the number of digital devices in schools, including computers, projectors, interactive tables, wireless networks, and various accessories, as well as a functioning system for maintaining such devices in compliance with school resources and context. All devices or platforms for online interaction should be subject to security measures implemented in collaboration with the supervising authority for cybersecurity.

In the report on consultations during the drafting of the NARC 2021-2026, children and youths have indicated a significant use of online platforms and social networks, particularly for online learning during the pandemic. The children have stated a lack of access to digital devices, an absence of informatics cabinets at schools, while for the majority of them the same holds true in

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<sup>48</sup> European Union (2021), EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child 2021-2024 [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12454-EU-strategy-on-the-rights-of-the-child-2021-24\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12454-EU-strategy-on-the-rights-of-the-child-2021-24_en)

<sup>49</sup> MoESY, 2021. National Education Strategy 2021 – 2026 (DRAFT)

their homes, where they lack digital devices, although their skills in this regard are satisfactory. The children and youths identified several issues related to the use of social networks and platforms to obtain information or for pastime. They emphasize the importance of broad information about the dangers of the virtual world. They also highlight the important role of communicating with parents as regards reporting concerning cases when accessing the virtual world. Teachers in schools have insufficient information, knowledge, and skills in terms of digital device usage and informing students about safe internet use<sup>50</sup>.

On the other hand, the increasing use of the internet by children may lead to further issues regarding their online safety. Child safety online is one of the priorities for Albania and all institutions focusing on this issue in their activity.

According to a UNICEF study<sup>51</sup> on “Children's experience of Internet use in Albania”, the average age when the surveyed children had accessed the internet for the first time was at 9 years old, with 37% stating that they had used the internet from 8 years of age and/or even earlier. Whereas 51% of the surveyed children have permanent access to the internet (whenever they wish). Parental restriction is the most common reason behind children’s lack of access to the internet whenever they wish to or need, particularly for younger children (9-11 years old). Children aged 15-17 years spend more time online and access a wider range of sites compared with younger children. The most frequent activities they participate in on the internet relate to entertainment, studies, and social interaction. The least frequent activities include civic and community participation. The most developed digital skills of children pertain to the area of operational skills and social relationships; whereas creative skills are less developed. As they grow, children engage in a wider variety of activities and become more confident in their digital skills. Younger children feel less confident about skills related to their online behaviors. Amongst internet access means, Smartphones are the most prevalent, specifically 77% of the surveyed children use their mobile phones daily compared with other means of access, at an average of 3 hours per day. Children use the internet mainly for entertainment and social networks: YouTube is the most accessed site (72%), Instagram (58%).

In general, the surveyed children have more online technological skills than their parents. The study found that during their time on the internet, children had encountered upsetting situations. More specifically, 14% of the surveyed children had had upsetting experiences online, especially those between 15-17 years of age.

The statistics from this research indicate that:

- 1 in 5 children had not told the upsetting event to anyone.
- 1 in 5 children were upset because of hateful or degrading messages toward them.
- 1 in 5 children had seen images of violence or abuse online.
- 17% of the surveyed children had seen images involving physical violence.
- 1 in 10 children had seen content referencing suicide.

Over 20% of the surveyed children accept all friend requests on social networks, while 25% of the children admitted to having interacted online with someone they didn’t know in person, and 16% of them had met in person with someone they only knew online. Parents are aware of only 9% of the aforementioned cases.

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<sup>50</sup> Report on focus group discussions with children and youths, during the consultation stage for the drafting of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 (August 2021), Drafted by Save the Children, Terre des hommes Albania, World Vision in Albania and Kosovo.

<sup>51</sup> Dunja A., Gjergji O., Gvineria D., Hallkaj E., Verzivolli I., 2019. Një klikim larg: Përvoja e përdorimit të internetit nga fëmijët në Shqipëri [One click away: Children's experience of Internet use in Albania] UNICEF Albania and IPSOS Strategic Marketing. Tirana, available at [https://www.unicef.org/albania/sites/unicef.org.albania/files/2020-01/report\\_oneclickaway.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/albania/sites/unicef.org.albania/files/2020-01/report_oneclickaway.pdf)

In the framework of the partnership between the Albanian Government and UNICEF, during 2018-2019, AKCESK participated in the “Safe internet for children and youth in Albania” project, which focuses on educating and raising awareness among students in 9-year schools. In this context, the “Peer Educators for Online Safety” manual was drafted for the first time and is being implemented by UNICEF as a model in other countries across the world. Online peer educator trainings have been performed in 7 regions in the country based on the manual contents, resulting in the certification of 300 students of 9-year schools as peer educators.

The trained students, together with school teachers and AKCESK staff, collaborated to raise awareness among all school children on safe internet use. The total number of trained students by late June 2019 amounted to 12,286.

In 2020, public libraries started to transform into “Bibliotech” technological digital centers, providing opportunities to learn about digital safety. The “Friendly Wi-Fi” initiative implementation in Tirana has expanded (53 additional access points in eight additional public spaces in Tirana), resulting in the blocking of 516,000 internet requests to access blacklisted sites.

Parallel to competence and skill development, children’s increased internet use requires tackling of challenges arising from the lack of safety and knowledge about their protection. For this purpose, it is important that school staff receive training about internet child safety, be supported with resources, trainings, and information sessions to better assist students and parents regarding child safety online. The most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children should have access to online digital services and obtain information about digital skill modules in a safe manner. Parents and other public actors require information about the importance of digital development and protection means.

Further measures are required, including strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation involving regulatory agencies, the private and industrial ICT sector, addressing parents’, specialists’, children’s and youths’ capacity gaps, protecting children on the internet and establishing safe spaces for internet navigation (in collaboration with the private sector), strengthening of legal and regulatory frameworks, and investments in technological and child-friendly solutions.

### 3. Strategy Vision & Policy Goals

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#### 3.1 Vision

The vision of the NARC consists in the establishment of a favorable environment to ensure the safe and healthy upbringing of girls and boys, developing their maximum physical and psychosocial potential, social inclusion and active participation in all relevant areas, and ensuring progress assessment of the observance of the rights of all children in Albania.



The mission of the upcoming NARC: a) Considering children's and parents' voice; b) Furthering the work toward harmonization with the EU, SDG, and international conventions; c) Serving as a coordinating cooperation instrument among all actors, such as civil society, businesses, media, etc.; d) Guiding / ensuring prioritization of financial investments.

The displayed policy goals are in accordance with the policy goals of the programs included in the Midterm Budget Program 2021-2023.

Furthermore, each policy goal is broken down into specific objectives, which are then divided into outputs (expected outcomes), whereas outputs are detailed into measures. For each specific objective, indicators are provided, which offer objective information on the progress of the implementation of the Agenda.

## PART II. POLICY GOALS AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

### Policy goal I. Good governance as regards observing, protecting, and fulfilling child rights

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Based on Policy Goal I “Good governance as regards promoting, observing and protecting child rights” of the previous APC 2017-2020, this strategic objective has been expanded further, seeking to not solely improve governance as regards promoting, observing and guaranteeing child rights, to improve the monitoring of the child rights situation in order to generate data that would inform beneficial policies, but also to establish mechanisms for child participation in the decision-making of central and local institutions.

The main impact indicators under this goal are:

- Percentage of total budget expenditures for education
- Percentage of total budget expenditures for health
- Percentage of total budget expenditures for social protection
- Percentage of Sustainable Development Goals indicators focusing on children and adolescents regularly reported as part of the national plan of official statistics

There is one specific goal that interlinks with this policy goal:

#### **Specific goal I.1 Strengthening the institutions and mechanisms in order to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of children**

The main indicators under this strategic goal are:

- Increasing the annual budget of the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights (SAPCR)
- Number of LGUs with functional mechanisms / forums involving children in decision-making / number of children involved
- Number and percentage of central and local policy plans informed by data analysis
- Number of complaints and cases handled by independent human rights institutions on children's rights during the year

#### Specific goal I.1 Strengthening the institutions and mechanisms in order to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of children

The analysis of the situation in the area covered by this particular goal is given in section 2.4.1, while the main challenges arising from the analysis are:

- In the context of good governance for children's rights and the important role played in this regard by the National Council for the Rights and Protection of the Child, it is necessary to further strengthen this mechanism.
- Budgeting for children is a problematic area of action. In this regard, it is required to invest in the necessary resources to periodically conduct budget analysis focused on children, capacity building / instruments to implement child-centered budgeting at the central and local level, and, above all, to increase financial allocations for the benefit of children.

- SAPCR still remains with the same organization chart and human capacities since its establishment, thus being with limited resources against the duties and responsibilities assigned by the legislation.
- Sectoral information management systems and indicators for children are not yet fully operational for the realization of children's rights, given the dynamics of the sector. The collection and reporting of administrative data (for children), aggregated by gender, age group, disability status, belonging to a national minority, citizenship, etc. remain problematic.
- Providing the necessary financial and human resources to independent human rights institutions, to ensure continuity and quality of work and above all, to promote them to children and families / guardians.
- Implement the guideline for child participation by all responsible institutions and monitor its ethical implementation. Furthermore, it remains important to set up appropriate mechanisms at central and local level for the effective involvement of children / adolescents.

### **Measure I.1.1. Strengthening structures at central and local level, responsible for drafting, coordinating and monitoring cross-sectoral strategies and measures that affect children's lives**

I.1.1.a Integrating children's issues into the work agenda of Integrated Policy Management Groups, in coordination with the National Council for Protection of Children's Rights (NCPCR)

I.1.1.b Establishment and coordination of meetings among donors and international organizations in support of the implementation of the Agenda for Children and children's issues, under the direction of NCPCR

1.1.1.c Strengthening SAPCR capacities, including structure review and development of staff capacities.

I.1.1.ç Establishing and functioning of a central cross-sectoral structure to design and coordinate the child / adolescent friendly cities initiative in coordination with NCPCR.

- Establishing local mechanisms for friendly cities initiative.
- Development of child-friendly cities plans in at least 3 municipalities, based on the analysis of the children situation.

1.1.1.d Review and coordination in terms of addressing and monitoring the implementation of recommendations of international human rights institutions (CRC, CEDA, UPR) with a focus on children.

I.1.1.dh Developing an analytical report on the effects of climate change and the environment on children in Albania to inform the development of a national and local plan on civil emergencies.

I.1.1.e Addressing the effects of climate change and the environment on children during the development of the national and local plan of civil emergencies

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Number of issues raised at IPMG meetings in the field of children's rights.
- Number of meetings and raised issues by NCPCR
- Drafted structure proposals at SAPCR
- Revised statute and regulation of SAPCR

- Established coordination group by the NCPCR;
- Instruction developed for the implementation of child / adolescent friendly cities;
- Number of municipalities with friendly cities action plans developed;
- Number of drafted reports and action plans developed from the assessment of the implementation of the recommendations given by human rights international institutions;
- Published study report and the national and local emergency plans include the addressing of the effects on children

### **Measure I.1.2 Improving budget mechanisms for children**

1.1.2.a Capacity building of the institutions for the budget trend analysis and sectoral budget planning, to re-prioritize the achievement of results for children.

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Number of analytical reports of drafted budgets in the field of children's rights

### **Measure I.1.3. Improving statistics and data / knowledge to implement children's rights**

I.1.3.a. Planning and conducting a multi-indicator cluster survey for children (MICS)

I.1.3.b Updating analysis of the situation of children with disabilities, based on the results of Censi and MICS

I.1.3.c Updating analysis of the situation of Roma and Egyptian children, based on the results of Censi and MICS

I.1.3.ç Annual preparation of analytical data publication for children, adolescents and young people and updating the dashboard annually with official statistics on children

I.1.3.d Reviewing DCM 636, dated 26.10.2018 "On the types, ways of information exchange and statistical data required by SAPCR and responsible state structures, on a local and national level"

I.1.3.dh Annual update of child statistics collected by SAPCR (statistikafemijet.gov.al)

I.1.3.e Strengthening mechanisms and capacities for data collection and reporting with a focus on children at the municipal level (for at least 5 municipalities)

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Published MICS report
- Analysis updated report on the situation of the children with disabilities, based also in the findings of CENS and MICS;
- Analysis updated report on the situation of the children from Roma and Egyptian communities, based also in the findings of CENS and MICS;
- Annual publication of the children's, adolescents and youth statistics of the update of the dashboard with official data;
- Revised bylaw of the DCM no 636, date 26.10-2018
- Updated of children's dashboard with the data collected by SAPCR
- Establishment of reporting platforms for child indicators in 5 municipalities

## **Measure I.1.4. Strengthening child participation mechanisms and forums**

I.1.4.a Establishing child participation structures / mechanisms at central and local level, including the mechanism for independent monitoring of the Agenda for the Rights of the Child

I.1.4.b Strengthening the capacities of children and adolescents for the realization of an effective participation.

I.1.4.c Developing UPSHIFT digital education programs, Ponder for children in entrepreneurship, digital training, social innovation, active citizenship, advocacy, critical thinking and media thinking

I.1.4.ç Expanding and using digital technology and innovative platforms such as “U-report” to realize the rights of children and young people locally, nationally and internationally as well as raising their voices on issues that affect them closely online and offline.

### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Children and Youth Council set up at the central level in at least 4 Municipalities of the country.
- Number of decisions based on consultations with children at central and local level.
- Number of children involved in programs of entrepreneurship, digital skills, social innovation, active citizenship, advocacy, critical and media thinking.
- Number of surveys conducted annually to collect the opinions of adolescents / young people.

## Policy Goal II. Elimination of all forms of violence and protecting children

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Elimination of all forms of violence and protecting children includes the upbringing of children in a supportive environment with positive parenting practices that protect them from violence and abuse. This goal focuses on the functioning of a beneficial and comprehensive child protection system by improving the normative, budgetary, and reporting framework on child protection and building the capacities of mechanisms and services for addressing violence against children. This goal prioritizes the establishment and improvement of special and integrated mechanisms and services for addressing the gravest forms of violence, including sexual abuse and online abuse and exploitation.

The main impact indicators under this goal are:

- Percentage of children (1-14 years old) who have experienced physical punishment and / or psychological violence from their parents / caregivers.
- Rate of children (0-17 years) victims of criminal offenses, per 100,000 child population.
- The rate of children aged 14-17 in detention per 100,000 respective population.
- Children in pre-detention (14-17 vjec) as percentage of children of same age in detention.
- Rate of child victims and potential victims of trafficking per 100,000 child population.

There are three specific goals that interlinks with this policy goal:

### **Specific Goal II.1. Children being raised in a supportive environment, with positive parenting practices, which protect them from violence and abuse**

The main indicators under this Specific Goal are:

- Knowledge, attitudes and positive practices of parents / guardians in the context of preventing and addressing violence

### **Specific Goal II.2. Functioning of a comprehensive and beneficial child protection system**

The main indicators under this Specific Goal are:

- Percentage of LGUs that have a specified budget line for managing child violence cases.
- Percentage of LGUs with qualified child protection structures in accordance with the requirements of the revised legislation.
- Number of employees to protect employed children.
- Number of children identified at risk and / or in need of protection, whose cases were managed by the CPU / PMF during the year.
- Number of children who has been granted a protection measure by the court.
- Number of children who have reported some form of violence, registered by educational institutions.
- Number of children, victims of violence, registered by health institutions.

### **Specific Goal II.3: Special and integrated mechanisms and services for addressing the gravest forms of violence, including sexual abuse and online abuse and exploitation**

The main indicators under this Specific Goal are:

- Number of specialized and functional services set up for children, victims of violence and sexual abuse.

- Number of cases of child sexual abuse and online exploitation investigated by the responsible authorities.

### Specific Goal II.1. Children being raised in a supportive environment, with positive parenting practices, which protect them from violence and abuse

The situation analysis of the area covered by this specific objective is provided in section 2.4.2, whereas the main challenges found in the analysis include:

- There is no study analysis to assess the knowledge and attitudes of the Albanian population's practices regarding violence against children.
- The mass awareness raising among the population concerning negative social norms was performed based on projects but shaped according to LGU-adopted and practiced modules.
- Positive parenting has made no progress as regards the inclusion of such programs in the system. The improved legal framework considers parenting programs as one of the measures to support the family and prevent the child from being separated from the family. Except for the initiatives introduced by different organizations, part of the interventions at local level, there has been no progress related to parenting program piloting, impact assessment, and documentation for further intervention.

The following are the results and activities interlinked with the Specific Goal II.1

#### **Measure II.1.1 Addressing non-positive social norms in the community and family in the framework of prevention and addressing violence against children**

II.1.1.a Conducting a study (with two comparative waves) for measuring the knowledge of attitudes and practices of the Albanian population about violence against children (first wave of survey study 2022; second wave of survey study 2026)

II.1.1.b Developing a communication plan and supporting materials / products in order to address negative social norms related to all forms of violence/ abuse against children (including the theme of early marriage)

II.1.1.c Organizing and undertaking mass awareness campaigns at national and local level to provide information about the forms of trafficking and its effect on the life of the individual and society, including awareness of the rights of PVT/ VT

II.1.1.ç Developing an education module on positive parenting to be used by professionals at the local level (LGU + CPU + professionals in community centers)

II.1.1.d Establishing parenting courses / programs / support / counseling at health centers or social service directorates at the local level (on positive disciplines, on joint and equal responsibilities of mothers and fathers towards children, on growing up children free from gender stereotypes and their education on gender equality values appropriate for all age groups);

II.1.1.dh Raising awareness in the school community and creating a positive culture that does not accept violence, bullying and violent extremism

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Publication of studies to measure knowledge, attitudes and practices of violence against children
- Communication plan completed.
- Number products prepared with communication messages.

- Number of self-aware persons on negative social norms.
- Number of persons reached through awareness-raising activities.
- Positive parenting education module completed.
- Number parents advised on positive parenting, including those with disabilities.
- Approved programs / courses for LGU for positive parenting.
- Number and percentage of schools where plans of awareness-raising activities have been implemented.

## Specific Goal II.2. Functioning of a comprehensive and beneficial child protection system

According to the four-year report on the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2017-2020 implementation, the Agenda sought to establish an integrated and beneficial system for child protection, through a significantly improved legal and institutional framework. The improvement of the legal framework on child protection constitutes an important specific objective of the new Agenda, which provides for interventions to align it with the international legislation and lead to actual measures on observing child rights and protection.

