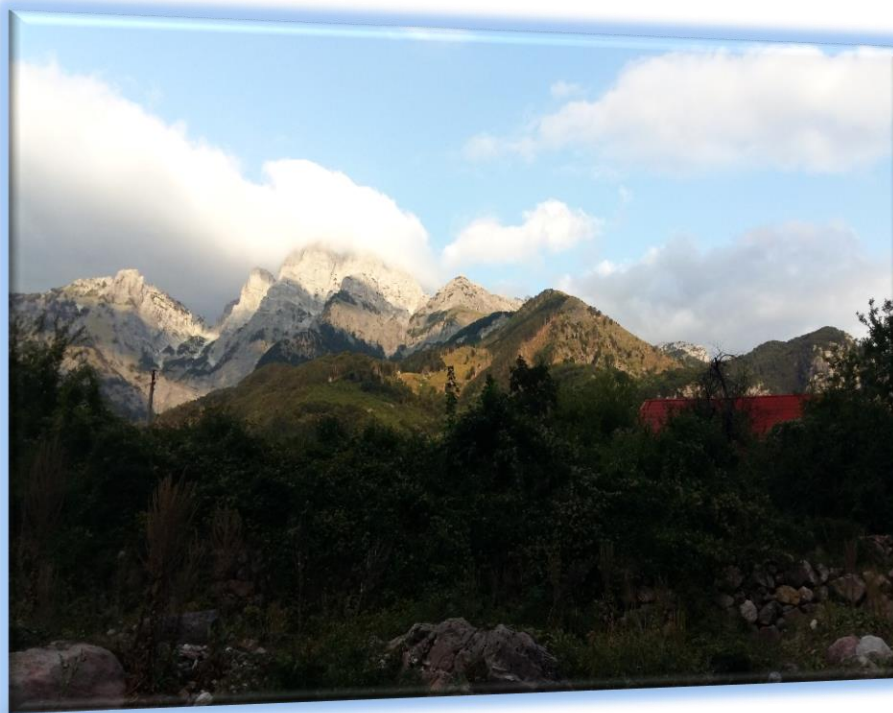


# Annual Report 2018



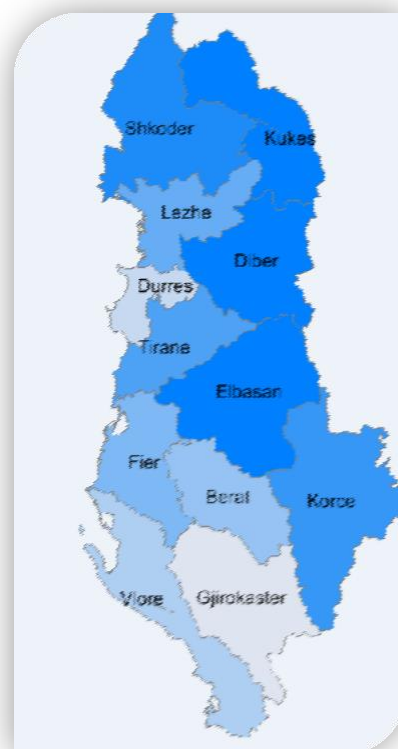
*Observatory for Children and  
Youth Rights*

*January 2019*

## About Observatory for Children and Youth Rights

Observatory for Children and Youth 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://observator.org.al/odf2/qarqet-en.html>

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. 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.

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## 1. Projects and initiatives developed by Observatory during the year 2018 (January-December 2018)

### I. Out of school children

This initiative, piloted in Durres region, is fulfilled in partnership between UNICEF, Observatory for Children's Rights and World Vision with the attention of the Ministry of Education and Sports and with the support of all local structures. The purpose is to identify and register in school every child, despite the fact that they were born in the area or not, creating a favorable environment to live.

In January 5th was signed the Common order of the three Ministries (U3M – Ministry of Education and Sports (MAS), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MPB) and Ministry of Health (MSH)) “To identify and register in school every child at compulsory age”, in order to coordinate the inter institutional collaboration to make possible that every resident child attend school.

