

## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN 2010



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OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY ON PEOPLE  
WITH DISABILITIES IN 2010

**MONITORING REPORT**

Tirana 2011

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRF	Albanian Disability Rights Foundation
AlbVet	Albanian VET Support Program
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disability
DDCA	Disability and Development Coalition Albania
HII	Health Insurance Institute
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
SII	Social Insurance Institute
M	Mean
KMCAP/ MCDAW	Medical Commission to Determine the Ability to Work
MEDPAK	Protection of the Rights of People with Disabilities
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoLSAEO	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
MPWTT	Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication
N	Number
NPO	Non-Profit Organizations
NSPD	National Strategy of People with Disabilities
SD	Standard Deviation
SSS	State Social Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
RDNES	Regional Department of National Employment Service
RDPVT	Regional Department of Public Vocational Training
RED	Regional Education Department
NHA	National Housing Agency
MH	Ministry of Health
ILO	International Labor Organization

TAC	Territorial Adjustment Council
PHD	Public Health Department
UHCT	University Hospital Center of Tirana
NCQSA-HI	National Center of Quality, Safety and Accreditation of Health Institutions
NES	National Employment Service
IED	Individual Education Plan
UNFPA	United Nations Food Program Albania
EO	Education Office
CEC	Central Election Commission
NCRT	National Council of Radio and Television

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reflects the results of monitoring the National Strategy for People with Disabilities for the year 2010, through analyzing the progress of the work of responsible actors for implementing the objectives of this Strategy.

The data collected in six regions of the country, Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra, Vlora, Elbasan and Korça make the bases of the report. Data collection was done through conduct of two surveys. The first survey collected information through public officials in the institutions, responsible actors at central and local level, on the progress made for implementing the measures in each area of the action plan. 151 questionnaires were distributed in institutions, filled by people officially appointed by the heads of their respective institutions. Shortages in this information source were completed by data secured through contacts, direct interviews, official documents of the institution and information collected from internet and media publications.

In a second survey, in the same districts, people with disabilities and their family members total of 1025 participants( 45.9% female), were requested to assess their situation in relation to the five areas of the National Action Plan, through use of qualitative and quantitative questionnaires.

Results of the study indicate 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 2010 statistics speak about a total number of beneficiaries of 114.352 people with disabilities and 16,598 carers who in 2010 have benefited 12.267.954 Allëkë<sup>1</sup> from the state budget.

With regards to services, data of 2010 show an increase in the number of beneficiaries from services offered in day care and residential centers. The actual number of beneficiaries from these services is 2147. If this figure is compared to that of 2009, there is an increase in number equal to 559 people. It is noticed increase in the typology of

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<sup>1</sup> [www.mpcs.gov.al](http://www.mpcs.gov.al).

services offered by these centers and an orientation towards a model of community centers or establishment of home-care services. There is some progress made in the establishment of new social services for people with disabilities although the number does not yet meet all the needs of the community of people with disability. There is a progress identified in these centers with regards to establishment of multidisciplinary teams for assessment especially in the case of disabled children.

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; priority was given to extend the list of medicines treating severe illnesses causing disability; the level of demand to build accessible health centers increased.

Positive steps have been made in the area of health care services. The contract that has to be signed every year with the family doctor based on the order issued by Health Insurance Institute, foresees the obligation for home visits and all other related support by the doctor at home for people with disability; the list of medicines includes drugs that treat very serious illnesses that cause disability; there is an increased demand and attention towards construction of accessible health care centers and hospitals.

Progress steps are made in the area of improvement of legislation to guarantee an accessible and barrier free environment, this has encouraged the emergence of changes in construction projects and their implementation. Schools continue to be constructed to enable a barrier free entrance as well as other accessibility elements including elevators. The Municipality of Tirana is implementing a complete project consisting of construction of 390 ramps, built in the pavements in the main cross-roads. This progress is noticed in other cities too; planning for parking places for people with disability are in process; the National Housing Agency has included elements of accessibility in its typical project designs and it's implementing them in all constructions financed by the NHA; Municipality of Saranda is implementing a project financed by state budget consisting on creating a mode of accessible traffic lights. There is an increase in the number of accessible buses in the city of Tirana. In general there is an increased awareness and noticed attention in all the cities towards not allowing barriers in the new buildings/constructions.

The Drafting of the new Law on Pre – University Education, is considered as one of

the major achievements of Ministry of Education and Science, as a law that takes into consideration support of best contemporary experiences to implement inclusive education for children with disability in ordinary schools. In cooperation with other actors of civil society and basically with Save the Children, in 2010 MES has continued the process of integration of children with disability in ordinary kindergartens and schools.

In an effort to implement the respective measures of NSPD Action Plan, MES has been working to increase the number of integrated kindergartens and schools in national level. In 2010, MES has identified children with disability who are attending the ordinary primary education in national level, based on disability categories.

The project implemented by Save the Children, on inclusive education has enabled piloting of new elements in support of inclusion of children with disability in ordinary schools. The psychological service is included in kindergartens and schools in 36 districts of the country in order to increase the quality of service offered to children; specialised services have been created in special schools for teaching of autistic children.

There is progress with regards to identification of people with disability as job-seekers; data from NES show there is an increased awareness by the responsible structures on the obligations that stem from the legal and policy framework to promote employment and vocational training for people with disability. RDNES in some regions report to have taken concrete actions to influence employment and vocational training for people with disability.

Essential development has been noticed in the area of disability legislation. The Law on Protection against Discrimination was approved and the Commission on Legal Aid has been established. Secondary legislation is under process to enable implementation of the law on Legal Aid. The process of signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability has influenced responsible structures to undertake initiatives related to changes in legislation as well as in country practice in this area. So, in cooperation and with the support of UNDP, MOLSAEO is working in the area of assessment and review of the legislation in the field of disability under the principles and standards outlined in the CRPD, so as to plan necessary intervention to enable comply of legislation with the CRPD. Important secondary legislation have been adopted, which benefit also the category of people with disability, related to transport, barrier free environment,

communication or standards of care for children and youth including those with disability. Another positive initiative, is that related to the change of article 35 of the Law on Social Insurance, on the possibility to get rid of the current statement on non-appealing right to the final decision of the Supreme MCDAW, a proposal that is with the Parliament to get approved.

Although these positive steps have been identified, the level of implementation of NSPD is not at the desired level. Out of 95 measures, 41% mark some progress, 18 measures are well implemented, of those only 3 measures completely fulfilled. 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.

There are still insufficient measures for early disability prevention, and many of the rehabilitation services for people with disabilities are lacking – the number of service centers is still insufficient – there are 54 centers of which 17 are public and 37 are non-public and they don't still cover geographically all the territory in the country. The architectural barriers still hinder people with disabilities to live normally in their homes, to move, to go to school, to work and participate in 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 whom said they feel isolated and excluded.

Financing of supportive infrastructure for ordinary schools to assist teaching of students with disability remains problematic. The report identifies the need to review the teaching programs in special schools to respond to the specific needs of students with disability. Lack of transport and especially lack of accessible transport is considered as obstacle to attendance of the teaching process in regular and special schools by children with disability from rural areas in the country.

Still the number of employed people with disability is almost inconsiderable in

proportion to the total number of unemployed jobseekers. RDNES need to reconstruct their activity to enable consistent services of counseling, orientation and integration in vocational training and labor market for people with disability. Lack of national employment fund continues to hinder the development of subsidizing policy for the employment entities, to influence and promote employment of people with disability in accordance with their specific needs. The report indicates that there is no significant progress in the area of vocational training for people with disability. There is a need to assess the activity of vocational training centers aiming to enable that people with disability actively benefit from their activity. Employment of people with disability still remains a critical issue for people with disability themselves as well as for their family members, a challenge for all responsible actors in central and local level.

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 for Determining the Ability to Work (KMCAP) continues to focus on medical needs rather than on a multidisciplinary approach.

On the other hand, the results of this survey show that in 2010 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.

Most of measures (76%) have been given a mere passing grade (5) with only 6 areas being given a slightly higher grade, 6. These results show that the Action Plan of NSPD is still not made efficient to bring about a significant improvement in the quality of life for people with disability and their family members.

NSPD is the framework of the governmental policies to resolve the disability issues. The recommendations in every area of NSPD dictate deep changes for more responsibility from the institutions, and the need to speed up the actions and accountability for the achieved results.

A special priority recommendation relates to the necessity to review the Action Plan of the NSPD, with the aim to redesign it, because the actual situation with regards

to responsible actors, timelines and incomplete budgets, creates increasing obstacles in years towards its implementation. This intervention becomes more imperative under the obligation of bringing all policy and legislation in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability, human rights framework already signed and it's on the way to ratification by the Albanian State.

## 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.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 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 fourth 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.

This fourth monitoring report, analyses the progress in 2010, based on reporting from the responsible institutions in central and local level, and through its recommendations, it aims to make a reform in its activity measures and in the way they are implemented and monitored, nowadays to be in compliance with the lines of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability.

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 restricted”<sup>3</sup>. This definition observes the WHO recommendations.

During 2010, there were 114,352 people with disabilities and 16.598 carers who had the right to benefit from the governmental payment schemes for the disability.

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<sup>3</sup> National Strategy on People with Disabilities, English version, p. 7.

Table 1 specifies the categories that the Albanian legislation considers as beneficiaries of this assistance.

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

<b>Type of Disability</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>PwD</b>	<b>Carers</b>
I. PwD born or becoming disabled for reasons other than work	76.975	61,887	15.098
a) mental, sensory and physical	53.783	46.281	7.502
b) blind	15.410	11.635	3.775
c) paraplegic and tetraplegic	7.792	3.971	3.821
II. Invalids	53.965	52.465	1.500
a) labour invalids	53.391	51.891	1.500
b) war Invalids	574	574	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>130.950</b>	<b>114.352</b>	<b>16.598</b>

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, second and third report of this kind and this is the fourth 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. A working group was created to conduct the survey. The working group consisted of five experts with expertise in various areas such as construction, legislation, special education, vocational training, employment and social services. There was close collaboration with local networks. 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.

### **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 year 2010, 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 February-April 2010. A total of 151 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 2010 happened?	DON'T KNOW <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROGRESS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/>
Has somebody or a working group been appointed to follow this issue?	DON'T KNOW <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROGRESS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/>
Has an Action Plan been formulated with deadlines for each measure?	DON'T KNOW <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROGRESS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/>
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.

Again we faced with the situation where 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, Durres, Vlore, Shkoder, Korça and Elbasan.

The study was conducted parallel to the first survey during March-April 2010. 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 1025 people participated in the survey; 571 (55.7%) were people with disabilities and 454 (44.3%) were their family members (parents, sisters and brothers). Both genders were represented in the study, with a slight overrepresentation of males (n=555, 54.1%). The people with disabilities were of various age groups and needed different levels of support; they also represented various disability categories.



## AREA I: ACCESSIBILITY

The first area of the Action Plan of the National Strategy on People with Disabilities is “Life free of barriers”. This area includes two objectives, together with measures for their implementation, aimed at removing the existing barriers, and avoiding emergence of new ones related to:

- 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.
- 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 2010, 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 2010 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.

*Responsible Institution:* MoPWTT

#### *Findings:*

According to the MoPWTT, measures are being taken towards legal improvements in terms of providing housing for persons with disabilities, in line with the problems and issues that were encountered in the course of the implementation of the existing legislation.

The National Housing Agency (NHA) has included as part of its working objectives introduction of elements of accessibility, as part of the standard housing prototypes, which are being implemented in several districts in the country. NHA also points out that there are plans for introducing ramps at the entrance of the buildings, with non slipper material, and with supportive and protective railings. There is also an elevator with capacity for 4

persons, with the necessary signs and control buttons placed at a convenient slot for persons with disabilities. In the course of 2010 were reviewed the project designs for four types of buildings. Meanwhile around the building blocks have been placed benches, and parking slots for wheelchair users. NHA also clarifies that the buildings built in the course of 2010 were funded by the funds of the National Housing Agency. NHA however points out to lack of cooperation from the local government units (LGUs) in order to adapt in details the flats that are planned for persons with disabilities. NHA is in the process of calculation of the necessary costs in the existing objects build by the NHA.

Also, the regional directorate of NHA in Shkodër points out that all the buildings built by the NHA are equipped with ramps and elevators, but that is as far as it goes to the level of accessibility.

### **Status: Some progress**

*Together with my parents, we lived for more than ten years in a single room where there was absolutely no way for me to fit the wheelchair. One of our relatives offered us to live in a rented flat, with a lot more space from what we had. We moved there, and before the works were completed, I used to dream everyday of the day when these works would be over, and I would be able to ride in the elevator, and finally be able to go out of the house and move in my wheelchair.*

*My dream remained but a dream, locked in the seventh floor of the building where I live, since the narrow space of the elevator could in no way fit my wheelchair.*

**F.A. 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.

*Responsible Institution:* (a) MoPWTT; (b) local government units

Findings:

MoPWTT does not provide any information about the implementation of this measure, since it considers it to be a responsibility of the local government units.

MoES points out that in the planned public funds for schools are also included funds for construction of accessibility elements, but it does not specify how much of these funds are tailored for 2010.

The municipality of Tirana reports that in the course of 2010, any investment was in line with the construction norms that guarantee removal of barriers. The municipality of Tirana has provided for funds, and it has launched radical interventions in the sidewalks of the capital. The purpose of these interventions is to make them accessible for persons with physical disability (mobility restrictions) and visual impairment. The municipality of Korça reports to have introduced ramps in the sidewalks of the main crossroads, but funds are part of an overall project, without breaking them down in specific terms. The municipality of Elbasan also reports about the introduction of ramps in schools, and sidewalks as part of different projects, but without proper planning from the public funds. The municipality of Durrës reports that some apartment building blocks, in the vicinity of the kindergarten 'Sotir Noka', and some schools have already become accessible.

**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:*

MoPWT did not provide any data regarding the implementation of this measure.

The project "An accessible Tirana" is being implemented for 6 years, and is an ongoing project. A phase of the project regarding "Accessible parking spots and crossroads for persons with disabilities" is already complete. This project has enabled parking for persons with disabilities in 35 points in the city of Tirana, with 52 parking slots.

Surveys in Tirana indicated that there is need for a lot more of attention as regards measures for the prevention of new constructions with barriers. The changes are visible and tangible in the new constructions. The municipality of Tirana reports that the new facilities of the schools, kindergartens, social centers are planned in line with accessibility

elements. The municipality of Tirana has started radical interventions in the sidewalks of the capital. The objective is to make the sidewalks accessible for the wheelchair users. The Directorate of Transports and Mobility in the municipality of Tirana confirms the ongoing works for building 390 ramps in the sidewalks of the capital. The whole intervention is part of a very important project for multi-modal transportation, which is being implemented since some time now by the municipality of Tirana. According to this project, the road axes are being divided according to their users, giving them the possibility to have and use their own space, for the vehicles, buses, bicycles and the pedestrians<sup>4</sup>.

The action plan of the local strategy for people with disabilities for the region of Durrës drafted in 2010 includes a separate area about accessibility, with concrete objectives and measures for implementation, accompanied with a package of concrete interventions and projects, with budget lines for interventions in the existing social objects. The municipality of Vlora has included the issues of disability in its Plan for Sustainable Urban Development of the city. MEDPAK association points to the fact that they are lobbying with the local government units to make all new roads and facilities accessible for persons with disabilities. However, monitoring of project implementation is not at the appropriate level, which in turn does not provide for the appropriate accessibility and leads to failure of the functioning of the proper independent mobility of persons with disabilities. There is not yet proper attention being devoted to the elimination of barriers in order to guarantee building accessibility in the health care facilities, in the shopping malls and entertainment facilities. Many of the central and local governmental institutions are failing to take measures towards ensuring accessibility of their institutions, through installment of disability accessories.



Ramps in the sidewalks of Tirana

**Status: Good progress**

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<sup>4</sup> [www.tirana.gov.al](http://www.tirana.gov.al).

*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 Ministry of Health (MoH), all hospitals in Tirana (with the exception of the obstetric – gynecologic hospital “Mbretresha Geraldine”) are equipped with elevators, and other accessibility accessories. The Sector of Investments under the Financial Planning Directorate in the MoH reports that it is following from close the progress of the process. For every new planned construction both at the hospital level, and at the health care centers there has to be an approval by the Ministry of Health, to make sure that this construction meets the standards outlined in the town planning/urban regulation in terms of ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities. Accessibility funds are part of the overall project fund for hospital facilities which are either being reconstructed, or being built from scratch. The budget for 2010 did not provide for accessibility or supportive 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.  
*Responsible institutions:* Local government units (LGUs)

*Findings:*

According to the MoH, in the course of 2010 work has continued in several objects/facilities, but failing to specifically assign funds for investments, has hindered the completion of hospital facilities, in line with the European standards. In the hospital of Elbasan work is underway for completing the surgery and obstetrics-gynecology service. The bidding value was a total of 352 million lek (out of 370 million lek which was the initial limit fund). During 2010, were funded approximately 120 million lek, while for 2011 are allocated an additional 140 million lek for the continuation of works. The project has provided for the installation of an elevator, the ramp etc. In the hospital of Saranda the ramp has already been introduced. Work is underway also in Shkodra, and it is expected that sometime during September-October 2011, the construction of the ward for acute diseases will be complete. Concomitantly, work is underway for the organization of the

tender regarding supplies/equipment and refurbishment of this ward. During 2010, works continued for the reconstruction of the out-patient clinic in Korça. The reconstruction of the out-patient clinics in Peshkopia and Gjirokastra has not yet been done because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy has not approved the tendering procedures, thus their construction is pending (these two out-patient clinics will be constructed with loans from Cooperazione Italiana, and it is precisely this institution that will organize the tenders).

**Status: Some progress**

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

*Responsible institutions:* MoLSAEO/ State/National Employment Service

*Findings:*

According to MoLASEO, the vocational training centers in Fier and Durrës have already been made accessible; in Gjirokastra and Shkodra reduced and adopted training programs and labs have also been done. In addition the mobile vocational training center has been properly equipped. Only Center No 4 of vocational training in Tirana has been already made accessible. The Regional Directorate of Public Vocational Training in Korça reports that the building provides access through an elevator to reach the cabinets of its different floors. The Regional Directorate of Public Vocational Training in Elbasan reports that at its entrance now there is a ramp, and the building provides access to two accessible toilets.

**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 institutions:* Ministry of Education and Sciences (MoES)

*Findings:*

MoES does not provide detailed information regarding accessible schools and kindergartens during 2010.

The municipality of Tirana during the process for the reconstruction of kindergartens and schools continues to focus on elements of their accessibility. There is no separate budget item for them, but it is part of the overall budget for the facility. According to Tirana municipality all new facilities of schools, kindergartens, and social centers include the elements of accessibility. During 2010, a new school was built in Shkozë, an integrated kindergarten in Shkozë (kindergarten-nursery) and one kindergarten in the area called Fusha e Aviacionit. All of these are accessible for people with disabilities, within the framework of the project "Tirana without barriers".

**Status: Some progress**

*Measure 1.2ë.* 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.

*Responsible institutions:* (a) MoPWTT ; (b) local government unit

*Findings:*

The experts of MoPWTT who responded to the questionnaires were not aware regarding progress in terms of implementation of this measure. The same situation was true also for the municipalities of Tirana, Vlora, Durrës, Korça and Shkodra. Furthermore, the municipalities do not recognize this as being part of their responsibilities, even though it is a common obligation with CEC, as determined in the Electoral Code/article 103.

The responsibility for enabling accessibility of the ballot centers remains with the central elections commission. CEC took some positive steps in terms of producing accessible voting instruments for blind persons and in terms of making accessible some ballot centers in Tirana for the parliamentary elections of June 28, 2009. But this stopped up to the introduction and installment of 26 temporary ramps, which were removed immediately following the end of the electoral process), in 24 schools and health centers in Tirana covering 72 ballot centers located in these facilities. The obligation remains to measure the level of accessibility, and to improve on it in all ballot centers countrywide, pursuing the process of ensuring gradual accessibility in all of them.