The situation analysis of the area covered by this specific objective is provided in section 2.4.2, whereas the main challenges found in the analysis include:

- A Family Code review is necessary to improve the child protection system in Albania. The Family Code provides important instructional concepts, such as parental responsibility, foster care, alternative care including foster families, and protection measures informing all legal and regulatory acts that address child protection from all forms of violence. The Strategy on the Rights of the Child stipulates the reviewing of the Family Code, in order to ensure a more adequate tackling of any gaps and obstacles related to child protection and adoption. On the one hand, ensuring clarity and aligning some of the legal concepts in the Family Code will ensure the redress of significant gaps in the current child protection system, and on the other, a more harmonious implementation of various laws and regulations pertaining to child protection and family support. The following are some of the critical areas requiring Family Code review:
  - i. Child's Best Interest Principle - The Family Code faintly refers to the "child's best interest" principle. Meanwhile, Law No. 18/2017 "On the Rights and Protection of the Child" and Law No. 37/2017 "Juvenile Criminal Justice Code" provide a comprehensive definition of the said instructional principle applicable to all decisions related to children. The best interest principle in the Family Code needs to be clarified, especially in terms of assisting law enforcement officials in understanding and applying this principle in practice;
  - ii. Child Protection Units -The Family Code includes no reference to Child Protection Units (CPUs) and Child Protection Workers (CPW) and it is necessary to integrate the role of these structures into the different processes regulated by the Code, which regard child protection, thus aligning the Code with Law No. 18/2017;
  - iii. Deinstitutionalization concept - Article 267 of the Family Code sets forth a clear condition on considering the institutionalization of the child as a last resort. However, the Code does not provide for the deinstitutionalization process, nor does it stipulate any procedures to return the child to the family of origin or place them in an alternative family-based service in the event that returning to the biological family is not possible. The Albanian Government has adopted the National Action Plan on Deinstitutionalization and the alignment of the integrated legal, administrative, and

procedural system constitutes a political obligation that will ensure its implementation. In this regard, the Family Code comprises a key instructional legislation to be amended in order to reflect the said obligation (e.g. professional foster family);

- iv. Protection Measures - Law No. 18/2017 has introduced protection measures, but they are yet to be included and acknowledged in the Family Code. The manner in which protection measures are taken and revoked, and the manner in which parties are legitimized to make such requests, should be stipulated in the Family Code, while accounting for the obligations and procedures set forth in Law No. 18/2017. Furthermore, there is also an immediate need to define protection measure validity deadlines, related to several modifications to be made in Law No. 18/2017. Article 218 of the Family Code “Urgent Measures” overlaps with the concept of “Urgent Protection Measures” set forth in Law No. 18/2017. There are identified overlaps of the Family Code with the Law on Measures Against Violence in Family Relations and Protection Measures, with the Standard Operating Procedures on defining the child as a PVoT/VoT.
  - v. Parental responsibility - As regards alternative care and placing the child in any type of alternative care, the Code should specify how this decision impacts the exercise of parental responsibility. The Code should also explicitly stipulate that placing the child in any type of alternative care does not denote an automatic loss of parental responsibility. Consequently, the concepts of “revoking” and/or “restricting” or “inability to exercise” parental rights should be elaborated. The Law on Asylum provides for protection and alternative measures (temporary foster care) for foreign unaccompanied children, while the Family Code does not recognize such alternative measures (it recognizes social care institutions and foster families only for Albanian children, not foreign children) and, simultaneously, the Law on Social Services does not provide for any services to foreign non-asylum-seeker citizens.
  - vi. Foster care - The current legal proposals by the Ministry of Justice to amend the Family Code provide only minor improvements related solely to the adoption process. Regardless, the concept of foster care plays an important role for all children under the protection of the state: children without parental care, including foreign unaccompanied children and separated children, as well as those under protection due to abuse, neglect, violence, and exploitation. These aspects, introduced by Law No. 18/2017 “On the Rights of the Child”, are not included in the Family Code. The Family Code sets forth the definition of Foster care, but without providing a clear concept regarding ‘legal guardianship’, causing a general confusion between fostering as a service/care provider and legal guardian. The list of responsible authorities or professionals, which (should be granted) legal guardianship, should also be explicitly defined and separated from the foster care concept. These proposals should be taken into consideration together with the adoption of a law on alternative foster care.
  - vii. Marriageable age –minimum eligible age to marry, in order to prevent harmful practices, such as child marriages (in addition to defining the minimum age and prohibition of marriage until 18 years old, this measure should also set forth sanctions against those allowing marriages under the age defined in the law).
- If there will be any reflection in Law No. 121/2016, consequently Decision No. 518, dated 04.09.2018 “On community and residential social care services, criteria, procedures to receive these services and personal expense amount for organized service beneficiaries” and Decision No. 149, dated 13.3.2018 “On the criteria, documentation, and procedures for identifying foster families for children without parental care and funding amount for the expenses of the child placed in a foster family” will become applicable.

- The Law on Asylum stipulates the placement of an unaccompanied child in a foster family. Law No. 18/2017 “On the Rights and Protection of the Child” provides for it as an alternative in applying the urgent protection measure. Currently, the alternative process of placing children in foster families is quite challenging to our context. The number of families willing to provide foster services is almost insignificant. The court process can take several months to 1 year, further complicating the placement of a foreign unaccompanied child in a foster family.
- Furthermore, it is also important to perform a complete assessment of the needs arising during the implementation of the said Law and the subsequent DCM, in order for changes to be aligned and harmonized with Law No. 18/2017 “On the Rights and Protection of the Child”, etc.
- Adopting a new personal data protection law aligned with the EU General Regulation 679/2016 on Data Protection (GDPR) and EU Policy Directive 680/2016. Children require special protection when it comes to the collection and processing of their personal data, as they are far more exposed to risks compared to others. In this regard, the GDPR strengthens their right to personal data protection. In particular, such specific protection should be applied when using children’s personal data for direct marketing purposes when such services are provided. This approach is also intended to be addressed in the Albanian legislation on personal data protection by aligning the law on personal data protection with the EU acquis in this area.
- Decision No. 573, dated 24.6.2015, “On the approval of Service Standards for Child Protection Units” marked a significant step in observing and further expanding the rights stipulated in Law No. 10347 “On the Protection of the Rights of the Child”. These standards aimed to observe the principles of: respect for and guaranteeing of the values and personality of the individual; universality; equal opportunities; right to beneficence; partnership; transparency and impartiality; non-discrimination; independence, social integration, and participation in the community life. Upon adoption of the new Law No. 18/2017 “On the Rights and Protection of the Child”, the need to further develop the service standards for Child Protection Units is imperative. In this regard, the Strategy will address the drafting of working procedures, performance indicators and their monitoring included in a methodological instructional document to establish a system of criteria on the quality and benefit of providing this service.
- Instruction No. 253 “On the Management of Cases of Children in Need of Protection during the COVID-19 Natural Disaster” aimed to define the procedures and actual actions of child protection structures as regards the management of cases of children in need of protection during the natural disaster resulting from the COVID-19 epidemic. This instruction is regarded as critical in guiding CPWs in the event of an emergency. SACRP, as the monitoring and support structure of CPUs at national level, should be prepared in case of emergencies not related only to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to other natural disasters, such as earthquakes, humanitarian emergencies, etc., in order to direct the work of CPWs and drafting of a preparatory plan. The Strategy will also include the reviewing of the manual in order to consider other forms of natural disasters and actual procedures in accordance with the specifics and effects of emergency types.
- DCM No. 578 “On Case Management Procedures” includes referral and management procedures for cases of children in need of protection, Individual Protection Plan development and contents, funding and expenses for its implementation, and enforcement of protection measures. In the absence of a proper child protection protocol (or reviewing the existing one of Law No. 10347), the implementation of the said DCM has encountered difficulties in managing cases of children with certain vulnerabilities, such as foreign unaccompanied children, child victims of trafficking, repatriated children, Albanian child

returnees from conflict areas (violent extremism), child victims of sexual abuse, and children in conflict with the law. There have been several initiatives by civil society organizations, which have drafted protocols pertaining to certain profiles of children in need of protection, by defining procedures and formats to be followed to protect children in accordance with the case management procedures set forth in DCM No. 578. However, due to the wide range of profiles of children in need of protection, drafting protocols that address such cases necessitates the inclusion of working procedures and formats that are consistent with those outlined in the DCM, as well as the addition of indicators and elements that improve child protection based on the specifics of such cases. For this purpose, it would be useful to conduct an analysis on the implementation of the DCM and the need to improve it, as there have been discussions regarding several difficulties it gives rise to in terms of the handling of cases involving children, such as child victims of sexual abuse, children in conflict with the law, foreign unaccompanied children, etc. Such analysis will also assist the need to include changes in the case management procedure formats, e.g. the need to add a service costing column to the Individual Protection Plan, etc. Another identified need is also the unification of the role of CPW/CPU in all the aforementioned procedures.

- The review of DCM No. 111 should be accompanied by a joint instruction from the MoHSP, MoI, MoJ, and others on how to handle child-related cases. The DCM review should consider the following issues:
  - i. Defining and clarifying the fostering procedure for foreign unaccompanied and separated children;
  - ii. Amending the DCM to add the category of Albanian children repatriated from conflict zones (currently not included) covering other specifics as well, such as stateless children or children born to Albanian parents in conflict zones, who are not defined as child returnees after being born in such zones. Because of the distinctions and structures involved in their handling, which go beyond the current skills and capacities of CPWs, it is critical that it be treated as a separate category.
  - iii. Standard Operating Procedures for all three categories should be clearly outlined in the instruction: foreign unaccompanied and separated children in need of protection and the process of family reunion, repatriated Albanian children, including children repatriated from conflict zones, and foreign children in legal or illegal migration accompanied by their parents when facing violence or abuse.
- DCM No. 129 “On Procedures for the identification, immediate assistance, and referral of economically-exploited children, including children in street situation” stipulates the establishment of field teams by the Director of the structure responsible for social services at the Municipality, who also drafts and approves the work plan of child protection structures at local level and field teams to ensure the proactive identification of economically-exploited children, including children in street situation. Furthermore, the National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings outlines the establishment of the mobile unit for the identification of persons, including child victims of trafficking, as well as the involvement of the child protection unit structure in the process of managing cases of children in need of protection. The proposal to draft a joint cross-ministerial instruction aims to coordinate actions and human resources for managing cases of economically exploited children, children in street situation, and child victims of trafficking, through the establishment of a single field team to identify, refer, and then manage cases of children in need of protection, including children in street situation, economically-exploited children, and child victims of trafficking. The instruction will focus not only on placing the child under protection, as laid down in Decision No. 578, but also on providing for the deinstitutionalization means (when alternative foster care is applied).

- The process of managing cases of children at risk and in need of protection is complex and, as such, it requires an assessment and clear definition of any procedures or decisions affecting the child from the first moment of identification. The instrument of assessment and establishment of the child's best interest includes a core assessment and describes the formal process in strict procedural protection terms prior to any action or decision that affects the child. This instrument assists professionals working with children, particularly CPWs, and other decision-making structures, such as courts or ITG members, who propose protection measures in any decision-making on behalf of the child, pursuant to Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, the instrument considers appropriate child participation and decision-maker involvement to be important, as they identify and weigh various relevant factors to determine what is in the best interest of the child.
- Save the Children Albania has drafted a document with the SACRP in the area of alternative foster care, which has been widely implemented by different institutions and has been included in alternative foster care modules, and requires adaptation, unification, and approval. The instrument to assess and establish the best interest of the child should be an integrated part of the forms filled in according to DCM No. 578 on the process of case management and part of the monitoring methodology.
- The Child protection policy is a regulatory document that ensures the observance of child rights in any institution in relation to the child and guarantees that the staff and their actions and programs do not harm the children, do not expose them to risks of harm and abuse, and that any concerns raised by the institutions regarding the safety of children within the communities they work with are reported to the relevant authorities. This document will underline the importance of observing child rights and will strengthen the child right infringement reporting mechanism even in those institutions from different sectors that do not have a close direct impact on children. This document of preventive and protective effect should be adopted by public and non-public educational institutions, sports clubs, child academies, social and developmental centers, etc.
- Despite efforts to make legal improvements, the structure that will guide the continuing education process for professionals in the social field (including child protection professionals) remains unclear. It is expected that a systematic professional capacity building program will be designed in accordance with the roles and functions of professionals.
- Despite progress in building the capacities of workers involved in child protection and related services, work coordination and the provision of specialized trainings recognized by coordination institutions in this field remain priorities.
- The alignment of the work of other sectors with the concepts of child protection remains challenging.
- Frontline professionals (including health staff, police workers, teachers, or other public service employees) require ongoing professional training as regards case management.

The following are the results and activities interlinked with the Specific Goal II.2

### **Measure II.2.1. Improving normative, budget and reporting framework for child protection**

This measure includes the drafting of proposals following the legal analyses of several sectors that are focused on child protection.

II.2.1.a Drafting and approval of the law "On alternative care", in terms of improving the legal framework in the system of protection and childcare, and justice system"

II.2.1.b Drafting and approval of a special law against trafficking in human beings and for the protection of VT / PVT and harmonization as far as possible with Directive 2011/36 “On the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings and the protection of their victims ”

II.2.1.c Approval of bylaws related to children on the Law on Foreigners approved in 2021

II.2.1.ç Review of Law No. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services" and harmonization with legal amendments to Law No. 18/2017 on child protection issues as well as other obligations arising from national and international law

II.2.1.d Review of Law No. 8153, dated 3.10.1996, “On the Status of Orphans”

II.2.1.dh Adoption of a new law on personal data protection, aligned with the General Regulation on Personal Data Protection (GRPDP)

II.2.1.e Drafting and approval by normative act of the methodological instruction regarding the quality criteria of the work of child protection structures, cross-sectoral technical groups and the methodology for their control.

II.2.1.ë Review of instruction No. 253, dated 10.04.2020 "On the management of cases of children in need of protection, during the period of natural disaster due to the epidemic caused by Covid-19" on the actions of child protection structures in all cases of emergencies and pandemics.

II.2.1.f Review of DCM No. 578 “On case management” to reflect the needs identified by the analysis of its practical implementation.

II.2.1.g Review of DCM No. 111 “On procedures and rules for return and repatriation of children”

II.2.1.gj Review of the DCM No. 617 dated 07.09.2006 “On determining the indicators of evaluation and monitoring of NE programs, PWDs Payments and social services

II.2.1.h Drafting and approval of an internal inter-institutional instruction regarding the notification and removal of illegal and harmful materials of sexual abuse and exploitation of children online

II.2.1.i Drafting of a joint inter-ministerial instruction regarding the management of children's cases following the implementation of DCM 129 - Establishment and strengthening of field teams for the identification, referral and management of cases of children in need of protection, including children in street situations, economically exploited and child victims of trafficking

II.2.1.j Approval of the methodology of the assessment of the best interests of the child and the determination of the best interests of the child for certain categories with a special focus on children with disabilities and children of Roma and Egyptian communities

II.2.1.k Local level budgeting (LGU) for Child Protection Units for case management of children in need of protection

II.2.1.l Improvement of the case management module / workflow (CPU) part of the electronic register system of social services, including training of child protection structures and NARU at LGU

#### **Indicators at the measure level:**

- Approved legal act on alternative care.
- Analyzed legal and institutional basis of anti-trafficking, international practices and recommendations; law drafted by experts; drafted law consulted with the public
- Approved bylaws for migrant children

- Legal act revised and approved (law no 121/2016 “for social care services”)
- Revised and approved legal act (law no 8153, date 3.10.1996 “on orphan status”)
- Legal act revised and approved (adoption law)
- Approved normative act (methodological guidelines on the quality criteria for the child protection structures, intersectoral groups and the methodology of their monitoring)
- Approved order (order no 253, date 10.4.2020)
- Approved bylaw (DCM no 578 “on case management”)
- Revised and approved bylaw (DCM no 111)
- Revised and approved bylaw (DCM 617 date 7.9.2006)
- Approved instruction (an internal inter-institutional instruction regarding the notification and removal of illegal and harmful materials of sexual abuse and exploitation of children online);
- Inter-ministerial instruction drafted and approved (joint inter-ministerial instruction for the management of children's cases following the implementation of DCM no. 129);
- Approved methodology (methodology for assessing the best interests of the child and determining the best interests of the child);
- Cost analysis (agreed) for the management of child protection cases;
- Number of LGUs with dedicated costs for the management of child protection cases;
- Percentage of child protection structures using the electronic register system of social services;
- Generation of quarterly and annual reports from the electronic register system of social services;
- New law on personal data protection aligned with the GDPR and the Police directive, adopted.

## **Measure II.2.2 Strengthening the capacity of professionals, mechanisms and services in addressing child violence**

II.2.2.a Organizing the annual national conference of professionals in the field of child protection.

II.2.2.b Establishment and functioning of the Social Worker Order

II.2.2.c Making the education and accreditation system functional for social service workers (including CPUs)

II.2.2.ç Capacity building of child protection structures in LGU based on modules certified and approved by the NCCE for the management of cases with cross-sectoral access of children in need of protection

II.2.2.d Improving the capacities of employees from different sectors such as social care, police, media, etc., in LGU based on modules certified and approved by the NCCE in order to improve the mechanism of identification, reporting and referral of violence and support of children in need of protection

II.2.2.dh Capacity building of cross-sectoral teams (RATC) based on modules certified and approved by NCCE on prevention and protection of child victims / potential victims of trafficking

II.2.2.e Training of judicial structures to be specialized in criminal offenses of trafficking in order to proactively investigate cases of trafficking in persons, to effectively carry out criminal

prosecution procedures, to use special techniques of investigation, to strengthen the conduct of financial investigations

II.2.2.ë Training of border and migration police officers, customs officers, asylum workers and staff of migrant reception and accommodation centers including medical staff in order to increase the capacity regarding the identification of VT / PVT among asylum seekers, migrants and especially unaccompanied children, regardless of their ability and / or willingness to cooperate.

II.2.2.f Developing a policy dedicated to pre-university education in the field of prevention and addressing all forms of violence and abuse, including bullying and extremism in schools

II.2.2.g Establishing a system for identification, prevention and reporting of violence, bullying and extremism in schools

II.2.2.gj Increasing the number of security officers in schools

II.2.2.h Increasing the number of psycho-social workers in schools

II.2.2.i Training of teachers and staff of the psycho-social service unit and ethics committees in schools regarding violence and abuse, bullying and extremism in schools

II.2.2.j Developing a protocol for the identification and reporting of violence against health workers, including the review of forms and data collection registers on violence against children.

II.2.2.k Inclusion of screening indicators for child abuse in the performance evaluation criteria of public health institutions that provide care for the child (HCs, maternity hospitals, hospital emergencies), etc.

