



Evaluation Report

“Strengthening the capacity of civil society to protect the rights of children with disabilities in Albania”

Funded by the EU Delegation

Implemented by:

- WV UK as main applicant of the Grant
- MEDPAK and Partnerë për Fëmijët as the co – applicants

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Table of Contents

i. Acknowledgements	3
ii. Affirmation	3
iii. Glossary:.....	4
iv. Introduction	5
1. Executive Summary	6
2. Evaluation Introduction/Background	10
2.1 Evaluation purpose.....	10
2.2 Evaluation Objectives.....	11
3. Methodology	13
3.1 Evaluation Team	13
3.2 Data Collection Methods.....	14
3.3 Methods of Analysis	17
4. Limitations.....	18
5. Findings.....	19
5.1 Relevance	19
5.2 Effectiveness	22
5.2.1 A summary of changes that the project brought in the life of children , parents, schools and community	32
5.3 Efficiency.....	33
5.4 Sustainability.....	33
6. Conclusions	35
7. Recommendations for future interventions.....	36
8. Lessons Learned from the Evaluation Process.....	37
9. Lessons learned from the project.....	37
10. Appendices	38

i. Acknowledgements

This Evaluation Design is compiled by Ms.Irida Agolli and Ms.Delina Nano, evaluation team from IPSED, referring to the Terms of Reference document which is part of our contract with World Vision UK. In addition, we acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of World Vision Albania and Kosovo, specifically Project Implementing Staff, Grant Acquisition and Compliance Unit Staff and Ministry Quality Team in the National Office of World Vision Albania and Kosovo.

ii. Affirmation

“Except as acknowledged by the references in this paper to other authors and publications, the Evaluation Design described herein consists of our own work, to evaluate “Strengthening the capacity of civil society to protect the rights of children with disabilities in Albania” project to find out the impact on communities due to project implementation and to improve the quality of the next phases design and implementation as a part of the requirements of World Vision’s Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Learning System.”

Primary quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the evaluation process remains the property of the communities and families described in this Evaluation Design and must be used only with their and World Vision’s consent.

iii. Glossary:

ADDC	Albanian Disability and Development Coalition
CBO	Child Based Organizations
CP	Child Protection
CPU	Child Protection Units
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CWD	Children with Disability
DME	Design Monitoring and Evaluation
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GACU	Grants Acquisition Compliance Unit
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MQ	Ministry Quality (World Vision previously referred as Monitoring and Evaluation Department)
MEDPAK	Mbrojtja e të Drejtave të Personave me Aftësi të Kufizuara
MSC	Most significant change stories
PE	Peer Educators
RED	Regional Education Directorate
SO	Support Office (World Vision)
WV	World Vision
WV A&K	World Vision Albania and Kosovo
WV UK	World Vision United Kingdom

iv. Introduction

The Project “Strengthening the capacity of civil society to protect the rights of children with disabilities in Albania” was implemented from May 2014 until April 2016.

The overall objectives of the project were to: 1) Contribute to the promotion and protection of child rights, focusing on fulfilling the rights of children with disabilities (CWD); 2) Support civil society (CSOs & CBOs) to more effectively influence policies that provide increased support to vulnerable children (especially CWD).

The specific objective was: Civil society organisations (formal and informal) and government structures are strengthened to promote and protect the rights of children with disabilities, particularly to education.

The overall objectives tackle the right to education and protection for CWD and support civil society to participate effectively in policymaking as Albania seeks to implement national and international laws for disability. The specific objective concerns CSOs, as well as the capacity of community and government local structures to deliver effective services for CWD and generate needs-based policy initiatives.

The evaluation presented below sought to understand the extent to which these objectives were met through an effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability lens. The evaluation design used a mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) approach to enable a better understanding of the perceptions of changes by project end.

Primary data used in this report refers to the quantitative and qualitative tools that were used to measure indicators at the end of process. The secondary data refers to desk review of project relevant documentation and legislation.

The Evaluation Report is structured following World Vision’s defined template which is composed of the following chapters:

1. Executive Summary: Focuses on the main analytical points and indicates the main conclusions, lessons learned and specific recommendations;
2. Evaluation Introduction/Background: Presents an overview of project context and background and evaluation objectives. ;
3. Methodology: Summarizes the actual methods that were used to collect and analyse the data.
4. Limitations:, Includes a description of the constraints and limitations encountered during the evaluation and how they affect the findings;
5. Findings: Offers an assessment of the current situation and take account of the views of partners, government, and community representatives, and girls, woman, boys, and men;
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations;
8. Lessons Learned from the Evaluation Process: Summarises lessons learned as per the evaluation’s reflection exercises;
9. Appendices.

