

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN
OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES IN 2008-2009**



European Union



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MONITORING REPORT

Tirana 2010

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRF	Albanian Disability Rights Foundation
ANAD	Albanian National Association of the Deaf
ASED	Association pour le Soutien de l'Enfance en Détresse
CEC	Central Election Commission
CRCA	Children's Rights Center of Albania
DCM	Decision of the Council of Ministers
DDCA	Disability and Development Coalition Albania
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HII	Health Insurance Institute
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
ILO	International Labor Organization
KMCAP/MCDAW	Medical Commission to Determine the Work Ability
M	Mean
MEDPAK	Protection of the Rights of People with Disabilities
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MH	Ministry of Health
MoLSAEO	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
MPWTT	Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication
N	Number
NCQSA-HI	National Center of Quality, Safety and Accreditation of Health Institutions
NCRT	National Council of Radio and Television
NHE	National Housing Entity
NPO	Non-Profit Organizations
NSPD	National Strategy of People with Disabilities
PHD	Public Health Department
RED	Regional Education Department
SD	Standard Deviation

SII	Social Insurance Institute
SSS	State Social Services
TAC	Territorial Adjustment Council
UHCT	University Hospital Center of Tirana
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results of monitoring the National Strategy for People with Disabilities for the period 2008 – 2009, have been integrated in this report that analyses the two year progress of the work of actors responsible for implementing the objectives of this Strategy. The report was prepared based on the data collected in six regions of the country: Tiranë, Durrës, Shkodra, Vlora, Elbasan and Korça. Two surveys were conducted to collect data. The first survey collected the data on the progress made for implementing the measures in each area of the action plan, undertaken by the public officials in the institutions, responsible actors at central and local level. The information was collected through 132 questionnaires distributed in institutions, filled by people officially appointed by the heads of their respective institutions. There were many shortages in this information source, but they were completed by data secured through direct contacts/ interviews, official documents of the institution and information collected from internet publications.

The people with disabilities and their family members were requested in a second survey in the same districts to assess their situation in relation to the five areas of the National Action Plan. The survey included 1.041 participants (43.1% women) and the questionnaires were both qualitative and quantitative.

It should be emphasized that there have been achievements in the implementation of the Action Plan of NSPD. There is a progressive increase of the number of people with disabilities beneficiaries of the disability allowance. The statistics speak about a total number of beneficiaries of 105.972 people with disabilities and 13.247 carers who in 2008 have benefited 9.3 billion lek from the state budget.

The latest statistics from 2009¹, show that the number of people with disabilities beneficiaries of the rehabilitation services in public and nonpublic, day care and residential centers, has increased to 1591. There are good initiatives undertaken by the local

¹ Data taken from MoLSAEO, still unpublished officially.

government and NPOs regarding the establishment of multidisciplinary teams in the residential and day centers for the assessment of disability; there is progress made in the establishment of new social services for people with disabilities compared to previous years.

Steps have also been made regarding health services. The guideline issued by HII in the annual contract with the family physicians, provides the obligation for home visits and all other relevant assistance for people with disabilities; during 2008 and 2009 priority was given to extend the list of medicines treating severe illnesses causing disability; the amount of the hygienic and sanitation package for quadriplegic people was increased; the level of demand to build accessible health centers increased.

Legal improvements for building an environment without barriers have encouraged the emergence of changes in construction projects and their implementation. The number of schools and health centers that provide accessible entrance and other elements (including lifts) for people with disabilities and the roads that incorporate accessibility elements in sidewalks has increased. They have been extended not only to Tirana, but also to some other cities, including parking places for people with disabilities, the National Housing Entity has included accessibility elements in typical projects, the faculties educating the future generations of designers and constructors are increasingly incorporating the legal accessibility obligation in the curricula.

Progress is observed in the field of education for children with disabilities in mainstream schools in terms of efforts made by the MES in cooperation with civil society actors to improve the legal framework and to implement pilot projects for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the preschool and school system.

There are achievements in improving practices for working with individual education programs (IEP) for students with disabilities.

Although not going into depth in the analysis of the detailed employment situation of persons with disabilities, the National Employment Service identifies under the Labor Market Survey an annual general survey of the employment situation in relation to people with disabilities relevant to the labor market needs. Also, in the framework of the ILO project to draft the National Strategy for Employment, the first steps have been taken to develop promotional policies for the employment of persons with disabilities.

Positive steps have been made in the area of legislation. A major achievement was

the signing by the Albanian state of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2009.

This step will promote legal improvements in the field by doing a full review of the legislation in the field of disability and improve it in line with the Convention. The legislation in the field of accessible buildings' design and construction has improved. There are efforts for legal improvement in the process of disability assessment, in the legislation for an inclusive education, the law on social services and economic assistance, etc. The structure to monitor the National Strategy for People with Disabilities, established at central level, continues its consolidation at local level. SSS is implementing the project "Capacity building of local government structures (municipality/region) and the staff of State Social Service for the implementation of standards and legislation in the field of social care.

Although these positive steps have been identified, the level of implementation of NSPD is not at the desired level. Out of 95 measures, 22 (23%) of them have not started to be implemented at all, and only 11 measures are well implemented, only 6 of which measures fully. Unfulfilled obligations are observed in all areas, even in more important measures, such as the improvement of the disability assessment process which remains as before only within the medical framework, improvements that should have been made to the disability legislation and have not yet started. Furthermore, this situation allows discrimination within the disability groups. These omissions preserve the obstacles to the implementation of NSPD objectives to achieve the final goal of improving the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families.

The measures for early disability prevention are still insufficient and many of the rehabilitation services for people with disabilities are lacking – the number of disabled people benefiting from these services is very low – 381 people benefit services from public centers (168 women) and 1210 from non-public centers (709 women). The concern for accommodating elderly people with mental and physical disability, mainly para and tetraplegic who are mostly living alone, is becoming more and more evident, as the existing centers offer services up to a certain age, and specialized centers are totally missing. The architectural barriers still hinder people with disabilities to live normally in their homes, to move, to go to school, to work and attend various activities, the accessibility remains an important area that is a concern for people with disabilities

with severe motor, vision or speech impairment, more than 50% of which said they feel isolated and excluded. There is a lack of realistic data from MES regarding the number of children with disabilities attending mainstream schools, while the data from MoLSAEO show that 8.552 children with special needs aged 6-18 years receive disability allowance for education in mainstream or special education schools. Only the extraordinary efforts of parents make possible the enrollment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools in the cities, while children with disabilities in rural areas, due to the lack of transportation, remain isolated and do not benefit any kind of education. The numbers on the employed people with disabilities say nothing – according to NES in 2008 only 3 people with disabilities have benefited from the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market with employment terms from 6 to 12 months.

The failure to draft the integral disability law continues to preserve the fragmentation of the disability legislation, extending the discrimination within the disability groups.

The disability assessment by the Medical Commission to Determine the Ability to Work (MCDAW) continues to focus on medical needs rather than on a multidisciplinary approach.

On the other hand, the results of this survey show that in 2009 people with disabilities and their family members still belong to the marginalized part of the Albanian society. They are poor and isolated in a society which must eliminate architectural and social barriers. Health, education, social and employment services for people with disabilities are scarce and of poor quality. The opinion of people with disabilities is not respected.

NSPD is the framework of the governmental policies to resolve the disability issues. In the end of 2009, in the middle of the timeline to implement the NSPD, the results are very far from 50% of the measures of the action plan fulfilled.

The recommendations in every area of NSPD dictate deep changes for more responsibility from the institutions, to speed up the actions and be accountable for the achieved results.

INTRODUCTION

The National Strategy on People with Disabilities (NSPD) is the program of action of the Albanian government to improve the lives of people with disabilities by developing new policies and programs and bringing the existing policies and programs in line with the international guidelines issued by the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union. NSPD is a legal document, Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) No. 08, (01/07/ 2005), which defines the objectives to be achieved in the period 2004-2014, and the respective responsibilities of the Albanian central and local government to carry out specific tasks to attain those objectives.

The fundamental principles of the NSPD reflect the principles of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations. They are formulated as follows:

1. Civil rights, equality and non-discrimination;
2. Self-determination;
3. Inclusion, participation and equal opportunities;
4. Free access and barrier - free environment;
5. Prevention, early detection and early intervention;
6. Rehabilitation; and
7. Accessibility to service and assistance.

The goal of the NSPD has been formulated “to ensure noticeable improvement in the social status and quality of life of the people with disabilities in the Republic of Albania in full compliance with the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.”²

² NSPD, Albanian version, p.8.

The document has stated the following seven objectives that will ensure the achievement of the goal:

1. To encourage education towards a society that creates opportunities for participation for people with disabilities;
2. To guarantee human rights of the people with disabilities;
3. To secure optimal education for people with disabilities;
4. To secure opportunities for employment and economic advancement for people with disabilities;
5. To promote responsible and accountable public social services for people with disabilities;
6. To support the efforts of people with disabilities for good quality of life in the community; and
7. To collect information on people with disabilities and disability related issues.

NSPD has determined five fields of intervention:

1. Life without barriers (accessibility);
2. Services (medical, social, rehabilitative);
3. Employment, vocational training and education;
4. Capacity building; and
5. Legislation and research.

The National Action Plan, which is part of the NSPD document, specifies 95 measures to be undertaken as well as the respective deadlines, responsible institutions and funding sources. The timeline extends 10 years (2004-2014), while the responsible institutions are the respective ministries with their programs, local government units and non-profit organizations. The specified sources of financing are the state and local government budget, non-profit organizations and donors. No specification has been made in relation to financial resources foreseen to support the implementation of NSPD.

This is the third report of monitoring the implementation of National Action Plan. The first report published in 2007, focused on the work done during the

period 2005-2006. The report concluded that although some progress was noted in some areas, such as increased disability allowance and the adoption of a comprehensive curriculum for compulsory education system, many of the objectives of the strategy – foreseen to be implemented within that timeframe – were not fulfilled, and most of the measures were not implemented. The second report reviewed the work done during 2007 and the assessment had a dual purpose. First, it identified the progress made during 2007 and the support provided by the state and the Albanian society for people with disabilities to ensure their integration into society. Secondly, it pointed out problematic areas and some of the reasons that lead to these problems with the belief that this will lead to the analysis of the reasons that have hampered progress and the development of action plans that will provide solutions to issues

This third assessment report goes one step further in its goals: a) it identifies the progress made during 2008 – 2009 and the support provided by the Albanian state and society for the people with disabilities to ensure their integration into society; b) it highlights the problematic areas and identifies the causes for the failure to achieve the objectives through the foreseen measures, and c) defines and recommends the ways and approaches for intervention in the action plan and the NSPD in general, in order to make it more applicable.

The official definition of a person with a disability in Albania is a person whose physical function, mental capacities or psychological health are highly likely to deviate for more than six months from the condition which is typical for the respective age and whose participation in the life of society is therefore restricted³. This definition observes the WHO recommendations.

During 2008⁴, there were 105,972 people with disabilities and 13247 carers who had the right to benefit from the governmental payment schemes for the disability. Table 1 specifies the categories that the Albanian legislation considers as beneficiaries of this assistance.

³ National Strategy on People with Disabilities, English version, p. 7.

⁴ These statistics were taken at www.mpcs.gov.al, in February 2010. Official statistics for 2009 are not published yet.

Table 1: **Number of people with disabilities in Albania**

Type of disability	December 2008
Total people with disabilities	105972
Beneficiaries of disability allowance - Total	57333
- Blind	10868
- Para - quadriplegic	3662
- Mental and physical disability	42803
Labor invalids	48639
Beneficiaries of carer allowance - Total	13247
- Blind	3408
- Para - quadriplegic	3552
- Mental and physical disability	6287

This report was prepared by the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation. ADRF was founded in 1996, as the successor to the OXFAM disability program in Albania. The ADRF philosophy is based on the social model for the people with disabilities and equalizing their opportunities. One of the areas of activity of this foundation is expressed in its mission statement as “promoting initiatives for improving the legislation for people with disabilities and its implementation.” ADRF has played a key role in materializing the idea of the necessity for NSPD and bringing together different partners from the central and local government as well as the civil society, in its drafting process. Being aware that the approval of NSPD by the Council of Ministers constituted only its first step, ADRF undertook the responsibility for monitoring, as a civil society actor, to guarantee the implementation of the strategy by the responsible institutions.

ADRF has already published the first and second report of this kind and this is the third report in the series.

METHODOLOGY

The process

The study followed a participatory action research model by making sure that people with disabilities and family members, as well as other important NSPD implementation stakeholders were included in all aspects of this evaluation. The process of designing the study entailed two stages. The first stage was preparatory, and the second stage built on the work done and lessons learned during the first stage.

The preparatory stage involved establishment of a working group and local networks. The local networks were established during the regional meetings/seminars in Tirana, Durrës, Korça, Vlora, Elbasan and Shkoder.

Participants of the local networks were representatives of the local government at both the regional and municipality level, representatives of disability organizations and directors of service organizations. Participants at the Tirana meetings also comprised representatives of the central government from various Ministries. The local networks worked under the guidance of the experts from the working group in the context of the regional meetings.

First, the participants followed a presentation on the National Strategy, its objectives and the National Action Plan. Then, they were informed about the survey plan to evaluate the implementation level of the strategy. Through a presentation, participants learned about the fundamental principles, as well as the evaluation methodology designed by the working group. At the end, the participants were divided into groups according to their areas of expertise and they gave their opinion on the procedure of data collection. During the second stage, the methodology of data collection was analyzed and few improvements were made in order to increase the response rate and improve the information quality.

A new working group was created to conduct the survey. The working group consisted of one university professor (who is also the parent of an adult with

disabilities) and five members of the ADRF staff with expertise in various areas such as construction, legislation, special education, vocational training, employment and social services. One of the group members is also a wheelchair user.

Description of the Evaluation Plan

The objective of the study was to measure the progress made for the implementation of the National Action Plan of the NSPD in its intervention areas, during the period 2008-2009, and its impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Based on the National Action Plan, two separate, but interrelated studies were designed. These studies guided both the process for the formulation of data collection instruments and the determination of sources of information.

The first study collected quantitative and qualitative data on the implementation of each one of the 95 measures of the National Action Plan. The primary source of information were experts in the central and local government agencies who were assigned the responsibility for the implementation of the measures as well as four nongovernmental disability organizations (NGOs).

Six regions of the country were included in the study: Tirana, Durres, Vlore, Shkoder, Korça and Elbasan. (For a full list of participating government offices go to the Appendix 1). Data were collected in July – October 2008 and October – December 2009. A total of 132 structured questionnaires, with quantitative and qualitative data, were completed. The questionnaires were built separately for each area of the action plan and included all questions that were pertinent to the office following this model:

Has Measure .XXXX, planned to be implemented in 2007 happened? DON'T KNOW NO IN PROGRESS YES

Has somebody or a working group been appointed to follow this issue? DON'T KNOW NO IN PROGRESS YES

Has an Action Plan been formulated with deadlines for each measure? DON'T KNOW NO IN PROGRESS YES

If your response is IN PROGRESS, please specify what has been done until now, _____

If your answer is NO, please specify the barriers encountered:

In order to encourage the participation in the survey, the questionnaires were accompanied by the letter of the approval for the study and the permission to provide information by a government official in position of authority. (See Appendix 2 for samples of some of the letters). The participants were also invited to attach any documentation that was appropriate and would help the evaluation process. At the end, the participants were asked to state their position, and sign and date the questionnaire, so that the information could be considered official. Although the participants in the questionnaire were carefully chosen, the box most chosen in the completed questionnaires from the regions in particular was "Don't Know." This brought an immediate change in the data collection strategy, planning and organizing direct interviews with representatives of institutions and relevant specialists, at the same time phone calls or email contacts were used.

The results of the study on the implementation of the National Action Plan have been presented separately for each measure, emphasizing whenever possible the progress made, as it was reported by each agency responsible for implementation.

The second study was based on a written, structured, quantitative-qualitative survey with people with disabilities and family members from six regions in the country: Tirana, Durrës, Vlorë, Shkoder, Korça and Elbasan. The study was conducted in October - December 2009. The participants were volunteers, and they were recruited through the disability organizations and special education schools. To protect the identity of the participants, the questionnaires were anonymous and no personal information was collected.

A total of 1041 people participated in the survey; 526 (50.5%) were people with disabilities and 515 (49.5%) were their family members (parents, sisters and brothers). Both genders were represented in the study, with a slight overrepresentation of males (n=587, 56.9%). The people with disabilities were of various age groups and needed different levels of support; they also represented various disability categories.

AREA I: ACCESSIBILITY

Life without barriers (Accessibility) is the first area of intervention in the National Action Plan of the National Strategy for People with Disability (NSPD).

The objectives of this area and the measures for their implementation aim to get rid of the existing barriers, and avoid emerge of new ones in order to:

1. enable participation of people with disability in the social life, considering the existing conditions of public infrastructure in the country which constitute the biggest obstacles for disabled persons participation in the daily life activities, and which make it more difficult for their involvement in the process of education, employment, and their access to vocational and education training facilities for people with disability.
2. bringing people with disabilities “to the attention” of the whole society, so that they can be perceived as an important factor that contributes in the process of increasing the awareness of the society, and laying the foundations for higher sensitivity on the part of law makers and the society at large.

The main steps to be taken in order to guarantee a life without barriers include: (a) Removing barriers for enabling participation in the social, cultural and political life; (b) creating the necessary conditions to provide access to information; and (c) including study of accessibility in the curricula of the Faculties of Architecture, Design, Media Communications and computer sciences.

The National Action Plan has two objectives:

- I.1. Ensure accessibility for people with disabilities through gradual removal of existing architectonic, infrastructure and transport barriers, and through preventing the creation of new accessibility barriers.

I.2.Utilize modern technologies to gradually overcome communication and information barriers for people with disabilities..

The National Action Plan includes 14 measures envisaged for the implementation of these objectives.

RESULTS

Results information comes from two sources. The first is information about progress in the implementation of National Strategy for People with Disability (NSPD) National Action Plan for 2008 - 2009, in terms of reporting on the findings related to each planned measure. The picture is not complete because the information provided by the institutions/actors involved in the implementation of NSPD is not complete. Whereas the second source of information comes from the findings of the survey with disabled persons and their family members regarding their perception of the situation and of the existing barriers for disabled persons, in terms of both construction barriers and communication barriers.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 2008 – 2009 TASKS PREPARATION FOR FUTURE TASKS

01. Accessibility

Measure 1.1. Accessible flats will be built and accessibility measures will be applied to 10% of the buildings constructed with the funds of the National Public Housing Department.

Timeline: 2007-2014

Responsible Institution: MoPWTT

Findings:

According to the National Public Housing Department, since 2007 elements of accessibility are standard components for the standard housing projects, reiterating the fact that this Agency pays particular attention to the disability issue given that these houses will be used by the so-called social groups, which include disabled persons. Standard housing projects have been developed for houses equipped with elevators/lifts and ramps at the entrance and which respect the spaces defined according to the standards. These projects are being implemented in the facilities planned for Shkodra, Korça and Kavaje. Whereas the regional offices of the National Housing Agency state

that they do not have appropriate information/knowledge with regard to enforcement of this measure, and are not familiar with these issues. The specialists employed in these local offices are not very familiar with the existing legislation, and have not received training about these issues.

Status: Some progress

Actually I live in an apartment, in a new flat, which although having lift, it is placed at a height of half a floor, so it can't be reached because of many stairs that are at the entrance. This has forced me to start to look for a new apartment, in a flat that at minimum to have an apartment where the elevator could be easily reached, i.e. it should start in the ground floor, or better at the underground parking space and be big enough for my wheelchair to fit into. I'm looking everywhere in Tirana, for a flat to meet these requirements. What I have found so far, is an increasing number of other people with disability living in my conditions, with whom and /or their family members we are meeting every day in front of apartments that offer everything in terms of barriers, but no solutions.

S.L. tetraplegic

Measure 1.2. Public funds should be planned and used for the removal of existing barriers in the roads and public infrastructure, public buildings, schools, health institutions and state-owned buildings and for the construction of accessibility elements such as ramps, elevators, etc.

Timeframe: 2007-2015

Responsible institutions: (a) MoPWTT; (b) local government units

Findings:

The MoPWTT reports that work is underway for the elimination of the existing physical barriers, but that there is no special fund allocated for this purpose. In the workshop organized in February 2009 with representatives of urban structures at the local level, the MoPWTT informed the participants about the most recent legal obligation with regard to accessibility – The Regulation for utilization of spaces by people with disabilities, COM decision no 1503 of 19.11.2008, in particular regarding the role of local government units for preventing the emergence of barriers in new objects/facilities, and eliminating

barriers in the existing facilities.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) reports that projects for the reconstruction of public health centers in Tirana have taken into account introduction of elements of accessibility. In a written note to all entities involved in investments in construction and reconstruction of health care centers, the Ministry of Health informs them that it will not accept any project that does not meet, or it is not in keeping with the accessibility requirements of the projects.

According to Tirana Municipality, every investment will be carried out based on construction norms that guarantee removal of barriers. Again according to the same municipality, during 2008, the construction permits for 95 new facilities approved by the CTA(Council of Territorial Adjustment/KR) of Tirana Municipality, have been in compliance with the norms established in COM decision no 401 of 25.06.2004.

According to Korça municipality funds have been planned, while the amount is not determined, whereas Durrës municipality has not planned any budget for the enforcement of this measure. Elbasan municipality points out the introduction of ramps in schools and sidewalks as part of the projects, but there is no planning from public funds to cover them.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.2.a,b. Public funding of new social and infrastructure projects will include funding for wheelchair accessibility in the implementation of the pilot project "An Accessible Tirana." The pilot project will be replicated in other municipalities in the country.

Timeframe: For Tirana: 2005-2007
For the rest of the municipalities: 2007-2015

Responsible institutions: (a) MOPWTT; (b) Tirana Municipality; (c) other municipalities

Findings:

The MoPWTT did not provide any data with regard to the enforcement of this measure.

The implementation of Tirana without barriers Project began 5 years ago, and it is ongoing. In the context of this project, during 2008, in Tirana 12 schools were reconstructed, 4 new schools were built with elements of accessibility in place.

In 2008 started the process for the reconstruction/rehabilitation of ten new roads, which are still underway, and which process envisages introduction of building accessibility elements that guarantee removal of barriers in the cross-sections of the capital.

Currently it is underway a project for parking slots/space and cross-sections for Persons with Disabilities. This project provides parking space for disabled persons in 35 points in the city of Tirana and 52 parking slots.

A project is underway for the rehabilitation of the sidewalks in “Ali Demi” neighborhood in Tirana, making them accessible, with lightening lines or persons with visual impairment.

The strategy of Tirana Municipality “FOR OPEN URBAN SPACES”, where the Open Spaces include: sites/squares, roads, condominium areas, urban/regional parks etc. defines as one of its specific objectives the identification of the possibilities for improving entry to Open Spaces, and their accessibility by the disabled persons. For accessible transport refer to measures 1.3 and 1.4 (below)

The surveys conducted in Tirana indicated that now there is more attention paid to introduction of measures for the prevention of new constructions with barriers. The changes are tangible/ visible in the new kindergartens and schools, in the sidewalks where there have been introduced the basic elements of accessibility. However, what is missing is the appropriate level of project implementation monitoring, which does not ensure the appropriate accessibility, and consequently leads to failures in the complete chain of independent movement of disabled persons.

Very little has been done for the elimination of barriers in order to guarantee building accessibility in the health care centers, trade centers and entertainment centers. Many of the central and local institutions are not accessible and lack disability accessories.

Durrës and Shkodra municipalities report that there are plans in place for new roads to include sidewalks with accessibility elements. In Durrës, the new trade centers have already introduced accessible elements for disabled persons.

None of the municipalities included in the study, reported to have in place a full-fledged action plan for building a barrier free city.

Status: Good progress

Measure 1.2c. Accessibility modifications will be done to the main hospitals in Tirana in the amount of 82.8 million lek.
Timeframe: 2005-2010
Responsible institution: Ministry of Health

Findings:

According to the MoH, the Investments Unit in the Economic Department of this Ministry during 2008 prepared an Order of the Minister of Health regarding Recognition and Implementation of Building Accessibility Standards for Persons with Disabilities. This order has been disseminated to all potential investors in the field in order to ensure compliance of all construction and reconstruction projects for the health facilities. This Order was not renewed in 2009. Given the changes of almost all hospital directors and Public Health Department it would be advisable to renew this order. There are no possibilities and capacities for providing the necessary information.

Projects of out-patient clinics that are being rehabilitated in the context of cooperation with Italian Cooperation office are being followed by the Investments Sector (project supervisor) in the Directorate of Economic Planning in the Ministry of Health. Investments carried out in other health institutions are monitored by the director of that health institution or the person in charge.

Accessibility funds are part of the general broad funding for hospital facilities that are being reconstructed or built from scratch. In the draft-budget for 2010 there is no request for funding of accessibility or disability accessories

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.2ç. Hospitals at Municipal and Regional level should ensure a barrier free and accessible environment to meet the needs of disabled persons.
Timeframe: 2005 -2015
Responsible institutions: Local government units (LGUs)

Findings:

According to MoH there are in the process of establishment and finalization accessible premises, in line with the standards for the treatment of people with disabilities in the regional hospitals. This has already been done in the regional

hospital of Elbasan and in the emergency unit of Mother Teresa University Hospital Center (TUHC) in Tirana. According to MoH, work is underway for the construction of a new hospital (Surgery service and Obstetrics and Gynecology) in the city of Elbasan, for a total value of 370 million lekë. The project envisages installation of lifts, building of ramps, handrails and accessible toilets for people with disabilities. Also, during 2010 there is budget allocation for building the ramp for access to people with disability in Saranda hospital, at a value of 930 thousand lekë.

Also, there is budget provision for constructing a ward for patients with severe mental health problems in Shkodra and Vlora. The budget allocated for each hospital ward will be 50 million lekë. These constructions include the necessary elements for people with disabilities. The reconstruction of the out-patient clinic of the city of Korça is almost complete (due to finish soon), and the same is true for the cities of Gjirokastra and Peshkopi. The reconstruction includes also installation of lifts and introduction of ramps etc.

Also, regional offices of public health report that work has already started for some modifications, mainly related to introducing ramps at the entry of hospitals in Vlora, Shkodra, Durrës and Korça, and the installation of lifts in Shkodra. However, despite these efforts, the hospitals are still far from being supplied/equipped with disability accessories for wheelchair users. There are no short-term plans in place to address this need. Vlora does not yet have funds for the enforcement of this measure.

The information of Vlora public health directorate indicates that they do not have appropriate information. Tirana Regional Health Authority (TRHA) informs that two out patient clinics of Tirana are now accessible, and have been supplied with lifts, entry ramps and accessible toilets.

A direct survey conducted in 2008 by the Center for Quality, Safety and Accreditation of Health Institutions indicates that approximately 64 % of the requirements and standards for making public facilities in hospitals accessible for use by people with disabilities are in fact not met.

Status: Some progress

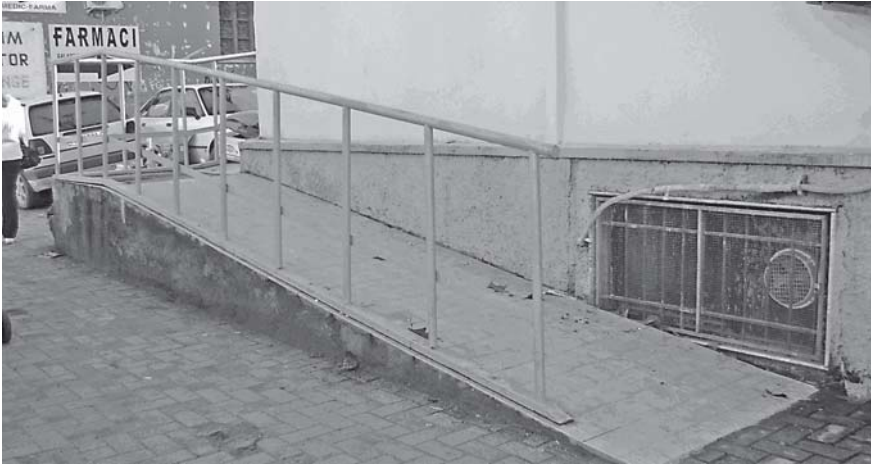
A questionnaire on “Access and facilities for use of health care service for people with disability in the outside and the interior space in hospitals” has been distributed by NCQSA-HI, on behalf of promoting the Safety and the Rights of the patients in health care system, in 21 main hospitals in the country:

5 in Tirana and 16 in some main districts in the country.

The aim was to make a direct observation with regards to implementing the standards in our hospitals for use by PwD as an obligation under the approved legal acts.

Out of 21 observed hospitals it resulted that:

- 17 hospitals do not have special parking spaces for vehicles used by people with disability, only three of them do have, QSUT, Elbasan, and Gjirokastra;
- 8 hospitals, do not have ramps in the entrance in conformity with standards to facilitate use by and the mobility of wheelchair users, while 12 do have
- 3 hospitals do not have the proper width of the doors, in conformity with standards(not less then 90 cm to allow entrance by a wheelchair user) and 17 others give a positive answer in relation to this question
- Out of 12 hospitals that have lifts, only 9 of them are used for this purpose, while 8 hospitals do not have lifts at all,
- 16 hospitals do not have accessible toilets, marked and reserved for people with disability, wheelchair users, in every floor, while 3 of them have given a positive answer, 1 have given no answer at all.
- 8 hospitals do not have supportive rails as required by standards in stairs and in halls and 11 of them have given a positive answer, and 1 has not responded at all.
- 1 hospital is not equipped with mobility means, wheelchairs, while 19 others agree that they do have, while the answer to the question if they use these muse these mobility means, is responded positively from 12 hospitals, 5 have not responded, while from the remaining 2, one use them for operations.
- 11 hospitals are not equipped with disability accessories i.e bed lifts; 8 have given a positive answer, while 1 has given no answer.
- 16 hospitals have not covered the floor with non slippery material, while 4 respond positively
- 9 hospitals do not have interior floors non reflective, while 8 respond positively, 3 do not give an answer at all
- 16 hospitals do not have information on interior signaling system, exposed or not exposed, accessible and reachable by people with disability with hearing and visual impairment, while 4 of them respond positively.



Measure 1.2d. Eight vocational training centers will become accessible for the training of people with disabilities by the State/ National Employment Service.

Timeframe: 2005-2007

Responsible institutions: MoLSAEO/ State/National Employment Service

Findings:

According to MOLSAEO there are particular accessibility elements in the vocational training centers of Fier, Elbasan and Korça, and work is underway with the rest of the centers, but none of the centers is yet fully accessible, in compliance with the standards.

The survey findings indicate that out of 9 vocational training centers, only center no 4 in Tirana has ensured entrance accessibility.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.2e. One hundred (100) schools and 90 day care centers (for children ages 3-6) will become accessible for people with disabilities.