II.2.2.l Strengthening the capacities of the toll-free National Line 116-006, and the “Report and Rescue” Application to enable advising and reporting of possible Human Trafficking cases

II.2.2.ll Strengthening the lines of counseling, psychological counseling and mental health for children through the expansion of services, reporting channels, service extension, capacity building and financing (Telephone line such as ALO 116 111, You are not alone, etc.), for reporting violence and for providing psycho-social support to children in need of protection

II.2.2.m Strengthening emergency services for the reception and short-term accommodation of cases of repatriated children, including children from conflict zones, and unaccompanied and separated foreign children through the service expansion, reporting channels, service extension, capacity building and funding

II.2.2.n Establishing accommodation and rehabilitation services for repatriated children and unaccompanied and separated foreign children

#### **Indicators at the measure level:**

- Annual national conference of professionals in the field of child protection;
- Structures of the social worker order developed;
- The establishment of the Board at NCCE;
- Conducting capacity building needs analysis, determining training topics by NCCE;
- Accreditation of training bodies and curricula by NCCE;
- Percentage of annually trained staff of child protection structures in LGUs;
- Percentage of trained employees, by topic and sector each year of employees from different sectors, such as: social care, police, media, etc., in LGUs;
- Percentage of trained professionals of intersectoral teams (KRAT);

- Percentage of trained employees of judicial structures;
- Percentage of trained border police and migration staff, customs officials, asylum workers and staff of migrant reception and accommodation centers;
- Child protection policy for pre-university education;
- Consolidation of safe and child-friendly environments at school;
- Increasing the quality of psychosocial services for all students;
- Percentage of teachers and staff trained;
- Protocol for identification and reporting of violence, drafted;
- Screening indicators included in the performance evaluation criteria of health institutions;
- Number of cases of PV/ VoT children reported each year;
- The number of reported cases of violence against children each year;
- Development of methodology for data collection and reporting from consulting lines to SAPCR;
- Number of children receiving emergency protection services;
- Number of children accommodated (for repatriated, unaccompanied and separated foreign children);
- Percentage of rehabilitated children (for repatriated, unaccompanied and separated foreign children).

### Specific Goal II.3: Special and integrated mechanisms and services for addressing the gravest forms of violence, including sexual abuse and online abuse and exploitation

The situation analysis of the area covered by this specific objective is provided in section 2.4.1, whereas the main challenges found in the analysis include:

- There is a lack of consistency in child protection services, from prevention to early detection and rehabilitation.

The following are the results and activities interlinked with the Specific Goal II.3

#### Measure II.3.1 Prevention and protection of children from sexual abuse and online abuse and exploitation

II.3.1.a Drafting and approval of a specific instruction on the standards of service provision and operation of “One Stop Centers” for helping children victims of sexual violence and other serious forms of violence.

II.3.1.b Establishing models of specialized intersectoral services to immediately assist children victims of sexual abuse.

II.3.1.c Drafting proposals for the establishment of specialized rehabilitation services for sexually abused children.

II.3.1.ç Developing cross-sectoral training programs for professionals for the provision of integrated services for children victims of sexual abuse and other serious forms of violence and their training (including child protection staff, justice system staff, health employees, education employees, etc. ).

II.3.1.d Drafting and approval of an inter-institutional agreement for the establishment of a specialized group (police officers, prosecutors, and internet service providers to investigate online crimes against children.

II.3.1.dh Establishing a curricula system at the School of Magistrates and the Police Academy to increase the technical capacity and knowledge of young police officers, prosecutors, and judges in terms of child protection measures, social services, cybercrime, digital data and online sexual abuse and child exploitation.

II.3.1.e Capacity building for investigators and police officers specifically involved in the investigation of online child sexual abuse and exploitation.

II.3.1.ë Improving the capacity and infrastructure of the Forensic Science Laboratory of the Police to effectively collect and analyze digital data related to online crimes against children.

II.3.1.f Coordination with the responsible authority for cyber security (AKCESK) to coordinate the work to deal in real time through the reporting system/platform of sites with illegal content, reports made regarding the abuse and sexual exploitation of children on the Internet.

II.3.1.g Cooperation and coordination of training programs, with the authority responsible for cyber security (AKCESK) for capacity building of employees of institutions responsible for the protection and education of children (staff of the judiciary, prosecution and police, and institutions other law enforcement of the justice system), to increase the level of child safety in the online environment.

**Indicators at the measure level:**

- Approved instruction on the standards of service delivery and operation of “One Stop Centers”;
- Number of child victims of sexual abuse who benefit from specialized services, every year;
- Proposals for a model of rehabilitation services;
- Number of professionals trained each year, professionals for providing integrated services for child victims of sexual abuse;
- Drafted and approved inter-institutional agreement for the establishment of a specialized group (police, prosecutors and internet service providers to investigate crimes against children online;
- Establishment of the training system;
- Number and percentage of trained officers / investigators
- Number of cases of children where their data have been effectively analyzed;
- Upgrading the existing platform administered by AKCESK;
- Number of reactions from the portal;
- Number and percentage of staff of the judiciary, prosecution and police, and other law enforcement institutions of the trained justice system.

## Policy Goal III - Child-friendly and adolescent-friendly systems and services

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Child-friendly and adolescent-friendly systems and services include prompting of child-friendly processes and systems in education, health, social services, and justice. In this regard, the main aim has been to identify the key measures of sectoral strategies to perform the progress assessment of child rights in these areas.

The main impact indicators under this goal are:

- Net enrollment report, by educational cycle/level
- Results of 15-year-old students in literacy, mathematics, and science
- Completion level of education (three levels)
- Rate of children in residential care at the end of the year, per 100,000 child population
- Rate of children 0-17 years in residential care with a maximum capacity of 10 children at the end of the year, per 100,000 child population
- Percentage of boys and girls (0-17 years old) who are at risk of being poor (relative poverty), living below the national poverty line
- Neonatal mortality
- Infant mortality (under 1 year)
- Mortality of children under 5 years
- Percentage of target children vaccinated as recommended in the national vaccination calendar - First dose FRP

There are four strategic goals that interlink with this policy goal:

### **Specific Goal III.1 Equal opportunities to develop skills and learn - from early childhood to adolescence**

The main indicators under this Specific Goal are:

- First grade enrollment rate of children compared to the total number of children aged 6 – SDG Indicator
- School dropout rate
- Number of children benefiting from the financial support mechanism (scholarships) for categories of children in need (DCM 854)<sup>52</sup>

### **Specific Goal III.2 Integrated social protection system sensitive to the needs of children and families**

The main indicators under this Specific Goal are:

- Number of children living in families which benefit economic assistance
- Number of children benefiting from disability payments
- Number of Municipalities that have set up NARU structures according to legal provisions
- Number of services for children set up by the Social Fund
- Number of centers transformed into community services for the children and the family

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<sup>52</sup> The DCM cited, as decision no. 666, dated 10.10.2019, of the Council of Ministers, "On the financial quotas of food in canteens and dormitories and the determination of criteria for obtaining scholarships and payments for students of pre-university education in public educational institutions", amended.

- Number of children in foster care

### **Specific Goal III.3 Children's and adolescents' health improvement**

The main indicators under this Specific Goal are:

- Percentage of underweight children under 5 years old, (indicator reported by IPH).
- Percentage of stunted children under 5 years old (indicator reported by IPH).
- Percentage of children exclusively breastfed up to 6 months (indicator reported by IPH).
- Number of neonatal intensive care units applying new neonatal care standards.

### **Specific Goal III.4 Friendly Justice for Children**

The main indicators under this Specific Goal are:

- Number of children receiving free legal aid
- Number of cases handled by the probation service
- Number of children (14-18 years old) defendants under investigation reported by the prosecution
- Number of children treated with a protection order by court as victims of domestic violence

### **Specific Goal III.1 Equal opportunities to develop skills and learn - from early childhood to adolescence**

The situation analysis of the area covered by this specific objective is provided in section 2.4.3, whereas the main challenges found in the analysis include:

- Education and care in early childhood are administered by local self-government units, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, and Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, but there are no cross-sectoral coordination policies in this area.
- Albania has narrowed the equality gap of access to education for students from marginalized groups, despite persisting critical challenges, particularly at pre-school level.
- Despite increased school access, the academic achievements of children from vulnerable groups, particularly from Roma, Egyptian, national minorities, and children with disabilities, remain unsatisfactory.
- The number of teaching assistants in schools has significantly increased, but their professional capacities require improvement.
- Problems with critical thinking skills, such as assessing, analyzing, and applying knowledge in a new context.

The following are the outputs and activities related to Specific Goal III.1

#### **Measure III.1.1. Growth, well-being, and learning during early childhood, from 0 to 3 years of age**

III.1.1.a Establishing a technical advisory committee by the National Council on Child Rights and Protection, for the purpose of drafting work plan/measures to coordinate roles between the MoHSP, MoESY, and LGUs to increase well-being and learning during early childhood, from 0 to 3 years of age. The technical advisory committee will draft a work plan and specify the roles and responsibilities of the MoHSP, MoESY, and LGUs for a better coordination of activities between the ministries responsible for pre-school education and local governance.

III.1.1.b Drafting of proposals for amendments to legal and sub-legal acts in force on the organization and coordination of services of early childhood care (from 0 to 3 years of age). An analysis of the legal framework on early childhood will be conducted and specific proposals will be issued regarding amendments to legal and sub-legal acts for the purpose of organizing services to increase well-being and learning during early childhood, from 0 to 3 years of age.

III.1.1.c Conducting a communication campaign on positive parenting and the physical and emotional care of children aged 0-3 years old through well-planned activities at local level. Furthermore, awareness-raising activities held by civil society organizations and international partners will also be supported.

III.1.1.ç Creating a cross-institutional working group to draft the educator's guide in accordance with child development and learning standards for children aged 0 to 3 years. ASCAP will draft the educator's guide in order to ensure a common understanding and the implementation of development and learning standards for children aged 0 to 3 years.

III.1.1.d Drafting the educator guide and training package for the implementation of development and learning standards for children. ASCAP, in collaboration with experts in the relevant fields, will draft and implement the educator guide and training package.

III.1.1.dh Drafting the standard implementation quality assessment framework with the relevant inspection instruments. In order to ensure the implementation quality of development and learning standards for children, ASCAP will draft an assessment framework and the relevant inspection instruments.

III.1.1.e Providing financial assistance/nursery bonus to low-income families to allow attendance at public nurseries

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Technical advisory committee established by the National Council on Child Rights and Protection
- Drafted legal and sub-legal acts
- Number of parents aware of positive parenting and the physical and emotional care of children
- Cross-institutional working group created to draft the educator's guide.
- Instruction for training educators on how to implement development and learning standards for children
- Designed standard implementation quality assessment framework
- Number of children assisted with the nursery bonus

#### **Measure III.1.2 Growth, development, and learning in children aged 3 to 6 years through a comprehensive and quality approach**

III.1.2.a Conducting a study to identify the obstacles to child attendance in pre-school education. The measure includes a study to be conducted in collaboration with international partners and it is expected to analyze the obstacles to child attendance in pre-school education and provide recommendations on reducing/eliminating such obstacles.

III.1.2.b Developing an assessment instrument for child preparation for school in preparatory classes (aged 5 to 6 years). ASCAP will develop an instrument to assess the level of preparation of children in preparatory classes. "Preparatory class" denotes classes targeted at children aged 5-6 years that have not attended preschool education, established at basic education schools, as well as 3rd groups in preschool education, utilizing the same program.

III.1.2.c Providing financial assistance/kindergarten bonus to low-income families to allow attendance at public kindergartens

III.1.2.ç Including all children aged 5-6 years in the 3rd groups in kindergartens or preparatory classes, particularly children from vulnerable categories. In the five upcoming years, the conditions to provide all children aged 5 to 6 years with access to preschool education, be it through enrollment in 3rd groups in kindergartens or preparatory classes, will be ensured.

III.1.2.d Excluding Roma and Egyptian pupils aged 3 to 6 years in pre-school education from financial fees and food payments. This measure aims to increase the number of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled in preschool education so that their families do not view the financial fee as a barrier to their children receiving an education.

III.1.2.dh Developing instruments for capacity building at local level for planning and budgeting in regard to early childhood education, in order to ensure a higher enrollment of children from vulnerable groups (in at least eight municipalities). The measure foresees capacity building for local actors for the purpose of planning and budgeting quality early childhood services, paying special attention to vulnerable groups.

III.1.2.e Building the capacities of municipality staff regarding instrument implementation (in at least eight municipalities). Staff from the municipality will attend training to learn about the instruments and how they will be used in practice.

III.1.2.ë Raising parents' and the community's awareness of the importance of preschool education will be performed through well-planned activities at the level of local education offices and preschool institutions, as well as basic education schools where preparatory classes are established at, also in cooperation with local government. Furthermore, awareness-raising activities held by civil society organizations and international partners will also be supported.

III.1.2.f Building the capacities of parent associations/councils, including parents with disabilities, to ensure useful engagement in preschool education issues. Various activities will be held, focusing on increasing parental involvement in preschool education issues and building the capacities of parent councils to contribute toward preschool education quality enhancement.

III.1.2.g Expanding trainings of pre-school teachers and kindergarten leaders about the child-centered learning methodology, including children with disabilities (based on teaching standards for children aged 3 to 6 years). (In at least eight municipalities). Pre-school teachers and kindergarten leaders will receive training on the child-centered learning methodology according to teaching standards for children aged 3 to 6 years.

III.1.2.gj Developing inspection instruments for the preschool education evaluation framework. ASCAP will develop inspection instruments for the evaluation framework to monitor the quality of early childhood care and education and the way preschool education leaders and teachers implement and monitor educational programs carried out in preschool institutions.

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Study conducted to recognize the obstacles encountered in the inclusion of children in preschool education
- Designed tools
- Number of children supported with the kindergarten bonus
- Number of children aged 5-6 years attending kindergartens
- Number of Roma and Egyptian children benefiting from the measure
- Designed tools

- Percentage of trained municipal employees
- Number of awareness-raising activities with parents and communities for the importance of preschool education.
- Number of associations and councils of trained and engaged parents
- Number and percentage of trained teachers and directors on the methodology of learning with focus the children, including those with disabilities.
- Designed tools for monitoring the preschool education system assessment.

### **Measure III.1.3 Comprehensive basic and lower and upper secondary education**

III.1.3.a Functionalizing the Pre-University Information Management System (PUIMS) fully. The PUIMS will be the database (drop out, disability, etc.) that will combine administrative data with learning outcomes. Consolidating the PUIMS to provide necessary data for decision-making. The Pre-University Information Management System (PUIMS) will be the first database in Albania combining administrative data with learning outcomes at central level. The consolidation of the platform through maintenance and population will enable data input from schools and its functionalizing will render the currently used Excel spreadsheets unnecessary. In order for the data to be reliable, the responsible school staff will be trained and clear quality assurance procedures that enable data error identification and prevention will be defined.

III.1.3.b Training teachers and other school actors to improve comprehensive school practices. Teachers' and other school actors' capacities will be enhanced in order to reduce barriers to learning and active participation for each school student.

III.1.3.c Establishing a model to assist children with basic skills (writing, language, mathematics). Specific assistance programs for children from vulnerable groups with lower learning outcomes. This measure stipulates supporting children, especially those from vulnerable groups, as regards basic skills (writing, language, mathematics). Schools will assess student needs and provide relevant support to them.

III.1.3.ç Building the capacities of teaching assistants and teachers working with students with hearing and vision impairment. Professional development programs will be created for these teachers.

III.1.3.d Drafting a cooperation agreement between the MoHSP and MoESY regarding the interaction between multidisciplinary education assessment commissions for children with disabilities and the Multidisciplinary Disability Assessment Commission. The role of multidisciplinary commissions must be strengthened in order to achieve inclusivity. The cooperation with new disability assessment commissions based on the inclusivity model, as well as the regular monitoring of the child's educational progress, are critical to the implementation of the individual education plan.

III.1.3.dh Planning budgets to procure didactic materials according to the specific needs of different categories of children with disabilities. Local self-government units, in collaboration with ministries and donors (EU, UN, etc.) have improved school infrastructure, transforming them into accessible facilities for children with disabilities. This measure foresees the ongoing procurement of didactic materials according to the specific needs of different categories of children with disabilities.

III.1.3.e Conducting an updated analysis of the situation of children with disabilities based also on the INSTAT MICS results. This updated analysis will assist schools in assessing and planning services according to the specific needs of children with disabilities.

III.1.3.h Transforming special schools into resource centers for disability. In the context of the approach of comprehensive education recommended to all member states by the CRPD, the Committee has stated that the Albanian government should pay special attention to the phrasing, definition, and implementation of specific objectives concerning the promotion of an inclusive culture in traditional education, individualized assessment of educational requirements as part of human rights. In order to implement the comprehensive education approach and the recommendation of the CRPD Committee, it has been decided to transform special public schools into resource centers.

III.1.3.ë Raising the awareness of/empowering parents of children with disabilities in order to increase the child's participation and support in the family, school, and community, and increase their access to key services. Inclusion of parents and the community is an important principle of quality, comprehensive education, both in and out of the classroom. The first step to raising parents' and families' awareness and empowering them to engage more cooperatively with schools is promoting a social and educational atmosphere that makes parents feel welcomed, respected, trustworthy, heard, and useful.

III.1.3.f Promptly identifying Roma and Egyptian students at the age of attending preschool and basic education, as well as encouraging participation in compulsory education for students aged 6 to 16 years, who are yet to be enrolled or have dropped out. It is intended to establish functional intersectoral working groups in 61 municipalities to identify and address the needs of students who have yet to enroll in compulsory education, who do not attend school regularly, or who are at risk of dropping out, and to refer the families of such children to social protection services.

III.1.3.g Financially supporting Roma and Egyptian students and those from vulnerable groups. The MoESY will consolidate a scholarship program for Roma and Egyptian high school students from families in dire economic conditions. The scholarships will be awarded on the condition of regular attendance, while girls and high-performance students will take priority.

III.1.3.gj Organizing special after school programs to assist Roma and Egyptian students aged 6 to 16 years with schoolwork or to provide them with supplementary lessons. Schools will assess the needs of Roma and Egyptian students aged 6 to 16 years who have learning difficulties and will carry out special after school programs for doing schoolwork.

III.1.3.h Organizing courses to build and develop the basic reading/writing skills and life skills of Roma and Egyptian parents that did not attend school, whose children are enrolled in compulsory education. It is deemed crucial for public compulsory education schools, in collaboration with local self-government units, to organize courses to build and develop the basic reading/writing skills and life skills of Roma and Egyptian parents, as well as special after school programs for the children.

III.1.3.i Strengthening the online practices of [akademia.al](http://akademia.al), expanding the materials of [akademia.al](http://akademia.al). This measure entails the further development of interactive methods through online learning by offering functionalities that facilitate the communication and teaching process.

III.1.3.j Developing teacher's capacities to conduct lessons over the Internet - ICT. Training programs focused on building teacher's capacities to conduct lessons over the Internet will be developed, in collaboration with the institutions responsible for cybersecurity and information society - ICT.

III.1.3.k The online Akelius system for groups that are difficult to reach (migrants/refugees) seeks to assist refugee and migrant children in obtaining language skills and encourage participation and class outcome improvement.

III.1.3.l Early prevention and response system for non-enrollment. Extension of the implementation of the early prevention and response system for student non-enrollment and dropout in basic education (with special focus on boys and girls from vulnerable groups). (The current baseline is the system implemented in 4 LGUs - Durrës, Korça, Lezha, and Shkodra) Specific working plans will be drafted for these groups and a reporting system will be established for cases of non-enrollment and dropout. The state's scholarship program will continue, with the goal of lowering the dropout rate for students enrolled in basic education who are unable to attend due to financial constraints.