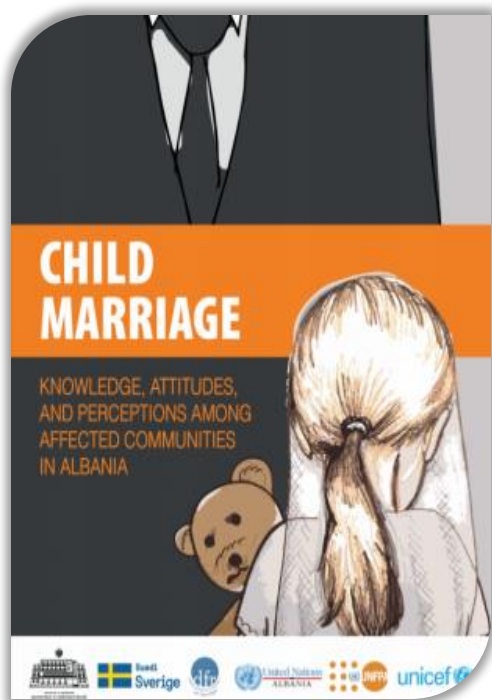
In this context several important steps have been taken regarding the children education including:

- Raising a work practice for the workbook of the roles of the responsible institutions for the implementation of U3M.
- The practice of the intersection training between the staffs of the schooling and local institutions which are charged with responsibility and role by the U3M signing.
- The guides and instructions for monitoring the best schooling practices for reducing the school abundance and for integrating in school the out of school children.
- The training practices for the actors in the base educational institutions in order to ensure the regular attendance and the completion of the base education by every children.
- The work practice for the extraction of the data for international indicators of the educational system.
- The practice of the intersection of the lists from different sources in order to identify out of school children.
- The practice of the inter institutional collaboration to intensifies the work regarding the case of out of school children



The call for the children education is addressed to everyone. The education of every child is an every day mission, the implementation of which asks for attention and commitment in time of everyone.

## II. To conduct Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions Qualitative Study on Child Marriage in Albania



During the period October 2017 – December 2018, Observatory, under the attention of Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in close cooperation with UNICEF and UNFPA in Albania, and with the financial support of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, has engaged in conducting a Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perceptions qualitative report on Child marriage in Albania. The study used qualitative methods, selected as the best way to capture data on knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, social expectations, incentives, sanctions and norms relating to child marriage. Focus group discussions were conducted in Durrës, Korça, Lezha and Tirana with younger (18-24) and older (25-50) people from four communities: Roma and Egyptians living in de-facto segregated communities; Roma and Egyptians living in integrated communities; non-Roma living in rural areas; and non-Roma living in urban areas. Researchers also conducted interviews with young people who were married before the age of 18, or older people whose children were married before the age of 18, and with key informants. The data collection, conducted between the autumn of 2017 and early summer of 2018, covered primarily Roma and rural populations where the phenomenon seemed to be more prevalent. All of the

communities selected also had high rates of poverty, given the link between poverty and child marriage.

Findings of the report and recommendations emerging from the entire process were shared in a Launching event on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018 organized under the attention of Ministry of Health and Social Protection, with the participation of around 60 representatives of in-line ministries, UN agencies, International and National NGOs, media, etc. The findings provide a ‘snapshot’ of what people in the communities covered think and believe about what drives child marriage, and its impacts on children. The study revealed that people’s preferences for child marriage – particularly among Roma – are complex and deeply rooted in a mesh of social expectations, deeply held personal beliefs, and the realities of living in poverty. Any policy and programmatic responses to child marriage need to take the complexities of this reality into account. Findings and recommendations will help stakeholders to understand the issue of child marriage better and build common ground to take actions. It will better guide mainstreaming of child marriage issues into the country strategies and programmes of government and non-governmental stakeholders, as well as UN agencies. The study report is available at: <http://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Child-marriage-Report-Final-vesion.pdf>. A policy brief on main findings and recommendations emerging from the study report has been produced and published, available at: <http://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Policy-brief-Final-version.pdf>

