



**Government of Albania and United Nations
Programme of Cooperation
for
Sustainable Development 2017–2021**

2021 SUMMARY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT
FOR THE ALBANIA SDG ACCELERATION FUND PHASE I

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Executive Summary

Albania has been a Delivering as One country since its pilot phase started in 2007 and has completed two One Programmes cycles during 2007-2016 and in 2021 finalized the last year of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017-2021.

The Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017–2021 is the third five-year programme developed under the Delivering-as-One approach. PoCSD was operationalised through biennial joint work plans, delivering USD 135 million over five years, with 80 percent provided by government and development partners in the country, including national, regional and global. More than 90 percent of the results planned at the beginning of the programme were achieved on time or are on track. Alignment of UN support with national plans was strengthened through monitoring of indicators against the results framework, joint annual reviews and reports and periodic dialogue with government and other partners.

In response to the 2030 Agenda call for integrated approaches across multiple sectors and goals, as well as collective action at all levels in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a joint Government of Albania and United Nations development cooperation funding mechanism, “SDG Acceleration Fund” (the Fund) was established in April 2018 upon signature of the Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA) with the Government of Albania to support integrated and multidimensional sustainable development activities for Albania’s achievement of the SDGs. The Fund is the re-branded mechanism of the former One UN Coherence Fund, established in 2007, and operates in full respect of human rights principles, promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment as of fundamental importance with multiplier effect for achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development as required by the UN GA Resolution 71/243¹.

Purpose

The objective of the SDG Acceleration Fund is to support integrated and coherent resource mobilization, allocation and disbursement - from the governments of Member States of the United Nations, inter-governmental or non-governmental organisations, or from private sources - to promote development and implementation of integrated activities to accelerate the achievement of SDGs in the priority areas outlined in the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020 and PoCSD 2017-2021, including but not limited to:

- ✦ Consolidate good governance, democracy, and the rule of law;
- ✦ Ensure social cohesion with focus on health, education, social protection, child protection and elimination of gender-based violence;
- ✦ Contribute to economic growth with greater focus on competitiveness, expanding employment opportunities and promoting sustainable rural development;
- ✦ Scale up actions towards a safe environment and climate change mitigation through sustainable use of resources.

Until the end of 2021, five joint projects / joint output work continued to be implemented with support from the Fund, ensuring strengthened UN coherence, coordination and collaboration in Albania, include:

Leave No One Behind (LNB) – The project is funded by Switzerland, represented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, with the joint participation of four UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA and in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies at central and local level. The project’s goal – system change for the improvement of social services and the participation of persons in need in public decision-

¹ Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

making – supports the vision of an overall inclusive Albania. This, in turn, is in line with the SDGs, and with Albania’s aspiration for EU accession. The project is implemented under Outcome 2 Social Inclusion, Output 2.3 Social inclusion and protection of the PoCSD 2017-2021. The project was completed on 31 July 2021.

End Violence against Women (EVAW) in Albania – The project is funded by Sweden, represented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, with the joint participation of three UN agencies of UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA and in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies at central and local level. The project’s goal – harmonizing legislation with international norms related to GB-VAW, to increase the number of and strengthen institutional mechanisms that prevent and address cases of GB-VAW and to develop and implement new tools that aid better understanding and prevention of GB-VAW. The project is implemented under Outcome 2 Social Inclusion, Output 2.5 Gender-based Violence of the PoCSD 2017-2021. The project is planned to be closed on 30 June 2022.

Earthquake response – implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, and implemented by UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO. The project’s goal –supporting the Government of Albania post-earthquake recovery efforts the areas of (i) education, (ii) economic recovery and resilience, including agriculture, (iii) community infrastructure, (iv) social protection, (v) child protection, and (vi) gender equality. The project is implemented under Outcome 4 Environment and Climate Change, Output 4.3 Earthquake Response of the PoCSD 2017-2021. The project is planned to be closed by end 31 December 2023.

Government of Norway contribution – The project is funded by the government of Norway, and implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, and implemented by UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, UNWOMEN, UNHCR, IOM, ILO, UNFPA and WHO. The project’s goal - (i) enhancing reception conditions at borders and ensuring systematic border monitoring; (ii) institutional capacity building for NRHIs and supporting Government to improve access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized groups; and (iii) effective management of natural resources supporting the green economy for a sustainable development of Vjosa Valley – Zagori. The initiatives are implemented under Outcome 1 Governance and Rule of Law, Output 1.1 Human Rights, Output 1.4 Access to Justice, and Output 1.6 Migration and Asylum and Outcome 4 Environment and Climate Change, Output 4.1 Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change and Output 4.2 Natural Resources of the PoCSD 2017-2021. The project was completed by mid-April 2022.

EU for Gender Equality in Albania—Implementation of the EU Gender Equality acquis – The project is funded by the European Union and implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, and implemented by UN agencies of UN Women, UNFPA. The project’s goal - enhance transposition of the EU Gender Equality *acquis* and achieving gender equality outcomes in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 5). The project is implemented under Outcome 1 Governance and Rule of Law, Output 1.5 Mainstreaming Gender and Gender Response Budgeting of the PoCSD 2017-2021. The project is planned to be closed by 31 March 2023.

The Albania SDG Acceleration Fund is seen as an enabler to streamline cooperation between donors with multiple UN agencies in an integrated way and offer a way for smaller contributors to participate in a larger project, thus leveraging the development impacts.

UNCT Albania has successful experience with joint programming, credited to well-established inter-agency coordination and collaboration, and is committed to generating more joint planning and joint programmes (JPs). Joint programming comprises 15–25 percent of UNCT Albania’s annual budget. By the end of 2021, twelve JPs were under implementation, three of which started that year. Five JPs are financed by the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund Phase I and two JPs by Phase II.

The UN joint programme “EU for Gender Equality in Albania—Implementation of the EU Gender Equality *acquis*”, which started implementation in 2021, has a particular significance for the UN in Albania not only due to its strategic importance but also as a model of partnership of the UN and the EU when it comes to promoting gender equality and ensuring that national policies and standards promote women’s full enjoyment of their human rights. Through this project, for the first time, the EU has agreed to share its contributions through the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, which mirrors the importance that the EU attributes to the principle of Delivering as One and of interagency coherence and collaboration. These efforts in support of SDG 5 on gender equality will continue during the implementation of the new UNSDCF 2022-2026, which includes a dedicated outcome on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The 2021 Progress Report of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017–2021 presents the collective actions and results of the nineteen UN entities working in Albania in 2021, made possible with funding from our partners, including through the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund.

These projects are implemented by a large number of actors such as UN organisations, Albanian Ministries, Local Government Units, Civil Society Organisations and target groups.

Partnerships with the Government of Albania, specifically with the offices of the prime minister and the deputy prime minister, line ministries and local government, were instrumental in supporting implementation of these interventions under the PoCSD in 2021 and the Agenda 2030 in the country. Key cooperation partners include Parliament, prime or deputy minister’s office, line ministries and other government bodies, including but not limited to the State Probation Services, the Albanian State Police, the School of Magistrates, and the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, National Institute for Statistics (INSTAT), Institute for Public Health (IPH), the Health Insurance Fund, national human rights institutions, National Authority for Electronic Certification and Cyber Security, Council of Ministers, courts, prosecutors’ offices, local governments, local Child Protection Units, Civil Society Organisations including women’s organisations, professional associations, Women Councillors’ Alliances, Youth Networks, the Refugee Organisation, Agency for Support to Local Government (ASLG), Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA), the Albanian Supreme Audit Institution (ALSAI), the Chamber of Notaries, electoral bodies, the alliance of women MPs, and political parties, academia, national and local media, the private sector, including banks, community organisations, European Union Commission, international bilateral donors and International Finance Institutions (IFIs).

Beyond the coordination among partners involved in the implementation of these projects, results are substantiated by additional projects and/or initiatives undertaken by UN agencies under the above-mentioned outputs and synergies are actively sought for and used to achieve the relevant outputs and outcomes that these joint projects/initiatives fall under in the PoCSD 2017-2021.

Two cross-cutting themes orient the projects: governance and gender equality, they will do so as an articulation of human rights principles and they are topics recurrently addressed in the policy dialogue in the projects’ Steering Committees and in the cooperation with all other partners of the project:

- The improvement of governance is at the centre of these projects, since the projects will be faced with governance issues at all levels: slow implementation of policies and strategies, limited availability of funding for social services and social inclusion, limited capacities of actors whose tasks include the planning and the provision of services, resistance against innovation, etc. The projects reacted to these challenges and promoted good governance by establishing and leading policy dialogue and cooperation mechanisms with central, local authorities, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders ensuring that the voice of the most vulnerable men and women is heard, by introducing concept of responsive service delivery and of social inclusion, reflecting good governance principles, and by strengthening the capacity of service providers at individual and at institutional levels. These were implemented in introducing transparent institutional procedures, in the management of the grant fund for innovative projects, when involving and consulting target groups and civil society organisations into the project’s implementation to better respond to their needs, when supporting the improvement of the interface and the cooperation between authorities and civil society organisations and target groups and involving the latter in monitoring of services provision.
- The promotion of gender equality was a regular dimension of the projects’ implementation. All of the projects’ interventions are gender sensitive. Majority of the target groups are women, since among the

vulnerable and marginalised groups, women make up for the largest part; when supporting the authorities at national and local levels, women and their specific perspectives and needs received special attention. The projects cooperated closely with the Ministry of Health and Social protection (MoHSP) and specialists of Gender Equality and Domestic Violence at municipality level as well as with women's alliances of municipal councils where they are set up to mainstream gender in social services planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Administrative Elements of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund Phase I

The Terms of Reference for the rebranded SDG Acceleration Fund, which set out the modus operandum and the responsibilities of the Government of Albania, United Nations Albania as well as the contributing Development Partners towards the Fund's implementation, were approved by Joint Executive Committee on 6 June 2018, co-signed by the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania and the UN Resident Coordinator.

The Joint Executive Committee (JEC)², in its role as the overseer of the overall contribution of the United Nations to Albania's development via the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021 (PoCSD), decides on specific allocations of resources from the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund. The allocation decisions are based on the relevant priority activities, including respective budgets and implementation partners, set out in the cooperation frameworks and government strategies in place.

On behalf of the UN in Albania, accountability lies with the UN Resident Coordinator for the overall management of the Fund, administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office in NY, as Administrative Agent, with UN Resident Coordinator Office serving as Secretariat.

All actions of the United Nations in Albania are organized through four Outcome Workplans, corresponding to the four Outcomes in the PoCSD. Actions financed by the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund are included in these Outcome Workplans. The work plans are prepared jointly with the government counterparts and are signed by the UN Resident Coordinator, relevant line ministers and UN Heads of agencies, who co-chair the Outcomes, and all contributing UN agencies. Government has a critical role in the discussion of priorities, monitoring of progress and mid-course adjustment.

Core reporting is provided through the annual, joint UN Progress Report against the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development. On a case by case basis, specific joint projects within the SDG Acceleration Fund may establish Steering Committees and agree to more detailed supplementary reporting, as agreed by the parties involved.

A new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022–2026 was signed on 25 October 2021 by the deputy prime minister, the UN Resident Coordinator and the heads of 19 UN agencies.³ This new Cooperation Framework marks the fourth of its kind in Albania and builds upon significant experience and built-in adjustments⁴ by the UN system in Albania as one of the first Delivering as One (DaO) pilot countries. In 2021, phase II of the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund was established to accompany UNSDCF 2022–2026 implementation, MoU signed in July 2021, while the current fund's closure date was extended to 31 December 2023, with JEC minutes of 11 October 2021, to allow for finalisation of the ongoing projects related mostly to gender acquis implementation and earthquake recovery response.

² The JEC is co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the UN Resident Coordinator (and composed of Government and the UN Country Team).

³ Three UN agencies—ITU, UNDRR and UNV—that were not signatories to the PoCSD 2017–2021 signed the new UNSDCF and committed to delivering across its results. However, IAEA will not participate in the UNSDCF implementation.

⁴ For example: 1, UN programme staff and partners have worked over two full previous cycles in joint inter-agency results groups and using JWPs where working methods and performance expectations are now considered 'business as usual'; 2, A joint fund for strategic, coordinated UN system work has been in continuous operation since 2007 and is a preferred funding modality for government and offers broad appeal to the international community.

Assessment of Results

Amidst Covid-19 and the earthquake-related challenges facing the country, during 2021, the fifth and final year of implementation of the current Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development (PoCSD) 2017–2021 was conducted in close cooperation with government (central and local level) and partners, duly operationalised by four Joint Work Plans (JWPs) prepared and signed jointly by the ministers or deputy ministers of the relevant implementing ministries and the heads of the contributing UN agencies. Coordinated by the four Outcome Results Groups, co-led by the heads of two UN agencies and the minister from the key implementing line ministry of the Outcome area, the implemented initiatives are attributed to advancing progress in three areas: 1, Governance and Rule of Law; 2, Social Cohesion; and 3, Environment and Climate Change.

The Fund’s interventions in 2021, assessed and matched against the SDG goals indicate focus on driving progress in achieving several SDGs such as SDG 4, 16, 1, 8, 5, 2, 17, 9, 10, 15, 11, 16. Attention on these SDGs, but not only, is in line with the focus of UN work in Albania, which is on building people centered governance, rule of law and human rights, ensuring quality education for all, reducing inequalities, building sustainable, resilient economic growth and resource management, and effective response and recovery from Covid-19 pandemic.

By end-2021, several key achievements were evidenced, as reported below, and supported by UN in Albania, for each of the four Outcomes. Reference is made to key SDG targets towards which these results contribute.

Outcome 1—Governance and Rule of Law

✦ **Human Rights:** SDG targets: 5.5, 16.2, 16.3, 16.6, 16.9, 16.10, 16.b, 17.18

✦ **Access to Justice—**SDG targets: 5.8, 5.a, 16.2, 16.3

✦ **Migration and Asylum—**SDG targets: 5.2, 8.7, 10.7, 10.b, 16.2, 16.3, 17.16, 17.18

The Government of Norway contribution has enabled UN agencies that work under the above three output areas to enhance reception conditions at borders and ensure systematic border monitoring: increase state capacities to manage mixed migration flows, with focus on un-accompanied minors, women at risk, victims/survivors of violence. In addition, institutional capacity building is evidenced for the National Human Rights Institutions and the Government improved access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

✦ **Mainstreaming Gender and Gender-Responsive Budgeting—**SDG targets: 5.1, 5.4, 5.c, 17.18

The UN joint programme “EU for Gender Equality in Albania—Implementation of the EU Gender Equality *acquis*”, which started implementation in 2021, has a particular significance for the UN in Albania not only due to its strategic importance but also as a model of partnership of the UN and the EU when it comes to promoting gender equality and ensuring that national policies and standards promote women’s full enjoyment of their human rights. Through this project, for the first time, the EU has agreed to share its contributions through the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, which mirrors the importance that the EU attributes to the principle of Delivering as One and of interagency coherence and collaboration. These efforts in support of SDG 5 on gender equality will continue during the implementation of the new UNSDCF 2022-2026, which includes a dedicated outcome on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Through UN support, 2021 saw some progress made towards gender-mainstreaming in legal and policy frameworks at the central and local level as well as in the national EU IPA programming documents in line with international and national GE commitments including the EU GE *acquis*.