III.1.3.ll Early prevention and response system for student non-enrollment and dropout in upper secondary education (with special focus on boys and girls from vulnerable groups).

III.1.3.m Developing the capacities of the student parliament and student government for higher participation in school decision-making (duties and responsibilities of the student government). Training programs focused on enhancing the capacities of the student parliament and student government will be developed, in order to ensure a greater participation in school decision-making and fulfillment of the relevant duties and responsibilities of the said bodies.

III.1.3.n Training psychologists and social workers on gender equality (baseline in 2020 - 70 trained psychologists). Gender equality training for the remaining psychologists and social workers will continue.

III.1.3.nj Establishing entertainment and cultural services in LGUs

III.1.3.o Developing training modules/programs and resource materials for teachers that promote civic competence and child and adolescent engagement.

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Functional information management system.
- Percentage of trained teachers to improve the inclusive practices at school.
- Designed support model.
- Percentage of trained teachers.
- Drafted agreement.
- Percentage of budget for didactic materials.
- Number of source schools for disability.
- Number of children in special schools.
- Number of self-aware parents.
- Number of identified Roma and Egyptian pupils.
- Number of Roma and Egyptian pupils involved in compulsory education.
- Number of Roma and Egyptian pupils supported by financial schemes.
- Number. of Roma and Egyptian pupils participating in post-school programs.
- Number of Roma and Egyptian parents attending the courses.
- Number of teachers and students using the platform.
- Percentage of trained teachers.
- Number of persons using the online system.
- Number of identified students not enrolled in school.
- Number of students enrolled in school due to intervention.
- Number of students enrolled in school due to intervention.

- Percentage of trained parliament students.
- Percentage of trained psychologists / social workers.
- 10 established cultural centers.

### **Measure III.1.4 Management of risk and disasters at school**

III.1.4.a Technical assistance to the MoESY, local education offices, and selected schools, for drafting a policy and plan on Reducing Disaster Risk at School. The MoESY, in collaboration with local education offices and selected schools, will draft a policy and plan on Reducing Disaster Risk at School. The plan will first be piloted in the selected schools and will then extend to others.

III.1.4.b Building the capacities of teachers and school staff to implement the package of disaster risk reduction at school. Professional development programs will be designed for teachers and school staff.

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Drafted and adopted plan on Disaster Risk Reduction at School
- Percentage of teachers trained to implement the package of disaster risk reduction at school

### **Measure III.1.5 Career education and labor market preparation**

III.1.5.a Developing a career guide model for preparing students for the labor market. ASCAP, in collaboration with experts, will prepare a career guide to prepare students for the labor market, which corresponds to the demands of employers and the latest labor market developments.

III.1.5.b Training career education professionals at upper secondary education schools. Professional development programs will be designed for career education professionals at upper secondary education schools.

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Drafted guide to prepare students for the labor market.
- Percentage of trained career education professionals at upper secondary education schools

## **Specific Goal III.2 Integrated social protection system sensitive to the needs of children and families**

The situation analysis of the area covered by this specific objective is provided in section 2.4.3, whereas the main challenges found in the analysis include:

- The local government must fulfill the tasks of planning, providing, and monitoring standardized and specialized services for identified groups in need, such as early intervention programs to empower families and prevent the child from being separated from the biological family, addressing issues related to positive parenting practices, the mental health of parents and even children who become part of the residential care system.
- Establishment and management of specialized services and emergency centers for children in need of protection (e.g., child victims of sexual abuse, victims of trafficking, child/adolescent users of abusive substances, etc.).
- The identification of solutions for service funding should be accompanied by:
  - i. Establishing case assessment and referral structures at all LGUs;
  - ii. Enhancing the capacities of such structures, including in the area of fund management.
- Furthermore, models/practices of complete social service package provision should be piloted, at least in some LGUs, in collaboration with economic aid schemes, and new

biopsychosocial disability assessments should be developed. This would enable the consolidation of the integrated social protection system.

- As regards the category of children aged 15 to 18 years without proper parental care and under residential care, it is recommended to establish a model aiming to teach them life skills and prepare them for independent living, based also on the deinstitutionalization process already commenced with child care public services, which should be extended to non-public residential services as well.

The following are the outputs and activities related to Specific Goal III.2

### **Measure III.2.1 Improving the access of children and adolescents in need to social protection programs**

III.2.1.a Annual publication of the study "Measuring Income and Living Standards in Albania", including indicators of material deprivation of children

III.2.1.b Support packages for families with many children, beneficiaries of the economic assistance scheme

III.2.1.c Approval of the new Law on the children of the Republic of Albania: On financial treatment of children who lose one of their parents due to duty in the first line

III.2.1.ç Proposal of (technical and financial) options on the improvement of the economic protection (aid) system in order to effectively address material and monetary poverty, and the possibility of achieving the 'universal benefit of children'

III.2.1.d Establishing a system model for cash transfers in situations of natural crisis, for families in need

III.2.1.dh Capacity building of LGU employees (social administrators in cooperation with NARU employees) to inform and support families that receive economic assistance in order to benefit from services and other social protection measures

III.2.1.e Realization of the integration of the three MIS systems through the improvement of the social service integration module in cash payments, including the categories of children in need, as well as the development of a plan of measures that includes all structures responsible for service delivery for children and families (Cash Payment, Baby Bonus, Vaccine Bonus, School Bonus, School Meals, Free Books)

III.2.1.ë Updating the guidelines for municipalities / regions on drafting social plans, including the protection of children from violence / abuse.

III.2.1.f Review of the DCM and the instruction on the distribution of the budget allocated to the social fund from the central budget.

III.2.1.g Capacity building of LGU and relevant structures in order to apply and benefit from the social fund.

III.2.1.gj Developing Standard Procedures for pre-social services (information, counseling, psycho-social support) of Action for social workers responsible for case management in the provision of social care services to children and families (including CPU)

III.2.1.h Developing and approving the methodology for assessing the satisfaction of service delivery for all categories, especially those with a focus on children

III.2.1.i Conducting a study on the approach and level of satisfaction of service delivery with a special focus on children

III.2.1.j Improving existing standards and drafting standards for new child social protection services including the costing of standards

III.2.1.k Drafting the regulatory framework on the procurement of services

III.2.1.l Review of the DCM on licensing of services

III.2.1.ll Improvement and increase of integrated socio-health services through the Social Fund (specialized services for children including: children for all forms of abuse, victims of trafficking, children with disabilities, social health support houses of adolescents who have developed addictions, etc.).

III.2.1.m Review of DCM on baby bonuses

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Annual publication of data on child poverty based on the EUROSTAT methodology
- No. of families that benefit from packages approved by the normative act
- Approval of the Law supporting this new scheme
- Agreed document of technical and financial options for the improvement of the economic aid system
- Set up the model mechanism of the system for cash transfers in situations of natural crisis, for families in need;
- Percentage of employees trained in LGUs;
- DCM and the MIS action plan for the integration of the three MIS systems;
- Annual report with MIS data published;
- Guide approved by ministerial order for municipalities / regions for drafting social plans;
- •Percentage of LGUs with approved social plans;
- Revised DCM and revised instruction on the distribution of the budget allocated to the social fund from the central budget;
- Percentage of NARUs trained to apply for and benefit from the social fund;
- Approved procedures of pre-social services (information, counseling, psychosocial support);
- Methodology for assessing the satisfaction of service provision for all categories approved by ministerial instruction;
- A published study on the approach and level of satisfaction of receiving services with a special center for children;
- Number of approved standards of new social protection services DCM and guidelines drafted and approved;
- DCM and approved instruction on the regulatory framework for procurement of services;
- A revised sub-legal act - DCM on licensing of services;
- Number of new social services for children (integrated socio-health services);
- Number of service recipients disaggregated by gender / service models;
- Approved DCM of the newborn bonus.

#### **Measure III.2.2 Improving alternative care / service to advance the deinstitutionalization process**

III.2.2.a Review of standards of child social care institutions.

III.2.2.b Establishment of specialized alternative care for children with mild disabilities

III.2.2.c Establishing a functional referral mechanism and cooperation for early detection of abandonment cases. (designing a support package for this group of mothers, such as housing, employment, education, parenting education, early childcare, etc.)

III.2.2.ç Transforming public residential care centers into community-based services

III.2.2.d Modeling and piloting of quality alternative services, including specialized professional foster care service

III.2.2.dh Modeling procedures for reuniting the child with his biological family

III.2.2.e Capacity building of professionals (CPU, NARU, prosecutor and court) to implement the national deinstitutionalization plan and the revised alternative care legislation (including the new legal framework for adoption) at the central and local level

III.2.2.ë Capacity building of CPU child protection officers and NARU social workers in relation to the process of early identification of vulnerable families, referrals, development of family empowerment plans and as a result development of the gatekeeping mechanism;

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Revised standards of social welfare institutions for children;
- Number of families providing alternative care;
- NARU trained on functional referral mechanism and cooperation for early detection of dropout cases;
- Number of transformed public residential care centers;
- Number of piloted services;
- Procedures designed and approved for the reunification of the child with the biological family;
- Number of trained professionals, by sector and geographical spread;
- Number and percentage of CPU and social workers of the LSGU trained in the process of early identification of vulnerable families, referrals, development of family empowerment plans and as a result of the filtering mechanism (gatekeeping).

### **Specific Goal III.3 Children's and adolescents' health improvement**

The situation analysis of the area covered by this specific objective is provided in section 2.4.3, whereas the main challenges found in the analysis include:

- In response to increased neonatal mortality, measures should be taken to improve the quality of health monitoring for pregnant women, as well as the quality of neonatal care at all service levels, including at hospital (maternity wards) and primary health care levels.
- For a long time, early identification and follow-up of developmental problems in children has been inadequate, accompanied by a lack of rehabilitation services.
- In regard to vaccination, the work should continue in order to ensure consistency and tackle the barriers posed by parents'/guardians' opposition, particularly to the measles vaccine.
- The mental well-being/health of parents/guardians and children should be prioritized, as a key factor in children's progress, particularly under the circumstances of COVID-19.
- The strengthening of adolescent-friendly services to address sexual health, healthy nutrition, and mental health remains a key issue. Because of this age group, it is important

to remember that, in addition to professional-centered measures, measures that allow interaction with adolescents and development of their skills should be prioritized.

- Addressing stigma, up to the establishment of accessible, appropriate, and specialized services should be included in the relevant strategies.
- Thereafter, the drafting and implementation of the communication plan will be prioritized, to change nutritional practices or monitor the implementation of existing strategies and laws on nutrition, including those in school facilities

The following are the outputs and activities related to Specific Objective III.3

### **Measure III.3.1 Improving the health of children and adolescents**

III.3.1.a. Establishing a working group to determine the band of pediatric age, adolescence and young age

III.3.1.b Review of guidelines and clinical protocols of health care regarding pregnant women and children in terms of primary health care (including antenatal care, postnatal care, nutrition of pregnant women and children and child development) and of neonatology in maternity hospitals for improvement of neonatal health care and the implementation of neonatal screening for the early identification of genetic diseases in children as well as other disorders.

III.3.1.c Training of health staff on the implementation of the revised protocols - primary and hospital health care (maternity hospitals)

III.3.1.ç Organizing awareness-raising campaigns on care during pregnancy at home.

III.3.1.d Providing training for parents on safe parenting during the first phase and adolescence.

III.3.1.dh Developing a communication and awareness-raising campaign on the involvement of children and young people in healthy behaviors focusing on reproductive health, sex education and legal and illegal drug abuse.

III.3.1.e Updating the user manual and training of personnel providing vaccination service, collection and entry of data in the vaccination health information system.

III.3.1.ë Training of medical/nurse staff and operators working in the vaccination system.

III.3.1.f Developing an information program and training with a focus on parents on issues related to the safety and necessity of vaccinating children.

III 3.1.g Strengthening the monitoring system of nutritional status and growth of children aged 0-5 years in Albania

III.3.1.gj Training of kindergarten and preschool education staff on the growth and psycho-motor development of the child

III.3.1.h Approval of the MoHSP operational plan on civil health emergencies, with a focus on ensuring the continuity of services for children and adolescents.

III.3.1.i Increasing the staff of psycho-social services in all levels of health system care at the hospital level – pediatric service

III.3.1.j Establishing the working group and drafting of ‘roadmap’ steps on the development of health service capacities in schools

III.3.1.k Training of school staff on sexual education of adolescents

III.3.1.l Drafting an action plan on the development of mental health services, with a focus on services for young people and adolescents

III.3.1.ll Training of pedagogical staff in addressing mental health problems

III.3.1.m Drafting protocols on early identification of mental health issues and establishing referral networks with partner institutions

III.3.1.n Drafting policies and standards on healthy eating and physical activity in the pre-school and 9-year system and the sale of drinks and food in commercial premises near educational institutions.

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- Legal revisions adopted to determine the band of pediatric, adolescent and young age;
- Approval of at least 6 clinical health care protocols and guidelines for pregnant women and children;
- Number of health staff trained to implement the revised protocols - primary and hospital health care;
- Number of pregnant women trained in home care during pregnancy;
- Number of parents trained on safe parenting during the first stage and adolescence;
- Number of children aware of the involvement of children and young people in healthy behaviors with a focus on reproductive health;
- Updated manual for use and training of staff providing vaccination service, data collection and uploading to the vaccination health information system;
- Number of health personnel trained in the vaccination system;
- Number of parents aware of issues related to the safety and necessity of vaccinating children;
- Published annual reports on the nutritional status and growth of children aged 0–5 years in Albania;
- Number of staff of kindergartens and preschool education on the well-being and psychomotor development of the trained child;
- Number of municipalities covered with trainings on the well-being and psychomotor development of the trained child;
- MHSP operational plan for civil health emergencies, reflects the needs for services for children approved
- Increased number of psychosocial services staff;
- A plan developed with “roadmap” steps for the development of health service capacities in schools;
- Number of schools covered on adolescent sex education;
- A plan developed and consulted with stakeholders in the field of children's rights for the development of mental health services, focusing on services for young people and adolescents;
- Number of staff trained to address mental health problems;
- Number of schools covered by trainings;
- Approved protocols for early identification of mental health issues;
- Number of policies developed on healthy eating and physical activity in the preschool and 9-year system;

- Number of schools where interventions on healthy eating and physical activity have been implemented in the preschool and 9-year system.
- The number of children who will benefit from the free dedicated eyecare program.

### Strategic Objective III.4: Child-friendly justice

The situation analysis of the area covered by this specific objective is provided in section 2.4.3, whereas the main challenges found in the analysis include:

- The establishment of new institutions pursuant to the Juvenile Criminal Justice Code is a precondition on ensuring the adequate infrastructure to implement sub-legal acts, alternative punishment measures, as well as to re-integrate minors into society. To this end, continuing the work to establish institutions remains a priority:
- The Minors and Juvenile Crime Prevention Center, envisioned as a subordinate mechanism to the Ministry of Justice, will develop prevention programs and conduct 6-month supervisions of minors following sentencing termination. The Juvenile Education and Rehabilitation Institution envisioned as a mechanism for conducting rehabilitation and re-integration programs for juveniles sentenced to restriction of liberty by the court. The institution will function as a semi-open institution, where juveniles will have restricted liberty/mobility to the extent that prevents criminal offenses and with the aim to re-integrate and re-socialize minors into the community.
- Continuing capacity building for professionals in the field is similarly important, as is the cooperation between the levels of the justice system and local government structures to implement the juvenile justice legislation in practice.
- Notwithstanding changes to the Family Code regarding adoptions, there is still work required to make the abandonment declaration mechanism functioning, to ensure the child's best interest and not hold children "hostage" in residential institutions until they reach the age of majority. This results in children being left with the biological family and, on the other hand, in the inability to find an alternative family, by placing them with an adoptive family.

The following are the outputs and activities related to Specific Objective III.4

#### Measure III.4.1 Improving access to justice

III.4.1.a Establishing a working group and drafting of criteria on training, licensing and crediting of various professionals in the framework of the implementation of the juvenile code

III.4.1.b Functioning of juvenile interviewing units, set up in 12 local police directorates and their use in interviewing juvenile victims, perpetrators and witnesses of criminal offenses

III.4.1.c Providing restorative justice and mediation programs for children in conflict with the law

III.4.1.ç Approval of a special law on statelessness

III.4.1.d Capacity building of civil status employees for identification, registration and granting of statelessness status to children

III.4.1.dh Drafting a guide on the statelessness determination procedure of the stateless status in Albania

III.4.1.e Drafting and approval of a joint instruction between SAPCR and the Center for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Crimes for the management of cases of children in conflict with the law

III.4.1.ë Capacity building of the employees of the Center for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Crimes for the management of cases of children in conflict with the law

III.4.1.f Capacity building of procedural representatives for the management of children in conflict with the law

III.4.1.g Drafting and approval of a new DCM to institutionalize the multi-sectoral and inter-institutional approach to the management of cases of children in conflict / contact with the law at the local level

III.4.1.gj Extending the multi-sectoral and inter-institutional approach to the management of cases of children in conflict / contact with the law at the local level with the justice system

III.4.1.h Drafting and reviewing PLE training modules on gender equality officers and local coordinators of domestic violence / child protection worker / PWD specialists / Roma and Egyptian specialists, victims of criminal proceedings, victims of trafficking, as well as other categories in need

III.4.1.i Preparation and distribution of PLE materials on gender equality, GBV and domestic violence, victims of crime, victims of trafficking, children, women and other vulnerable groups, in an understandable language appropriate for PWDs, children and Roma and Egyptians

III.4.1.j Implementing the Council of Europe recommendations concerning children with imprisoned parents

#### **Indicators at measure level:**

- A working group established for training, licensing, accrediting of various professionals in the framework of the implementation of the juvenile code;
- Criteria drafted, agreed, and approved on the training, licensing, accrediting of various professionals in the framework of the implementation of the juvenile code;
- A twelve well-maintained systems of juvenile interviewing units;
- Number of police officers trained in “Scientific techniques for interviewing juveniles”;
- Percentage of interviews recorded in interviewing units;
- Number of children participating in restorative justice and mediation programs;
- Adopted law on statelessness;
- Number of civil status employees throughout Albania trained in identifying, registering and granting statelessness status to children;
- A guide drafted for the procedures of determining the statelessness status in Albania;
- A joint agreement between SACRP and the Center for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Crimes for the Management of Cases of Children in Conflict with the Law;
- Number of trained staff of the Juvenile and Youth Crime Prevention Center for the Management of Cases of Children in Conflict with the Law;
- Number of procedural representatives trained for the management of children in conflict with the law;
- Number of rehabilitated juveniles;
- Sub-legal act adopted to institutionalize the multi-sectoral and inter-institutional approach to the management of cases of children in conflict/contact with the law at the local level;
- Five new multi-sectoral and inter-institutional approach jurisdictions for the management of cases of children in conflict / contact with the law;

- Number of professionals trained on the multi-sectoral and inter-institutional approach to managing cases of children in conflict / contact with the law;
- Number of children in contact / conflict with the law;
- Designed and revised training modules for gender equality officers and local coordinators of domestic violence;
- Number of persons who are familiar with the prepared materials on gender equality, GBV and domestic violence, etc.;
- New Juvenile Justice Strategy including EU recommendations

## Policy Goal IV. Promotion of Child Rights in the Digital World

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Promotion of child rights in the digital world includes the provision of access and involvement of children in the digital world, in full accordance with Objective 5 of the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child. Learning and creativity in the digital environment through the development of digital competencies via ICT have been regarded as a priority and important goal for children, with the child's best interest in this process being regarded as critical by all institutions contributing to the digital environment.