Timeframe: 2004 - 2014

Responsible institution: Ministry of Education and Sciences (MoES)

Findings:

Tirana Municipality submitted an accurate list, and pictures of locations of schools that have been reconstructed, while reiterating the fact that all of them have been

made accessible for pupils with disabilities. www.bashkiatirane.gov.al

All reconstructed/rehabilitated schools include accessible building elements which enable elimination of barriers for pupils with disabilities. These include entrance with ramps, and toilets with accessible facilities, both for the pupils, and for the teaching staff. Two of the planned schools have lifts. The budget for accessibility elements is not a separate item in the overall budget for the facility.

In theory the obligation for introducing accessible elements in the designs of school buildings by the MoES was introduced in the year 2000. The Ministry of ES does not have detailed information about schools and kindergartens that have been made accessible, but given the current status of schools and kindergartens, after 2000, according to MoES there is an ongoing process for the design of school buildings in keeping with accessibility norms.

Status: Some progress

<i>Measure 1.2ë.</i>	Continuous efforts will be undertaken to ensure that polling stations become accessible for people with disabilities and so are other public offices like courts, etc.
<i>Timeframe:</i>	launched in 2006
<i>Responsible institutions:</i>	(a) MoPWTT ; (b) local government unit

Findings:

The respondents, specialists of MoPWTT were not familiar with the progress made regarding enforcement of this measure. The same situation is true for the municipalities of Tirana, Vlora, Durrës, Korça and Shkodra. What is more, these municipalities do not recognize it as their own responsibility, even though this is a common obligation for them and CEC, based on the Electoral Code, and precisely in its article 108. Thus the responsibility for enabling accessibility of the polling stations remains with the Central Elections Commission. The Central Elections Commission had planned that before the elections of 2009, it would identify information regarding the level of accessibility of the polling stations, as well as their location, which has in fact almost not happened. A positive fact remains that CEC took several progressive steps regarding production of special voting means for people with visual impairment, and for making accessible some of the polling stations in Tirana for the parliamentary elections of June 28, 2009. CEC, in cooperation with ADRF made possible building of 26 mobile sloping ramps in 24 facilities/health centers and schools in Tirana, which served for 72 polling stations that were located in these facilities.

ADRF forerun the process by preparing a brief on the situation and the measures for intervention to build sloping ramps. Another positive step was taken by the Ministry of Health, which during the reconstruction of its building introduced a sloping ramp at the entrance, as well as installed an elevator. In Korça the level of accessibility in the court of appeal is satisfactory. This court has been rehabilitated and has been supplied with a ramp at the entrance, as well as an elevator, while the district court is the process of reconstruction, and the engineering design provides for the disability elements.

Whereas the district court and the attorney's office in Elbasan are not yet accessible for disabled persons: such as wheelchair users, and persons with visual impairment etc. Whereas with regard to Vlora judicial district court, it is not accessible for persons with physical and mobility limitations, but it has audio communication via which parties are convened in court session. The court of appeal in Vlora has an elevator, but no sloping ramps at the entrance, even though the building has been built the last 4-5 years. The same situation is true for the court of first instance and court of appeal in Shkodra. The first is located in a building with four floors, while the other with 3 floors and none is accessible for disabled persons.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.3. Accessibility measures shall be applied to transport means starting from the urban transport in Tirana and continuing with railway transport.

Timeframe: Started in 2007

Responsible institution: MoPWTT

Findings:

According to MoPWTT work is underway for drafting of regulations on technical use of railways. These draft regulations provide for specific facilities in enabling access for wheelchair users. Also, a Manual on Albanian Standards for Road Construction and Engineering has been published. This Manual lays out the standards for introduction of facilities for wheelchair users.

Again according to MoPWTT, no funds have been allocated for the enforcement of this measure, but meanwhile there is a contact person and the necessary budget has been projected for its enforcement. The Institute for Transport Studies has conducted a survey on the construction of a terminal in for inter-urban and international transportation

in Tirana. During the construction of this terminal, all elements of accessibility for disabled persons will be taken into consideration. Also, measures have been taken in the documentation for the establishment of procedures for accessibility and utilization of individual transport means for people with disabilities.

According to Tirana Municipality, entities with public transportation licenses have the obligation to ensure accessible transportation means. Now, over 12 additional buses have been added to urban bus lines, which meet the accessibility requirements for disabled persons. In over 80% of the bus stations there are covered shelters for disabled persons and the elderly.

Also, Elbasan Municipality reports to have introduced in the public transportation lines accessible transportation means for wheelchair users.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.4. Introducing accessible road signs for persons with visual and hearing impairments.

Timeframe: launched in 2007

Responsible institutions: (a) MoPWTT ; (b) local government units

Findings:

According to MoPWTT nothing has been done for the enforcement of this measure. The specialists of the Urban Departments in the municipalities of Tirana, Vlora, Elbasan, Durrës and Korça state that they have no information regarding this issue. Tirana Municipality points out that there traffic lights and lines have been introduced in 10 cross sections, but the traffic lights are not equipped with audio/voice signaling.

Status: No progress**02. Use of Modern Technologies**

Measure 2.1. To provide support for the publication of audio books and Brail publications, as the basic type of literature for the blind, including school curricula, technical, legal and artistic literature.

Timeframe: Began in 2005

Responsible institutions: NPOs

Findings:

The Albanian Association of Blind people provide this service through its National Rehabilitation Center for People with Visual and Hearing Impairments. This center is partially funded by the state budget. The center has a collection of 220 books, including textbooks, fiction, selected scientific publications, audio books that the persons with the visual impairment can have access to any time, and 34 modest regional/local audioregistering places. The association also runs a printing house which prepares publications in *Brail*. Estimates in Albania indicate that there are about 300 persons who can read in *Brail*. (www.shvsh.org.al)

The service of publications in Brail, as the basic type of literature for persons with visual impairment, including textbooks only for school pupils, is also delivered by the Institute of Pupils with Visual Impairment. The Institute prints for the needs of its students 30 types of texts in brail, with 8 to 10 copies (print-run) for each title, but can not cover all the needs. These publications are funded by the state budget and donors who have provided materials and equipments for publication. It is necessary to expand the technical base with staff, and with contemporary printing programs/softs.

Status: Good Progress

Measure 2.2. Disabled persons need to have access to daily communication in all areas of public service (during treatment/address of official matters)

Timeframe: began in 2005

Responsible institutions: NPOs

Findings:

Public offices are not accessible for wheelchair users. This was a major issue, which came up during 2009, in the course of the process of the supply of the citizens with identity cards before the elections process for the parliamentary elections of June 28, 2009. Given that the ID Cards application offices in Tirana were not accessible, a considerable (not identified) number of persons with disabilities could not be supplied with ID cards. This concern was also raised several times with and in the Media.

Also, none of these public offices have sign language interpreters and none of the government official reports in printed in Brail. NPO representatives report that

they have endorsed and supported the enforcement of this measure, but that the Local Government Unit had not shown any interest. The Albanian National Association for Persons with Hearing Impairment (ANAD) is delivering a national seminar for the training of 15 sign language interpreters, but none of them is involved in the interpretation for persons with hearing impairment in the public offices.

Status: No progress

Measure 2.3. Ensure cooperation with the electronic media so that the news editions are also broadcasted in sign language

Timeframe: started in 2005

Responsible institutions: NPOs

Findings:

According to ANAD, with the initiative of MoLSAEO and ANAD, in 2008, Albanian public television is broadcasting one of its news editions for 10 minutes with sign language interpretation. This is a single effort, while there is no strategy at the country level for the enforcement of this measure.

The Programme Department of the NCRTV/KKRT (National Commission of Radio and Television) reports that the new draft law for the media, which is being amended, includes provisions which are in compliance with the European legislation and take into consideration respect for human rights and reflection of disability issues in the Media. Following the approval of the law in the parliament, NCRTV/KKRT will draft and issue the necessary sub-legal acts such as: instructions, regulations etc. so that radio and television operators are clear and can comply with the requirements of the disability rights legislation.

Status: Some progress**DISCUSSION**

This general overview speaks of the steps in progress made towards the achievement of the first objective of the National Action Plan of NSPD, namely Accesibility/Enabling a life without barriers for people with disability, while gradually

removing the existing architectural, urban and transportation barriers, and preventing the creation of new barriers”. But these steps are extremely slow. Results of four of the measures (40%) reflect very little progress, whereas for five of the other measures (50%) there has been some progress. The above mentioned analysis indicates that only one of the measure has been taken seriously, and is partially completed. The following table is a summarized overview of the progress of each of the measures of this objective, also depending on the timeframes:

Table 2: **Status of Progress for Objective One: Accessibility**

Measure	Time frame	Responsible institutions	Progress status
1.1 Accessible flats will be built and accessibility measures will be applied to 10% of the buildings constructed with the funds of the National Public Housing Department.	2007-2014	MOPWTT	Some progress
1.2. Public funds should be planned and used for the removal of existing barriers in the roads and public infrastructure, public buildings, schools, health institutions and state-owned buildings and for the construction of accessibility elements such as ramps, elevators, etc.	2007-2014	MOPWTT Local government unit	Some progress
1.2a,b Public funding of new social and infrastructure projects will include funding for wheelchair accessibility in the implementation of the pilot project "An Accessible Tirana." The pilot project will be replicated in other municipalities in the country.	Tirana: 2005-2007 The rest of the municipalities: 2007-2015	MOPWTT Tirana Municipality Municipalities	Good progress
1.2c. Accessibility modifications will be done to the main hospitals in Tirana in the amount of 82.8 million lek.	2005-2010	Ministry of Health	Some progress

1.2ç. Hospitals at Municipal and Regional level should ensure a barrier free and accessible environment to meet the needs of disabled persons.		Local government unit	Some progress
1.2d. Eight vocational training centers will become accessible for the training of people with disabilities by the State/National Employment Service.	2005-2007	National Employment Service Mo LSAEO	Some progress
1.2e. One hundred (100) schools and 90 day care centers (for children ages 3-6) will become accessible for people with disabilities.	2004 - 2014	Ministry of Education and Sciences	Some progress
1.2 ë. Continuous efforts will be undertaken to ensure that polling stations become accessible for people with disabilities and so are other public offices like courts, etc.	Started in 2006	MOPWTT Local government unit	Some progress
1.3. Accessibility measures shall be applied to transport means starting from the urban transport in Tirana and continuing with railway transport.	Started in 2007	MOPWTT	Some progress
1.4. Introducing accessible road signs for persons with visual and hearing impairments.	Started in 2007	MOPWTT Local government unit	No progress

Results of the implementation of measures of second objective of the action plan of NSPD/SKPAK, namely “Use of modern technologies for the gradual elimination of information barriers for persons with disabilities” on one side point out to the serious concern of NPOs, while on the other they indicate the low interest on the side of the state administration both at the central and at the local level. Giving NPOs responsibilities in terms of the implementation of the Action Plan, without any governmental support in

terms of funding or fulfilling the obligations, may not be that realistic since NPOs do not have the financial capacities, nor the decision-making power to foster the implementation of these measures. Their implementation will be possible only thanks to the joint efforts of local government units, other state institutions, and NPOs.

Table 3: **Status of Progress for Objective II: Use of Modern Technology**

Measure	Time frame	Responsible institutions	Progress status
2.1. To provide support for the publication of audio books and Brail publications, as the basic type of literature for the blind, including school curricula, technical, legal and artistic literature.	Starting in 2005	NGOs	Good progress
2.2. To provide support for the publication of audio books and Brail publications, as the basic type of literature for the blind, including school curricula, technical, legal and artistic literature.	Started in 2005	NGOs	No progress
2.3. Ensure cooperation with the electronic media so that the news editions are also broadcasted in sign language.	Started in 2005	NGOs	Some progress

The progress observed in this area of the Action Plan for 2008 –2009 is true both for the central and the local levels. There is progress made by the Ministry of Health, MoPWTT, but not at the appropriate level – the steps are still way too slow. At the central level, the municipality of Tirana is progressing, but not with the expected pace of a capital city. Some steps have also been observed in other municipalities, but they are insufficient.

It is worth pointing out that even when there are achievements with regard to respecting the measures, they are not compliant. The information coming from the local government units is very weak. This is one of the indicators that very little, if nothing at all, has been done for the implementation of the NSPD/SKPAK in the area of living without barriers. But, even when there is some progress, the data are not collected and processed or reflected. This is because the responsible local government structures for monitoring the implementation of NSPD/SKPAK are not in place, or even when they

are in place they are inactive, and often not recognized by the heads of the institutions. This is because in most of the time the person in charge is totally out of the scope of the situation, and can not collect the data, so mostly the answers would be: "I do not know/ I am not aware of that". And this is an answer which comes also from heads of departments. At the local level, there is little information and expertise for the implementation of this objective. One of the reasons that has influenced in the failure to deliver on the commitments could be lack of proper coordination between the central and local governments. Also, local staffs do not have appropriate information regarding legal changes, and the responsibilities stemming from these changes. Lack of budget for ensuring accessibility at the central and local levels does not allow for its planning and monitoring.

RECOMANDATIONS

The above mentioned results dictate the need for a series of recommendations for the state institutions both at the central and local level for the implementation of this area of the National Action Plan:

1. MOPWTT has the most important role in terms of implementation in the first area of NSPD/SKPAK. The following recommendations could be used in improving its work, in line with the responsibilities in the context of NSPD:
 - To introduce as part of its policies, concrete objectives for implementation in the area of NSPD for building a barrier free environment.
 - To take the leading role in guiding the responsible structures of every other line ministry involved in this area.
 - To delegate to all regional and local institutions responsibilities for the implementation of NSPD , while request coordination with the recent legal improvements in this area, and include in their annual plans specific obligations; To monitor continuously the enforcement of the obligations of NSPD through collection of information; To include this information in the annual report of the Ministry, and to record the data in the statistical data base of the Ministry.
 - To make sure that the new policies in construction, transports and telecommunications take into account accessibility standards for disabled persons.
 - In line with most recent legislation, start the establishment of the relevant structures at the central and local levels that will approve the projects with

the appropriate level of accessibility and monitor their implementation, being the responsible authorities for monitoring and guaranteeing the accomplishment of standards for accessibility.

2. The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sciences, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, in line with the improved legislation, should include in their working priorities realization of accessible premises of their existing facilities and in all new investments; to formulate and approve specific instructions about the elements of accessibility, which should be part of all rehabilitation and construction projects in the relevant areas, to establish an office that will be responsible for ensuring accomplishment of building accessibility standards in new project designs and taking them into consideration during project implementation (construction or reconstruction of buildings).
3. The National Housing Entity should review all standard housing projects/designs for public housing, in order to make sure that they are compliant with and guarantee reach of and access by people with disability as well as quality standards for them. Also, it should reflect these changes in the cost estimates for the standard projects.
4. The Central Elections Commission should identify the level of accessibility at all electoral centers, develop a data base, and run cost estimates in order to include them in the draft budgets for the next elections, namely the local elections.
5. All municipalities should include in their annual draft-budgets costs for accessibility of premises, in order to guarantee systematically and gradually the accessibility of all public facilities.
6. Responsible institutions of the local government units should take measures to guarantee that licensed vehicles for public transportation meet the accessibility standards for disabled persons.
7. MoLSAEO should come up with proposals of changes in the National Action Plan, which should cover at least the following areas: (a) to specify more clearly the responsible institutions for each measure; (b) to alter the timeframe for undelivered measures; and (c) to add the responsible state agencies under "Responsible institutions" for the delivery of those measures, which currently have been attached to NPOs, as the only responsible party for implementation purposes.

AREA II. SERVICES

The Action plan of the National Strategy for People with Disability includes 21 measures in the area of services. These measures include a broad range of services related to health care and social services. Following the multi-disciplinary model, the responsible institutions for the implementation of these measures come from the areas of health care, social services, and education at the central and local levels, and NPOs. Following are the objectives of the National Strategy for People with Disability regarding Services:

1. Prevent disability at the earliest possible stage through early detection, and treatment of the children 0-6 years of age.
2. Provide coordinated health and social services by the public and private institutions for the people with disabilities in accordance with a shared philosophy of rehabilitation and integration.
3. Ensure the financial and physical opportunities for the provision of basic health care services for people with severe disabilities in the whole territory of the county.
4. Provide services for the rehabilitation of functional, physical, psychological, social and economic limitations caused by inborn disabilities, accidents or chronic diseases to ensure the integration of people with disabilities in their families and in the community.
5. Provide information to people with disabilities, their family members, experts, and caregivers on assistive technology that may be used by people with disabilities. Meet their needs with assistive technology equipment. Ensure the use of assistive technology for people with disabilities.
6. Provide high-quality services by the local government in compliance with the national state policies on disability as required by the legislation on decentralization

RESULTS

The results are broken down into two sections. The first deals with the implementation of each measure in line with the reports of experts of the administrative competent structures and NPO leaders. The second presents the results of the questionnaire with the disabled persons and their family members.

IMPLEMENTATION OF TASKS FOR 2008-2009. PREPARATION FOR THE FUTURE

Prevention and Early Identification

Measure 1.1. Establishment of multi-disciplinary teams for the assessment of disabled individuals, and preparation and evaluation of individual plans for their rehabilitation and integration.

Timeline: Began in 2004-2005

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) MoLSAEO; (c) NGOs

Findings:

The assessment that determines eligibility for the disability payment, invalidity pension for disabled persons and the right for care givers is done through the Medical Commission for the Determination of the Ability to Work.(MCDAW)

MCDAW is an institution under SII and every year it is involved in the assessment of approximately 94 thousand persons with disabilities, including persons with mental and physical disabilities and their right for care givers; para and tetraplegics, and their entitlement to care givers, (or other wise personal assistant- not still evolving as a concept and as a proper service but just cash benefit to a family member) and labor invalids. Whereas persons with visual impairment are evaluated by another medical commission, in charge of determining the visual impairment degree. This commission is under the State Social Service (SSS) and operates only at the national level in the SSS. The number of beneficiaries from the disability program is approximately 120 thousand persons or 3.7 % of the country's population⁵.

Despite the considerable percentage of the country's population, methodology for

⁵Dr. Nexhmedin Dumani "Study on the re-organizaiton of the medical commission for the assessment of disability", november 2008.

the medical assessment by the MCDAW in determining the disability still remains problematic. *The assessment process is based entirely on the medical model and medical criteria for evaluation do not include all types of diagnoses. Decision-making by MCDAW is not on multi-disciplinary bases, but only on the determination of diagnoses and loss of working ability, without taking into consideration the conditions where the disabled persons live and elimination of barriers for social inclusion, their need to be equipped with rehabilitative mobility means (like wheelchairs), the need for physical therapy, speech or occupation therapy, the need for integration in the education system, vocational training, employment and entertainment activities.*

According to MoLSAEO, with regard to assessment and determination of disabilities, a series of measures have been taken to improve the institutional and legal frameworks. In 2008 a proposal was submitted to the Council of Ministers for improving some of the provisions of law no 9355 "On aid and social services". The improvements made to this law were in line with the establishment of special commissions under SSS for the disability assessment, the possibility for defining and grading payment depending on the gravity of diagnosis and the review of the regulation for the evaluation of disabilities, based on the WHO, International Classification of Functioning and Disability (ICF) The proposed amendments have not yet been approved, despite a second proposal by MoLSAEO in the course of 2009 to this end. According to MoLSAEO, the above mentioned amendments have been projected in the draft budget for 2010, which is expected to be approved in December 2009. Currently, the enforcement of this measure is still at the level of proposals for legal amendments and there is no adopted legal act in this direction.

Meanwhile the other institution responsible for the implementation of this measure, the Ministry of Health (MoH) states that there have been positive developments in this regard⁶. Thus, in the psychiatric hospitals in Shkodra, Elbasan and Tirana, in addition to the medical staff there are now psychologists and social workers who are involved in the treatment of the patients. There are also supported houses, which have been established for patients with mental disabilities in Shkodra, Korça, Elbasan, Vlora, where the medical staff, educators, the ergo therapists try to create conditions as close to the family environment for the hospitalized individuals, helping them in their integration as soon as possible in the social life. However, experts of this institution point out that there are still problems with the staff in terms of their technical skills required for the early identification of emotional and behavior disorders.

In the context of positive models of cooperation with MOH, CICA organization stands

⁶ Interview with the representative of the Ministry of Health, Head of Sector M.B

out. In May 2009, CICA⁷ and MOH signed a cooperation agreement “For assistance for autistic children”, which aimed at assisting public health structures in the early diagnoses of autistic children, based on multi-disciplinary teams and enhancing the quality of treatment in practice of this category of children. Both institutions have applied for funds in the context of *Health Amelioration & New Development Services project*, in the context of IPA Adriatic - Hands Project, supported by the European Commission.⁸

In line with this measure, the Municipality of Tirana, is managing several multi-disciplinary services that deliver concrete services for disabled persons. In concrete terms “*The Multi-disciplinary Community Center for Children and Families in need*”⁹ provides services for disabled children and persons with disabilities. In the course of 2009, 6 children with disabilities have been treated with individual therapy sessions. While multi-disciplinary evaluation is done by the experts of this center who convene every month and discuss about cases of beneficiaries with more immediate needs in order to harmonize the objectives/steps of action for improving the situation of the clients of the center¹⁰.

In the context of NPOs that operate in the region of Tirana, and broader, in line with this measure, positive steps have been taken by the association “*Help the Life*”¹¹, which has set up a monitoring and evaluation structure for early intervention through multi-disciplinary teams. This structure is providing services in 3 municipal units in Tirana, 10 schools and 10 kindergartens in Tirana, and 4 schools and 4 kindergartens in the city of Vlora. This project includes 94 children with disabilities.

In the city of Shkodra, according to the association for “*Education of persons with hearing and visual impairment and their integration*”, in cooperation with MAGIS, this association is working for the implementation of a project for the early diagnoses of children with hearing problems since their birth and their rehabilitation. This diagnosis is done by multi-disciplinary teams and in line with contemporary standards.

Another recent good initiative in the context of community services for persons with disabilities and for their multi-disciplinary assessment is also the “*Community center for mental health*”, established in the city of Korça¹². Diagnosis of the beneficiaries of this

⁷ CICA (Comunita Internazionale di Capodarco in Albania) is an Italian NGO which is active in Albania since 1995. Currently this NGO is managing a day care center in Tirana that provides services to children with mental and physical disabilities through a multi-disciplinary team (doctors neuropediatric, physiotherapist, psychologist, educator) helping these children in their re-integration in the families and society.

⁸ In May 2010 the projects will be discussed and the winners will be announced. In case of a positive response it will start the process of screening for autism, and the introduction of conditions for treatment.

⁹ Address: Rr. “Maliq Muca”, (behind the premises of “Zëri i popullit” newspaper), Tel: 2234778

¹⁰ <http://www.tirana.gov.al/common/images/sherbime&aktivitete/Maj-Qershor%202009.pdf>

¹¹ Help life (translator’s note)

¹² This center was established in April 2008 by the Department of Public Health under the Ministry of Health. It is a community educational center and the services are guided for persons with problems of mental health in terms of preventing their hospitalization in the psychiatric hospital through psycho-social service.

center is done based on multi-disciplinary teams and based on ICD-10 and CDMN. Also, this center provides educational, community and entertainment activities. Currently, the center provides services to approximately 250 beneficiaries, mainly from the city of Korça, because of lack of transportation.

Status: Some progress

Measure no 1.2 Establishment of molecular biochemistry and genetics laboratory in the Obstetrical and Gynecological Hospital in Tirana.

Timeline: Beginning in 2004 - 2005

Responsible institution: Ministry of Health

Findings:

This measure is considered to have been met since 2007, with the establishment of the molecular biochemistry and genetics laboratory in the Obstetrical and Gynecological Hospital in Tirana. During 2008, Molecular Biochemistry Laboratory has carried out 104 tests for early identification of prenatal diagnoses of chistic phybroses, beta hemptglobinopatite, and muschular dystrophy, Down Syndrome. Whereas in 2009 a total of 43 tests were run for the above mentioned pathologies. With the change in the financing modalities currently it is the hospital centers themselves that manage their budgetary funds, thus for 2010 it should be the managers of these centers, the director of the Maternity home who will plan the funds for purchasing different kits for the appropriate functioning of these laboratories.

Status: Task completed

Measure 1.3. The Laboratory of Genetic Testing at the Children's Hospital will be upgraded and improved

Timeline since 2004

Responsible institutions: a) Ministry of Health b) Health Insurance Institute c) NGOs

Findings:

The gathered data indicate that the Genetics Laboratory in the Tirana University Hospital Center (TUHC) in the course of 2008-2009 has worked for the cytogenesis

examination for different tests such as: chromosomal aberrations etc. there have been approximately 300 such examinations in the course of one year. Meanwhile there is high demand but the materials for the proper operation of this lab are missing.

By the end of 2007, this laboratory had the necessary supplies for the prenatal diagnoses. But because of some small deficiencies it is not yet operational (the data are of end December 2009).

Currently, work in this laboratory is focused in teaching and gynecological counseling.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.4. Research on the early prevention of disability will be conducted. Information bulletins on early prevention and best practices in child-raising will be prepared and distributed.

Timeline: twice a year

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health (b) Ministry of Education and Sciences

Findings:

According to collected data, MoH indicates that there are no studies or research on the minimization of disabilities, and neither there is any working group or contact person or detailed plan in place for the implementation of this measure. However, it is reported that refurbishment of hospitals with a sufficient number of ultrasound equipments has had a positive impact in the minimization of born disabilities. In the course of 2008 and 2009, with the budget of MOH were purchased 8 ultrasound equipments with obsionobstetrical for the hospitals of Fier, Pogradec, Përmet, Bulqiza, Saranda, Public Health Department of Shijak, out-patient clinic no 1 in Tirana and for the health care center in Paskuqan. The ultra sound equipments have helped in following the pregnancies and prevention of pregnancy complications, but the performance can not be measured in order to assess their impact on the reduction of born disabilities.

With regard to preparation of materials and bulletins of divulgate nature related to the upbringing of children, it is reported that the “*National Center for Growth, Development and Rehabilitation of Children*” publish a magazine and leaflets. (See Area V – Legislation and research.) The Ministry of Education and Sciences (MoES) does not posses information regarding studies, research or measures taken for the minimization of the risk of born disabilities, neither does it possess information with

regard to the establishment of any working group for that purpose. While for the preparation of materials of divulgate nature with regard to rearing of children, according to MOES, in general the publications of the Institute of Curricula and Standards mainly focus on the teachers and pupils, and partially on the parents

Status: Some progress

Health and Social Services

<i>Measure 2.1</i>	New services, such as day care services, family and community-based services aimed at the integration of people with disabilities will be provided
<i>Timeline:</i>	2005 - 2006 & ongoing
<i>Responsible institutions:</i>	(a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities/State Social Service; (b) Social Insurance Institute; (c) Local Government Units

Findings:

According to MoLSAEO work is ongoing in that direction, even though there are no data if a special team is working in particular for the implementation of this measure. In the course of 2008-2009, NPOs have set up day care centers in Tirana, Durrës, Gjirokastra, Lezhe, Shkodra, Kukës, Berat and Kuçova, without including here the models funded by the World Bank. In *Shkodra* there are 6 family-like apartments for children with disabilities. These new centers provide services for 54 children with disabilities, of whom 43 children have come from disability public services in Shkodra. The services are co-financed by “Shpresa” NPO and the state budget. In this case, also the association has invested for the accessibility and refurbishment of the premises of these family-like apartments. In Berat has been established the shelter called “Lira”, which provides protected residential care and workshops for the physical and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, as well as day care service.

Whereas in Tirana another initiative is in progress with regard to helping autistic children, and that is “*Fondacioni i Fëmijëve Shqiptarë*”^{13,14}. According to the data, over 40 children from Albania have been sent abroad for medical treatment and surgeries

¹³ Albanian Children Foundation (translator’s note)

¹⁴ <http://www.albanianchildren.org>

such as: *talassemia, multiple sclerosis, eye surgery, spine surgery, heart surgery, moya – moya disease surgery, cancer* in countries such as: Italy, Greece, England, Germany, USA, Switzerland, Russia and Austria.

Also, according to MoLSAEO it is finalized the reconstruction and refurbishing of centers that provide services for persons with disabilities in Shkodra, Durrës and Tirana. The residential centers have been supplied with the necessary equipments and items, in line with the new requirements and standards for social care services. In this aspect, we find reflected in the official web page of MoLSAEO that on the International Disability Day (3 December) was inaugurated the reconstruction of the residential center for Development in Durrës, funded by the World Bank, and co-financed by the state budget, for a total amount of 33 million lekë. The center provides specialized and qualitative services for the disabled persons, in order to ensure the harmonious development of their personality and to ensure their integration in the best ways possible in the society¹⁵.

SSS and its regional offices report that work is underway for the introduction of new day care services for disabled persons and that they have concrete plans for the implementation of this measure. According to them, there are 7 new day care centers opened in Librazhd, Tirana, Tepelenë, Berat, 5 shelters in Tirana, Bushat and Shkodra, as well as 3 home care services in Korça, Tirana and Shkodra.

Meanwhile, the regional office of SSS in Elbasan, reports that in Cërrik is opened one day care center, a shelter for disabled persons with slight mental retardness established by the Psychiatric hospital of Elbasan. Also, according to the regional office of SSS in Durrës the “*Foundation of Semes Christian Center*” has opened a day care center for children with disabilities. Meanwhile in Tirana, it is worth mentioning a new day care service for children with mental disabilities opened since December 2009, and now located in new and comfortable premises by the association “*Ndihmoni Jetën*” in Prush commune in Tirana. This association has been providing services for children with disabilities and their family members since 10 years, but the establishment of this building would increase the number of beneficiaries, as well as improve the quality of the delivered services.

In compliance with the policy on social investment and the application of the principles of corporate social responsibility, Vodafone Albania represents one of the fewest Albanian companies that has established its Foundation since the year 1997. Since its establishment, Vodafone Foundation Albania, offers grants to non for profit organizations and other institutions of civil society in response to needs of marginalized groups. People with disability belong to

¹⁵ www.mpcs.gov.al

one of the beneficiary groups of Vodafone Foundation Albania Grants. A number of 20 projects have been implemented during the years 2008/2009 and 22 other projects are at implementation stage in 2009/2010.

Out of these, 3 projects in 2008/2009 and 4 projects in 2009/2010 are oriented towards improving the socio-economic status and respect of human rights of people with disability in Albania. Project that could be mentioned in the area of assistance to people with disability are “Open a window”, implemented by the National Association of Blind, “Supportive services for people with disability in need of wheelchairs in Albania”, implemented by Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, “Special Olympic” implemented by SOA and Don Bosko.

Community of people with disability have benefited directly or indirectly through other projects such as “Vocational Training” implemented by center “Don Bosko”, “Albania Reads” or building ramps in the schools of Tirana, implemented by YAPS Foundation.

For the first time, winner of the “World of Change” for the year 2009, is an engineer with disability, who will influence a positive change towards realizing concepts of universal design.

Table 4: **Social care for People with Disabilities**¹⁶

	Public	Of these:		Non public	Of these:	
	Total	Residential	Day care	Total	Residential	Day care
Total no of centers	11	7	4	14	3	11
Tirana	1	1	0	8	2	6
Berati	2	2	0	0	0	0
Durrës	1	1	0	0	0	0
Korça	3	1	2	2	0	2
Elbasan	1	0	1	0	0	0
Shkodra	1	1	0	2	1	1
Vlora	1	1	0	0	0	0
Lezhe	1	0	1	2	0	2

Note: The data for 2009 have not yet been published by MoLSAEO

¹⁶ Informaiton source <http://www.mpcs.gov.al/statistikat>

In Korça two centers are successful in their activity, i.e. the “Community center for mental health” and “Kennedy Foundation”, which *inter alia* provides services at home for disabled persons and the elderly.