A new multi-functional center established by the municipality of Tirana, called TEN

led to full accessibility of the center for people with disabilities.

The construction of the building of the Court for Serious Crimes in Tirana ended in 2010. The court building meets the accessibility standards for people with disabilities.

In 2010, the judicial district court of Korça was made fully accessible for people with mobility impairment.

**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.

*Responsible institution:* MoPWT

*Findings:*

According to MoPWT, there is no organized process for ensuring road transportation means, and that no funds are allocated for the implementation of this measure. Meanwhile, they report that a responsible person has been assigned to this end, and there is the necessary budget for the implementation of measures for changes in railroad transportation.

MoPWT reiterates the importance of building an inter-urban and international terminal in Tirana. The study to this end has been carried out by the Institute for Transport Studies. During the construction of this terminal will be considered all elements of accessibility for people with disabilities.

The documentation for the definition of procedures of accessibility and utilization of individual means of transport for people with disabilities is complete.

The municipality of Tirana reports that during 2010 as well, subjects which were licensed in the provision of public transportation had to make available accessible means of transportation. A fleet of 35 new/additional buses were added to the urban lines of Tirana during 2010, with elements of accessibility for people with disabilities and during 2011 plans are for this number to increase. In the municipality of Durrës there are no accessible means of within city transportation, while the spots have been marked with signs indicating slots for people with disabilities.

**Status: Some progress**

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

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

*Findings:*

MoPWTT reports that there is in place no organized process for ensuring accessible signage for people with visual impairment, as regards road transportation, and furthermore there are no funds planned to this end.

Tirana municipality reports that it is working on road sign interventions for people with disabilities. Alongside, it is also working for allocating the necessary budget to this end. This is one of the priorities of the municipality, and is envisaged to take place very soon. The city of Saranda, which falls within the region of Vlora, will soon introduce in the streets of the city acoustic traffic lights for blind people, thus making Saranda the first city in the country where blind people will be able to find the road on their own. For this project, lek 500 thousand were allocated from the state budget of 2010, which covers the installation value. This project will help replace the existing traffic lights with acoustic traffic lights in the city. MEDPAK research/resource center is accessible for people with visual and hearing impairments; bells have been installed for people with visual impairment, while lights have been installed for people with hearing impairment.

**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.

*Responsible institutions:* NPOs

*Findings:*

The Association of Blind People of Albania provides this service through its National Center for Rehabilitation of Persons with Visual Impairment. This center is partially financed from the state budget. The center has a collection of books, among them textbooks, fiction, selected scientific publications, and audio books which are available for blind persons at any time. This association also runs a printing house which publishes *Brail*

*publications*. The service for Brail publications, which represents the fundamental type of literature for blind people, including textbooks solely for the purposes of the students of the school is also provided by the Institute of Students with Visual Impairment. The Institute prints for its own needs 619 textbooks in Brail for blind students/students who have lost their sight, and an additional amount of textbooks with big letters for students with partial lost of sight, but it cannot meet all of its needs. For the publications, the Institute has the support of the state budget and donors who have offered assistance with materials and equipments for the publication. It is therefore necessary to enhance the technical expertise and update the printing technology.

**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 equipped with accessible physical infrastructure for wheelchair users. A problem continues to be the inability of persons of disabilities to apply for ID cards and passports because the offices are not physically accessible for them.

In addition, none of the public offices have sign language interpreters, and none of the government reports is printed in Brail.

There is one example provided by the district court of Pogradec where they hired a sign language interpreter in a court case including a person with hearing impairment. A positive step in this regard is that courts can now hire against payment sign language interpreters for all needs of people with hearing impairment. NGOs report that they have endorsed the implementation of this measure, but the local government units have not expressed any interest.

The Albanian National Association of Deaf is continuing training of sign language interpreters, with the support of the donors, but however none of these sign language interpreters has been engaged in interpretation services for people with disabilities in public offices. MEDPAK reports that it has worked for including in mainstream education children with hearing and visual impairment. For the children with visual impairment, MEDPAK has trained a teacher to assist them in Braille writing and to assist them

during classes, as well as helping other teachers understand the homework that they write in Braille ( the school under the name of “Genc Leka”, in Librazhd). For the children with hearing impairment, MEDPAK has organized trainings of parents, and classmates of children with hearing impairment, in teaching them how to use sign language, by using the Albanian sign language dictionary produced by ANAD.

**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:*

ANAD reports that the news edition of 10 minutes, launched with the initiative of MoLASEO and ANAD during 2008, and broadcasted in the Albanian Public Television is accompanied by sign language interpretation. This initiative continued in the course of 2010 as well. This service is paid out of the state budget. But this is a single edition, and there is as yet no strategy at the country level for the implementation of this measure.

**Status: Some progress**

**DISCUSSION**

This general overview is an indication of progressive steps in terms of accomplishment of the first objective of the National Action Plan of the National Strategy on People with Disabilities: “To ensure a life without barriers for people with disabilities, while gradually removing the existing architectural, urban and transportation barriers, and to prevent the emergence of new barriers”. But these steps are way too slow. In only one measure there is good progress noted (at 10%), while in the rest of other measures there has been somewhat progress (90%). It worth pointing out however, that where progress has been noted it is in the most important points. The table below is a summary of progress for each of the measures of this objective:

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

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
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.	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.	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.	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.	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.	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.	Ministry of Education and Sciences	Some progress
1.2ë. 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.	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.	MOPWTT	Some progress
1.4. Introducing accessible road signs for persons with visual and hearing impairments.	MOPWTT Local government unit	Some progress

The results of the implementation of the measures of the second objective of the Action Plan of the National Strategy on People with Disabilities: “Use of modern technologies for the gradual elimination of information barriers for persons with disabilities” demonstrate an increasing interest of NGOs, as well as their serious concern and involvement in this area. On the other hand though, the results are an indication of very low interest on the part of the central and local government administrations.

However, the small progressive steps are an indication of the beginning of a change. Assigning NGOs responsibilities in the context of the Action Plan, without financial support from the government or failing of the government to meet its obligation continues to leave the non-governmental organizations in an absurd situation since they do not have the financial resources, nor the decision-making power to foster the implementation of these measures. The implementation of these measures will be possible only thanks to joint efforts of local government units, other state institutions and the NGOs, while instituting concrete and clear relations among the parties.

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

Measure	Responsible institutions	Progress Status for 2010
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.	NGOs	Good progress
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.	NGOs	No progress
Ensure cooperation with the electronic media so that the news editions are also broadcasted in sign language	NGOs	Some progress

The little progress observed in this area of the Action Plan in the course of 2010 is distributed at the central and at the local level. Few progressive changes were made by the Ministry of Health, MoPWTTT, MoLSAEO, but however not at the appropriate level – the steps are still way too slow. At the central level, there has been continued progress on the part of Tirana municipality, but however not with the pace expected by a capital city. Some other municipalities have also made certain steps, which are however not at all sufficient.

In some instances, even when there are achievements regarding respecting the measures they are not in line with accepted standards. The information that comes from the local government units is very scarce. A part of the information also comes from media sources. This is one of the indicators that demonstrates that there has been very little or no work at all regarding the implementation of the National Strategy on People with Disabilities, in terms of life without barriers. Another aspect could be related with the fact that even when there is work being done the data are not collected and therefore reflected. An influencing factor in this aspect is that there are not yet in place the responsible local structures for monitoring the implementation of the National disability strategy, or even when they exist they very often are not recognized by the heads of the institutions (meaning they are unaware as to their existence). This becomes clear, while they assign a person to collect the data, who has no idea in the area; this becomes obvious also through the many

responses given as “ I am not aware of...”. There are also important gaps identified in terms of identification of information within the same institution –even when there are results they are not made known. The information contained in the web pages of the central and local level institutions is not updated. At the local level there is very little information and expertise that would enable the implementation of this objective. One of the reasons that has adversely impacted the implementation of the commitments could be lack of proper coordination between the central and local levels. In addition, the local staffs are slow and lack the expertise in getting updated with the legal changes, and therefore with the responsibilities deriving from them. Lack of funding which should have been planned and properly allocated to ensure accessibility at the central and local levels does not make possible planning and monitoring of its implementation. Meanwhile, the action plan of the national disability strategy has kept moving astray in terms of being current regarding responsible actors, measures for the implementation of objectives and timeframes. This is an ongoing obstacle in the process of its implementation and monitoring.

## **RECOMANDATIONS**

The above mentioned results show shortcomings in realizing them for reasons mentioned and repeated every year during the monitoring process and no measures taken for improvement. This dictates the need for a series of recommendations for the state institutions both at the central and local level, responsible for the implementation of this area of the National Action Plan: Its necessary and really imperative to intervene to review the action plan of the NSPD, as its current status with regards to responsible actors, timeframes and incomplete budgets as well as its incoherence with the current development in this area, consist an obstacle/hindrance for its implementation. This intervention becomes more important under the framework of adopting legislation to be in line with the currently country signed UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability, which at the moment is in its way to being ratified.

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 priority policies, concrete objectives for implementation in the area of NSPD for building a barrier free environment.
- To guide the responsible structures of every other line ministry involved in this area.

- To design efficient mechanisms to monitor 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 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 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, to initiate 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 Labour Socail Affairs and equal Opportunities, Ministry of Education and Sciences, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Interior(Local Government) 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,
  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 voting centers, develop a data base with relevant data and run cost estimates in order to include them in the draft budgets for the coming 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, (including Life without Barriers), 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: (d) to define strengthening of monitoring mechanisms of the NSPD, through restructuring and increasing of its capacities including the area of responsibilities to realize a “Life without Barriers”.

## AREA II. SERVICES

For this section of the Action Plan of the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities provides us with 21 measures. The responsibility for implementation of these measures fall on different institutions. The areas where these measures will be implemented deal with areas such as, social services and community health care. The responsible actors are central government institutions and also institutions of local government. It's worth mentioning in this section the special role that organizations should play in providing with various services for the category of persons with disabilities.

Objectives, which then are converted into specific measures, are as follows:

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 following results are obtained through the information received from the institutions, responsible for implementation of these measures and through interviews or other official sources.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF TASKS FOR 2010, 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.

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

#### *Findings:*

The assessment or commissioning of PwD which basically defines the right to receive a disability payment, is accomplished through Medical Commission for Assessment of the Capability to Work (MCACW). This assessment is based totally in a medical model. People with disabilities are considered as patients and treated as such; their economic, social, psychological situation is not taken into consideration.

This commission also doesn't consider the needs for rehabilitation, the need for education or vocational rehabilitation, etc. The measures provided in this section have as ultimate goal the transformation of this commission into a multidisciplinary commission, which determines the real needs for recovery, rehabilitation and finally for integration of persons with disabilities.

MoLSAEO has taken an initiative to change the structure of MCACW, but it has not yet taken the form of a decision. Reforming MCACW means among other, also an assessment of people with disabilities, based on International Classification on

Functioning (ICF). MoH reports that ICF is still in the stage of translation, to be formalized at a later stage.

What has been reported by this ministry, related to the work done in this direction, is the continuation of services offered in the Center for Development and Growth of Children, which serves as a center for preventive, diagnostic and training center, development and rehabilitation of children aged 0-8 years. Fund available for this center for 2010 was 6 million leke.

Ministry of Health reports that, each year, through investments increasingly large, is modernizing diagnostic technologies and has greatly expanded the number of medical devices in this center and also in health centers.

It should be emphasized that assessment of the children in this center, remains exclusively an internal assessment of the center. This assessment doesn't have to do with the one made by MCACW in the general context of reform that should be undertaken under this action plan.

The other central institution responsible, the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities reports the establishment of multidisciplinary commissions in accordance with approved Regulation on Standards for persons with disabilities by the Council of Ministers No. 821/2006 and guidance nr 1730, dated 27.08.2010.

This guidance released in 2010 is pursuant to Decree No. 821 and refers to the implementation of standards of social care services for persons with disabilities in residential and daycare centers. MoLSAEO reports that for 2010 the budget is specified on services for people with disabilities, established and administered by local government units<sup>6</sup>. MoLSAEO also reports of a series of initiatives for the reform of MCACW. These initiatives so far have remained at suggestions level, as mentioned above, and have not been put into effect.

### **Status: Some progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* Ministry of Health

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<sup>6</sup> Law on the State Budget, Anex 5

*Findings:*

This measure is considered completed since 2007, the year, which marked the establishment of the Laboratory of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetic Analysis Laboratory Obstetric Gynecological Hospital of Tirana.

There hasn't been obtained any information on the number and type of the examinations, carried out for 2010.

Since the mode of financing has changed, the hospitals are currently self-funding centers and manage their budget, so it should be the directors of these centers, the managers of maternity Hospital, to plan funds to purchase various kits, to ensure the well 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

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

*Findings:*

Ministry of Health reports in this respect no developments. The budget of the medical genetics laboratory is not allocated specifically, but is under the general operational expenses of University Hospital Center of Tirana. Currently, with the accomplishment of the health reform, the budget of the operational expenses goes through the Health Insurance Institute, which also monitors this activity. MoH in these conditions can not be pronounced on the costs of the genetics laboratory. There hasn't been received any information from HII.

**Status: No 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.

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

*Findings:*

MoH reports that there haven't been carried out studies or research on minimizing the risk of incurred disability. From reporting results that lack of funds, but also of human resources in this field, is the main obstacle for implementing this measure. MoH simultaneously stresses that the work is oriented more in stimulating doctors and students of the faculty of medicine for professional capacity building through the studies and scientific projects.

Another institution responsible for implementation of this measure is the Ministry of Education and Science. MDS states that there were no specific studies, researches, or undertaken measures to minimize born disability, while in terms of preparation of newsletters and materials on the growth of children, responds positively.

Thus, in cooperation with Save the Children, in particular the pilot projects "All Inclusive Education", MES and the respective Regional Education Directorates of project, have strongly supported the implementation of support materials for teachers working with children with disabilities. Save the Children, in this context has published and distributed several packages: for teachers "How to recognize the difficulties of pupils", for parents "Practical Tips" and the publication "School for All".

**Status: Some progress**

**Health and Social Services**

*Measure 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

*Responsible institutions:* (a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities/State Social Service; (b) Social Insurance Institute; (c) Local Government Units

*Findings:*

MOLSAEO responds positively regarding the establishment and provision of new services for people with disabilities. Thus, there have been reported 3 new day care centers in Shkodra, Kukes and Fier. It has also been established a new shelter in

Rreshen. There are reported two pilot services in home care in two regions, Tirana and Shkodra. These pilot services supported by UNICEF, an initiative that had the preparatory phase in previous years, have already begun to be implemented. MOLSAEO states that in the services provided, what is very important for 2010, is the diversity in the new types of services provided for people with disabilities, such as homecare service, caretaking services of children with disabilities, specialized services for people with physical disabilities, services for autism, as the set up in the development center in Shkoder in the non-public center in Tirana, etc.

According to SSS, the main obstacle in the development of services is the unfinished process of decentralization and lack of social fund of the local units.

The Regional Social Insurance Office of Vlora reports the establishment of new centers in psychiatric hospitals and day care services in homecare are nearby these hospitals. The Regional Social Insurance Office Durres responds negatively on setting up new services in these institutions.

Some of the larger municipalities in the country report to start working towards the establishment of new services. Thus, the Municipality of Tirana reported that the work is still in process. In Tirana during 2010, namely in municipal unit no. 6 is set up a service for children with autism. This service consists in making available a space-room equipped with necessary equipment for teaching tools. Meanwhile, the Municipality of Shkodra and Elbasan report no new initiatives in this regard. Municipality of Vlora states that work on the development of services is in process and specifically we are working to open a day center, but gives no detailed information. Municipality of Elbasan confirms the existing center Balash in the city of Elbasan and also a number of foreseen projects to enrich the center with services or activities.

#### Vodafone Albania Foundation

*Within the program "World of Difference" of the Foundation Albania Vodafone, was finalized in 2010 the project of a winner, engineer with disability, which raised awareness of the specialists and the community in building barrier-free environments among the community of developers and architects, among students in the faculties of the building and nearby municipalities in several cities throughout the country. Vodafone Albania Foundation reached out further attention to the problems of disability, through "World of Difference" continuing support during 2010 with two other winners, people with disabilities in motion and sight. One of the*

*winner, S. L. comes up with an idea to run an awareness campaign for the rights of persons with disabilities. This initiative aimed at raising the awareness of institutional, social, and legal media in order to affect the improvement of the lives of these persons as well as their full integration into society. Therefore, she is organizing meetings with various representatives of civil society and key figures in 10 cities in Albania: Burrel, Shkodra, Lezha, Durrës, Fier, Vlora, Berat, Elbasan, Korça and Tirana. The other project enables people with disabilities to use computer vision package. E. L. will create an audio pack in Albanian that step by step guides for using the most common computer programs. This package will be distributed to the blind community nationwide. This project has the support of “Albanian Association of Blind People”.*

But despite these achievements, still there are insufficient community services for people with disabilities in some urban centers and rural areas in the country. SSS' interviewed specialists, emphasize that it is an alarming situation of adults with physical disabilities and mental (over 25)<sup>2</sup>. Despite their willingness to assist and accommodate cases by social administrators, they are unable to meet the needs that represent this category. Among other things, appear more problematic cases of those families, which have in their composition two or more people with physical disabilities or mental, which are even more severe cases to treat and deliver necessary social services.

SSS and regional offices of the SSS state that the main causes for failing to establish services are related to lack of funds. Another problem that they identify is the lack of specialized sectors in applying for various projects of social scopes.

According to the interviewed, deficiency of new community services is not only due to insufficient funds, but also because of failure in recognizing the needs of the community in areas where they reside. In this regard we would point out the lack of human resources specialized in the field of disability and nonprofit management.

### **Status: Some Progress**

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<sup>2</sup> The criteria determined in the sublaw do not allow the admission in residential or day care centers. It is explained below.

*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

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

*Findings:*

MoH reports that there are no developments for 2010 in terms of piloting new models of services. What is done in the past about these services, are pavilions created and incorporated in psychiatric hospitals. These sections have served as a new way of prevention of psychiatric hospitalization of persons who can be treated in other forms without the need for hospitalization.

There hasn't been any assessment on the effectiveness and extension of various types of services for people with disabilities. The main obstacle to their realization, according to MoH, is the lack of special structures to perform these assessments.

MOLSAEO responsibility as an actor in the implementation of this measure, reports the pilot home care services for people with disabilities, which have begun to be implemented in two cities: Tirana and Shkodra. Under this plan, by 2013, it is predicted the extension of these services in other municipalities

While SSS reports that there is work underway to establish several pilot centers, homecare, for the age group 0-25 years. For this, they are working in several major cities: Tirana, Korca, Durres, Berat, Vlora and Lezha. While, in terms of assessing the effectiveness of models of services, SSS reports that such assessments are carried out periodically. It results that day care, community and family care services, are the most preferred models and SSS aims toward providing these models in coming years.

Two studies were conducted on the needs of people with disabilities in order to expand and improve their services in the cities of Durres and Fier with the support of UNFPA. State Social Service in collaboration with the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation and with the help and cooperation of local government institutions has worked for several months in these two cities to develop local strategies in these two areas, based on the needs of persons with disabilities. Final products were the compiled strategies and action plans with targets and measures for their implementation, set deadlines and clear responsibilities, specific projects associated with the implementation of measures in order to achieve the ultimate goal which is improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in these areas.

Tirana Municipality, in its medium-term strategy of social services had predicted for 2010 home care services for people with disabilities, but the budget was not approved, thus their implementation was impossible.

Tirana Municipality refers for the year 2010 no new pilot services in the municipality. The main obstacle is the non functional City Council for the past two years.