Outcome 2—Social Cohesion

✦ **Social Inclusion and Protection—**SDG targets: 1.3, 3.7, 4.1, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 10.2, 11.10, 16.6

The UN joint LNB programme contributed to the rich legal and policy framework established in the area of social inclusion and social protection to be complemented with efforts to sustain implementation at the local level and clarify regulatory and financing frameworks. The UN contributed towards provision of direct

technical support at the local level to fulfill obligations linked to the provision and management of social care policy and services at the local level. This has included support that benefits all municipalities in Albania (e.g., methodologies linked to the planning, mapping and monitoring of local services, plus tools, guidelines and training materials to support detailed policy implementation), as well as specific support provided in selected municipalities to pilot test different mechanisms at the local and regional level, so as to learn practical lessons prior to facilitating the wider roll-out and scaling up of the range of initiatives to be undertaken by the partners in the coming years.

At the community and local level, vulnerable groups were empowered over their rights and entitlements to social services and participated meaningfully in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms. Municipal institutional capacities were strengthened in implementing social inclusion policies at the local level and providing inclusive services, while CSOs were enabled in holding municipal authorities accountable for social care services delivery.

✦ **Gender-Based Violence**—SDG targets: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 8.7, 16.1, 16.2

Credited to the UN joint programme End Violence against Women (EVAW) in Albania a solid legislation on GBV, developed and adopted with a strong contribution of UN agencies in previous years, and improved law implementation capacities of local actors and law enforcement agencies, tailored to the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, guaranteed access to specialized services and justice for women and girls, victims of GB–DV, including from marginalized and vulnerable groups despite ongoing isolation measures. An enhanced and improved national response to GB–DV and harassment in the workplace was in place by the end of 2021. Key achievements include, to name a few, a reduction in the percentage of women who have experienced physical violence in their lives, to 18 percent from 23.7 percent in 2017⁵, all municipalities have in place a functional Coordinated Referral Mechanism, from 27 (44%) in 2017, more than 4,000 cases of Gender based Violence (GBV) addressed through Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs), from 312 in 2017, and survivors of sexual violence receiving integrated support services from the multi-sectoral socio-medical staff at the LILIUM Centre.⁶ Civil society organisations and national human rights institutions now have a stronger voice in influencing policies, through monitoring and reporting on national legislation and international standards, seeking public accountability at local and national level, supporting survivors and challenging negative social norms on GBV to ensure that progress is being made on safeguarding that women and girls live a life free from violence. Government, for the first time, prioritised addressing child marriage and early union in its budgeted national policy framework. The National Gender Equality Strategy,⁷ the National Action Plan on LGBTI and the National Agenda for Child Rights approved in 2021⁸ contain objectives and measures to combat this harmful practice.

Outcome 4—Environment and Climate Change

✦ **DRR and Climate Change** – SDG targets: 7.2, 9.1, 11.2, 11.b, 12.1, 12.2, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 15.1, 15.3, 17.9

The initiatives implemented with the Norway contribution have contributed towards a more effective management of natural resources supporting the green economy for a sustainable development of Vjosa Valley – Zagori. Several achievements include: assessment of the natural and socio-economic potential in the area to provide a protection status to Vjosa River in line with EU and international standards, and at the same time support the development of a viable ecotourism offer; assessment of the ongoing eco-tourism initiatives and needs for improvement under the branding - ‘Vjosa wild river one of the few in Europe’ ; a bootcamp was put in motion followed by an accelerator programme for established tourism businesses to explore and develop new business ideas and potential startups in Permet. With the aim of identifying the potential for job creation in the green economy, and with a focus on women and youth in the upper Vjosa Valley, a research was conducted on labour market opportunities in the green economy sector, specifically tourism, applying the Market Systems Analysis methodology (MSA).⁹ Considering the importance of

⁵ <https://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/national-population-survey--violence-against-women-and-girls-in-.html>

⁶ The LILIUM Centre, named after the flower, is the first crisis management centre for sexual violence cases in Albania that provides integrated services to victims of sexual violence. All health-care services, forensic examination, evidence gathering through criminal justice, and psycho-social services are provided at the same time, at the same place, and by professionals dealing with cases of sexual violence. The centre serves as a model for similar services.

⁷ [Strategjia Kombetare per Barazine Gjinore 2021-2030.docx \(live.com\)](#)

⁸ [Agjenda Kombetare për të Drejtat e Femijeve 2021–2026. UNICEF Albania](#)

⁹ [ILO_MSA Tourism Sector in Vjosa river region](#)

developing sound communications and outreach strategies for promoting social entrepreneurship as an innovative approach for social inclusion and empowerment of women and girls, an initiative was launched for Promotion of social entrepreneurship and creating models for inclusive women owned social enterprises in the upper Vjosa river basin area. The Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-University Education developed a state-of-the-art methodology for climate change and DRR, increase the capacities of the education workforce on DRR, benefiting ten schools and 120 teachers in the Vjosa Valley–Zagori area, set up DRR commission in all ten schools, and prepare school plans for emergency preparedness.

✦ **Earthquake Response**—SDG targets: 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 2.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.a, 4.c, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.a, 5.b, 5.c, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.9, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5, 9.b, 10.2, 10.4, 11.4, 13.1, 16.2, 17.3

Aligned to PDNA and in collaboration with government to support the reconstruction and recovery efforts to Build Back Better,¹⁰ successful interventions supported national earthquake efforts in the areas of (i) education, (ii) economic recovery and resilience, (iii) agriculture, (iv) community infrastructure, (v) social protection, (vi) child protection, (vii) gender equality, and (viii) DRM. By the end of 2021, at least 5,000 children and parents and caregivers had benefitted from child protection in emergency services, 450 child protection professionals were capacitated to deliver quality protection services in emergency settings, 1,200 teachers were skilled in DRR strategies and other inclusive methodologies, 350,000 boys and girls accessed online learning, 35 households restored agriculture production and dependent livelihoods, 30 households were supported through guarantees and micro-finance credit lines. At least 777 women and girls were provided with livelihoods and essential services in areas affected by the earthquake, including psycho-social and legal aid, self-defense training and economic empowerment interventions.

Narrative Reporting on Implementation Progress

Government of Norway contribution – implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, and implemented by UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, UNWOMEN, UNHCR, IOM, ILO, UNFPA and WHO. The project's goal - (i) enhancing reception conditions at borders and ensuring systematic border monitoring; (ii) institutional capacity building for NRHIs and supporting Government to improve access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized groups; and (iii) effective management of natural resources supporting the green economy for a sustainable development of Vjosa Valley – Zagori. The initiatives are implemented under Outcome 1 Governance and Rule of Law, Output 1.1 Human Rights, Output 1.4 Access to Justice, and Output 1.6 Migration and Asylum and Outcome 4 Environment and Climate Change, Output 4.1 Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change and Output 4.2 Natural Resources of the PoCSD 2017-2021.

Enhanced reception conditions at borders and ensured systematic border monitoring: increased state capacities to manage mixed migration flows, with focus on un-accompanied minors, women at risk, victims/ survivors of violence

At the outbreak of the pandemic, UN Agencies contributing under this priority area focused their efforts primarily on the COVID-19 emergency response, which included direct assistance and measures to minimize and mitigate the posed risks in access to territory and asylum as well as to ease considerable economic hardships to affected refugees and asylum seekers in the country. Despite delays, activities were progressively back on track and implementing agencies, led by UNHCR, coordinated more closely activities to ensure cooperative interaction and partners' inputs in all the processes. It organized and facilitated monthly SDG coordination meetings with the UN Implementing partners (UNICEF, IOM, UN Women, UNFPA and WHO) aiming at harmonizing joint activities.

¹⁰ All construction will follow the Build Back Better (BBB) principle, applying sustainable building norms and providing an opportunity to sustainably reduce future risk. BBB will guide rebuilding stronger, safer and more disaster-resilient infrastructure and systems. This agenda will also contribute to building sustainable infrastructure. In terms of environmental sustainability considerations, the special measure will bring improvements to energy efficiency, which will be pursued through the reconstruction and rebuilding process of public buildings and at cultural heritage sites. This will help manage the carbon footprint for the buildings and sites and reduce cost for the beneficiaries.

UNHCR coordinated the organization of a series of joint UN agencies field assessment missions in the border adjacent areas of Korce and Gjirokaster, aiming at assessing the current practice regarding the identification and referral mechanisms of persons/groups with specific needs by Border and Migration Police, as well as the services provided to them by local institutions. UN agencies and Partners had meetings with different stakeholders¹¹, the arrangements of which was facilitated by UNHCR's field presence in both Korce and Gjirokaster. It also organized and facilitated, in April 2021, a roundtable, among UN agencies and the State Agency for the Child's Rights and Protection. Invaluable feedback was obtained regarding challenges and recommendations were proposed for the improvement of services and conditions for refugees and migrants. The collected information coupled with the visits to various reception facilities for asylum seekers and border crossing points¹², provided very rich information for analysis and resulted in the development of a comprehensive, evidence-based joint UN assessment report and a subsequent response action plan, forming the basis for targeted capacity-building activities for the remainder of the project.

After the UN joint field assessment mission, UN Women followed up with field meetings in the border of Korce to identify specific gaps with regards to identification and support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The missions identified lack of a system of referral for SGBV survivors, who does not have a definite legal status, such as asylum seekers. Border authorities do not have sufficient capacity to identify victims of SGBV during the pre-screening and provide sufficient information and services. This is also the case with local coordinators against domestic and gender-based violence of the Municipalities in Korce areas (Devoll and Kolonje), who need training on national and international law related to (non-national) SGBV survivors. To address some of these challenges, UN Women collaborated with Caritas Albania, to provide capacity support on respective procedures and mechanisms with relation to victims of SGBV to Border and Migration Police, as well as to local government stakeholders (service providers) in the two main entry border areas of Korce region.

UN Women through UNHCR Partner Caritas supported the reception center in the Korce border region by hiring three professional staff: a psychologist, a translator and a medical professional who provided immediate support to refugees and migrants in the temporary accommodation center, with a specific focus on potential women and girls victims of domestic and/or sexual violence. Through this intervention 383 women and girls had access to separate interviews with police officers with a woman interpreter in Arabic; 286 migrant women and girls had access to counselling sessions; 582 persons, of which 91 women and girls, had access to emergency medical assistance in the Temporary Accommodation Centre; 343 people, of which 121 women and girls, supported with medical items.

Relevant stakeholders have been engaged to improve coordinated support for survivors of VAW and GBV or potential victims of trafficking.

Furthermore, UN Women undertook a legal analysis of two laws (law on asylum and law on foreigners) to identify the gaps and provide recommendations to improve the legal framework. As a result, the new and revised Law on Foreigners was approved on June 24th, 2021 (Law no.79/2021), which partly embeds gender-sensitive provisions to ensure protection of migrant women and women asylum seekers as per the standards of the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW Concluding Observations. During the consultation process, UN Women Albania provided comments and recommendations on the draft law. Thanks to the adoption of one of these proposals, migrant women and women asylum seekers who are divorced due to domestic violence or other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) can now obtain permit for autonomous residency, regardless of the duration of their marriage or relationship.

UNHCR also coordinated the work on mapping of all current (governmental) SOPs (as well as national laws and Instructions). The aim of the mapping exercise was to serve as a reference point for the drafting of SOPs relating to identification and case management of persons with specific needs.

¹¹ BMP directors and officials, Anti-Trafficking Police, Caritas coordinators, People's Advocate, the Directors of Regional Public Health Institution, the Regional Directorates of State Social Services, the Director of Social Services in Municipalities, CPU and DV coordinators.

¹² Municipal Social Centres of Gjirokasterr and Erseka, the Temporary Reception Facilities of Kapshtica and Gerhot and Kakavia Border Checking Point.

Advocacy efforts were made related to the revision of the Pre-Screening Instruction, which regulates the access to territory and identification of vulnerable categories, through coordinated action of OSCE, UNHCR and IOM. The revision of the Pre-Screening Instruction did not mark any progress in 2021.

UNHCR coordinated with all UN agencies the joint organization of a two-day online workshop: “*Improving the identification, referral and case management of persons with specific needs*”, aiming at the capacity development of all frontline staff (from the Border and Migration Police, Anti-trafficking police, Child Protection Units and Domestic Violence Coordinators). As a result, 33 frontline protection staff were capacitated to better deliver services to vulnerable groups of refugees and migrants, with a focus on unaccompanied or separated children (UASC) and Victims of Trafficking (VoT). These results directly contribute to SDG targets 5.2, 8.7, 16.2, 16.3 and 17.18. It was also agreed that regardless of the improved national legal and normative framework, on-the-job training and coaching of the frontline staff is urgent.

UNHCR also coordinated a meeting among UN Partners and State Agency for the Protection of Children’s Rights to inform the latter of findings from the UN joint missions - particularly those related to challenges faced by CPU in the areas of Korce (including Kolonje and Devoll areas) and Gjirokaster – and to increase its engagement in project activities. Other UN joint meetings were organized by UNHCR aiming at coordinating fact-based advocacy action(s) at both local and central level for the full implementation of national legislation.

In December 2021, UNHCR, in collaboration with EASO, and in coordination with the relevant UN agencies (UNICEF, IOM and UN Women) organized two roundtables on ‘Access to the Asylum Procedure & Identification and Referral of Persons with Specific Needs’. The roundtables were held in Gjirokastra and Korca and benefited more than 40 participating stakeholders. Training materials (EASO Tool kit and UNHCR Vulnerability Tool) were translated in Albanian and distributed to all stakeholders.

UNICEF, together with UNHCR, took several pro-active advocacy steps to highlight the importance and utmost urgency of addressing the inadequate reception services for the UASC in Albania. The advocacy efforts related to UASC were based on the two core sets of significant evidence collected in 2019 and early 2020. From one hand, close monitoring of the National Reception Centre for Asylum-seekers (NRCA) in Babru, Tirana, has proven earlier anticipation about the overall worsening of the condition in which children and women were accommodated.

To address the situation, UNICEF work during 2021 focused on drafting a technical legal analysis around the regulatory framework and provided Government with a clear set of recommendations on what needs to change. A dedicated SoP for the case management of UASC was also drafted in consultation with the UN agencies and core stakeholders. The objective till the end of 2021 was to galvanize a joint UN advocacy with the new Government which will hopefully endorse them during 2022, and as such remove many legal and administrative barriers which currently prevent the UASC to fulfill their basic rights.

In parallel, active capacity-building in the southern border Municipalities supported 30 front - line professionals with dedicated case management skillset, while 60 members of technical interdisciplinary group members have been introduced to core concepts on the identification and provision of child protection services for Unaccompanied and Separated Children and respective pathways. Among other things, targeted professionals were equipped with the necessary learning skills to proactively identify among UASC cases, children affected by statelessness or at risk, and effectively activate referral/case management mechanisms.

As a result, 199 UASC received child-friendly assessments in 2021 and 7 of them have been supported with emergency sheltering, basic services and psycho-social support through UNICEF supported programmes.

