



By

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I - ABOUT OBSERVATORY FOR CHILDREN RIGHTS

The Child Rights Observatory in Albania is a non-governmental entity established in 2009 as a civil society network intended to monitor the situation of children in the country.

Through its representatives at the sub-national (regional) level and in collaboration with local government units in municipalities and communes, the Observatory is collecting statistical information from administrative records of health, education, social protection and other local authorities. Using the DevInfo software the wealth of statistical information is consolidated into a database accessible online at: <http://www.observator.org.al/odf-map/>.

So far, the Observatory database has been a unique source of such disaggregated data: a user-friendly interface allows zooming into the specifics of Albania's 374 municipalities and communes since 2009 until today. Using this data complemented by survey-generated evidence, the Observatory has been producing situation reports and contributed to action plans for children developed at the national and regional levels. In 2013 it produced the first comprehensive report on various dimensions of child poverty and deprivation in Albania.

An important spill-off of the Observatory's strong presence on the ground has been their ability to advocate with government authorities for enhanced local measures to address the needs of children and families, especially from vulnerable backgrounds. Lately, the Observatory has been among the leaders behind a nation-wide initiative of "Every Roma Child in Kindergarten". Their credibility of those who "know" the real situation has been instrumental in the role of advocates for early inclusion of Roma children.

Within the framework of the post-MDG discourse, the Observatory will continue to play a critical role of an independent screening instrument to measure Albania's progress towards more socially just and inclusive society. This work is being increasingly aligned with the effort of the national statistical agency (INSTAT) to strengthen social statistics, with the understanding that the degree of detail in Observatory's records is likely to remain a unique feature complementing regular data gathering on a more aggregated level.

II - PROJECTS, INITIATIVES AND PARTNERED DEVELOPED BY OBSERVATORY DURING THE YEAR 2014 (JAN – DEC 2014)

1. "Reinforcing Children's Social Welfare Services At Regional Level In Response To Children's Social Exclusion Policy Implementation – RIDE"

The Observatory role in this initiative (May 2013 – May 2014), in harmonization with CRU, consisted in coordination and harmonization of all social welfare structures at regional and local level to that ensure that no child is excluded from the enjoyment of its rights. This new approach helped to design an integrated, coordinated child aware approach to social care and protection service provision, which currently is still missing – particularly at the regional/local level.

The initiative focuses on the following interventions:

- Developing a comprehensive and sustainable approach to implementing the child's social welfare policies to prevent child's exclusion and ensure protection of the rights of the child;
- Improvement of public sector and civil society response to children's inclusion ensured through the evidence based policy analysis;
- Provision of an inclusive package of services for the most vulnerable children in an integrated manner.

The initiative “*Reinforcing Children’s Social Welfare Services at regional level in response to children’s social exclusion*”, aimed to contribute to prevent child’s exclusion and protect the rights of the child, which was the overall objective of the project. In this way, it provided effective support to the implementation of the law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child as well as the NPA 2012-2015.

2. “*Every Roma Child In Kindergarten: Building Advocacy Networks And Evidence Based Practices For Roma Children’s Access To Early Childhood Development*”

The first phase of the initiative “*Every Roma child in kindergarten: Building advocacy networks and evidence based practices for Roma Children’s access to early childhood development*” aimed to set up and support local networks for evidence based advocacy for Roma children early development, by working with social services (social workers) and other institutions that provide care and protection for children, NGO’s and other social partners.

Ensuring that Roma and non-Roma children alike receive an equal start in life is one of the main focuses of the cooperation between the Albanian Government and UNICEF. This initiative was designed to play an important role in providing periodical information, data and evidence collection, best practices exchange, gaps identified and analyzed policies implementation for the Roma inclusion, – which result on road mapping practices.

The initiative focuses on the following interventions:

- Facilitate and foster alliances with the local authorities and Roma groups for the inclusion in pre-school education of Roma Children;
- Gather continuously data/evidence/good practices and gaps of implementation of policies for Roma children (based on a unified protocol for data and evidence collection);
- Prepare periodic action monitoring reports and to advocate for change and in support of Roma children inclusion in kindergartens;

It implemented a list of actions that targets the role, functions and duties of the local institutions in regards of issuing early social inclusion of Roma children in their locality. These actions were designed in a networking role and duties of government and non-government actors, by producing and conducting permanent collection of data and evidence, case by case solution and exchange the best practices gained, identifying the gaps and finding the proper solution within the local actor’s roles and duties.

3. “*Every Child In School And Learning: Improving Monitoring Aspects Of Invisible, Semi-Invisible And At-Risk Of Dropping Out Children In Albania*” – 1st Phase

Another implemented initiative by the Observatory of the Children’s Rights during this period has been

“*Every child in school and learning: Improving monitoring aspects of invisible, semi-invisible and at-risk of dropping out children in Albania*” – 1st phase. The aim of this initiative was to reduce the number of “OOSC” and those “at-risk” of dropping out in Albania and prevent the phenomena through specific data-oriented action.

The initiative focuses on the following interventions:

- Developing inter-ministerial instructions that will facilitate better coordination and harmonization of duties and responsibilities of GoA institutions in identifying and taking actions on OOSC cases;
- Revising and establishing clear indicators, definitions and benchmarks for the three groups of OOS and at-risk children;
- Update and extend EMIS with new incorporated indicators and methodologies of data collection and processing.

4. *“HeForShe” initiative*

This initiative undertaken by the Observatory for the Children’s Rights entitled “HeForShe”, has the same title and is designed by following the global movement “HeForShe”, which is a solidarity movement or gender equality that engages men and boys as advocates and stakeholders, to break the silence, raise their voices and take action for the achievement of gender equality.