The main impact indicators under this goal are:

- Percentage of adolescents/youths equipped with at least one information technology skill

A specific goal interconnected to this policy goal:

### Specific goal IV.1 Promotion of Child Rights in the Digital World

The key indicators at specific objective level in this strategic objective include:

- Percentage of schools with adequate ICT infrastructure, including internet.
- Number of municipalities providing secure internet service for children and families in public facilities or institutions.
- Number of businesses engaged in promoting and protecting children's rights in the digital world.
- Number of complaints reviewed by AMA on violations of children's rights.

### Strategic Objective IV.1 Promotion of Child Rights in the Digital World

The situation analysis of the area covered by this specific objective is provided in section 2.4.4, whereas the main challenges found in the analysis include:

- Coordinating and engaging all responsible actors for an ethical presentation of children in media, ensuring their necessary space in public broadcasting, building the capacities of journalists/media and children in this area.

The following are the outputs and activities related to Specific Objective IV.1

#### Measure IV.1.1. Access and inclusion of children in the digital environment

IV 1.1.a Creating the appropriate infrastructure for ICT use in schools as well as its maintenance

IV 1.1.b Expanding the network of community-based digital training and online protection laboratories for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in at least 4 new municipalities

- Training of community center staff on digital training and online protection modules in 4 municipalities
- Installing wireless networks in community centers in 4 municipalities
- Investing in additional digital equipment in the community centers of 4 municipalities

IV 1.1.c Creating or improving public spaces with “Friendly WIFI” safe internet for children and families through initiatives to provide free internet access but at the same time filtered information, in order to promote and protect the rights of children and young people in the digital environment.

IV 1.1.ç Extension of the BiblioTech model at the city libraries for digital training and online protection in 4 new municipalities

- Purchase of equipment

- Designing a digital literacy curriculum at BiblioTech's
- Training of 100 local library staff

**Indicators at measure level:**

- % of functional computers in schools;
- 4 digital laboratories of digital training and online protection in four municipalities;
- 40 people trained on digital training and online protection modules in four municipalities;
- "Friendly WIFI" internet filtered public spaces;
- BiblioTech corners in the libraries of the four municipalities;
- Number of staff trained in national libraries;
- Completed digital literacy curricula at BiblioTech's.

**Measure IV.1.2 Learning and creativity in the digital environment**

IV.1.2.a Developing digital competence through increased use of ICT in all subjects

- Inclusion of digital competence in teacher standards
- Setting standards for achieving digital competence according to the format of the European Union
- Inclusion of lower and upper secondary students in the national coding program
- Inclusion of digital competence through information and communication technology in the first grade of basic education

IV.1.2.b Raising students' awareness of Internet security, privacy, information sharing and antivirus

IV.1.2.c Training of at least 100 girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)

**Indicators at measure level:**

- Digital competences included in teacher standards;
- Set up standards for achieving competences;
- Number of students aware of internet security, privacy, information sharing and antivirus;
- 100 girls trained in STEM;

**Measure IV.1.3. Respecting the ethics and the highest interest of the children in the digital environment**

IV.1.3.a Review of the Code of Conduct of the private sector (ISP, online platforms, innovation ecosystem, start-ups and business) in promoting and respecting children's rights in the digital environment

IV.1.3.b Training of private sector actors regarding the rights of children in the digital environment.

IV.1.3.c Awareness of public actors, parents in particular, through conversations, roundtables, debates, etc. on the importance of digital development of children and their participation in the development of society

IV.1.3.ç Drafting an inter-institutional agreement between SAPCR and AMA on the commitment to guarantee the implementation of ethics and the rights of the child in the audiovisual environment

IV.1.3.d Capacity building of local and national media journalists in order to implement the main principles in respecting children's rights in the media

**Indicators at measure level:**

- Revised code of conduct;
- Workshop with key industry actors on children's rights in the digital environment;
- Organize roundtables on the importance of children's digital development and their participation in the development of society;
- Inter-institutional agreement drafted between SACRP and AMA on the commitment to guarantee the implementation of ethics and the rights of the child in the audiovisual environment;
- Number of trained journalists to implement the main principles of respect for children's rights in the media

# PART III. IMPLEMENTATION, INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, REPORTING, AND MONITORING

## NARC implementation

The NARC will be implemented during 2021-2026. The MoHSP is the institution responsible for monitoring the implementation progress of this document, with the support of the SACRP.

The institutions responsible for the implementation of the defined measures have been listed in the Action Plan Matrix, in Annex 1. The Matrix also includes deadlines and required financial resources for implementation. In order to increase accountability in all activities, at least one institution responsible for conducting the relevant activity has been determined. The Agenda is cross-sectoral, involving a variety of actors and institutions that will coordinate their efforts to attain the objectives and carry out the activities in the majority of the activities outlined in the plan. Line ministries, independent institutions, local self-government units, civil society organizations, and international organizations will cooperate with each other to implement the measures set forth in the NARC.

The NARC will comprise part of the Integrated Planning System (IPS) according to Prime Minister's Order No. 157, adopted on 22.10.2018 "On the adoption of measures for the implementation of the cross-sectoral approach and the establishment of the integrated sectoral/cross-sectoral mechanism operation". This mechanism will operate in relation to the Integrated Planning System as the main system that determines the means and mechanisms for an integrated planning of public policies. The IPS functions through Integrated Policy Management Groups and Sector Steering Committees, MoHSP being a member of both according to the provisions of the said Order.

## Monitoring and reporting

To ensure a quality monitoring and assessment of the said plan, actor cooperation and coordination is required. The monitoring and assessment process will undergo the following stages: Data collection; Data analysis; Reporting and accountability. Reports will provide the basis for the Joint Sector Review process.

The monitoring of the NARC will take place in accordance with a methodology confirmed by the responsible unit at the Prime Minister's Office pursuant to Decision of Council of Ministers No. 290, dated 11.4.2020, "On the establishment of the state database of the Integrated Planning System Information System (SIPSI/IPSI)", which, inter alia, is the main system for monitoring the achieved performance in regards to the policies and objectives planned in the strategic documents. Monitoring denotes the ongoing collection of data related to the NARC, both statistical and other data that provide information on the NARC implementation.

The MoHSP, with the contribution of the Cross-Institutional Working Group established upon Order of the MoHSP Minister No. 519, dated 23 September 2020 "On the establishment of the Cross-Institutional Working Group for drafting the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2025", and supported by the SACRP:

- Annual reports on NARC implementation. This report will map out the progress of measure and indicator implementation, including those at specific objective level. The report will be drafted by March of the following year. An online dashboard may be created

as an instrument to visually display the measure implementation status and also be accessible to the public.

- Midterm report on NARC implementation. This report will be drafted in 2023-2024 and will provide the status of measure and strategic indicator implementation. The monitoring process will enable measure review to address any potential changes resulting from the current situation and encountered challenges.
- Final assessment report (referenced below in this chapter).

Pursuant to the legal obligation, the implementation of the NARC will be reviewed by the National Council on Child Rights and Protection. Thus, all reports drafted by the Technical staff of the MoHSP/SACRP and the cross-ministerial group will be submitted to the National Council on Child Rights and Protection for recommendations. Simultaneously, the reports will be open to civil society. A stable mechanism of consultation on NARC implementation with children and parents will be established to receive their ongoing contribution.

Annual and midterm monitoring and assessment reports will also be submitted to Integrated Policy Management Groups and Sector Steering Committees for recommendations. Monitoring reports will also be reviewed annually by the Albanian Parliament, namely the Parliamentary Group “Friends of Children”.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is the detailed process of the success analysis regarding NARC implementation, which identifies the progress success, reviews the reasons for potential issues, and then adapts the strategic orientation based on the circumstances. Usually, the designing and execution of the evaluation phase is independent from the typical monitoring and reporting framework. The evaluation includes the drafting of assessment questions, collection and analysis of data that provide answers to such questions, as well as evidence gathering to formulate conclusions and recommendations. The NARC evaluation will commence in the last year of implementation (2026). The methodology will be discussed and agreed upon by the National Council on Child Rights and Protection and will include an analysis pursuant to measure relevance, effectiveness, efficacy, sustainability, and impact. The evaluation will be conducted by independent specialists to ensure Report analysis and conclusion impartiality. The evaluation report will serve as a reference for the drafting of the NARC in the upcoming years. The report will involve all review steps from the accountability mechanisms (National Council on Child Rights and Protection, Integrated Policy Management Groups, Sector Steering Committees, and the Albanian Parliament).

## PART IV. BUDGETARY ANALYSIS

This chapter outlines the distribution of indicator costs and financial resources funding the measures and activities of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 (NARC). The financial effects were calculated for each measure based on the activities foreseen in the NARC Action Plan, while considering the determined outcomes and indicators for each activity.

The Strategy costing has been done based on the methodologies and practices of budget planning, in order to determine the additional NARC implementation cost and the financial gap compared with the budgetary funds planned in the MTBP 2021-2023 and from donor funding. Budgetary calculations were made using the IPSIS-recommended instrument adapted in accordance with relevant instructions.

During this process, expenditures for each measure were identified and their classification into predetermined expenditure categories was performed. For expenditures that are more frequently repeated, standard costs have been defined through market study and consultations with specialists, e.g. costs for training organization, salaries, various equipment, and other materials and services. Then, the cost was calculated by year, making sure that the gap for 2021-2023 would be as small as possible.

The costing process was also based on national document consultation, including the Midterm Budget Program 2021-2023 and the proposal of new price ceilings in the framework of the drafting of the MTBP 2022-2024, consultations with all involved institutions, consultations with 'potential' donors, as well as historical costs from the implementation of the previous plan. The Action Plan on NARC implementation includes an analytic costing of each measure.

The overall cost of the implementation of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 is estimated at ALL 1,603,948,852 or EUR 12,831,591. The average reference exchange rate is ALL 125 per EUR 1. The table shows the financial costs, financial resources, and the financial gap over the 6 years of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 implementation.

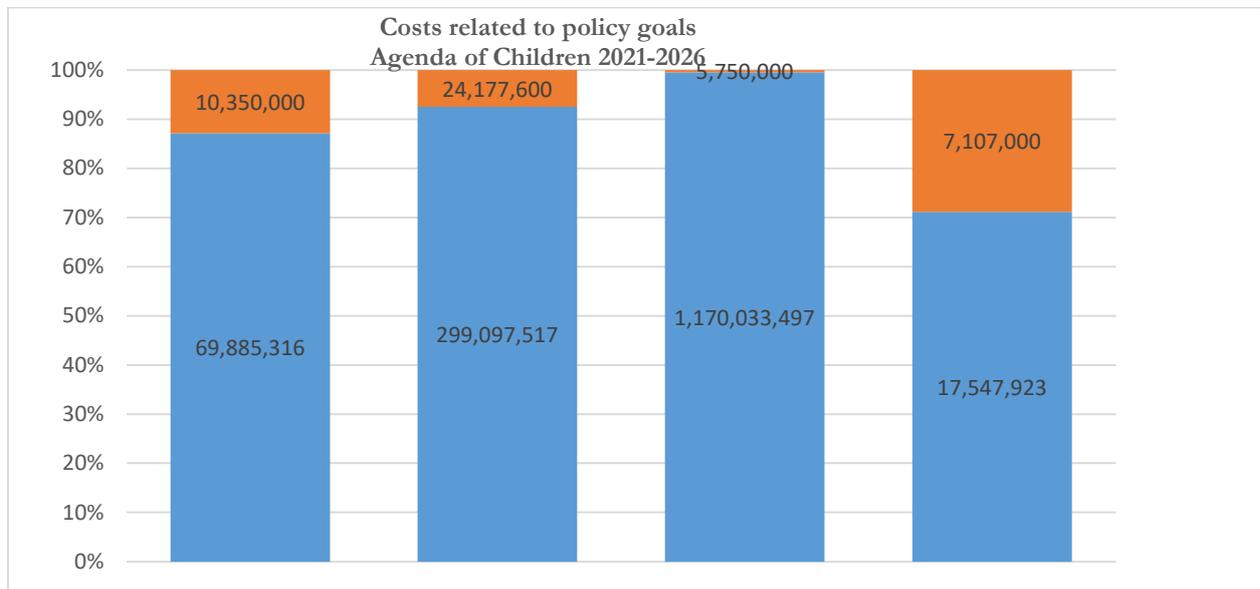
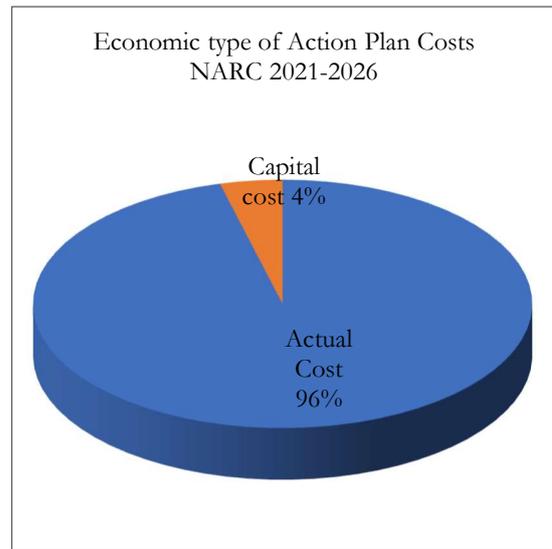
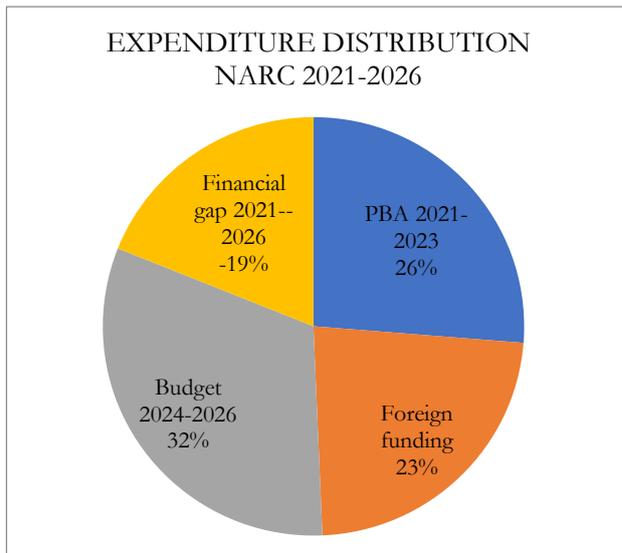
The costs of the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 do not include the costs of activities included in other approved strategies or action plans.

Policy Goal	Cost Type	Total Cost 2021-2023	Planned Costs MTBP 2021-2023 Budget and Donors	Costs to be planned in the Budget 2024-2030	Financial Gap 2021-2026
<b>Policy Goal I:</b> Good governance as regards observing, protecting, and fulfilling child rights	Current	69,885,316	32,353,190	15,065,202	<b>32,816,924</b>
	Capital	10,350,000	0	0	
<b>Policy Goal II:</b> Elimination of all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse, and harmful practices	Current	299,097,517	154,297,343	85,718,322	<b>83,259,453</b>
	Capital	24,177,600	0	0	
<b>Policy Goal III:</b> Child-friendly and adolescent-friendly systems and services	Current	1,170,033,497	579,493,144	408,505,842	<b>187,784,510</b>
	Capital	5,750,000	0	0	
<b>Policy Goal III:</b> Child-friendly and adolescent-friendly systems and services	Current	17,547,923	10,565,900	339,247	<b>6,642,776</b>
	Capital	7,107,000	7107000	0	
<b>TOTAL [ALL]</b>		1,603,948,852	783,816,576	509,628,613	<b>310,503,663</b>
<b>TOTAL [Euro]</b>		<b>12,831,591</b>	<b>6,270,533</b>	<b>4,077,029</b>	<b>2,484,029</b>
<b>EUR 1 ALL 125</b>					

The funding of the action plan will be realized through a number of sources; however, the state budget, LGU funds, and financial support by donors remain the main sources. For the 2021-2026

period, the state budget is expected to fund 58.0% of the financing necessary for the implementation of the plan, 23.0 % is expected to be financed from other sources and donors, while the funding gap is at 19.0%.

Current costs make up some 96.0 % of the total expenses, while the rest (4.0%) has been projected for capital costs, as in the graph below. Costs are reflected in the following chart disaggregated by policy goal. In financial terms, Policy Goal III is expected to have the major share in the NAP implementation with 73%. Policy Goal II makes up 20.0%, while Policy Goal I makes up 5% and Policy Goal IV makes up 2% of the total plan costs.



The strategy will be revised in 3 years (in 2024) to be aligned with the measure implementation progress, and to be updated in line with the needs and midterm budget programs for the 2024-2026 period of each institution.

The relevant institutions will plan budget funding needs for financially uncovered plan measures, in relevant budget programs under the midterm budget program and annual budget planning processes and will negotiate with various donors to co-finance certain activities.