UNICEF (through the Norway funding and other resources) supported the Albanian State Police to finalize the adaptation of child-friendly interview units in Berat and Gjirokaster, as well as to identify and prepare designs for five more police departments that could be adapted to conduct child-friendly interviews, per the requirements of the new Criminal Justice for Children Code. The premises comply with the normative standards for child-friendly interviews. The physical space is non-frightening for children and the equipment provided by UNICEF, together with the knowledge on how to use it, will help the law-

enforcement and justice authorities to record the interview and enable its use in subsequent stages of the criminal process with no need for the child to testify again and therefore it avoids their revictimization.

Conditions for children, women and girls in vulnerable situation improved in reception facilities in 2 Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centers for irregular migrants in Albania, supported by IOM. Specific interventions included the procurement and installment of (i) four fully furnished containers, for interviewing, Children Friendly Space, sanitary, and toilet container, in the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre in Kapshtice, Korçe; and (ii) one furnished container for interviewing in the Registration and Temporary Accommodation Centre in Gerhot, Gjirokastër. Containers were handed over to the Border and Migration Police (BMP), enabling BMP to conduct interviews in a warm and welcoming environment guaranteeing confidentiality and proper identification of migrant vulnerabilities. At the same time, the interventions aim at increasing availability and access to sanitary services in the context of the COVID-19 situation.

Continuous coordination is ongoing between IOM and the Ministry of the Interior as the lead institution responsible in the field of migration and anti-trafficking, specifically with the Sectors of Anti-Trafficking and Migration for the sustainability of interventions and in parallel engagement with Children State Agency, Ministry of Finance and Economy and employment offices that address these issues at the local level referenced to vulnerable categories including victims and potential victims of trafficking, unaccompanied migrant children etc.

During 2021, UNFPA, with support from UNHCR, strengthened capacity of local government stakeholders (municipality social protection units, regional health centers and other service providers in Korca and Gjirokastra regions) to address gender-based violence (GBV) through training on multisectoral response based on SOPs on GBV and the pre-screening instruction. The module for the training of members of the Coordinated Referral Mechanism was prepared by UNFPA and accredited by the Center for Continuous Education (Ministry of Health and Social Protection). The module contains information on the international and national legislation on GBV&DV, with particular focus on changes made during 2020, multi sectorial response against GBV&DV, the SOPs and the importance of using them during the case management, etc. As a result of UNFPA's intervention, improved tools and updated training modules are to be used for capacity development of state service providers.

WHO, with support from UNHCR, conducted a rapid assessment of the existing capacities, processes and tools that are used to manage the health needs of refugees and migrants at the border entry points in Korca and Kapshtica. This assessment also guided the subsequent establishment of a referral mechanism, capacity building of local government actors and development of a standard operating procedure for the management of health case services for refugees and migrants¹³.

In December 2021, in collaboration with implementing UN Agencies, and the UN Resident Coordinator, UNHCR, organized a high-level discussion in Tirana, to mark the end of the joint initiative. Key outcomes of the activities implemented under this initiative, findings of assessments and the results of targeted capacity development activities were highlighted during the discussion. Great emphasis was placed on the importance of fostering a dialogue among participants within the framework of Albania's international commitments and relevant policies and strategies to manage mixed movements of refugees and migrants.

Institutional capacity building for the National Human Rights Institutions ensured and Government supported to improve access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Solid foundations have been laid, with UN support, for an effective institutional cooperation with the National Human Rights Institutions and the Albanian Government towards improving access to justice for vulnerable and marginalized groups, including children. NHRIs capacity continued to be consolidated to perform a stronger monitoring role and advocacy towards further improvement and effective

¹³ WHO contribution consisted in (i) Conduction of Rapid assessment of the current situation of the capacities processes and tools used for the management of health of migrants/refugees at the points of entry; (ii) Development of SOP-s: protocol (s) on screening, case detection, case management and referral through consultation; (iii) Preparation of training materials and delivery of training to professionals of entry points Korca and Gjirokastra; (iv) Preparation of Manuals and informational leaflets.

implementation of national legislation in accordance with human rights obligations of the Government of Albania.

In support of the public oversight mechanisms (namely the Parliament, the People's Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination), UNICEF hired in June 2020 – until December 2022 a national consultant to offer close support to the Parliament and the NHRIs in advancing child rights legislative agenda and ensuring public oversight over child rights. At first this recruitment (initially planned to happen in March 2020) was postponed because due to the pandemic, the Parliament of Albania temporarily suspended its meetings, whereas NHRIs sent their staff to work from home. Otherwise, the public oversight mechanisms would not have maximised the benefits of this technical support opportunity during this downtime. Until the hiring of the consultant, however, UNICEF programme staff advocated with and provided technical assistance to these bodies, in particular for the maintenance of the legislative and oversight role of the Parliament, the monitoring functions of the National Ombudsperson over the situation of children in residential care institutions and juvenile detention facility, in recommending the public administration to properly address the rights of child victims of domestic violence, etc. People's Advocate (National Ombudsperson) encouraged and reinforced by UNICEF's support, issued several public calls during the quarantine months to properly respect, fulfil, and protect the rights of children, during the pandemic. This played a role in ensuring that child rights were present in various COVID-19 response plans and measures put in place by the Government.

With this grant combined with other resources, UNICEF has supported People's Advocate to adapt their way of thinking and conducting planned activities on child rights, in full respect of the social distancing restrictions. UNICEF signed in October 2020 a new partnership protocol with People's Advocate to support them with external expertise and communication equipment in a) monitoring implementation of child rights in the areas of criminal justice for children; social welfare and risk preparedness; as well as education; and b) keeping the dialogue with children, teachers, parents, Parliament and other public authorities for information-sharing, reporting and child rights promotion purposes. Through this support, the People's Advocate has hired two external experts to support the limited human resources of its Child Rights Protection and Promotion Section, within this NHRI. Through this support, People's Advocate monitored the conditions and treatment of children deprived of liberty in several police departments and in the specific juvenile penitentiary centre and issued official recommendations to law enforcement and justice institutions to address some situations that result in violations of child rights. During a roundtable with stakeholders, representatives of the Parliament, Ministry of Justice, General Department of Police (GDP) and of Prisons publicly committed to take these Ombudsperson's recommendations on board or indicated actions taken to comply with them. Almost as an immediate response to these recommendations, The GDP issued a circular to draw the attention of all police departments to ensure full implementation of children's procedural rights in criminal law processes, whereas Kavaja Juvenile penitentiary re-instituted the physical visits of family members to the detained juveniles. It is worth noting that prior to the People's Advocate recommendation, the detained children had not been able to meet with their parents and family members for over 15 months, due to social distancing measures imposed by the Government to counter COVID-19. Similarly, with UNICEF, Norwegian SDG fund support and other grants, the People's Advocate monitored the activities of municipalities and other public authorities at the local level on: a) offering social care and protection of children, particularly those at risk; and b) on the level of their preparedness in handling emergency situations and offering shock response to children in need and to their families. In December 2021, the People's Advocate officially launched the findings and recommendations of this monitoring in the presence of several Mayors and Deputy Mayors, the State Agency of Child Rights as well as the three Deputy Chairs of the Group of Parliamentarians "Friends of Children". While full implementation of these recommendations requires longer term monitoring, beyond the duration of the validity of this grant, the positive reaction of the various public authorities to the Ombudsperson's recommendations observed during this roundtable is considered a precondition to their successful future implementation.

UNICEF further supported the People's Advocate to translate in English and publish its Annual Report of 2019 as well as to develop and publish (in consultation with children) a caselaw book about the child rights violations cases handled by this Ombudsperson's institution. Particularly at this crucial time of human rights restrictions imposed by the pandemic, UNICEF supported the People's Advocate to maintain online

discussions with children and their families, through equipment provided to this NHRI for this purpose. People's Advocate, its Commissioner for Protection and Promotion of Child Rights and the Child Rights Sections within this NHRI organized open days activities with parents, children and teachers in schools, while keeping a very active online presence and dialogue with children. The publications, open days activities and the consultations with children directly contributed to strengthening the transparency of this National Human Rights Institution and improving the public trust, including children's trust in this institution. Indeed, the People's Advocate multiplied the number of complaints received directly by children (from 15 in 2020 to 102 in 2021). So did the overall number of cases brought on behalf of children or initiated by the People's Advocate (from 150 in 2019 to 195 cases in 2020 and to 226 cases in 2021). To maintain this growing trust to the institution, the People's Advocate has also increased the number of remedies provided to child rights violations cases (125 recommendations provided in 2021 and 99 recommendations provided in 2020 vs. 75 in 2019).

In parallel, UNDP continued to support the People's Advocate (PA) in providing remedies and upholding the human rights standards and gender considerations through development and implementation of a joint UNDP-PA work plan to support this institution in strengthening the dialogue with the public administration in ensuring implementation of the PA's recommendations. A further UNDP support to PA included the development of a national assessment report on the subsistence minimum standard, which is in the final stage, assessing the current economic, legal, and social situation with regard to the need to define and calculate subsistence minimum as the basis to provide a dignified living with basic services that should enable people to take an active part in society, regardless of their ability to work.

In partnership with UNDP, supported by the financial contribution of the Governments of Norway and Austria (ADC), PA's regional offices in collaboration with FLA centers and local NGOs have increased outreach to vulnerable groups in 16 municipalities¹⁴ of Albania, enabling PA and its regional offices to play their role as interlocutors of authorities at central and at local level. Supported by UNDP and in partnership with local NGOs, PA has placed a keen focus on improvement of public knowledge on human rights and fundamental freedoms; HRs protecting mechanisms to facilitate the lodging, as well as an effective response to violations of HRs and fundamental freedoms; and legal aid and access to justice of vulnerable people through legal education and legal awareness on HRs and legal aid through coordination at local level of services providers' efforts in areas where there are not yet established FLA centers.

In addition, in partnership with UNDP and in close collaboration with Civil Society Organizations, the People's Advocate has raised public awareness and promoted human rights through info sessions, organization of open days with municipal and other local state structures and in close coordination with local social service providers and Primary Free Legal Aid Centers in eight regions¹⁵ where these centers are established and function with UNDP support. PA has also been supported by UNDP to improve PA's accessibility and visibility as well as to improve public awareness and knowledge on PA's role and mission. Numerous visibility products, such as electronic newsletters, visuals, HD videos for social media, were developed and shared in social media on international days (for ex. 16-days of activism against VAW, etc.) but not only, to enhance accessibility of vulnerable individuals to the institution of PA, improve information sharing on PA's mission and strategic objectives, and to strengthen PA's role and profile (branding) as safeguard of human rights, freedoms, and lawful interests of citizens in Albania.

The Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination (CPD) increased its outreach to vulnerable groups, as customers of services provided under domestic laws, especially in remote areas, to address challenges to equal and unhindered access to basic services. This was enabled through the conducting of a study on 'customers in need status' covering eight municipalities,¹⁶ supported by UNDP in cooperation with local grass-root organisations. The action will serve to initiate approval of by-laws complementing the Law 'On the Electricity Service' to determine the status of 'Customer in Need' for marginalised minority groups such as Roma and Egyptians.¹⁷ Furthermore, 407 vulnerable individuals from Roma and Egyptian

¹⁴ Kukes, Librazhd, Himara, Gjirokastra, Pogradec, Prrenjas, Sarande, Shkoder, Vlore, Durres, Korca, Lezha, Fier, Rrogozhina, and Berat.

¹⁵ Vlora, Fier, Lezha, Peshkopia, Shkodra, Durres, Pogradec and Gjirokastra.

¹⁶ Berat, Durres, Elbasan, Fier, Korce, Pogradec, Shkoder and Tirane.

¹⁷ It will ensure Roma and Egyptians' right to access affordable electricity through strengthening the legal framework in fighting all forms of discrimination and inequality in accessing basic services.

families in need in the eight municipalities were informed of this CPD initiative and the advocacy campaign undertaken by grass-roots organisations. In addition, to improve Albanian jurisprudence regarding application of equality and non-discrimination principle in court rulings, UNDP supported CPD to draft a legal analysis of 300 court decisions where CPD has been a party. This study report on existing judicial practice highlights some key challenges in the interpretation of Law on Protection against Discrimination of 2010 and recommends a course of actions from responsible justice institutions to improve Albanian jurisprudence in this field and increase capacities of judges and lawyers in application of the domestic and ECHR standards on equality and non-discrimination.

With UNICEF support, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination developed in 2021 a child-friendly informative brochure on the Law on Protection from Discrimination¹⁸. This recently amended Law (in 2020) protects children from discrimination (in addition to adults). Information is key to increase children's demand for the redress offered by this human rights institution, and the engaging and easy-to-understand brochure helps to promote a non-discriminatory and inclusive culture, already from the early ages.

During the national lockdown (March-May 2020) UNICEF provided information and assistance to the Parliament on the legislative role it could play in addressing child marriage and other implementation challenges and gaps that stand on the way of full realization of the rights of children in the family law and criminal law area. As a result, on 27 May 2020, the Group of Parliamentarians "Friends of Children" conducted an online meeting where they required the Minister of Education to report on the way the online schooling was organized, delivered to, and accessed by children. Many members raised concerns over the access of the poorest children in the online learning opportunities and asked the Minister to think of additional measures to help those children likely to have stayed behind, to catch up with the level of their classmates prior to the beginning of the following academic year. At the same meeting, the "Friends of Children" discussed and approved the annual report of this Group of Parliamentarians, as well as agreed on the draft resolution accompanying it, together with the new annual workplan. This resolution, approved by the plenary meeting of the Parliament on June 18, 2020, pointed out not only the tasks that the Parliament set out to do for the subsequent year, but also officially requested the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of Justice, General Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Education and the State Agency for Child Rights to step up their efforts with a view to ensure services and budgeting for children, guarantee justice for children, particularly to victims of sexual abuse, deinstitutionalization, equitable access to education, etc.

The Parliament also organized one additional and important hearing session in 2020 with UNICEF support, on child rights and their situation during the pandemic, with the participation of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, youth groups, NHRIs and international partners like Save the Children, World Vision, UNICEF, and other UN agencies. Through the above-mentioned hearing sessions, the Parliament strengthens its public oversight role and holds the executive to account for the realization of child rights.

With UNICEF continued advocacy and sensitization of MPs, particularly the members of the "Friends of Children" caucus, children's legislative agenda advanced in 2020. Equipped by the UNICEF staff and dedicated child rights consultant with factual and scientific evidence over the positive effects of the salt iodization over children's health, the Parliament adopted the Universal Salt Iodization law, despite opposition by some representatives of the business community. The Parliament also approved amendments to the Domestic Violence Law and to the Anti-discrimination Law, designed to increase remedies, protection and services for child and adult victims.

With UNICEF support and advocacy, the Group of Parliamentarians "Friends of Children" successfully concluded its work in mid-2021. During 2021, the "Friends of Children" were heavily involved in the discussions and the adoption of legislation on mental health, on aliens, on asylum seeking and on the status of children in the care of the Republic.