Meanwhile the regional office of SSS in Shkodra and Vlora report that in particular the issue of failure to introduce new community services is mainly influenced by the budgetary insufficiency and lack of knowledge regarding attraction of foreign donor funds.

A positive fact is that the Municipality of Elbasan, in the context of the decentralization policies, has established a working group, and has also drafted an action plan with deadlines, with the view to improve the situation and delivery of social services for this city. While such committeemen has not been observed in other interviewed municipalities.

But despite these achievements, there are still missing community services for the disabled persons in the majority of urban and rural centers in the country. The interviewed specialists of the SSS reiterate that the status of adult (over 25 years old) with mental and physical disabilities is alarming. Despite their willingness to assist the cases reported by the social administrators, they are not in a position to respond to the needs of this category of persons. *Inter alia*, very problematic are cases of households with 2 or more persons with mental or physical disabilities, which represent the most acute cases that require treatment and social services.

The Association of para-tetraplegics” in Vlora stated that: it is a problem that there are no services provided in the homes of persons with severe disabilities. Another problem is lack of accessibility of the health centers and other public institutions. Improving the infrastructure of the centers would also directly help in their use by a greater number of persons with disabilities that as it is remain isolated at their homes.

Also, according to the respondent, lack of new community services is a result of not only insufficient budgetary funds, but also due to lack of information about the needs of the community in the areas where they live. In this aspect, we would also point out lack of trained human resources in the disability area and not for profit management.

Status: Progress

Measure 2.2.

New service models will be piloted and evaluated for their effectiveness. Needs assessment studies will be

conducted for the expansion of services for people with disabilities..

Timeline: 2004 (pilot projects), 2007.

Responsible institutions: (a) MoLSAEO/State Social Service; (b) local government unit (c) Ministry of Health; (d) NGOs (e) Municipality of Tirana

Findings:

For the implementation of this measure, according to MoLSAEO the process started by the World Bank is ongoing with the piloting of some types of services which currently are under the local government auspices. With regard to their effectiveness, these centers have been monitored every now and then by the monitoring structures of SSS. MoLSAEO plays an important role in following this process.

On the other hand, there seems to be no national study about the needs assessment and delivery of services according to disability categories, age groups of clients and their frequency at the local level. In this aspect, experts of ADRF, with the support of GTZ have carried out in 2 pilot cities, namely in Korça and Shkodra an assessment report¹⁷ on the needs of the disabled persons in these two cities. This report was finalized with a clear local strategy for interventions in light of improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

Another worth mentioning achievement is the approval of the “Document for the implementation of the custodianship service and the action plan for its implementation for 2008-2010”¹⁸. According to MoLSAEO, the custodianship service (personal assistance service) will be piloted in the course of 2008-2010 in two municipalities (namely in Tirana, Shkodra) and until 2013 the goal would be to extend the service to other local government units, in line with the budgetary needs and possibilities. During 2010, with the support of UNICEF, trainings will begin in Tirana and Shkodra for the state structures and custodian families etc.

At the local level, in line with this measure, the Municipality of Tirana states that it is underway the project for persons in need going out of the social assistance scheme, in order to ensure their integration in “community works” and “services at home”. Based on this initiative, home services have been provided for the disabled persons, in the course of 2009, in the municipal units no 3, 7 and 9.

Whereas in the Municipality of Elbasan there is a day care center called “Balashe

¹⁷ December 2009 “Disability Local Strategy for the cities of Korça\ Shkodr” ADRF-GTZ

¹⁸ COM decision no 1104, dated 30.7.2008. This strategic document envisages care in custodian families for children without parental care and families with social problems.

center” and there are plans for expanding it, despite the fact the limited funds do not help in the achievement of this purpose. Whereas other respondent local government units do not refer for any piloting of services for disabled persons.

According to MOH, in the context of studies and gathered data, there have been introduced in 4 priorities areas (namely in Tirana, Vlora, Elbasan, Shkodra) admission wards, which are incorporated within the psychiatric institutions with beds, which has helped prevent inappropriate admissions up to 30%. These wards also have served as training structures for the students of nursing faculty in Vlora, social works and psychology in Tirana. The patients themselves feel better during their treatment in these wards. All psychiatric services as institutions now have plans, while there are also individual plans, but the staff of the hospital structures, including their managers are not familiar with these documents.

There are initiatives about individual care and case management for the patients of the hospitals. The methodology of nursing evaluation has been used in Elbasan and Shkodra, while case management methodology is underway in Tirana and Vlora.

Status: Some progress

Measure 2.3. New standards and regulations for service for people with disabilities will be written and approved. The standards and regulations will point out the right of the clients for appropriate services, which respect their dignity and are strengths-based.

Timeline: 2004-2005

Responsible institutions: a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities/State Social Service

Findings:

The legal framework in the area of social services standards for disabled persons has already been completed since 2006. There are now in place “*Standards for disability services for day care and residential centers*,”¹⁹; “*Standards of services for the elderly in the residential and day care centers*”²⁰. But there are not as yet approved any instructions or explanatory guides related to the implementation of standards that need

¹⁹ COM decision no 822 dated 06.12.2006.

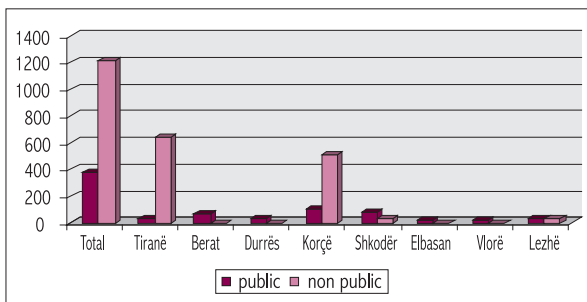
²⁰ COM No.. 823 dated 06.12.2006.

to be met by public and private providers vis-à-vis persons with disabilities²¹. Furthermore, the standards of social services represent different specificities for the categories of minors, youngsters, and adults with disabilities, an element, which needs to be kept in mind in their implementation by the responsible institutions. Meanwhile, in the context of the “*Document for the implementation of custodial service and action plan for its implementation for 2008-2010*”²² have been drafted the draft standards for custodian service for the children in need, and they are in the approval process.

Table 5: **Beneficiaries in public and non-public centers, according to statistics for 2008²³**

	Clients Public centers	of these clients:		Clients Non public centers	of these clients:	
		Females	without families		Females	without families
No of beneficiary clients	381	168	131	1210	709	31
Tirana	30	11	0	640	405	31
Berat	68	33	7	0	0	0
Durrës	31	14	6	0	0	0
Korça	100	42	40	508	276	0
Shkodra	88	42	61	32	14	0
Elbasan	20	7	2	0	0	0
Vlora	22	8	15	0	0	0
Lezhe	32	11	0	30	14	0

Figure 1: **Beneficiary clients by prefectures**

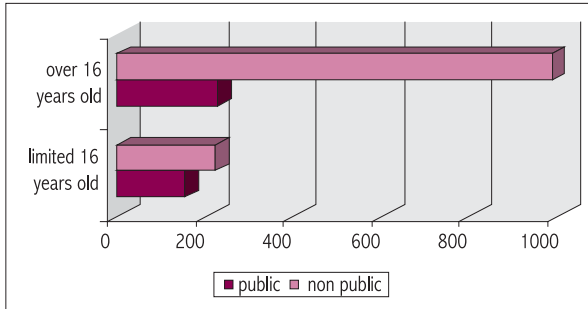


²¹Meanwhile positive steps have been taken for the category of children, in 2008 rule no.830, dated 14.4.2008 was approved “For implementation of standards of social services for children in public and private institutions”.

²² COM no.1104, dated.30.7.2008.

²³ <http://www.mpcs.gov.al/statistikat>.

Figure 2: **Clients by age**



Note: 2009 data have not yet been published by MoLSAEO

According to MoLSAEO data, in the course of 2008²⁴ have been inspected and then *licensed 25 entities and re-licensed 35* other entities that deliver social services. Licensing is accompanied by an evaluation by the state social service which is done on the ground and includes as components specific elements of standards for particular groups of beneficiaries such as: number of beneficiaries, types of services, general conditions of the institution, safety of beneficiaries and protection from violence and abuse, food, clothes, number of staff, how many of them are professionals etc. this document is very important for the decision-making of the Licensing Committee. But the interviews do not indicate the establishment of any working group for the re-evaluation of social services, in line with the needs of disabled persons.

By the end of the monitoring of this measure, it is worth mentioning that this measure needs to be revised in order to be considered as a complete obligation since 2006, with the approval of a good part of standards of social services for the vulnerable groups. The inclusion of other measurement indicators should be part of this measure in the coming years, including the explanatory instructions and guides for the implementation of standards of social services for persons with disabilities, in line with the needs that they present because of gender, age etc.

Status: Progress

²⁴ Statistics not yet completed for the year 2009.

Measure 2.4. Regulations for admission to the public residential care centers for persons with disabilities and older people will be reviewed to accommodate persons with severe disabilities whose needs cannot be met by their families.

Timeline: started in 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) MoLSAEO; (b) local government units; (c) NGOs

Findings:

The status with regard to this finding is still problematic. According to the legal and sub-legal acts in place²⁵, admission in public and private centers of residential care for disabled persons is limited until 25 years of age.

A limited number of adults with disabilities have been placed in the homes for the elderly, which makes the situation still problematic. There is no specialized staff that can provide specific services for this category, in line with its needs. In this context, MoLSAEO reports that the review of the regulations has come out as a recommendation and the idea is to assign responsible persons in the future for the improvement of this situation.

The respondents, who are experts of SSS, rightly so, raise the concern with regard to the difficulties they encounter to put in public centers adult persons with mental disabilities and the persons with physical disabilities such as: paraplegics and tetraplegics, who have mainly been abandoned. More problematic are those categories of households who have more than one disabled person in their households.

Below is the concern of one of SSS experts, not only as regards the age restriction/limit to be admitted in the residential care centers, but also the absence of day care specific services, community or residential services for this category.

Interview with specialists of the regional office of SSS.

"We are faced with major difficulties in the treatment of adults with disabilities, above 25 years old. For the treatment of this category there is no other institution that we can address, except for those of "Mother Teresa", which currently host 30 individuals of this category.

We have cases referred to us by our experts or social administrators whom we provide with a temporary solution, without being able to provide them with

²⁵ COM decision No.209, dated 12.4.2006 "For defining criteria and necessary documentaion for admission of people in public and private residential, institutions of social protection and the order No 1934, dated 18.10.2007, "For the procedures of placement of clients in public and private residential cneters of socail protection"

long term solutions because of absence of residential or day care centers of this category.

For instance we have a very serious case in one of the communes in the vicinity of the city of Kavaja, of a family composed of two sisters, one brother and their mother who are all suffering from severe mental retardness and schizophrenia. We were informed by this commune about the difficulties encountered by this family, and we have tried to assist them.

Initially they were sent to the psychiatric hospital in Elbasan, where they did not stay for more than 1 week, and then they were sent for treatment at the psychiatric hospital in Tirana, since they are under the administrative unit of Tirana, and they have been sent back to their home, following a brief stay in that institution. We have encountered major difficulties to assist this category of individuals, in particular due to lack of specialized centers or direct community services to come to their assistance.”

On the other hand, the local government states that the central government should be responsible for addressing this situation, since it has the competency to draft policies and legislation. In this regard, only the Municipality of Tirana has participated in the groups established for the formulation and improvement of legislation for improving social services delivery for vulnerable groups.

Meanwhile, in the aspect of private providers of social services, there is progress with regard to this measure since the admission criteria are in compliance with the needs of the clients, with no age limitations. In this aspect, we can mention the “Kennedy Foundation” in the city of Korça, which is focused on the delivery of services at home for the elderly (cleaning, washing, cooking, personal hygiene etc), but considering the increasing demand and the problems with which are encountered the families of children with disabilities, it has expanded its same services in this direction, offering in addition also physiotherapy.

In the end, it is worth mentioning that the situation is better in terms of private versus public providers. In this context, admission in residential and day care centers of persons with disabilities, in line with their age, remains yet to be addressed and arranged for in the legislation.

Status: No progress

Measure no 2.5. Reduced fees for people with disabilities for public services will be initiated.

Timeline: 2005-2006

Responsible institutions: Local government

Findings:

With regard to this measure, local government units report different initiatives.

The Municipalities of Tirana, Korça and Elbasan report that they are in the process of formulating differentiated fees for public services for the disabled persons. A working group has been established to this end to follow this issue with clear deadlines. However, there does not seem to be further information available regarding each concrete area where there is work going on for reducing public service fees for the disabled persons.

The Municipality of Durrës reports that they do not have sufficient budget or local capacities for the enforcement of this measure.

The same situation applies for the Municipality of Vlora as well, which has made no progress at all regarding implementation of this measure.

Status: No progress

Measure no 2.6. (a) Psycho-social counseling will be initially provided in 36 schools in Albania; (b) this service will be expanded to all the schools of Albania; (c) necessary infrastructure to work with students with special needs will be provided in schools.

Timeline: 2004 - 2010

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (b) Regional Education Directorates; (c) NGOs

Findings:

According to MoES, School Psychological Service (SPS), after being experimented with for 4 years throughout the country, is spread in all cities in Albania. Currently, SPS covers 313 9th grade schools and 150 high schools.

In line with this measure, Regional Education Directorates report different indicators. Elbasan education directorate reports that work is underway for providing to all schools psychological services, but without including the communes. Whereas with regard to school infrastructure accessibility for children with disabilities this is still problematic.

Only the school of Kuqan is accessible. Shkodra education department reports that there is psychological service available in all the schools in the city, but there is as yet no counseling for the category of children with disabilities. This directorate has identified 81 children with disabilities in mainstream education. Meanwhile, this situation is problematic in terms of school infrastructure, which makes these institutions inaccessible for children with mobility impairment.

Also, the education department in Korça reports that the psychosocial counseling service is introduced in all 9th grade schools and there are in process working groups for improving this service, which has determined a working plan with concrete deadlines. Meanwhile, the school infrastructure is problematic since even in those schools which have ramps (school “Sotir Gura”) they are not used because the way they have been built leads more to problems than helps the pupils with disabilities who mostly receive assistance by their school mates in terms of entering the premises of the school.

In line with this measure, MEDPAK is working in 5 schools and 5 kindergartens in the cities of Korça and Librazhd, which provide psychological service through the psychologist employed by the regional education directorate. Meanwhile, the psychologist of the MEDPAK project assists the psychologist of the regional education department for specialized services for children with disabilities. Also, this project provides training of school psychologists in these two cities for the evaluation of children with disabilities and formulation of objectives in the individual educational plan as part of the multi-disciplinary team.

The association “Ndihmoni Jetën” reports that it is working for the establishment of the capacities of the staff of psycho-social service in 10 schools and 10 kindergartens in the city of Tirana and 4 schools and 4 kindergartens in the city of Vlora. Meanwhile, work is going on thanks to this project for the establishment of the evaluation structures and establishment of educational programs for children with disabilities in schools, where in the working group to this end participate also the psychologist and the social worker. In Shkodra, the association for *“Education of persons with hearing impairment and their integration”* reports that in the context of this measure it is giving its contribution by giving education support to children with hearing impairment in the interpretation of the sign language and orientation in terms of problems they have to be enrolled in mainstream schools. By way of concluding, it is worth pointing out that psycho-social counseling is now offered in all schools around Albania. However, there is no information regarding their involvement in the work with pupils with disabilities. Whereas in the aspect of refurbishment of schools with the necessary supplies and infrastructure to serve the needs of pupils with disabilities a lot still remains to be done.

Status: Some progress

Health care for people with severe disabilities

Measure no 3.1. Regulations on the provision and distribution of medical supplies and motorized vehicles to people with severe disabilities will be reviewed. A dedicated budget line will be established for people with disabilities.

Timeline: 2004 - 2008

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) Health Insurance Institute

Findings:

With regard to this measure, MoH reports that there are no concrete arrangements regarding planning for distribution of medical equipments and vehicles for persons with disabilities. In the course of 2009, ADRF launched a legal initiative for the adjustment of the legal framework in line with the implementation of this measure of the strategy, but as yet there have been no discussions about a draft-law about this purpose.

By the same token, given that reimbursement of assistive and rehabilitation means legally falls under HII, the MoH reports that during February- March 2010: MoH, ADRF and HII will sit in a round table to review the possibility for wheelchair supply/ for persons with disabilities.

Meanwhile, for the list of reimbursable drugs, HII reports that during 2008²⁶ and 2009²⁷, priority was given to expanding the list with drugs for severe illnesses that lead to invalidity such as: *post-transplant drugs, cancer, diabetes drugs, inclusion of new drugs for neurological illnesses, chronic renal illnesses, etc.* Also, with regard to reimbursement of medical equipments there has been a good initiative in this aspect. All paraplegic and tetraplegics individuals who have been determined as such by MCDAW are entitled to benefit 16.000 lekë every month (approximately 170.00\$) to face their needs and expenses for hygiene and sanitation package.

The budget for drugs used in the treatment of illnesses of persons with disabilities is not separate from the total budget of reimbursable drugs, and the data made available by HII indicate that the reimbursement amount for the categories of full invalid, war invalid and partial invalids account for 30% of the total reimbursement amount.

The list of reimbursable drugs is a scheme which is functioning well and is coming to the assistance of persons with disabilities, while there seems to be no change throughout this period with regard to the legislation and policies related to utilization

²⁶ COM DeciVKM nr. 780, date 14.5.2008.

²⁷ VKM nr. 521 date 13.05.2009.

and financing of wheelchairs, even though ADRF has been lobbying about this issue for more than 5 years.

Status: Some progress

Measure 3.2. The curriculum for the family practitioner will be revised. It will include material on severe and profound disabilities.

Timeline: annually

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) Health Insurance Institute

Findings:

With regard to this measure, MOH reports that in different subject matters in the Faculty of Medicine is being addressed the issue of diagnoses and treatment of diseases that lead to severe impairments of abilities. The family doctor who is the first contact for the disabled person, in the course of the specialization provides for 2 weeks of training in the department of clinical psychiatrics in order to obtain the indispensable knowledge for this category, as well as in the Department of Family Medicine where the students acquire general knowledge about impairments in general. By the same token, in the instruction of HII and the contract which is signed annually with the family doctor provide for the obligation to pay home visits and the rest of assistance for disabled persons.

The medical and the teaching personnel has not done any practice with relation to people with disabilities and the specifics of their diagnoses. During 2009, 10 doctors were specialized in the branch of family medicine.

Whereas with regard to this measure, the specialists of MoH rightly so, raised the concern about the review in the formulation of this measure since the indicator which is required to be measured is not clear.

Also, HII reports that MOH in cooperation with the Faculty of Medicine (Department of Family Medicine) and Pro-Health (project funded by USAID), since October 2, 2009 has launched the process for the training of nurses and family doctors in the regions of Shkodra, Berat, Lezha and Korça, which will continue for 10 consecutive weeks. Training will focus on obtaining practical knowledge and information to provide qualitative services for health care centers for all categories of patients, including here patients with disabilities. The role of HII in this aspect is not simply related to facilitating the conditions for the organization of these

training sessions. The same fact is reported by HII Shkodra, since they are in a process of trainings organized by the USAID program Pro-Health, MOH and HII. The family doctors have been involved in short term and long term trainings for the diagnoses of chronic diseases, which include persons with disabilities.

Status: Some progress

Measure no 3.3. The options of covering the extra costs of providing the extended medical treatment to people with severe disabilities in general, and those with severe intellectual disabilities in particular will be studied.

Timeline: annually

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) health Insurance Institute

Findings:

HII is in charge of funding health insurance for all categories of disabilities determined as such by the medical evaluation committees. For these categories, HII funds all health care services delivered in the context of primary health care, hospital care and services delivered at home by the medical personnel. Also, from the list of reimbursable drugs benefit 100% reimbursement of drugs (first alternative) the category of full invalids and 50-95% the rest of the categories.

Based on the recent legal changes,²⁸ funds for salaries and operational expenses, which include also drug, hospital care, and primary health care, i.e. family doctors, are now entirely managed by HII.

Financing by the health insurance scheme of hospital health care began in January 2009 with the effectiveness of the law. But with regard to the annual or monthly cost of disability there does not seem to exist any study conducted by HII, since in the first three years of financing of health care services in the primary and hospital health care the previous budgets are still being used to cover the services in total, and not with costs for each case.

Status: No progress

²⁸ Ligji Nr.10043 date 22.12.2008: "Per disa ndryshime ne ligjin nr. 7870 date 13.10.1994 Per shqurimet shendetesore ne Republiken e Shqiperise", te ndryshuar dhe VKM nr. 1661, date 29.12.2008 "Per financimin e sherbimeve shendetesore spitalore nga skema e sigurimeve te kujdesit shendetesor".

Rehabilitation Services

Measure no 4.1 A national program will be approved and implemented for the establishment and functioning of rehabilitation services. They will gradually spread over the whole territory of the Republic of Albania and will serve all disability categories.

Timeline: 2005 - 2015

Responsible institutions: a) Ministry of Health; b) MoLSAEO.

Findings:

MOH reports that there is a National Action Plan *for the physical health rehabilitation (phr) for 2007-2011*. The action plan of PHR includes specification regarding development policies and the service delivery system, training of the specialized personnel, and development of information and financing systems. The action plan includes measurable objectives and results with relevant timeframes, responsible institutions and resources for the implementation.

During the reporting period has been established and is under operation the the orthopedic and physiotherapy department in the Kukës hospital. Also, it is inaugurated the hospital of Kavaja which for the first time provides for the functioning of the rehabilitation service. For the first time were trained 16 physiatry doctors through a program containing 5 modules, in accordance with EU standards.

A persevering problem related to this measure is failure to plan for the necessary funding for this purpose, which is believed to continue to constitute a problem for 2010 as well. The absence of rehabilitation structures, while the necessary human resources for these services have been and are still being prepared for this service, is an issue that requires further attention by the policy-makers. This among other things hinders the spread of this service to other cities in the country as well. Furthermore, there are vacancies in terms of other professionals in the area of rehabilitation such: development therapist, music and speech therapists.

On the other hand, the NPO sector involved in the delivery of this service reports that despite gaps, they do not find the necessary degree of cooperation from the local government units in terms of expanding and improving the quality of this service, which is a concern raised in particular by the association for physical rehabilitation in Korça and the association for physical rehabilitation in Tirana.

When asked about the implementation of this measure, MoLSAEO wrote in the questionnaire box that they have no information. Meanwhile, the local government

units report that they are taking measures for the formulation of the Map of Services in line with the legal obligations in order to understand the services currently provided and their involvement in compliance with the needs of disabled persons for the years to come.

Status: Little progress

Measure no 4.2. An accreditation system will be created and implemented for the centers of early childhood care, rehabilitation and training for each of the categories of disabilities.

Timeline: Start date 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) MoLSAEO.

Findings:

According to the data of MoH, the “National Center of *quality, safety and accreditation of health institutions*” has been established since 2006. thanks to the legal changes in the area of health care”²⁹ there is a legal base to this end, while the necessary documentation is being prepared for the accreditation of health care institutions, including accreditation of the rehabilitation centers which are part of the system. While the training of health care personnel will be done by the Education Center in Tirana which is operational.

On the other hand, since 2004, SSS began the process of licensing of NGOs that deliver social services. The Inspectorate of State Social Service is in charge of monitoring these services through routine inspections. Monitoring and inspection places these standards in given contexts, while giving results which could be considered as sort of their accreditation.

According to MOLS AEO data, in the course of 2008³⁰ have been inspected and later on *licensed 25 entities and re-licensed 35* entities that deliver social services. Licensing is accompanied with an evaluation by SSS, which is done in the field and includes as components elements of standards for particular groups of beneficiaries such as: number of beneficiaries, types of services, general conditions of the institution, safety of beneficiaries and protection from violence and abuse, food, clothes, number of

²⁹ Law no.10 107, dated 30.3.2009 “For health care in the Republic of Albania”

³⁰ Official statistics for 2009 are still in process.

staff, how many of them are professionals etc. this document is very important for the decision-making process by the Licensing Committee. But the interviews indicate that there is no working group in place that would in charge for a re-assessment of social services in compliance with the needs of disabled persons. Furthermore, the system does not include a regular process of accreditation, in particular for the different disability categories and services with a break down according to age groups. This indicator should be kept in mind for measuring this measure in the years to come.

Status: Progress

Measure no 4.3. At the central, regional or local level, new services will be created and existing ones will be adapted for people with disabilities.

Timeline: Beginning in 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) MoLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of education and sciences; (d) NPOs

Findings:

MOLSAEO reports that new services have been introduced from the center to the “grassroots” for treatment of disabled persons. For more information with regard to new services introduced during 2008-2009, see measures 2.1& 2.2.

In line with the implementation of this measure, SSS reports that the necessary legal acts have already been approved³¹ which have fostered the process for the launch of new services. In concrete terms the transfer of the public centers under the local government auspices, and the opportunity for launching new services in compliance with the needs of each disabled person is believed to bring about a positive climate for the coming years, in relation to opening of new services.

According to an interview published in Gazeta Shqip 20.01.2010, it is reported that:

In the course of 2009, in the network of public and private social care

³¹ DCM no. 336 dated 31.05.2006 and DCM no. 850 dated 15.12.2006 “For transfer of ownership to Municipalities of some properties that are under administration responsibility of the General directory of Social State Services”.

institutions have been treated approximately 4000 vulnerable persons, orphans, elderly and persons with disabilities.

The Director of the State Social Service, Mihal Naço confirms that 302 children have been treated by public institutions of residential and day care service, as well as 1916 children have received services in private institutions. According to him, the files of the children are updated continuously with data on their physical, psychic and social development. Also, attention has been given to improvement of the health care and prevention of epidemiological diseases.

Also, 403 persons with disabilities have been treated in public centers that provide residential and day care services for people with disabilities, as well as 486 other persons have been treated in private ISP and community care centers for this category.

According to Mihal Naço, the main objective of development centers has been rehabilitating, inclusion and independence of the beneficiaries in the community. In line with objectives of the social services strategy and the national disability strategy measures have been taken for the implementation of disability standards, fostering of cooperation with the local government, and removal of beneficiaries who have 5-10 years in these institutions.

The municipalities involved in the process for the collection of data did not report any achievement with regard to accomplishment of this measure. Meanwhile, the information in the webpage of Tirana municipality reflects tangible achievements in this regard. The “Multi-disciplinary *Community Center for children and families in need*” is one of the center whose priorities include individual therapy. During May-June, the development therapist has provided services to 6 children with special needs one of them with autistic element, behavior disorders and hyperactivity. Therapy services were provided 3 times a week, in sessions which lasted 45 minutes for each child. Therapy consisted in the development of intellectual skills of children, development of communication, development of perception and improvement of fine motor skills and global motor skills³².

According to MoH data, the centers or the new specific services for the treatment of persons with disabilities have not been established and they are not envisaged to be established even during 2010-2011. Meanwhile, there are in the

³² <http://www.tirana.gov.al/?cid=1,86,2958>

process of establishment in the institutions with beds structures for the treatment of persons with disabilities, which have not taken place so far due to lack of assigned funds.

MEDPAK, with its activity in Librazhd reiterates that it has provided training to the offices of social services in 9 communes and 2 municipalities of the city of Librazhd, but the local government, except for the one in the city, in no commune or other municipality has established structures for social services for disabled persons. The Association of Physical Rehabilitation of Korça reports that it has established structures for the rehabilitation of disabled persons for this city and has made achievements in this end. Meanwhile, it has not had the cooperation and the necessary support by the local government structures in financial terms.

The social center called “Të qëndrojmë së bashku/ To stay together” is a project of the organization “For the women and children”, financed by the Municipality of Tirana, since November 2007. The center provides services for 100 children and young individuals with disabilities from Tirana and its outskirts. The services delivered by the center are related to educational and didactic sessions, counseling and training for the disabled persons and their families, counseling and medical orientation. The center serves also as an orientation center for promotion of education and employment of its clients with disabilities. The success and sustainability of this service are linked with its financial support by the local government, but also the partnership of the center with other NPOS and the business community.

Status: Some progress

Contemporary assistive technology

Measure no 5.1. Assistive technology and adaptive equipment will be provided to people with disabilities. All social services centers and schools will be supplied with assistive technology, adaptive equipment and teaching aids.

Timeline: beginning in 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of education and sciences; (d) NPOs

Findings:

MOLSAEO does not report any data with regard to implementation of this measure. Meanwhile, MOH reports that for 2009 has already taken the process of procurement of assistive equipments for persons with visual impairment amounting to 30 million lekë. The data of MoES indicate that all special schools have been equipped with assistive equipment for appropriate teaching to the relevant disability categories. Meanwhile, more should be done with regard to public schools (for more information see Education Area).

Status: Little progress

Measure 5.2. The publication of brochures and informative materials on assistive technology for people with disabilities will be encouraged and supported. Exhibitions and fairs for assistive technology and adaptive equipment will be held.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health, (b) MoLSAEO/ State social service; (c) Ministry of education and sciences; (d) NPOs

Findings:

There are no publications so far regarding assistive technology for the disabled persons either by MoLSAEO or MoH. No exhibits or fairs have been organized in the country with regard to assistive technology and accessible equipments. The respondents report that the main reason for failure to implement this measure is lack of funds.

Status: Little progress

Measure 5.3. Specialized centers for assistive technology and adaptive equipment will be established and advertised.

Timeline: Beginning from 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NGOs

Findings:

The workshop “Mirësia”, which is an activity of ADRF, supported by grants of USAID and Vodafone Foundation), as the sole model in Albania which manufactures wheelchairs for persons with disabilities in compliance with their needs, has distributed during this period about 800 wheelchairs in the country. Besides the wheelchair, people with disabilities receive also a manual on wheelchair usage. This service provides not only wheelchairs, but also sheltered employment for persons with disabilities who work in it. There has been no support by the government to respond to the increasing demand towards this category and the community in general. In addition, 120 wheelchair users and their family members participated in three camps of active rehabilitation, with demonstrations and use in practice of wheelchairs in different places.

The National Center for the Rehabilitation for Persons with Visual Impairment continued to provide services as a specialized center in assistive technology and accessible equipments for persons with visual impairment supported by the state budget.

None of the respondents of the regional health directorates of Elbasan, Korça, Shkodra and Vlora had any information regarding the developments in the respective regions. One of the obstacles identified was lack of trained personnel in the area of assistive technology.

Status: Little Progress**Community services**

Measure 6.1. Specific administrative units will be created to provide and oversee services for people with disabilities at the central, regional and local government.

Timeline: beginning in 2004

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) Ministry of Interior; (c) MoLSAEO; (d) Ministry of Education and Sciences

Findings:

Since 2007, at the MoLSAEO there is in place a Technical Secretariat composed of three experts in charge among other things with the task of promoting the establishment of the national network of administrative structures and contact persons for disability services.