Elbasan Municipality reports that, besides Balash center, which constantly faces financial difficulties, there have been initiatives for pilot services. However, during meetings of the Technical Table, with all the actors responsible, have been presented several projects, such as the creation of an agricultural enterprise nearby Balash Centre for Integration of minors and youth with disabilities, “Window of Life” for the blind, “All Inclusive-duty education for all” and create a multidisciplinary center for children with specific needs. As a major obstacle, the municipality points the lack of funds from central government.

### **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.

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

#### *Findings:*

Standards of social services for people with disabilities marked a turn since the decision on Standards Services for Persons with Disabilities in day care and residential centers,<sup>8</sup> also “Service Standards for Aged Care Centers Residential and day”.<sup>9</sup> In 2010 was adopted the guidance 1730, dated 27.09.2010 to the implementation of standards of social care services for persons with disabilities in residential centers and day. This instruction serves to staff, employed or professionals and parents to realize the implementation of standards laid down in Decision no. 822.

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<sup>8</sup> Decision CoM nr. 822 date 06.12.2006

<sup>9</sup> Decision CoM Nr. 823 date 06.12.2006

Table 4: **Beneficiaries in public and private centers, according to statistics of 2010<sup>10</sup>**

	Residential			Day Care		
	Total	Public	Non-public	Total	Public	Non-public
Tiranë	2	1	1	17	1	16
Shkodër	8	1	7	5	2	3
Kukës	-	-	-	2	1	1
Elbasan	-	-	-	3	2	1
Berat	2	2	-	2	1	1
Korcë	1	1	-	6	1	5
Durrës	1	1	-	1	-	1
Vlorë	1	1	-	-	-	-
Lezhë	-	-	-	1	1	-
Gjirokastrë	-	-	-	1	-	1
Dibër	-	-	-	1	1	-
Sum	15	7	8	39	10	29

From the above table it results that in total, there are 54 centers, among which 17 are public while 37 are non-public. Depending on the types of centers, they are divided into: 1) residential-15 units nationwide, 2) Community Center-39 units nationwide; 3) House-1 unit. According to the State Social Service, in one of the published editions, these centers fail to cover geographically throughout the country. For example, no residential services in 6 counties: Fier, Elbasan and Dibra, Kukes, Lezha, Gjirokastra.<sup>11</sup>

It was also published a manual on standards, for employees of residential and day care centers with the support of UNFPA.

**Status: Progress**

Measure 2.4. Regulations for admission to the public residential care centers for persons with disabilities and older

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.shssh.gov.al/images/stories/shssh/publikime/manuali-standarteve-pak.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.shssh.gov.al/images/stories/shssh/publikime/manuali-standarteve-pak.pdf>

people will be reviewed to accommodate persons with severe disabilities whose needs cannot be met by their families.

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

*Findings:*

MOLSAEO reports that are under review the criteria of the regulation for admission to residential care centers. Currently, according to the sub laws in force on residential centers, in these centers are admitted only people with disabilities from age 0-25<sup>12</sup>. A category of adults, particularly with mental disabilities, remains untreated in these centers, despite the great need there is for specialized treatment in residential or day care centers. This problem concerns also a group of persons with physical disabilities, adults abandoned by their families or alone, who also because of the criteria specified in the bylaws, are not beneficiaries of services in residential or day care services.

The local government states that it is not in its power to change laws, noting that this is a responsibility of central government.

While public institutions, the criterion of age continues to prevent admission to residential, the non-public institutions have shown progress in this direction. Some of them have no age requirements for admission to residential centers, but perform a needs assessment of the individual. Elbasan Municipality reported that work is in process to establish a residential center for the elderly.

**Status: No progress**

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

*Responsible institutions:* Local government

*Findings:*

Tirana Municipality reports that are designed facilities for people with disabilities in regard to public transport and also in the local tax system.

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<sup>12</sup> Decision CoM Nr. 209, dated 12.4.2006 "On the criteria and the documents for admission in residential, public and private residential centers of social care" and guidance Nr. 1934, dated 18.10.2007 "On the procedures for admission in residential centers, public and non public".

While the Municipality of Elbasan, Vlore and Shkodra have not recorded any progress toward implementation of the measure.

**Status: Some 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.

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

*Findings:*

MDS refers that this goal was accomplished three years ago. Psychological Service is provided in all schools in the cities across the country and in some schools in rural areas. Further, MDS notes that this service has significantly increased the quality of educational service offered to schools, especially in terms of children with disabilities.

While specialists in Elbasan Regional Education Department reported that for every 4 school there is a psychologist, which makes the service coverage poor. There is often lack of rooms for sessions, and in these conditions the psychologists use the rooms for teachers to make sessions

Vlora Municipality states that during this year there were hired 9 psychologists covering 9-year schools, secondary schools in the city and some surrounding villages.

In terms of infrastructure improvement for children with disabilities MES and the Regional Education Departments do not report any progress.

Psychological service already covers the majority of schools across the country. It is not clear though what is the specific work of psychologists with children with disabilities. However, MES, with optimism, expressed about the impact of psychological services in enhancing the quality of educational service to children with disabilities.

MEDPAK Association pursuant to this measure is working in 14 schools, Librazhd, Korca, Gjirokastra and Vlora, in which is provided the psychological service, appointed by Regional Education Department, one psychologist for 2700 pupils.

**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.

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

### *Findings:*

MoH reports that there was a review of reimbursed drugs for people with disability. With regards to medical supplies/ equipments for people with disability, HII reports that implementation of this measure is in process. Based on data from HII, the Law no. 10 383, date 24.02.2011 "For Health Care Insurance" will bring significant change in this aspect. The Law states in a declarative way that the fund for health insurance reimbursement will also reimburse medical supplies and equipments for people with disability. This law, before being put in life, has provided a transition period of 2 years.

HII is currently working to establish legal and technical groups working to prepare the implementing provisions of the law.

New list of reimbursable drugs has been approved by the Council of Ministers on 24.02.2010. The growth of all indicators speaks for increase of quality and the number of drugs added to the list of drugs reimbursed in 2010, something which de facto increase the value of the prescription.<sup>13</sup>

## **Status: Some progress**

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

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

### *Findings:*

MoH reports that series of training were realised with the support of Caritas- Albania, targeting family doctors in health care centers in the districts of Shkodër, Krujë dhe Laç

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.isksh.com.al/images/stories/publikimet/revista/revista14.pdf>

(average 15-20 doctors per district). Training(s) were organised on the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability, current disability related legislation, as well as home care assistance for people with disability.

The basic package of primary health care approved and distributed to all health care centers includes: minimal standard of physical infrastructure, standard list of medical supplies, list of reimbursed drugs and the health-center consumables. It's worth mentioning, that for the first time this package includes the health care for the elderly, care for mental health as well as health promotion and education.

**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.

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

*Findings:*

MoH does not provide information on this measure. HII has under its health insurance scheme, fund for health insurance for all categories of people with disability, defined as such from Medical Assessment Commission.

With regards to calculations of monthly or annual costs for people with disability, it appears that no study has been done, as in the first three years of funding primary health care services and hospital services, the operation has been within the same budgets covering previous total-costs services with no individual cost related service. Funding from Health Insurance scheme of health care in hospitals has started in January 2009, with the entry in force of the Law.<sup>14</sup>

**Status: No progress**

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<sup>14</sup> Law No.10043 date 22.12.2008: "For some changes in Law no. 7870 date 13.10.1994 For Health Care Insurance in the Republic of Albania", changed by DCM nno. 1661, date 29.12.2008 "For Financing the Health Care in Hospitals from the scheme of health care insurance"

## 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.

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

### *Findings:*

MoH reports that in cooperation with Handicap International “The National Strategy on Physical Medical Rehabilitationin and its action plan for the period 2006-2013 has been prepared and approved in 2006. Still MoH admits that there is still a lot to be done towards the implementation of this plan. Main problems, that accounts for non – implementation of the action plan are reduced funds to strengthen the medical and physical rehabilitation and lack of specialised staff in this area, lack of professionals for rehabilitation like developmental physiotherapists, speech therapists, music and art therapists etc. The action plan includes measurable objectives and results, relevant institutions and resources to implement them NPO that are involved in providing this service admit that they haven’t yet found ways to cooperate with local government to sustain, extend and increase the quality of the existing services.

## **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.

*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<sup>15</sup> there is a legal base to this end, while the necessary

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<sup>15</sup> Law no. 10 107, dated 30.3.2009 “For health care in Albania”.

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.

MoH reports that with the exception of approval of standards for accreditation of institutions that offer primary health care, there is no other development/progress. Meanwhile MoLSAEO does not give any opinion on this measure.

**Status: No 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.

*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, see measures 2.1& 2.2.

Data from MoH show that no centers or new services for treatment of people with disability were established and no projection for establishing such exist for the year 2010-2011. Meanwhile there are plans to establish residential centers, structures to treat people with disability, elements that have not been realized so far because of lack of projected funds for this purpose.

**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.

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

*Findings:*

MoH reports that all ambulatory or hospital institutions built or reconstructed in 2010, have been obligated to create facilities for treatment of people with disability.

MES does not report with regards to this measure, but under the process of design and approval of the “Law on Pre university Education”, secondary laws will include issues related to assistive technology or teaching aids. MoLSAEO does not offer information related to this measure

The data of MES 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.

*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.

MoH reports that Institute of Public Health - IPH so far does not have any publication of the kind. Articles in the Medical Journal, where different doctors write, articles are written time and again on these issues, but this journal is not distributed for the general public or for people with disability. While the National Center for Child Growth and Development, continue to publish the quarterly journal “Lulet e Jetes”. According to MoH 4 (four) booklets have been distributed in 100 copies.

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: No progress**

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

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

*Findings:*

MoH reports that specialised public and private structures such as the Centre for Biomedicine, The center for lifelong education in Tirana and the Bio-Medicine Engineering Units in 12 regional hospitals, Directorate of Standardization (Ministry of Economy) as well as engineering structures at the state institutions financed by international organizations like WHO, USAID have worked to inform and counsel the technical and non-technical staff that directly or indirectly work with technical equipments. This was realised through 2-3 days training(s) with international experts focussed on introduction/presentation and the security of products in compliance with the requests of respective standards. These data does not give specific information on the coverage of disability issues.

The workshop "Mirësia", an activity of ADRF, supported by USAID continue to be the sole model in Albania which manufactures wheelchairs for persons with disabilities in compliance with their needs, has distributed during this period about 300 wheelchairs in the country. Besides the wheelchair, PwD 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. In addition, active rehabilitation training is organized for wheelchair users and their family members, an activity where people with disability despite training, get to know other wheelchair users, have also time to relax and enjoy company of friends.

Interviews show that there is significant lack of staff that possess knowledge on assistive technology for people with disability.

**Status: Little Progress**

## Community services

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

*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. Interviewed Regional Councils reports creation of departments or assignment of relevant specialists to follow specifically the issues of social services for people with disability in the local government. This is in line with meeting the legal obligations that regions have with regards to social service delivery.<sup>16</sup>

## 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

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<sup>16</sup> 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.

caretakers of person with hearing and visual impairments.

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

*Findings:*

MoLSAEO reports that it has been approved the “*Document for the implementation of custodainship service and the action plan for its implementation for 2008-2010*”. (See measure 2.2 in this area). *Also it is approved also the COM decision “On the standards for the custodianship service for children in need”*. 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.

From the data collected from MoLSAEO it results that no measures have been taken for establishment of working groups, no initiatives have been taken to train care givers or to provide careers for people with visual or hearing impairment. SSS reports that the Directorate of Training and Projects have taken into consideration in their annual training program, training for sign language interpreters.

**Status: Some progress**

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

*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. MoLSAEO reports that increase of number of day care centers to residential ones clearly reveal that this is the vision of this Ministry for services for people with disability. With support of UNICEF, piloting of two Home-care services have started in Tirana and in Shjkoder. A shelter is established in Rreshen. MoH reports that the realization of this measure is in process. Community centers for temporary care for people with mental health problems have been established in Tirana and in some other cities with projection for extending them.

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 new service for autistic children in a social center of the Municipality.

**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 for 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.

This part of the report will serve as a reflection on what has been achieved and in what areas *progress* or *some progress* is noticed and identify what has not been achieved.

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 have been considered that there has been “some progress”. In this line there are good initiatives 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 still continues to make the evaluation according to the medical model. Despite efforts undertaken by MoLSAEO that aim reorganizing and functioning of MCDAW, this is still in the level of efforts. They should take concrete forms, through creating working groups with participation of experts and groups of interest in order to generate concrete proposals on behalf of reforming the MCDAW.

With regards to studies, research on prevention of disability, there is no improvement in the situation with regards to previous years. Some publications have been realized, but still they are few and within short-term projects frameworks. We propose that responsible actors, get engaged in this direction with concrete plans for publication of information bulletins related to prevention and distribution of this information in health care centers, schools etc.

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

Table 5: **Prevention and early identification**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institution/s</b>	<b>Progress status for 2010</b>
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.	a) 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.	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	a) Ministry of Health b) Health Insurance Institute c) NGOs	No 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.	(a) Ministry of Health (b) Ministry of Education and Sciences	Some progress

In the analyses 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. This progress is noticed in the NPO sector. 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 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 are presented in the following table.

Table 6: **Health and Social Services**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institution/s</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
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	(a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities/State Social Service; (b) Social Insurance Institute; (c) Local government units	Some 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.	(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	a) MOLSA /State Social Service	Progress

appropriate services that take into account their dignity and are based on their abilities.

2.4. Review of the regulations for admission in the Public Centers of Residential Care for disabled persons and the elderly, with the view to housing persons with grave disabilities whose needs can not be met by their households.	(a) MOLSAEO; (b) local government units; (c) NGOs	No progress
2.5 Determining reduced fees for public services for the disabled persons.	Local government units	Some 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.	(a) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (b) regional education directorates; (c) NGOs	Some

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 in the area of legislation. The Law on Health Care Insurance is approved and it states the supply of medical devices (including mobility means) for people with disability. This law foresees two years transitory period, and implementation of legal provisions is really subject to release and adoption of secondary legislation that are expected to be done meanwhile

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 7: **Health care for persons with severe disabilities**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institution/s</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
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	(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.	(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.	(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.

Table 8: **Rehabilitation Services**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institution/s</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
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.	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.	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO	No 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.	(a) Ministry of Health; (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NGO	Some progress

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; show that there seems to be little progress. It is not reported that people with disability, their family members, experts, and caregivers have been informed on assistive technology. This objective does not mark as they have high costs that could not be met. A positive step is reported in cases of the new constructions, that have taken into consideration supply with such technologies for the category of people with disability.

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 9: **Assistive technology**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institution/s</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
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.	(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	(a) Ministry of Health, (b) MOLSAEO/ State Social Service; (c) Ministry of Education and Sciences; (d) NPO	No progress
5.3. Specialized centers for assistive technology and adaptive equipment will be established and advertised.	(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.

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.

Tabela 10: **Community Services**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institution/s</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
6.1. Specific administrative units will be created to provide and oversee services for people with disabilities at the central, regional and local government.	(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	(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.	(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 a range of recommendations for the state institutions in central and local level, responsible for the implementation of this sector of the National Action Plan:

1. MoLSAEO should finalize the legal initiative, which it has already launched with regard to disability assessment/evaluation<sup>17</sup> 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

<sup>17</sup> Assessment that is actually done by the MCDAW based on medical model.

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. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Measures should be taken for the development of the custodian/personal assistance service for other disability categories
11. 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.
12. Based on the recent legislative developments, it is necessary the review of the action plan, regarding measures and responsible actors.



## **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 kindergartens<sup>18</sup> 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.

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<sup>18</sup> 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, Durrës, Shkodër, Korça, Vlorë and Elbasan, as well as NGOs that participated in the study.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF TASKS IN 2010, 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.

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

#### *Findings:*

The study on the employment situation of persons with disabilities and their employment in relation to labor market needs is carried every year by NES as part of a comprehensive study on the national level to evaluate the employment of the population according to labor market needs. Persons with disabilities, unemployed job seekers and employees are defined separately in this study. In the statistics of the National Employment Service, during the first 6 months of 2010, 2112 persons with disabilities are registered as unemployed jobseekers, of whom only two are employed.<sup>19</sup> Referring to NES data, during 2010 people with disabilities unemployed jobseekers occupied 0.1%<sup>20</sup> of the total of unemployed jobseekers employed. However it should be emphasized that the regional employment offices still have

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<sup>19</sup> ADRF, (Tirana, 2010), Monitoring Report "For a dignified life through work"

<sup>20</sup> <http://kerkojpune.gov.al/statistika.në vite>.

no special structure to follow the process of accurately identifying people with disabilities as jobseekers.

The number of unemployed job seekers with disabilities registered during 2010 in the regions of Durrës, Elbasan, Korça, Shkodra, Tirana is 1038 persons in total.

The Shkodra Regional Directorate of NES reports that they register 13,565 unemployed jobseekers, among them 316 persons with disabilities or 2.3% of total unemployed jobseekers. This office reports to have undertaken a study of the labor market with a specific chapter to identify persons with disabilities as unemployed jobseekers. Based on this assessment, RDNES has subsequently prepared an action plan for the promotion of the employment of persons with disabilities. This office reports that, in 2010 they have mediated the employment of 3 people with disabilities in private companies, making their employment possible.

The Korçë Regional Directorate of NES reports that in the Korça region there are 440 persons with disabilities or 9.5% of the total unemployed jobseekers (no = 4602) at regional level. The Durrës Regional Directorate of NES reports that 440 persons with disabilities are registered as unemployed jobseekers or 9.5% of the total unemployed jobseekers (no = 4633). The Elbasan Regional Directorate of NES reports that 204 persons with disabilities are registered as unemployed jobseekers or 1.7% of the total unemployed jobseekers (no = 11599) registered at regional level, and RDNES Tirana reports 28 persons with disabilities registered as unemployed jobseekers or 1.7% of the total number (n=1687). RDNES Vlorë has not provided data.

Based on the cause of disability, the official statistics show that 47% of people with disabilities have acquired a disability due to reasons related to their occupation. Within this scheme, only 2275 of 9533 people with disabilities assessed as able to work partially, resulted as being employed.<sup>21</sup>

According to latest official statistics, 64% (n = 75.348) of persons with disabilities, are reported to be of working age.<sup>22</sup> Of these 32,107 are individuals with disabilities in working age and 43,241 are occupational disabled persons of working age, and 19,342 are women.

### **Status: Some progress**

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<sup>21</sup> ADRF, (Tirana, 2010), Monitoring Report "For a dignified life through work"

<sup>22</sup> MoLSAEO, State Social Services, Training, Projects and Statistics Department July - August 2010.

*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.

*Responsible institution:* MoLSAEO / National Employment Office

*Findings:*

NES reports that work is being done to promote and support the creation of protected jobs for persons with disabilities a. For the implementation of this measure relevant laws and bylaws are being drafted continuously such as: (1) DCM no. 48, dated 16.01.2008 "For the amount and criteria for benefiting from the program of promoting employment of unemployed people in difficulty", as amended, DCM no. 632, dated 18.09.2003 "For the promotion of employment of women and DCM no. 873, dated.27.12.2006 "On professional practices. "In these programs people with disabilities are included as "special group". (2) On the job training under DCM no. 47, dt. 16.01.2008. As a result of the implementation of this decision 2 people with disabilities have been trained in total during 2010. (3) Order no. 394, dated 23.02.2004 "On the Fees of Vocational Training System" (amended by Order No. 317, dated 21.02.2005) pursuant to Law no. 8872, date 29.03.2002 "On Education and Vocational Training in RoA" DCM no. 618, date 07.09.2006 "On the determination of documentation criteria and the amount of benefit payments for people with disabilities" as amended, and Instruction no. 2210, dated 25.11.2010 "On the implementation of DCM no. 618, dated 7.9.2010. NES reports that in 2010, for the implementation of this measure, a fund in the amount 1.500 000 lek was allocated.