# ANNEX 1 – ACTION PLAN

NATIONAL AGENDA ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD 2021-2026					
<b>Strategic goal I:</b>	<b>Good governance in respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the rights of the children</b>				
<b>Specific goal I.1:</b>	<b>Strengthening the institutions and mechanisms in order to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of children</b>				
<b>Expected result:</b>	Strengthening cross-sectoral structures and mechanisms at central and local level in order to design effective programs for the children. Number of complaints and issues handled (new and carried) during the year by independent human rights institutions on children's rights				
<b>Indicator:</b>	Increasing the annual budget of the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights (SAPCR)		Baseline 2020: NA	Target 2023: 100%	
	Number of LGUs with functional mechanisms / forums involving children in decision-making / number of children involved		Baseline 2020: 0	Target 2026: At least 1 new mechanism per year	
	Number and percentage of central and local policy plans informed by data analysis		Baseline 2020: 100	Target 2026: 100%	
	Number of complaints and cases handled by independent human rights institutions on children's rights during the year		Baseline 2020: 195 PA, 14 KPD, IDPC 0	Target 2026: 2% increase per year	
MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES		RESULTS	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS	PARTNER INSTITUTIONS	DEADLINE
<b>I.1.1. Strengthening structures at central and local level, responsible for drafting, coordinating and monitoring cross-sectoral strategies and measures that affect children's lives</b>			<b>MoHSP</b>	<b>LSGU, NPOs, IO</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>
<i>I.1.1.a Integrating children's issues into the work agenda of Integrated Policy Management Groups, in coordination with the National Council for Protection of Children's Rights (NCPCR)</i>		<i>Number of issues raised at IPMG meetings in the field of children's rights.</i>	MoHSP		2021-2026
<i>I.1.1.b Establishment and coordination of meetings among donors and international organizations in support of the implementation of the Agenda for Children and children's issues, under the direction of NCPCR</i>		<i>Number of meetings and raised issues</i>	MoHSP	SAPCR	2022-2026
<i>I.1.1.c Strengthening SAPCR capacities, including structure review and development of staff capacities.</i>		<i>Drafted structure proposals Revised statute and regulation</i>	MoHSP, SAPCR	MoFE	2021-2026
<i>I.1.1.d Establishing and functioning of a central cross-sectoral structure to design and coordinate the child / adolescent friendly cities initiative in coordination with NCPCR. - Establishing local mechanisms for friendly cities initiative. - Development of child-friendly cities plans in at least 3 municipalities, based on the analysis of the children situation.</i>		<i>Established coordination group; Instruction developed for the implementation of child / adolescent friendly cities;</i>	LGU	Partner, MoHSP, MoI, ASLG, MoC, MoESY, MoE	2021-2026

	<i>No. of municipalities with developed friendly cities plans.</i>			
<i>1.1.1.d Review and coordination in terms of addressing and monitoring the implementation of recommendations of international human rights institutions (CRC, CEDA, UPR) with a focus on children.</i>	<i>Number of drafted reports and action plans</i>	MoFA	SAPCR Line Ministries	2022 -2026
<i>1.1.1.db Developing an analytical report on the effects of climate change and the environment on children in Albania to inform the development of a national and local plan on civil emergencies.</i>	<i>Published study report</i>	Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Defense, MoHSP, SAPCR, LGU, partner	2022-2023
<i>1.1.1 Addressing the effects of climate change and the environment on children during the development of the national and local plan of civil emergencies</i>	<i>The national and local emergency plans include addressing of the effects on children</i>	Ministry of Defense	SAPCR, MoHSP, Partner	2021-2026
<b>I.1.2 Improving budget mechanisms for children</b>				
<i>1.1.2.a Capacity building of the institutions for the budget trend analysis and sectoral budget planning, in order to re-prioritize the achievement of results for children.</i>	<i>No. of analytical reports of drafted budgets in the field of children's rights</i>	MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
<b>I.1.3. Improving statistics and data / knowledge in order to implement children's rights</b>		<b>INSTAT</b>	<b>Line Ministries, LGU</b>	
<i>1.1.3.a. Planning and conducting a multi-indicator cluster survey for children (MICS)</i>	<i>Published study</i>	INSTAT, MoHSP	MoESY, PHI, Partner	2023-2025
<i>1.1.3.b Updating analysis of the situation of children with disabilities, based on the results of Censi and MICS</i>	<i>Analysis report</i>	MoHSP, INSTAT	SAPCR, Partner	2025-2026
<i>1.1.3.c Updating analysis of the situation of Roma and Egyptian children, based on the results of Censi and MICS</i>	<i>Analysis report</i>	MoHSP, INSTAT	SAPCR, MoESY, Partner	2024-2026
<i>1.1.3.ç Annual preparation of analytical data publication for children, adolescents and young people and updating the dashboard annually with official statistics on children</i>	<i>Annual publication</i>	INSTAT	Line Ministries, Partners	2021-2026
<i>1.1.3.d Reviewing DCM 636, dated 26.10.2018 "On the types, ways of information exchange and statistical data required by SAPCR and responsible state structures, on a local and national level"</i>	<i>Revised bylaw</i>	MoHSP, SAPCR	Partner, Line Ministries	2022
<i>1.1.3.db Annual update of child statistics collected by SAPCR - (statistikafemijet.gov.al)</i>	<i>Updated dashboard</i>	SAPCR	Line Ministries, Partner	2021-2026
<i>1.1.3.e Strengthening mechanisms and capacities for data collection and reporting with a focus on children at the municipal level (for at least 5 municipalities)</i>	<i>Establishment of reporting platforms for child indicators in 5 municipalities</i>	Regional INSTAT Municipalities	Local institutions, Partner	2021-2026
<b>I.1.4. Strengthening child participation mechanisms and forums</b>		<b>MoESY, MoHSP, Municipalities</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>

I.1.4.a Establishing child participation structures / mechanisms at central and local level, including the mechanism for independent monitoring of the Agenda for the Rights of the Child	Children and Youth Council set up at the central level in at least 4 Municipalities of the country	MoESY, MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
I.1.4.b Strengthening the capacities of children and adolescents for the realization of an effective participation.	No. of decisions based on consultations with children at central and local level	LGU	MoESY	2021-2026
I.1.4.c Developing UPSHIFT digital education programs, Ponder for children in entrepreneurship, digital training, social innovation, active citizenship, advocacy, critical thinking and media thinking	No. of children involved	MoESY, Municipalities	Partner	2021-2026
I.1.4.ç Expanding and using digital technology and innovative platforms such as “U-report” to realize the rights of children and young people locally, nationally and internationally as well as raising their voices on issues that affect them closely online and offline.	No. of surveys conducted annually to collect the opinions of adolescents / young people	MoESY	LGU, Partner	2021-2026
<b>Strategic goal II:</b>	<b>Eliminating all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices</b>			
<b>Specific goal II.1:</b>	Children grow up in a supportive environment, with positive parenting practices that protect them from violence and abuse.			
<b>Expected result:</b>	Improving the knowledge, attitudes and practices of parents / guardians in terms of preventing all forms of violence and protecting children			
<b>Indicator:</b>	Knowledge, attitudes and positive practices of parents / guardians in the context of preventing and addressing violence		<b>Baseline:</b> To be decided from the study in 2022	<b>Target 2026:</b> Increased by 20%
<b>MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>PARTNER INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
<b>II.1.1 Addressing non-positive social norms in the community and family in the framework of prevention and addressing violence against children</b>		<b>SAPCR, MoHSP, LSGUs</b>	<b>LGUs, NPOs, NRM, AMA, RATC, AP</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>
II.1.1.a Conducting a study (with two comparative waves) for measuring the knowledge of attitudes and practices of the Albanian population about violence against children (first wave of survey study 2022; second wave of survey study 2026)	Publication of studies to measure knowledge, attitudes and practices of violence against children	SAPCR	Partner	2021-2026
II.1.1.b Developing a communication plan and supporting materials / products in order to address negative social norms related to all forms of violence/ abuse against children (including the theme of early marriage)	Communication plan completed; No. of products with prepared communication messages; No. of self-aware persons.	SAPCR, MoHSP	LGU, Partner	2022-2024

II.1.1.c Organizing and undertaking mass awareness campaigns at national and local level to provide information about the forms of trafficking and its effect on the life of the individual and society, including awareness of the rights of PVT/ VT. Ref: National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons 2021-2023	No. of persons reached through awareness-raising activities	MoI	NRM, LGU, SAPCR, AP, RATC, AMA, NPO, IO, National and Local TV's, Multi-functional Community Centers	2021-2023
II.1.1.f Developing an education module on positive parenting to be used by professionals at the local level (LGU + CPU + professionals in community centers)	Positive parenting education module completed; No. of parents advised on positive parenting, including those with disabilities	LGU, MoHSP, SSS	SAPCR, Partner	2022-2024
II.1.1.d Establishing parenting courses / programs / support / counseling at health centers or social service directorates at the local level (on positive disciplines, on joint and equal responsibilities of mothers and fathers towards children, on growing up children free from gender stereotypes and their education on gender equality values appropriate for all age groups); Ref: National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030	Approved programs / courses for LGU for positive parenting	LGU, SAPCR	Partner	2022-2023
II.1.1.db Raising awareness in the school community and creating a positive culture that does not accept violence, bullying and violent extremism	No. and % of schools where plans of awareness-raising activities have been implemented	MoESY, SAPCR, MoFE	LGU, CVE, NAECCS	2021-2026
<b>Specific goal II.2:</b>	<b>Operation of a comprehensive and effective child protection system</b>			
<b>Expected result:</b>	Improving child protection mechanisms to prevent and address all forms of violence and abuse			
<b>Indicators:</b>	Number of normative acts drafted / revised, in consultation with stakeholders and children and in line with international standards		Baseline 2020: NA	Target 2026: At least 10
	Percentage of LGUs that have a specified budget line for managing child violence cases		Baseline 2020: 6% (4 Municipalities)	Target 2026: 4% increase per year
	Percentage of LGUs with qualified child protection structures in accordance with the requirements of the revised legislation		Baseline 2020: 33%	Target 2026: 100%
	Number of employees to protect employed children		Baseline 2020: 236	Target 2026: 420
	Number of children identified at risk and / or in need of protection, whose cases were managed by the CPU / PMF during the year		Baseline 2019: 2,449	Target 2026: 5% increase per year
	Number of children who has been granted a protection measure by the court		Baseline 2019: 45	Target 2026: 5% increase per year

	Number of children who have reported some form of violence, registered by educational institutions	Baseline 2018: 2342	Target 2026: 2% increase per year	
	Number of children, victims of violence, registered by health institutions	Baseline 2018: 21	Target 2026: 5% increase per year	
MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES	RESULTS	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS	PARTNER INSTITUTIONS	DEADLINE
<b>II.2.1. Improving normative, budget and reporting framework for child protection</b>		<b>MoHSP, SAPCR, MoJ, MoI</b>	<b>LGU, NPOs, ON, State Police</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>
<i>II.2.1.a Drafting and approval of the law “On alternative care”, in terms of improving the legal framework in the system of protection and child care, and justice system”</i>	<i>Approved legal act</i>	<i>MoHSP, AAC</i>	<i>Partner, MoJ</i>	<i>2022-2024</i>
<i>II.2.1.b Drafting and approval of a special law against trafficking in human beings and for the protection of VT / PVT and harmonisation as far as possible with Directive 2011/36 “On the prevention and fight against trafficking in human beings and the protection of their victims ” Ref: National Anti-Trafficking Plan of VT/ PVT</i>	<i>Established working group Analyzed legal and institutional basis of anti-trafficking, international practices and recommendations Law drafted by experts Drafted law consulted with the public</i>	<i>MoI, MoHSP</i>	<i>Partner, MoJ, SAPCR, MoFE</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>II.2.1.c Approval of bylaws related to children on the Law on Foreigners approved in 2021</i>	<i>Approved bylaws</i>	<i>MoI, MoEFA, MoFE, SIS</i>		<i>2022-2024</i>
<i>II.2.1.f Review of Law No. 121/2016 "On Social Care Services" and harmonization with legal amendments to Law No. 18/2017 on child protection issues as well as other obligations arising from national and international law</i>	<i>Legal act revised and approved</i>	<i>SSS, MoHSP</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2022-2024</i>
<i>II.2.1.d Review of Law No. 8153, dated 3.10.1996, “On the Status of Orphans”</i>		<i>SSS, MoHSP</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2022-2024</i>
<i>II.2.1.db Adoption of a new law on personal data protection, aligned with the General Regulation on Personal Data Protection (GRPDP)</i>	<i>Legal act approved</i>	<i>MoJ, CRIPPD</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>
<i>II.2.1.e Drafting and approval by normative act of the methodological instruction regarding the quality criteria of the work of child protection structures, cross-sectoral technical groups and the methodology for their control.</i>	<i>Approved normative act</i>	<i>MoHSP, SAPCR</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2022</i>
<i>II.2.1.ë Review of instruction No. 253, dated 10.04.2020 "On the management of cases of children in need of protection, during the period of natural disaster due to the epidemic caused by Covid-19" on the actions of child protection structures in all cases of emergencies and pandemics.</i>	<i>Approved instruction</i>	<i>SAPCR/MoHSP, LGU</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2022-2023</i>
<i>II.2.1.f Review of DCM No.578 “On case management” to reflect the needs identified by the analysis of its practical implementation.</i>	<i>Approved bylaw</i>	<i>MoHSP/SAPCR</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2021-2022</i>

II.2.1.g Review of DCM No.111 “On procedures and rules for return and repatriation of children”	Revised and approved bylaw	MoHSP/SAPCR	Partner	2021-2023
II.2.1.gj Review of the DCM No. 617 dated 07.09.2006 “On determining the indicators of evaluation and monitoring of NE programs, PWDs Payments and social services	Revised and approved bylaw	SSS, MoHSP	Partner	2021-2023
II.2.1.b Drafting and approval of an internal inter-institutional instruction regarding the notification and removal of illegal and harmful materials of sexual abuse and exploitation of children online. <i>Ref: National Cyber Security Strategy for 2020-2025</i>	Approved instruction	MoJ, MoJ, MoHSP, NAECCS, EPCA, SAPCR, AMA, State Police		2022-2024
II.2.1.i Drafting of a joint inter-ministerial instruction regarding the management of children's cases following the implementation of DCM 129 - Establishment and strengthening of field teams for the identification, referral and management of cases of children in need of protection, including children in street situations , economically exploited and child victims of trafficking	Drafted and approved Inter-ministerial instruction	MoHSP, MoI, MoJ	Partner	2021-2023
II.2.1.j Approval of the methodology of the assessment of the best interests of the child and the determination of the best interests of the child for certain categories with a special focus on children with disabilities and children of Roma and Egyptian communities	Approved methodology	MoHSP, SAPCR	Partner	2021-2022
II.2.1.k Local level budgeting (LGU) for Child Protection Units for case management of children in need of protection	Cost analysis (agreed) for the management of child protection cases No. of LGU with cost dedicated to the management of child protection cases	LGU/MoHSP/SAPCR	MoFE, Partner	2021-2026
II.2.1.l Improvement of the case management module / workflow (CPU) part of the electronic register system of social services, including training of child protection structures and NARU at LGU	% of child protection structures using the system Generation of 4 monthly reports and annual reports from the system	MoHSP, SSS, SAPCR	Partner	2021-2026
<b>II.2.2 Strengthening the capacity of professionals, mechanisms and services in addressing child violence</b>				
II.2.2.a Organizing the annual national conference of professionals in the field of child protection.	National conference	SAPCR	Partner	2021-2026
II.2.2.b Establishment and functioning of the Social Worker Order	Established structures	MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
II.2.2.c Making the education and accreditation system functional for social service workers (including CPU's)	Board establishment at NCCE Conducting capacity building needs analysis, defining training topics	NCCE, MoHSP, SAPCR		2021-2026

	<i>Accreditation of training bodies and curricula</i>			
<i>II.2.2.f Capacity building of child protection structures in LGU based on modules certified and approved by the NCCE for the management of cases with cross-sectoral access of children in need of protection</i>	<i>% of employees trained each year; Training topics</i>	MoHSP, NCCE, MD, MoESY, MB, LGU	Partner	2021-2026
<i>II.2.2.d Improving the capacities of employees from different sectors such as social care, police, media, etc., in LGU based on modules certified and approved by the NCCE in order to improve the mechanism of identification, reporting and referral of violence and support of children in need of protection</i>	<i>% of trained employees, according to the topic and sector each year</i>	SAPCR, MoJ, MoESY, MoI,	Partner, MoFE	2021-2026
<i>II.2.2.db Capacity building of cross-sectoral teams (RATC) based on modules certified and approved by NCCE on prevention and protection of child victims / potential victims of trafficking. Ref: National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons 2021-2023</i>	<i>% of trained professional</i>	SAPCR, RATC, NCCE	Partner	2021-2026
<i>II.2.2.e Training of judicial structures to be specialized in criminal offenses of trafficking in order to proactively investigate cases of trafficking in persons, to effectively carry out criminal prosecution procedures, to use special techniques of investigation, to strengthen the conduct of financial investigations. Ref: National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons 2021-2023</i>	<i>% of trained employees</i>	SM, SP	MoI/SP, General Prosecution Office, IO	2021-2026
<i>II.2.2.è Training of border and migration police officers, customs officers, asylum workers and staff of migrant reception and accommodation centers including medical staff in order to increase the capacity regarding the identification of VT / PVT among asylum seekers, migrants and especially unaccompanied children, regardless of their ability and / or willingness to cooperate. Ref: National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons 2021-2023</i>	<i>% of trained employees</i>	SP/BMD	MoI/Asylum, CPU, General Directorate of Customs, MoHSP, IO, NPO	2021-2023
<i>II.2.2.f Developing a policy dedicated to pre-university education in the field of prevention and addressing all forms of violence and abuse, including bullying and extremism in schools</i>	<i>Pre-university education policy</i>	MoESY, SAPCR, MoFE	Partner, MoHSP,	2021-2024
<i>II.2.2.g Establishing a system for identification, prevention and reporting of violence, bullying and extremism in schools. Ref: National Education Strategy 2021-2026 (2.3.1)</i>	<i>Consolidating safe and child-friendly environments at school</i>	MoESY, MoFE	Partner, MoHSP, SAPCR	2021-2026
<i>II.2.2.gj Increasing the number of security officers in schools. Ref: National Education Strategy 2021-2026 (2.3.4)</i>	<i>Consolidating safe and child-friendly environments at school</i>	MoESY, MoFE		2021-2026
<i>II.2.2.b Increasing the number of psycho-social workers in schools. Ref: National Education Strategy 2021-2026 (2.2.1)</i>	<i>Increasing the quality of psycho-social service for all students</i>	MoESY, MoFE		2021-2026
<i>II.2.2.i Training of teachers and staff of the psycho-social service unit and ethics committees in schools regarding violence and abuse, bullying and extremism in schools</i>	<i>% of trained teachers and staff</i>	MoESY, MoFE	Partner, MoHSP, SAPCR	
<i>II.2.2.j Developing a protocol for the identification and reporting of violence against health workers, including the review of forms and data collection registers on violence against children.</i>	<i>Protocol on the identification and reporting of violence</i>	MoHSP	Partner	2022-2024