¹⁸ www.unicef.org/albania/documents/ligji-për-mbrojtjen-nga-diskriminimi

With UNICEF advocacy and support, the new “Friends of Children” group (after the national elections) was reconstituted in November 2021, to mark the International Day of Children, chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament, and with a membership of over 50 MPs. To facilitate the transition between the former and the newly reconstituted “Friends of Children”, UNICEF published a summary of relevant child rights resources as well as summaries of the activities of the previous Group of Parliamentarians on child rights. UNICEF advocated with MPs and the Parliamentary structures, with a view to ensure that some core membership of the Group remained unchanged from the previous one and carried on to the reconstituted Group. UNICEF also supported the “Friends of Children” to share regionally in December 2021 the achievements and challenges in advancing the legislative agenda for children. One of the Deputy Chairs of the “Friends of Children” represented Albania and shared its best practices in the regional high-level consultation event “Parliamentarians for Children”, organized by UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO). Through this forum Albanian MPs were exposed, together with staff from the Parliament to a rich mosaic of national parliaments experiences. This forum was also an opportunity for the Albanian MPs to network with their peers. These results benefited of the kind support of the Embassy of Norway, through the SDG acceleration fund.

To strengthen the capacities of Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in ensuring implementation of the criminal justice for children code and national justice for children strategy, UNICEF supported the participation of two, relevant MoJ representatives in the UNICEF-organized International Access to Justice for Children Conference taking place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina during 25-27 February 2020. The conference was attended by representatives of governments and judiciaries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia and brought together professionals in the children’s equitable access to justice area all the way from Ireland to Japan. Not only were Albanian participants able to present their country’s work in advancing justice for children normative framework and children’s access to legal aid in their own country, but they were also exposed to diverse experiences from various countries in areas of juvenile justice, protection of children victims and witnesses, participation and right of children to be heard in civil/family and administrative proceedings, typologies of support to children participating in legal processes, the rights of children on the move, etc. As a result, the key professionals that benefitted of this international exposure, will be able to apply this learning in crucial implementation measures of the existing normative framework on children’s access to justice, may engage in measures to further advance the legislative/normative agenda in this regard and may also engage in training or transferring this knowledge and experience to other professionals participating to legal processes affecting children.

UNICEF supported the online training organised by the Albanian Bar Association with the attorneys designated to represent children in legal processes affecting them. UNICEF handled a specific session regarding the role of attorneys in improving the criminal justice for children's indicators. To aid members of the Bar Association in their interactions with child clients, UNICEF translated and published in Albanian language the *Guidelines on Child-Friendly Legal Assistance*, earlier developed by UNICEF ECARO¹⁹.

With the technical support provided by UNICEF in Albania and in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in February 2021, was completed the [“Four-Year Implementation Report of the National Agenda for the Right of Children 2016-2020”](#)²⁰. The Report was compiled relying on the information received from a total of 21 governmental entities at national level, 42 municipalities, and 10 international and local organization, reflecting their actions/measures undertaken in the past 4 years to fulfil the rights and needs of children and adolescents in Albania. The report brings forward the voices of children, collected through various efforts along the years. The Report marked an important milestone in the monitoring of the child rights realization and the accountability role carried out by the governmental institutions in this regard. Its content affirmed that only 49% of the actions planned originally under the National Action Plan of Children (Agenda) were fully realized, corresponding to 39% achieved indicators. Implementation lagged behind in various areas, while new challenges were, laying the foundation for the work towards drafting the new Agenda. In November 2021, [the “Agenda for the Right of the Child 2021-](#)

¹⁹ www.unicef.org/albania/documents/udhëzime-mbi-ndihmën-juridike-miqësore-për-fëmijët

²⁰ 4-year Implementation Report of the Agenda for the Rights of Children, accessible at: <https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/four-year-implementation-report-national-agenda-rights-children-2017-2020>

[2026](#)²¹ was approved by the Government of Albania. The drafting of this strategic document, with UNICEF technical assistance, was coordinated by an Inter-Ministerial Technical Working Group, led by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. The completion of the Agenda entailed a large consultation among a wide range of relevant institutions, including the local government, non-governmental organizations and children/adolescents. The Agenda largely stands in alignment with the European Union Strategy for Children, the priorities identified in the 2021 [Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents](#)²², and its high-level results linked with the Sustainable Development Goals' indicators. The commitment of the Government is to cover up to 60% of the planned activities. UNICEF will continue its efforts in annually monitoring the progress, and advocate for its effective implementation.

Effective management of natural resources supporting the green economy for a sustainable development of Vjosa Valley – Zagori

The Vjosa River is Albania's second largest river basin (approximately 6,808 km²) and is one of the longest transboundary rivers in the Balkan area. In Albania, the Vjosa catchment is shared among: Erseke, Permet, Gjirokastrë, Tepelene, Mallakastër, Fier, and Vlorë. Because the river has not been subjected to large damming or channeling schemes, it is considered one of the rare remaining natural flow regimes in Europe (National and International added value). Vjosa Valley-Zagori is part of the priority areas in the national strategy for the sustainable development of tourism 2019-2023, approved through the DCM No. 413, date 19.06.2019, for the tourism development and in the "Integrated Rural Development Program - 100 Village Program", which includes the coordination of multisectoral developmental interventions in the first 100 villages selected as the ones with high potentials of socio-economic development, agritourism and rural tourism, nature and environment, as well as cultural heritage. This program is part of the inter-sectoral strategy for rural and agricultural development 2014–2020, approved by DCM no 709, date 29.10.2014, and amended through the DCM No. 21, date 12.1.2018.

Contributing to achievement of SDG targets 3.d, 12.1, 13.1, 15.1, 15.3 and 15.5:

UNDP assessed the natural and socio-economic potential in the area to provide a protection status to Vjosa River in line with EU and international standards, and at the same time support the development of a viable ecotourism offer. Vulnerability and exposure to climate risks is being assessed in the lower parts of the river, for current and future climate impacts on agriculture, water resources, health, natural disasters, biodiversity, health, soil erosion and hydrogeology as part of the fourth national communication to UNFCCC.

It also assessed the ongoing eco-tourism initiatives and needs for improvement under the branding - 'Vjosa wild river one of the few in Europe' considered innovation in pandemic times including introduction of digital marketing as an irreversible trend focused on the following elements and profile of Permet-Zagoria destination management: tangible/intangible cultural heritage; local livelihoods and relationships with the environment; tourism and eco resources; confirmation of information related to local festivals/traditions; experience of the community with tourism; rapid assessment on the local participation in tourism management; clarification of a potential local networks/Destination Management Organizations; Actual accessibility/ distance from transport hubs and availability of tourism facilities.

In addition, a bootcamp was put in motion followed by an accelerator programme for established tourism businesses to explore and develop new business ideas and potential startups in Permet. In this regard, the participating businesses presented their products and services in the Opening of the Tourism season on March 14th together with the Mayor of Permet, UNDP Resident Representative and the Minister of Tourism and Environment.

The Municipality of Permet and surrounding areas are known for their biological diversity and authentic landscape. Hence, to introduce new approaches for the management of natural resources and climate action in the Vjosa Valley – Zagori, with a specific focus on sustainable use of land, forest, and water resources,

²¹ Agenda for the Rights and Protection of Children 2021-2026 accessible at: <https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/national-agenda-rights-child-2021-2026>

²² Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Albania, accessible at: <https://www.unicef.org/albania/documents/situation-analysis-children-and-adolescents-albania>

an ecotourism plan is developed that presents on how to plan tailor-made eco-friendly, responsible and sustainable tourism activities in the specific context of upper Vjosa as an ecotourism destination. A set of planning measures are included as building blocks of the development programs. An action plan with specific activities to develop communication and promotional material for the destination and its tourist products is included together with the development programs. The later will serve to develop and apply a local support schema to integrate relevant local products, services and natural assets into an economically viable Vjosa Valley – Zagoria Natural Park eco-tourism offer. Several non-UN initiatives already undertaken in Permet Municipality will serve as a baseline for the development of the local action plan: (i) Vjosa Eco-museum; (ii) National Park “Bredhi i Hotoves” Visitors InfoPoint; and (iii) Thermal Baths - Benje together with other attractions as Lengarica Canion, museums and protected cultural objects.

With the aim of identifying the potential for job creation in the green economy, and with a focus on women and youth in the upper Vjosa Valley, the ILO conducted research on labour market opportunities in the green economy sector, specifically tourism, applying the Market Systems Analysis methodology (MSA).²³ The methodology identified the root causes of prevailing constraints in the tourism sector value chain and generated knowledge on how to improve both employment opportunities and enterprise growth.

Considering the importance of developing sound communications and outreach strategies for promoting social entrepreneurship as an innovative approach for social inclusion and empowerment of women and girls, UN Women launched an initiative for Promotion of social entrepreneurship and creating models for inclusive women owned social enterprises in the upper Vjosa river basin area. The methodological approach for the outreach and awareness raising on social entrepreneurship was developed and concrete field activities for capacity building and outreaching to key stakeholders (Local governments, Civil Society organizations and other relevant players) took place in the first quarter of 2021.

An information video²⁴ was launched aimed at raising awareness on women’s social entrepreneurship in the Vjosa upper river basin, with focus on promoting and improving consumption of women’s products, with the aim of mitigating the economic consequences they are suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic. Communication and capacity strengthening plan was developed and piloted in selected municipalities with prospects for the same to be replicated and used by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection across the country, with the aim to increase women’s access to the social enterprises fund.

The intervention aims to support the establishment of at least 5 women owned social enterprises. UN Women finalized stakeholder mapping, an in-depth desk review, a survey launch and analysis, stakeholder interviews and the identification of potential beneficiaries. As a result of the stakeholder mapping exercise UN Women identified together 62 stakeholders from key public institutions; locally based stakeholders; International and bilateral Organizations; Private sector representatives; Other nationally/regionally based stakeholders. An online survey was shared with the stakeholders during the end of January-beginning of February 2021 with a response rate of 43%. The team carried out semi-structured interviews online with selected survey participants and held face-to-face meetings in person and per telephone. As a result, a list of 14 beneficiaries were identified: 8 informal women groups and 6 organizations that are not exclusively women-led but that are seen as potential candidates to become a social enterprise.

UNICEF worked with the Quality Assurance Agency of Pre-University Education (ASCAP) to develop a state-of-the-art methodology for climate change and DRR, increase the capacities of the education workforce on DRR, benefiting ten schools and 120 teachers in the Vjosa Valley–Zagori area, set up DRR commission in all ten schools, and prepare school plans for emergency preparedness. Raising awareness and schools’ capacities on environmental issues and DRR is an ongoing commitment of the Ministry of Education and Sport, UNICEF, and ASCAP. 1200 children have been participating in awareness activities with regard to the environmental issues²⁵. In this regard, UNICEF engaged in an agreement with ASCAP to revisit the CLEEN manual for environmental education for primary school by adding elements related to the new curriculum as well as updating a training methodology which includes among other areas disaster risk reduction as well as offer teachers with new skills on how to implement environmental education in

²³ [ILO - MSA Tourism Sector in Vjosa river region](#)

²⁴ <https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/videos?id=ffd995ed-7dde-4206-9cf3-a5f1e4f9c2ff>

²⁵ <https://www.ascap.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Modele-te-veprimtarive-mjedisorre-dhe-per-emergjencat.pdf>

the classroom and as part of the curricula. A mapping of the schools in the target regions of Vjosa e Siperme was developed and a list of the schools and teachers to be part of the project has been compiled (120 teachers and local education offices specialists). In the meantime, UNICEF has purchased 98 tablets as part of the school requests to be provided with the needed technology to be able to attend trainings on the CLEEN methodology. The tablets are being used also by students as part of the CLEEN methodology to conduct research work on environmental issues, respond to quizzes, present projects developed by the teachers, etc.

FAO's deliverables included: (i) finalization of the field study on sustainable use of land/soil, water and natural resources - 59 soil samples and 14 water samples collected for further analyses; specific soil analyses (22 indicators per sample) and water analyses (14 indicators per sample) started; (ii) production of Digital Maps on (a) risk of flooding (b) natural drainage (c) total available water (d) potential and actual risk of erosion (e) types of agriculture land (f) agro-ecological map, while completion of the database with land use data is ongoing; (iii) implementation of two workshops and field demonstration on land use, land erosion, and best practices for sustainable land use benefiting 48 persons (40% women) representing farmers, extension service providers, local agriculture departments; (iv) implementation of two workshops and field demonstration on water availability, floods, drainage and irrigation, and different climate change scenarios benefiting 56 participants (40% women) representing farmers, extension service providers, and local agriculture departments; (v) organization, in collaboration with Municipality of Permet, of the fair "Feed your roots", to promote local products and tourism culinary of the Permet area with participation of approximately 60 people and 20 farmers exhibited their typical products and demonstrated authentic recipes, intertwined with educational, cultural and social activities; (vi) implementation of four trainings on PDNA, CSA, and IPM to build local capacities for resilience to climate change benefiting 58 participants (69% women), representatives of farmers, agro-entrepreneurs, agri-tourism farms and holdings, agro-processing, local extension and emergency services. A study for 15 typical agriculture products to become GI products was developed.

WHO contributed to the development and implementation of Water Safety Plans (WSPs) in Small Scale Water Supply Systems (SSWSS) in Vjosa Valley – Zagori, specifically in Kutal, Piskove, Permet and Riban, Dishnice, Kelcyre. It conducted a mapping of the institutions who have responsibilities in the operation, management and safeguarding of water supply systems in the rural areas of Tirana region, Albania, introduced the WSP approach to the involved institutions, ensured engagement of the community and convening of the water safety plan (WSP) team, equipment of the WSP team with the step-by-step guidance and the sequential ready-to-use templates for conducting the work, and implementation of the six tasks of WSP in Small Scale Water Supply Systems (SSWSS).

EU for Gender Equality in Albania—Implementation of the EU Gender Equality *acquis* – funded by the European Union and implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, and implemented by UN agencies of UN Women, UNFPA. The project's goal - enhance transposition of the EU Gender Equality *acquis* and achieving gender equality outcomes in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 5). The project is implemented under Outcome 1 Governance and Rule of Law, Output 1.5 Mainstreaming Gender and Gender Response Budgeting of the PoCSD 2017-2021.

The government of Albania has made national and international commitments to advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) by adopting sound policies and laws that integrate the principle of gender equality (GE). Government recognises GE as one of the principles of its planning and budgeting process, which, over the years, has resulted in an increase in budget allocations for GE results.

Through UN support, 2021 saw significant progress made towards gender-mainstreaming in legal and policy frameworks at the central and local level as well as in the national EU IPA programming documents in line with international and national GE commitments including the EU GE *acquis*.

At the national level, two strategic documents were reviewed from a gender perspective (the government's Strategic Response to Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) III; Business and Investment

Development Strategy 2021–2027), five EU IPA III 2022 action documents (Good Governance and Public Administration; EU Integration Facility; Social Inclusion; Health; and Water) integrate GE goals and gender-responsive measures and indicators, and nine IPA Unit officials in the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoARD) were familiarised with gender mainstreaming approaches. In addition, regional cross-learning experiences were exchanged at a UN Women’s Gender Equality Facility meeting of practitioners in Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the local level, Gramsh Municipality signed the European Charter for Equality, 63 local officials in Elbasan, Gramsh, Gjirokaster and Tirana were familiarised with European Charter Guidelines on how to draft a Local Gender Action Plan and four such draft plans were developed.