The Regional Labour Offices in Tirana, Durrës, Korçë, Elbasan and Vlorë (The focus of this monitoring report) report that they fully understand the legal framework that enables the promotion of employment for people with disabilities, but they do not report having regional policies for achieving this goal. Even when they have registered people with disabilities as unemployed job seekers, the process remains there and does not go further. These offices lack special structures, trained specialists to advise, guide and mediate for people with disabilities in the labor market. These offices report that they have undertaken concrete actions to raise awareness of private companies on the legal obligations they have for the employment of persons with disabilities. However, the lack of state subsidies to private companies is identified as one of the factors limiting the employment of persons with disabilities by these companies.

The National Employment Fund, which still reported missing, would facilitate the

process of creating protected jobs where persons with disabilities would be employed (workshops and joint employment centers) subsidies for the equipment or adaptation of the workplace, etc..

**Status: Some progress**

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

*Responsible institutions:* MoLSAEO / Social Insurance Institute

*Findings:*

In applying this measure the Social Security Institute (ISI) reports that work is continuing for this reform. This institution has approved the “Revised Criteria for Determining Working Ability” with the document no. 4913 dated 24.11.2010.

**Status: Progress**

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

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

*Findings:*

State institutions at central level report that due to the gaps in the legal framework and financial constraints special centers for the employment of persons with disabilities have not been created. The fact that the National Employment Fund is still not active doesn't allow for the practical implementation of this policy.

Based on reports by ADRF<sup>23</sup> models of a given type of protected employment are given by several NGOs,<sup>24</sup> but it should be noted that these projects implemented by NGOs simply enable the daily involvement of people with disabilities in a particular job. Due to the lack of legal framework, these centers do not guarantee that the product of

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<sup>23</sup> ADRF (2008). Small steps: formative evaluation of implementation of Standards of Social Services for individuals with disabilities in residential and day care centers and related protection and fulfillment of human rights.

ADRF, (Tirana, 2010), Monitoring Report “For a dignified life through work”.

<sup>24</sup> ADRF, South atelier, “Lira” Berat, “Help Life”, Tirana, Centre “Balashe”, Elbasan.

the work of persons with disabilities reaches the market. As such, they are still partial models of protected employment.

**Status: Very little progress**

*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.

*Responsible institutions:* MoLSAEO / National Employment Service

*Findings:*

MoLSAEO and the National Employment Service report that work has been done for the implementation of the legal framework in this field. Pursuant to the legislation mentioned earlier in this report, relevant legal obligations have been assigned and work is being done continuously to implement them. Law "For Labour Inspectorate"<sup>25</sup> also includes legal obligations as well as relevant measures for its implementation in view of employment of people with disabilities. Information and awareness raising of private entities on: (a) the obligation to employ persons with disabilities and (b) incentives they benefit from its implementation are specifically defined in the law no. 7995, dated 20.09.1995 "On employment promotion", Article 15, paragraph 1, 2.

RDNES make efforts to attract the attention of employers regarding the obligations they have based on the legislation framework for employment of persons with disabilities. There is a need for a better coordination between Regional Departments of NES and the Regional Offices of Labour Inspectorate in enforcing the legal obligations. REDNESS - Shkoder reports that they issue periodical "reminders" to public and private entities regarding their legal obligation to hire people with disabilities. One such element is included by this office in 2010 also in the direct contracts with employers.

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<sup>25</sup> Law no. 7986, date 13.09.1995 "For Labour Inspectorate", changed by law no. 8394, date 02.09.1998, "For some changes and additions in the law nr.7986, datë 13.09.1995 "For Labour Inspectorate" and Law no. 8857, date 07.02.2002, "For Labour Inspectorate".

However RDNES identifies a range of factors that hinder the integration of persons with disabilities in society through employment and vocational training. Such factors are; (1) limited labor market, (2) businesses have low awareness of their obligations arising stemming from the relevant legislation, (3) the community in general is very prejudicial about job skills of people with disabilities; (4) failure of governmental and private entities to enforce the legal framework and the need for its further improvement; (5) persons with disabilities don't have relevant education for certain jobs; (6) persons with disabilities are not trained in demanded crafts, (7) appropriate working conditions for persons with disabilities (8) lack of specific indicators for the registration of persons with disabilities as job seekers in the registration database for unemployed job seekers, registration based on job skills of people with disabilities.

In function of the implementation of policies and legal framework at local level but also in view of solving the problems mentioned above, it is important that the responsible authorities at local level draft action plans to promote employment and vocational training to people with disabilities. These action plans serve to redimension the role of institutions responsible for employment and vocational training, but also activate and make efficient incentive mechanisms at the local level to achieve concrete results for employment and vocational training of persons with disabilities in the public as well private sector. Two local strategies<sup>26</sup> designed during 2010 by experts of the field, with the support of SSS and UNFPA in two regions of the country - Fier and Durres, have served this purpose.

The report identified that also in 2010, initiatives have sprang up to the aim of proper functioning and the creation of conditions to develop local programs for vocational training and employment for vulnerable groups, including people with disability. Launching by the Municipality of Tirana<sup>27</sup> of "Social network on Employment" is one of the initiatives that aim to create capacities of groups in need/vulnerable groups through vocational training in different professions(electrician, administrator, plumber, babysitter); counseling, orientation for employment as well as creation of small businesses(hair dresser, service agencies, tailoring etc.) The social network for employment is open to all other actors that operate in this area and wish to engage in this net. The timelines for this project is 24 months; Municipality of Tirana takes the responsibility to play

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<sup>26</sup> MOLSAEO (Novemembr 2010), Strategy for regional development for people with disability in Fieri  
MOLSAEO (Novemembr 2010), "Local Strategy for people with disability" For better quality of life for

<sup>27</sup> [www.bashkiatirane.gov.al/opinione](http://www.bashkiatirane.gov.al/opinione).

the role of the secretariat of the net aiming to coordinate the services of vocational training, qualifications and employment offered by NPOs, Municipality of Tirana and other actors under this project.

Another initiative relevant to employment, is that undertaken in 2010 by the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF) supported by Vodafone Albania Foundation, to implement a 1(one) year project focussed on “Employment of people with Disability in Albania”. The project is under implementation in the cities of Tirana, Durrës, Shkoder, Elbasan and Korca. This project aims to challenge barriers in attitudes and mentalities, to increase awareness of local structures and the general public on the right of people with disability to get employed through realizing a prior assessment of their needs and the actual labour market to accommodate these needs, as well as offering concrete models through employment of 20 people with disability in the five cities. Although challenging, the employment models were created.

In order to guarantee the sustainability of programs that enable employment of people with disability, it's important to review and improve the legal and policy framework in this area. To this purpose as well as to guarantee a cross sectorial and coherent intervention, in November 2010, with the support of USAID, ADRF has started to implement a two years program focused on economic empowerment of people with disability in Albania.

**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.

*Responsible institutions:* MoLSAEO / National Employment Service

*Findings:*

MoLSAEO reports that the Vocational Training Sector at this institution is working to implement this measure, while not giving any specifications. In applying this measure NES reports that during 2010 a study was undertaken “Labour Force Survey from the perspective of the enterprise” in order to better know the labor market, the demands and needs for skills from private entities. This study is

currently in the data processing stage. Deadline is until June 2011. Specific results are expected regarding the needs, skill requirements identified by the employing entities. The results of this study will serve to re-evaluate training programs in accordance with the needs of the labor market. In this framework, the results of this study will serve to re-evaluate the needs to adapt the vocational training programs so that people with disabilities too can benefit skills for demanded jobs. Such a policy will contribute to increase the chances of people with disabilities to be employed in the labor market.

In an assessment made by ADRF<sup>28</sup> the DRFPP in the regions of Tirana, Korca, Durres, Elbasan, Shkodra inform that the vocational training centers have enrolled 75 people with disabilities as students. Of these, five persons with disabilities in Durres, 58 in Elbasan and 12 in Shkodra. It is estimated that the ratio of trainees with disabilities to those without disabilities is very small. Such a fact highlights a range of issues which hinder the integration of persons with disabilities in these centers.

Leaders of DRFPP in the regions targeted by this monitoring report identify as the main obstacle to the vocational training of people with disabilities; (1) low level of education of persons with disabilities (2) lack of transportation and tailored facilities in the centers that provide vocational training, (3) prejudicial mentality and attitude regarding the skills of persons with disabilities (4) lack of instructors trained to work specifically with persons with disabilities (5) programs of professional training courses designed not in compatibility with the needs of persons with disabilities (6) lack of curricula tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities (7) lack of specific courses for people with disabilities. All these issues should be taken into consideration during the review process of the system of vocational training for persons with disabilities in the period ahead.

Still in 2010, positive steps are identified in the direction of licensing of the new vocational training centers, to offer services that were inexistent before for people with disability. On this behalf, MOLSAEO has licensed the Albanian National Association of Deaf (ANAD) as a vocational training center for Albanian sign language interpreters.

### **Status: Some progress**

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<sup>28</sup> ADRF, (Tirana, 2010), Monitoring Report "For a dignified life through work"

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

*Responsible institutions:* MoLSAEO / National Employment Service

*Findings:*

MoLSAEO reports that is working toward implementation of this measure, but obstacles mainly of financial nature do not allow to meet the obligations deriving from it. NES identifies through data it provides that bylaws have been drafted and the implementation of DCMs that promote employment, no. 47 and 48, 632 and 873 (cited above) that include the treatment and services in support of job seeking people with disabilities. These are active government programs related to: employment services and the promotion of employment opportunities that support and promote cooperation with private employers.

Despite the fact that RDNES report the lack of necessary infrastructure (human and financial resources) to implement this measure, there is considerable effort to orient persons with disabilities who are job seekers towards the labor market and vocational training centers as well. These offices have negotiated with private entities regarding persons with disabilities jobseekers. In applying this measure, RDNES Shkoder reports that under the ILO project for the promotion of employment it has informed the employers on the benefit package relevant to the employment of persons with disabilities.

Also the local plans that have been developed with the support of MoLSAEO, SSS and UNFPA in two regions of Durres and Fier have provided through concrete projects models for redimensioning RDNES functions in order to provide counseling and support services for persons with disabilities registered as jobseekers.

**Situation: Progress**

**Inclusive education**

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

*Responsible Institution:* Ministry of Education and Science

*Findings:*

According to experts of the Ministry of Education and Science the whole pre-university education system is in the process of educational reform. This reform has been completed for the secondary education in which inclusion is achieved through the introduction of compulsory and facultative curriculum. This has made that, depending on the location of the school, students acquire knowledge and gain skills to increase their sensitivity and attitudes toward people with disabilities on the one hand and their inclusion in the educational process.

MES is currently in the process of deepening the reform in basic education curriculum. Working groups have been established and are working to develop “a new curriculum framework in basic education.”

**Status: The obligation is met,  
but work is continuing for further improvements.**

*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.

*Responsible institution:* Ministry of Education and Science

*Findings:*

In the framework of the cooperation agreement that MES has with Save the Children, in particular for the piloting of “inclusive education”, Ministry of Education and the respective DAR of project during 2010 have supported the preparation of supporting materials for teachers working with children and students with disabilities. Save the Children has published and distributed packages with: booklet for teachers “To recognize learning difficulties”, printed in 1000 copies, brochure for parents “practical advice” in 1000 copies, and the publication “A School for All”. On behalf of the project “ For development at an early age of children “a guide for teachers working with children of ages 4-5, in the kindergarten, titled “A world to be explored” has been published in 3000 copies, as a cooperation of Save the Children with MoES.

**Status: Progress**

*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.

*Responsible institution:* Ministry of Education and Science

*Findings:*

MES reports that Individual Educational Plans forms to work with children with disabilities, are distributed in RED / EO training sessions mainly done by Save the Children, but also in the training sessions conducted by school psychologists within the project that MES has with “Terre des hommes” for “establishing the child protection system” and other training conducted by school psychologists. The duties of the school psychologist state clearly that s/he along with the class teacher build PEI.

In applying this measure it is reported that the process of drafting a new “Law on Pre-University Education” is close to conclusion. This law, among other things, regulates the procedures for initial and ongoing assessment of students with disabilities.

**Status: Progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* Regional Education Departments

*Findings:*

In applying this measure the only models offered in terms of creating resource rooms are set up during the implementation of the Save the Children project.<sup>29</sup> During 2010 in three mainstream schools, in cities where the project is focused, Korçë, Vlorë and Gjirokastër, resource environments are set up to facilitate the individual work of support teachers with students with disabilities. The project has enabled the piloting in the structure of these three schools, the introduction of three teachers to facilitate teaching for students with disabilities.

**Condition: little progress**

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<sup>29</sup> Project of Save the Children , realized in cooperation with MoES on inclusion of children with disability in education system is under implementation in local level (in the city of Korçë, Vlorë dhe Gjirokastër ) from MEDPAK organisation.

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

*Responsible institution:* Ministry of Education and Science

*Findings:*

A very important innovation in the system of education is the preparation of new draft law “On pre-university education.” For the first time this law provides for the introduction into the education the support teacher for children with disabilities. Also for the first time, pursuant to this law, the whole system for the identification and orientation of children with disabilities will be established, in order to provide them the best of their education depending on the disability.

**Status: Progress**

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

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

*Findings:*

In applying this measure MES reports that, in collaboration with Save the Children, a package has been prepared: booklet for teachers “To recognize the difficulties in learning”, brochure for parents “Practical Tips.” They are distributed in 5 RED and a copy will be distributed to all RED. Also these materials are online and RED are notified to find and use.

**Status: Some progress**

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

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

*Findings:*

The Ministry of Education and Science does not have data on the total number of young people with disabilities who attend vocational schools but what is verified in the

beginning of each school year is related to the filing of claims by the Association of the Blind for blind students enrolled in secondary education. For this purpose, MES has been providing full support. Blind students are enrolled in mainly social cultural secondary schools “Foreign Languages” and in art schools.

**Condition: 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.

*Responsible institution:* Ministry of Education and Science

*Findings:*

The MES expert has shown that all special education schools have subjects and practical activities that help the training of students for life or to equip them with job skills that are considered to be useful for their work integration. Thus, in the Institute of deaf students there are special lessons in musical education and learning musical instruments, computer and foreign languages. In this institute practical lessons are conducted for the regulation of bicycles, computer and tailoring. While “L. Gurakuqi” has a subject called life skills where students learn job skills in sewing and gardening. Also in the special education classes in other districts there are specific lessons that aim at enabling students with disabilities with life skills.

**Status: Progress**

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

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

*Findings:*

Ministry of Education and Science has allocated during 2010 a fund of approximately 400,000 million leks to provide transportation of students including students with disabilities. In general, special education schools have their vehicle to provide transportation services

to disabled students. Where school cooperation with local governments is good, the municipalities themselves contribute to providing the vehicle for special schools.

However the leaders of special schools report that the 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 remains problematic. Many children with disabilities from these areas, mainly diagnosed with mental disabilities remain isolated due to transportation and with no chance to pursue special education. The accessible transportation for students with physical impairments, users of wheelchairs is lacking.

### **Status: Some progress**

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

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

#### *Findings:*

In applying this measure, MES reported that in general students with disabilities, depending on the severity of their disability, attend special schools and classes or are integrated into mainstream schools. What is appreciated regarding the new service by this institution during 2010, is the fact that autistic children are treated in the two forms above. Besides their integration into mainstream schools, in September 2010, at School "L. Gurakuqi in Tirana a class for autistic children was opened, where students are offered a specialized service.

### **Status: Some progress**

#### **Integrated schools and kindergartens**

*Measure 5.1.& 5.2* Create integrated kindergartens and schools in the main cities, in national level.

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

#### *Findings:*

The table below, gives a full picture of integrated kindergartens and schools, a model created by the project that Save the Children is implementing in cooperation with

MoES in three cities in the country, contributing to implementation of these two measures.

The number of children with disabilities integrated is 98, of those 67,3% (n=66) are children integrated in ordinary schools and 32.7%(n=32) are disabled children integrated in kindergartens.

**Table 11: Ordinary kindergartens and schools in cities of Gjirokastrë, Korçë dhe Vlorë, integrating children with disabilities**

<b>City</b>	<b>School 9-year</b>	<b>Kindergarten</b>
Gjirokastra	Urani Rumbo	No 2
	Çajupi	No 6
	Naim Frashëri	No 5
	Koto Hoxhi	Nr.7
Korçë	Asdreni	Nr.1
	Demokracia	No 2
	Naum Veqilharxhi	Nr.9
Vlorë	Sevasti Qiriazhi	Nr10
	Ismail Qemali	Nr.3
	Ibrahim Kushta	No 5
	Lef Sallata	Nr.9
	Teli Ndini	1 Maj

In the framework of the National Action for zero school drop-out, for the first time, MES has provided a database for identification of children with disabilities in the 9-year education, by type of disability. The following table presents the number of children with disabilities included in mainstream schools of the 9-year education. These data are detailed by districts nationwide.

**Table 12: Number of children with disabilities, according to disability included in mainstream schools nationwide**

<b>Nr. DAR/ZA</b>	<b>Disabled students in 9-year education, in January 2011</b>									
	<b>Total</b>	<b>At school</b>	<b>Home schooling</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Physical (locomotive)</b>	<b>Mental + physical</b>	<b>Visual</b>	<b>Hearing</b>	<b>Speech</b>	<b>Autistic</b>
1 Berat	58	54	0	16	12	0	0	8	28	1
2 Bulqizë	192	190	0	13	11	18	56	17	74	1
3 Delvinë	34	11	0	8	2	1	1	1	1	1
4 Devoll	14	14	0	2	5	1	3	2	1	0

5	Dibër	86	80	0	12	18	10	14	11	5	10
6	Durrës	35	35	2	8	16	6	2	0	0	1
7	Elbasan	37	31	0	17	0	9	3	1	0	1
8	Fier	108	100	0	41	45	3	4	3	1	12
9	Gramsh	162	162	0	33	10	12	85	1	21	0
10	Gjirokastra	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
11	Has	48	47	0	14	11	0	3	2	7	10
12	Kamëz	107	104		21	22	0	45	3	12	0
13	Kavajë	103	100	0	26	26	4	12	13	6	11
14	Kolonjë	21	21	0	7	6	0	7	1	0	0
15	Korçë	81	81	77	4	40	11	9	12	3	6
16	Krujë	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Kuçovë	22	22	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	Kukës	39	30	0	4	14	0	9	3	0	0
19	Kurbin	39	39	0	9	3	17	8	1	0	1
20	Lezhë	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	Librazhd	106	75	8	3	4	5	2	2	1	0
22	Lushnjë	52	52	11	7	4	15	3	8	4	0
23	Malësi N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Mallakastër	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	Mat	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
26	Mirditë	64	62	0	12	18	5	21	2	5	1
27	Peqin	33	33	0	17	2	10	1	2	1	0
28	Përmet	75	75	0	8	11	1	38	6	4	7
29	Pogradec	17	17	0	7	2	4	0	1	2	1
30	Pukë	14	13	1	0	1	13	0	0	0	0
31	Sarandë	85	84	0	7	7	69	1	0	0	0
32	Skrapar	50	49	0	0	11	12	27	0	0	0
33	Shkodër	65	61	4	15	11	4	13	9	8	5
34	Tepelenë	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35	Tirana B.	301	295	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
36	Tirana Rr	48	46	0	14	10	3	5	3	6	7
37	Tropojë	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
38	Vlorë	17	16	0	2	4	2	2	4	2	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2123</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>77</b>

**Status: Progress**

### **Psycho-social and educational support services**

*Measure 6.1 & 6.2* Create psycho-pedagogical and psycho-social services in ordinary schools in all regions in the country.