The activities and results of this initiative were designed by having under consideration: National Strategy on Gender Equality and against Gender-Based and Domestic Violence (2011-2015), GoA Plan of Action and results showcased during the 2014 UN Secretary General’s UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign of 16 days of activism against gender violence (25 November - 10 December) with the theme of “Orange your Neighborhood”.

The overall goal of the campaign was to spread awareness and spark action on the responsibility that, particularly **young men and women, boys and girls** in promoting equality and alliance between men and women in the family and society, by reaching deep into the human conscience, towards an equal and peaceful society, communities, families.

The initiative focuses on the following interventions:

- To build a system of shared values that promote equality and alliance between **boys and girls** in the family and society, by reaching deep into the human conscience.
- To initiate the establishment of a network of **young boys and girls** who will promote role models, raise awareness against gender-based violence, and promote and advocate for gender equality in the Albanian society;

5. *“Police and the community, a necessary collaboration for a safer life” in Lezha*

Implementation of the initiative “Police and the community, a necessary collaboration for a safer life” from the Observatory Lezhe financed by the Program of the Swedish Government for “community policing” in support of the Ministry of Interior, and the interventions that were realized resulted successful and useful in the frame of the major objective for the creation of a local network mandated to improve the collaboration between the community and police structures, communication and solving social problems in different communities, especially young people.

The initiative focuses on the following interventions:

- Creation of a permanent communication network between the police, young people, community, local government and other actors.
- Information and education of the community, especially young people regarding the objectives of community policing as a community service.
- More information and access for the communities to affect the increase of the level of trust regarding services and safety offered by the State police.

All the actors (RED, PHD, Regional Employment Department, Municipality of Lezhe, District Council, two high schools “Kolin Gjoka” and “Hydajet Lezha” showed high community motivation in raising awareness and quality of collaboration with state police. Important recommendations were given by all actors especially from active young people themselves who showed a great interest regarding the topic and considered the collaboration police-community to be very important. These recommendations showed the importance of this issue and the volunteer of the community in general and young people especially to find ways of

collaboration; also showed that interventions will have a stable effect in time – now citizens will request for more regarding the collaboration police-community.

6. Strengthening child/family welfare statistical data collection

After a 6 years experience in collaboration with all local and national institutions, national and international organizations and all other actors involved in monitoring children’s rights and family welfare, nowadays Observatory is well known for its data collection and elaboration system, which is DevInfo software based, about 200 indicators and a disaggregation up to the regional and municipal/communal level. This database is periodically updated with information gathered in a formal institutionalized way from all public and non public institutions.

The initiative focuses on the following interventions:

- statistical data on child wellbeing is collected at the national, regional and local levels and made publicly accessible as the CRO’s online database ;
- annual and thematic updates and briefings on the situation of children and families reflecting the civil society perspective are prepared;
- networks and alliances of child rights champions and activists are promoted and facilitated at the sub-national level

7. Reconstruction of Child Protection Unit office in Shkodra Regional Council, - Reinforcing Children’s Social Welfare Services At Regional Level

Child Protection Unit (CPU) office nearby Shkodra Regional Council, in cooperation with Observatory for Children’s Rights and with support of UNICEF Albania, made possible the re-construction of CPU office, for improving and offering in professional level the coordination of service as guarantee of social welfare of child rights in Shkodra region.

III – PARTNERS CONTRIBUTION

No	Project Title	Developing Partner	Period of implementation
1	“Reinforcing Children’s Social Welfare Services At Regional Level In Response To Children’s Social Exclusion Policy Implementation – Ride”	UNICEF	May 2013 – Jun 2014
2	“Every Roma Child In Kindergarten: Building Advocacy Networks And Evidence Based Practices For Roma Children’s Access To Early Childhood Development”	UNICEF	17 Oct 2013-17 Oct 2014
3	“Every Child In School And Learning: Improving Monitoring Aspects Of Invisible,	UNICEF	May – Sep 2014

Semi-Invisible And At-Risk Of Dropping Out Children In Albania” – 1st Phase			
4	The initiative “HeForShe”	UN Women; UNDP	3 Nov 2014-10 March 2015
5	“Police And The Community, A Necessary Collaboration For A Safer Life” In Shkoder, Korçe, Lezha	Swedish Government	Nov 2013-Jul 2014
6	“Knowledge generation on Children and Women” SSFA_	UNICEF	28 Oct 2014 – 28 Feb 2015
7	Reconstruction of Child Protection Unit office in Shkodra Regional Council, - Reinforcing Children’s Social Welfare Services At Regional Level	UNICEF	June 2014

IV - REVIEWS ABOUT THE OBSERVATORY FOR THE CHILDREN’S RIGHTS, DURING THIS YEAR (2014)

The Observatory assembles and analyses local and regional data, to aid the decisions of local, regional and national government institutions. In our view, the Observatory has made significantly contribution to creating evidence for improved policy making for the benefit of children. This has been made possible by the professionalism and diligence of its staff, including the excellent relationship that Observatory staff enjoys with the government counterparts within the regions and districts – **Mr. Detlef Palm, UNICEF Representative in Albania (2009-2014) (January 2014)**

I have known the Observatory for the Children’s Rights from the work it has done on Korça region since 2009, as a local actor and an independent civil society mechanism, which has managed to consolidate cooperation with local institutions networks, coordinate the initiatives between stakeholders and identify needs and problems in the field, by lobbying and advocating with all the stakeholders to fulfill and guarantee the rights of children in need – **Mr. Niko Peleshi, Deputy Prime Minister, Albania (January 2014)**

I believe that the Observatory for the Children’s Rights with a 5 years’ experience in the sector of civil society, is a potential candidate capable of representing and treat with professionalism the issues of children's rights in the country – **Mrs. Klajda Gjoshaj, Minister of European Integration, Albania (January 2014)**