In MoH, its institutions and the regional directorates of public health there are no

administrative units or assigned experts to monitor and follow in particular disability issues. There is only one contact person in MoH and some other ministries that cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of MoLSAEO.

At the local level, the municipalities or communes have the staff that administers the issues of social assistance and disability payment, whose main responsibility is to make sure that the documentation meets the requirements and to present this documentation to the Council that approves benefit measures, social assistance or disability payments. The great load of work of this staff to abide by the legal documentation belittles on the other hand the main competencies of the social administrator based on law no 9355 “on social assistance and social services” on the identification in the field and assessment of needs of disabled persons.

While at the regional level the implementation of this measure is still underway. The regional council of the city of Korça, in line with meeting the legal obligations³³, at the decision-making level has established in April 2009 “*the committee for needs assessment and planning of new community services*”. Meanwhile, at the administrative level in the regional council of Korça, disability services have been administered since December 2008 by the Directorate of Investments and Services. The specialist in charge of transport issues is also in charge of the social services field for the region.

The same situation is true for the other regional councils where there are not yet departments or appointed specialists to follow specifically the issues of social services for people with disability in the local government.

Status: Little progress

Measure 6.2. Foster care and care for a family member will become the alternative to institutional care for people with severe disabilities. Training will be provided for the family caretakers of person with hearing and visual impairments.

Timeline: Beginning from 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) MoLSAEO/ State Social Service; (b) MoES; (c) NGOs

³³ COM decision, No 563, dated 12.08.2005 “For defining responsibilities of the prefecture/qark for the delivery of social services” and the order No 1, dated 02.02.2007, of MoLSAEO and Ministry of Interior.

Findings:

MOLSAEO reports that it has been approved the “*Document for the implementation of custodianship service and the action plan for its implementation for 2008-2010*”. (See measure 2.2 in this area)

Also it is underway the approval of draft COM decision “*On the criteria and documents for the custodianship service*”. This draft decision establishes the criteria for the evaluation of custodian family, the procedures for the selection of the custodian family, evaluation of the child, measures for funding this service etc. this draft decision will be forwarded for approval in the context of custodianship service strategy.

In the course of 2009 another positive development was made possible in the accomplishment of this measure. According to a COM decision,³⁴ the period for serving as a custodian (who is not economically active, as well as does not benefit from the mandatory social insurance scheme) for paraplegic and tetraplegics persons shall be considered as insurance period for pension eligibility, maternity leave, an accident at work, vocational diseases, and health insurance. The introduction of this amendment applies only to this particular social category.

The data collected by MOLSAEO and MOH do not indicate about the establishment of a working group for training of custodians that will provide services in the homes of persons with severe disabilities, as well as for custodians for the persons with visual and hearing impairments. MoLSAEO indicates however that a positive development is the qualification of the students of the “Specialized Pedagogy Unit” in Vlora that prepares professionals who are going to work specifically with persons with disabilities.

The regional office of SSS in Tirana explains that the implementation of this measure is an ongoing process and that there is in place a working group established to this end, with concrete deadlines. Meanwhile the regional SSS office in Durrës reports that in the residential center in Durrës work is ongoing for brining persons with severe disabilities in their biological families, for those persons who have been for a long time in institutions and for whom there is no development possibility.

According to information provided in the official webpage of the Tirana Municipality/ Social Services Sector, the custodianship service for persons with severe physical and mental disabilities is already underway, in compliance with the provisions of the Family Code and the sub-legal acts for its implementation³⁵. In order to benefit from this service, in the course of January- September 2009, in the Social Services Sector 33 cases have appealed for requesting removal of the ability to act and placement under

³⁴ DCM No.326 and 328, dated 12.3.2009

³⁵ Law No 9062 dated 08.05.2003

custodianship program. During that period, this sector has given its evaluation to the Tirana judicial district court for 8 persons with disabilities, who have been placed under the program, while 25 other cases are being followed, for which the judicial process is not yet complete³⁶.

The respondent NPOs explain that no measures have been taken for the enforcement of this measure, in particular as regards the training of custodians for disabled persons. Meanwhile, ANAD reiterates that it has not been informed about the training by the government of the custodians of persons with severe disabilities and for the persons with visual impairment. This organization, since 2006 has been providing training to a group of 15 persons as sign language interpreters in the Albanian sign language, with the revenues of this association and without any support from the government. The same situation is true for the association of “Education of persons with hearing impairment and their integration”, which has organized different training sessions to come to the assistance of custodians or family members of this category of persons. While the Association for persons with visual impairment in the branch of Elbasan points out that training of the custodians of persons with visual impairment is underway.

By way of concluding, we would point out that there is interest by the state entities for improving the legal aspect for the enforcement of this measure, while there still remains a lot to be done by the state structures in terms of training of custodians of persons with disabilities in order for this measure not to remain simply in the context of NPO initiatives or donor funding.

Status: Some progress

Measure no 6. 3. Promotion of non-residential care to reduce the demand for residential care.

Timeline: 2010

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NGO; (e) local government.

Findings:

In line with implementation of this measure, MoLSAEO reports that its priorities include de-institutionalization of residential services. During 2008, this process was

³⁶ <http://www.tirana.gov.al/?cid=1,86,1131>

being implemented in two local units, in Durrës and Shkodra as part of the process for the transfer from residential services towards services closer to the biological family in the form of family like apartments. In Durrës have been established the first two models of family like apartments for 25 children from 0-3 years old, who have so far benefited from the services of the center for orphanages in Durrës. The new units of services are co-financed by the association of “Hope e Homes” and the state budget. The association has invested in ensuring accessibility of new premises and selection of the personnel of these shelters.

In Shkodra there are six family like apartments for disabled children. In these new centers services are provided for 54 children with disabilities, of whom 43 have come from the public residential center for people with disability in Shkodra. Services are co-financed by the association “Shpresa” and the state budget. Even in this case, the association has invested in ensuring accessibility and improvement of the premises of these shelters.

In line with the implementation of this measure, MOH also reports that in the mental health policy, the construction and operation of the residential care is of priority. So far there are residential care centers for persons with mental disabilities in Korça, Elbasan, Vloa and Tirana. The number of beds for acute mental cases in hospitals has been reduced from 910 to 730 beds, which is in line with the concept for the removal of the patient from the hospital and bringing him in the original home.

The respondents from the local government units do not report about any progress, with regard to implementation of this measure, among which only the Municipality of Tirana reports about the establishment of a project in the of care at homes for people with disability but without going into the specifics of the project.

Status: Some progress

DISCUSSION

The following section is about the progressive steps, as well as about the failures with regard to the accomplishment of the objective of the Action Plan of the National Strategy fo People with Disability in the area of social and health care services. In terms of tables there are measurement indicators for each of the objectives and measures of these two important areas.

As the first measurement objective is *“Prevention of disability in the early phase through diagnoses and treatment of children from 0-6 years old”*. According to the

following table for 3 out of 4 measures that were monitored there has been “some progress”. In this line there are good initiative undertaken by the local government units and the NPOs regarding establishment of multi-disciplinary teams in the residential and day care centers for the disability assessment. But, on the other hand, it is still problematic the way how the organization and assessment of disability is done by the medical commissions, i.e. MCDAW it still continue to make the evaluation according to the medical model. Despite the initiative undertaken by MoLSAEO since a year now, for the formulation of a legal act, the re-organization of KMCAAP should take place as soon as possible in order to do away with the existing assessment method.

So, there is progress in the context of not for profit initiatives, but in the aspect of legal initiatives with regard to improvement of legislation, status it is not met, and requires further initiatives.

In the same objective, the measure regarding studies for the early prevention of disability is not met completely, which for 2010 should be in agenda of both MoH and MoES. The conduct of these studies will constitute the necessary base for the development of information necessary for this area as regards early prevention of disabilities and formulation of best practice in the proper growth of this category of children. While the status is very positive as regards the information bulletins issued periodically by these institutions, and should continue to be further upgraded.

The following table is a summary of the level of progress for each measure of this objective, according to deadlines:

Table 6: **Prevention and early identification**

Measures	Timeline	Responsible institution/s	Progress status
1.1 Establishment of multi-disciplinary teams for the assessment of disabled individuals, and preparation and evaluation of individual plans for their rehabilitation and integration.	2004-2005	Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO; (c) NGOs	Some progress
1.2 Establishment of molecular biochemistry and genetics laboratory in the Obstetrical and Gynecological Hospital in Tirana.	2004-2005	Ministry of Health	very good progress/ obligation met

1.3 The Laboratory of Genetic Testing at the Children's Hospital will be upgraded and improved	2004	a) Ministry of Health b) Health Insurance Institute c) NGOs	Some progress
1.4 Research on the early prevention of disability will be conducted. Information bulletins on early prevention and best practices in child-raising will be prepared and distributed.	Twice a year	(a) Ministry of Health (b) Ministry of Education and Sciences	Some progress

In the analyses of each of the measures of Objective no 2 of the action plan of the National Strategy on People with Disability (NSPD) there is progress as regards the introduction of new social services for the disability category compared to the previous years. There is progress not only in the NPO sector, but also in the initiatives undertaken by the local and central government bodies. But despite these achievements there are no community, residential or day care services for the disabled persons in most of the urban and rural centers in the country.

In particular it is more problematic the status of adults with physical and mental disabilities above 25 years old, where inter alia there is also the obligation for placing them in residential centers until that age. This concern this time is not only from this category and their family members, but mainly from the state employees who are faced with considerable difficulties to assist those persons or families who have 2 or more disabled persons with mental or physical disabilities, which are the most serious cases to be treated or be provided with the necessary social services.

Despite their readiness to assist the cases which are reported by the social administrators, they are not able to meet the needs of this category because of lack of social services in this direction. This is more influenced by the lack of investments and financing to establish this category of services and to develop capacities of the staff necessary to work with this category of people with disability .

Also, the monitoring indicated that local government units have not assessed the needs presented at the regional level by the different disability categories. Also, there are not as yet clear local strategies for the development of this category of services, in line with the needs of different disability categories. The formulation of clear local strategies should be a priority of the responsible actors for the accomplishment of the obligations stemming from this objective.

The following table provides the results of the implementation of the measures under Objective 2 of NSPD Action Plan “Provide coordinated health and social services by the public and private institutions for the people with disabilities in accordance with a shared philosophy of rehabilitation and integration.

Table 7: **Health and Social Services**

Measures	Timeline	Responsible institution/s	Progress status
2.1 New services, such as day care services, family and community-based services aimed at the integration of people with disabilities will be provided	2005-2006 and on	(a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities/State Social Service; (b) Social Insurance Institute; (c) Local government units	Progress
2.2 Piloting of new models of services and evaluation of their effectiveness. Conduct of studies for the needs assessment for enhancing the range of services for disabled persons.	2004 (pilot projects), 2007	(a) MOLSAEO/State Social Service; (b) local government (c) Ministry of Health; (d) NGOs (e) Municipality of Tirana	Some progress
2.3 Preparation and approval of new standards and rules for disability services. The standards and rules will indicate the rights of clients for appropriate services that take into account their dignity and are based on their abilities.	2004-2005	a) MOLSA /State Social Service	Progress
2.4. Review of the regulations for admission in the Public Centers of Residential Care for disabled persons and the elderly,	started in 2005	(a) MOLSAEO; (b) local government units; (c) NGOs	No progress

with the view to housing persons with grave disabilities whose needs can not be met by their households.

2.5 Determining reduced fees for public services for the disabled persons.	2005-2006	local government units	No progress
2.6 (a) Offering psycho-social counseling in 36 schools in the country; (b) the replication of this service in all schools in the country (c) securing the necessary school infrastructure for working with children with special needs.	2004-2010	(a) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (b) regional education directorates; (c) NGOs	Some progress

Monitoring the measures of Objective 3 of the action plan of the national disability strategy (NSPD *“Provision of financial and physical possibilities for the delivery of basic health care services for persons with severe disabilities throughout the country”*) indicates that there has been some progress and this is because of legal changes in the area of health and social care services.

However, in the accomplishment of this objective there is no tangible progress regarding reimbursement by the mandatory health insurance scheme regarding basic medical equipments and wheelchairs, to enable inclusion of disabled persons in the society.

Also, there are no initiatives for the establishment of working groups or conduct of studies for the calculation of monthly or annual costs for facing additional expenses coming from long medical treatment of persons with severe disabilities in general, and persons with severe intellectual impairments in particular.

On the other hand, the review of the measures and indicators for the measurement of this objective, has come as a necessity in the following years in order to adjust to the recent legal changes, as well as technical changes to ensure better monitoring of this objective.

Table 8: **Health care for persons with severe disabilities**

Measures	Timeline	Responsible institution/s	Progress status
3.1. Measure 3.1. Regulations on the provision and distribution of medical supplies and motorized vehicles to people with severe disabilities will be reviewed. A dedicated budget line will be established for people with disabilities	2004-2008	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) health Insurance Institute	Some progress
3.2 The curriculum for the family practitioner will be revised. It will include material on severe and profound disabilities.	annually	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) Health Insurance Institute	Some progress
3.3. The options of covering the extra costs of providing the extended medical treatment to people with severe disabilities in general, and those with severe intellectual disabilities in particular will be studied.	annually	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) Health Insurance Institute	No progress

The fourth objective related to “*Providing services for the rehabilitation of functional, physical, psychological, social and economic limitations caused by inborn disabilities, accidents or chronic diseases to ensure the integration of people with disabilities in their families and in the community*” has not yet been fully met. In this aspect, even though it will be considered positive and a fulfilled obligation the level achieved by the legal framework related to the standards of social services for vulnerable groups and licensing of public and private service providers a lot remains to be done with regard to re-evaluation of social services, in line with the needs of persons with disabilities. The way it is, the licensing system still does not include a normal accreditation process tailored specifically for different disability categories and services according to the needs of different age groups. This indicator should be kept in consideration for the

measurement of this measure in the following years.

On the other hand, the local government bodies should comply with the legal obligation for the formulation of “the local map of social services” at the regional level, which is an element that will assist further in the evaluation of rehabilitation services and other categories of social services for the disabled persons.

Table 9: **Rehabilitation Services**

Measures	Timeline	Responsible institution/s	Progress status
4.1 A national program will be approved and implemented for the establishment and functioning of rehabilitation services. They will gradually spread over the whole territory of the Republic of Albania and will serve all disability categories.	2005 - 2015	a) Ministry of Health; b) MOLSAEO.	Little progress
4.2. An accreditation system will be created and implemented for the centers of early childhood care, rehabilitation and training for each of the categories of disabilities.	started since 2005	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO	Progress
4.3 . At the central, regional or local level, new services will be created and existing ones will be adapted for people with disabilities.	started since 2005	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NGO	Some progress

From the monitoring of the fifth objective related to “information to people with disabilities, their family members, experts, and caregivers on assistive technology that may be used by people with disabilities; Meeting their needs with assistive technology equipment and ensuring the use of assistive technology for people with disabilities.

There seems to be little progress. Investments carried out by the state institutions in line with this objective leave a lot to desire and this in most of the case is justified

with the high costs of this category of equipments.

Institutions of special education are in general equipped with teaching aid means, while the same is not true for public institutions of the pre-university system.

The situation is better in the NPO sector where the support of different donors has made it possible for accomplishment of the needs for different equipments in support of people with disability in need.

Table 10: **Assistive technology**

Measures	Timeline	Responsible institution/s	progress status
5.1. Assistive technology and adaptive equipment will be provided to people with disabilities. All social services centers and schools will be supplied with assistive technology, adaptive equipment and teaching aids.	Beginning from 2005	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State social service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NPOs	little progress
5.2. The publication of brochures and informative materials on assistive technology for people with disabilities will be encouraged and supported. Exhibitions and fairs for assistive technology and adaptive equipment will be held	Beginning in 2005	(a) Ministry of Health, (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NPO	little progress
5.3. Specialized centers for assistive technology and adaptive equipment will be established and advertised.	Beginning from 2005	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NPO	little progress

In the final objective related to the area of social and health services “ Provide high-quality services by the local government in compliance with the national state policies on disability as required by the legislation on decentralization “there has been progress regarding the process of decentralization of social services, their transfer under the local government institutions. But it is worth pointing out

that the same situation is not true with regard to the establishment of specific departments for addressing the issues of social services at the municipal/regional/commune level. The accomplishment of the legal obligations for the establishment of the relevant departments to assess the needs for social services at the local level with the view to introduce new services, in compliance with these needs, as well as finalizing of the local maps for the social services delivery should be part of the agendas of the local government institutions for this year.

Also, special attention should be paid to the custodian service/ personal assistance service for disabled persons with regard to ensuring their continuous training with the view to delivery of efficient service for this category.

Table 11: **Community Services**

Measures	Timeline	Responsible institution/s	Progress status
6.1. Specific administrative units will be created to provide and oversee services for people with disabilities at the central, regional and local government.	Beginning from 2004	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) Ministry of Interior; (c) MOLSAEO; (d) Ministry of Education and Sciences	Little progress
6.2 Foster care and care for a family member will become the alternative to institutional care for people with severe disabilities. Training will be provided for the family caretakers of person with hearing and visual impairments	Beginning from 2005	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (b) MASH; (c) NPO	Some progress
6.3. Promotion of non-residential care to reduce the demand for residential care.	2010	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NGOs; (e) local government units	Some progress

RECOMANDATIONS

The above mentioned results dictate the need for a series of recommendations for the state institutions at the central and local levels, responsible for the implementation of the national action plan within the given deadlines:

1. MoLSAEO should finalize the legal initiative, which it has already launched with regard to disability assessment/evaluation³⁷ through multi-disciplinary teams, based on individual plans for intervention, and in sustainable cooperation with the beneficiaries (disabled persons) and their family members.
2. MOH and MoES should establish working groups to conduct studies for the early prevention of disabilities, which will help in the development of information in this area, and the formulation of best practices.
3. In the framework of management and proper functioning of the laboratories (molecular biochemistry and genetics), MOH, in cooperation with other operators in the health area should pay particular attention to budgets allocated for their performance, as an indispensable element for the early prevention of disability and the causes that influence its development.
4. The local government units, in close cooperation with SSS, should launch initiatives for the establishment of working groups for needs assessment for social services at the local level, and the formulation of clear local strategies to this end, which would assist in getting to know the situation at the local level with the view to introducing new social services.
5. MOLSAEO should launch a legal initiative for opening new social services for the category of adults with mental and physical disabilities, and pay particular attention to those families who have more than one family member with disability.
6. Measures should be taken to increase the number of alternative community services for disabled persons, while planning for their geographical spread and for coverage of all types of disabilities.
7. MOLSAEO and MOH should take the legal initiative for refurbishing and equipping with medical supplies and equipments and other assistive equipments for the mobility of disabled persons, to ensure that they are subsidized from the basic health insurance scheme.
8. New rehabilitation services should be introduced gradually in the whole territory of the country, with the view to meet the needs of every disabled individual, it does not matter how far she/he is from the urban area services.

³⁷ Assessment that is actually done by the MCDAW based on medical model.

9. The system of licensing of social services should include a normal process of accreditation tailored specifically for the needs of different disability categories and services according to different age groups.
10. Promotion of assistive technology and its advertising should be promoted by the central and local governments equally, in line with the functions and in support of disabled persons.
11. Measures should be taken for the development of the custodian/personal assistance service for other disability categories (persons with hearing, visual and mental impairments) in line with their treatment and introduction to the new advanced methods.
12. The local government bodies at the regional/commune/municipality levels should establish the responsible departments for the identification, evaluation, and coordination of social services, with the view to assessment of the needs and introduction of new services for disabled persons.
13. The area of social and health services, with regard to the measures and measurement indicators should be reviewed in order to ensure compliance with the current legislation developments, reassignment of responsible actors and with a part of the accomplished obligations.

AREA III. EDUCATION. EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The National Strategy for People with Disabilities has addressed the education of people with disabilities in general and the vocational training in particular, as two pillars supporting the employment of people with disabilities. The existing legal framework addresses the issues of the employment of people with disabilities, their vocational training and education.

The Action Plan of the National Strategy for People with Disabilities has an objective for employment, one for the vocational training, four objectives for education and one objective for the participation in artistic, cultural and sports activities. The objectives are the following:

1. Improve the policies for the employment of people with disabilities and their effective implementation;
2. Improve the policies and programmes for the vocational education and training of people with disabilities;
3. Provide education to all students with disabilities, giving a priority to the inclusive education.
4. Improve and modernize the educational learning process in the special schools;
5. Establish integrated schools and kindergartens³⁸ and gradually increase their number;
6. Create psycho-social and educational services in several schools and kindergartens, and gradually extend these services to all the schools;
7. Support the participation of people with disabilities in artistic, cultural and sport activities at local, national and international levels.

³⁸ In Albania, the kindergartens that are part of the education system are attended by children aged 3-6 years.

RESULTS

The results of the evaluation study on the degree of implementation of the National Action Plan in the field of education, employment and vocational training are presented in two sections in the form of findings. The first section consists of the report on the work done for each measure according to the area of intervention and respective objective. Timelines and responsible institutions have also been spelled out to provide the context for the measure. The findings come from the reports prepared by the experts of various ministries at the central level, the questionnaires completed by experts at the regional and local level in Tirana, Durres, Shkoder, Korça, Vlore and Elbasan, as well as NGOs that participated in the study (Save the Children, the Association of Albanian Invalids, MEDPAK, Albanian National Association of the Deaf "Help Life", and ADRF). Data also come from the six-region surveys with people with disabilities and their family members.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 2008 – 2009 TASKS

PREPARATION FOR FUTURE TASKS

Employment

Measure 1.1. Studies will be conducted on the status of employment of people with disabilities and their employment in relation to the labor market needs.

Timeline: Starting from 2004

Responsible institutions: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities / National Employment Service

Findings:

The responsible institutions for the employment and vocational training do not report any separate survey conducted to study the situation of employment and vocational training for people with disabilities and the opportunities they are offered in the current labor market. MoLSAEO, the central level institution responsible for drafting policies to promote employment of people with disabilities, has not yet undertaken a specific study at the national level for this purpose. Meanwhile experts of the National Employment Service point out that under the general Labor Market Survey a survey of the employment situation of people with disabilities in relation to labor market needs has been carried out. This survey is annual but doesn't go deep into a detailed analysis of the employment situation of people

with disabilities. The identification of people with disabilities as a separate group, unemployed jobseekers and employees, shows up in the NES statistics. However, it should be noted that regional labor offices have no special structure which would follow the process of accurate identification of people with disabilities as jobseekers.

In the framework of the ILO project for drafting the National Employment Strategy, the first steps have been taken to develop policies promoting the employment of people with disabilities, based also on NSPD. The intervention by this project is related to targeting people with disabilities in programs promoting their employment as one of the target groups. This is in process and the funds are expected to be allocated.

The total number of registered unemployed jobseekers with disabilities during 2006 in the six regions (Durrës, Elbasan, Korça, Shkodra, Tirana and Vlora) where the monitoring has focused, is 1153 and 37.6 % (n= 434) are women with disabilities. Meanwhile, during 2009 the number of unemployed jobseekers with disabilities in the 6 regions is 1287, with 33.9 % (n=437) women with disabilities.

The Regional Employment Office in Shkodra³⁹ reports registering 13.988 unemployed jobseekers, with 544 jobseekers with disabilities. This Office has conducted a case by case survey to evaluate the employment situation of people with disabilities in Shkodra region. This survey reports that 26.2 % (n=143) of the registered jobseekers are people with disabilities with a chance to be integrated in the open labor market. This Office reports that in 2008 – 2009 they have mediated the employment of people with disabilities in private companies, but they have faced the hesitation of the managers of these companies. The Regional Employment Office in Korça⁴⁰ reports that in the region of Korça they have 145 people with disabilities registered. None of them is employed or provided mediation for employment by this Office. According to MoLSAEO⁴¹, 6.2 % (n= 2288) of all unemployed people registered as jobseekers (n=141 700) are people with disabilities.

Status: Some progress

³⁹ Local strategy for people with disabilities in Shkodra region, GTZ, ADRF, December 2009.

⁴⁰ Local strategy for people with disabilities in Korça region, GTZ, ADRF, December 2009.

⁴¹ Taken from the webpage of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Retrieved 10.02.2010 at <http://www.mpcs.gov.al/statistikat>.

Measure 1.2. Encourage and support the creation of sheltered jobs for people with disabilities and ensure transportation to their workplaces in the open labor market.

Timeline: Starting from 2004

Responsible institutions: MoLSAEO / National Employment Office

Findings:

Although the Regional Employment Offices in Tirana, Durrës, Shkodër, Korça, Elbasan and Vlora fully know the legal framework enabling the promotion of the employment of people with disabilities, they do not report any regional policies for reaching this goal. Even in the cases when they have registered people with disabilities as unemployed jobseekers, the process ends there. These offices lack special structures, specialized staff trained to counsel, orientate and mediate people with disabilities into the labor market. Meanwhile these offices have not taken any initiative to raise the awareness of private companies regarding their legal obligations to employ people with disabilities, and they have not introduced job seeking people with disabilities to these companies.

In the absence of governmental subsidies, the private companies don't create the conditions and facilities necessary to employ people with disabilities. The National Employment Fund, which is still reported as missing, would make possible the creation of protected jobs for the employment of people with disabilities (workshops and common employment centers); subsidies for the equipment or the adaptation of the workplace, etc.

In the review of the employment promotion legislation that NES is conducting they point out that the draft "Guidelines for drafting active innovative labor market programmes" will include people with disabilities to be counseled regarding employment, on-the-job training programmes, employment subsidies. According to them, these processes would directly promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in the open labor market.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.3. Reform of the disability benefits and pension schemes to avoid conflicts with the active policies of labor market.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institutions: MoLSAEO / Social Insurance Institute

Findings:

Although MoLSAEO reported that work to implement this measure was continuing, nothing specific was mentioned regarding the nature of the progress. None of the Regional Offices of the Social Insurance Institute, that were subject of this monitoring, reports ever having a discussion on these issues in the recent years.

Status: No progress

Measure 1.4. Open special centers for the employment of people with disabilities.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) MoLSAEO / National Employment Service; (b) NPO

Findings:

The governmental institutions at central level report that, due to financial restrains, the sheltered employment centers for people with disabilities have not been created. The still non-active National Employment Fund doesn't enable financially the practical implementation of this policy.

Despite the fact that the governmental structures at local and central level know about the alternative of employment for people with disabilities, there is still no concrete undertaking of any survey/assessment of the needs that people with disabilities (by disability categories) at national level have to be employed in protected centers.

ADRF reports⁴² and the questionnaires filled by the representatives of disability NGOs show that models of a type of sheltered employment are provided by some NPOs⁴³, but it should be emphasized that these projects implemented by NPOs simply enable the daily involvement of people with disabilities in a given job. Due to the lack of legislation, these centers don't guarantee the marketing of the product created by the work of people with disabilities. As such, they still are partial models of sheltered employment.

Status: Very little progress

⁴² ADRF (2008). Small steps: Formative evaluation of the implementation of Social Services' Standards for people with disabilities in the residential and day care centers and respective protection and the respect for human rights.

⁴³ ADRF, Atelie Korça, "Lira" Berat, " Ndihamoni Jeten", Tirana, Qëndra " Balashe", Elbasan.

Measure 1.5. Identify instruments and ways for the implementation of the legislation and existing policies in the area of employment for the integration of people with disabilities in the society through employment and vocational training to pressure employers to meet their legal obligation to employ people with disabilities and the incentives they receive.

Timeline: 2004-2005

Responsible institutions: MoLSAEO / National Employment Service

Findings:

MoLSAEO reports that the finding of mechanisms for implementing policies and legal framework on employment and vocational training of people with disabilities but meanwhile this institution doesn't offer any specification regarding the steps of this process.

NES, through the implementation of the DCM No 48, dated 16.01.2008 has started the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor market with employment with 6 – 12 months employment terms. During 2008, 3 people with disabilities have benefited, while applying the abovementioned DCM during 2009, the Regional Office of Durrës only reports the employment of 2 people with disabilities.

In implementing this measure, the Regional Employment Offices point out a number of obstacles that hinder the promotion of the employment of people with disabilities in the respective regions. Obstacles such as: lack of a accurate assessment of employment needs of people with disabilities at regional level (except for the Regional Employment Office of Shkodra which has developed a employment needs assessment for people with disabilities); lack of specific indicators for registering the people with disabilities as jobseekers in the database of unemployed jobseekers, registration based on the work ability of people with disabilities; the absence of the National Fund which would enable the subsidies for employers who would employ people with disabilities; lack of local action plans to promote the employment of people with disabilities.

It should be emphasized that the answers to questionnaires show that the specialists of the Regional Employment Offices are aware of the need to reevaluate their work also in the framework of promoting local policies for the employment of people with disabilities. But for in this aspect concrete actions are needed. In the regions of Korça and Shkodër, ADRF, supported by GTZ⁴⁴, in cooperation with the network of governmental structures in these two regions, responsible for employment

and vocational training, has succeeded during 2009 to develop local strategies in these two regions to promote employment and vocational training of people with disabilities.

Status: Some progress

Vocational training

Measure 2.1. Revise the system of vocational training and rehabilitation for people with disabilities keeping in mind the evolution and requirements of the labor market.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institutions: MoLSAEO / National Employment Service

Findings:

MoLSAEO reports that working groups are working to implement this measure, without giving any specific information.

National Employment Service reports that people with disabilities have been trained in the vocational training centers⁴⁵ benefiting from free of charge trainings, based on the order of the Minister No. 782 dated 04.04.2006. Based on the data provided by NES, at national level, 26 people with disabilities have benefited from free of charge vocational training during 2008 and 10 people with disabilities in 2009.

The Vocational Training Center in Shkodër⁴⁶ reports that in 2008 they have worked for vocational training of people with disabilities through a project funded by the European Union. This project made possible the adaptation of curricula for people with disabilities and create opportunities for vocational training for 23 people with disabilities in four professions. In the end of the courses, only 2 of them were employed. While for during

⁴⁴ Local strategy for people with disabilities in Shkodra region, GTZ, ADRF, December 2009.
Local strategy for people with disabilities in Korça region, GTZ, ADRF, December 2009.

⁴⁵ The goal of Public Vocational Training Centers is to organize professional courses for vocational training and re-training of jobseekers aiming at their integration in labor market. The people with disabilities are one of the eligible groups which benefit from free of charge vocational training courses in these centers. Presently, there are 8 public vocational training centers operating in the biggest cities of the country such as: Vlora, Shkodër, Tirana, Durrës, Kavaja, Elbasan, Korça, Tepelena. During the years a number of private entities and NGO have been licensed to conduct vocational training activities in the whole country. (National Observatory of People with Disabilities).

⁴⁶ Local strategy for people with disabilities in the city of Shkodra", GTZ, ADRF, December 2009.

2009, the center reports that only 4 people with disabilities enrolled for vocational training courses.

The Vocational Training Center in Korça region reports that until now they have no people with disabilities enrolled as students. The employment office has not referred anyone, but also the people with disabilities themselves or their family members have shown no interest for the vocational training courses.