*Responsible institution:* Ministry of Education and Science

#### *Findings:*

Experts from the Ministry of Education and Science report that school psychological service currently operates in all kindergartens and 9 - year schools and in secondary schools of urban areas in 36 districts of the country.

**Status: Progress**

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Employment and Vocational Training**

In this monitoring report it is estimated that efforts are made by the responsible institutions at central and local levels, to enable the implementation of the obligations they have to ensure the right to employment and vocational training of persons with disabilities. Progress is identified towards the identification of persons with disabilities as job seekers, part of a nationwide survey conducted by NES to assess the employment needs of the population according to labor market needs. There is also a high degree of awareness of the structures responsible for the obligations stemming from the political and legal framework for promoting employment and vocational training of persons with disabilities. This is reflected locally, where RDNES in some regions have undertaken concrete actions to promote the employment process and training of persons with disabilities. These actions have been focused in terms of: (1) raising the awareness of public and private employer entities on the obligations they have for the employment of persons with disabilities as well as incentives that they could benefit in cases of their employment, (2) counselling-mediation for persons with disabilities to be employed at private entities, and (3) enrichment of the documentation on the progress of this process. Despite these efforts, it is necessary that RDNES needs to restructure their activities to ensure continuing services to people with disabilities counseling - guidance and mediation in the labor market and vocational training centers.

The lack of the National Employment Fund continues to hamper subsidy policy development, which create incentives for private entities, to hire persons with disabilities in accordance with the needs and skills for the jobs they have. The absence of this funding also prevents the development of other options for the employment of people with disabilities such as protected employment.

From the official data it is estimated that the number of employed people with disabilities still has an insignificant percentage in relation to the total number of hired unemployed job-seekers. The models of employment and vocational training of people with disabilities provided through projects implemented by civil society, in cooperation with the structures for the employment and vocational training at the local level, have increased the level of awareness about the obligations that all responsible actors have in this direction and have created the premises for the development of mechanisms for the progress of this process.

Even in the field of vocational training of people with disabilities the report highlights that there is no visible progress. The very small number of trainees with disabilities involved in vocational training centers is indicative of the existence of a range of factors that hinder the integration of persons with disabilities in these centers. They are identified as mostly related to the lack of: (1) adapted curricula, (2) instructors trained to teach persons with disabilities (3) specific courses in accordance with job opportunities for persons with disabilities; (4) adapted facilities. There is a need to reassess the activity of the vocational training centers so that people with disabilities to become their active beneficiaries.

In conclusion it can be said that despite the progressive steps identified in this monitoring report, the employment and training of persons with disabilities remains a critical problem for people with disabilities, their families and a challenge for all stakeholders responsible at central and local level.

**Table 13: Employment and Vocational Training**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Status of progress</b>
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.	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.	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.	MoLSAEO / Social Insurance Institute	Progress
1.4. Open special centers for the employment of people with disabilities.	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.	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.	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.	MoLSAEO / National Employment Service	Progress

**Education of people with disabilities**

Based on the findings of this monitoring report on the field of education of children with disabilities, in a substantial part of the measures for the implementation of the action plan progress is noted. During 2010 one of the achievements of MES in the field of education is the development of new draft “Law on university education”. This draft takes into account among other things, the support for the implementation of modern practices of inclusive education for children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

In cooperation with civil society actors and mainly the organization Save the Children, MES has continued the process of integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools and kindergartens. The report highlighted a growing number of children with disabilities integrated into mainstream kindergartens and schools. Also the implementation of relevant measures of the action plan SKPAK, MES has also worked to increase the

number of integrated kindergartens and schools nationwide. An important undertaking of MES during 2010 is regarded to be the identification of children with disabilities, based on the type of disability, who attend mainstream schools. This assessment will serve to plan services in support of full inclusiveness of these students with disabilities in mainstream schools in accordance with the specific needs they have.

The report estimates that the project implemented by Save the Children has enabled the piloting of new elements to support the implementation in practice of inclusive education for children with disabilities. Such elements are: (1) creation in mainstream schools of resource environments to enable individual work outside the classroom with students with disabilities, (2) placement in mainstream schools of three assistant teachers, and (3) partial adaptability of facilities in mainstream schools that are the focus of the project. New interventions in inclusive education practices will serve to guide and support future implementation of the legal framework for inclusive education of children with disabilities. In order to improve the quality of service provided for students with disabilities in mainstream schools MES, in the training conducted for teachers, has provided models of IEP for students with disabilities and work models to be conducted for their implementation.

Increasing the number of school psychologists involved in mainstream schools is an important element in improving the quality of service provided for students with disabilities. In support of inclusive education practices, it is estimated that work has been done for the preparation and publication of instructional materials to help teachers and parents of children with disabilities. However they still remain low in number as well as in titles. The report identifies as problematic the equipment of schools with textbooks adapted for students with disabilities as well as teaching materials to help teachers who work directly with these students.

Although work has been done towards enriching the school curriculum with special training course aimed at the life skills for students with disabilities who attend them, the report highlights the necessity to reevaluate these programs of these schools in accordance with the specific needs of students. It is also pointed out that the transport of children with disabilities from rural areas to attend special schools is still difficult. Children with disabilities in these areas remain isolated and do not receive any education do to the lack of transportation.

Also MES has no information on the number of young people with disabilities who may attend vocational schools. There is a lack of national assessment for this issue.

The report highlights that in 2010 new services have been created for teaching autistic children. Teaching for autistic students is conducted in mainstream schools and in those of special education.

In conclusion we can say that during 2010 significant efforts have been made by MES and other actors of civil society to ensure the right to education of children with disabilities.

**Table 14: Inclusive education**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Status of progress</b>
3.1. Design a new mainstream school curriculum that encourages inclusive processes.	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.	Ministry of Education and Science	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.	Ministry of Education and Science	Progress
3.4. Create resources in mainstream schools to work more specifically with students with special needs.	Regional Education Departments	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.	Ministry of Education and Science	Progress
3.6. Prepare bulletins and other helping materials for teachers and parents.	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.	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.	Ministry of Education and Science Ministry of Education and Science	Progress
4.2. Provide facilities like transportation, etc., for children with disabilities from remote areas to attend special schools.	Education departments Local government	Some progress
4.3. Create new services for special categories of children who are not covered (services for autistic children, etc.).	Ministry of Education and Science / NPO	Some progress
5.1. & 5.2 Create integrated kindergartens and schools in the main cities, in national level	Ministry of Education and Science Local government	Progress
6.1. & 6.2 Create psycho-pedagogical and psycho-social services in ordinary schools in all regions in the country	Ministry of Education and Science	Progress

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Employment and Vocational Training

Based on the findings of this monitoring report and aiming to improve the situation, the following are some recommendations to be considered by the structures at central and local levels, responsible for designing and implementing policies and legislation in the field of employment and vocational training persons with disabilities.

1. MoLSAEO and NES should undertake concrete measures to enforce the political and legal framework to promote employment for people with disabilities in the open labor market.

2. MOLSAEO and NES should review the legal framework in order to enrich it through bylaws to provide employment and training of people with disabilities.
3. RDNES should re-dimension their activity to provide services for counseling-orientation and mediation in employment and vocational training of persons with disabilities in the regions.
4. The process of planning and allocation of funds at the local level in order to achieve physical adaptability of RDNES buildings to provide barrier-free access to persons with disabilities.
5. The necessity of planning funds for capacity building for specialists at the central and local level, who are responsible for implementing employment policies and training of persons with disabilities.
6. The establishment of the National Employment Fund should be a priority in order to support financially the interventions necessary to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities and support other options to their employment.
7. The necessity of reassessment of policies and programs of public vocational training centers in order to include the people with disabilities.

### **Education of people with disabilities**

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

1. The Ministry of Education and Science should promote the priority adoption of the draft Law on Pre-University Education.
2. The Ministry of Education and Science should prepare a package of by-laws for the implementation of the Law on Pre-university Education.”
3. The Ministry of Education and Science, based on legal obligations, should plan budgets to support RED to face additional costs that requires the implementation of new practices of inclusive education in the preschool and school education.
4. The Ministry of Education should plan and provide priority delivery to mainstream schools of teaching materials suitable for working with students with disabilities.
5. The Ministry of Education and Science should continue the process of expanding the number of integrated schools and kindergartens across the country.
6. The Ministry of Education and Science and RED should identify the financial terms for the additional transport needs of rural children attending mainstream and special schools.
7. MES in collaboration with MoLSAEO should undertake a study to assess the needs of youth with disabilities to attend education in vocational schools.

## **AREA IV. CAPACITY BUILDING**

Capacity building in the context of the National Strategy on People with Disabilities (NSPD) includes the following aspects: (a) raising awareness of the Government representatives that participate in the legislative and executive process at the central and local governance levels; (b) establishment of a structure for monitoring the implementation of NSPD; (c) appropriate treatment of all service providers for persons with disabilities in the areas of health, rehabilitation, social services, education, employment, vocational training and entertainment; and (d) active participation of persons with disabilities and their family members in the decision-making processes of impact in their life. The objective for this area is as follows:

Enhancing the capacities of the structures working with/involved in the disability area through establishment of new administrative structures, improvement of the level of the existing structures, and enhancing the capacities of human resources.

### **OUTCOMES**

Reporting of results/outcomes provides information about the progress made in terms of implementation of the NSPD National Action Plan for 2010, by reporting the findings for each planned measure. Despite the fact that the National Action Plan did not include all of the aspects addressed in the NSPD, this report provides additional information about the directions that have not been taken into consideration.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF OBLIGATIONS FOR 2010, DESIGNATION OF FUTURE TASKS**

### **Measures of the Action Plan**

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

*Responsible institution:* MoLSAEO

#### *Findings:*

The structure for Monitoring the National Strategy on People with Disabilities is already established at the central level, and this fact has already been reported in previous reports. In the course of 2010, the decision-making structures at the central level have not met regularly to determine the policies in this particular area, as required by the NSPD. In 2010, the National Council on Disability Affairs has convened only once (instead of three times which is the specific requirement in the Strategy).

The Technical Secretariat of MoLASEO was operational during several months in 2010, to be subject then to a radical restructuring of the managerial and support staff as well as to concrete plans and tasks. Due to this restructuring, the Technical Secretariat has not yet prepared and published the annual report for 2010, and it has not improved on its work for the institutionalization of contact points in all municipalities of the country. Responsible persons for disability issues continue to be active in all central institutions that have a stake in the implementation of the NSPD. A problem continues to be the involvement of these persons in many other issues in the respective institutions that they work for, which leaves the disability issues attention much to be desired.

In the course of 2010, OSCE and the British Council launched an initiative for empowering/strengthening the National Council on Disability Affairs. This initiative was launched in the framework of the project on  $\frac{1}{2}$ Strengthening the Institutional Capacities of the Albanian National Council on Disability Affairs. $\frac{1}{2}$  The purpose of this project was to support the National Council in drafting and formulating its strategic framework, as well as to collect and develop better practices in terms of cooperation, lobbying and advocacy for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

### **Findings: Good 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

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

*Findings:*

The Medical Commission for Determining the Ability to Work (KMCAP) still continues to focus on the medical assessment that determines the right for state benefits for the persons with disabilities. The changes and amendments to law no 9935 "On social assistance and services" in the course of 2010 did not address the necessity for an assessment/evaluation from a multi-disciplinary view point. The proposals made in this law by the civil society on the improvements in light of the establishment of multi-disciplinary commissions for the assessment of the disability, the possibility for a scaled payment according to the degree of severity of the diagnoses and revision of the regulation for the evaluation/assessment of persons with disabilities, based on the International Manual for the Classification of Functioning of disability and health (ICF) were not taken into account.

**Findings: No progress**

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

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

*Findings:*

The Centre of medical expertise at the General Directorate of Social Insurance Institute (SII) has not yet been established. The Social Insurance Institute reports that there is in place a commission for the labour invalids, according to the scheme established since 1993. The representatives of this institution reported that offices have been reconstructed in 35 regional directorates and local agencies of SII, making them more accessible for persons with disabilities and their family members.

**Findings: Some 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 centres.
- (b) Open vocational training courses for the preparation of professionals in the areas of physical, social, psychological and professional rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

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

*Findings:*

The National Employment Service (NES) reports that there have been no specific trainings tailored for the disability area, but these have been mainly in the framework of donor-funded projects. The staff of regional Employment and Vocational Training (VeT) offices have participated in the trainings organized in the context of disability issues. These training sessions have influenced the development of counselling capacities of staff to work with specific groups, including persons with disabilities. Worth mentioning here are the initiatives of Vodafone Albania Foundation and ADRF in Tirana, Durrës, Korça, Elbasan, and Shkodra; Alb Vet in Tirana and Elbasan; State Social Services (through UNFPA) in Durrës and Fier.

There are however no vocational training courses that would provide for the preparation of professionals, who could contribute in the areas of physical, social, psychological, and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

**Findings: Some progress**

**Other important developments**

The Department of Training and Projects at the SSS reports that in the context of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the State Social Service implemented a project on “Establishment of Local Government Units capacities (municipalities/regions) and the staff of the State Social Service for the implementation of standards and legislation in the area of social care.” In the course of 2010, training was organized on the implementation of approved standards for centres

of care for persons with disabilities. The managers, social workers, care givers in the care institutions, as well as the inspectors of State Social Service and the regional offices benefited from a total of 12 days of trainings. The number of participants in the trainings organized in the course of 2010 was 180.

In the context of cooperation with UNFPA, the State Social Service implemented a project on  $\frac{1}{2}$  Local level planning regarding disability rights.  $\frac{1}{2}$  100 representatives of the responsible local institutions on the disability issues in the areas of social services, employment, vocational training, accessibility, and education participated in a six days training held in the cities of Durrës and Fier. To pursue further with this initiative, representatives of local and regional institutions in Durrës and Fier participated in an interactive process for the formulation of the local strategies in the disability area in the respective regions. Strengthening the capacities of the responsible structures in the disability area is part of five objectives and concrete measures in four priority areas of local disability strategies (services, employment and vocational training, education, and accessibility).

In July 2010, UNDP with the support of One UN Coherence Fund, as well as in cooperation with MoLSAEO and ADRF launched a project aimed at strengthening the capacities to reach social inclusion, and to implement the rights of persons with disabilities in Albania, while supporting the ratification of the Disability Rights Convention and its Optional Protocol. One of the components of this project is related to strengthening the capacities of central and local government unit structures, those of the Ombudsman and of the office of the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination, and the civil society to acknowledge and implement the responsibilities deriving from the Disability Rights Convention.

The Ministry of Health reports that in course of 2010, with the support of Caritas Albania, a training of general practitioners in the health care centres (15-20 GPs) in the districts of Shkodra, Kruja and Laç was organized on the specificities of treatment of persons with disabilities in the out-patient care and in their households.

The Albanian National Association of Deaf report that it has pursued training of sign language interpreters in the course of 2010, with the support of the Government of Finland.

In the course of this period, 167 teachers and specialists of the Regional Education Directorates, psychologists of 12 kindergartens and 12 schools in the cities of Vlora, Korça and Gjirokastra were involved in the trainings organized in the context of the projects by the Save the Children. The trainings were aimed at improving working performance with children with disabilities in mainstream kindergartens and schools.

**Discussions**

The measures planned under the National Strategy on People with Disabilities in terms of capacity building do not include all aspects of the definition as submitted in the text of the strategy. To this end, the situation as it is presented in this study is not complete. According to the utilized methodology, the study included only the measures provided for in the National Action Plan. The results indicate that in only one of the planned measures there was progress made, and another one for which there was somewhat progress during 2010. This means that the implementation of measures in this area was at the level of 45%.

Tabela 15: **Capacity building**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Status of progress</b>
1.1 Establish a monitoring structure for the National Strategy on People with Disabilities.	MoLSAEO	Good progress
1.2. establishment and strengthening of new structures at the regional level to conduct the multi-disciplinary (physical, health and social) assessment of persons with disabilities.	MoLSAEO, State Social Service	No progress
1.3. Establishment of the centre of medical expertise at the General Directorate of SII and modernization of the regional directorates (0.5 million Euro).	MoLSAEO Social Insurance Institute	Somewhat progress
1.4. Enhancing the capacities of human resources at the National Employment Service at the central and local levels through organization of trainings to provide psycho-social support to the staff who works in the vocational training centres (VeT Centres). Opening of vocational training courses for the preparation of professionals in the areas of physical, social, psychological and professional rehabilitation and enablement of persons with disabilities.	MoLSAEO National Employment Service	Somewhat progress

## RECOMANDATIONS

Capacity building is a substantial element in achieving success for improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities, and for ensuring their inclusion in the Albanian society. Below are some recommendations that might prove to be helpful in the realization of the objectives assigned under NSPD:

1. Enlargement of the National Council on Disability Affairs, by increasing the number of participants and the range of participants to include actors from the Academia, and organizations that provide services and advocacy;
2. Strengthening/empowering the Council of the Technical Secretariat, in line with the instructions of the report developed by OSCE and the British Council;
3. Adoption of the necessary measures to pursue with the process for the establishment of the network of collaborators with the Technical Secretariat at all levels (central, regional, and local). Planning of financial resources for training of the network members;
4. The process of assessment of the disability should need to change radically in order to guarantee realization and respect of disability rights. Measures should be taken to train the staff involved in the process of assessment;
5. Encouragement and support for introducing new diplomas in higher education in new professions in the disability area such as: job coaching/counsellor for professional rehabilitation, speech, music and art therapist;
6. Planning of financial resources to support systematic training of staff responsible for disability issues at the central, regional and local levels, in line with the initiatives of MoLSAEO in the course of 2010;
7. Promoting the concept of inclusion in all policies, programs, and projects designed for persons with disabilities, and in projects and programs which have an indirect impact on their lives.



## **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 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**

In this area of the Strategy we will consider each measure of these objectives according to the actors responsible for their implementation. It is worth starting upfront with the achievements of the current year. There have been a series of positive developments as regards improvement of the disability legislation. The signature of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability(CRPD) by the Government in 2009, and the strong and expeditious measures towards the ratification of the Convention are

strong indicators of the willingness of the Albanian government to endorse and adopt the Convention. This also will be translated into willingness to adopt legislation, in line with the convention, and which will help eliminate the existing discriminatory practices. Very good work has been done in the fight against discrimination, as well as in terms of increasing access to justice through adoption of legal and sub-legal acts affecting disability area as well. Despite the fact that the adopted legislation is in line with international accepted standards, and it represents a very positive achievement, still a lot remains to be done in terms of execution and enforcement of new legislation in the future. Another aspect that needs to be addressed is the situation of differentiated treatment and legal discrimination among different groups of disabilities.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF 2010 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.

*Responsible institution:* Missing in the action plan

#### *Findings:*

So far, there is no specialized institution in charge solely of disability issues. However, we must make mention of the National Council on Disability Affairs and the Technical Secretariat at the MOLSAEO. According to a consultancy paper drafted with the support of OSCE and the British Council,<sup>30</sup> a lot remains to be done in terms of enhancing the operationability of the National Council. According to this study, one of the reasons behind little progress in terms of implementation of the National Strategy on people with disabilities is also related to the inability of the National Council to convene at the policy-making level.

Even though during 2010 there was no novelty in terms of implementation of this measure, there were still a series of positive developments in terms of introducing legislation in line with the international disability standards.

In this aspect it is worth mentioning the Law on Protection Against Discrimination

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<sup>30</sup> This document is for consultancy purposes only. It does not represent the official opinion of the OSCE Presence in Albania and that of the British Council.

of 04.02.2010. Following the adoption of this law, there are now in place the structures provided for by the law. There is now an Office on Protection against Discrimination, which has immediately started working on issuance of the necessary acts for the proper functioning of the office, and enforcement of the legislation.