I. Executive Summary

Operating within a context whereby that the majority of CWD are excluded from the education system, leading to subsequent exclusion from social support and access to the protection, health services and livelihood opportunities, the project ‘Strengthening the capacity of civil society to protect the rights of children with disabilities in Albania’ sought to:

- Contribute to the promotion and protection of child rights, focusing on fulfilling the rights of children with disabilities (CWD);
- Support civil society (CSOs & CBOs) to more effectively influence policies that provide increased support to vulnerable children (especially CWD). .

The evaluation documents the extent to which the project met its intended objectives and presents clear achievements and the reasons behind them.

Evaluation Objectives

The evaluation aimed to:

- Measure to what extent the project has fully implemented the activities, delivered outputs and attained outcomes and specifically measuring development results. The evaluation considers the evidence of project progress according to the key evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability
- Generate substantive evidence based knowledge, by identifying best practices and lessons learned and make recommendations for strengthening the capacity of civil society to protect the rights of children with disabilities in Albania

Methodology

The evaluation was carried out by two consultants who were responsible for designing and managing the final evaluation process. A mixed methods approach was used consisting of a literature review, quantitative surveys of 50 education professionals and 56 parents of CWD and qualitative interviews and focus groups with 16 key stakeholders. The data collected was analysed and later triangulated to provide robust answers to the key evaluation questions. .

Key Findings:

Relevance: Evidence generated through the evaluation from various sources indicate that the project was appropriate to the needs of CWD and in line with the new on-going development on the policy context at local and national level. In particular, trainings and resources developed for teachers were deemed highly relevant, with teachers reporting high levels of satisfaction with content and quality of the trainings.

The extension of the project into rural areas was also deemed highly relevant by several stakeholders given the more acute levels of discrimination within rural settings. Further, given this context initiatives to raise awareness amongst parents, teachers, children and the wider community on child rights related issues were particularly pertinent, and brought about important changes.

Effectiveness: Evidence generated during the evaluation indicates that the project objectives have been met successfully. The project reached 200 CWD in total across Dibra and Elabasan

Effectiveness was particularly high in regard to the capacity building activities that have resulted in increased opportunity for inclusion and has also positively affected the attitude of parents, teachers, children and community on the child rights-related issues and especially CWD rights.

Trainings and round tables were held for teachers and professionals across 6 regions on inclusive education and in cooperation with CSOs and CWD parents. A key result of the trainings has been the widespread adoption of a standardized individual educational plans (IEP) for CWD. 46% of the teachers said that one of the most important changes is that they have started for the first time to measure the progress of children with disabilities.

Evidence gathered during evaluation indicated that there have been considerable changes in the teachers' attitude and the extent of their collaboration with the parents of CWD. The project has facilitated new linkages among professionals and parents therefore contributing to stronger network to advocate for rights of children with disabilities

In terms of CSO actions to increase the protection of CWD's rights, the project contributed in drafting the first regulation document regarding the functioning of the multi-disciplinary commissions on regional directory level and in school level. The document has been submitted to MoES for further elaboration and approval in order to be operational by starting of new academic year 2016-2017.

Multidisciplinary Commissions in Education Directorates, school boards and school governments have become more active and are clearer on their roles and responsibilities in supporting an inclusive environment for CWD. However, there is still work to be done to fully engage local government, who have largely remained passive and ad hoc participants during project implementation.

At policy level different project activities encouraged the implementation of comprehensive education policies at project schools and they serve as models to be followed by other schools. In particular the recruitment of assistant teachers in four schools should be noted as a key achievement for local CSOs advocating for better implementation of the Pre University Education Law. Furthermore, the project has generated convincing evidence that academic and social performance of CWD is improved when the child is supported by assistant teachers, which can be used for ongoing advocacy efforts.

Efficiency: In financial terms the project budget was managed accordingly and where possible was used to increase the number of beneficiaries to other regions, not only in Dibra and Elbasan. For example, the budget planned for training the parents of CWD in Elbasan and Dibra, was used to also train parents of CWD coming from other regions as well.

Project activities were monitored and assisted by the project staff in accordance with the indicators defined in the Logical Framework. The project team was very professional and consistent in their monitoring and follow ups.

Sustainability: With capacity building at the heart of the project many of the project achievements are inherently sustainable. The project has created some work practices with children in school which will continue to be implemented after its completion. School Directors confirmed that the

trained teachers and commissions of RED for disabilities will continue with their work to create comprehensive school environments as it is a legal requirement.

Parents, school director and RED specialist noted that certain activities, such as activities for children rights and CWD, developing the IEP for CWD, discussion of issues related with CWD with the school board, support by the RED specialist etc. will continue.

There is a gap to further improve and increase the capacity of the teachers but the created models will continue their implementation because even the parents are better informed and as a result more demanding regarding the well-being of their children.

Stakeholders note the important role of RED for the sustainability of the work done with CWD. RED must have a more concrete and practical involvement in promoting and measuring the quality of inclusion in education of CWD and creating opportunities for sustainable partnerships between parents and schools.