II.2.2.k Inclusion of screening indicators for child abuse in the performance evaluation criteria of public health institutions that provide care for the child (HCs, maternity hospitals, hospital emergencies), etc. Ref: Strategic Document and Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health 2017-2021	Screening indicators included in the performance evaluation criteria of health institutions	MoHSP		2024-2025	
II.2.2.l Strengthening the capacities of the toll-free National Line 116-006, and the "Report and Rescue" Application to enable advising and reporting of possible Human Trafficking cases. Ref: National Plan for Combating Trafficking in Persons 2021-2023	No. of reported cases of children each year	MoI/SP	NCAS, NPO, IO	2022-2023	
II.2.2.ll Strengthening the lines of counseling, psychological counseling and mental health for children through the expansion of services, reporting channels, service extension, capacity building and financing (Telephone line such as ALO 116 111, You are not alone, etc.), for reporting violence and for providing psycho-social support to children in need of protection.	No. of reported cases of violence against children each year. Development of methodology for data collection and reporting from consulting lines to SAPCR	MoHSP, SAPCR	Partner	2021-2026	
II.2.2.m Strengthening emergency services for the reception and short-term accommodation of cases of repatriated children, including children from conflict zones, and unaccompanied and separated foreign children through the service expansion, reporting channels, service extension, capacity building and funding	No. of children receiving emergency protection services	MoHSP, SAPCR, LGU, NCCE, MoFE	Partner	2021-2026	
II.2.2.n Establishing accommodation and rehabilitation services for repatriated children and unaccompanied and separated foreign children	No. of accommodated children % of rehabilitated children	MoHSP, SAPCR, LGU	MoFE, Partner	2021-2026	
<b>Specific goal II.3</b>	<b>Specialized and integrated mechanisms and services addressing serious forms of violence, including sexual abuse and online abuse and exploitation</b>				
<b>Expected result:</b>	Strengthening specialized services to address serious forms of violence				
<b>Indicator:</b>	Number of specialized and functional services set up for children, victims of violence and sexual abuse		Baseline 2020: 1	Target 2026: 4	
	Number of cases of child sexual abuse and online exploitation investigated by the responsible authorities		Baseline 2018: 12	Target 2026: 30 per year	
<b>MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>PARTNER INSTITUTIONS</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
<b>II.3.1 Prevention and protection of children from sexual abuse and online abuse and exploitation</b>			<b>MoHSP</b>	<b>LSGUs, NPOs, IO, MoJ, MoI, MoESY</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>
II.3.1.a Drafting and approval of a specific instruction on the standards of service provision and operation of "One Stop Centers" for helping the children victims of sexual violence and other serious forms of violence. Ref: Lanzarote Convention (On the ratification of the Council of Europe on the protection of children against sexual abuse and exploitation)		Approved instruction	MoHSP, SAPCR	Partner	2022-2024
II.3.1.b Establishing models of specialized cross-sectoral services to immediately assist children victims of sexual abuse. Establishment and operation of centers for the treatment of victims of sexual abuse in 2-Municipalities;		Number of children victims of sexual abuse who benefit from specialized services, every year	SAPCR, MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026

II.3.1.c Drafting proposals for the establishment of specialized rehabilitation services for sexually abused children;	Proposals for a model of rehabilitation services	SAPCR, MoHSP	Partner	2022-2024
II.3.1.ç Developing cross-sectoral training programs for professionals for the provision of integrated services for children victims of sexual abuse and other serious forms of violence and their training (including child protection staff, justice system staff, health employees, education employees, etc.)	Number of professionals trained each year	NCCE, MoHSP, MoI, MoJ (School of Magistrates)	Partner	2022-2026
II.3.1.d Drafting and approval of an inter-institutional agreement for the establishment of a specialized group (police officers, prosecutors and internet service providers to investigate online crimes against children	Drafted and approved agreement	SAPCR, NAECCS, State Police, Prosecution Office	Partner	2022-2024
II.3.1.db Establishing a course system at the School of Magistrates and the Police Academy to increase the technical capacity and knowledge of young police officers, prosecutors and judges in terms of child protection measures, social services, cybercrime, digital data and online sexual abuse and child exploitation	Established course system	MoJ/MoHSP	Partner	2022-2024
II.3.1.e Capacity building for investigators and police officers specifically involved in the investigation of online child sexual abuse and exploitation.	Number and % of trained officers / investigators	MoHSP, MB		2021-2026
II.3.1.è Improving the capacity and infrastructure of the Forensic Science Laboratory of the Police to effectively collect and analyze digital data related to online crimes against children.	No. of cases of children whose data have been effectively analyzed	MoI, State Police		2021-2026
II.3.1.f Coordination with the responsible authority for cyber security (AKCESK) to coordinate the work to deal in real time through the reporting system / platform of sites with illegal content, reports made regarding the abuse and sexual exploitation of children on the Internet.	Upgrading the existing platform administered by NAECCS	EPCA, ISP		2022-2025
II.3.1.g Cooperation and coordination of training programs, with the authority responsible for cyber security (AKCESK) for capacity building of employees of institutions responsible for the protection and education of children (staff of the judiciary, prosecution and police, and institutions other law enforcement of the justice system), in order to increase the level of child safety in the online environment. Ref: National Cyber Security Strategy for 2020-2025	Number and % of trained employees	MoHSP, SAPCR, NAECCS	Partner, MoJ	2021-2026
<b>Strategic goal III:</b>	<b>Child and teen friendly systems and services</b>			
<b>Specific goal III.1:</b>	Equal opportunities for skills development and learning - from early childhood to adolescence			
<b>Expected result:</b>	Improving access to and quality of education in order to enable the inclusion of children, especially those in need			
<b>Indicator:</b>	First grade enrollment rate of children compared to the total number of children aged 6 – SDG Indicator	Baseline 2019: 81.5	Target 2026: 2% increase per year	
	School dropout rate	Baseline 2019: 0,5 % (year 2019)	Target 2026: 0.1% decrease per year	
	Number of children benefiting from the financial support mechanism (scholarships) for categories of children in need (DCM 854)	Baseline 2019: TBD	Target 2026: Increased by 5% each year	

MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES	RESULTS	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS	PARTNER INSTITUTIONS	DEADLINE
<b>III.1.1. Growth, well-being and learning during early childhood 0-3 years</b>		<b>MoHSP</b>	<b>MoESY, LGU</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>
<i>III.1.1.a Establishing a technical advisory committee by the National Council for the Rights and Protection of the Child, in order to develop a work plan or plan of measures regarding the coordination of roles among MoHSP, MoESY and LGU to increase welfare and learning during early childhood (0-3 years)</i>	<i>Established Technical Advisory Committee</i>	MoHSP	MoESY LGU	2022-2023
<i>III.1.1.b Drafting proposals on the amendments of legal acts and bylaws in force for the organization and coordination of services on early childhood care (0-3 years)</i>	<i>Drafted legal acts and bylaws</i>	MoHSP	MoESY, LGU	2022-2023
<i>III.1.1.c Communication campaign for positive parenting and physical and emotional care of children (0-3 years old)</i>	<i>No. of self-aware parents</i>	MoHSP, LGU	MoESY, LGU	2022-2023
<i>III.1.1.ç Establishing an inter-institutional working group for drafting the instructions for educators for the implementation of child development and learning standards (0-3 years old).</i>	<i>Established inter-institutional working group</i>	QAAPE	MoHSP, LGU	2022-2023
<i>III.1.1.d Developing an instruction and training package for educators for the implementation of child development and learning standards.</i>	<i>Drafted instruction</i>	QAAPE	LGU	2022-2023
<i>III.1.1.db Developing a quality assessment framework for the implementation of standards with relevant inspection instruments</i>	<i>Developed quality assessment framework on the implementation of standards</i>	QAAPE	LGU	2022-2023
<i>III.1.1.e Financial support / kindergarten bonus for low-income families to enable kindergarten attendance</i>	<i>Number of children supported with the nursery bonus</i>	MoFE, LGU	MoHSP	2022-2026
<b>III.1.2 Growth, development and learning in children 3-6 years old through a comprehensive and quality approach</b>		<b>MoESY</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>
<i>III.1.2.a Conducting a study on the recognition of obstacles encountered in the inclusion of children in preschool education</i>	<i>Study conducted to recognize the obstacles encountered in the inclusion of children in preschool education</i>	MoESY	LGU, QAAPE	2022-2023
<i>III.1.2.b Development of school readiness assessment tools regarding children in preparatory classes (5-6 years old)</i>	<i>Designed tools</i>	QAAPE		2022-2023
<i>III.1.2.c Financial support / kindergarten bonus for low-income families to enable public kindergarten attendance.</i>	<i>Number of children supported with the kindergarten bonus</i>	MoFE, LGU		2022-2026
<i>III.1.2.ç Inclusion of all children aged 5-6 years in the 3rd groups in kindergartens or preparatory classes, especially children of vulnerable categories (Measure defined in the Education Strategy A1.1.3)</i>	<i>No. of children aged 5-6 years attending kindergartens</i>	MoESY	GDPE	2022-2023

III.1.2.d Exclusion of Roma and Egyptian children aged 3-6 in preschool education from financial fees and meal payments. (Roma-Egyptian NAP)	No. of Roma and Egyptian children benefiting from the measure	Municipalities	LEO/RDPE/GDPE MoESY, LGU	2021-2026
III.1.2.db Development of capacity building tools at the local level for planning and budgeting in relation to early childhood education to achieve a higher inclusion of children from vulnerable groups(at least in 8 municipalities)	Designed tools	Municipalities	Partners	2022-2023
III.1.2.e Capacity building of municipal staff for the implementation of instruments (at least in 8 municipalities)	% of trained municipal employees	Municipalities	Partners	2023-2026
III.1.2.ë Awareness of parents and the community about the importance of preschool education. (Measure defined in the Education Strategy - A 1.1.1)	No. of awareness-raising activities	MoESY	QAAPE	2022-2023
III.1.2.f Capacity building of parents' associations / councils, including parents with disabilities, in order to engage effectively in preschool education issues	No. of associations and councils of trained and engaged parents	QAAPE	Partners	2022-2023
III.1.2.g Extending training to preschool teachers and kindergarten directors on the methodology of learning focused on children, including those with disabilities (based on learning development standards for children 3-6 years old). (in at least 8 municipalities)	No and % of trained teachers and directors	QAAPE	Partners	2022-2026
III.1.2.gj Drafting inspection framework tools for preschool education assessment	Designed tools	QAAPE	Partners	2022-2023
<b>III.1.3 Inclusive basic, lower secondary and higher education</b>		<b>MoESY</b>	<b>LGU, Education faculties</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>
III.1.3.a Full functioning of Pre-University Information Management System (PIMS). PIMS will be the database (regarding dropouts, disability, etc.) that will combine administrative data with learning outcomes. (Measure defined in the Education Strategy - B.2.1)	Functional information management system	MoESY, QSHA	Partner, MoFE	2021-2023
III.1.3.b Training teachers and other school actors to improve inclusive school practices	% of trained teachers	QAAPE, AKAFPK	Partner	2021-2023
III.1.3.c Establishing a model in support of children regarding basic skills (writing, language, mathematics). Special assistance programs for children from vulnerable groups with low learning outcomes	Designed support model	MoESY	QAAPE	2022-2023
III.1.3.ç Capacity building of teaching assistants and teachers working with deaf blind students. (Measure defined in the Education Strategy A2.1.2)	% of trained teachers	MoESY	QAAPE	2022-2023
III.1.3.d Drafting a cooperation agreement between MoHSP and MoESY, regarding the interaction between the multidisciplinary commissions for the evaluation of education for children with disabilities and the multidisciplinary Commission for the evaluation of the disability. (PWD Strategy)	Drafted agreement	MoHSP	MoESY	2022-2023
III.1.3.db Budget planning for the provision of didactic materials according to the specific requirements of different categories of children with disabilities (PWD Strategy)	% of budget for didactic materials	MoESY	Partner, LGU	2022-2023

III.1.3.e Transforming special schools to resource centers for the disabled children (Measure defined in the Education Strategy, A2.1.3)	No. of source schools for disability No. of children in special schools	MoESY	Partner	2023-2024
III.1.3.ē Awareness / empowerment of parents with children with disabilities in order to increase the participation and support of the children in the family, school, community as well as their access to basic services	No. of self-aware parents	MoESY	Partner	2022-2023
III.1.3.f Timely identification of Roma and Egyptian children who are old enough to be enrolled in preschool and basic education, as well as encouraging the inclusion in the compulsory education of students aged 6-16 who are not enrolled or have dropped out of school. (Roma-Egyptian PWD)	No. of identified Roma and Egyptian pupils No. of Roma and Egyptian pupils involved in compulsory education	School Directories	Child Protection Units, LEO	2021-2023
III.1.3.g Financial support for Roma and Egyptian children and vulnerable groups (Measure defined in the Education Strategy A2.1.6)	No. of Roma and Egyptian pupils supported by financial schemes	MoESY		2021-2023
III.1.3.gj Organizing special after-school programs for Roma and Egyptian children aged 6-16, who can be assisted in completing teaching tasks or receiving additional lessons. (Roma-Egyptian NAP)	No. of Roma and Egyptian pupils participating in post-school programs	LEO	MoESY	2022-2023
III.1.3.h Providing courses to build and develop basic literacy skills and life skills of Roma and Egyptian parents with lack of education, whose children attend compulsory education (Roma-Egyptian NAP)	No. of Roma and Egyptian parents attending the courses	LEO	MoESY, Partner (Roma NGOs)	2022-2023
III.1.3.i Strengthening the online practices of <i>akademia.al</i> , expanding the main materials of <i>akademia.al</i>	No. of teachers and students using the platform	MoESY	Partner	2021-2023
III.1.3.j Capacity building of teachers for the development of online learning contents - ICT major	% of trained teachers	MoESY	QAAPE	2022-2023
III.1.3.k Akelius online system for the groups which are the most difficult ones to be reached (migrants / refugees)	No. of persons using the online system	QAAPE/MoESY		2021-2022
III.1.3.l The system of prevention and early response to non-enrollment in school. Expansion of the implementation of the prevention system and early response to non-enrollment in school and student dropout from basic education (with special focus on children from vulnerable groups, boys and girls). (baseline - the system is currently implemented in 4 LGUs - Kukes, Korca, Lezha and Shkodra) (Measure defined in the Education Strategy A 2.3.1)	No. of identified students not enrolled in school No. of students enrolled in school due to intervention	MoESY	GDPE	2022-2023
III.1.3.ll Prevention and early response system to non-enrollment in school and dropout of students in higher and secondary education (with special focus on children from vulnerable groups, boys and girls)	No. of students enrolled in school due to intervention	MoESY	LGUs, Partner	2022-2026
III.1.3.m Capacity building of the student parliament and student government encouraging greater participation in school decision-making (tasks and responsibilities of student government)	% of trained parliament students	QAAPE		2022-2023

III.1.3.n Training of psychologists and social workers on gender equality. <i>Measure defined in the Education Strategy A.2.1.8)</i>	% of trained psychologists / social workers	QAAPE		2022-2023
III.1.3.nj Establishing entertainment and cultural services in LGU	10 established cultural centers	MoFE, LGU	MoESY, MoC	2022-2026
III.1.3.o Development of training modules / programs and resource materials for teachers that promote the citizenship competence and activism of children and adolescents.	Prepared materials	MoESY	Partner	2022-2024
<b>III.1.4 School based disaster risk management</b>		<b>MoESY</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
III.1.4.a Technical assistance to MoESY, local education offices and selected schools in order to develop a policy and plan on Disaster Risk Reduction in schools. (complementary to Education Strategy A.2.5.1)	Drafted and approved plan	MoESY	Partner	2022-2023
III.1.4.b Capacity building of teachers and school staff to implement the disaster risk reduction package in schools (complementary to SKA A.2.5.1)	% of trained teachers	QAAPE	Partner	2021-2023
<b>III.1.5 Career education and labor market training</b>		<b>MoESY</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
III.1.5.a Preparing a career guideline model on the training of students for the labor market	Prepared guideline	QAAPE, AKAFPK	Partner	2022-2023
III.1.5.b Training of career education professionals in higher and secondary schools	No and % of trained professionals No and % of consulted children	QAAPE, AKAFPK	Partner	2023-2025
<b>Specific goal III.2:</b>	<b>Integrated social protection system, sensitive to the needs of children and families</b>			
<b>Expected result:</b>	Improving the access of children and adolescents in need to social protection programs			
<b>Indicator:</b>	Number of children living in families which benefit economic assistance		Baseline 2019: 100,905	Target 2026: 80,000 (3% decrease each year)
	Number of children benefiting from disability payments		Baseline 2019: 15,321)	Target 2026: 16,000 (1% increase per year)
	Number of Municipalities that have set up NARU structures according to legal provisions		Baseline 2020: 11	Target 2026: 35 (4 other municipalities per year)
	Number of services for children set up by the Social Fund		Baseline 2020: 9	Target 2026: 20 (2 new services per year)
	Number of centers transformed into community services for the children and the family		Baseline 2020: 0	Target 2026: 4
	Number of children in foster care		Baseline 2019: 369	Target 2026: 600 (10% increase per year)

III.2.1 Improving the access of children and adolescents in need to social protection programs		MoHSP	MoI/MoFE, NGOs, IOs	2021-2026
III.2.1.a Annual publication of the study "Measuring Income and Living Standards in Albania", including indicators of material deprivation of children	Annual publication of data on child poverty based on the EUROSTAT methodology	INST.AT	MoHSP	2021-2026
III.2.1.b Support packages for families with many children, beneficiaries of the economic assistance scheme	No. of families that benefit from packages approved by the normative act	MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
III.2.1.c Approval of the new Law on the children of the Republic of Albania: On financial treatment of children who lose one of their parents due to duty in the first line	Approval of the Law supporting this new scheme	MoHSP		2021-2022
III.2.1.ç Proposal of(technical and financial) options on the improvement of the economic protection (aid) system in order to effectively address material and monetary poverty, and the possibility of achieving the 'universal benefit of children'	Agreed document	MoHSP	MoFE, Partners	2021-2023
III.2.1.d Establishing a system model for cash transfers in situations of natural crisis, for families in need	Established mechanism	MoHSP, LGU	Partners	2021-2026
III.2.1.db Capacity building of LGU employees (social administrators in cooperation with NARU employees) to inform and support families that receive economic assistance in order to benefit from services and other social protection measures	% of trained employees	LGU, MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
III.2.1.e Realization of the integration of the three MIS systems through the improvement of the social service integration module in cash payments, including the categories of children in need, as well as the development of a plan of measures that includes all structures responsible for service delivery for children and families (Cash Payment, Baby Bonus, Vaccine Bonus, School Bonus, School Meals, Free Books)	DCM and the plan of MIS measures Annual report based on published MIS data	MoHSP, SSS	LGU, Partner	2021-2023
III.2.1.ë Updating the guidelines for municipalities / regions on drafting social plans, including the protection of children from violence / abuse.	Guideline approved by Ministerial Order % of LGU with approved social plans	MoHSP	Partner	2022-2023
III.2.1.f Review of the DCM and the instruction on the distribution of the budget allocated to the social fund from the central budget.	Revised DCM and revised instruction	MoHSP		2021-2022
III.2.1.g Capacity building of LGU and relevant structures in order to apply and benefit from the social fund.	% of trained NARU	MoHSP, LGU		2021-2026
III.2.1.gj Developing Standard Procedures for pre-social services (information, counseling, psycho-social support) of Action for social workers responsible for case management in the provision of social care services to children and families (including CPU)	Approved procedures	MoHSP		2021-2023