Adoption of the law on Legal Aid in 2008 was accompanied in the course of 2010 with the establishment and recruitment of structures envisaged by this law. Now, there is in place a Commission on legal aid, and in cooperation with the civil society<sup>31</sup> there are pending sub-legal acts that will be approved for ensuring the enforcement of this law. It is worth mentioning the role of the civil society in terms of drafting of the necessary sub-legal acts through a transparent and clear process, in cooperation with the legal aid commission. After the adoption of the regulations and sub-legal acts, it is expected to start the work of the legal counselors authorized by this commission for the provision of legal aid for persons included in the social protection schemes, including persons with disabilities.

Another positive initiative, is that related to the change of article 35 of the Law on Social Insurance, on the possibility to get rid of the current statement on non-appealing right to the final decision of the Supreme MCDAW, a proposal that is with the Parliament to get approved. Yet another change in this aspect was the review of the criteria for disability assessment through Note 24.11.2010/ 4913.

In the course of 2010, the Agency for the Support of the Civil Society based on law no 10 093 "On the organization and operation of the Agency for the Support of the Civil Society" of 09.03.2009 has issued grants to the civil society based on the priority areas such as: fight against corruption, fight against trafficking of human beings, domestic violence, organization of different lobbying activities for different vulnerable groups, different initiatives for promoting youth employment etc. according to the data of this agency,<sup>32</sup> 52 civil society organizations have been selected from a wide variety of areas, including organizations active in the disability area.

### **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.

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<sup>31</sup> TLAS as the initiator of the discussions for the formulation of the law on legal aid, during 2010 has taken a series of other initiatives for issuance of sub-legal acts. The round tables organized during this time have had representatives from the civil society, with many years of experience in the area of legal aid.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.amshc.gov.al>.

*Timeframe:* 2005-2006

*Responsible institution:* (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:*

MoLSAEO refers to a study of the Albanian legislation to address disability issues, supported by UNDP. There is in place an inter-ministerial working group that is involved in this study, in cooperation with international experts. This study which is still in draft form aims at identifying the compatibility of the Albanian legislation, to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability and propose interventions to ensure its harmonization and consistency with it.

*Starting from July 2010, for a period of two years is being implemented the project supported by One UN Coherence Fund. The objective of the project is to strengthen local capacity to achieve social inclusion and promote the rights of people with disabilities by supporting Albania to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Optional Protocol.*

*The program is supported by the One UN Coherence Fund and will be implemented by UNDP in collaboration with the Albanian government and civil society partners. Being part of the "One UN", this programme aims to help Albania in its duty to examine the compatibility of laws, policies, institutional structures and the real practice with the lines of CRPD and also the steps needed in the nearest future to prepare for the ratification process. Program activities are inspired and are consistent not only with the principles of the UN, but also with the principles of the EU to promote equal opportunity and nondiscrimination of people with disabilities. The program will work to ensure:*

*Government to undertake necessary legal and policy measures to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - to achieve this, the program will review compliance of policies and legislation with CRPD, will build the capacity of relevant staff to understand the legislative requirements*

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<sup>33</sup> UN Convention on Disability Rights was signed by the Government of Albania in december 22, 2009.

of CRPD and will advocate for ratification. Also, the program will offer technical assistance to build an action plan for implementation and awareness of CRPD as well as to identify the costs of the action plan.

**Status: Some progress**

*Measure 1.3.* Prepare an integral law on disability

*Responsible institution:* (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. However, upon the instruction of the Minister of MoLSAEO, a working group has been established for the formulation of this law. There is no draft available yet, until the final results of the study mentioned in Measure 1.2 on the disability legislation in Albania will be approved, so as to be able to use and fit the recommendations of this study in the formulation of the draft.

**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”

*Responsible institution:* MoPWTT

*Findings:*

This measure is being enforced since 2009 in light of the law on Territorial Planning. This law in six of its articles provides ample space to the issue of accessibility for people with disabilities. The obligation for planning an accessible territory is part of article 1-scope of the law. In addition, in this law the issue of ensuring accessibility of territories is determined as an issue of national importance.

**Status: Very good progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* MoPWT

*Findings:*

MoPWT reports of no achievements during 2010 in the area of transport legislation. However, this Ministry does report that the work for improving the transportation conditions and removal of barriers for persons with disabilities is at the center of attention of the formulation and review of its policies.

**Status: Some progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* MoPWT

*Findings:*

According to MoPWT, the Regulation for “Use of spaces by persons with disabilities” adopted by Decision of Council of Ministers no. 1503, of 19.11.2009 provides also for the technical standards on the means of public transportation to ensure accessibility.

The measures are included in the documentation of the General Directorate of Road Transport Services for the establishment of procedures for ensuring accessibility of individual transportation means for people with disabilities.

Positive developments are tangible in respect of the regulation for parking spaces for people with disabilities, through Decision of Council of Ministers no. 277 of 10.03.2010

**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

*Responsible institution:* MoPWT

*Findings:*

MoPWT reports that there are no amendments envisaged for the Road Code, but there is rather a Regulation no 7 of 0.8.07.2008 of the General Road Directorate that will enable enforcement of this measure. In addition, the regulation “On the use of spaces by people with disabilities” adopted by Decision of Council of Ministers no. 1503 of 19.11.2009 makes provisions for the modified technical rules and instructions for accessible roads.

**Status: Good progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* MoPWT

*Findings:*

There is no special manual, but for the project manual which provides for instructions in terms of establishment of accessibility according to MoPWT, which is part of the regulation “On the use of spaces by people with disabilities” adopted by Decision of Council of Ministers no. 1503 of 19.11.2009 makes provisions for the modified technical rules and instructions 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.

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

*Findings:*

MoES reports of positive movements in this direction. Currently, MoES is waiting for the adoption of the new law “On pre-university education”, in order to pursue with

the issuance of sub-legal acts, which will provide also for the standards envisaged under this measure.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) reports about the technical standards regarding equipments for people with disabilities, which this Ministry has procured, in line with the allocated budgets, and which are supposed to be certified according to European or international standards. The manufacturers of these equipments should comply with ISO standards, while the equipments should meet CE standards.

However there are no specific legal regulations regarding standards for accessible assistive means or teaching kits for persons with disabilities.

**Status: No progress**

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

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

*Findings:*

Persons with disabilities who enjoy the status of the labor invalid or that of paraplegic and tetraplegic person are exempted from customs duties for accessible vehicles for this category of persons with disabilities.

However, there has been positive progress regarding adoption of law no 10 280 of 20.05.2010 (on some changes to law no 9975 of 28.07.2008 “On national taxes”, amended. According to article 5 of this law, war veterans, the labor invalids, the paraplegics and tetraplegics, and blind persons are exempted from taxes when used vehicles are transferred in their ownership. Furthermore, according to article 11/1, the anti-fascist war veterans, blind persons, labor invalids are exempted from: fees for consular services, the tariff for navigation passport issued by the Harbor Master’s Office, tariff for driving license by the General Directorate of Road Transport Services.

However, in practice, not all disability categories benefit from these measures. Only persons with disabilities who enjoy a status according to the legislation in effect are exempted from these duties and tariffs.

**Status: Some 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

*Responsible institution:* (a) Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities/ State Social Service; (b) local government; (c) Health Insurance Institute (HII)

*Findings:*

A positive development regarding the implementation of this measure is the adoption of the Decision of Council of Ministers no. 752 of 08.09.2010 “On standards of care for children in need”.

This Decision provides for training of caretakers of children and adults, providing in particular for concerns and needs of children and adults with health problems, behavioral problems, victims of abuse, and children with disabilities.

The municipal and commune councils are among the responsible institutions and structures, that play a very important role. These entities through formulation of regional policies and identification of financial needs and potential regarding care, make possible the allocation of necessary funds for the care services or other protective alternatives for children.

**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.

*Responsible institution:* (a) MoLSAEO / State Social Service; (b) local government; (c) Health Insurance Institute

*Findings:*

There are no developments with regards to this measure. MoLSAEO is responsible for the establishment of the working group that will be in charge for the formulation of the draft integral law. The issues envisaged under this Measure will be addressed by this working group in the context of this law.

ANAD, the Albanian National Association of Deaf, reports that there are no legal changes regarding sign language interpreters. According to this association, it has not hired any interpreters in its institution.

**Status: No progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* NGOs

*Findings:*

There are no developments regarding this measure. MoLSAEO is responsible for the establishment of the working group for the formulation of the integral draft law and the issues envisaged under this Measure shall be addressed by this working group in charge of this law.

ANAD, the Albanian National Association of Deaf, reports that there are no legal changes regarding sign language interpreters. According to this association, state has not hired any interpreters in its institution.

**Status: No progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* NPO

*Findings:*

ANAD reports that in 2008, thanks to efforts of the MoLSAEO and the National Association of People with hearing impairment (ANAD), there is already being broadcasted a news edition in the Albanian Public Television, but there is still no specific legislation to this effect. This news edition is being broadcasted by the Albanian Public Television (TVSH), and the sign language interpreters are being paid by the institution for this service.

**Status: Some progress**

### **03. Obtaining information**

*Measure 3.1.* Create a statistical database and update it regularly

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

#### *Findings:*

According to MoLSAEO, the information regarding the category of beneficiaries, age, gender, and educational attainment is collected by the local government units, and then is submitted to supervising structures, according to a special agenda. Decision of Council of Ministers no. 617, of 07.09.2006 establishes the system of indicators to be collected. This report provides general data for persons with disabilities, as well as data regarding their economic and social situation, and their needs. The Ministry of Education and Sciences gathers and publishes data regarding only special education.

The sector of statistics of the Ministry of Health every year collects morbidity data based on International Classification of Diseases (ICD), and in the relevant chapters are described the pathologies that lead to disabilities. There are no statistical banks for new disability cases.

Municipalities collect data on regular bases regarding disability benefits.

INSTAT publishes data on regular bases regarding beneficiaries of disability payments, and invalidity pensions.

Different disability organizations/associations possess data in line with disability for which they are assigned, but these data are only for internal purposes of these associations, and their membership.

#### **Status: Some progress**

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

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



#### **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

*Responsible institution:* (a) National Observatory for Disabled Persons; (b) NGOs

*Findings:*

National Observatory for People with Disabilities provides data and publishes annual reports.

NGOs have fragmented data bases, depending on the area of their speciality or engagement. These data bases are maintained and processed mainly for the internal purposes of these organizations.

**Status: little progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* (a) Ministry of Health; (b) NGOs

*Findings:*

According to MoH, the annual statistical reports prepared by the Statistics Department in this Ministry, are based on the forms prepared by INSTAT, which contain data about the type, frequency and geographical distribution of the disabilities.

**Status: Some 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.

*Responsible institution:* NGOs

*Findings:*

None of the NGOs that participated in this study is involved or has information about the work done to this end. There has been no publication produced.

**Status: No progress**

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

*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 has provided any information regarding the preparation of the list of disabilities and their classification according to possible social restrictions.

**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

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

*Findings:*

The responsible institutions for the implementation of this Measure are determined in broad terms in the action plan.

Different organizations of the civil society publish periodical reports with information about issues related to rehabilitation, integration, legal framework, and rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities, and other types of publications.

The association “NdiHmoni Jetën”<sup>34</sup> publishes a journal called “Jeta” in regular bases; the association of Blind Persons in Albania publishes a journal

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<sup>34</sup> Help life- translator’s note.

called “Drita e zërit”; CARITAS Albania publishes a bulletin called “Dimension”; ADRF publishes a biannual magazine called “Sfida”<sup>35</sup> and updates the publication on ‘the Albanian Legislation in the disability area’. ADRF has published other types of publications such as: different Guides to come to the assistance of persons with disabilities in understanding the meaning of the disability legislation, information leaflets on: services, education, employment, accessibility for people with disabilities etc.

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

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

*Findings:*

There is no strategy, but there is increased Media attention on disability issues.

**Status: Some progress**

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

*Responsible institution:* (a) local government units; (b) NGOs

*Findings:*

At the multi-purpose center called TEN, in Tirana was organized a fair with crafts and works of people with disabilities, with the participation of organizations active in the disability area.

The municipality of Elbasan almost every year organizes fairs with works and crafts

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<sup>35</sup> The challenge- translator’s note.

of persons with disabilities of Balashe center. At the same time, this municipality this year launched different initiatives in the disability area, such as courses for blind people through computer training etc.

In the municipality of Korça a fair was organized with works and crafts of ATELIE. Also there has been a personal exhibition of an autistic painter, E.V.

**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

*Responsible institution:* MoLSAEO

*Findings*

MoLSAEO does not have information with regard to this activity.

**Status: No progress**

**DISCUSSION**

As mentioned above, there have been several improvements introduced to the legal framework. The adoption of the law “On protection against discrimination”, “On legal aid”, and the integration of disability issues in different aspects of the legislation mark positive developments towards guarantying equality. However, it will take some time for these acts to become effective.

The necessary acts and regulations for their adoption are already in place. However, some changes and amendments which are considered substantial and essential for the disability area are still at their early phases. Here, we can mention the reform in the process of evaluation, formulation of the integral law or studies in the disability area legislation, which are still in their preparatory phase. During 2010, there have been no changes related to the above mentioned.

Table 16: **Improvements in the legislation to ensure equality**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
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.	MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health, MOES, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice	Some progress
1.3. Prepare an integral law on disability	MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health, MOES, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice	Some progress
1.4. Include an article that guarantee the inclusion of accessibility standards in all new constructions in the law "On Urban Planning"	MoPWTT	Very good progress
1.5. Improve the existing transport legislation with the goal of making it accessible for disabled persons.	MOPWTT	Some progress
1.6. Establish technical standards on the means of public transportation to ensure accessibility	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	MOPWTT	Good progress
1.8. Prepare a Manual on how to make roads accessible for disabled persons	MOPWTT	Good progress

As regards implementation of the objective for ensuring access and simplification of procedures, it is worth mentioning the adoption of social care standards. This is a very important document which is in part related to the implementation of the measure envisaged under this objective. As regards improvement of services delivered for different disability categories there have been no initiatives.

**Table 17: Legislation for ensuring access and simplification of procedures**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
2.1. Prepare the respective legislation on the technical standards of adaptive equipment and teaching aids for children and students.	MOES 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.	MOLSAEO / State Social Service; MoES; NGOs	Some 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	MOLSAEO / SSS Local government SII	Some progress
2.3.b. Create the legal framework which ensures services which are free or at	MOLSAEO / SSS Local government	No progress

reduced prices for basic needs of people with sensory impairments such as readers, guides and sign-language interpreters.	SII	
2.4. Improve the legislation to support disability NGOs to provide rehabilitation services.	NGOs	Some Progress
2.5. Ensure the legal framework for the sign language broadcast of a five-minute news bulletin.	NGOs	Some Progress

A positive step is that launched by INSTAT with the introduction of a specific item list in the Census questionnaire. It is still difficult to procure statistical indicators regarding the prevalence and frequency of different disability categories, and students with disabilities integrated in mainstream education. The statistical data on people with disabilities continue to be based on the disability payment criteria or are placed in the context of social protection schemes. There are no studies with statistical data that would enable a more comprehensive picture, with diverse disability indicators.

Table 18: **Statistical data**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
3.1 Create a statistical database and update it regularly	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.	MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health , INSTAT National Observatory for Persons with Disabilities	Good progress
3.3. Establish a registry of people with disability with data from the Census.	INSTAT	Very good Progress

Public institutions have made several steps in their research work regarding economic, social, and rehabilitation issues of people with disabilities, as described in Measures 4.1-4.4. the studies are however fragmented.

Table 19: **Research**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
4.1. Establishment of a data base on the health, social and economic status of (a) hemophilic persons, and (b) cancer patients.	National disability observatory NGOs	Little progress
4.2. Conduct of studies on the prevalence and incidence of different types of disabilities.	Ministry of Health NGOs	Some progress
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.	NGOs	No progress
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.	MoES, MOLSAEO, Ministry of Health local government NGOs	No progress

NGOs have had a major share in the implementation of this objective. Financial support was possible only thanks to international donors. There have been a series of publications in different fields of the disability area. Some of these publications were possible thanks to the cooperation with the relevant public institutions.

Table 20: **Publications in the disability rights area**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
5.1. Publish periodical leaflets and information material regarding rehabilitation, integration, legislation, rights and freedoms of disabled persons, etc.	NGOs	Some progress

None of the measures described as necessary under objective six “Support for educational programs against discrimination of people with disabilities” has been achieved. There has been some progress as regards implementation of educational programs against discrimination of people with disabilities. Several local fairs have been organized, together with workshops and trainings by the civil society, in the context of different programs in the fight against discrimination.

Table 21: **Educational programs**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Responsible institutions</b>	<b>Progress status 2010</b>
6.1. Collaborate with the Media, to build a cooperation strategy regarding the coverage disability issues, and accessibility of people with disabilities to information	State structures; NGOs Media	Some progress
6.2. Promote the creational initiatives of disabled persons through annual fairs with their products	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	MOLSAEO	No progress by the responsible institutions

Of the measures envisaged in this area, 25% of them have not been implemented at all; in two of the measures ( 8% ) there has been very good progress, and in 67% there has been good or somewhat progress.

## **RECOMANDATIONS**

From the above mentioned, we may conclude that there is clear need for interventions in almost all of the measures envisaged under this objective. The signature of the CRPD represents a lot of obligations and challenges. It seems that the responsible ministries, for the most part of the implementation of the measures, and in the context of the Convention on Disability Rights, are aware of the need for expediting the process of improving the legislation, in order to ensure its harmonization with the Convention on disability rights. However, still a lot remains to be done in this aspect.

1. There is need to expedite the process of the analyses for ensuring harmonization of the Albanian legislation with the standards and articles of the CRPD. To this end, it is necessary that in addition to the establishment of a working group with experts of the area, there should be better coordination between MoLSAEO, as a leading agency in this process and the other responsible ministries. The working group established to this end should have in place a working plan, with clear responsibilities and properly defined deadlines.
2. MoPWT should foster the improvement of legislation, in particular as regards the implementation of the existing legislation and sub-legal acts, and in terms of establishing the linking chains and coordinating the work with the local government institutions.
3. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Interiors should draft and adopt the necessary sub-legal acts, which guarantee implementation of the existing disability legislation in the relevant areas.
4. Decision-making structures of the local government units shall draft and adopt local acts, in line with basic legislation. In addition, the local government units should undertake more initiatives for the community of people with disabilities in their constituencies.
5. Line ministries should collect statistical data, while not limiting them only to cash benefits for disabilities, but expanding the disability data in order to make use of the data for a comprehensive and full evaluation of the reality in the disability area. This evaluation would help in an accurate identification of the needs, for drafting more efficient policies and laws in the future to respond to them.
6. MoLSAEO, MoH, NGOs will need to have in place a concrete action plan for the conduct of studies in the disability area.
7. MoLSAEO should support and cooperate with NGOs that are active in the disability area, in their monitoring and research initiatives in the disability area.

## **CONSUMERS SPEAK OUT: THE RESULTS OF THE 2010 SURVEY WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS**

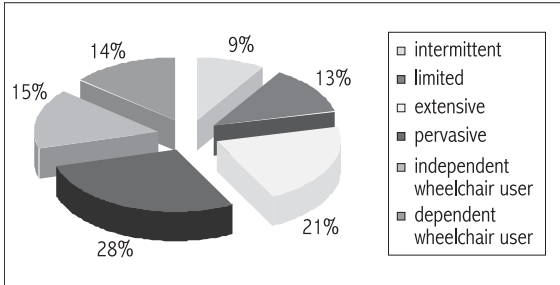
A quantitative – qualitative survey was conducted in six regions of Albania with persons with disabilities and family members to measure the impact of the NSPD and its action plan on quality of life of them and their family members. The survey aimed to measure the perception of people with disability and their family members on the implementation of the action plan of NSPD. The survey focused on the main areas of the action plan, namely: 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 February-March 2011.