A Youth Needs Analysis was conducted, supported by UNFPA, in the administrative units of Berzhite, Bulgarec, Kodovjat, Lunxheri, Shirgjan and Velipoja to support awareness raising, information sharing and capacity building of young boys and girls on GE issues including harmful practices that undermine GE. Five consultation meetings with the municipalities of Elbasan, Gramsh, Gjirokaster, Korca and Tirana took place to agree on the partnership between UNFPA and the respective municipalities and to mobilise the working group on gender-responsive youth development and youth-centred outreach at the local level. Furthermore, UNFPA conducted the elaboration of existing Municipality development plans for gender and youth aspects. Gender and youth perspective profile were developed for each of the Municipalities.

Leave No One Behind (LNB) – implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, with the joint participation of four UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and UNFPA and in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies at central and local level. The project’s goal – system change for the improvement of social services and the participation of persons in need in public decision-making – supports the vision of an overall inclusive Albania. This, in turn, is in line with the SDGs, and with Albania’s aspiration for EU accession. The project is implemented under Outcome 2 Social Inclusion, Output 2.3 Social inclusion and protection of the PoCSD 2017-2021.

The impact of poverty and social exclusion can be minimised, if not neutralised, with adequate and appropriate social protection and social inclusion policies. The government has undertaken three ambitious vertical reforms, of disability, cash assistance and social care services, but there is still need for measures, tools and standards for national and sub-national authorities to deliver integrated social protection that addresses the needs of men, women, boys and girls in Albania. National policies on social protection are not driven by periodic, nationally approved measurements of household or child poverty, while evidence of material and non-material deprivation does not feed directly into the design of any social protection measures and national social protection policies do not include national poverty reduction targets in line with the SDGs. A comprehensive social protection system is still being developed. Whereas national policies do outline a vision for an integrated social protection system, the system is still fragmented by other sectors (health, education, nutrition) and the vision is not backed up by adequately financed measures to enable implementation of the vision and address the gender-based and social determinants of poverty and social exclusion. The national information system for social protection still lags behind and is not a unified database collecting information on children who are beneficiaries of social protection programming. Spending on social protection is low, on cash benefits for families and children and particularly on social care services, and all national and local institutions dealing with social protection lack adequate resources. Pressure for fiscal discipline and reducing public debt has become an obstacle to identifying fiscal space for appropriate social protection budgets and financing a social protection floor.

Throughout 2021, UN in Albania promoted and supported a social protection system that works for all, especially those most at risk and hard to reach through implementation of three joint programmes: Leave no One Behind financed by the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund, and Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Delivery, and SDG Financing financed by the UN Joint SDG Fund.

Throughout 2021, through the Leave No One Behind (LNB) joint programme, UN agencies complemented the government’s efforts to roll-out the social protection reform by adopting a holistic and reinforcing approach to support comprising technical assistance, capacity building, advocacy, research and grant funding.

Empowerment of vulnerable groups at the community level to demand responsive and inclusive social care services

Vulnerable groups particularly Roma and Egyptians (R&E), PwD, youth and women and their CSOs are empowered with information, knowledge and advocacy skills on their rights and entitlements to social services and are actively engaged at the local and national level in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms²⁶ to demand their rights and influence policy planning and decision making. This engagement resulted in improved and inclusive local policies (inclusive local social care plans, establishment of new social care services) responsive to the needs of the vulnerable communities. Supported by UNDP, more than 1,800 R&E (371 families) benefitted from implementation of integrated social services in Fier, Kruja and Lezha, four community centres for children with disabilities (Korca, Puka, Roskovec and Shkodra) become operational, and staff from thirteen community centres strengthened their capacity building through online training and exchange visits, six organisations of PwD implemented small grant projects and strengthened their capacities for advocacy and networking and voicing the rights of their constituencies involving more than 400 PwD.

With the support of UN Women, more than 1,200 women and men in twelve municipalities raised their voice and participated in budgeting processes, 840 vulnerable women and girls, including youth, older women, rural women, women with disabilities and unemployed women, benefitted from training and awareness events and voiced their needs. About 20 percent of concerns raised were discussed with municipalities and will become priorities in the subsequent budget. In addition, capacities of local CSOs and LGUs were strengthened to activate, engage the community and women of all groups into participatory budgeting processes, 35 LGUs representatives from twelve target municipalities were involved in elaboration of local priorities for public consultation with women, and 30 representatives of local NGOs and activists and Prisma members were engaged in participatory budgeting.

Strengthening capacities of local governments in planning and budgeting and delivering adequate social care services, including innovative services at the local government level

All municipalities developed and costed social care plans, 36 of which (60%) were supported by LNB. In all, 25 municipalities (40%) implemented several innovative services for vulnerable groups with the potential of scaling up in other municipalities, enabling access to quality social care services to more than 17,000 R&E, PwD, women, youth and children (UNDP). Eleven municipalities²⁷ were assisted to develop and approve social care plans, fully costed and with clear targets to reach at least 60 percent of all children in poverty or a vulnerable situation in the municipality, and budget briefs that served to inform the decision making on the planning of expenditures for the financing of social care plan and social care services. All 61 municipalities have been supported through training and mentoring to populate and use the MIS for social care services (UNICEF). Five municipalities²⁸ were assisted to develop through consultative process five-year local social housing plans allowing them to assess and address the social housing needs of the most vulnerable in their territory (UNDP). Tirana Municipality is assisted to develop a Plan of Action for PwD, and one for R&E, that will form an integral part of the new Local Social Care Plan 2021–2025, which is also in development (UNDP). Seventeen municipalities were supported in implementing a social fund through grants allocated for innovative community-based social care services. In addition, protocols were developed for municipal social care service staff during Covid-19 and similar pandemics (UNDP). Working together with the welfare staff of the municipalities of Shkodra and Tirana, clear and practical work protocols for NARUs and social workers were developed, so that the municipalities can offer quality family assessment and counselling even in a crisis such as Covid-19. The standards are being used to train the staff of other municipalities (UNDP and UNICEF).

Further elaboration of policy and legal framework on social protection and social inclusion supported with establishment of public funding mechanisms at the national level

National institutions²⁹ advanced their cross-sectoral cooperation in consolidation and further development of the legal and regulatory policy framework on social inclusion and social care reforms in Albania, the design and use of the standardised data collection systems and data sharing protocols for monitoring and

²⁶ Forums of PwD, Participatory Gender-Budgeting Network, Local Partnership Models on SRH and Rights, Local Social Dialogue Groups, National Advocacy Platform-Youth Voice Network.

²⁷ Delvina, Devoll, Gramsh, Himara, Klos, Kolonje, Pustec, Selenica, Tepelena, Vau i Dejes, etc.

²⁸ Korca, Permet, Tirana, Vau i Dejes and Vlora.

²⁹ MoHSP, MeFE, MoESY, INSTAT.

analysis of national social inclusion policies and strategies. Recognising that the achievement of social inclusion and social protection requires concerted and well-targeted financial investments in the social sector over the longer-term, the LNB programme has provided valuable technical support and advice to the government linked to its development of state funding mechanisms for social inclusion. This includes support to MoHSP for monitoring of social inclusion indicators (Social Inclusion Policy Document, SIPD) and the writing of an evaluation report with conclusions and recommendations (UNDP); support to MoFE for: (1) completion of the social housing secondary legislation; (2) monitoring of the Social Housing Strategy (SHS) and development of the new action plan of SHS for the period 2021–2025; (3) development of guidelines for the development of local housing plans (UNDP); provision of technical assistance to the State Social Service for the mapping of social care services nationwide with the aim of supporting the latter and other concerned government institutions to identify gaps in the area of social care services, as well as to inform LNB’s internal planning of activities for further support to institutions providing social services for vulnerable groups at the sub-national level. The mapping results are expected to serve as a good basis for government policy dialogue and for civil society engagement (UNDP).

Other support provided by UNDP included strengthening of the partnership with academia and with QAAPE to (1) strengthen professional capacities of 1,000 assistant teachers for children with disabilities and encourage their cooperation with community-based centres and families and provision of integrated support services, and (2) documentation and sharing of good practices on cooperation of assistant teachers with families and social care service providers in supporting the development of children with disabilities.

In partnership with the Faculty of Social Sciences, UNICEF contributed to strengthening the social protection workforce through pre- and in-service curricula for social workers. The curriculum of three social work programmes in Elbasan, Shkodra and Tirana has been reviewed and revised to ensure that it reflects the social service legal framework, the new legal and professional requirement for the different types of social protection workforce working either in the municipalities or through direct service provision. About 600 social work students graduating with a bachelor degree will benefit from the new curricula during 2022–2024 and about 330 practising social workers have benefitted from the training programmes.

With UN Women support, the results of social exclusion, vulnerabilities and gender-based discrimination at the local level in 15 municipalities can finally be measured using the EU–INSTAT Survey on Income and Living Conditions as a baseline. INSTAT finalised gender-responsive mapping of links between social inclusion and vulnerabilities. The report is a key resource for future policy makers in the field of social protection, highlighting the peculiarities of women’s poverty in Albania in 15 municipalities and providing evidence that income-based poverty measures, complemented with material deprivation and social exclusion, increase gender inequality.

End Violence against Women (EVAW) in Albania – implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, with the joint participation of three UN agencies of UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA and in close partnership with relevant governmental bodies at central and local level. The project’s goal – harmonizing legislation with international norms related to GB-VAW, to increase the number of and strengthen institutional mechanisms that prevent and address cases of GB-VAW and to develop and implement new tools that aid better understanding and prevention of GB-VAW. The project is implemented under Outcome 2 Social Inclusion, Output 2.5 Gender-based Violence of the PoCSD 2017-2021.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) continues to be one of the most pervasive forms of violence in Albania, exacerbated by traditional perceptions of gender roles and patriarchal values. The 2019 VAWG Survey by INSTAT, UNDP and UN Women found that one in three women of age 18–74 years (36.6%) recently experienced one or more of five forms of violence (intimate partner violence, dating violence, non-partner violence, sexual harassment or stalking), while one in two (52.9%) had experienced it during their lifetime. The situation of women and girls, victims of gender-based and domestic violence (GB–DV) has worsened even more due to Covid-19 isolation, with limited access to specialised support services. The increasing trend of reported DV cases to the Albanian State Police reaffirms that such violence remains a persistent phenomenon in the country.

Progress has been achieved regarding the legal, normative and policy framework, especially in the area of domestic violence in line with international standards and the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) recommendations to Albania. Nevertheless, there are no legal provisions, nor a normative and policy framework for protecting victims of crimes such as stalking, harassment or sexual assault or violence outside family relations. Positive steps have been taken to further consolidate the multi-sectoral response to violence in family relations at the local level through Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs), covering 100 percent of the territory, and the recording and tracking DV cases system (Recording Violence in Albania, REVALB). However, the CRMs, especially those established recently, need consolidation. Offering services to victims of violence remains challenging. Women from disadvantaged groups face additional barriers to access these services. With the establishment of the first pilot centre for providing emergency multi-disciplinary specialised support services to sexual violence victims, much needs to be done to consolidate this type of service and scale up the referral centres in other regions in the country.

UN Women supported the development of the new Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) and its Action Plan (2021-2030) which was adopted by the Albanian Government in June 2021³⁰. The NSGE³¹ is harmonized with EU Strategy for GE and especially with EU GAP III 2021-2025 in all its strategic aims and objectives. An important development for this strategy is its specific focus on women and girls "in all their diversity" and its definition³². NSGE also includes important new areas relevant to gender equality, including green economy; digitalization; work-life balance; (rural) women's property rights; localization of gender mainstreaming policies (through the use of EU Charter for Equality and the preparation of Local Gender Action plans); the enhancement of actions related the implementation of Istanbul Convention, CEDAW, ILO Convention on the protection from harassment and violence in the world of work, and other international treaties focused on VAW and protection of human rights, etc. The Strategy also aims at a diversification of specialist support services to protect victims/survivors of violence tailored according to their needs and measures to ensure protection even during humanitarian crises and civil emergencies. Furthermore, activities that involve men and boys; prevention actions addressing harmful practices; establishment of effective perpetrator programs are key and concrete new directions of this strategy, which will have a significant impact on WE&GE and on reducing VAW&DV.³³

In November 2021, the Government of Albania approved³⁴ the National Action Plan on LGBTI+ persons (2021-2027)³⁵, with the technical support of UN Women and the Council of Europe, which aims at: (i) improving the access of LGBTI+ people to public services and specialized support services that are effective, of good quality, and available throughout the country, in accordance with their specific needs and national standards harmonized with European/international ones; (ii) ensuring protection and security for LGBTI+ people through improving the legal framework, its effective implementation, as well as increasing the access of LGBTI+ people to the justice system; (iii) creating an inclusive, accepting and non-discriminatory society against LGBTI+ people in Albania. Measures on the elimination of violence against LGBTI+ people are crosscutting in the Action Plan as well as the obligations of authorities to report on cases of violence and monitor protection measures. To this aim, the Action Plan requires the case management of LGBTI+ victims of domestic violence to be carried out through a coordinated multi-sectoral approach, through the work of Local Coordinators (LC) and members of the CRM Interdisciplinary Technical Team set up in all 61 municipalities in the country, as well as by engaging the Child Protection

³⁰ With CoM Decision No.400 dated 30.06.2021

³¹ NSGE is available English

³² Women and girls of different ages, from urban and rural areas, with a disability, from ethnic minorities, from LGBTI community, elderly, single mothers, abused, trafficked, asylum-seekers and migrants

³³ <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Strategjia-Kombetare-per-Barazine-Gjinore-2021-2030.docx>

³⁴ With CoM Decision No.700 dated 18.11.2021.