The vocational training centers in the regions report the fact that the center should do more in order to inform the citizens, including the community of people with disabilities, on their activity and the types of courses they provide. The centers regard as important the need to train the instructors on applying special work programs with people with disabilities as well as the possibility to create laboratories with work processes that can be carried out by people with disabilities. These centers should also view as especially important the physical adaptability of their buildings in order to facilitate the access of people with motor disabilities.

Status: Some progress

Measure 2.2. Develop opportunities for employment, professional counseling and support services for people with disabilities in cooperation with employers.

Timeline: Starting in 2005 and onwards

Responsible institutions: MoLSAEO / National Employment Service

Findings:

In the evaluation made through questionnaires, a very little number of people with disabilities are reported as being part of the open labor market. This is because of many above mentioned factors, divided by issue in the analysis made to the implementation of each measure in this field.

Even though we can generally say that during the evaluation of employment and vocational training of people with disabilities, little progress is seen. This progress is mostly related to raising the awareness of responsible structures at central and local level on policies and legal framework; the obligation they have regarding the promotion of employment and vocational training of people with disabilities.

The employment of people with disabilities in Albania still remains far from practical implementation.

Based on a positive practice related to the identification of employment needs of people with disabilities, the Regional Employment Office in Shkodër recommends that the employment process for people with disabilities can be moved forward in all its parts if a well-defined annual fund will be available to support the employment of people with disabilities divided from the general fund for the promotion of the employment of unemployed jobseekers.

Status: No progress

Inclusive education

Measure 3.1. Design a new mainstream school curriculum that encourages inclusive processes.

Timeline: 2004-2006

Responsible institutions: Ministry of Education and Science

Findings:

According to the experts of the Ministry of Education and Science the curricular reform of the compulsory 9-year education has created new possibilities for achieving the concept of inclusion of students in the classroom enabling a differentiated treatment. The extracurricular classes available to all grades I – IX fill in the gap of the previous curricula to work with an individual education plan for students with special needs. The teachers themselves prepare the individual education plans for children with disabilities.

Nevertheless, all the Regional Education Departments report that the individual work with students with disabilities needs continuous support through training of teachers who work directly with children with disabilities, providing other facilities such as teaching instruments, text books assisting teachers and students with disabilities in order to ensure a good progress of this process that has just started.

Status: Obligation has been met, but improvements are needed to further encourage the inclusion of students with special needs.

Measure 3.2. Prepare a packet with practical guidelines, teaching materials and standards for the integration of students with special needs for the public schools.

Timeline: 2004-2006

Responsible institution: Ministry of Education and Science

Findings:

In implementing the new curricula of the 9-year education, the Institute of Curriculum and Training (ICT) has started and is continuing the design and publication of manuals assisting the teachers in the 9-year education. A text, titled "Inclusion", is prepared for offering support to parents and teachers. The text was distributed to RED/EO. The ICT publication, supported by Save the Children, "Student-centered teaching" is another guideline in support of the teachers.

Status: Some progress

Prepare and approve a normative act that regulates the individual educational plan (IEP), and specifies the admission rules for students with special needs as well as their assessment procedures.

Measure 3.3. Draft a normative act that regulates the work with the individual educational plan (IEP), and specifies the rules on admission and initial and progressive evaluation of students with special needs.

Timeline: 2004-2006

Responsible institution: Ministry of Education and Science

Findings:

The Department of Curricula, Monitoring and Evaluation in MES, with the document no 8252, dated 26.11.2008, addressed to 6 regions, Tirana, Berat, Librazhd, Gjirokastra, Vlora, Korça and Elbasan respectively, instructs "the preparation of individual education plans and evaluation of students with disabilities".

It should be emphasized that the model provided by Save the Children regarding the work with individual programs for children with disabilities who are in mainstream kindergartens and schools is a model that follows all the necessary steps of the process:

identification⁴⁷ of children with disabilities, specialized evaluation by professionals, individual education plan that is revised by professionals every 3 or 6 months. In the design and evaluation of the IEP the collaboration includes the parents of children with disabilities. Save the Children, in cooperation with the respective Regional Departments and MES, is presently working with IEP with students with disabilities in 34 schools of compulsory education and 34 kindergartens in six regions of the country.

In the last 3 years, through the programme of the Center for Equal Opportunities in Shkodër, ADRF has supported the integration of 77 children with disabilities in 11 mainstream schools of Shkodër. For this reason ADRF has worked in cooperation with the Regional Education Department of Shkodër. The project has enabled the continuous training of 30 teachers in mainstream schools, who worked directly with children with disabilities. The models of inclusive education provided by projects implemented by the civil society in Albania, based on international standards, have offered the opportunity to identify the issues existing in our country. They need to be considered during the process of drafting legal amendments that would make possible to achieve inclusive education in all the education system.

In this period the Normative Education Provisions and the Law on Pre-university Education System are being reviewed. The review process for these two very important documents for the education system will include the relevant articles for the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. These amendments of the above mentioned legislation will contribute in creating a full framework for the practical implementation of inclusive education. MES is in the process of collecting and arranging all the suggestions and proposals for change coming from RED/EO, schools and teachers, as well as NPOs collaborating with MES on inclusion.

Albana⁴⁸ is a 9 year old girls who likes school and the company of her peers. She is in second grade in primary school and Albana and her parents are pleased with her progress in school. Albana was included in the inclusive education project of Save the Children when she was 5 years old. Born with the Down syndrome, the girl showed disabilities in several development areas. The Portage

⁴⁷ Project implemented by Save the Children in six regions of the country; Children with disabilities usually are identified at school age, supervised through IEP in kindergartens of the project and later are accompanied to the project's schools when they reach the appropriate age and development for enrolling in school. The project has identified the children with disabilities (mainly the ones with learning disability) also in the schools and later they are supported with IEP.

⁴⁸ Success story of one case of children with disabilities being integrated in mainstream schools by the project implemented by "Save the Children". This is a model of steps to be taken to achieve the integration of children with disabilities in school and the work to be done by all the actors involved in the process.

methodology assessment conducted at her home showed that Albana had cognitive difficulties related to memory, and difficulties in gross and fine motor skills. The girl's parents, highly interested in her development, were willing to support the professionals to design, monitor and support Albana with an Individual Education Plan which is reviewed regularly about 3 times a year. Her mother and kindergarten teacher shared regularly the tasks and achievements in regular meetings. The assessment in the end of the kindergarten period showed that Albana had advanced in many development fields and had increased her social skills, life skills and academic knowledge. As a result of these achievements, Albana enrolled in one of the mainstream schools in Tirana. When she was 8 years old, her teacher, as well as her colleagues in the kindergartens and schools of this project, were trained about the inclusive education, how to prepare and implement IEP and the student-centered teaching methodology. A group comprising the school principal, teacher, psychologist, social worker of the project and Albana's mother built her IEP. They met 3 times a year to evaluate the changes and to review IEP. Beside the work to improve Albana's academic knowledge, her teacher involved her in all social and educational activities of the class or school giving her a part in singing and reciting. There were moments when the girl's attention lowered and she showed signs of fatigue. In these cases the school psychologist has assisted her in the class activities or conducted projective tests or other recreational activities. The IEP group members, seriously involved in the development work with Albana, observed the classroom and kept notes of each progress she made. The school directorate, in cooperation with the social worker of the project tested Albana's achievements against the objectives of her IEP, using special tests. After more than 4 years, Albana has developed language skills. She recognizes all the letters and copies parts of books, but she still has difficulties in writing by dictation. Even though mathematics is challenging for Albana, she recognizes all the numbers up to ten and uses them in simple operations, counts different objects and classifies them by specific features, e.g. color, form, etc. Albana especially likes to draw, sing and handcrafts, coloring, cut and paste. Now Albana has a lot of friends and is pleased when plays and learns with them. "Albana is very kind, social and likes to care about other children. One day she took care of me when I got sick in the classroom. Now we help each other" says Ema, her classmate. Albana now has increased her self confidence. She tries to be more independent at home or school.

Status: Progress

Measure 3.4. Create resources in mainstream schools to work more specifically with students with special needs.

Timeline: Starting from 2004

Responsible institution: Regional Education Departments

Findings:

The mainstream schools attended by children with disabilities still have no resource environment/classrooms which would assist the children with special needs and mainstream teachers with different teaching materials, publications and information on disability. Only in Librazhd, with the support of the organization MEDPAK, a regular school is reported to have a resource unit, integrated to help students with disabilities and school teachers. Given that the preschool and primary school education have begun the practical implementation of inclusion of children with special needs, RED in respective areas need to plan the establishment of resource facilities in mainstream schools where children with disabilities are integrated.

In the Korça region RED, based on the objectives set in the regional plan⁴⁹ will make possible the creation of resource facilities in two mainstream schools and one kindergarten.

Status: Very little progress

Measure 3.5. Improve the legal provisions on the workload and the financial stimulus of teachers.

Timeline: 2005– 2006

Responsible institution: Ministry of Education and Science

Findings:

Experts of the Ministry of Education and Science report that until now there are no legal amendments regarding the workload and financial incentives for teachers who teach children with special needs. This situation is because the Normative Pre-university Education Provisions and the Law on Pre-university Education System are being reviewed and they will reflect the changes regarding the workload of teachers or new alternatives.

In relation to the amendments to these laws, MES is collecting all the relevant suggestions from REDs in all the regions and the civil society organizations that have an

⁴⁹ Local strategy for people with disabilities in Korça region, GTZ, ADRF, December 2009.

expertise on the implementation of inclusive practices in kindergartens and schools for children with disabilities.

Status: Some progress

Measure 3.6. Prepare bulletins and other helping materials for teachers and parents.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Education and Science; (b) Regional Education Departments; (c) NPO

Findings:

In order to assist the teachers who work directly with students with special needs, and to professionally reflect in their work the changes made to the curricula, MES experts report that ICT has published the book “Issues of the new curriculum, Inclusion”, with 134 pages. This is one of the most specialized publications assisting teachers to conceive, address and implement in the classroom the concept of inclusion. Moreover, in assistance of the teachers, parents, community of students in schools, the NPOs that implement concrete projects on the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools have prepared and published a number of publications. Save the Children has supported the publications of texts in support of teachers, parents, RED staff (see area V – legislation and research). “Save the Children” and ADRF have used these publications and materials in the trainings organized with management staff of schools, teachers and parents.

Status: Some progress

Measure 3.7. Treat as a priority the enrollment of children with disabilities in vocational secondary schools.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Education and Science; (b) Regional Education Departments

Findings:

The Ministry of Education and Science has no data on the total number of young people with disabilities who attend vocational schools. MES, in collaboration with RED

and EO, assists the registration of students with disabilities in secondary vocational schools, mostly in musical schools for students with visual impairments. All these procedures are carried out by RED/EO and the management of respective schools.

RED Elbasan reports that they have 3 young people with disabilities enrolled in secondary professional schools. Meanwhile, RED Shkodër has enrolled in vocational schools for the period being reported, 90 young people with disabilities and RED Durrës reports that they have enrolled 6 young people with disabilities in vocational schools.

There is no survey undertaken by MES or MoLSAEO for assessing the number of young people with disabilities who finish 9-year schools and those who directly benefit from economic assistance who can benefit from secondary vocational education.

Status: Very little progress

Special education schools

Measure 4.1. Prepare and implement special integration programs which offer a better social and practical preparation of students.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institution: Ministry of Education and Science

Findings:

Education of students with special needs is carried out mainly in special education schools. Table no. 12 represents the distribution of students with disabilities who attend special education by region and gender.

According to experts of Ministry of Education and Science, children with disabilities are treated in national institutions such as “Institute of students with hearing impairment”, school “Luigj Gurakuqi”, special classes in schools of education and in day centers. In all these institutions, teachers work with education programs of the 9-year schools that have special classes. They also work with preparatory programs to help students with disabilities prepare for following classes. All these programs are adapted by the teachers of institutions and special classes.

Table 12: **Number of students in special schools**

Nr.	Special schools	Number of students	
		Total	F
1	Institute of students with visual impairments	63	18
2	Institute of students with hearing impairments	127	46
3	"L. Gurakuqi" Tirana	90	31
4	"3 Dhjetori" Shkodër	97	42
5	Durrës	89	36
6	"Zëra Jete" Elbasan	75	24
7	Vlorë	93	31
8	Korça	27	3
9	Day center Pogradec	18	7
10	Day center Fier	27	9
11	Day center Librazhd	18	8
12	Day center Laç	12	5
13	Total	736	260

In the information obtained through questionnaires as well as assessments conducted by ADRF⁵⁰, DAR specialists and directors of special schools estimate that the education of children with disabilities in these schools is an opportunity that should be preserved but also expanded. The specific issues facing special education are numerous. Children with mental disabilities benefit education from this system. It is very important that in this educational institution children with mental disabilities are accepted, paying attention to the school organization and opportunities it offers through the program for the child's progress in the learning process. Under the perspective of curricula, the directors and teachers considered as very necessary to reassess and adapt them to work with children based on the diagnosis they have. With the exception of the Institute of Children with Visual Impairments, all the other schools cover only the first four years of the national program of 9-year school extending on year in two years. Therefore students can not attend lessons together with their peers in mainstream schools. This is a problem that has not yet begun to be addressed.

In the special education schools there is also a lack of teaching materials to help teachers work with the children with disabilities according to their diagnosis.

⁵⁰ Local strategy for people with disabilities in Korça region, GTZ, ADRF, December 2009.
Local strategy for people with disabilities in Shkodra, GTZ, ADRF, December 2009.

The special schools should receive attention also regarding the physical adaptability of their external and internal facilities. The directors of these schools report that there are a lot of students from rural areas who need this type of education, but it is impossible for them due to the lack of transport.

Based on the specific requirements on the work of teachers with the students with disabilities in these schools, it is necessary to review the structure of professionals in accordance with the needs of students. It is indispensable to include in these schools the physiotherapy and logopedics professionals.

Status: No progress

Measure 4.2. Provide facilities like transportation, etc., for children with disabilities from remote areas to attend special schools.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Education and Science; (b) Education Departments; (c) Local government

Findings:

The Ministry of Education and Science allocates each year from its own budget a fund for the transport of children with disabilities to special schools. Directors of special schools report that this fund is insufficient to enable the transport of children with disabilities from rural areas of respective regions.

The education of children with disabilities from rural areas of the country remains problematic. Many children with disabilities from these areas, mainly diagnosed with mental disabilities, remain isolated due to the lack of transport and without an opportunity to attend special education.

In Vlora, Elbasan, Durrës it is reported that the municipalities allocate funds for transport expenses and maintenance and repair of the vehicles of special schools in these cities. The special schools in Korça too report that the transportation funds are insufficient to cover the needs of children with disabilities from the rural areas of this region.

Status: No progress

Measure 4.3. Create new services for special categories of children who are not covered (services for autistic children, etc.).

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Education and Science; (b) NPO

Findings:

The experts of the Ministry of Education and Science report that, in the framework of the pilot project on inclusion implemented by Save the Children and MES in six regions of the country, the service provided to students with disabilities in several levels has improved. This includes better definition of the level of difficulties each child faces, the multidisciplinary treatment of the child's disability and the individual education plan prepared by the teacher in consultation with the school psychologist. It also includes the active involvement of parents in the educational process of the child, the active involvement of classmates for the progress of the child with disabilities in the schools and kindergarten part of the project. The activity of teachers is in the framework of the budget RED / EO have for the schools in their jurisdiction.

Moreover, the civil society organizations and foundations⁵¹ have started to undertake initiative for interventions in creating the services for information, diagnosis and treatment of autistic children in our country.

Status: Some progress

Integrated Schools and Kindergartens

Measure 5.1. Pilot the creation of 12 integrated schools and 12 integrated kindergartens in 6 cities that are regional centers and have universities.

Timeline: 2004-2006

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Education and Science; (b) Local government units

Findings:

The Ministry of Education and Science in the framework of the project "Inclusion in preschool and primary education" with the expertise and financial support by "Save the

⁵¹ [http:// www.albaniaanchildren.org](http://www.albaniaanchildren.org) .

Children” is implementing in six regions of the country: Tirana, Berat, Librazhd, Gjirokastra, Vlorë, Korça and Elbasan the education of children with special needs in mainstream kindergartens and schools of these regions.

Table 13 provides detailed information on the number of children integrated by this project in schools and kindergartens in the academic years 2008 – 2009 and 2009 – 2010. During these two years, 225 and 489 children with special needs respectively have been integrated in mainstream schools.

In cooperation with RED Shkodër, ADRF reports for the above period the education in 11 mainstream schools of this region of 40 children with disabilities. Two of these schools are from the suburbs.

Table 13: Number of children with disabilities integrated in mainstream schools and kindergartens

Academic year	Kindergartens		Total number of children integrated in kindergartens	Schools		Total number of children integrated in schools
Region	2008 -2009	2009-2010		2008-2009	2009-2010	
Gjirokaštër	34	22	56	26	38	64
Korçë	10	8	18	31	28	59
Vlorë	8	8	16	24	24	48
Tiranë	19	21	40	46	49	95
Berat	45	43	88	57	59	116
Librazhd	4	3	7	54	53	107
TOTAL	120	105	225	238	251	489

As regards the number of children with disabilities integrated in mainstream classrooms throughout the country, MES has no complete information. During the school year 2009 – 2010, MES made for the first time an effort to identify students with disabilities. In the framework of the initiative undertaken by MES “Reduce to zero the school drop-out” a database was created with indicators for collecting detailed information, including data about children with disabilities integrated within the system, i.e. in the schools, detailed based on the diagnosis and disorders affecting these children, and outside the system, i.e. never registered in the school.

This is a good step to guarantee in the future the appropriate, well planned, cost effective interventions in accordance with the needs.

According to the data from MoLSAEO⁵², 8,552 children with special needs aged 6 – 18 years, who receive the disability benefit, attend either mainstream schools or special education schools.

This system of payments encourages the people with disabilities to be involved in education and vocational training, creating an opportunity for social inclusion, employment and social integration⁵³:

- The people with mental, physical and sensory disabilities, born or acquired during life for reasons unrelated to work, are eligible for a secondary education benefit. Their number is 1,346 persons or 2.5% of the total number. The benefit for education is twice as high as the basic benefit. This group also includes 595 people who receive benefits during the period when they attend higher education, or another 1.2 % of people with disabilities receive a benefit three times as much as the basic benefit.
- Blind people or 856 persons (about 7.3 % of their total number) receive a payment 1.5 times higher when they have lost their job till the moment they find another job or till they retire. About 1.4 % of other blind people or 163 persons receive twice as much for the period they attend secondary education and 1 % of the blind people or 110 persons receive three times the basic benefit during the period they attend higher education.
- There are 10 paraplegic and quadriplegic people attending secondary school. They receive twice the basic benefit for the period they attend secondary education. Moreover, 27 paraplegic people receive three times the basic benefit for the period they attend higher education.

Status: Progress

Measure 5.2. Open integrated schools and kindergartens in all major cities of the country, reaching 100 integrated schools and 90 integrated kindergartens in Albania.

Timeline: 2006-2014

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Education and Science; (b) Local government units

⁵² Taken from the webpage of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Retrieved on 7.02.2010 at <http://www.mpcs.gov.al/statistikat>.

⁵³ Guiding document on the method of budgeting for people with disabilities by local government. Docent, Dr. Nexhmedin Dumani, December 2009.

Findings:

The Ministry of Education and Science is working to facilitate the process of implementing in practice the integration of children with special needs in the pre-school and primary school system, through initiatives for legislation amendments in support of these inclusive steps. Year after year, the number of integrated mainstream kindergartens and schools increases. This is also due to the support of this process and the cooperation with organizations that have an expertise in implementing the inclusive education approach. During the period being monitored, MES reports that at local level, inclusion is implemented in 39 primary schools and 27 kindergartens.

Status: Good progress

Psycho-social and educational support services

Measure 6.1. Establish psycho-pedagogical and psycho-social services in schools, consisting of a psychologist, a social worker and two or three part-time teachers, and later achieve sustainable services starting with the major cities which are regional centers and have universities.

Timeline: 2008

Responsible institution: Ministry of Education and Science

Findings:

Experts of the Ministry of Education and Science report that the school psychologist service is operational in all the 9-year and secondary schools of 37 cities of the country as well as the rural areas of the region of Tirana, partially in Korça, Elbasan, Vloora and Gjirokastra. This service is provided in 313 9-year schools and 150 secondary schools. The school psychologists work based on a program drafted in cooperation with the teachers and school directors. It is reported that they work with individual plans for students with specific problems. School directors point out the fact that the psychologists, due to the high work load and their training, find it difficult to provide specialized and viable support for students with special needs. They emphasize that it is indispensable to introduce in mainstream school structure the support teacher to assist the students with special needs who attend mainstream schools and the teachers who work directly with them.

Status: Progress

Measure 6.2. Create seven new centers of educational/psychological services covering all the regions of the country.

Timeline: 2013

Responsible institution: Ministry of Education and Science

Findings:

Presently there are no plans to develop these services for students with disabilities in compliance with the structure proposed in this measure.

Status: No progress

Artistic, cultural and sport activities

Measure 7.1. Identify the number of people with disabilities who make use of the facilities provided in cultural and sport activities, and conduct a needs assessment for the organization of activities in these areas.

Timeline: 2005 - 2006

Responsible institution: Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports

Findings:

No needs assessment has been carried out for the people with disabilities about cultural and sports activities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports has no statistics on the number of people with disabilities who have participated in different art, cultural and sport activities.

Status: No progress

Measure 7.2. Plan a special budget to enable the implementation of the legislation on the subsidies of cultural, artistic and sports activities for people with disabilities and their organizations.

Timeline: 2005 - 2006

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports; (b) local government

Findings:

There is no separate budget for these activities in the local government budget. But, through cooperation with various NGOs, many activities at local and national level have been organized.

Tirana Municipality reports that, during 2008 and ongoing, artistic and cultural projects submitted by organizations that work to help people with disabilities are supported.

For 2008, there have been no special funds for people with disabilities planned, the fund has been set in total for all categories of beneficiaries. There is cooperation with disability NGOs to plan activities. While in 2009 a fund of 250,000 lek was set by Tirana Municipality to develop cultural and sports activities for people with Disabilities.

Meanwhile Durres municipality identifies the lack of funds and relevant structures as problematic for planning and management of cultural and sporting activities.

Status: Very little progress

Measure 7.3. Create an annual calendar for the sport activities for people with disabilities. Support the participation of people with disabilities in national and international activities.

Timeline: Every year

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports; (b) local government; (c) NPO

Findings:

There is no published calendar for the annual sports activities for people with disabilities. Progress is reported in this measure by NPOs. The Municipality of Tirana reports that the activities for people with disabilities are included in the annual calendar of sports activities for all categories and ages.

National and local NPOs organize, in accordance with their annual plans and with donor support, different sport activities for people with disabilities.

Vodafone Albania Foundation, in partnership with the Special Olympics Committee have successfully organize in Albania the Special Olympic Games, one of the most important events in support of sport and recreational activities for people with special needs in our country. The first official games, recognized by the International Special Olympics Committee, were held in October 2008 in Tirana. There were 250 participants from all the country, represented in 12 teams (Berat, Durrës, Elbasan I & II, Lezha,

Korça, Pogradec, Shkodër I & II, Tirana I & II, and Vlora), in 5 disciplines (football, basketball, ping-pong, athletics, and bowling). The same participation level was also in 2009 Special Olympic Games organized in October 2009, with 250 participants divided in 12 teams, including Berat, Durrës, Elbasan (2 teams), Lezha, Korça, Pogradec, Shkodër (2 teams), Tirana (2 teams), and Vlora. The specific for this year was that the Games were preceded by district level games where the regional teams were formed. Another new element was the addition of a new sport discipline, bringing their number to six (football, basketball, ping-pong, not, athletics, and bowling). On of the successes of the 2009 Games was the involvement of 100 volunteers who contributed in this organization.

The Foundation Vodafone Albania, together with a network of collaborators and partners from civil society, is committee to continue this tradition in the coming years. Particularly, it will support a team representing Albania who will participate in the European Special Olympics Games in Warsaw, Poland, in September 2010.

Meanwhile the Association of Blind People Elbasan reports that this association has organized in the last two years the national futsal cup with the participation of blind people teams from several cities. The association of blind people has also organized the local and regional chess championship.

The Association for Physical Rehabilitation, Korça organizes based on its own calendar, nature sport activities for people with disabilities, members of this association.

Status: Very little progress

Measure 7.4. Increase the number of recreational activities for various groups of people with disabilities. Whenever possible combine recreation with rehabilitation.

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports; (b) local government; (c) NPO

Findings:

Recreational activities for different groups of people with disabilities are organized by local government in cooperation with the NPOs on the international day of disability. Despite the co-operation that local government reports having with NPOs in the field of disability no funding is planned for specific activities. Sports and cultural activities are reported by associations when they are part of the implementation of their projects.

Albanian Foundation for the Rights of People with Disabilities (ADRF) has organized every year the active rehabilitation camp for people with disabilities, wheelchairs users. 90 beneficiaries in 2008, 2009 have received training from experts to help in their rehabilitation. In these camps basketball and table tennis matches for people with disabilities are organized.

Association "Help Life" has organized exhibitions each year with the best works of people with disabilities and during 2009 an exhibition of photos taken by people with disabilities. The International Tennis Federation, in cooperation with the Albanian Tennis Federation and ADRF, is working for months to develop the wheelchair tennis in Albania. Through this activity, the Albanian Tennis Federation opens its doors and creates access to its services also for people with disabilities, by providing a model of a inclusive development programmes.

The Association of People with Hearing Impairments (ANAD) has organized twice masked balls with the participation of 150 people, football cup with the participation of people with hearing disabilities from different districts of the country, friendly matches with teams from Italy, Kosova.

The participation in sport and cultural activities of people with physical disabilities in most cases is hindered by the lack of adaptability of premises where these activities take place, as the association of paraplegic and quadriplegic people reports.

Status: Some progress

Measure 7.5. Secure funding for joint public sport activities for people with and without disabilities.

Timeline: Starting in 2005

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports; (b) local government

Findings:

There are no funds planned for joint sport activities for people with disabilities. The municipality of Tirana reports that it has planned these activities in the framework of the activities for all categories and age groups. Very little is done by the central and local government structures to provide additional funding to support the sport activities for people with disabilities.

Status: No progress

Measure 7.6. Systematically advertise the planned activities.
Timeline: Starting in 2005
Responsible institution: NPOs of people with disabilities

Findings:

NPOs of people with disabilities have advertised their activities mainly through their members. The activities are not advertised in the media mainly due to the lack of funds. The municipalities and ministries haven't provided financial support in this direction.

Status: Little progress

DISCUSSION

Employment and vocational training

The employment and vocational training of people with disabilities still remains a serious issue related to the solution that should be provided by the responsible institutions at local and central level, the civil society organizations through employment promotion programmes and the private sector by incorporating in its policies the employment of people with disabilities.

This monitoring of NSPD, the third of its kind, points out that the progress in the area of employment and vocational training, which is made based on the objectives and measures defined in NSPD by the responsible institutions at central and local level, is very little considering the fact that in some cases the certain objectives and measures have not been implemented within the given timeline. It is obvious that we presently register a small number of people with disabilities as jobseekers and an almost insignificant number of people with disabilities who are employed in the open labor market. The issues of employment and vocational training of people with disabilities has not been addressed by the employment offices at regional level in accordance with their specificity. MoLSAEO has not taken yet a national survey to assess the situation of the employment and vocational training of people with disabilities, the opportunities that the labor market in Albania offers them, new alternatives for the employment of people with disabilities based on their needs (sheltered employment or special employment centers) as well as the orientation to intervene in improving the infrastructure to facilitate the process of identification, counseling-orientation and mediation of people with disabilities.

The Regional Employment Offices have no special structures to treat the job-seeking

people with disabilities that would facilitate the practical implementation of the policies for their employment.

In absence of subsidies from the state, the private companies do not provide the conditions and facilities that are necessary to employ people with disabilities. The National Employment Fund, which is still reported as missing, would enable the creation of sheltered jobs for people with disabilities (workshops and joint employment centers); subsidies for the equipment or adaptation of the workplace, etc.

The reassessment of the legislation in the field of education and vocational training which is reported as progressing, will create room for more opportunities for practical implementation of the employment and vocational training of people with disabilities.

Moreover, the findings of the report emphasize the need to orientate the public vocational training centers towards the inclusion of people with disabilities. For this purpose an investment is needed regarding the evaluation of the curricula and vocational training courses, training of inspectors as well as investments in improving the physical infrastructure of these institutions in order to respond to the needs of people with disabilities.

Table 14: **Employment**

Measure	Timeline	Responsible institutions	Status of progress
1.1. Studies will be conducted on the status of employment of people with disabilities and their employment in relation to the labor market needs.	2004	MoLSAEO / National Employment Service	Some progress
1.2. Encourage and support the creation of sheltered jobs for people with disabilities and ensure transportation to their workplaces in the open labor.	2004	MoLSAEO / Social Insurance Institute	Some progress
1.3. Reform of the disability benefits and pension schemes to avoid conflicts with the active policies of labor market.	2005	MoLSAEO / Social Insurance Institute	No progress

1.4. Open special centers for the employment of people with disabilities.	2005	MoLSAEO / National Employment Service NPO	Very little progress
1.5. Find effective ways to obligate the employers to implement the existing legislation for the employment of people with disabilities.	2004-2005	MoLSAEO / National Employment Service	Some progress
2.1. Revise the system of vocational training and rehabilitation for people with disabilities keeping in mind the evolution and requirements of the labor market.	2005	MoLSAEO/ National Employment Service	Some progress
2.2. Develop opportunities for employment, professional counseling and support services for people with disabilities in cooperation with employers.	2005 and ongoing	MoLSAEO / National Employment Service	No progress

Education of people with disabilities

Based on the findings of the report, progress is observed in the field of education of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. This progress consists in the efforts made by MES in collaboration with civil society actors for the improvement of the legislation and the implementation of pilot projects for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the mainstream preschool and primary school system.

There are achievements regarding the improvement of practices for the work with individual education plans (IEP) with students with disabilities. MES, in collaboration with Save the Children is piloting this practice in six regions of the country. The expertise provided by local and international NPOs in this process is considered a contribution which is enabling the creation of the right model in order to make the inclusive education in the future part of the whole education system in Albania.

For the successful implementation of inclusive education the monitoring identifies as unresolved issues: the identification and specialized evaluation of children with special

needs, support the teachers with necessary teaching tools, publications, training, support teacher in schools. MES reported that the legal framework is being reviewed and approval is expected soon. The improved legal framework will fill gaps observed in terms of practical implementation of the inclusive education.

Progress has been observed regarding the increase of the number of integrated kindergartens and schools in different regions of the country, as well as the establishment of the psychological service in the whole education system in the country.

The education of children with disabilities in special schools remains problematic. These schools work with programs that are not evaluated in accordance with the focus that these schools have. Monitoring point out the indispensability of reevaluating the curricula of these schools. It is observed that the transport of children with disabilities from the rural areas to the special schools is unresolved. Children with disabilities of these areas, due to lack of transport remain isolated and do not receive any kind of education. Furthermore, MES has no information on the number of young people with disabilities who can attend vocational schools. There is no evaluation on national level on this issue. In regard to enabling sport and cultural activities for people with disabilities the report highlights the lack of planning budgets for these activities. In cases where there have been such activities they are supported by foreign donors and in few cases by local budgets.