Conclusions:

- The implementation of the Pre-University Education Law has been improved through good practices developed in Dibra and Elbasan districts based on needs identified locally.
- Civil society at different levels were enabled to lobby and advocate for the rights of CWD.
- CWD rights level of information has increased at all project school among all parents, teachers and professionals.
- 100% of parents participating in the survey have reported that the collaboration with teachers for better social and academic achievements of their children in school has been improved.
- The positive and open attitudes received from the project had been an important starting point to address comprehension. For the coming school year, the principals have requested support teachers from RED, which hadn't happened before even though there were CWD attending schools.
- In meeting with the different project beneficiaries, the project has increased the sensitivity of the main stakeholders and community to children rights-related issues and especially CWD. Major changes were identified from parents of CWD. While from other children in school a more open approach toward the inclusion of CWD has become visible.
- Two CSOs and one FBO strengthened their capacities to protect the rights of CWD through running inclusive summer activities for children where CWD are part of.
- The Internship program implemented in the 2nd year of the project has helped RED to understand the importance of providing assistant teachers for children with disabilities.
- The project has discovered alternative forms to motivate and include the school boards to address and identify more effective forms and ways for the inclusion of CWD and other school children, in spite of their problems and needs.

Key Recommendations

- Foresee a longer project implementation period for higher project sustainability and impact.
- Continue to lobby and advocate CWD rights by engaging civil society at all levels of community.
- Coordinate local and national efforts on protecting and promoting CWD rights.
- Extend the good practices developed under this project results to other schools in the same regions and to other regions in the country.
- Develop further the initiatives which engage parents in their children's education.
- Develop continuous training curricula for teachers and professionals on inclusive education.
- Develop practices which involve parents in the education process.
- Develop inclusive approaches and collaborative cultures within the school.
- Lobby and advocate for strengthening the accountability of the local structures offering community services.
- Support the role of local coalitions in increasing and empowering civil society to lobby and advocate for CWD rights and improved community services

2. Evaluation Introduction/Background

Strengthening the capacity of civil society to protect the rights of children with disabilities in Albania Project was implemented by World Vision and two co-applicants, MEDPAK and Partnerë për Fëmijët from May 2014 to April 2016

The project proposal document describes the context in which the project was developed, noting that in Albania there are an estimated 48,840 children with disabilities (CWD). While the Ministry of Education and Science's (MoES) unofficial reports estimate that only 8,879 CWD are registered in education, of which at least 736 attend special schools. This data indicates that the majority of CWD are excluded from the education system, leading to subsequent exclusion from social support and access to the protection and healthcare system and economic development. Concurrently, WV and its partners, in discussion with key stakeholders, identified significant gaps both in the capacities of CSOs to effectively influence policies to ensure they deliver the services that CWD need, but also in the capacities of local government and civil society to implement them.

The project had two overall Objectives:

- 1) Contribute to the promotion and protection of child rights, focusing on fulfilling the rights of children with disabilities (CWD);
- 2) Support civil society (CSOs & CBOs) to more effectively influence policies that provide increased support to vulnerable children (especially CWD). The project started in a favourable moment for Albania as the government had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) and had started to reform the legislation policies that affect and regulate the support for CWD. For that reason the specific objective of the project was to support CBOs, CSOs and government structures at national and local level to promote and protect the rights of children with disabilities, particularly to education.

From the beginning the project had intended to focus on CSOs, as well as community and government structures at local level in 9 districts, aiming to improve the capacities of stakeholders in those districts. In addition to generate an evidence base for policy initiatives that should motivate change at all levels.

The project activities were mainly focused in Dibra and Elbasan regions, by creating two good practice models on how to support CWD that can be potentially scaled up nationwide. The project also intended to provide a good model for civil society's involvement in protecting the rights of all vulnerable children. The project had a duration of 24 months.

2.1 Evaluation purpose

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to measure the extent that project objectives have been and met and impacted the beneficiaries, to identify any changes over time while exploring as well the unintended consequences of the intervention and broader impact.

The evaluation should contribute to an evidence base that enables:

- (i) Improved programme effectiveness by asking what's working, what's not working and why. Reflecting on these questions enables informed choices on how to improve programme plans.
- (ii) Increased accountability by sharing evaluation results in appropriate ways with all key stakeholders, including communities, partners, host governments, and donors.
- (iii) The generation of evidence that supports efforts to advocate for change by using evaluation results to lobby for appropriate changes to policy.

This is an end-of-project evaluation that will be primarily summative but includes significant programmatic and managerial lessons learned..