³⁵ National Action Plan on LGBTI+ persons (2021-2027) is available English <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/LGBTI-NAP-2021-2027-EN-final.pdf>

Units (CPUs) in case of LGBTI+ children victims of domestic violence. The Action Plan includes also distribution of indicative costs and financial resources for the implementation of measures

The UN Joint Programme on Elimination of Violence Against Women in Albania (EVAWIA), implemented by UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA, supported the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), women's CSOs and responsible state institutions to achieve the following tangible results:

- *Improved sub-legal DV framework, tailored to Covid-19 pandemic situation*
 - i) with UNDP support in partnership with MoHSP a new DCM no. 327/2021 was developed and adopted on 2 June 2021 based on revision of DCM no. 334/2011 on CRM functionality in line with the 2018 and 2020 DV Law amendments, the Istanbul Convention requirements and GREVIO recommendations. This DCM strengthens the sustainability of the Local DV Coordinator at the municipal level, provides for better cross-sectoral coordination among CRM members, provides for periodic monitoring of police officers by local DV coordinator and obliges municipalities to provide for budgeted basic specialised support services to GB-DV victims to mention a few; ii) with UNDP support in partnership with MoHSP a standardised protocol for CRMs members and professionals was developed and adopted to manage sexual violence cases at the local level through a coordinated multisectoral approach disseminated to all 61 municipalities; iii) the PA and Department of Public Administration with UNDP support developed and adopted a unified guideline to prevent and handle violence in the workplace; iv) state police with UNDP support developed a guide for police officer members of CRMs at the local level providing useful and practical steps on the management of domestic violence cases in accordance with the DV law amendments of 2018 and 2020; v) MoHSP with UN Women support finalised, and the Council of Ministers approved, the NSGE 2021–2030, its action plan, passport of indicators and costing according to Integrated Planning System Information System standards; vi) MoHSP in collaboration with UNDP developed a Commentary on the implementation of Law no. 9669/2016 'On measures against Domestic Violence' (amended), while recommendations issued by UN Women to protect victims of GBV were reflected in the approved law 'On the Status of Foreigners'. Additionally, with UN Women support, the Albanian State Police developed an e-Learning Course on the Policy against Harassment, including Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.
- *Enhanced and improved national response to gender based and domestic violence and harassment in the workplace (national and local level)*
 - i) A total of 45 local institutional response mechanisms (CRMs) were, with UNDP and UN Women support, further strengthened to prevent and effectively address DV at the local level through a multi-disciplinary and coordinated approach and 1,463 GB–DV cases recorded in the REVALB system as cases managed by CRM members; ii) 29 survivors of sexual violence (5 women, 21 girls, 3 boys) were provided with integrated support services by the multi-sectoral socio-medical staff at LILIUM Centre, under the leadership of MoHSP with UNDP support; and iii) ILO Convention 190 on 'Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the Workplace' was endorsed by the government of Albania and submitted for ratification to Parliament in early 2022.
- *Improved law implementation capacities of local actors and law enforcement agencies*

With UNDP support and in close partnership with MoHSP 20 Local Coordinators of Domestic Violence (LCDV) and more than 1,093 service providers at the local level were provided with training during the Covid-19 pandemic on three approved protocols in managing DV and sexual cases at the municipal level and recent DV law amendments. Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Armed Forces Academy, in collaboration with UNDP, trained 19 academic staff from the academy and 40 young students, women and men from the academy in the 'Policy and Procedures against Harassment and Sexual Harassment' aiming at building a safe environment free from all forms of violence harassment and sexual harassment. Furthermore, to ensure sustainability of future capacity building, 24 senior officials of the Albanian Armed Forces were trained through ToT on this policy and procedures. In partnership with the School of Magistrates and ASPA, supported by UNDP, 17 judges, prosecutors and 50 LCDV and municipal local staff from 36 municipalities and AUs were introduced for the first time to the Commentary on the Law 'On Measures against Violence in Family Relations'. In partnership with MoHSP and in collaboration with UNDP, 56 LCDV were trained in the newly approved DCM no.

327/2021 on the functioning of CRMs. Furthermore, with UNDP support, LCDV in 20 municipalities were trained in coordination and documentation of DV cases in the REVALB system.

In addition, through UN Women support, a total of 342 professionals from police, health care and social services in 15 municipalities are now better equipped to address GB–DV and provide support to survivors based on the national legal and policy framework. As a result of capacity building efforts of state and non-state service providers, a total of 1,637 women (and children) survivors of GB–DV, including more than 100 Roma women, women with disabilities and women from LGBTIQ+, benefitted from a host of specialized and coordinated services to escape a violence situation including psycho-social counselling, FLA, representation in court, obtaining I/POs and socio-economic reintegration services. In two municipalities - Kruje and Tropoje there was a 65% increase in cases reported to the referral mechanisms as a direct result of the support provided to the CRMs.

UN Women has continued to provide technical support to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection institution also for improving its accountability and reporting on actions for GE and against GB-VAW and DV: a) Report on the implementation of recommendations addressed to Albania by the Committee of Parties of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention); b) Report on the implementation of the agreed conclusions on ‘Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work’, adopted by the Commission at its sixty-first session, in March of 2017, as sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on behalf of the Government of Albania; c) Report prepared for the People’s Advocate in the frame of the report they deliver to the Assembly of Albania regarding violence against women, for the period January 2020 – September 2021; d) Report prepared for the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, in the frame of her next thematic report on “Violence and its impact on the right to health” which will be presented on Human Right Council on June 2022; e) Information prepared for OHCHR regarding “Femicide; f) Reporting for the Justice, Freedom and Security sub-committee (JFS) in the frame of EU Integration

UNFPA continued to build capacities of health-care and psycho-social care providers in implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on Multi-Sectoral Response to GBV. Eleven training workshops were delivered across the country improving knowledge and capacities of more than 200 health and social care workers on Violence Against Women (VAW)–DV, legislation, SOPs implementation, specialist support services, CRMs in their municipalities, addressing more effectively VAW–DV cases, and on health issues in civil emergencies. In addition, two round-tables with 40 women municipal councillors from Shkodra and Vlora municipalities were organised on the topic ‘The extended Alliance of Women Municipal Council Members in dialogue with Civil Society to fight GBV’, attended by representatives of civil society and local media. Ideas and initiatives will be addressed by both municipal councils in the 2022 budget to better serve the survivors of GBV and domestic violence and to prevent the phenomena in advance.

Furthermore, with UNICEF advocacy and technical support, the government of Albania for the first time prioritised addressing child marriage and early union in its budgeted national policy framework. Both the National Gender Equality Strategy³⁶ and the National Agenda for Child Rights approved in 2021³⁷ contain objectives and measures to combat this harmful practice. This is a first step towards addressing repeated observations from Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Albania, asking the state to tackle and reduce the phenomenon.

During Q4 2021, UNFPA initiated preparatory work for the CSOs and CEDAW shadow report with a focus on SRH-related issues.

In addition, UN Women continued its work on addressing violence against women in politics (VAWP) in the context of the national 2021 elections through collection of evidence and data on the scale and forms of VAWP, which is often manifested in, or influenced by, media. The report on “Violence against women

³⁶ Strategjia-Kombetare-per-Barazine-Gjinore-2021-2030.docx (live.com).

³⁷ Agjenda Kombetare për të Drejtat e Femijeve 2021–2026, UNICEF, Albania.

during elections and gender bias in the media coverage of the 2021 elections in Albania" was finalized, focusing on monitoring of media content (printed, online and social media) in the pre-and-post election period (including formation of the new Cabinet of Ministers), which will be used to improve the national legal framework.

To support empowerment of girls, UNICEF Albania marked the International Day of the Girl with the publication of two open letters to girls. In keeping with this year's theme of girl's encouragement to embrace Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) streams of education and professional life, two Albanian (female) engineers who are successfully building a career in Canada, wrote an open letter to Albanian girls about to make education or future career choices. These two letters concluded the one-year campaign 'Write a letter to a girl', initiated in October 2020 by UNICEF and UNFPA Albania, with a view to showing messages of support and encouragement to Albanian girls towards self-fulfilment and away from child marriage and early union.

Earthquake response – implemented through the modalities of Delivering as One mechanism, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, and implemented by UN agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO. The project's goal –supporting the Government of Albania post-earthquake recovery efforts the areas of (i) education, (ii) economic recovery and resilience, including agriculture, (iii) community infrastructure, (iv) social protection, (v) child protection, and (vi) gender equality. The project is implemented under Outcome 4 Environment and Climate Change, Output 4.3 Earthquake Response of the PoCSD 2017-2021.

The early days of 2020 found Albania mobilising efforts to recover from the devastating November 2019 earthquake (6.3 on the Richter Scale), from which 51 people died, more than 900 were injured, some 17,000 temporarily displaced, with more than 200,000 (7% of the population) in eleven municipalities³⁸ affected, and thousands of buildings destroyed or seriously damaged, including public and private infrastructure, homes, schools and health-care facilities. The government, with rapid support from the international community, undertook immediate search and rescue operations quickly followed by short-term life-saving assistance for those displaced.

Government received immediate emergency support from UN agencies in Albania (UNDP, WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF; see publication *UN support for Albania earthquake recovery*).³⁹ A UN Disaster Assistance Coordination team organised by the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was attached to the support provided by the EU-led Civil Protection Team. Moreover, following the prime minister's request, the EU, UN and World Bank undertook a PDNA,⁴⁰ released on 5 February 2020 to support preparations for the Together for Albania Donor Conference,⁴¹ which resulted in pledges to an amount of EUR 1.15 billion. The UN received a medal of honour from the prime minister of Albania in appreciation of the organisation's rapid support during the immediate response phase.⁴²

Aligned to PDNA and in collaboration with government to support the reconstruction and recovery efforts to Build Back Better,⁴³ successful resource mobilisation efforts resulted in EUR 11.69 million unearmarked contributions to the Albania SDG Acceleration Fund from eight governments to support national earthquake efforts in the areas of (i) education, (ii) economic recovery and resilience, (iii)

³⁸ Durres, Kamza, Kavaja, Kruja, Kurbin, Lezha, Mirdita, Rrogozhina, Shijak, Tirana and Vora.

³⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/un_support_to_albania_earthquake_recovery.pdf

⁴⁰ Assessing the impact of the earthquake on affected sectors and populations, and studying the socio-economic development of affected districts and at a wider national level. It defined a recovery strategy with short-, medium- and long-term needs, priority actions and costing, as well as an intervention framework. The PDNA identified a total need of EUR 1.076 billion.

⁴¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/international-donors-conference-albania-earthquake_en

⁴² The certificate reads: "In recognition of the work of the Search and Rescue unit of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team for extraordinary dedication in the search and rescue of lives of those affected by the earthquake, and for selflessness shown by all members of the unit in professionally helping the people in need, in extreme conditions."

⁴³ All construction will follow the Build Back Better (BBB) principle, applying sustainable building norms and providing an opportunity to sustainably reduce future risk. BBB will guide rebuilding stronger, safer and more disaster-resilient infrastructure and systems. This agenda will also contribute to building sustainable infrastructure. In terms of environmental sustainability considerations, the special measure will bring improvements to energy efficiency, which will be pursued through the reconstruction and rebuilding process of public buildings and at cultural heritage sites. This will help manage the carbon footprint for the buildings and sites and reduce cost for the beneficiaries.

agriculture, (iv) community infrastructure, (v) social protection, (vi) child protection, (vii) gender equality, and (viii) DRM.

UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, FAO) supported government in identifying and addressing areas of emergency support and immediate need, aiming to reduce the impact on the poorest, and other vulnerable groups.

Education

Planning for education interventions has been challenging following the Covid-19 curve of infections and measures in place, switching from online events to face-to-face or vice versa, requiring increased efforts.

Continuation of the learning process has been enabled through strengthening of the online platform [Akademi.al](#) with focus on the most vulnerable children. Some 450,000 children, teachers and parents have used the platform, 200,000 virtual classes have taken place, 20,127 video lessons have been developed and made available online, including 1,000 videos prepared for children with hearing and vision difficulties while new interactive and high-quality pre-school content is being added to the platform.

In efforts to reduce the digital divide, UNICEF supported expansion of the lessons provided on Albanian public television through the dedicated programme ‘RTSH Shkolla’, aiming to reach children who do not have access to devices and the Internet. To date, more than 100,000 children have been reached.

A total of 22 TechHubs have been set up in compulsory schools affected by the earthquake, benefitting 8,000 students. Schools were provided with 1,840 tablets and 24 smart boards. As part of the TechHubs initiative, UNICEF and ASCAP prepared a methodology for [teacher training in ICT](#) to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to use technology as a means to improve children learning outcomes. To date, 2,362 teachers have been trained, and 14,000 teachers have benefitted from peer learning experiences. UNICEF also supported ASCAP to develop ICT standards for teachers and that are approved by MoESY.

Competency-based training curricula were developed through combining international expertise with local partners, leading to 780 teachers trained.

As part of the interventions in reducing drop-out, UNICEF [supported directly 530 students in schools](#) affected by the earthquake with foundational skills and after-class remedial learning lessons in mathematics, early literacy and socio-emotional skills. To date, 950 teachers and 465 schools have been reached through teacher professional networks on the Early Warning System for school drop-out, including socio-emotional training.

Through the programme ‘Gender sensitive education at the pre-university level’ training modules have been prepared, 600 school psychologists and 205 school councils’ students have been trained and 458 psychologists have been assigned as gender focal points in the schools. The DRR programme covered 23 schools in Albania with teacher training (230 teachers, 600 school psychologists), peer support and sharing of experiences among teachers and schools, small grants to schools for addressing their recovery needs and a cutting-edge mobile app on DRR preparedness and policy recommendations to MoESY.

Economic Recovery and Resilience (ERR)

The ERR programme is supporting the private sector in Albania through implementation of two successfully tested methodologies: In Motion, and Supplier Development.

Following the training and qualification of 15 local consultants in the In Motion methodology, 36 micro-enterprises in Tirana are being supported with personalised assistance, trainings to improve their managerial skills, design support in improving the business image and grants for equipment and machinery.

With the support of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean and its experts, knowledge on the Supplier Development Methodology—an internationally tried and tested approach aiming to strengthen local value chains—has been transferred to UNDP Albania and to a team of local business consultants. The local team and eleven business consultants were trained in this methodology by

a team of international experts with more than 20 years of experience in implementing it, over a period of six months (90 hours of face-to-face training, 180 hours of online training and practical application of the methodology in a real company).

Eleven companies have indirectly benefitted from partial implementation of the Supplier Development Methodology as part of the Supplier Development Programme consultants' six-month training process, enabling them to increase capacities and, in some cases, improve their business performance.

Agriculture

The agriculture extension service increased skills and knowledge on the grant application procedures, with 48 farmers and entities trained to prepare and submit an application for the grant component, supported by FAO. In total, 44 prospected beneficiaries applied for grants (40 farmers and 4 agri-businesses), from among whom FAO signed a grant agreement with 34 beneficiaries. FAO is procuring pregnant heifers, construction of two cow barns and one piece of milking equipment to support four beneficiaries affected by the earthquake who could not access the grant programme due to their situation.

To improve farmers' access to formal financing sources, FAO examined both the demand and supply of the financial sector and identified related gaps between farmers and financial institutions. The report was shared with MoARD and relevant donors, and 30 farmers and extension service staff developed skills in financial literacy and micro-finance.

Technical capacities were strengthened, supported by FAO, for 20 professional staff, from the MoD Directorate of Civil Emergencies in Sendai framework implementation, and MoARD and INSTAT and relevant agencies in assessment of damages and losses caused by natural hazards and disasters in the agriculture sector.

The FAO methodology to assess damage and loss in the agriculture sector, in line with indicator C2 of the Sendai Framework and SDG Indicators 1.5.2 and 11.5.2 of DRR, will be institutionalised in close collaboration with the MoD (Civil Emergency), INSTAT and in coordination with other related line ministries. Consultation and capacity building was conducted for 35 technical staff from the Directorate of Civil Emergencies, MoARD, MoTE, MoI, prefectures, municipalities (Berat, Shkodra and Tirana), the State Authority for Geospatial Information and INSTAT who were involved in the assessment of damages and losses in the agriculture sector.

Community Infrastructure

The project 'Community Infrastructure Support (CIS)', which commenced on 1 December, 2021, will address the education sector recovery process after the earthquake. It aims to support Albanian citizens in Durres Municipality to improve their education outcomes, contributing to achievement of the targets of SDGs 4, 10 and 17.