### **III. Schools as a front line adversaries of Violent Extremism**

The Observatory for Children and Youth Rights (Observatory) in the framework of the small grant scheme of the project "Empowering Civil Society in Increasing Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism" has implemented during February – November 2018 the initiative "Schools as a front line adversaries of Violent Extremism". This initiative was implemented in Kamza, Pogradec and Elbasan respectively in 3 pilot high schools; "Ibrahim Rugova", "Dëshmorët e Pojskës" and "Mahmud & Ali Cungu". The main purpose of the initiative was preventing and combating Violent Extremism by engaging schools as a main frontline institution.

This initiative was funded by the European Union and implemented by Terre des Hommes - Albania in partnership with ISD, CCG and Bedër University.

### **IV. Media Monitoring and analysis on issues affecting children**

Since November 2017, Observatory together with MC Monitoring company, in partnership with UNICEF Albania is engaged in a monitoring process of Albanian media. Media Monitoring is realized in two directions:

- Capturing and analysing every article mentioning UNICEF. In event, monthly, quarterly, and annual basis, Key Performance Indicators of UNICEF Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy are calculated and processed. These indicators measure the impact, outcome and output of a UNICEF project, event, topic of interest and objective. Event, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports are prepared periodically.
- Capturing and analysing every article mentioning children. In daily basis, every article mentioning children is captured by MC Monitoring and is delivered to the Observatory. These articles are reviewed and analysed about the portraying of children in the Albanian media by aiming to identify which of them pertained to children and children's rights issues. At the end of monitoring process, a Child Rights Media Assessment Report will be produced.

In daily basis, are monitored all publications and broadcasts from 24 dailies newspapers, 13 magazines, 9 TV channels and 47 Albanian websites.

### **V. Monitoring of children's rights with a focus on out of school children in Albania**

Starting in June 2018, Observatory, in partnership with UNICEF Albania, is engaged in a series of activities under the framework of two main pillars: a) the monitoring and reporting of child rights at national and local level; b) ensuring that every child is in school.

While the vast majority of children of compulsory school age in Albania attend school, some remain excluded from education due to complex and overlapping factors, such as migration, extreme poverty, disability, parental attitudes or cultural practices, language issues or difficult family circumstances. During the last years, Observatory together with UNICEF, and in partnership with Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth (MoESY) have

been working on the issue of out-of-school children with various partners, by supporting the functioning of a mechanism for identification of children (6 to 8 years old) failing to start compulsory education on time, and their enrolment in school. The initiative is being realized in Durres, Korca, Lezha, and Shkodra.

Main objectives and expected results of the initiative are:

- a. Identify the cases of out of school children through implementing 3MR agreement
- b. Managing and supporting the cases of out of school children for re-integration by local authorities
- c. Following up the progress of every identified child as out of school.

On the other hand, the National Agenda for Child Rights 2017-2020 in Albania constitutes a significant instrument to improve the accountability of various duty-bearers of state governance in implementing actions towards progressive child rights realization. By end of 2018, the Agenda reaches its half term of implementation, when a possibility emerges with it to re-shape it according not only to the progress achieved, but also subject to emerging priorities. The collaboration of UNICEF with Observatory for this partnership enables dedicated technical support to MHSP and SACRP in developing the data collection instruments and conducting the information analysis to inform the Mid-Term Draft Report of Agenda for Children Implementation. Furthermore, the support encompasses the introduction of child and adolescent participation mechanisms/forums in the process of monitoring and reporting of the Agenda. The monitoring process, will also result in development of an implementation and monitoring plan for the next years, until 2020.