Table 15: **Inclusive education**

Measure	Timeline	Responsible institutions	Status of progress
3.1. Design a new mainstream school curriculum that encourages inclusive processes.	2004-2006	Ministry of Education and Science	Obligation has been met, but improvements are needed to further encourage the inclusion of students with special needs.
3.2. Prepare a packet with practical guidelines, teaching materials and standards for the integration of students with special needs for the public schools.	2004-2006	Ministry of Education and Science	Some progress

3.3. Prepare and approve a normative act that regulates the individual educational plan (IEP), and specifies the admission rules for students with special needs as well as their assessment procedures.	2004-2006	Ministry of Education and Science	Progress
3.4. Create resources in mainstream schools to work more specifically with students with special needs.	2004	Regional Education Departments	Very little progress
3.5. Improve the legal provisions on the workload and the financial stimulus of teachers working with children with special needs in integrated schools.	2005-2006	Ministry of Education and Science	Some progress
3.6. Prepare bulletins and other helping materials for teachers and parents.	2005	Ministry of Education and Science Regional Education Departments NPO	Some progress
3.7. Treat as a priority the enrollment of children with disabilities in vocational secondary schools.	2005	Ministry of Education and Science Regional Education Departments	Very little progress
4.1. Prepare and implement special integration programs which offer a better social and practical preparation of students.	2005	Ministry of Education and Science	No progress

4.2. Provide facilities like transportation, etc., for children with disabilities from remote areas to attend special schools.	2005	Ministry of Education and Science Education departments Local government	No progress
4.3. Create new services for special categories of children who are not covered (services for autistic children, etc.).	2005	Ministry of Education and Science NPO	Some progress
5.1. Pilot the creation of 12 integrated schools and 12 integrated kindergartens in 6 cities that are regional centers and have universities.	2004-2006	Ministry of Education and Science	Progress
5.2. Open integrated schools and kindergartens in all major cities of the country, reaching 100 integrated schools and 90 integrated kindergartens in Albania.	2006-2014	Local government Ministry of Education and Science Local government	Good progress
6.1. Establish psycho-pedagogical and psycho-social services in schools, consisting of a psychologist, a social worker and two or three part-time teachers, and later achieve sustainable services starting with the major cities which are regional centers and have universities.	2008	Ministry of Education and Science	Progress
6.2. Create seven new centers of educational/psychological services covering all the regions of the country.	2013	Ministry of Education and Science	No progress.

7.1. Identify the number of people with disabilities who make use of the facilities provided in cultural and sport activities, and conduct a needs assessment for the organization of activities in these areas.	2005-2006	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports	No progress
7.2. Plan a special budget to enable the implementation of the legislation on the subsidies of cultural, artistic and sports activities for people with disabilities and their organizations.	2005-2006	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Local government	Very little progress
7.3. Create an annual calendar for the sport activities for people with disabilities. Support the participation of people with disabilities in national and international activities.	Each year	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Local government NPO	Very little progress
7.4. Increase the number of recreational activities for various groups of people with disabilities. Whenever possible combine recreation with rehabilitation.	2005	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports	Some progress
7.5. Secure funding for joint public sport activities for people with and without disabilities.	2005	Local government Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports	No progress
7.6. Systematically advertise the planned activities.	2005	Local government NPOs of people with disabilities	Little progress

RECOMMENDATIONS

Employment and Vocational Training

Based on the findings of this monitoring report and aiming at improving the observed situation, the following are some recommendations to be considered by the structures at central and local level, responsible for the design and implementation of policies and legislation in the field of employment and vocational training of people with disabilities.

1. MoLSAEO should undertake a national survey to assess the situation of the employment of people with disabilities, the specific issues, in order to reevaluate the policies to ensure employment and vocational training for job seeking people with disabilities.
2. NES, through the regional employment offices should make possible the identification of people with disabilities job seeking in compliance with the needs, as well as create opportunities to create special structures for counseling – orientation and mediation of people with disabilities in the open labor market.
3. It is indispensable to plan funds for building the capacities of the professionals at central and local level, who are the responsible actors for implementing the policies for employment and vocational training of people with disabilities.
4. The establishment of the National Employment Fund is a priority for the financial support of necessary interventions to facilitate the process of employment of people with disabilities.
5. The assessment of the legal framework in compliance with the needs of people with disabilities to be integrated in the open labor market.
6. It is indispensable to reevaluate the policies and programs of public vocational training centers aiming at including the people with disabilities.

Education of people with disabilities

The following recommendations are related to the education of children with special needs in mainstream schools and special education:

1. The Ministry of Education and Science should conclude the process of review of legislation, the Normative Provisions and the Law on Pre-university Education System and should enable their approval as soon as possible.
2. The Ministry of Education and Science should plan budgets to support RED in

order to afford the additional costs required by the implementation of practices of inclusive education in preschool and school.

3. The Ministry of Education and Science and ICT should plan with priority the provision and distribution of appropriate teaching materials to work with students with disabilities.
4. The Ministry of Education and Science should continue the process of increasing the number of integrated kindergartens and schools in all the country.
5. The Ministry of Education and Science and RED should identify in financial terms the needs for transportation for children from rural areas attending special schools.
6. MES, in cooperation with MoLSAEO should conduct a survey to assess the needs of young people with disabilities to attend education in secondary vocational schools.

The main recommendations to promote the participation of people with disabilities in art, sport and other recreational activities are as follows:

1. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, through its structures, should take the responsibilities that NSPD addresses regarding the obligations of this institution in relation with planning and monitoring the cultural and sports activities for people with disabilities.
2. The responsible administrative structures at the local government level should plan, in cooperation with the NPOs, budgets to support the cultural and sports activities for people with disabilities in the respective regions.
3. The responsible structures at local level should work to raise funds from other sources to enable the support for sports and cultural activities of people with disabilities in respective regions.

AREA IV. CAPACITY BUILDING

In NSPD, capacity building in the field of disability includes the following aspects: (a) the education of the governmental representatives who participate in the legislative and executive process at the central and local government level; (b) establishment of a structure to monitor the implementation of NSPD; (c) necessary training of all those who provide services to the people with disabilities in health, rehabilitation, social services, education, employment, vocational training and recreation; and (d) active participation of the people with disabilities and their family members in decision-making processes that have an impact on their life. The objective for this area is as follows: To increase the capacities of structures working with disabilities through building new administrative structures, the improvement of existing structures and strengthening the staff capacities.

RESULTS

Reporting of results provides information on the progress made for the implementation of the National Action Plan of NSPD in 2008-2009, for each planned measure. Since the National Action Plan did not include all the aspects covered by NSPD, this report offers additional information on the aspects that were not considered.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 2008-2009 TASKS, DEFINITION OF FUTURE TASKS

Measures of the Action Plan

Measure 1.1. Establish a monitoring structure for the National Strategy on People with Disabilities.

Timeline: 2005

Responsible institution: MoLSAEO

Findings:

The monitoring structure for the National Strategy on People with Disabilities has been established at central level and was reported in the previous reports. It is being consolidated at local level. But, as the following description shows, the structures at central level have not met regularly to determine the policies in this field, as required by NSPD. In 2008 the Council didn't meet and during 2009 they organized only two meetings (instead of three as required by the strategy). The Technical Secretariat at MoLSAEO, continues to operate and carry out its fundamental tasks: to set up a network of contacts with local government and prepare the annual report on the implementation of NSPD. The Technical Secretariat has regularly published annual reports and has managed to have contact points in all the municipalities. Similarly, responsible persons for disability issues are in all central institutions that are responsible for NSPD implementation. What remains a problem though, is their engagement in many other issues in the institutions where they work, making disability the last issues on their agenda. The Secretariat has a fruitful collaboration with the State Social Services Departments in the Regions, but still hasn't set up its network of cooperation with the local government Regional Councils. A joint initiative between MoLSAEO/Technical Secretariat and ADRF in 2008 was the organization of 5 seminars in Tirana, Elbasan, Shkodër, Korça, Vlorë to encourage the local governments to appoint the contact point/responsible person to report and monitor the implementation of NSPD at regional/municipality/commune level, according to the responsibilities foreseen there. The Administrative Council has continued its regular meetings, with the participation of representatives of people with disabilities. Despite several disability contact points in all the municipalities of the country, the information provided for preparing this report had many gaps. Except for the experts from Tirana, Korça e Shkodra, the other experts who filled the questionnaire, showed that they had little or no knowledge on the developments in the field of disability in their municipality.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.2. Establishment and consolidation of new regional structures for the multi-disciplinary assessment (physical, medical and social) of the people with disabilities.

Timeline: 2005

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; (b) State Social Service

Findings:

The Medical Commission for Determining the Ability to Work (MCDAW) continues to focus on the medical needs determining the right to receive benefits from the state. The changes

made with the Joint Order of the Ministry of Health and MoLSAEO No. 382 (26.02.2007) didn't address the indispensability for a multidisciplinary assessment approach. In 2008 a proposal was submitted to the Council of Ministers for the amendment of Law 9355 "On Social Assistance and Services". The amendments proposed addressed the establishment of special commissions (multidisciplinary commissions) reporting to SSS, for the assessment of the disability, the possibility to provide a differentiated benefit depending on the severity of diagnosis and reviewing the regulation for the assessment of people with disabilities, based on the International Manual for the Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). This proposal was returned for review and a second one was presented in March 2009 by MoLSAEO. Nevertheless, the proposed improvements have not been approved yet.

Status: No progress

Measure 1.3. Establish a center of medical expertise at the General Directorate of Social Insurance Institute and modernize regional directorates. (0.5 million Euro)

Timeline: Starting from 2005

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; (b) Social Insurance Institute

Findings:

The Center of Medical Expertise at the General Directorate of the State Insurance Institute has not yet been set up.

Status: No progress

Measure 1.4. (a) Enhance the human resources capacity at the National Employment Service at the central and local levels through training to provide psycho-social support to the staff who work in vocational training centers.
(b) Open vocational training courses for the preparation of professionals in the areas of physical, social, psychological and professional rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

Timeline: 2005-2006

Responsible institution: (a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; (b) National Employment Service.

Findings:

The National Employment Service reports that there are no specific trainings in the area of disability, but in the framework of potential projects to be funded by ILO or CARDS, it is foreseen to develop the capacities for counseling specific groups, including people with disabilities. No vocational training courses have been started for the preparation of professionals in the areas of physical, social, psychological and professional rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

Status: Little progress**Other important developments**

During this period, through an initiative supported by the Save the Children programme, about 500 teachers have received at least three times a year support trainings on the student centered teaching methodologies, the concept of the inclusive education and its reflection in the Albanian legislation, types of disabilities and teaching strategies for children with disabilities, Individual Education Plan and its design and implementation. Beside the formal trainings, other activities have also been promoted including experience exchange between teachers, such as exchange of visits between teachers from different regions, open classes, internal trainings in schools where the trainer is the teacher most experienced in disability issues. In function of the progress of the inclusion process, during 2008 – 2009 MES has made possible twelve 2-day training sessions, in the Regional Education Departments in Gjirokastra, Korça and Vlora, with the participation of 100 teachers, education inspectors covering the education of students with disabilities, school psychologists, principals and vice principals of schools where inclusive education is being piloted. Meanwhile, the National Training Institute during 2009 has organized trainings on teaching, including teaching to children with disabilities. The beneficiaries of these trainings were 40 inspectors from all Regional Education Departments and Education Offices who deal with disabilities. With a goal to design and promote the implementation of local disability policies and educate the people involved in the legislative and decision-making process at local level, ADRF organized six education workshops in Shkodër, Durrës, Tirana, Elbasan, Korça and Vlora. The participants were representatives of NPOs promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities, women, children, roma and the human rights in general; staff of governmental institutions of social and health services, employment, education and construction, and representatives of the business community and the media (n=224). These seminars were financially supported by the European Union. The Department of Training and Projects at the State Social Services reports that in the framework of the Letter of Understanding between the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the United Nations Population Fund

– UNFPA, the State Social Services is implementing the project titled “Capacity building of local government (municipality/region) and State Social Services’ staff on implementing standards and legislation in the field of social care”. During 2009, a curriculum was prepared on training and the manual on the implementation of approved standards for care centers for people with disabilities. The directors, social workers, carers in Care Institutions as well as the inspectors of State Social Services and their Regional offices with benefit from them. The number of participants in the trainings foreseen during 2010 is 200 staff. In Vlora University “Ismail Qemali”, branch of specialized pedagogy, 2 groups of students have graduated with a First Level Diploma (Bachelor). The first 22 graduates are all employed in the field they graduated. In 2008, again 22 students graduated, 13 of which are employed according to their education. Presently, there are 30 students attending the third year and 12 enrolled in the first year. Fifteen students have just finished the master in Specialized Pedagogy and are waiting to receive the diploma. In order to push for the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, ADRF organized a national seminar and training at local level aiming at educating the governmental structures and the civil society in the area of disability. The above activities were supported by the Open Society Foundation, New York.

DISCUSSION

The measures planned for the implementation of NSPD in the area of capacity building do not include all aspects of the definition presented in the strategy text. For this reason, the situation presented in this study is not complete. According to the methodology used, the study included only the measures foreseen in the National Action Plan. The results show that the implementation of measures in this field has reached a level of 35%.

Table 16: **Capacity building**

Measure	Timeline	Responsible institutions	Progress status
1.1. Establish a structure for monitoring the national strategy on people with disabilities	2005	MoLSAEO	Some progress
1.2. Establish and strengthen the new structures at regional level for multi-disciplinary (physical, health and social) assessment for people with disabilities.	2005	MoLSAEO State Social Service	No progress

1.3. Establish e health expertise center at the Directorate General of Social Insurance Institute and upgrade of regional departments (0.5 million Euro)	Starting from 2005	MoLSAEO Social Insurance Institute	No progress
1.4. Strengthen the capacity of human resources in State Employment Service at central and local levels through training, in order to provide psycho-social support to the staff working in Vocational Training Center. Start vocational training courses for professionals in the fields of physical, social, psychological and professional rehabilitation of people with disabilities.	2005-2006	MoLSAEO National Employment Service	Little progress

RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building is a very fundamental element in order to succeed in improving the quality of life of people with disabilities and to include them in the Albanian society. The recommendations below may help in achieving the objectives set by NSPD:

1. Broadening the National Council on Disability Affairs member ship, increasing the representation and participation of actors from the academic world and the organizations providing services and advocacy.
2. Undertake necessary measures to complete the establishment of the network of Technical Secretariat collaborators at all levels (central, regional and local). Planning of financial resources to train the network members.
3. The process of disability assessment should radically change to guarantee the realization and respect of the rights of people with disabilities. Measures should be taken to train the staff involved in the assessment process.
4. Promotion and support for the initiation of new degrees in higher education for new professions in the area of disability, such as counselors job coaching for professional rehabilitation, speech, music and art therapists.
5. Development of the training program and planning of financial resources, which support the systematic training of the staff responsible for disability at central, regional and local level.
6. Promotion of the inclusion concept in all policies programmes and projects developed for people with disabilities.

AREA V. LEGISLATION AND RESEARCH

The area of legislation and research includes six objectives, which aim at the following: a) improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities, while guaranteeing equality and access to services; b) conducting and disseminating studies that will ultimately assist in improving the existing social policies for people with disabilities and designing new legislation. The objectives are the following:

1. Ensure full equality for people with disabilities through improvement in the legislation on social services, education, housing, and telecommunications.
2. Improve access and simplify the procedures a of the process of disability assessment/evaluation.
3. Ensure relevant and updated information and data on number, typology and social situation of people with disabilities.
4. Support the research programs on the economic, social and rehabilitation issues related to people with disabilities
5. Prepare and distribute information at the national, regional and local level regarding people with disabilities.
6. Support the education programs against the discrimination of people with disabilities.

RESULTS

Results of the study about the assessment of the level of implementation of the National Action Plan in the area of legislation and research are presented in two sections. The first section consists of the report on the work done for each measure according to the area of intervention and respective objective. It should pointed out that some of the achievements and problems in the area of legislation and research have been addressed in the reports of other areas of the Action Plan, since they are inter-related with these

measures. Also, in the introduction of the report is given a comprehensive list of the Albanian legislation which affects the lives of disabled persons. Based on the above-mentioned, this part is focused only on the legislation related to this measure. The second section provides data from the six –region survey with disabled persons and their family members, illustrated with tables and graphics.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 2008 - 2009 TASKS PREPARATION FOR FUTURE TASKS

01. Improvements in the legislation

Measure 1.1. Prepare the bases for the establishment of a separate state institution specialized in dealing with disability rights and issues.

Timeframe: Missing in the action plan

Responsible institutions: Missing in the action plan

Findings:

The National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) established in December 2005 is still operational, as a structure for the implementation of NSPD. The Council comprises Ministers and disability organizations and the Technical Secretariat at the MoLSAEO, which promotes and monitors the implementation of national disability strategy. Since 2009, NCDA is no longer chaired by the deputy Prime Minister but by the Minister of State. Upon the initiative of civil society⁵⁴ it was made possible the discussion and formulation of law no10 039, dated 22.12.2008 “on legal aid”. The law provides for the establishment of a legal assistance state commission, for the organization and functioning of legal assistance offered through attorneys authorized by this commission. Legal assistance is offered on administrative and civil issues in the form of counseling and advocacy in the court system for vulnerable groups, including disabled persons who are beneficiaries of social protection programs. From the collected data it is evident that the law has not yet began to be implemented. The enforcement of this law would constitute a very good instrument for protecting and respecting the rights of vulnerable groups, and disabled persons in particular. The respondents of MoLSAEO and disability NGOs indicate that there has been no progress in the implementation of this measure with regard to

⁵⁴ TLAS- Albania in 2008n launched the process for discusion and formulaiton of the law on legal assistance for vulnerbale groups. This initiative was endorsed by a large number of NGOs operating in the disability area, and ADRF.

establishment of an institution dealing with rights of people with disabilities, but Law no Nr.10 093, dated 9.3.2009 foresees the establishment of the agency for the support of the civil society. This agency is not yet operational because of lack of budget forecasts.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.2. Conduct a study on the Albanian legislation which addresses the disability issues. Make comparison with related international standards and conventions.

Timeframe: 2005-2006

Responsible institutions: (a) MOLSAEO; (b) Ministry of Health; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (c) Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports; (d) Ministry of Finance; (f) Ministry of Justice

Findings:

According to MoLSAEO, in 2008, a working group carried out a study for the ratification of the UN Convention, while differentiating the obligations for the Ministries in line with the Convention. In June 2008 was launched the “Approximation of the Albanian legislation with the UN Convention on the Rights of people with disabilities and the respective EU Legislation”, which was carried out in September 2007 by UNICEF and ADRF. The results were disseminated to the responsible Ministries and disability rights organizations, so that they could be used as lobbying instruments for the ratification by the Government of Albania of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability. On December 3, 2009, the government paved the road for the signature and then the ratification of the Convention, which is now signed by the government of Albania⁵⁵.

MoLSAEO has started the work for the preparation of the action plan in the context of the ratification of the Convention, and part of it will also be the measures for approximation of the Albanian legislation in this area along the lines of the Convention.

The Ministry of Integration in the progress report of 2008 for Albania 2008 reiterates that the implementation of the National Strategy for People with Disability has been slow and the procedural framework is not yet complete.

Status: Good progress

⁵⁵ UN Disability Rights Convention was signed by the Government of Albania on december 22, 2009

UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (CRPD) is the principal document that considers disability from human rights prospective.

UN Convention was adopted in by UN General Assembly in December 13th, 2006, and entered into force in May 3rd, 2008.

All the process of approval of signing of the CRPD by the Albanian Government, has at the bases advocacy and lobbying efforts of civil society with a special role of ADRF

ADRF has been involved since the initial process of the Convction, being part of the discussions and round tables organized by disability associations in international level on the content of the draft and proposals presented by Civil Society to UN ad hoc committe meetings working on the convention. ADRF also lobbied at the Albanian Government to ensure its commitment and support to the process of discussions and approval/ adoption of the CRPD.

Further on, with full involvement of all disability associtaions, other civil society groups, international organizations and donor agencies like SOROS, USAID, UNDP, OSCE, UNICEF, GTZ, CRD and EU Delegation, ADRF intensified lobbying efforts to the Albanian Government to influence ratification of the CRPD by the Albanian Government.

On December 3rd, 2009, the UN CRPD, was signed in principle by the Albanian Government, and in December 22nd,2009, the CRPD was officialy signed in New York by the Ambassador of Albania.

Adhering of Albania to the Convention, will place Albanian state in the group of member states to the Convention alongside with 144 states that have signed, including the European Union

Measure 1.3. Prepare an integral law on disability

Timeframe: 2006

Responsible institutions: (a) MoLSAEO; (b) Ministry of Health; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (c) Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports; (d) Ministry of Finance; (f) Ministry of Justice

Findings:

This law has not yet been drafted, but a working group has been established by MoLSAEO to work on it. MoLSAEO has extended the deadlines envisaged in NSPD with

regard to this measure. Furthermore, the law on status of persons with mental, physical and sensory impairments, which is ready, is not yet being implemented, thus discriminating more than half the overall number of disabled persons in Albania.

Lobbying Since 1995, different parent organizations of people with intellectual disability have been trying to influence Government to draft a Legal status for this category of people with disability. Several drafts of the status have been prepared by different organizations and have been presented to each government the years '90. None of them has considered these attempts, by resulting in people with intellectual disability remaining most discriminated in comparison to other categories of people with disability who have got their statuses

In the year 2005, Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, gathered all parents organizations under a Grouping of "For the status of people with intellectual/ mental disability to organize lobbying and advocacy campaigns recalling to the Albanian Government approval of the status, offering a unique Draft with input of and agreed by all organizations, with legal technical expertise of ADRF. Several meetings with responsible institutions and press conferences have been organized and press releases distributed to ADRF networks of collaborators. This process had full support of the Institute of People's Ombudsman, who has offered expertise and intermediary role to presenting the Draft – Status to MOLSAEO in order to push for its approvals well as full support of the Disability and Development Coalition, Albania. This process is interrelated also with the effort of the Albanian National Association of Deaf, who are also advocating for equal opportunities to the rest of other disability group. This issue is not yet resolved, consequently people with mental and sensory(deaf) disability and their family members, still remain the most discriminated even amongst other disability groups.

Status: No progress

Measure 1.4. Include an article that guarantee the inclusion of accessibility standards in all new constructions in the law "On Urban Planning"

Timeframe: 2005

Responsible institutions: MoPWTT

Findings:

COM Decision no 1503 of 19.11.2008 approved the regulation on utilization of spaces by people with disability which guarantees inclusion of building accessibility standards in all new and existing buildings, transport accessibility and road infrastructure. The law on territorial planning approved on 23.04.2009 includes ample provisions, in six articles, on the disability accessibility issue. The obligation for planning accessible territory is reiterated in article 1 – scope of the law. Also, the issue of ensuring accessibility of territories is determined as a matter of national importance. Law on administration of joint spaces in condominiums approved on 09.04.2009, in a particular article, provides the obligation of the local government to ensure accessibility of existing housing facilities owned by disabled persons.

Status: Very good progress

Measure 1.5. Improve the existing transport legislation with the goal of making it accessible for disabled persons.

Timeframe: 2005 and on

Responsible institutions: MoPWTT

Findings:

MoPWTT points out that there has been work for improving the existing transport legislation for removing barriers for people with disabilities, while there is an ongoing process, a person in charge has been assigned, but there is no action plan, with timeframes in place.

Status: Some progress

Measure 1.6. Establish technical standards on the means of public transportation to ensure accessibility

Timeframe: 2006

Responsible institutions: MoPWTT

Findings:

According to MoPWTT, the regulation for the utilization of spaces by disabled persons approved by COM decision no 1503, dated 19.11.2009 includes the technical standards

for means of public transportation. The measures have been included in the documentation of the General Directorate of Road Transport Services for the establishment of procedures for accessibility and utilization of individual transport means by the people with disabilities.

Status: Good progress

Measure 1.7. Amend the Road Code and the legislation that provides the technical conditions of the use of automotive means. Modification of technical regulations and specifications for building barrier free public roads

Timeframe: 2006

Implementing agency: MoPWTT

Findings:

According to MoPWTT, no changes were made to the Code since this was not deemed necessary, but there is however a regulation in place no7 of 08.07.2008 approved by the DPSHTR related to this measure. Also, the Regulation on utilization of spaces by disabled persons approved by CoM decision no 1503 dated 19.11.2009 includes as well the rules and technical regulations modified for accessible roads.

Status: Good progress

Measure 1.8. Prepare a Manual on how to make roads accessible for disabled persons

Timeframe: 2005-2007

Implementing agency: MoPWTT

Findings:

No separate manual has been drafted, but the Project-Manual which provides the instructions/roadmap for the introduction of facilities according to MoPWTT is part of the regulation “for the utilization of spaces by disabled persons” approved by COM Decision no 1503 of 19.11.2009, which includes as well the rules and technical regulations modified for accessible roads.

Status: Good progress

02. Access to the disability assessment process

Measure 2.1. Prepare the respective legislation on the technical standards of adaptive equipment and teaching aids for children and students.

Timeframe: 2006

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (b) MoLSAEO/ Social Insurance Institute /SSS; (c) Ministry of Health

Findings:

Work has not yet started to prepare the legislation for the technical standards of the accessible equipments and teaching aids for children and pupils with disabilities. There is no coordination among institutions in terms of taking over responsibilities.

Status: No progress

Measure 2.2. Improve legislation which excludes the vehicles used by people with disability from customs fees.

Timeframe: 2004-2005

Responsible institutions: (a) MoLSAEO/ SSS; (b) MoES; (c) NGOs

Findings:

There is not yet in place a working group that would work for the inclusion of all the rest of the disability categories to benefit from this measure. There is still the same situation, whereby only persons who are tetraplegics and paraplegics, people with severe visual impairments and labor invalids, enjoy the right to benefit from this exemption.

Status: No progress

Measure 2.3.a Prepare the legal framework for the free training of family caregivers of people with severe disabilities. Study the possibility of medical insurance and social security retirement for them

Timeframe: 2006

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal

Opportunities/ State Social Service; (b) local government; (c) Health Insurance Institute (HII)

Findings:

According to DCM decisions no 326 and 328 dated 12.3.2009, the time of service as a caregiver for paraplegic and tetraplegics patients (who is not economically active, and is not entitled to benefit under the mandatory social insurance scheme) is considered as an insurance period in terms of eligibility for pension, maternity leave, accidents at work, vocational morbidity, and health insurance. This improvement benefit only this social category. Also, there is not yet in place the legal framework for the training of caregivers in the homes of persons with severe disabilities, and there is no working group in place to work towards this end.

From the information we have, the local government perceives this as a responsibility of the central government exclusively, and they also speak about lack of staff, skills and budgets.

Status: Some progress

Measure 2.3b Create the legal framework which ensures services which are free or at reduced prices for basic needs of people with sensory impairments such as readers, guides and sign-language interpreters.

Timeframe: 2007

Implementing agency: (a) MoLSAEO / State Social Service; (b) local government; (c) Health Insurance Institute

Findings:

There is no working group in place, which would work for the formulation of this part of the legislation, but MoLSAEO refers to the draft-law on the status of persons with mental, physical and sensory disabilities, which is still in draft form. The SSS even though an important actor in the enforcement of this measure, is not aware of any developments.

Status: No progress

Measure 2.4. Improve the legislation to support disability NGOs to provide rehabilitation services.

Timeframe: Starting in 2006

Implementing agency: NGOs

Findings:

The role of NGOs in the delivery of services for disabled persons, including rehabilitation services, is determined in law no 9355, (19.03.05) "On social services and economic assistance". The law provides for the licensing and contracting of NGOs that deliver social services. But, in this aspect there is still a legal gap related to the regulation of procurement procedures for contracting this category of services. MoLSAEO refers to a legal initiative of 2009 for improving this legal framework, but the proposals have not yet been approved by the law makers.

In line with this law and the law on status of blind persons there is in place a National Center for the Rehabilitation of Blind persons, which is run by the National Association of Blind. The MoH for 2009 had allocated budget for the procurement of aids for the blind worth 30 million lekë.

The Council of Ministers approved the policy document on "custodianship of children in need", which serves as an important platform for promoting and application of new alternative services for children in needs (including children with disabilities), services in the family, which offers a solution in the interest of the child.

A center for autistic children is now in place (please, see AREA II Services)

Failure to improve further the legal framework for the support of NGOs has hampered the development of the activity of the center for Physical Rehabilitation in Korça, as well as the start of the activity of the Association for the Physical Rehabilitation in Tirana, and operation of the new center of "Help Life". This is also leading to the closure of the workshop for wheelchairs in Tirana, which is managed by ADRF.

During 2008, MoLSAEO was working to set up the Fund for Social Services, which would increase the possibility for funds for services. There is no information about the progress and concrete steps related to this process.

Status: Some progress

Measure 2.5. Ensure the legal framework for the sign language broadcast of a five-minutes news bulletin.

Timeframe: non written

Implementing agency: NPO

Findings:

According to ANAD, in 2008, thanks to the efforts of MoLSAEO and the National Association of Persons with Hearing Impairment (ANAD) it was made possible to have the news edition broadcasted also in sign language by the Albanian public television, but there is not yet any specifically tailored legislation.

NCRTV reiterates that it is in the process of formulating and completing a new legislation on the electronic media. The new draft law on the media provides for provisions in compliance with the European legislation paying attention to guarantee disability rights and reflect disability issues in the media. Following the approval of the law in the parliament, the NCRTV will formulate and issue the relevant sub-legal acts such as: instructions, regulations etc., so that radio and television operators are clear and can implement the requirements of the law on disability issues.

Status: Some progress

03. Obtaining information

Measure 3.1. Create a statistical database and update it regularly

Timeframe: 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) MoLSAEO; (b) Ministry of Health; (c) INSTAT; (d) local government unit; (e) NGOs;(f) academic institutions

Findings:

According to MoLSAEO, information about the categories of beneficiaries, age, gender and their educational attainment is gathered by the local government units and then is forwarded to supervisor structures according to a special agenda. COM Decision no 617 of 07.09.2006 determines the system of indicators that will be gathered.

The National Observatory for Disabled Persons gathers information for the preparation of an annual report, with updated statistics for disabled persons. The data for the report of the Observatory for 2007- 2008 have been obtained by MoLSAEO and its reporting institutions, as well as by the other line ministries. This report is important for obtaining general data for people with disabilities, and data related to their social and economic

status, as well as to their needs. A positive fact is that this annual report has kept expanding from one year to the other. The Observatory is about to complete the process of the formulation of the report for 2008 – 2009, for which there are set up three working groups.

The Ministry of Education and Sciences gathers and publishes data related only to special schools and special education. There are no data for the children with disabilities integrated in regular schools.

The Statistics Sector in the MoH every year gathers data about morbidity based on the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), which reflect the number of people with disabilities hospitalized, according to the morbidity and age groups. There are no statistical data for new disability cases.

Tirana municipality gathers data regarding disability payments on regular basis.