After several rounds of consultation with national and local authorities in 2021, agreement was reached on the targeted facilities: namely three education facilities in Durres Municipality, two schools to be retrofitted and repaired and one kindergarten to be newly built, with strong emphasis on sustainability, inclusiveness, vulnerable groups and environmental protection. During the first month of implementation (December) the initial technical assessment of the targeted facilities was complete, enabling the preparations of the Terms of Reference for launching a request for proposal for identifying the design and supervision company.

Social Protection

The project 'Strengthening the social protection response after the earthquake in Albania (Earthquake Social Protection Response, ESPR)' addresses social inclusion, protection and the needs of the most vulnerable groups impacted by the November 2019 earthquake. The project aims to increase social and economic resilience of earthquake-affected communities in Durres, Kruja and Shijak. Social protection services delivered by the project integrate measures that aim for community resilience and increased transparency and voices. The government and local authorities have been supported to develop strategies

and action plans to respond to social issues in emergencies, and people and families impacted by the earthquake, those living in poverty, PwD, children, women, elderly, youth, ethnic minorities, people in rural areas and other vulnerable categories are empowered and supported through integrated social and employment services and transparency mechanisms.

UN efforts contribute to the achievement of SDGs 1, 5, 10 and 16. For SDG 1—No poverty—the project is supporting implementation of nationally and locally appropriate post-disaster social protection floors for all, including the poor and vulnerable groups. For SDG 5—Gender Equality—the project is providing support to earthquake-affected women and men, girls and boys through provision of integrated social protection services. For SDG 10—Reduced inequalities—the project is empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. For SDG 16—Peace, justice and accountable institutions—the project is supporting the municipalities of Durres, Kruja and Shijak to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels responding to the needs of households effected by the earthquake.

By end-2021, the project had supported more than 150 households with basic social services, provided psycho-social support for more than 300 children and their families, delivered training for 21 municipal officials in addressing needs for responding to emergency situations, supported three community initiatives to voice the issues of post-earthquake reconstruction and supported the preparation of protocols for social service providers at the municipal level.

Child Protection

Even two years after the earthquake, some of the affected families still reside in temporary shelters or homes. Their overall socio-economic situation has not improved, while the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic has worsened their childcare and protection ability. Unsurprisingly, the incidence of children’s early school drop-out, exposure to violence, trafficking, economic exploitation, and many other forms of abuse has increased. Against this backdrop, a weak protection system and a statutory child protection workforce shortage created a fertile ground for child abuse to grow undetected and unattended. UNICEF’s intervention provided needed assistance to people affected by the emergency and the respective national protection system. Such an approach enabled people in urgent need to be helped while strengthening the statutory workforce’s overall higher level of professional preparedness and response abilities.

In 2021, UNICEF delivered vital protection services to 1,423 children and 600 adults severely affected by the November 2019 earthquake, many still residing in temporary shelters and housing. This support consisted of community-based mental health and psycho-social counselling, edutainment, referral to needed social and health services, school catch-up classes, and delivery of teaching materials. Additionally, 223 children and 30 adults, who needed more in-depth psychological support, were assisted through dedicated counselling sessions.

A total of 6,000 books for children ‘Trinka and Sam: The day the Earth Shook,’ specially designed to facilitate children–parents discussion about the earthquake, fears, anxiety, and how to cope with them, were distributed and used as a tool to strengthen parenting skills.

UNICEF also provided on-the-job coaching in case management to 193 statutory child protection workers, strengthening the existing system workforce and allowing them to manage 256 cases of children (40 with disabilities) at medium to high risk of abuse and exploitation or violence. These efforts covered 20 administrative units and 40 geographic locations across the country. These results contributed directly to achievement of SDG target 16.2.

Due to the worsening situation with domestic violence and mental health, UNICEF initiated, together with the National Child Helpline ALO 116, *Raporto Tani*, a web-based reporting and help-seeking tool and mobile application in addition to the existing traditional phone line. As a result, ALO116 registered 32,116 calls and dealt with 1,055 cases from which 887 required child protection services and follow-up referrals. Both intervention streams contributed directly to acceleration of results towards SDGs 5.2 and 16.2.

Gender Equality

Women's resilience in eleven municipalities was supported and strengthened, and institutional capacities were built across these municipalities, contributing to SDG targets 5.1 and 11.b.2. More specifically:

- Partnerships have been established at the central and local levels, including contact points responsible for DRR-related interventions in eleven targeted municipalities and at the central level through MoD and the National Agency for Civil Protection.
- A total of 264 women and activists have engaged in four targeted municipalities in participatory local planning and budgeting processes, identifying GE-oriented needs and priorities for reconstruction efforts in eleven municipalities, including through budget planning and approval process at the local level.
- Women's needs related to property rights in the eleven target municipalities were addressed, as part of the reconstruction and construction efforts through legal information and concrete legal support. Fourteen awareness-raising activities targeting 225 beneficiaries were organised during 2021. Besides, 68 women and girls affected by the earthquake benefitted from free legal counselling and assistance with their property rights.
- More than 160 women have been assisted with psycho-social and primary legal aid services in the targeted municipalities. This was possible by offering direct psycho-social and legal services to women survivors, as well as a result of the efforts to strengthen the capacities of at least 454 service providers to address cases of GBV, including their capacity to provide information and support services to women survivors of GBV in all eleven affected communities. This significantly strengthened a coordinated response to address GBV cases, especially in emergencies, including Covid-19 and post-disaster situations.
- Significant results were also achieved in raising awareness and implementing behavioural change techniques on GBV using Empowerment through Self Defence (ESD) in several municipalities of Albania, including schools in areas affected by the 2019 earthquake. The capacities of 30 teachers were built during a seven-day ToT on ESD, organised after endorsement from MoESY. Besides, during the 16 Days of Activism, 493 girls and young women in twelve municipalities took part in the ESD bus-tour training and awareness campaign.
- A total of 20 local development practitioners from earthquake-affected municipalities have deepened their knowledge and understanding on gender-sensitive value chain analysis, as a result of a one-week training, aiming at strengthening local capacities and increasing the economic resilience of women and girls. The value chain analysis was prepared by UN Women for ten earthquake-damaged municipalities to strengthen women's economic empowerment. It aimed at identifying opportunities for employment, self-employment, expansion of productive activities and market access for vulnerable women and is orienting the next phase of direct support to at least seven value chains (2 ongoing in Kamza Municipality) of women beneficiaries in at least six municipalities. In Kamza, around 30 women are benefitting from the value chain interventions, while another 200 women are expected to benefit from the upcoming value chain interventions in 2022 in the other five municipalities. Another 20 women from Kamza have been empowered (ongoing) through a small business programme intervention.

Disaster Risk Management (DRM)

Interventions of the project 'Strengthening Capacities of Albanian Fire Protection and Rescue Service (AFPRS)' are fully in line with the national action for enhancing the effectiveness and performance of the decentralised firefighting service. The objective of the project is strengthening, modernising, increasing the standards, operational and response capacities of AFPRS through support to ten targeted municipal fire protection and rescue services, contributing to SDG 11.

By the end of 2021, partnerships were established at the central and local level, including contact points responsible for the Fire Protection and Rescue Service in ten targeted municipalities and at the central level for MoI, General Directorate of Fire Protection and Rescue Service (GDFPRS), and National Agency for Civil Protection. Logistical support (169 PPE for 8 municipalities, 3 fire trucks and 3 Urban Search and

Rescue (USAR) containers for 3 municipalities) is in the process of procurement. Three construction sites for building fire stations to improve the work condition and operativity of AFPRS have been selected and the process for the design project has started. Several training modules have been prepared for basic firefighter training and USAR trainings, and the modules sent to GDFPRS for comments and improvement.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Government of Norway contribution

The COVID-19 pandemic and the total or partial quarantine regimes it imposed caused delays in many of the planned activities where the face-to-face interventions of counterparts and partners were crucial. In time, with the proliferation of online tools and modalities of distance working, the situation improved, and some delayed actions picked up the pace. Nonetheless, the actual physical presence remained critical, in those circumstances when monitoring of the situation of vulnerable people was at stake. UN agencies have shown very strong adaptability throughout their programming and started using different techniques to also accommodate the need for physical presence, for instance traveling in small groups, organizing events in the outdoors, keeping kits for personal protective equipment always at hand, and rigorously monitoring and supporting the partners with the same.

- Although access to territory was not limited under the State of Natural Disaster, UNHCR and partners observed that it was generally constrained by additional border management measures between March and May 2020. Interceptions and pre-screening of new arrivals resumed more systematically from May, though with reports of persons (including UASC- unaccompanied or separated children) being returned to Greece, without related safeguards, despite having expressed an intention to seek asylum in Albania. By the end of the year, only 50 asylum referrals had been made since April, limiting the scope of support that UNHCR and partners were able to provide to asylum seekers present in the country. In 2021, in line with the continued trend, only 85 arrivals were referred to the asylum procedure. Through UNHCR's field presence in Gjirokaster and Korce, implementing agencies have kept abreast of operational developments affecting persons with vulnerabilities, feeding into subsequent advocacy interventions to address the deteriorating situation regarding access to territory and asylum of persons with specific needs. UNHCR continues to engage and advocate with high-level counterparts in coordination with key international partners (e.g. EU Delegation). However, as of the end of 2021, the referral to the asylum procedure of persons seeking international protection has not been restored. Provision of information on rights and duties, as well as counselling on integration options available, to new arrivals, including persons with specific needs remain a challenge. Lack of qualified interpreters/cultural mediators, trained in migration and asylum issues, further compounds this challenge. There is also an absence of a common procedure used at national level for the identification of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).
- Supporting children at risk of and already affected by statelessness was one of the focus areas for this program, however, this component suffered significant setbacks, because a large part of support was dependent on functional courts and available workforce. During the first two-quarters of the year, the pandemic almost fully paralyzed the proper functionality of the court houses and justice system services, hence the backlog of cases grew exponentially. UNICEF had to put on hold series of planned interventions such as training courses planned for the civil registry staff, prepare options for online substitution, and engage more civil society partners to coverup the gaps created by people being absent due to the virus.
- Legal gaps and inconsistencies in provision or lack thereof of social services for irregular migrants posed a challenge in engaging and building capacities of government stakeholders in border areas. To address this challenge UN Women undertook a legal analysis of two laws (law on asylum and law on foreigners) to identify the gaps and provide recommendations to improve the legal framework. Advocacy efforts were undertaken to reflect these recommendations.
- Although UN Women provided several recommendations to ensure protection of migrant women

and women asylum seekers as per the standards of the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW Concluding Observations very few measures were taken under considerations by both laws. UN Women will continue to lobby to ensure that sub-legal acts to operationalize the new Law on Asylum and the Law on Foreigner include provisions for women and girls survivors (or at higher risk of becoming victims of) violence and/or trafficking, and that pre-screening questionnaires include questions to help identify victims of violence

- The law on provision of social services does not ensure that non-nationals or non-residents are catered for with essential services (Law 121-2016)
- The COVID-19 pandemic deepened preexisting inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in the social, political, and economic sphere, especially for women and girls who are the most affected.

The findings of the UN Joint field assessment missions, related to the challenges meeting stakeholders in the identification and referral of persons with specific needs in the border areas, revealed that there are many areas which need broader intervention at national level. However, these identified gaps are beyond the scope of this project, due to budget limitations as well as its territorial areas of focus – Korce and Gjirokaster. Therefore, a broader approach is needed, as well as enhanced synergies between UN Agencies and other programs, in order to support the response to identified issues and ensure that persons with specific needs receive the protection and support they need and are entitled to.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, particularly the measures to avoid gatherings, open days activities with the People’s Advocate were adjusted to be intensively conducted during those time windows when the measures were relatively relaxed, and the school year was ongoing. This required full preparedness, agile action and flexibility that UNICEF and People’s Advocate were able to handle.

UNICEF has supported the People’s Advocate with two additional staff to the Child Rights Section. With this additional staff the Section was able to complete so much and visibly increase both the number of child rights complains it received, including those directly put forward by children, but also the number of remedial actions it took to address those complaints and child rights violations. A remaining challenge that UNICEF hopes to support the People’s Advocate to address is making this causal effect between increased resources and better outcomes for children more visible towards the Parliament and other public decision makers, with a view to support People’s Advocate in successfully advocating for more resources and independence.

People’s Advocate received in 2020 a smaller budget than that of the previous year and the budgetary situation did not change in 2021. Had it not been for the support UNICEF provided through this fund, this NHRI may have not been able to maintain its functions regarding child rights. However, the lesson that could be deduced is that human rights developments, such as the independence of National Human Rights Institutions, remain fragile and setbacks may be probable, particularly considering austerity measures that the Government and Parliament may need to take due to the pandemic.

A common feature of the sectorial/thematic Strategies and Action Plans in Albania is the disconnect that exists between the measures planned at the national and subnational level of governance, as well as the lack of collaboration regarding the measures’ implementation and reporting. In the framework of preparing the Four-Year Implementation Report on the National Action Plan for the Rights of Child, UNICEF in Albania invested special efforts in engaging the local government in the process. This meant several interactions with the 61 municipalities, translated in a prolonged process compared to what originally planned. However, the lesson learned out of this approach has been that the interaction with the local government is essential to present the situation with regards to how the actions planned in the national strategies reach children through services at the local level. It also brought to the process and in the report the richness of barriers and challenges of implementation at the local level, which is very different from that of policymaking at the national level.

[EU for Gender Equality in Albania—Implementation of the EU Gender Equality acquis](#)

Constitution of the new government following the parliamentary elections of April 2021 postponed the processes for the drafting of NSDI III. New legislative and parliamentary composition in September 2021 put on hold work with Parliament, while the pandemic applied less priority to work on gender and more on health.

Leave No One Behind (LNB)

The capacities and resources of the public administration responsible for social protection and social services remain limited at all levels, both in terms of the number of staff, technical capacity and financial allocations. This was particularly striking during Covid-19 lockdown, where the public administration at the central, but particularly the local, level showed weak disaster management capacities to identify vulnerable segments and respond to their needs quickly. An unclear division of roles was noted between national and local government that are a prerequisite for a well-coordinated and targeted response in emergency situations. The lack of clarity created difficulties in transferring the integration social service model to targeted municipalities, which faced increased demands from the R&E communities for a broad range of social services: health, education, social and economic. UN agencies maintained persistent communication and coordination with beneficiary municipalities to ensure that those most in need received adequate support.

The pandemic expanded the typology of vulnerable groups beyond the R&E communities, with the elderly, particularly those living alone, people with chronic disease, women victims of GBV, unemployed persons, people suffering from mental health and depression, and rural youth, and widened the existing gaps and inequalities. The municipal social care services lacked any additional financing to cope with the pandemic and increase their outreach and had to re-orient their approach by coordinating with service providers from the civil society sector and international donors to respond to the demands of multiple vulnerable groups. The municipalities were mentored to adjust to the new reality and were supported with participatory tools for ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable were accounted for in the response measures.

The Covid-19 pandemic presented serious challenges for the budgetary allocations as LGUs had to respond to the financial and health crisis burden on social spending and social protection budgets, so that gender budgeting became even more challenging to address.

