

CONFERENCE "EARLY AND CHILD MARRIAGE"

Newsletter nr 10, 19 February 2016

In the framework of the initiative "Prevent Early marriage in Albania" supported by Canada Fund for Local Initiatives



The initiative "Prevent early marriages in Albania" is implemented by Observatory for Children's Rights in partnership with the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives. The first phase of the initiative had a specific view of underage marriages on Roma community in Tirana. In the second phase it was studied the situation in peripheral and rural areas of Vlora and Korca as two border areas.

At the conclusion of the initiative "Prevent early marriages in Albania" on 19 February 2016 was organized a Conference under the attention of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Health, International and National Institutions and civil society as well.

Observatory for Children's Rights, an initiative of UNICEF and a partner of UN, has developed a mechanism that allows the collection of information and regional level (county) about the situation and rights of children.

As an active and integral part of civil society in each region, the Observatory cooperates with public and private actors in the process of systematic collection of data and extract reports and relations information about children's rights, implementation of laws in this area and identify needs improvement.

Conference "Early and child marriage"

The Conference was held in two sessions:

The first panel was moderated by Prof. Dr. Arta Mandro, expert of family law and children's rights, the School of Magistrates. In this session of the Conference, they gave their support statements:

- Mrs. Gentian Sula, Vice/ Minister for Social Welfare and Youth
- Mrs. Elona Gjebrea, Deputy. Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs
- Mr. Gazmend Bejtja, Director in the Ministry of Health
- Mrs. Manuela Bello, Assistant Representative of UNFPA Albania
- Mr. Marc Antoine Dumas, Advisor at the Canadian

Embassy in Rome

- Mrs. Elma Tërshana, Executive Director of the Observatory for Children's Rights

The second panel was moderated by Mrs. Elida Nuri, UNFPA Albania. In this session of the Conference were realized technical presentations for the study "Taking the false steps of the family bliss" which can be found at

Study in albanian:

http://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ZEB_Studimi_al_12Shk2016.pdf

Study in english:

http://observator.org.al/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ZEB_Studimi_en_12Feb2016.pdf

Engagements during the Conference

Research tackling issues related to early and child marriages as societal problems of women and youth at the local levels, along with increasing of awareness to prevent early child marriage at the local and national level can be considered innovative and progressive in countries like Albania, where this phenomenon has spread its roots deep into history and unfortunately revived lately by the very dynamic social factors of a prolonged transition. Regional and global research place special focus on indicating the long-lasting consequences of the child early marriage on physical and emotional wellbeing and infringements of the rights to education and development (personal, professional and economic). Similar findings were evidenced through our detailed snapshot of the Albanian reality urging for immediate interventions to address the push and pulling factors of child early marriage in Albanian context.

Under the CRC and CEDAW Albania is required to consider the issue of early marriages and report about it. The coordination and intensification of joint efforts on early marriage in the Albanian context is a crucial imperative.

Ministries expressed their willingness for future cooperation to reduce underage marriages through:

- Strengthening the role of CPUs and CRU's which are suitably placed at local and regional level;
- Support of young mothers through specific social intervention programs;
- Individual work with girls -mothers;
- Addressing the gaps through adoption of necessary changes in the legal framework;
- Conducting of a national study including areas in northern Albania;
- Provision of tailored psycho-social services to address young people needs.

The multifaceted issue of early marriage both in terms of reducing its occurrence and in terms of addressing its consequences represents a give-and-take process among different stakeholders groups including the Government of Albania and its host of institutions, the local government as implementer and supporter of policies, donor community interested in the issues related to early marriage, media outlets, community at the local level, and the civil society operating at the local level.

We are convinced and inspired that an effective cooperation among the above-mentioned stakeholders will provide the best policy and social environment where these girls are empowered to have a stronger voice and take the lead of their lives - **"to enjoy being girls before being brides!"**

List of Abbreviations

CDF	Convention for Children's Rights
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
UNFPA	The United Nations Population Fund
CPU	Children Protect Unit
CRU	Children Right Unit



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