### **METHODOLOGY**

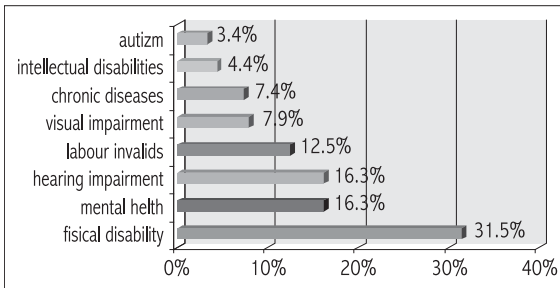
#### **Participants**

The number of participants in the survey was 1025 persons, 571 (55.7%) were people with disabilities and 454 (44.3%) were family members (parents or siblings). Both genders were represented, with a slight overrepresentation of males (n=555, 54.1%). The people with disabilities were of various group ages and needed different levels of support, as show in figure 1; participants also represented various disability categories (see figure 2).

**Figure 1. Level of Support Needed**

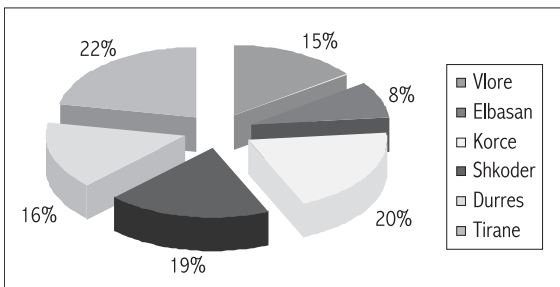


**Figure 2. Categories of Disabilities Represented**



Efforts were made to have proportionate representation of regions included in the survey as compared to their overall population, (see figure 3). The majority of participants, almost two third (63.3%, n=648) lived in cities, the rest in rural areas.

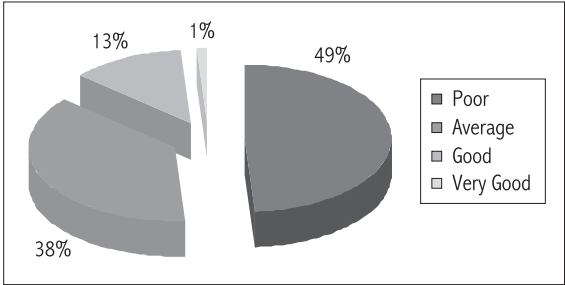
**Figure 3. Regional Representation**



The number of interviewed people living in poverty was high: almost half of the participants (48.8%) described their status as being poor and only 12% (i.e. one in nine

respondents) described their living conditions as being good or very good. See figure 4 for more information.

Figure 4. **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 s the Albanian school grade system: four is a failing grade, five is a very mere pass and assessment with 10 is extraordinary). Below, there is a model of the questions asked:

---

To what extent do you assess as	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No
accessible the public and								InformationN/A
private services, like ministries,								
the offices at local government								
level, the courts, employment								
offices, voting centers for you or								
your family member's member								
who is a wheelchair user or that								
has sensory limitations? What								
grade would describe this								
situation								

---

In the end the participants were asked to identify three unmet needs. The questionnaire used in 2010 was the same as the one used in 2008 and 2009. 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.

### **Selection of participants**

The participants were people with disabilities and family members from six regions in the country: Tirane, Durres, Vlore, Shkoder, Korce and Elbasan. They were selected with the assistance of the disability organizations, the offices of social services in the respective municipalities, disability service providers. To protect the identity of the participants, the questionnaires were anonymous and no personal information was collected. The first page of the questionnaire explained that participation in this survey was voluntary.

### **Data Processing**

The quantitative data of the questionnaire were processed with SPSS. The charts were prepared in Excel program. The qualitative data were studied based on themes and sub themes. Frequencies were also calculated to define the rate of needs expressed.

## **RESULTS**

The results follow the same sequence as the areas of the Action Plan.

### **Accessibility**

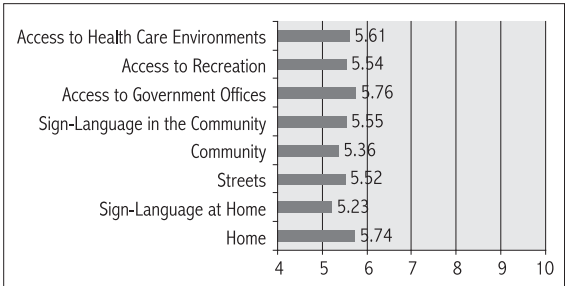
Eight (8) of questions of the survey were about the perception of the accessibility of various environments primarily for wheelchair users and people with sensory impairments. Accessibility continues to be a major area of concern for people with disability and their family members. The mean grade that participants have given to accessibility was 5.49. Though the mean grade for all accessibility elements resulted to be slightly higher the change was relatively low (the difference is

0.23). As shown in figure 6, 7 and 8, the questions related to accessibility have been given a slightly higher grade compared to 2009. Most noticeable improvement remains with indicators related to the entrance of some of the main local and central government institutions, some court houses and public schools. The following charts (figure 7-14) illustrate the distribution of grades for every aspect of accessibility. It is disturbing to see that almost half of the respondents assessed the situation with a failing grade (4) or with a mere pass (5).

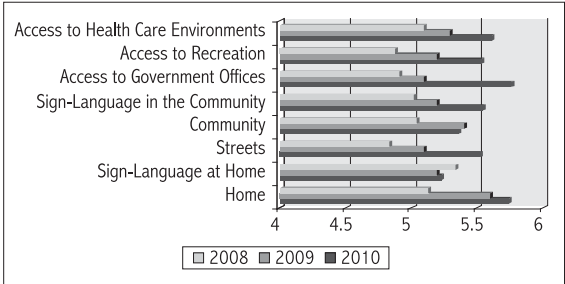
The majority of failing grade was given to the area of use of sign language interpretation at home and the area with the least failing grades was accessibility in public institutions.

These results show that most of people with severe mobility disabilities, with severe mobility, visual or language impairments feel isolated and excluded.

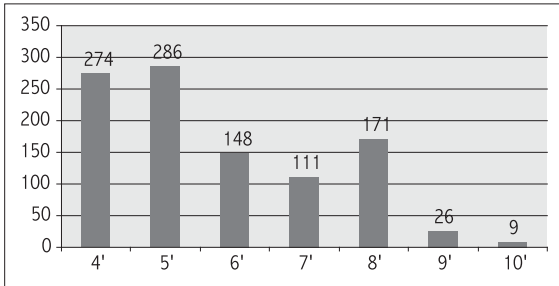
**Figure 5. Accessibility Mean Grades for 2010**



**Figure 6. Comparison of Accessibility Mean Grades for 2008 and 2009 and 2010**

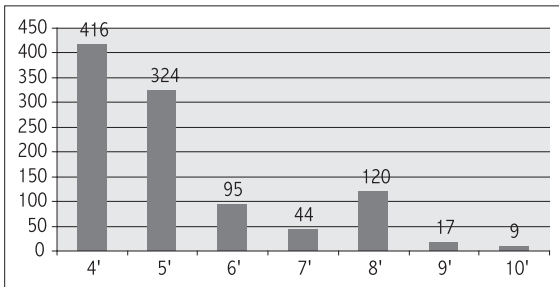


**Figure 7. Home Accessibility**



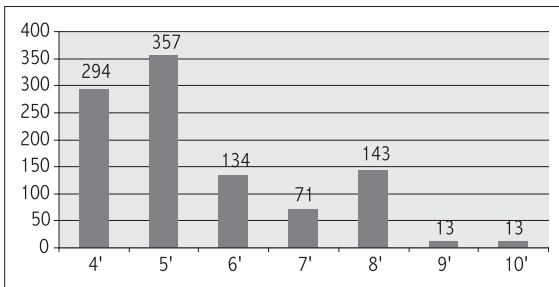
Note. The main statistical indicators are: N=1025, M=5.74, SD=1.55.

**Figure 8. Use of Sign Language at Home**



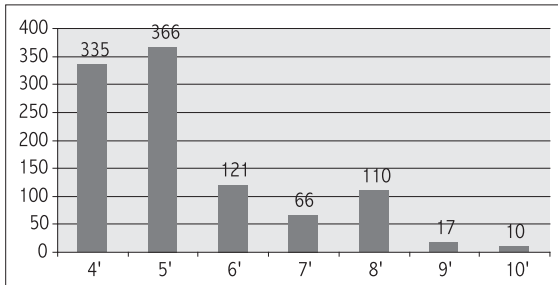
Note. The main statistical indicators are: N=1025, M=5.23, SD=1.48.

**Figure 9. Accessibility of Streets**



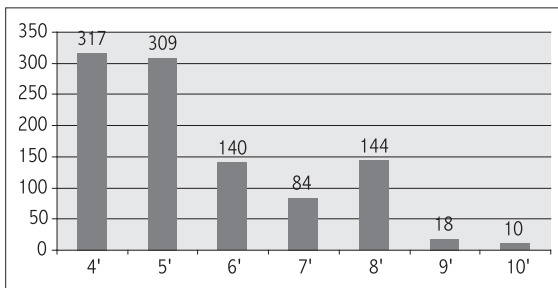
Note. The main statistical indicators are: N=1025, M=5.52, SD=1.48.

Figure 10. **Accessibility of the Community**



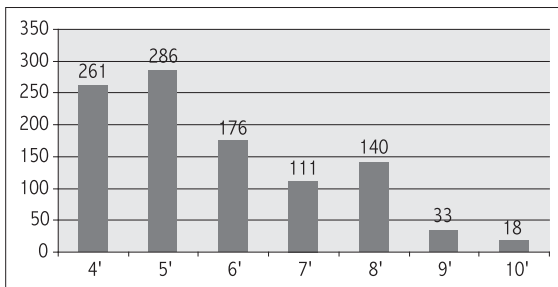
Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.36$ ,  $SD=1.43$ .

Figure 11. **Use of Sign Language in the Community**



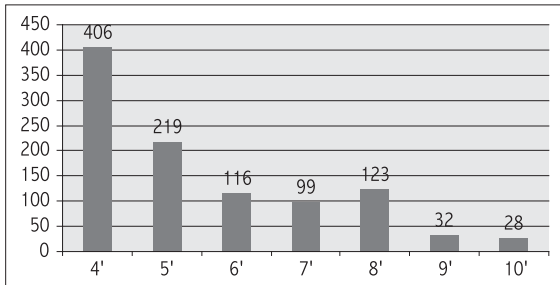
Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.55$ ,  $SD=1.53$ .

Figure 12. **Accessibility of Government Offices**



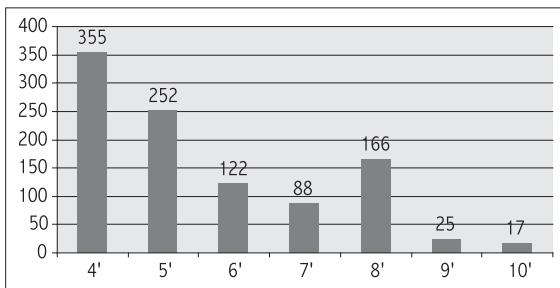
Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.76$ ,  $SD=1.57$ .

**Figure 13. Accessibility of recreational environments**



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.54$ ,  $SD=1.70$ .

**Figure 14. Accessibility of Health Care Environments**



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.61$ ,  $SD=1.64$ .

### **Medical and Social Services**

The participants in the survey were asked to grade the current situation related to the six areas of the National Action Plan in the area of medical and social services.

The group of questions received a mean grade of 5.9 which was the same with that of the previous year. To assess the perception on services for the year 2010, the moda grade is 5 (a mere pass). Figure 15 illustrates the data for 2010, whereas figure 16 provides an opportunity for comparison of data between 2008, 2009 and 2010. As illustrated in figures 17-22, for every aspect of services there is a high number of failing grades or mere 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.

Figure 15. Mean Grades per Area of medical and Social Services

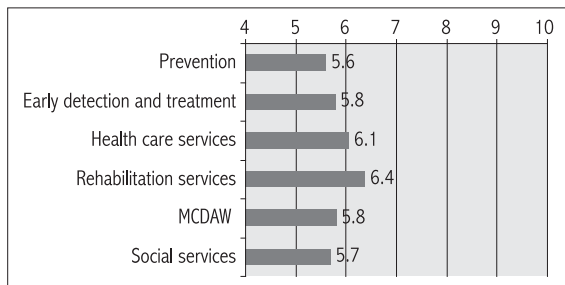


Figure 16. Comparison of Means between 2008, 2009 and 2010 (Medical and Social Services)

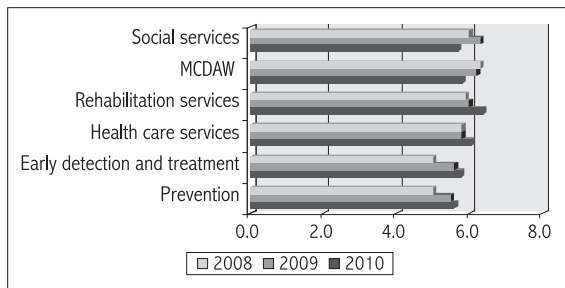
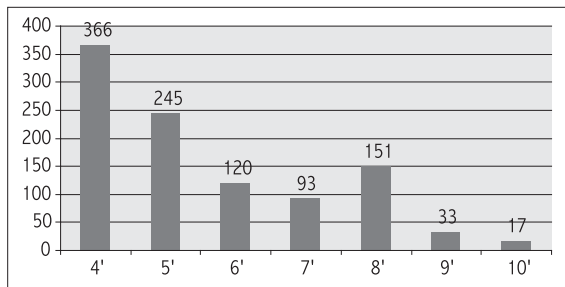
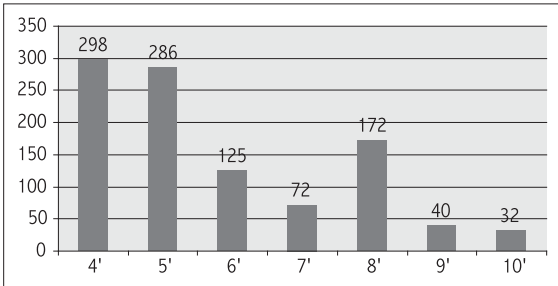


Figure 17. Prevention



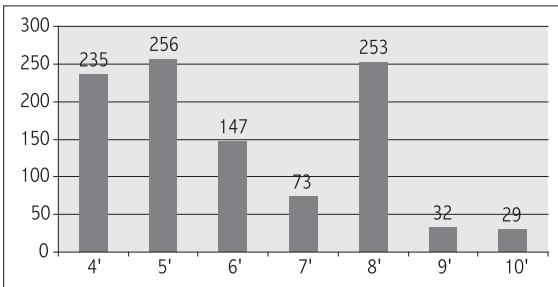
Note. The main statistical indicators are  $N = 1025$ ,  $M = 5.60$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ .

**Figure 18. Early Identification and Treatment**



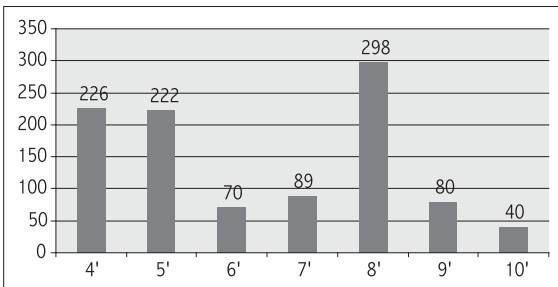
Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.79$ ,  $SD=1.73$ .

**Figure 19. Health Care Services**



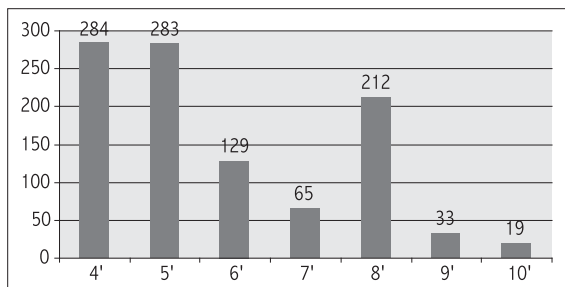
Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=6.06$ ,  $SD=1.72$ .

**Figure 20. Rehabilitation Services**



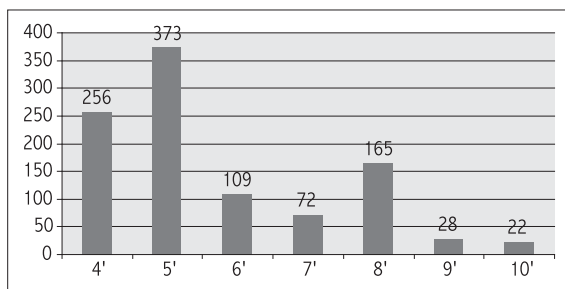
Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=6.40$ ,  $SD=1.876$

Figure 21. **Medical Commission for Determination of Ability for Work (MCDAW)**



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M= 5.82$ ,  $SD= 1.68$ .

Figure 22. **Social Services**



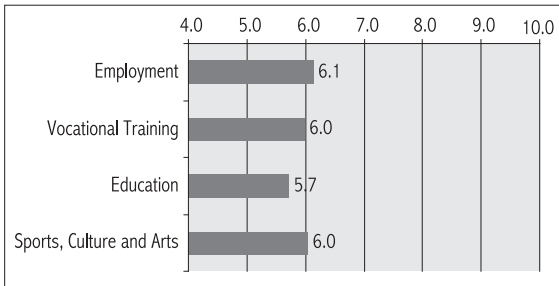
Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.70$ ,  $SD= 1.60$ .

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

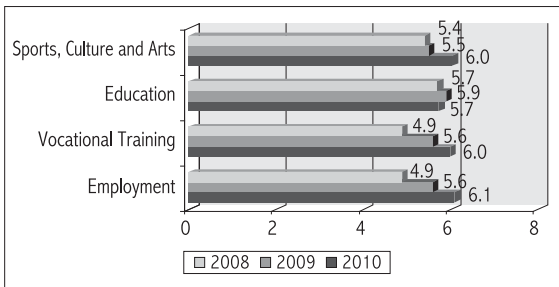
Each of these aspects of the lives of people with disabilities received a passing grade in 2010, as figure 23 indicates. It is obvious that in three out of four areas in figure 23, there is a slight raise in assessment in 2010. A slight decrease compared to 2009 is noticed in the area of education. This can be explained by the fact that in 2010, respondents were not selected through special schools, as was the case in 2009. However, of concern is the fact that in all the areas, more than 50% of the participants were very unsatisfied with the situation as was indicated by the frequency of the failing grade or mere passing grade. As shown in figure 24, the numbers are somewhat higher than in 2009, but opportunities for education, employment and

vocational training are still very low and the efforts for inclusion of people with disability in cultural, artistic and sports activities is considered as inadequate.

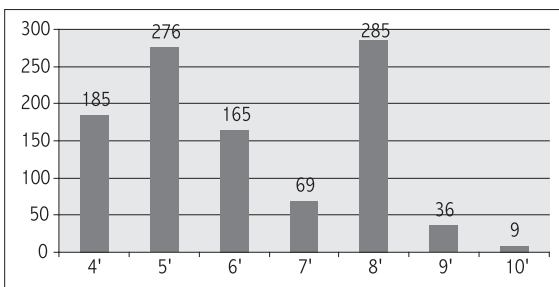
**Figure 23. Mean Grades per Area (Employment, Vocational Training, Education, Participation in Cultural, Artistic and Sports Activities)**



**Figure 24. Comparison between 2008, 2009 and 2010 (Employment, Vocational Training, Education, Participation in Cultural, Artistic and Sports Activities)**

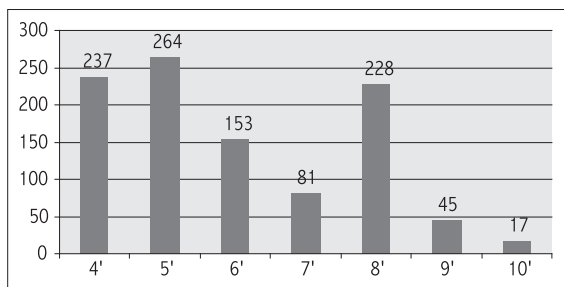


**Figure 25. Opportunities for Employment**



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M= 5.55$ ,  $SD= 1.55$ .