Whilst most of the focus in the recent years has been about monitoring of child rights at national level, little attention has been dedicated on the matter at local level. The national strategies/action plans target both national and local level institutions; however, the latest are rarely consulted or informed about their obligations for fulfilment of actions. The new Law on Child Rights and Protection assigns the responsibility (article 44) to undertake child rights monitoring and reporting at local level to the Municipality. Through this initiative, it is being assessed/explored how the child rights monitoring could be carried out at local level in two selected municipalities (Shkodra and Korca), including: the review of how children are portrayed at local action plans complementary to Agenda for Children and other sectorial strategies; what could be the technical mechanism led by Municipality to coordinate child rights monitoring; what could be the feasibility of collecting the information and designing a practical instrument to collect and report the information periodically. Most importantly, children are being engaged in this process, establishing a network of trained adolescents to be involved systematically in the processes related to planning and monitoring of child rights issues at Municipality. Ultimately, through the activities of this PCA, local level actors will be supported to develop the first child rights monitoring report at local level.

## **VI. Implementing Legal Mechanisms as a means of preventing early marriages**

With the support of the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) and the Australian

Government, Observatory has implemented the initiative "Enforcing Legal Mechanisms as

a Prevention Tool of early marriages ". The piloting of the initiative is oriented towards monitoring judicial decisions of the District Court of Shkodra, Kukës, Fier and Kavaja for the period 2011-2017.

This project implemented by the Observatory and the School of Magistrates has attracted the attention and interest of national and international agencies. Since the beginning of 2014, the Observatory has partners with line ministries and other institutions aiming to build a common understanding of the cases and the reality of early child marriage in Albania.

The initiative aimed at intervening in:

- Improving the legal process regarding juvenile delinquency cases, taking into account the rights and well-being of children during and after the judiciary process.
- Implementation of a national campaign against early marriage to raise the issue to the general public. Throughout the campaign, the results of the project are shared by encouraging actions that encourage and provide tools and knowledge about the dangers and effects of marriage of boys and girls of childbearing age.

#### **VII. Assessment of the dynamics of NE scheme for the impact of scoring formula, with focus on targeting poor families, to the current beneficiaries of NE in the pilot areas**

From January 2018 the MHSP has started the implementation of new NE scheme in nationwide premises, including all the regions. In this frame, on behalf of Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) and with the support of World Bank on the Social Assistance Modernization Project (SAMP), is conducted a nationwide spot check audit to better understand the characteristics of the NE beneficiaries and their welfare. The main goal was to assess the targeting accuracy through checking whether NE is reaching its intended audience (targeting assessment). The audit data were also used to cross-check inconsistencies with administrative data (application data).

- The spot check audit was conducted based in a random sample methodology. 1500 families separated in: beneficiaries from the system, beneficiaries from the 6% fund dedicated to the Municipalities, and applicant but not beneficiaries' families, were selected randomly to be interviewed. Information was collected through face to face interviews with an adult member of these families.
- The data collected from the interviews, together with the information extracted from the application form from the MIS were used to prepare a study report. The report assessed the characteristics/well-being /welfare of the NE beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.
- Furthermore, the process helped to make an assessment of those who have benefited from the scheme if they are really the poorest among the applicants, and to understand why those who are really in the same poverty situation are not included in the scheme.



### VIII. Partner Contribution

No	Project Title	Period of implementation	Supported by
1.	Out of School Children - OOSC Durrës and Elbasan	Jun. 2017- Feb. 2018	Word Vision UNICEF
2.	To conduct Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions Qualitative Study on Child Marriage in	Oct. 2017 – Mar. 2018	UNICEF and UNFPA
3.	Schools as a front line adversaries of Violent Extremism	February – November 2018	EU Terre des Hommes - Albania
4.	Media Monitoring and analysis on issues affecting children	Nov. 2017 – Mar. 2019	UNICEF
5.	Monitoring of children’s rights with a focus on out of school children in Albania	Jun. 2018 – Sep. 2019	UNICEF
6.	Implementing Legal Mechanisms as a means of preventing early marriages	Oct. 2017- Feb. 2018	CFLI –Australian Aid
7.	Assessment of the dynamics of NE scheme for the impact of scoring formula, with focus on targeting poor families, to the current beneficiaries of NE in the pilot areas	26 Nov – 31 Dec 2018	Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) Social Assistance Modernization Project