According to the representatives of the local government in the two regions, that of Shkodra and Korça, the data gathered by the offices of Economic Assistance in 2008 do not offer any information regarding the real needs and requests of people with disabilities⁵⁶, but they have planned the start of this process for next year. Elbasan municipality reports that they have assigned staff for filling in the data-base established specifically for people with disabilities.

INSTAT publishes data for the disability payments and invalidity pension.

Specific disability associations have data only about their members, according to the specific disability.

Status: Some progress

Measure 3.2. Conduct periodical studies for disabled persons, disability categories, existing services, needs etc.

Timeframe: Annually

Responsible institutions: (a) MoLSAEO; (b) Ministry of Health; (c) INSTAT; (d) National Observatory for Disabled persons

Findings:

The National Observatory for Disabled persons has carried out a study on the social, economic and health status of disabled persons in Albania; identification of disability in

⁵⁶ GTZ study on “ Structures of the local government and the process of decentralization of social care services for Disabled persons”, December 2008

early childhood, and integration of children with disabilities in regular schools, reflecting these data in annual reports.

The MoH points out that it has not carried out proper disability studies, but however the disability issue, as part of studies of medical nature is presented in conferences and symposiums by different departments of the Mother Teresa TUHC.

INSTAT has not carried out any studies in the course of 2008 – 2009 regarding disability issue, but it is in the process of preparation of questionnaires for the Census, including also collection of disability data.

MoLSAEO submitted a study on the re-organization of DAC, and a study regarding the status of different disability categories. Also, MoLSAEO cooperated with ADRF for the joint study called “Women with disabilities- isolated or forgotten?”

The institution of the People’s Advocate has conducted a survey in several development centers in the country, namely in Tirana, Shkodra, Lezhe, Berat, Korça and Vlora, while presenting individual reports with findings regarding the living conditions and treatment of persons with developmental disabilities.

QKACS/ NCACS has carried out a study on the respect of patients rights, part of which was also the survey on the level of access for disabled persons in 20 hospitals in the country.

In the course of 2008-09, ADRF has prepared and published several studies at the national level : survey called SMALL STEPS – formative evaluation of implementation of the standards of social services for disabled persons in day care and residential centers, and protection and enforcement of disability rights; a report on the Implementation of the National Disability Strategy, 2007; a study called “Corporate Social Responsibility and the vulnerable groups”; study on “Political parties and disability”; observation report of the parliamentary elections of June 2009 by observers with disabilities; report on media survey “Disability in pre-elections campaign”; study report on “ Local Action Plans for disabled persons in the region of Korça; study report on “Local Action Plan for disabled persons in the city of Shkodra.”

GTZ, in cooperation with ADRF, has prepared the study on Local Government Structures and the Decentralization Process of Social Care Services for Disabled persons”, 2008 CARITAS, in cooperation with ADRF, has carried out a study on the social and economic status of disabled persons in the cities of Shkodra, Laç, Fushë – Krujë.

In December 2008, the legal program at the ADRF conducted a “Study on the legal framework on the evaluation and commissioning of disability in Albania”, as well as another study on the “Legal framework of HII and the legal issues.”

Status: Good progress

Measure 3.3. Establish a registry of people with disability with data from the Census

Timeframe: next Census

Implementing agency: INSTAT

Findings:

INSTAT has started the ground work for the inclusion of the request for the registration of disabled persons in the Census questionnaires. ADRF has submitted to INSTAT models of questionnaires for the registration of disabled persons to be used during the Census planned in 2011. This is an ongoing process.

Status: Some progress

04. Support for research programs

Measure 4.1. Establishment of a data base on the health, social and economic status of (a) hemophilic persons, and (b) cancer patients

Timeframe: 2005-2006

Responsible institutions: (a) National Observatory for Disabled persons; (b) NGOs

Findings:

The Observatory for disabled persons does not have any data base for this group of individuals. The Association of hemophilic persons in Albania informs that it has started the process for the establishment of the registry with these data for its members, with the support of donors. This process is expected to start in March 2010.

Status: little progress

Measure 4.2. Conduct of studies on the prevalence and incidence of different types of disabilities

Timeframe: 2005-2015

Responsible institutions: (a) Ministry of Health; (b) NGOs

Findings:

The MoH has not carried out any studies with regard to the prevalence and frequency of types of disabilities. According to the Tirana regional health authority (TRHA), the reason for failure of these studies is lack of preparation of the family doctors to cover disability issues.

Status: No progress

Measure 4.3. (a) Develop the disability terminology; (b) publish the criteria on national disability studies a; and (c) prepare a glossary for the disability area.

Timeframe: 2004-2005

Implementing agency: NGOs

Findings:

None of the participating NGOs in this study, is involved in this measure or does have information in this area. There are no publications.

Status: No progress

Measure 4.4. Publish the list of disabilities and their categorization according to possible social restrictions

Timeframe: Since 2006

Implementing agency: (a) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (b) MoLSAEO; (c) Ministry of Health; (d) local government; (e) NGOs

Findings:

None of the actors involved provides any information regarding the preparation of the list of disability categories and their classification according to the possible social restrictions. According to MoH the preparation of the list is related to restructuring of MCDAW, which will also include improvement of the disability evaluation/assessment, where the end result will be a more comprehensive data registry. This process is expected to be legalized soon.

Status: No progress

05. Preparation and dissemination of information

Measure 5.1. Publish periodical leaflets and information material regarding rehabilitation, integration, legislation, rights and freedoms of disabled persons, etc

Timeframe: Annually

Implementing agency: (a) Institutions; (b) NGOs

Findings:

The National Action Plan does not determine the responsible institutions for the implementation of this measure.

The National Center for Growth, Development and Rehabilitation of Children, in the course of 2009 has published 4 editions of the magazine called “Life’s flowers”, with a print run of 1000 copies each, dealing with topics such as: treatment of autism, neural damages of plexit brakial, Rehabilitation and treatment of Down Syndrome.

A part of these copies are forwarded to the Institute of Public Health, which disseminates them through public health promotion staff in the districts. Another part is disseminated to the parents who come at the center, and a smaller share is forwarded to NGOs that treat children with disabilities.

10 leaflet type publications were printed during 2009, including topics such as: development of infants and children from 0-1 years of age; 1-3 year of age; motor development, development of speech etc. which get disseminated in the course of the meetings with the family members of the patients that come to the center. For 2010, the magazine will be published on bimonthly bases, i.e. there will be 6 editions in the year.

Different civil society organizations are involved in publishing publications with information material on the rehabilitation, integration, legislation and rights and freedoms of the disabled persons, as well as other publications.

There are several publications of Save the Children organization that will assist education professionals in equipping them with basic concepts of inclusion (in schools and kindergartens) such as: “Inclusion”, which is a leaflet appropriate for use by the education staff of mandatory/compulsory education and staff of pre-school education; the book on elimination of barriers to learning in the early ages”; the book “On games and learning in early ages; the book “Look at me, Listen to me “, which is a guidance for the use of UN Disability Rights Convention in order to progress in the area of protection of children’s rights.

The Association “Help Life” publishes a periodical newspaper called “Jeta⁵⁷”; the association of Blind Persons in Albania publishes the newspaper “Drita e zerit⁵⁸”; CARITAS Albania publishes a bulletin called “Dimensions”; ADRF publishes a trimestrial magazine called ‘Sfida⁵⁹’ and is in charge of updating regularly the publication called “Albanian legislation in the disability area”. Also, ADRF has published other publications such as: different guides helping disabled persons understand the legislation, information leaflets in the areas of: services, education, employment, accessibility for people with disabilities, etc.

DDCA⁶⁰ publishes an informational Bulletin, every quarter.

Building accessibility standards are now part of the curricula of the Civil Engineering Faculty, Polis University, etc.

Status: Good progress

06. Support of educational programs against discrimination

Measure 6.1. Collaborate with the Media, to build a cooperation strategy regarding the coverage disability issues, and accessibility of people with disabilities to information

Timeframe: Since 2005

Responsible institutions: (a) State structures; (b) NGOs; (c) the Media.

Findings:

NCRTV/KKRT reports that it has been involved in the process of formulation and completion of the new legislation on the Electronic Media. The new Media draft law includes provisions, which in line with the European legislation take into consideration respect for disability rights and their reflection in the media.

Further, the NCRTV/KKRT will continue to draft and issue the secondary legislation such as: instructions, regulations etc. in order for the radio and television operators to be clear and to implement the requirements of the law with regard to disability issues. NCRTV/KKRT invites people with disabilities to give their views on the new media draft-law related to disability issues. National Radio and Television Council (KKRT) reports that

⁵⁷ Which in english means life (translator’s note)

⁵⁸ The light of sound- in English (translator’s note)

⁵⁹ Which in English translates as Challenge (translator’s note)

⁶⁰ Disability and Developmetn Coalition Albania was established in June 2007, comprising members of disability area organizations, and other associations and institutons.

it has favored disability organizations through free broadcasting of their advertisements, and including their events and activities in the news editions. During 2009, ADRF in cooperation with UNDP, organized with media representatives of written and electronic media a training on the Role of Media in the ratification by the government of Albania of the UN Disability Rights Convention”, while also disseminating the relevant information.

Status: Some progress

Measure 6.2. Promote the creational initiatives of disabled persons through annual fairs with their products

Timeframe: annually

Responsible institutions: (a) local government units; (b) NGOs

Findings:

Elbasan municipality supports annually the organization of local fairs on December 3 for persons with disabilities. These fairs are organized in the premises of Skampa theatre hall and the premises at the entrance to the municipality. Also, Korça municipality includes the works of disabled persons in the regular fairs. The association MIS-AAK organized an international painting exhibition, with partial funding from MTCYS.

Status: Some progress

Measure 6.3. Award of the Price of Excellence on disability issues to the institution that has contributed in improving the life quality of this category of persons

Timeframe: Annually

Responsible institutions: MoLSAEO

Findings

MoLSAEO does not have information with regard to this activity.

In the context of Monitoring NSPDADRF with the support of USAID disseminated in 2008, 5 awards for NGOs in the disability area based on their achievements in line with the national strategy for people with disabilities in five areas of the action plan.

Status: No progress, only NPOs

DISCUSSION

Even though there have been positive steps towards the improvement of the legislation in the course of 2008-2009, they are fragmented and insufficient to complete the measures foreseen in the Action Plan for the first objective: “Ensure full equality for disabled persons through improving the legislation in the area of social services, education, housing and telecommunications.” Very good progress is tangible only in one Measure no 1.4, while in the measures of this objective related to basic disability legislation, steps are really minimal, which still generates inequality among different disability groups.

Table 17: **Improvements in the legislation to ensure equality**

Measures	Timeframe	Responsible institutions	Progress status
1.1. Prepare the bases for the establishment of a separate state institution specialized in dealing with disability rights and issues.			Some progress
1.2. Conduct a study on the Albanian legislation which addresses the disability issues. Make comparison with related international standards and conventions.	2005-2006	MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health, MASH, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice	Good progress
1.3. Prepare an integral law on disability	2006	MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health, MASH, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice	No progress
1.4. Include an article that guarantee the inclusion of accessibility standards in all new constructions in the law "On Urban Planning"	2005	MoPWTT	Very good progress

1.5. Improve the existing transport legislation with the goal of making it accessible for disabled persons.	2005 and on	MOPWTT	Some progress
1.6.. Establish technical standards on the means of public transportation to ensure accessibility	2006	MOPWTT	Good progress
1.7. Amend the Road Code and the legislation that provides the technical conditions of the use of automotive means. Modification of technical regulations and specifications for building barrier free public roads	2006	MOPWTT	Good progress
1.8. Prepare a Manual on how to make roads accessible for disabled persons	2005-2007	MOPWTT	Good progress

There is some movement in terms of implementation of measures for the second objective, which is related to improving access and simplification of procedures for evaluation/assessment of disability: but there continues to be no progress in three out of six measures (i.e. 50% of them.)

Table 18: **Legislation for ensuring access and simplification of procedures**

Measures	Timeframe	Responsible institutions	Progress status
2.1. Prepare the respective legislation on the technical standards of adaptive equipment and teaching aids for children and students.	2006	MASH MOLSAEO /Social Insurance Institute / SSS Ministry of Health	No progress
2.2. Improve legislation which excludes the vehicles used by people with disability from customs fees.	2004-2005	MOLSAEO / State Social Service; MoES; NGOs	No progress

2.3.a Prepare the legal framework for the free training of family caregivers of people with severe disabilities. Study the possibility of medical insurance and social security retirement for them	2006	MOLSAEO / SSS Local government SII	Some progress
2.3.b. Create the legal framework which ensures services which are free or at reduced prices for basic needs of people with sensory impairments such as readers, guides and sign-language interpreters.	2007	MOLSAEO / SSS Local government SII NGOs NGOs	No progress
2.4 Improve the legislation to support disability NGOs to provide rehabilitation services.	since 2006		Some Progress
2.5 Ensure the legal framework for the sign language broadcast of a five-minutes news bulletin.			Some Progress

There is considerable progress with regard to measure no 3.2 of the third objective, namely “ensuring information and data about the number, typology and social status of disabled persons”.

However, it is still difficult to obtain statistical figures with regard to the prevalence and incidence of different disability categories and for including pupils with disabilities in downstream education.

Table 19: **Statistical data**

Measures	Timeframe	Responsible institutions	Progress status
3.1 Create a statistical database and update it regularly	2005	MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health INSTAT Local government NGOs Academic institutions	Some Progress
3.2 Conduct periodical studies for disabled persons, disability categories, existing services, needs etc.	Annually	MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health, INSTAT Observatory Combater për Disabled persons	Good progress
3.3. Establish a registry of people with disability with data from the Census	Next census	INSTAT	Some Progress

The Government continues not to provide support to research work regarding economic, social and rehabilitation issues of disabled persons, as described in measures from 4.1-4.4. Also, neither have NGOs indicated any interest in this sense. The index of the realization of this objective is the same as that of the last year, - nil.

 Table 20: **Research**

Measures	Timeframe	Responsible institutions	Progress status
4.1. Establishment of a data base on the health, social and economic status of (a) hemophilic persons, and (b) cancer patients	2005-2006	National disability observatory, NGOs	Little progress
4.2. Conduct of studies on the prevalence and incidence of different types of disabilities	2005-2015	Ministry of Health	No progress
4.3. (a) Develop the disability terminology; (b) publish the criteria on	2004-2005	NGOs	No progress

national disability studies a; and (c) prepare a glossary for the disability area.

4.4 (a) Develop the disability terminology; (b) publish the criteria on national disability studies a; and (c) prepare a glossary for the disability area.	Since 2006	MoES, MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health local government NGOs	No progress
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There has been considerable progress in the publication of materials related to disability issues, as pointed out in the fifth objective for this area. The actors for the implementation of this measure are only NGOs, which get funds from the donors and some state institutions.

Table 21: **Publications in the disability rights area**

Measures	Timeframe	Responsible institutions	Progress status
5.1. Publish periodical leaflets and information material regarding rehabilitation, integration, legislation, rights and freedoms of disabled persons, etc	Annually	NGOs	Good progress

None of the described measures as necessary for achieving objective no.6 “support for educational programs against discrimination of persons with disabilities” has been achieved.

Table 22: **Educational programs**

Measures	Timeframe	Responsible institutions	Progress status
6.1. Collaborate with the Media, to build a cooperation strategy regarding the coverage disability issues, and accessibility of people with disabilities to information	Since 2005	State structures; NGOs Media	Some progress
6.2. Promote the creational initiatives of disabled persons through annual fairs with their products	Annually	Local government, NGOS	Some progress
6.3. Award of the Price of Excellence on disability issues to the institution that has contributed in improving the life quality of this category of persons	Annually	MOLSAEO	No progress by the responsible institutions, only NGOs

From a general overview, 38 % of the measures in this area were either not met at all, or very little in the course of 2008 – 2009, against 20% with good progress, while there was only one measure with “very good” progress. The ministries responsible for their implementation have not yet taken full responsibility for the implementation of this area, which is very important for the quality of life of disabled persons and the respect for their rights. The above mentioned findings coincide exactly with the statements coming from persons with disabilities, who confirm being discriminated and not treated as equal citizens.

RECOMANDATIONS

The most recent development, that of the signature by the government of Albania of the UN Disability Rights Convention, which paves the road towards its ratification will have a positive impact on the acceleration of the process for the establishment of a comprehensive legal framework in the disability area, which is also related to delivery of most of the responsibilities under the National Disability Strategy. At the same time, there is need for strengthening research work in order to ensure the guidance for the

formulation of new policies. The following recommendations serve as orientation for the actors in this area:

1. In the context of the obligation for the ratification and implementation, of UN Convention on Rights of People with Disability, MoLSAEO should resume the process of evaluation of the legislation in the disability area in order to ensure approximation with the Convention.
2. MoLSAEO should promote formulation of the joint action plan with other ministries, taking the lead to kick-start the process.
3. MoPWTT should conduct an analysis to reformulate the legislation in order to ensure accessibility of buildings, roads and telecommunications, so that it is easy to be implemented.
4. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Interior should draft and approve the necessary sub-legal acts, which guarantee implementation of the existing legislation in the disability area in the respective fields.
5. Decision-making structures of the local government should draft and approve local acts in compliance and in conformity with the basic legislation.
6. Departments of Statistics in all line ministries, local government units should establish the data base for disabled persons and provide update information in that relation.
7. MoLSAEO should formulate a program for the conduct of studies at the national level in the disability area, in compliance with the National Action Plan of the national disability strategy, and take the leading role in the process of cooperation with other ministries.
8. MoLSAEO should support and cooperate with NGOs in the disability area in the initiatives for monitoring and research work in the disability area.

CONSUMERS SPEAK OUT: THE RESULTS OF THE 2009 SURVEY WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Any assessment of the impact of a new piece of legislation requires the opinion of people most affected by its implementation. For this reason a quantitative – qualitative survey was conducted in six regions of Albania with persons with disabilities and family members to measure the impact of the National Strategy on People with Disabilities and its action plan on the quality of life of people with disabilities, as perceived by them and family members.

The survey focused on the main areas of the action plan: accessibility, medical and social services, employment, vocational training, education, participation in cultural, artistic and sports activities, capacity building as well as legislation and research. The study was conducted in May-July 2009.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 1041 people participated in the survey; 526 (50.5%) were people with disabilities and 515 (49.5%) were family members (parents or siblings). Both genders were represented, with a slight overrepresentation of males (n=587, 56.9%). The people with disabilities were of various age groups and needed different levels of support, as Fig. 3 shows; and they represented various disability categories (see Fig. 4).

Fig.3. Level of Support Needed

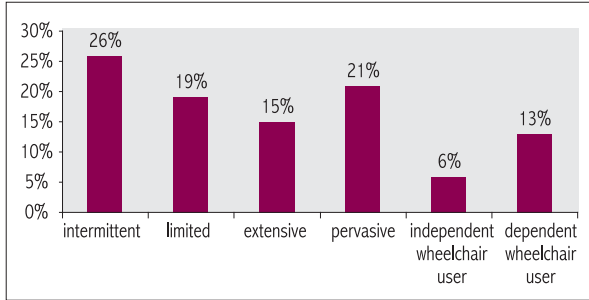
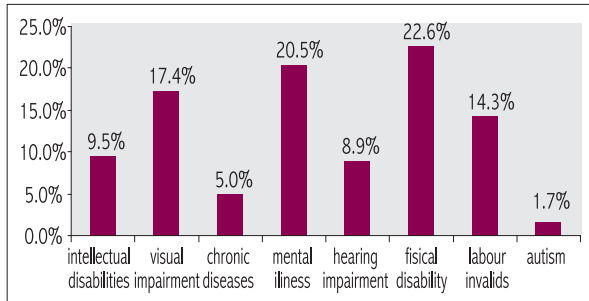
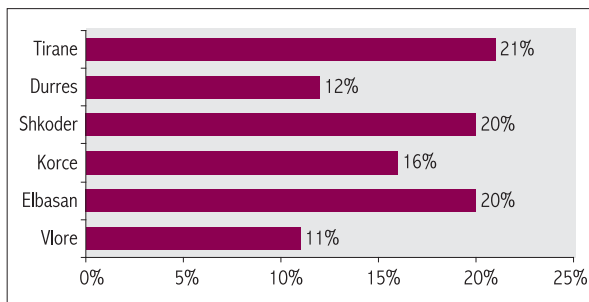


Fig.4. Categories of Disabilities Represented



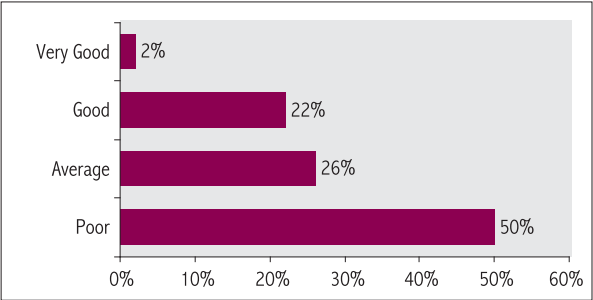
As Figure 5 shows, efforts were made to have proportionate representation of various regions relative to their overall population. Additionally, information was received from people living in 41 different administrative divisions. The majority of participants, almost four out of five (78%, N=797) lived in cities and townships, the rest in rural areas.

Fig. 5. Regional Representation



The number of respondents living in poverty is high: half of the participants (50%) described their status as being poor and only 24% (i.e. one in four respondents) described it as being good or very good. See Figure 6 for more information.

Fig. 6. Respondents' Financial Situation



Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of three sections: a section on demographics, 25 questions that were about the five areas of the National Action Plan and an open ended question. The participants were asked to note their perception with a grade from 4-10 (which is the Albanian school grade system: Four is failing, five is a mere pass and ten is outstanding). The following is the model of the questions asked:

How accessible is the environment in your own house to create the opportunity for you/ your family member who has visual impairments or is a wheelchair user to perform all his normal everyday functions? What grade would describe this situation

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 No Information
N/A

In the end, the participants were asked to identify three unmet needs. The questionnaire used in 2009 was the same as the one used in 2008. The questionnaire was piloted in 2008 with a group of parents and people with disabilities prior to being administered. A test-retest method was used to check for reliability, and content validity was ensured through the comparison with the National Action Plan, as well as through the feedback of the pilot respondents.

Recruitment

The participants were people with disabilities and family members from six regions in the country: Tirane, Durrës, Vlorë, Shkoder, Korçë and Elbasan. They were recruited through the disability organizations and special education schools. To protect the identity of the participants, the questionnaires were anonymous and no personal information was collected. The cover letter explained that participation was voluntary.

Data Processing

The quantitative data of the questionnaire were processed with SPSS and statistical tests were conducted as needed. The charts were prepared in Excel. The qualitative data were studied for themes and subthemes. Frequencies were also calculated to determine the rate of needs expressed.

RESULTS

The results are presented according to the areas of the Action Plan.

Accessibility

Eight (8) of the survey questions were about the perception of the accessibility of various environments primarily for wheelchair users and people with sensory impairments. Accessibility continues to be a major area of concern as indicated by the mean grade of 5.26. However, it is encouraging to compare the results of this survey with those of 2008. The mean grade for the category is slightly higher (the difference is 0.24), and as Fig. 8 shows, so are the other indices. The most notable improvement is in the accessibility at home, which is an indicator of efforts of the individuals and their families. The following charts (Figures 9-16)

illustrate the distribution of grades for each aspect. It is disturbing to see that with the exception of Home Accessibility, almost half of the participants have given the situation a failing grade in every aspect. This means that the majority of people with disabilities with severe mobility, visual or language impairments feel isolated and excluded.

Fig. 7. Accessibility Mean Grades for 2009

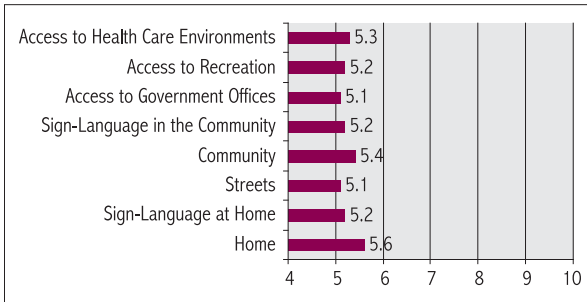


Fig. 8. Comparison of Accessibility Mean Grades for 2008 and 2009

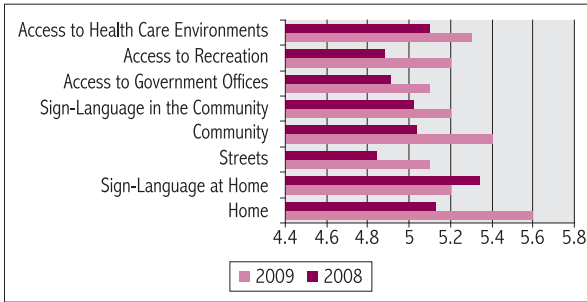
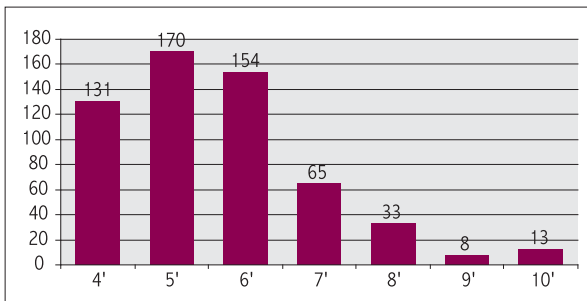
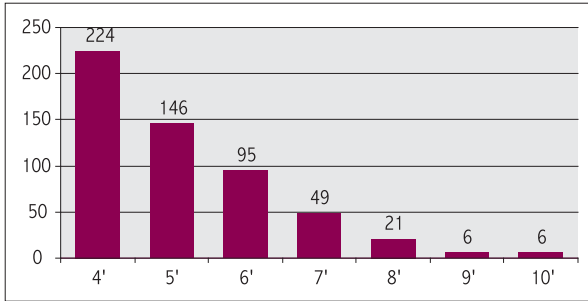


Fig. 9. Home Accessibility



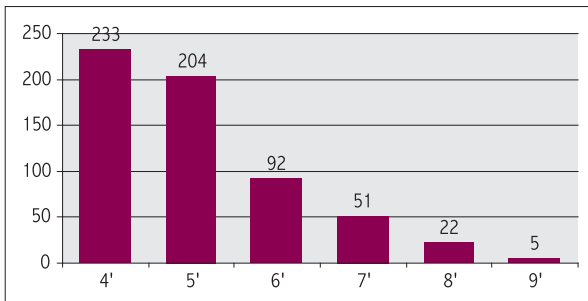
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=575$, $M=5.6$, $SD=1.39$.

Fig. 10. Use of Sign Language at Home



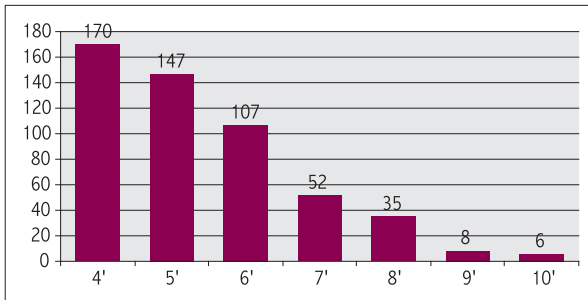
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=547$, $M=5.16$, $SD=1.31$.

Fig. 11. Accessibility of Streets



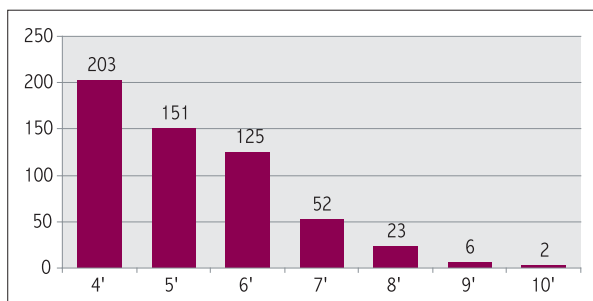
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=607$, $M=5.08$, $SD=1.15$.

Fig. 12. Accessibility of the Community



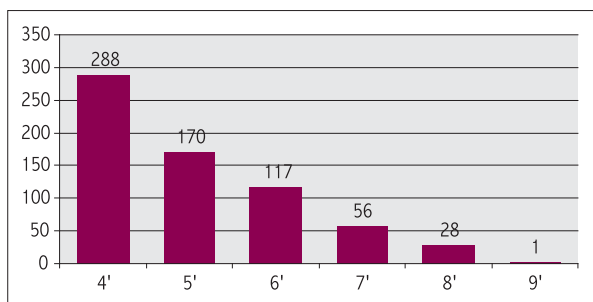
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=607$, $M=5.08$, $SD=1.15$.

Fig. 13. Use of Sign Language in the Community



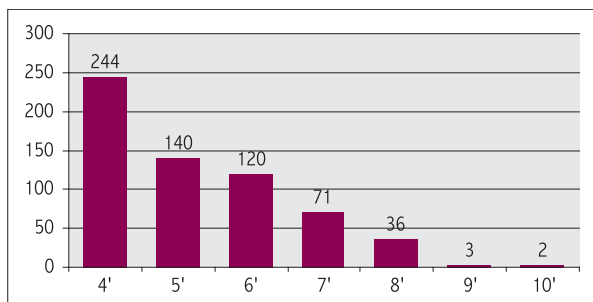
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=562$, $M=5.23$, $SD=1.24$.

Fig. 14. Accessibility of Government Offices



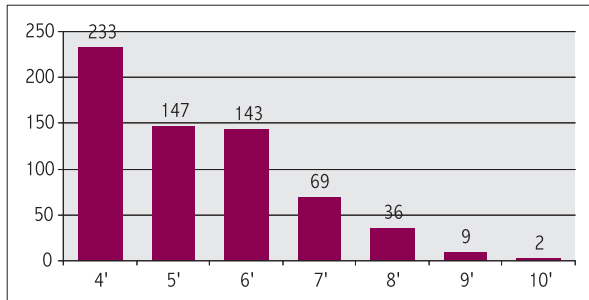
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=662$, $M=5.06$, $SD=1.20$.

Fig. 15. Accessibility of recreational environments



Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=616$, $M=5.24$, $SD=1.30$.

Fig. 16. Accessibility of Health Care Environments



Note. The main statistical indicators are: N=639, M=5.32, SD=1.31.

Medical and Social Services

The participants in the survey, were asked to grade the current situation related to the six spheres of the National Action Plan in the area of medical and social. The cluster of questions received a mean grade of 5.9 which was 0.2 higher than in the previous year. Also differently from last year, the grade most frequently given is 5 (a mere pass) rather 4 (fail) for 2008.

Figure 17 illustrates the data for 2009, whereas Figure 18 provides an opportunity for comparison of data between 2008 and 2009. As figures 19-24 indicate, for every aspect there is a high number of failing grades which indicates that a high percentage of people with disabilities and family members (almost half of them) are very unsatisfied with the services they receive.