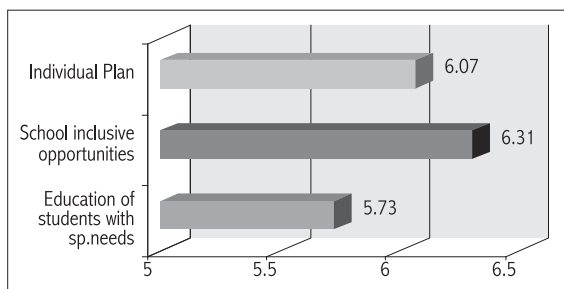
Figure 26. Vocational Education and Training



Note. The main statistical indicators:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=6$ ,  $SD=1.67$ .

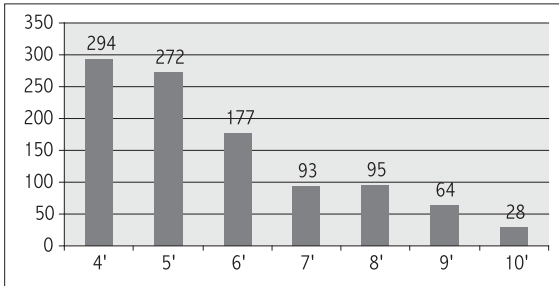
While the three questions related to education received a mean grade of 6.2 (0.3 higher than the assessment in 2009), there were small differences in the mean grades for specific questions related to this area (figure 27). Respondents with disabilities and their family members are less satisfied with opportunities for education for special needs students.

Figure 27. Mean Grades for Questions Related to Education



The grade most frequently given with relation to the quality of special education was 4, a failing grade ( $n=294$ , 28.7%). It is disturbing finding that shows that one in four persons are totally unsatisfied with the quality of education of children with special needs. Figure 28 illustrates the findings.

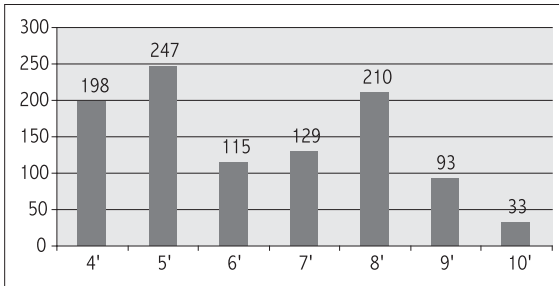
**Figure 28. Education**



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.73$ ,  $SD=1.67$ .

As shown in figure 29, about one of five of the respondents (19.3 %) think that schools do not give to students with disability inclusive opportunities in equal bases to their peers.

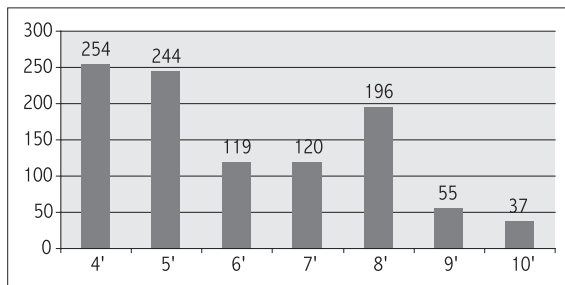
**Figure 29. Inclusive opportunities in schools**



Note. The main statistical indicators are  $N=1025$ ,  $M=6.31$ ,  $SD=1.78$ .

The work with the Individual Education Plan remains at the same level for the year 2010 as those in 2009. The mean grade was 6.07. Still what is noticed in the results of 2010 is the increase of grading with a failing grade (22.7% in 2009; 24.8% in 2010). One in four persons remains unsatisfied with the process of working with Individual Educational Plans with children with special needs, but still one in four is in general unsatisfied with the whole process. For a more specific information see figure 30.

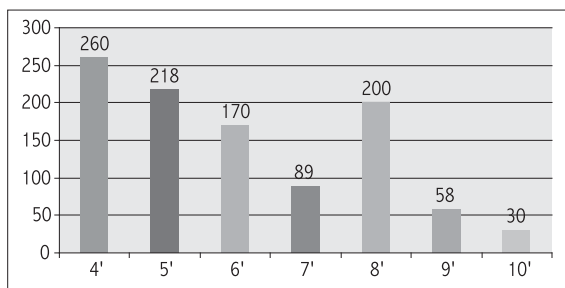
Figure 30. Individual Education Plan



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=6.07$ ,  $SD=1.78$ .

Participation in sports, and artistic and cultural activities received a mean grade of 6.04, marking difference of 0.54 compared to the year 2009. It is worth to mention that one in four respondents (25.4%) were of the opinion that people with disability were excluded. One in three of the respondents (31.3%) feel that people with disabilities are excluded. (figure 31).

Figure 31. Participation in sports, artistic and cultural activities



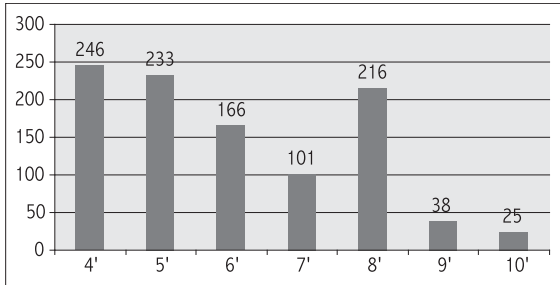
Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=6.04$ ,  $SD=1.75$ .

### 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 that deal with issues in various job positions like teachers, social workers, day and residential care staff, staff at the municipalities, labor offices and the ministries, the respondents gave it a passing grade: 6.02, which results to be higher than that of the year 2009 (5.73). Despite a slight

increase in the mean grade it should be noted that 24% of the interviewed persons (one in four persons) assessed this area with a failing grade as shown in figure 32.

**Figure 32. Staff Expertise**

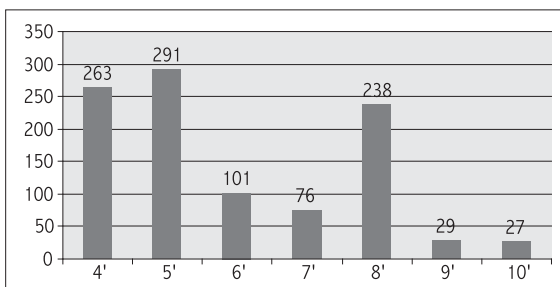


Note. The main statistical indicators:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=6.02$ ,  $SD=1.69$ .

**Legislation, Research, Equality and Non-Discrimination**

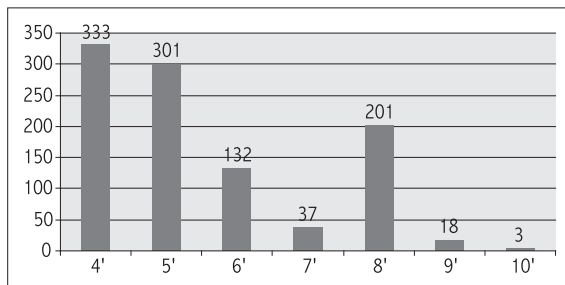
The current legislation that covers issues related to people with disabilities got a passing grade: 5.93, which is slightly higher than the assessment done for the same question in 2009 (5.91). The participants were less satisfied with the number and quality of published studies in the field of disabilities in 2010 (mean grade=5.55) compared to that of 2009 (a mean grade of 6.00). However, for both categories, there are a large number of people who were very unsatisfied with the situation. One in four (respectively 5.7%,  $n=263$ ) assessed the situation of the disability legislation with a failing grade and one in three respondents (32.59%,  $n=333$ ) assessed the scientific research very negatively/failing grade.

**Figure 33. Legislation**



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

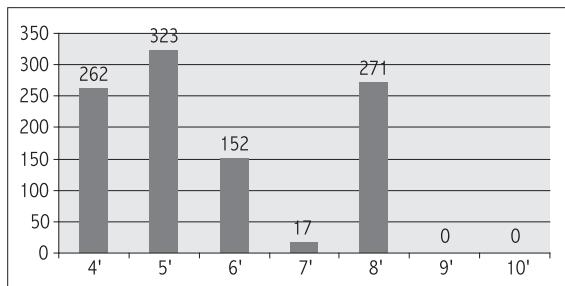
Figure 34. **Research**



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.93$ ,  $SD=1.72$ .

One fourth of participants (25.6%) thinks that people with disabilities are discriminated against and they are not treated as equals in the Albanian society. No one from the respondents gave it a good grade of a 9 or 10. This is an indicator of the fact that people with disability and their family members continue to remain one of the most marginalized groups in the Albanian society and insufficient efforts have been taken to protect and guarantee their rights within human rights framework.

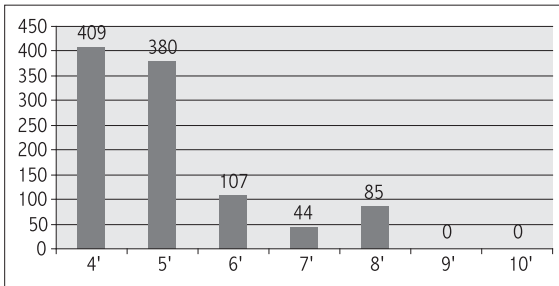
Figure 35. **Equality and non-discrimination**



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.71$ ,  $SD=1.54$ .

39.9% feel that they are not considered as partners in the decision making process at the municipality/commune, region or respective ministry level. The mean grade for this question is 5.04, lower than the mean grade for the same question in year 2009 (5.26). The frequency distribution of all grades is given in figure 36 below.

**Figure 36. Level of the respect of opinion in Decision Making**



Note. The main statistical indicators are:  $N=1025$ ,  $M=5.04$ ,  $SD=1.19$ .

**Comparison of Data between 2010, 2009, 2010**

The table below offers data of statistical analysis of the mean scores for the year 2008, 2009 and 2010. It is noteworthy that the mean score for 2010 is slightly higher than that of 2009 (the difference is 0.16). It's also obvious from the table that this difference is slightly lower than that between year 2009 and 2008 (0.31). The mean grades for 17 questions (68%) are statistically significantly higher than those of a year ago. This indicates that though institutions are working for implementation of the NSPD and people with disability and their family members are feeling the impact, the progress is still at low rates.

**Table 22: Data of statistical analyses of the mean scores for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010**

	2008		2009		2010		Difference between 2010,2009, and 2008
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
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	5.74	1.44	+0.14

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	5.23	1.46	-0.07
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	5.52	1.48	-0.16
4.	How accessible are the day care center/ school/ work environment for you or your family member who is a wheelchair user or has a visual impairment? What grade would describe this situation?	5.05	1.23	5.40	1.38	5.36	1.43	-0.04
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	5.55	1.53	+0.32
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	4.91	0.96	5.06	1.20	5.76	1.57	+0.7

wheelchair user or has a sensory impairment? What grade would describe this situation?

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	5.54	1.70	+03
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	5.61	1.64	+029
9.	What grade would describe the work done in Albania for the prenatal prevention of disabilities?	5.00	1.17	5.52	1.45	5.6	1.56	+008
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	5.79	1.73	+022
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	6.06	1.72	+028
12.	What grade would describe the satisfaction with	5.06	1.70	6.03	1.64	6.40	1.87	+037

habilitative and rehabilitative services (such as physical and speech therapy)?

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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   5.82   1.68   -0.37

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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   5.7   1.60   -0.53

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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   5.73   1.67   -0.21

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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   6.31   1.78   +0.49

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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   6.07   1.78   +0.2

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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   6.04   1.75   +0.52

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19. What grade would describe your satisfaction with opportunities of people with disabilities for vocational training at vocational schools or professional training courses?	4.90	1.35	5.33	1.26	6	1.67	+0.67
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	6.13	1.61	+0.58
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	5.93	1.72	+0.02
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	5.55	1.55	-0.45
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	6.02	1.69	+0.29
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	5.71	1.54	+0.66

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?

484 126 526 132 504 119 -0.22

<b>Total</b>	<b>5.29</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.76</b>	<b>+0.16</b>
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Participants in the survey, people with disability and their family members, were requested through an open question to write on their three most priority needs.

The great number of responses offered by the two groups participating in the survey (1371 needs listed by people with disability and 1164 needs listed by their parents and other family members) show that there are a lot of unfulfilled rights of people with disability outlined in all areas of the NSPD.

Table 23 indicates the basic and priority needs of people with disability and their family members, in compliance with the areas of the Action Plan of the NSPD. As noticed, the need for services is being considered as a priority, a must need by people with disability (28,6%, n=393), as well as by their family members (31,7%, n=370). Though the need for higher disability payments gets a considerable proportion/percentage, what's significant is the fact that alongside with payment participants in the survey consider as unfulfilled needs many other issues related to education, employment and vocational training, accessibility etc. (see Table 23).

Table 23: **Priority needs for people with disability and their family members**

<b>Needs</b>	<b>People with disability</b>	<b>Family members</b>
Services	28.6%	31.7%
Accessibility	15.3%	3.78%
Higher disability payments	12.5%	23.4%
Employment and vocational training	9.5%	10.4%
Better laws	7.5%	16.8%
Health care	11.8%	6%
Education	8.7%	3.6%
Housing	6.1%	3.9%

## **Conclusions**

The results of 2010 survey show that people with disabilities and their families still belong to most vulnerable groups of the Albanian society. They feel isolated and suffer from poverty, and the society they belong to, has yet to erase barriers in the environment and in attitudes. The social, medical, educational and employment services for them are scarce and of a poor quality. The opinion of people with disability is not respected. Most of the areas (76%) got a mere pass (5) and only six areas got a better grade of 6. These results indicate that the Action Plan of NSPD has not yet been effective in considerably improving the quality of lives of people with disabilities and their family members.

## **ANNEX 1**

### 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 Housing Agency/NHA
5. MEDPAK
6. ANAD
7. Regional Department of NHA Vlore
8. Regional Department of NHA Shkoder
9. Regional Department of Public Vocational Training, Elbasan
10. Vlore Regional Department of Health
11. Elbasan Regional Department of Health
12. Vlore Municipality
13. Tirana Municipality
14. Durres Municipality
15. Elbasan Municipality
16. Korca 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. Regional Office of Social State Service
6. Municipality of Tirana
7. Municipality of Durres
8. Municipality of Korca
9. Municipality of Elbasan

10. Municipality of Shkodra
11. Municipality of Vlora
12. Regional Department of Health Vlore
13. Regional Department of Health Elbasan
14. Regional Department of Health Shkoder
15. Regional Department of Health Korce
16. Regional Department of Health Durres
17. Regional Department of Education Korce
18. Regional Department of Education Elbasan
19. Regional Department of Education Vlore
20. Regional Department of Social Insurance Institute Shkoder
21. Regional Department of Social Insurance Institute Vlore
22. Regional Department of Social Insurance Institute Durres
23. Regional Department of Health Insurance Institute Elbasan
24. Regional Department of Health Insurance Institute Vlore
25. Regional Department of Health Insurance Institute Shkoder
26. Regional Department of Health Insurance Institute Korce
27. Health Insurance Institute
28. Social Insurance Institute
29. Albanian national Association of Deaf
30. MEDPAK
31. Regional Department of State Social Service, Elbasan
32. Regional Department of State Social Service, Korce
33. Regional Department of State Social Service, Vlore
34. Regional Department of State Social Service, Shkoder

### **III. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

1. Municipality of Tirana
2. Municipality of Durres
3. Municipality of Korca
4. Municipality of Elbasan
5. Municipality of Shkodra
6. Municipality of Vlora
7. Regional Department of Education Shkoder
8. Regional Department of Education Vlore
9. Regional Department of Education Elbasan
10. Regional Department of National Employment Service Vlore
11. Regional Department of National Employment Service Elbasan
12. Regional Department of National Employment Service Tirane
13. Regional Department of National Employment Service Durres

14. Regional Department of National Employment Service Shkoder
15. Regional Department of National Employment Service Korce
16. Albanian Disability Rights Foundation
17. Social Insurance Institute
18. Ministry of Education and Science
19. Ministry of Labour Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
20. Save the Children
21. MEDPAK
22. Albanian National Association of Deaf
23. National Employment Service
24. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Durres
25. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Shkoder
26. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Elbasan
27. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Korce
28. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Vlore

#### **IV. CAPACITY BUILDING**

1. ADRF (Albanian Disability Rights Foundation)
2. State Social Service
3. Institute of Social Insurance
4. Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunity
5. Regional Office of Social State Service Elbasan
6. Regional Office of Social State Service Shkoder
7. Shkoder Regional Office of Social Insurance
8. Vlore Regional Office of Social Insurance
9. Durres Regional Office of Social Insurance

#### **V. LEGISLATION AND RESEARCH**

1. Municipality of Tirana
2. Municipality of Durres
3. Municipality of Korca
4. Municipality of Elbasan
5. Municipality of Shkodra
6. Municipality of Vlora
7. Antena Nord
8. Regional Department of Health Shkoder
9. Regional Department of Health Korce
10. Regional Department of Health Elbasan
11. Regional Department of Health Durres
12. Regional Department of Health Vlore

13. Regional Department of Health Insurance Institute Durres
14. Regional Department of Health Insurance Institute Vlore
15. Regional Department of Health Insurance Institute Shkoder
16. Albanian Disability Rights Foundation
17. Health Insurance Institute
18. Ministry of Health
19. Ministry of Interior
20. Ministry of Finance
21. Ministry of Justice
22. Ministry of Education and Science
23. Ministry of Labour Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
24. Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication
25. National Observatory of Handicap
26. Radio Shkodra
27. MEDPAK
28. Social State Service
29. Albanian National labour Invalids
30. Albanian National Association of Deaf
31. TV Rozafa
32. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Durres
33. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Shkoder
34. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Elbasan
35. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Korce
36. Regional Office of Institute of Social Insurance Vlore
37. Elbasan Regional Office of Social Services
38. Korce Regional Office of Social Services
39. Vlore Regional Office of Social Services
40. ADRF (Albanian Disability Rights Foundation)

## ANNEX 2

SAMPLES OF GOVERNMENT PAPERWORK RELATED TO THE STUDY

**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA**  
**MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIR AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**  
**SOCIAL STATE SERVICE**  
**DIRECTORATE OF TRAINING, PROJECTS AND STATISTICS**

“ Durrresi” Street, 83, Tirane,

[www.shshs.gov.al](http://www.shshs.gov.al)

Prot. No.... 179/1Prot Tirana, on 09/02/2011

Subject: Information

To: Albanian Disability Rights Foundation

Tirana

Appreciating the cooperation we have had so far with the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation, the Social State Service enables you the communication with the institution’s representative contact person, Ms. Teuta Heba ([tpanariti@yahoo.com](mailto:tpanariti@yahoo.com)), Chief of the Statistics Department, who on behalf of the project “Promoting and Protecting the Rights of People with Disability, will provide you with necessary statistical information that our institution elaborates.

Thank You for the cooperation,

General Director  
Mihal NAÇO

**REPULIC OF ALBANIA  
MUNICIPALITY OF THE CITY  
KORÇA**

No.230/ Prot

Korca, on 09.02.2011

To: Albanian Disability Rights Foundation

Mrs. Blerta Çani

Allow me to express my gratitude and appreciation for the cooperation offered in the area of the Human Rights of People with Disability.

Municipality of Korca, now has a regional Action Plan to implement the National Strategy on People with Disability. Implementation and monitoring of this strategy is a need and duty of all actors working in this area.

On this behalf, you may contact Mrs. Alketa Zallemi, counselor for social policy and projects, to receive the necessary information,

Thank you,

Sincerely Yours,

Mayor  
Niko Peleshi