End Violence against Women (EVAW) in Albania

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to affect the support provided to all GB–DV cases reported at the local level. The parliamentary elections held on April 25, 2021 impacted the availability and cooperation of main governmental counterparts at the central and local level with a slowdown of activities. Being aware of the risks, UN agencies in partnership with MoHSP used a twin track approach to reach both central and local governmental authorities responsible for coordination and provision of specialised support services to GB–DV victims. UN agencies intensified partnerships with media outlets especially during the 16 Days of Activism campaign and beyond to maximise reaching out to the public. After the elections, the UN agencies continued to maintain a sharp focus at the local level ensuring that planned activities are delivered accordingly.

Earthquake response

The process of adoption of the National Platform for DRR and a National DRR Strategy and its Action Plan, which are the main entry points for engendering DRR in Albania, were delayed as a result of the June 2021 elections and the formation of a new government in September 2021. There have been ongoing high-level discussions about the re-configuration of the current National Civic Emergency Agency, which may have impacted its staff's full commitment in taking forward the commitments related to the National Strategy on DRR. Meanwhile, adoption of local DRR plans is dependent on the National Strategy, so work is expected to start during 2022. To strategically address this component of the intervention, a CSO with experience in supporting national authorities at the central and local levels in gender and the area of DRR, environment and climate change, including gender mainstreaming in relevant policies and programmes, will be contracted to implement this component during 2022.

Indicator Based Performance Assessment

Aiming at increased participation of stakeholders and groups in decision making, leading to more informed and sustainable policies, and more effective and accountable public institutions, the UN in Albania worked closely with all partners in 2021 to achieve the PoCSD outcomes, including mechanisms and processes for steering, review and adjustment. Progress reporting against PoCSD indicators uses official data provided

by INSTAT and the statistical bodies of line ministries, as well as administrative and programme-related data from cooperation partners.

UN in Albania interventions in this Summary Report were attributed to, or contributed to, achievement of the indicators under the relevant outcomes and outputs during PoCSD 2017–2021 implementation. Annex A provides the status of implementation of each indicator.

Joint efforts were particularly vested to respond to the needs that arose from both the earthquake and the Covid-19 crisis, supporting the most vulnerable communities in solidarity and leadership for coordinated, multi-lateral action with government and other partners.

With UN support under the PoCSD, government noticeably increased its ability to monitor progress on implementation of the recommendations from international Human Rights conventions, treaties and regular national reports, improve evidence for actions taken in line with observations and recommendations, and generate stronger political engagement from Parliament and the human rights institutions in the country to strengthen public accountability mechanisms and increase outreach to vulnerable people.

Government is paying more attention to gender equality, including significant advancement in women in leadership positions and political representation. Gender Equality is now a core principle in the Organic Budget Law (2016), enabling Albania to stand out among many European countries, representing a significant institutional change. Similarly, a wide array of sector policies includes an evidence-based statement on gender inequality in relevant sectors and provides for measures to combat the phenomenon.

Coverage and validity of mechanisms and obligatory core curriculum for tracking, reporting and addressing all forms of violence against women and children and trafficking in human beings has improved substantially.

Ground-breaking achievements have been achieved for child rights and juvenile justice in Albania. Major results include significant advancements in legal and policy frameworks, for example those encouraging alternatives to detention.

UN efforts for the development of Albania's social system, through significant advancements made in the legal and policy framework, including explicit social inclusion targets incorporated in most sector-specific policies, contributed to an increased public ownership of vulnerability and more empowered vulnerable persons and groups. By the end of 2021, the country experienced a stronger provision of social and health services, establishment of institutional coordination mechanisms and increased capacities of human resources.

Demonstrating that gender equality is a primary goal in UNCT's work throughout the year, and guided by the Gender Thematic Result Group, the team implemented the Systemwide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard⁴⁴ Action Plan and duly prepared the 2021 SWAP annual report. In mainstreaming gender equality, UNCT reported meeting or exceeding 87 percent of the SWAP on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and engaged extensively to introduce a gender lens across programmatic interventions and sectoral areas, ensuring application of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) approach. Strong cross-programmatic synergies and integrated approaches proved effective in ensuring impact and sustainability of efforts: two EVAW programmes were harmonised to scale up efforts and expand good practices, with LNOB and the EVAW JP to leverage local-level planning and budgeting for prioritisation of the EVAW interventions. Integration of gender equality and women's empowerment principles were also ensured in the new UNSDCF, including through a Gender Equality Brief, two Rapid Gender Assessments on the impact of Covid-19 in the lives and livelihoods of women and men and on VAW and a high-quality CCA. In addition, the UNSDCF features a standalone outcome dedicated to 'gender responsive governance'.

⁴⁴ <https://albania.un.org/en/46382-unct-swap-scorecard-assessment-results-and-action-plan-united-nations-country-team-albania>

A LNB Phase II project started implementation in the second half 2021 focusing the interventions on the consolidation of the social protection and social care reform roll-out (full implementation of the Law on Social Care Services) and strengthening results from LNB Phase 1.

Annexes

Annex A: Progress against relevant PoCSD results framework

Outcome 1—Governance and Rule of Law State and civil society organisations perform effectively and with accountability for consolidated democracy in line with international norms and standards National Development Goals: Accession to the European Union; Good Governance, Democracy and the Rule of Law EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas: 5, 10, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24 SDGs: 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 16, 17				
Indicator	Baseline, 2016	Target, 2021	Means of Verification	Value of Indicator, 31 December 2021
Rate of children in detention (per 100,000 population of age 14–17 years)	33.3	20	INSTAT	14
Out of all child-related valid complaints, proportion for which a remedial action was taken by the People’s Advocate, annually	65% (2014): 65 out of 100 cases	5% increase, annually	PA Office records	55.3% (125 of 226 cases)
No. of networks of CSOs that monitor and prepare shadow reports or submissions on implementation of international instruments on women’s rights and GBV	0	1	Stakeholder reports	CEDAW shadow report by CSOs has been initiated
No. of monitoring reports on refugee and migrant rights situation in the country	0	2	Physical monitoring	Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Albania
No. of national reports monitoring implementation of international instruments with GE indicators, age and sex-disaggregated data and analyses	0	At least 2	National government institutions’ websites	5th and 6th State Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019)
No. of border monitoring reports	1	6	Project data	3
Existence of legislation that recognises a child’s right to be heard in civil and administrative proceedings that affect them (in line with Article 12 of CRC)	1 Law (Family Code)	2 Laws ((Family Code; Child Rights and Protection Law) and secondary legislation approved	Parliament website Official Gazette MoJ website (Justice for Children rubric)	4 Laws (Family Code; Child Rights and Protection Law; Criminal Justice for Children Code; Anti-discrimination Law (revised), and related sub legislation)

Establishing FLA Centres at District Court level to ensure equitable and unhindered access to justice for the most vulnerable persons	0	11	MoJ annual report	10
No. of GoA draft laws, policies, strategies and plans engendered	2	4	Annual reports	20 ⁴⁵
Reception capacities at borders increased, with a differentiated approach for at-risk women and children	1 centre for women and children at risk (15 persons)	2 centres for women and children at risk (at least 15 persons)	MoI reports Monitoring of border situation	3: Temporary Reception Facilities at Gjirokaster, Kapshtica and Korce
SOPs for case management of different categories of migrants and refugees within the management of mixed movements	0	4	ONAC reports	3 ⁴⁶

Outcome 2—Social cohesion: Health, education, social inclusion and protection, child protection and gender-based violence

All women, men, girls and boys, especially those from marginalised and vulnerable groups, are exercising their entitlements to equitable quality services, in line with human rights, while more effective and efficient investments in human and financial resources are being made at central and local levels to ensure social inclusion and cohesion

National Development Goals: Accession to the European Union; Good Governance, Democracy and the Rule of Law; Investing in People and Social Cohesion

EU Integration Chapters & Priority Areas: 19, 23, 24, 32

SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17

Indicator	Baseline, 2016	Target, 2021	Means of Verification	Value of Indicator, 31 December 2021
No. of sector-specific policies with explicit social inclusion targets	4	24	INSTAT Biannual report of MoHSP Line ministry policy documents NSDI 2015–2020 monitoring framework	47
Level of implementation of National Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian Integration	Rated 2	Rated at least 3 (based on estimated rating from 1 to 5) ⁴⁷	UN, EU and stakeholders' qualitative assessments, sector and country progress reports	Rated 3

⁴⁵ Revised Law 'On Protection from Discrimination,' no. 124/2020; Amendments to the Law 'On measures against violence in family relations,' no. 9669, dated 18.12.2006; Law 'On Social Housing,' no. 44/2018, adopted by the Albanian Parliament on 4 May, 2018; Social Inclusion Policy document; National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021–2030, National Strategy on Gender Equality and Action Plan 2016–2020; Strategy for Legal Education of the Community 2019–2023; Strategy of Security in Communities 2021–2026; National Strategy for Development Integration (NSDI) II 2015–2020 (4 gender-sensitive objectives all under the GE section) & NSDI Monitoring framework; National Strategy on Social Protection 2019–2022; Public Finance Management Strategy 2019–2022; National Plan for Roma and Egyptian Minorities 2021–2025, National Plan for LGBTI 2021–2027; National Action Plan for Implementation of UNSCR 1325 (adopted by government on 11/09/2018); GoA strategic response to IPA III, 5 EU IPA III 2022 Action documents (Good Governance & Public Administration, EU Integration Facility, Social Inclusion, Health and Water), National Programme of Official Statistics 2022–2026; Local Gender Action Plans in 5 municipalities: Durrës, Elbasan Korça, Shkodra and Tirana.

⁴⁶ SOPs on UASC case management, on access to territory and management of vulnerable groups at access to territory, and on health care.

⁴⁷ 1, no progress or steps towards achieving the target has been made; 2, some limited or fragmented measures towards achieving the target have been taken; 3, regular progress has been made at a systems level towards achieving the target; 4, advanced progress has been made at a systems level towards achieving the target; and 5, critical systemic changes are in place to ensure the target will be met.

			MoHSP and State Social Service (SSS) records	
No. of national mechanisms collecting evidence and addressing violence against children	4: police, CPUs, schools, helpline	At least 6: police, CPUs, schools, helpline, health centres, online and web-based platform	State Agency for Child Rights Protection annual reports	6
% women who have experienced physical violence during their life	23.7%	21%	INSTAT	18%
Inter-sectoral monitoring and coordination mechanism established and performing according to its mandate or Terms of Reference	0	1 (Statistical Indicators and Integrity Group, SIIG)	GoA and MoHSP Social Inclusion annual reports	1 (SIIG) MoHSP conduct monitoring and reporting with Social Inclusion indicators as outlined in the SIPD
Policy or budgetary framework that explicitly addresses child poverty and disparities available	No	Yes	Quality assessment measured against EU and international standards SIIG reports NSDI implementation report	Yes
Coordination mechanisms for social protection systems established countrywide	0	7 municipalities	GoA and MoHSP annual reports	Annual progress report of national Social Protection Strategy indicated that all municipalities have a social care plan in place and commit to implementing social protection policies by establishing proper mechanisms at local level; financial and human resources at local level are scarce; Covid-19 added additional burden 6 municipalities ⁴⁸
No. Roma and Egyptian women and men with improved access to basic social protection services is increased.	357 R&E benefitted from integrated community-based social services 112 R&E included in reintegration programmes	500 R&E benefitted from integrated community-based social services 150 R&E included in reintegration programmes 200 R&E benefitted from employment measures	Government progress report on implementation of NAPIRE ESERE project progress report	At least 10,000 overall through the years. Only in 2021, 371 R&E families or more than 1,850 R&E individuals in municipalities of Fier, Kruje and Lezhe benefitted from integrated social services. >1,855 individuals received social services; 350 R&E children

⁴⁸ Devoll, Kamza, Pogradec, Puka, Rrogozhina and Tirana.

	184 R&E benefitted from employment measures			benefitted from inclusive education support and 24 youth were enrolled in high school; 132 youngsters enrolled in VET courses and 68 began internships; 332 individuals supported through income generation schemes; 13 with start-ups as formal businesses; 140 with job referrals; 163 with counselling on labour market inclusion and assisted through the process of completing an application as a job seeker; 2,166 beneficiaries (907 female; 994 male; 265 LGBTI).
No. of municipalities with improved capacities, organisation development and quality management of service providers, and effective planning and budgeting	5 municipal public service providers	10 municipal service providers 3 new municipalities include GRB in MTBP	Record of participatory planning and budgeting of services at local levels	Operationalisation of 4 community centres for children with disabilities (Korca, Puka, Roskovec and Shkodra) bringing the number of community services for PwD and other vulnerable people to 17 and capacity building for community centre staff through online training, and exchange visits 6 municipalities ⁴⁹ with improved capacities and quality administration of integrated social services
Proportion of population covered by social protection floors or systems, by sex, gender, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, R&E, PwD, migrants, refugees, pregnant women, newborn, work-injury victims and poor and vulnerable	N/A	62%	IMSPSD JP Report	70% ⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Devoll, Kamza, Pogradec, Puka, Rrogozhina and Tirana.

⁵⁰ National Monitoring of the SDG Indicator 1.3.1 | UNDP in Albania.

No. of GBV-related laws and by-laws adopted or amended to align with international and regional standards	2 laws 0 by-laws	2 laws and policies 20 by-laws	Parliament website Council of Ministers website Line ministries	1 revised law and 3 policies 13 by-laws, protocols, guidelines 1 global Convention ratified or admitted
No. of municipalities with functional CRMs	27	61	Yearly reports produced by MoHSP	61
No. of cases of GBV addressed through CRMs	312	450	MoHSP reports REVALB, MoHSP	1,463
Existence of improved knowledge on child marriage	No	Yes	UNFPA and UNICEF reports	Yes

Outcome 4—Environment and Climate Change

Government and non-government actors adopt and implement innovative, gender-sensitive national and local actions for environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction

National Development Goals: Accession to the European Union; Growth Through Sustainable Resources and Territorial Development; Investing in People and Social Cohesion; Good Governance, Democracy and the Rule of Law (Strengthening Public Order and Emergency Preparedness)

EU Integration Chapters and Priority Areas: 15, 27

SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17

Indicator	Baseline 2016	Target, 2021	Means of Verification	Value of Indicator, 31 December 2021
No. of targeted children and parents or care givers benefitting from child protection in emergency services	500	2,000	MoHSP–State Agency for Child Rights and Protection (SACRP) records Project reports	3,163 (1,646 children and 630 adults + 887 referrals of children)
No. of targeted child protection professionals capacitated to deliver quality protection services in emergency settings	0	200	MoHSP–SACRP records Project reports	193
No. of teachers skilled in DRR strategies and other inclusive methodologies	500	1,500	MoESY records ASCAP records Project records	23 schools in Albania covered with teacher training 230 teachers and 600 school psychologists trained
No. of children (boys and girls) accessing online learning (in school or via other distant learning opportunities)	300,000 children of all ages and cycles of pre-university education	460,000 children	MoESY records Surveys Online platform records	At least 450,000 children
No. of households restoring agriculture production and dependent livelihoods	0	60	Project reports	35

No. of households supported through guarantees and microfinance credit lines	0	100	Project reports	30
Frameworks and protocols for vulnerable groups and communities in place and utilised by municipalities, including formalisation of gender issues and women's roles	0	5	MoESY–MoHSP records Surveys Online platform records	In preparation protocols for social service providers at municipal level to respond to disasters