III.2.1.b Developing and approving the methodology for assessing the satisfaction of service delivery for all categories, especially those with a focus on children	Methodology approved by Ministerial instruction	MoHSP, SSS		2022-2024
III.2.1.i Conducting a study on the approach and level of satisfaction of service delivery with a special focus on children	Published study	MoHSP	Partner	2022-2023
III.2.1.j Improving existing standards and drafting standards for new child social protection services including the costing of standards	No. of approved standards	MoHSP		2021-2022
III.2.1.k Drafting the regulatory framework on the procurement of services	Drafted and approved DCM and instructions	MoHSP		2021-2023
III.2.1.l Review of the DCM on licensing of services	Revised bylaw	MoHSP		2022-2023
III.2.1.ll Improvement and increase of integrated socio-health services through the Social Fund (specialized services for children including: children for all forms of abuse, victims of trafficking, children with disabilities, social health support houses of adolescents who have developed addictions, etc.).	No. of new social services for children No. of service recipients disaggregated by gender / service models	MoHSP, LGU	Partner	2021-2026
III.2.1.m Review of DCM on baby bonuses	Approved DCM	MoHSP	SSS	2022-2024
<b>III.2.2 Improving alternative care / service to advance the deinstitutionalization process</b>		MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
III.2.2.a Review of standards of child social care institutions.	Revised standards	MoHSP	SSS	2022-2023
III.2.2.b Establishment of specialized alternative care for children with mild disabilities. Ref: National deinstitutionalization plan 2020-2022	No. of families providing alternative care	MoHSP		2022-2024
III.2.2.c Establishing a functional referral mechanism and cooperation for early detection of abandonment cases. (designing a support package for this group of mothers, such as housing, employment, education, parenting education, early childcare, etc.). Ref: National deinstitutionalization plan 2020-2022	Trained NARU Established referral mechanism	MoHSP		2022-2023
III.2.2.ç Transforming public residential care centers into community-based services. Ref: National deinstitutionalization plan 2020-2022	No. of transformed centers	MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
III.2.2.d Modeling and piloting of quality alternative services, including specialized professional foster care service. Ref: National deinstitutionalization plan 2020-2022	No. of pilot services	MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
III.2.2.db Modeling procedures for reuniting the child with his biological family	Drafted and approved procedures	MoHSP	Partner, SSS	2021-2022
III.2.2.e Capacity building of professionals (CPU, NARU, prosecutor and court) to implement the national deinstitutionalization plan and the revised alternative care legislation (including the new legal framework for adoption) at the central and local level	No. of trained professionals according to the sector and geographical distribution	MoHSP, MoJ	Partner	2021-2026

III.2.2.ë Capacity building of CPU child protection officers and NARU social workers in relation to the process of early identification of vulnerable families, referrals, development of family empowerment plans and as a result development of the gatekeeping mechanism;	Number and % of child protection employees and social workers of NARU being trained	MoHSP	Partner	2021-2026
<b>Specific goal III.3:</b>	<b>Improving the health of children and adolescents</b>			
<b>Results:</b>	<b>Strengthening services in order to improve the health indicators of children and adolescents</b>			
<b>Indicators:</b>	Percentage of underweight children under 5 years old, (indicator reported by IPH).	Baseline 2018: 2.9	Target 2026: 2 pp decrease each year	
	Percentage of stunted children under 5 years old (indicator reported by IPH).	Baseline 2019: 11.3	Target 2026: 2 pp decrease each	
	Percentage of children exclusively breastfed up to 6 months (indicator reported by IPH).	Baseline 2019: 76.4	Target 2026: 2 pp increase each year	
	Number of neonatal intensive care units applying new neonatal care standards	Baseline 2020: 0	Target 2026: 3	
<b>III.3.1 Improving the health of children and adolescents</b>		<b>MoHSP</b>	<b>IPSH, HCSO</b>	<b>2021 -2026</b>
III.3.1.a. Establishing a working group to determine the band of pediatric age, adolescence and young age	Approved legal reviews	MoHSP	IPH / HCSO	2022-2023
III.3.1.b Review of guidelines and clinical protocols of health care regarding pregnant women and children in terms of primary health care (including antenatal care, postnatal care, nutrition of pregnant women and children and child development) and of neonatology in maternity hospitals for improvement of neonatal health care and the implementation of neonatal screening for the early identification of genetic diseases in children as well as other disorders.	Approval of at least 6 protocols and guidelines	MoHSP National Center of Quality Safety and Accreditation of Health Institutions HCSO Obstetric-Gynecology Service - Neonatology Service	IPH, Partner	2021 - 2023
III.3.1.c Training of health staff on the implementation of the revised protocols - primary and hospital health care (maternity hospitals)	No. of trained health staff	MoHSP HCSO/LHCU Obstetric-Gynecology Service - Neonatology Service	IPH	2022 – 2023
III.3.1.ç Organizing awareness-raising campaigns on care during pregnancy at home.	No. of trained pregnant women	IPH	HCSO/LHCU	2022-2026
III.3.1.d Providing training for parents on safe parenting during the first phase and adolescence.	No. of trained parents	HCSO/LHCU	IPH, MoESY, Partner	2022-2026

III.3.1.db Developing a communication and awareness-raising campaign on the involvement of children and young people in healthy behaviors focusing on reproductive health, sex education and legal and illegal drug abuse.	No. of self-aware children	IPH, HCSO/LHCU	MoESY, Partner	2022-2023
III.3.1.e Updating the user manual and training of personnel providing vaccination service, collection and entry of data in the vaccination health information system.	Updated manual	IPH- National Vaccination Program	HCSO/LHCU	2021-2022
III.3.1.ë Training of medical/ nurse staff and operators working in the vaccination system.	No. of trained health personnel	IPH- National Vaccination Program LHCU	HCSO, Partner	2023-2026
III.3.1.f Developing an information program and training with a focus on parents on issues related to the safety and necessity of vaccinating children.	No. of self-aware parents	IPH- National Vaccination Program LHCU	HCSO, Partner	2021-2026
III.3.1.g Strengthening the monitoring system of nutritional status and growth of children aged 0-5 years in Albania	Published annual reports	IPH, LHCU	MoHSP, Partner	2021-2026
III.3.1.gj Training of kindergarten and preschool education staff on the growth and psycho-motor development of the child	No. of trained staff No. of municipalities covered by training	HCSO/LHCU LGU	MoESY IPH	2022-2026
III.3.1.h Approval of the MoHSP operational plan on civil health emergencies, with a focus on ensuring the continuity of services for children and adolescents.	Approved plan which reflects the service needs for children	MoHSP		2021-2022
III.3.1.i Increasing the staff of psycho-social services in all levels of health system care at the hospital level – pediatric service	No. of additional staff (at least 30 psychologist/ social worker	MoFE, MoHSP, HCSO		2022-2026
III.3.1.j Establishing the working group and drafting of 'roadmap' steps on the development of health service capacities in schools	Step-by-step plan	IPH, HCSO/ LHCU health structure at schools	MoESY	2021-2022
III.3.1.k Training of school staff on sexual education of adolescents	No. of schools covered by training No. of staff in trained schools	MoESY	IPH, Partners	2022-2026
III.3.1.l Drafting an action plan on the development of mental health services, with a focus on services for young people and adolescents	Plan drafted and consulted with actors in the field of children's rights	MoHSP, HCSO	IPH, MoESY, Partners	2021-2022
III.3.1.ll Training of pedagogical staff in addressing mental health problems	No. of trained staff No. of schools covered by training	MoESY, MoHSP	IPH	2022-2026

III.3.1.m Drafting protocols on early identification of mental health issues and establishing referral networks with partner institutions	Approved protocols	MoHSP	IPH, Partner	2022-2023
III.3.1.n Drafting policies and standards on healthy eating and physical activity in the pre-school and 9-year system and the sale of drinks and food in commercial premises near educational institutions.	No. of drafted policies; No. of schools where the interventions have been implemented.	MoHSP, MoESY	Ministry of Agriculture, partner	2022-2026
<b>Specific goal III.4:</b>	<b>Child - friendly justice</b>			
<b>Expected result:</b>	<b>Improving justice for children by guaranteeing a child-friendly system and protecting their highest interests</b>			
<b>Atf Indicator:</b>	Number of children receiving free legal aid		Baseline 2019: 3	Target 2026: 50% increase each year
	Number of cases handled by the probation service		Baseline 2019: 218	Target 2026: 300 (at least 20 more cases each year)
	Number of children (14-18 years old) defendants under investigation reported by the prosecution		Baseline 2019: 111	Target 2026: 60 (10 fewer cases per year)
	Number of children treated with a protection order by court as victims of domestic violence		Baseline 2019: 208	Target 2026: 250 (10 more cases per year)
<b>III.4.1 Improving access to justice</b>				
III.4.1.a Establishing a working group and drafting of criteria on training, licensing and crediting of various professionals in the framework of the implementation of the juvenile code	Established working group Drafted, agreed, and approved criteria	MoJ, School of Magistrates, GDPS, SAPCHR, CPU, NCM, Court/HJC, Prosecutor/HPC, NPO/Projects		2021-2023
III.4.1.b Functioning of juvenile interviewing units, set up in 12 local police directorates and their use in interviewing juvenile victims, perpetrators and witnesses of criminal offenses	12 Maintenance systems No. of police officers trained in "Scientific techniques for interviewing juveniles" % of recorded interviews	MoI, State Police	Partner	2021-2026
III.4.1.c Providing restorative justice and mediation programs for children in conflict with the law	No. of children participating in restorative justice and mediation programs	MoJ, CPU, PS	Partner	2021-2026
III.4.1.ç Approval of a special law on statelessness	Approved law	MoI	Partner	2022-2025

III.4.1.d Capacity building of civil status employees for identification, registration and granting of statelessness status to children	No. of civil status employees trained throughout Albania	MoI	Partner	2021-2026
III.4.1.db Drafting a guide on the statelessness determination procedure of the stateless status in Albania	Drafted guideline	MoI	Partner	2022-2025
III.4.1.e Drafting and approval of a joint instruction between SAPCR and the Center for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Crimes for the management of cases of children in conflict with the law	Approved instruction	MoJ, SAPCR	Partner	2022-2023
III.4.1.ë Capacity building of the employees of the Center for the Prevention of Juvenile and Youth Crimes for the management of cases of children in conflict with the law	No. of trained employees	MoJ, SAPCR		2021-2026
III.4.1.f Capacity building of procedural representatives for the management of children in conflict with the law	No. of trained representatives	MoJ, SAPCR	MoHSP	2021-2026
III.4.1.g Drafting and approval of a new DCM to institutionalize the multi-sectoral and inter-institutional approach to the management of cases of children in conflict / contact with the law at the local level	Approved bylaw	PS, CPU		2022-2023
III.4.1.gj Extending the multi-sectoral and inter-institutional approach to the management of cases of children in conflict / contact with the law at the local level with the justice system	5 new jurisdictions Nr. of trained professionals No. of supported children in contact / conflict with law	PS, LGU, CPU SAPCR	Partner	2021-2024
III.4.1.b Drafting and reviewing PLE training modules on gender equality officers and local coordinators of domestic violence / child protection worker / PWD specialists / Roma and Egyptian specialists, victims of criminal proceedings, victims of trafficking, as well as other categories in need. Ref: Legal Education Strategy (4.1.1.c)	Designed and revised modules	PLE, MoJ, SAPCR		2022-2023
III.4.1.i Preparation and distribution of PLE materials on gender equality, GBV and domestic violence, victims of crime, victims of trafficking, children, women and other vulnerable groups, in an understandable language appropriate for PWDs, children and Roma and Egyptians. Ref: Legal Education Strategy (2.3.1.b)	No. of persons who are familiar with the prepared materials	PLE, MoJ, SAPCR		2021-2026
III.4.1.j Implementing the Council of Europe recommendations concerning children with imprisoned parents	New Juvenile Justice Strategy including EU recommendations	MoJ	Partner	2022-2023
<b>Strategic goal IV:</b>	<b>Promoting children's rights in the digital world</b>			
<b>Specific goal IV.1:</b>	<b>Promoting children's rights in the digital world</b>			
<b>Expected result:</b>	<b>Creating a secure digital environment and empowering children to engage in the digital world</b>			
<b>Indicator:</b>	% of schools with adequate ICT infrastructure, including internet		Baseline 2020: To be decided	Target 2026: 80% of all schools

	Number of municipalities providing secure internet service for children and families in public facilities or institutions	Baseline 2020: 1	Target 2026: 10 (2 new municipalities each year)		
	Number of businesses engaged in promoting and protecting children's rights in the digital world	Baseline 2020: 3	Target 2026: 10 (2 new businesses each year)		
	Number of complaints reviewed by AMA on violations of children's rights	Baseline 2020: 39	Target 2026: 60 (5 more cases each year)		
MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES		RESULTS	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTIONS	PARTNER INSTITUTIONS	DEADLINE
<b>IV.1.1. Access and inclusion of children in the digital environment</b>			<b>MoESY, LGUs</b>	<b>NAIS, NAECCS</b>	<b>2021-2026</b>
<i>IV 1.1.a Creating the appropriate infrastructure for ICT use in schools as well as its maintenance. <b>A5.1 - National Education Strategy (2021-2026)</b></i>		<i>% of functional computers in schools</i>	<i>MoESY, LGUs</i>	<i>NAIS</i>	<i>2021-2026</i>
<i>IV 1.1.b Expanding the network of community-based digital training and online protection laboratories for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in at least 4 new municipalities</i> – <i>Training of community center staff on digital training and online protection modules in 4 municipalities</i> – <i>Installing wireless networks in community centers in 4 municipalities</i> – <i>Investing in additional digital equipment in the community centers of 4 municipalities</i>		<i>4 digital laboratories 40 persons</i> <i>4 Community Centers with equipment</i>	<i>LGUs</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2021-2023</i>
<i>IV 1.1.c Creating or improving public spaces with “Friendly WIFI” safe internet for children and families through initiatives to provide free internet access but at the same time filtered information, in order to promote and protect the rights of children and young people in the digital environment. * <b>National Cyber Security Strategy (2020-2025)</b></i>		<i>Public Spaces with filtered “Friendly WIFI” Internet</i>	<i>LGUs</i>	<i>In cooperation with the private sector, NAECCS</i>	<i>2021-2024</i>
<i>IV 1.1.d Extension of the BiblioTech model at the city libraries for digital training and online protection in 4 new municipalities</i> • <i>Purchase of equipment</i> • <i>Designing a digital literacy curriculum at Bibliotech’s</i> • <i>Training of 100 local library staff</i>		<i>Bibliotech corners at the libraries of 4 Municipalities</i> <i>No. of trained staff</i> <i>Completed curricula</i>	<i>LGUs</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2021-2026</i>
<b>IV.1.2 Learning and creativity in the digital environment</b>					
<i>IV.1.2.a Developing digital competence through increased use of ICT in all subjects</i> – <i>Inclusion of digital competence in teacher standards</i> – <i>Setting standards for achieving digital competence according to the format of the European Union</i> – <i>Inclusion of lower and upper secondary students in the national coding program</i> – <i>Inclusion of digital competence through information and communication technology in the first grade of basic education</i>		<i>Digital competence included in teacher standards</i> <i>Defined standards for achieving competence</i>	<i>MoESY, QAAPE</i>	<i>GDPE</i>	<i>2021-2026</i>

<i>* A5.2 - National Education Strategy (2021-2026)</i>				
<i>IV.1.2.b Raising students' awareness of Internet security, privacy, information sharing and antivirus. A5.1 - National Education Strategy (2021-2026) * National Cyber Security Strategy (2020-2025)</i>	<i>No. of self-aware students</i>	<i>CRIPPD, MoESY</i>	<i>Partner</i>	<i>2021-2026</i>
<i>IV.1.2.c Training of at least 100 girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)</i>	<i>100 girls</i>	<i>MoESY</i>	<i>NPO, international partner</i>	<i>2021-2024</i>
<b>IV.1.3. Respecting the ethics and the highest interest of the children in the digital environment</b>				
<i>IV.1.3.a Review of the Code of Conduct of the private sector (ISP, online platforms, innovation ecosystem, start-ups and business) in promoting and respecting children's rights in the digital environment * National Cyber Security Strategy (2020-2025)</i>	<i>Revised Code of Conduct</i>	<i>NAECCS SAPCR</i>	<i>NAECCS, Children's agency, private sector, EPCA</i>	<i>2021-2023</i>
<i>IV.1.3.b Training of private sector actors regarding the rights of children in the digital environment. * National Cyber Security Strategy (2020-2025)</i>	<i>Workshop with leading industry actors</i>	<i>MoHSP SAPCR</i>	<i>EPCA, NAECCS</i>	<i>2021-2023</i>
<i>IV.1.3.c Awareness of public actors, parents in particular, through conversations, roundtables, debates, etc. on the importance of digital development of children and their participation in the development of society. * National Cyber Security Strategy (2020-2025)</i>	<i>Organized roundtables</i>	<i>MoHSP SAPCR</i>	<i>NAECCS</i>	<i>2021-2025</i>
<i>IV.1.3.ε Drafting an inter-institutional agreement between SAPCR and AMA on the commitment to guarantee the implementation of ethics and the rights of the child in the audiovisual environment</i>	<i>Drafted inter-institutional agreement</i>	<i>SAPCR, AMA</i>		<i>2021-2023</i>
<i>IV.1.3.d Capacity building of local and national media journalists in order to implement the main principles in respecting children's rights in the media</i>	<i>No. of trained journalists</i>	<i>MoHSP, SAPCR, AMA</i>		<i>2021-2026</i>

# ANNEX 2 – COUNCIL OF MINISTERS DECISION



## VENDIM

Nr. 659, datë 3.11.2021

## PËR

### MIRATIMIN E AGJENDËS KOMBËTARE PËR TË DREJTAT E FËMIJËVE 2021-2026

Në mbështetje të nenit 100 të Kushtetutës dhe të shkronjës “b”, të nenit 39, të ligjit nr.18/2017, “Për të drejtat dhe mbrojtjen e fëmijës”, me propozimin e ministrit të Shëndetësisë dhe Mbrojtjes Sociale, Këshilli i Ministrave

## VENDOSI:

1. Miratimin e Agjendës Kombëtare për të Drejtat e Fëmijëve 2021-2026, sipas tekstit që i bashkëlidhet këtij vendimi dhe është pjesë përbërëse e tij.
2. Ngarkohen të gjitha ministritë dhe institucionet përgjegjëse për zbatimin e këtij vendimi.

Ky vendim hyn në fuqi pas botimit në “Fletoren zyrtare”.

**KRYEMINISTRI**

**EDIRAMA**

**MINISTRI I SHËNDETËSISË  
DHE MBROJTJES SOCIALE**

**OGËRTA MANASTIRLIU**