Fig. 17. Mean Grades per Area of medical and Social Services

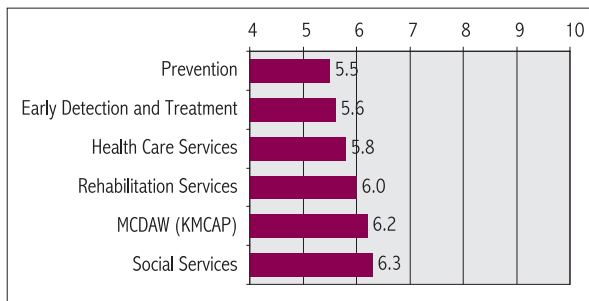


Fig. 18. Comparison of Means between 2008 and 2009 (Medical and Social Services)

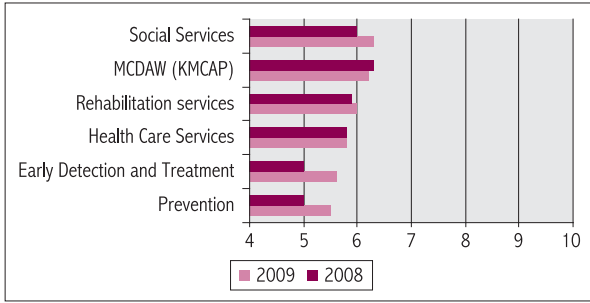
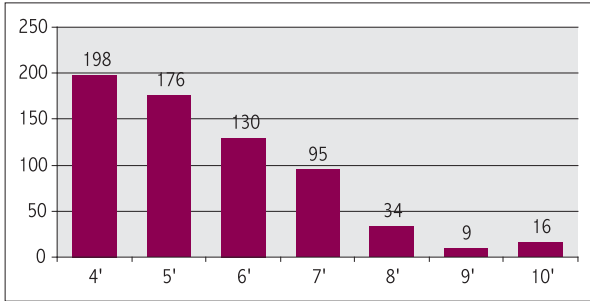
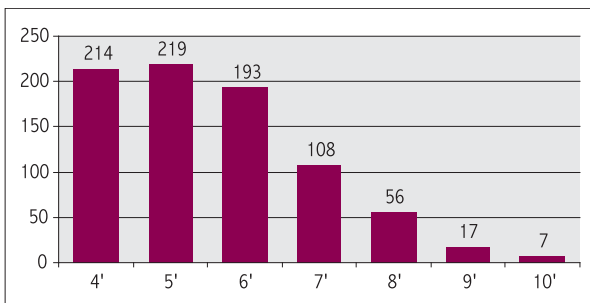


Fig. 19. Prevention



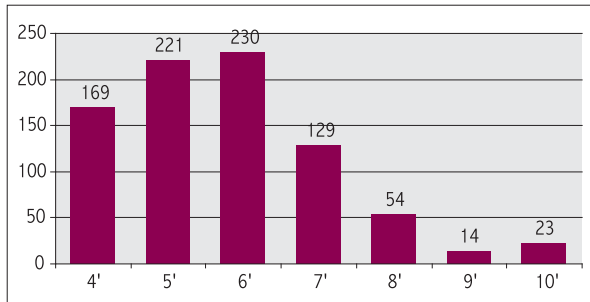
Note. The main statistical indicators are $N = 658$, $M = 5.52$, $SD = 1.45$.

Fig. 20. Early Identification and Treatment



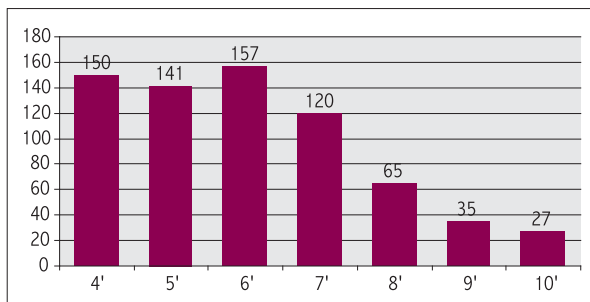
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N = 814$, $M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.37$.

Fig. 21. Health Care Services



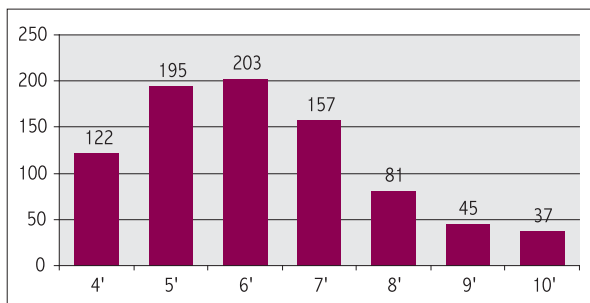
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=840$ $M=5.78$ $SD=1.42$

Fig. 22. Rehabilitation Services



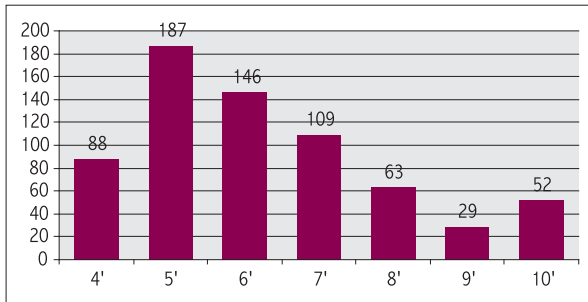
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=695$ $M=6.03$ $SD= 1.64$

Fig. 23. Medical Commission for Determination of Ability for Work (MCDAW)



Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=840$, $M= 6.19$, $SD= 1.59$.

Fig. 24. **Social Services**



Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=674$, $M=6.25$, $SD= 1.70$.

Employment, Vocational Training, Education, Participation in Cultural, Artistic and Sports Activities

Each of these aspects of the lives of people with disabilities received a passing grade as figure 25 indicates. However, of concern is the fact that with the exception of education, in all the other areas, more than 50% of the participants were very unsatisfied with the situation as was indicated by the frequency of the failing grade. The somewhat better results for education may be explained by the fact that many of the participants were family members of special education students and not of the children who have been denied the right to education. The numbers are somewhat higher than in 2008, as Figure 26 illustrates, but opportunities for employment and vocational training are still very low and the efforts for inclusion in cultural, artistic and sports activities are judged to be inadequate by the survey participants.

Fig. 25. **Mean Grades per Area (Employment, Vocational Training, Education, Participation in Cultural, Artistic and Sports Activities)**

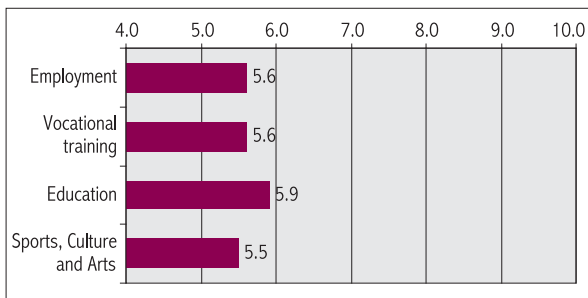


Fig. 26. Comparison between 2008 and 2009 (Employment, Vocational Training, Education, Participation in Cultural, Artistic and Sports Activities)

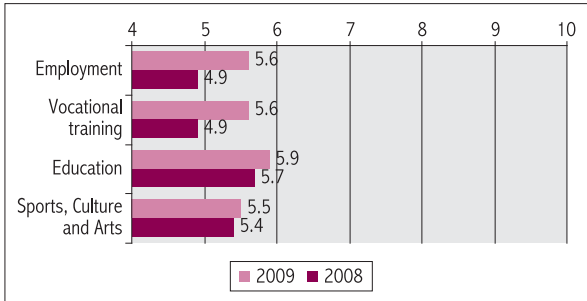
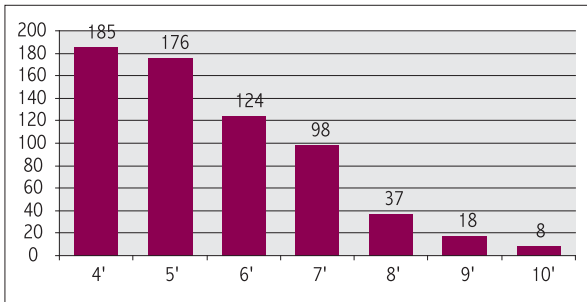
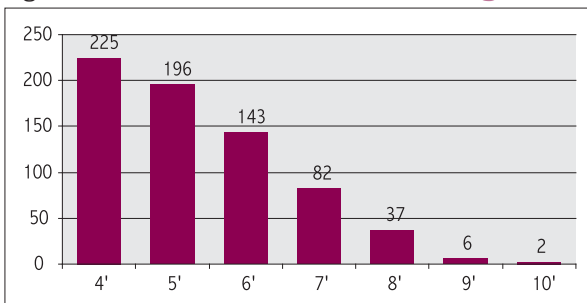


Fig. 27. Opportunities for Employment



Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=646$, $M= 5.55$, $SD= 1.43$.

Fig. 28. Vocational Education and Training



Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=691$, $M=5.33$, $SD=1.26$.

While the three questions related to education received a mean grade of 5.9, there were small differences in the mean grades for questions as Fig. 29 shows. Respondents

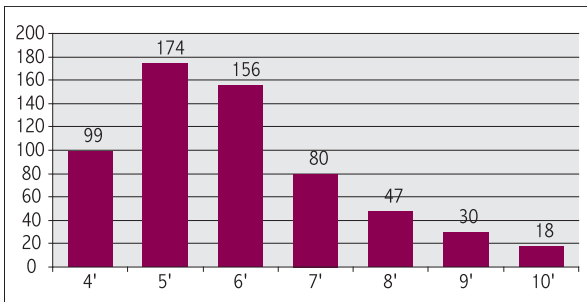
with disabilities and their family members are less satisfied with inclusive opportunities for special needs students.

Fig. 29. Mean Grades for Questions Related to Education



The grade most frequently given to the satisfaction with the quality of special education was 5, a mere pass ($n=174$, 28.9%). It is disturbing that 16.4% of the participants, i.e., one in six persons, gave it a failing grade, i.e., four. Fig. 30 illustrates the findings.

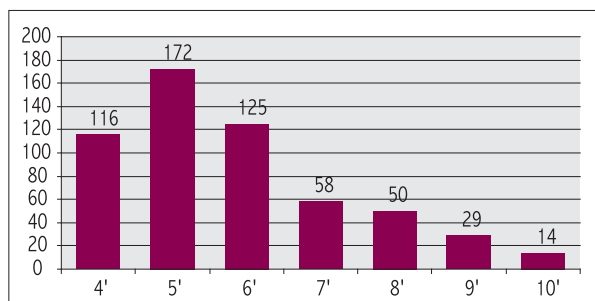
Fig. 30. Education



Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=604$, $M=5.94$, $SD=1.52$.

As Fig. 31 demonstrates, about one of five of the respondents (20.6 %) feel that schools are failing students with disabilities in providing inclusive opportunities with their peers. This reflects the situation of Special Education Schools.

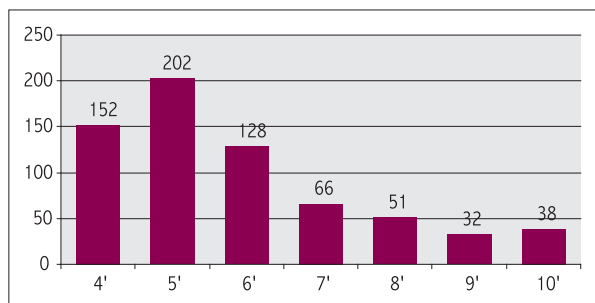
Fig. 31. Inclusive opportunities in schools



Note. The main statistical indicators are: N=564, M=5.82, SD=1.55.

The work with the Individual Education Plan has improved slightly from 2008 when 40% of the respondents gave a failing grade to the process, evaluation of results, consideration of parents' opinion, etc. In 2009, the percentage of people who gave it a failing grade was lower (22.7%), but this means that, still, about one in four people is very unsatisfied with the process. See Fig. 32 for more specific information.

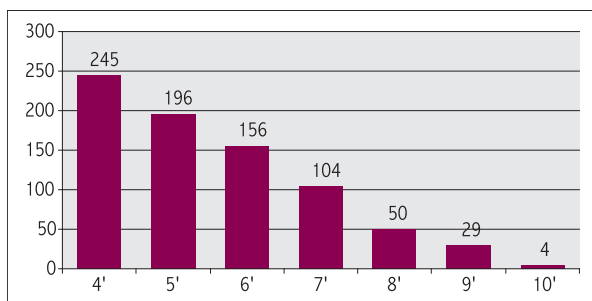
Fig. 32. Individual Education Plan



Note. The main statistical indicators are: N=669, M=5.87, SD=1.72.

Participation in sports, and artistic and cultural activities according to desire received a mean grade of 5.5, but it is noteworthy that one in three of the respondents (31.3%) feel that people with disabilities are excluded, as Fig. 33 shows. Only 10.6% (that is one person in ten) believes that the situation is good.

Fig. 33. **Participation in Sports, Artistic and Cultural Activities**

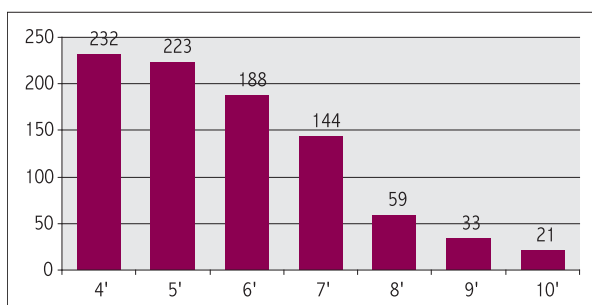


Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=784$, $M=5.52$, $SD=1.44$.

Capacity Building

The participants in the survey were asked one question related to capacity building. When asked about the degree of the satisfaction with the professional training of the people that work with people with disabilities or cover their issues in various capacities, such as teachers, social workers, day and residential care staff, staff at the municipalities, labor offices and the ministries, the respondents gave it a passing grade: 5.73, which is lower than that of the previous year (5.83). And it must also be noted that 25.7 % of the participants (i.e., one in four) gave it a failing grade as Fig. 34 illustrates.

Fig. 34. **Staff Expertise**



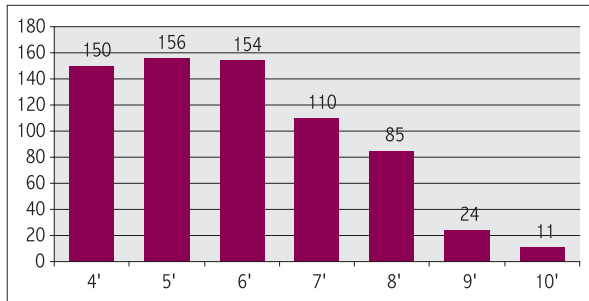
Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=901$ $M=5.73$ $SD=1.54$

Legislation, Research, Equality and Non-Discrimination

The current legislation that covers issues related to people with disabilities got a passing grade: 5.91, which is slightly lower than in 2008 (6.1). The participants were more satisfied with the number and quality of published studies in the field of disabilities in 2009 (mean grade=6.00) than in 2008 which received a mean grade of 5.36.

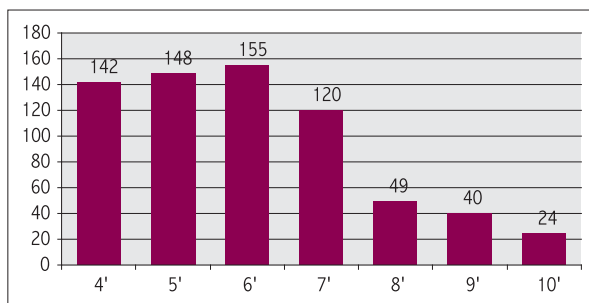
However, for both categories, there is a large number of people who were very unsatisfied with the situation. One in five (respectively 21.7% and 20.9%) gave both categories a four.

Fig. 35. Legislation



Note. The main statistical indicators are: N= 690, M= 5.91, SD=1.52.

Fig. 36. Research

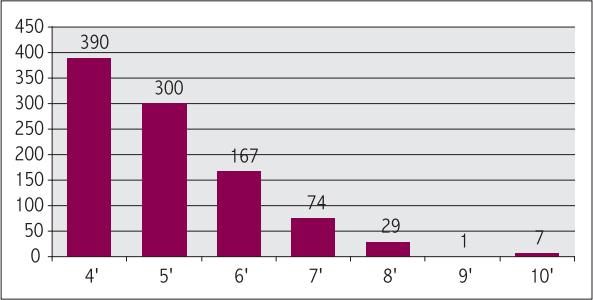


Note. The main statistical indicators are: N=678, M=6.00, SD= 1.62

A large number of respondents (40.3%) believed that people with disabilities are discriminated against and they are not treated as equals in the Albanian society and

only 4% (one in twenty respondents) have given it a good grade. This indicates that people with disabilities and their family members feel marginalized and not enough is being done to provide protection for their human rights.

Fig. 37. Equality and non-discrimination

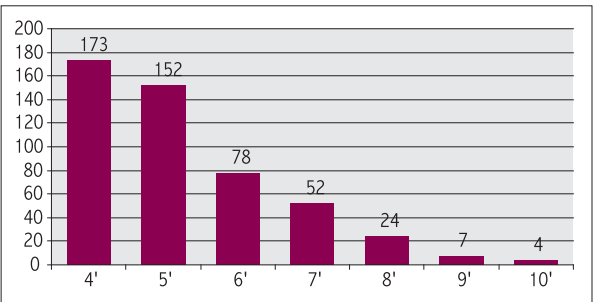


Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=968$ $M=5.05$ $SD=1.16$

One out of three of the participants (35.3%) felt that they are not considered as partners in the decision making process at day/residential care centers, and at the municipality/commune, region or ministry level and the mean grade is a mere pass: 5.26. Only 7.1%, i.e., one in 14 people gave it a good grade.

However, it must be noted that the mean grade was slightly improved in comparison to 2008, going from fail (4.84) to a mere pass (5.26). Fig. 38 provides information on all the frequency distribution of all grades.

Fig. 38. Opinion Respected in Decision Making



Note. The main statistical indicators are: $N=490$, $M=5.26$, $SD=1.32$

Comparison of Data between 2008 and 2009

The following table provides the data of statistical analysis and tests of the mean scores for 2008 and 2009. It is noteworthy that the mean score for 2009 is slightly higher than that of 2008 (the difference is 0.31). Also, the mean grades for 16 of the questions (64%) are statistically significantly higher than for the previous year, and only one indicator (4%) is statistically significantly lower. This indicates that the plan of action is working slowly, but its impact has started to be felt by the people with disabilities and their family members.

Comparison of Data between 2008 and 2009

	2008		2009		Difference between 2009 and 2008	P Value
	Mean	ST	Mean	ST		
1. How accessible is the environment in your own house to create the opportunity for you/ your family member who has visual impairments or is a wheelchair user to perform all his normal everyday functions? What grade would describe this situation?	5.12	1.21	5.60	1.39	+.480	.000*
2. What are the opportunities to use sign language at home for you/your family member with a hearing impairment? What grade would describe this situation?	5.33	1.45	5.16	1.31	-.177	.065
3. How easy is it for you/ your family member who is a wheelchair user or has a visual impairment to navigate the streets in your city and go where he/she needs to? What grade would describe this situation?	4.83	0.92	5.68	1.15	+.250	.000*
4. How accessible are the day care center/ school/ work environment for you or your family member who is a wheelchair user or	5.05	1.23	5.40	1.38	+.346	.000*

has a visual impairment? What grade would describe this situation?

5.	What are the opportunities for modified communication (for sign language, Braille, etc.) in the day care center/school/ work environment for you or your family member who is a wheelchair user or has a sensory impairment? What grade would describe this situation?	5.04	1.26	5.23	1.24	+ .188	.023*
6.	How accessible are the public and government services, such as Ministries, the offices of local government, court houses, employment offices, polling stations, etc. for you or your family member who is a wheelchair user or has a sensory impairment? What grade would describe this situation?	4.91	0.96	5.06	1.20	+ .149	.013*
7.	How easy is to for you or your family member who is a wheelchair user or has a sensory impairment to attend the various artistic, cultural and sports activities? ? What grade would describe this situation?	4.87	1.03	5.24	1.30	- .369	.000*
8.	How accessible are the health care environments such as the general practitioner's clinic, the dental clinic, the hospital for you/ your family member who is a wheelchair user? What grade would describe this situation?	5.08	1.25	5.32	1.32	+ .233	.001*
9.	What grade would describe the work done in Albania for the prenatal prevention of disabilities?	5.00	1.17	5.52	1.45	+ .520	.000*
10.	What grade would describe the work done in Albania for the early detection and treatment of children with disabilities?	5.04	1.32	5.57	1.37	+ .534	.000*

11. What grade would describe your satisfaction with the quality of health care for persons with disabilities?	5.75	1.42	5.78	1.42	+0.022	.750
12. What grade would describe the satisfaction with habilitative and rehabilitative services (such as physical and speech therapy)?	5.06	1.70	6.03	1.64	+0.175	.064
13. What grade would describe your satisfaction with the process of disability determination (the process, treatment, etc.)?	6.29	1.60	6.19	1.59	-0.095	.224
14. What grade would describe your satisfaction with the social services in residential and day care centers?	6.03	1.85	6.25	1.70	+0.218	.031*
15. What grade would describe the satisfaction with the quality of education for students with special needs (curriculum, quality of teaching, teacher's competencies, teaching aids, etc.).	5.76	1.57	5.94	1.52	+0.180	.045*
16. What grade would describe the opportunities offered by school for the inclusion of students with special needs in activities attended by their non disabled peers?	5.42	1.40	5.82	1.55	+0.398	.000*
17. What grade would describe your satisfaction with the Individual Planning in school, day care or residential settings (the formulation process, monitoring, evaluation, parent participation etc.)?	5.70	1.97	5.87	1.72	+0.167	.108
18. What grade would describe the participation of persons with disabilities in artistic, cultural and sports activities?	5.37	1.71	5.52	1.44	+0.145	.065
19. What grade would describe your satisfaction with opportunities of people with disabilities	4.90	1.35	5.33	1.26	+0.427	.000*

for vocational training at vocational schools or professional training courses?

20.	What grade would describe the opportunities for employment of people with disabilities according to their abilities?	4.86	1.32	5.55	1.43	+ .692	.000*
21.	What grade would describe your satisfaction with the existing Albanian legislation that covers issues relevant to people with disabilities?	6.01	1.60	5.91	1.52	-.098	.272
22.	What grade would describe your satisfaction with the quantity and quality of research projects in the field of disabilities?	5.35	1.59	6.00	1.62	+ .654	.000*
23.	What grade would describe the satisfaction with the preparation of personnel who work with persons with disabilities or cover their issues (teachers, social workers, residential and day care staff, municipality employees, labor office employees and experts at the ministry level)?	5.82	1.92	5.73	1.54	-.093	.266
24.	Are people with disabilities treated the same with the other Albanian citizens? What grade would best describe the situation?	4.94	1.19	5.05	1.16	+ .109	.043*
25.	Does the government at the local and central level ask for and take your suggestions in regards to issues pertaining to people with disabilities? What grade would best describe the situation?	4.84	1.26	5.26	1.32	+ .425	.000*
Total		5.29		5.6		+0.31	

Note. * Indicates that the difference is statistically significant.

Conclusion

The results of this survey show that in 2009 people with disabilities and their families still belong to a marginalized part of the Albanian society. They are poor and isolated in a society that has yet to erase the architectural and societal barriers. The medical, educational, social and employment services for them are scarce and of a poor quality, and their opinion is not respected. Most of the areas (84%) got a mere pass (5) and only four areas got a better grade of 6. These results indicate that the Action Plan has not yet been effective in considerably improving the quality of lives of people with disabilities.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Area/Institution	Persons Who Collected Information
Tirane	ADRF office
1. MLSAEO	
2. MPWTT	
3. Ministry of Health	
4. Ministry of Education and Science	
5. Ministry of the Interior	
6. National Employment Service	
7. State Social Service	
8. National Housing Body	
9. National Disability Monitor	
10. National Council on the Regulation of the Territory	
11. Ministry of Tourism Culture Youth and Sports	
12. Central Election Commission	
13. Tirana Municipality	
14. Regional Office of Social Services	
15. Regional Office of Public Health	
16. Department of Education	
17. Regional Office of the National Employment Service	
18. Local Office of the National Housing Body	
Korçe	Eftali Xoxa (ADRF)
19. Regional Office of Social Services	
20. Regional Office of Public Health	
21. Department of Education	
22. Regional Office of the National Employment Service	
23. Local Office of the National Housing Body	
24. Municipality	

Elbasan

Luiza Popja (ADRF)

25. Regional Office of Social Services
26. Regional Office of Public Health
27. Department of Education
28. Regional Office of the National Employment Service
29. Local Office of the National Housing Body
30. Municipality

Shkoder

Marita Sopi (ADRF)

31. Regional Office of Social Services
32. Regional Office of Public Health
33. Department of Education
34. Regional Office of the National Employment Service
35. Local Office of the National Housing Body
36. Municipality

Durres

Xhulieta Hasho

37. Regional Office of Social Services
38. Regional Office of Public Health
39. Department of Education
40. Regional Office of the National Employment Service
41. Local Office of the National Housing Body
42. Municipality

Vlore

Fatmira Çaçi (ADRF)

43. Regional Office of Social Services
44. Regional Office of Public Health
45. Department of Education
46. Regional Office of the National Employment Service
47. Local Office of the National Housing Body
48. Municipality
49. "Ismail Qemali" University of Vlora

Nongovernmental Organizations

50. Save the Children
51. MEDPAK
52. Social Centre "To stay together"
53. Disability organisations
53. ADRF
54. "Help the Life" Association

INFORMATION SOURCES FOR EACH AREA

I. ACCESIBILITY

1. Ministry of Health
2. Ministry of Education and Science
3. Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication
4. National Home Building State Enterprise
5. Vlore Office of National Housing Body
6. Elbasan Home Buildings State Enterprise
7. Durres Regional Office of the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication
8. Shkoder Regional Office of Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication
9. Vlore Regional Department of Health
10. Elbasan Regional Department of Health
11. Korce Regional Department of Health
12. Vlore Municipality
13. Tirana Municipality
14. Durres Municipality
15. Elbasan Municipality
16. Korce Municipality
17. Shkoder Municipality

II. SERVICES

1. Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
2. Ministry of Education and Science
3. State Social Service
4. Ministry of Health
5. Shkoder Regional Office of SSS

6. Tirane Municipality
7. Durres Municipality
8. Vlore Regional department of Health
9. Elbasan Regional Office of State Social Service
10. Elbasan Regional Department of Health
11. Korce Regional Office of State Social Service
12. Durres Hospital
13. Korce Regional Department of Health
14. Vlore Municipality
15. Vlore Regional office of State Social Service
16. Korce Municipality
17. Korce Regional Department of Education
18. Shkoder Regional Department of Health
19. Shkoder Municipality
20. ADRF
21. Center "To Stay Together"
22. MEDPAK
23. ANAD
24. Association "Help the Life"

III. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

1. Vlore Regional Office of Social Insurance
2. Ministry of Education
3. Elbasan Municipality
4. Elbasan Regional Department of Education
5. Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports
6. Vlore Regional Labor Office
7. Tirana Municipality
8. Durres Municipality
9. Shkoder Regional Department of Education
10. Shkoder Municipality
11. Vlore Regional Department of Education
12. Vlore Municipality
13. Save the Children
14. MEDPAK
15. Vodafone Albania Foundation
16. Elbasan Regional Labor Office

17. Tirane Regional Labor Office
18. Durres Regional Labor Office
19. Shkoder Regional Labor Office
20. Korce Regional Labor Office
21. Elbasan Regional Office of Social Insurance
22. Durres Regional Office of Social Insurance
23. Institute of Social Insurance
24. National Labor Service
25. Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunity
26. ADRF (Albanian Disability Rights Foundation)

IV. CAPACITY BUILDING

1. State Social Service
2. Elbasan Regional Office of SSS
3. Tirane Regional Office of SSS
4. Shkoder Regional Office of SSS
5. Korce Regional Office of Social Insurance
6. Korce Regional Office of Social Insurance
7. Vlore Regional Office of Social Insurance
8. Durres Regional Office of Social Insurance
9. Elbasan Regional Office of Social Insurance
10. Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunity
11. Disability Technical Secretariat
12. ADRF (Albanian Disability Rights Foundation)

V. LEGISLATION AND RESEARCH

1. Vlore Regional Office of Social Insurance
27. Elbasan Regional Office of Social Insurance
1. Elbasan Regional Department of Health
2. Elbasan Municipality
3. Elbasan Regional Office of Social Services
4. MEDPAK
5. Association of Albanian Invalids.
6. Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports
7. Tirana Municipality
8. Durres Regional office of Social Insurance
9. Durres Municipality

10. Korce Municipality
11. Korce Regional Department of Health
12. Korce Regional Office of Social Services
13. Korce Regional office of Social Insurance
14. Shkoder Regional Office of Social Services
15. Shkoder Regional office of Social Insurance
16. Shkoder Municipality
17. Vlore Municipality
18. Vlore Regional Department of Health
19. Vlore Regional Office of Social Services
20. National Disability Monitor
21. Ministry of Health
22. Institute of Medical Insurance
23. Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication
24. State Social Service
25. Ministry of the Interior
26. Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunity
27. National Council of Radio and Television
28. Shkoder Regional Department of Health
29. ANAD
30. Ministry of Education and Science
31. ADRF (Albanian Disability Rights Foundation)

APPENDIX II

SAMPLES OF GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK RELATED TO THE STUDY

**REPULIC OF ALBANIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
General Directorate of Pre university Policy**

**Rruga “ Durrësit”, Nr 23, AL-1001, Tirana- Albania, www.mash.gov.al,
Tel/Fax 00 355 4 22256 78**

Prot. No.2968/1 Prot

Tirana, 19.05.2009

Subject: Reply to your request

To: Albanian Disability Rights Foundation

In reply to your letter date 13.05.2009, I inform you that responsible person for the MES is Mrs Pranvera Kamani, chief of the Basic and Pre elementary Sector in the department of Curricula, Monitoring and Evaluation.

General Director
Fatmir Vejsiu

**REPULIC OF ALBANIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
Directorate of Hospital Planning**

**Boulevard "Bajram Curri", Tirana, Albania
Tel/fax. +355 42 751 37**

Prot. No.23/1 Prot

Tirana, on 23/06/2009

To: Albanian Disability Rights Foundation

In reply to your letter date 15.06.2009, where you require to appoint one responsible person for the process of evaluation and monitoring the implementation of National Strategy for People with Disabilities (NSPWD), we inform you that we have appointed Mr. Maksim Bozo, staff of the Directorate of Hospital Planning,

Thank You for your collaboration,

Director
Fedor KALLAJXHI

**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIR AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
DIRECTORATE GENERAL**

**Boulevard “Bajram Curri”, close to former hotel “Arbana”, Tirana,
Tel/Fax ++355 4 340056, +355 4 340057
www.shkp.gov.al**

Prot. No.... 1040...Prot

Tirana, on 14.05.2009

Subject: Response

To: Albanian Disability Rights Foundation

In reply to your request of the letter “Request for information on the implementation of the National Strategy for People with Disabilities (NSPWD), we inform you that Mrs. Lindita Agolli, specialist at the National Employment Service, is appointed as the representative of our institution to keep direct and regular contacts and communication with you.

For any further needs please contact at:

Tel: +355 42 340059/415

Fax + 355 42 362236

e-mail: lindaagolli@yahoo.com

General Deputy Director
Spiro Kuro