2.2 Evaluation Objectives

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Assess the current situation of protection of child rights focusing on fulfilling the rights of children with disabilities (CWD) in all project implementation areas (after project end).
 - 1.1 Assess level of access to their rights and live in a more protective, less discriminatory environment
2. Assess capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to influence policies that support CWD.
 - 2.1 Assess capacity of CSOs to promote and protect the rights of children with disabilities, particularly to education
3. Assess capacities of multidisciplinary professional groups in the 9 regions working for and with CWD rights to implement rights-based projects for CWD
4. Assess capacities of government structures to promote and protect the rights of children with disabilities, particularly to education
5. Analysis of existing laws, standards, procedures, policies and services regarding CP special focus on CWD

The evaluation considers the project according the following criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability based on findings from the primary and secondary data collected and described in the methodology. The key research questions are outlined in the table below:

Primary Information Needs

OECD – DAC Criterion	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	<p>What is the level of fulfilment of child rights (promotion and protection) focusing on fulfilment of the rights of CWD?</p> <p>What do the relevant institutional supports provide at this regard?</p>
Efficiency	<p>Has the project been achieved at reasonable cost?</p> <p>Which were the project strengths, weakness, and gaps in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?</p>
Effectiveness	<p>Which project outputs and outcomes were achieved and how the project benefited the target beneficiaries?</p> <p>What is the level of children, community members' knowledge on child protection regarding CWD?</p> <p>What is the level of local/central government's capacity to engage in CP regarding CWD in education sector?</p> <p>What is the children's level of satisfaction for accessing education institutional?</p>
Sustainability	<p>Which activities will continue after the termination of the project?</p>

3. Methodology

The following section describes the skills and composition of the evaluation team, as well as the methods selected for sampling, data collection and data analysis and the tools used to collect and verify the data used for this evaluation.

3.1 Evaluation Team

The Evaluation was designed and conducted by Ms. Delina Nano and Dr. Irida Agolli.

Dr. Irida Agollil, holds a PhD, in Social Sciences. She has very good knowledge in international and national legal framework for children with disabilities and has previous experience in conducting assessments, baseline and evaluations for several NGOs and UN Agencies. MS. Delina Nano, has a long experience in managing projects related to inclusion in education, youth empowerment, development of skills and competences of youth, etc. at a national scale. Ms. Nano has proven capability to facilitate and relate to stakeholders at multiple levels (e.g., World Vision staff, NGOs, public and private organizations, field participants, etc.). Lately she has coordinated several researches for international organisations which required quantitative and qualitative data elaboration and national scale surveys. The following table outlines the responsibilities and logistical needs of each consultant during the planning, data collection, analysis and report writing stages of the evaluation:

Evaluation Design Steps	Roles	Responsibility/ Logistics needs
Planning	<i>Consultant 1</i> <i>Consultant 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literature/ project documents from project staff and other relevant literature (legislation, strategies, studies etc.).• Necessary translations• Keep continuous contact and consult with project staff
Data Collection and Analysis	<i>Consultant 1</i> <i>Consultant 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead evaluation process, data collection and analysis.• Keep record of the methodology used and data analysis.• Provide feedback on a continuous basis to the project staff• Cooperate with the project staff in identifying and contacting the CWD for the quantitative survey in Dibra and Elbasan.• Cooperate with the project staff in identifying and contacting the professionals for the on-line survey.• Cooperate with the project staff in identifying and contacting the stakeholders for the direct interviews.• Cooperate with the project staff in identifying and contacting the participants for the Focus Group Discussions.

Reporting	<i>Consultant 1</i> <i>Consultant 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft the report and share it with project staff/relevant stakeholders. • Incorporate comments/feedback into the report and provide recommendations. • Produce a final report of findings and recommendations.
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3.2 Data Collection Methods

A mixed methods approach was applied to this evaluation. The following data collection methods were used during the evaluation process:

1. Secondary qualitative and quantitative data collection mainly via literature/ secondary review of document.
2. Primary quantitative data collection via a teacher and other professional's survey and a parent's survey, targeted at parents of CWD .
3. Primary qualitative data collection via Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

1. Secondary qualitative and quantitative data collection mainly via literature/ secondary review of document.

The Secondary quantitative and qualitative data collection included the review of project relevant documentation and legislation related with the right of CWD.

In the framework of the evaluation design a preliminary desk research was carried out and preliminary discussions took place between experts, project partners and with different stakeholders.

The documentation review was based on all documents that were considered as a main source of information. A list of documents relevant to the project was provided by the project partners to IPSED. Additionally, other relevant documents were accessed through the web and were made available during the field mission

The desk research focused on project documents (intermediary and final reports, meeting minutes, training reports, project proposal and log-frame), legislation and strategies prepared by Government of Albania, EU, UN Agencies, etc.

The documentation review helped in designing the evaluation methodology and preparing the evaluation instruments.

Key Documents reviewed included:

Project proposal:
Final project report
Interim project reports
Cooperation agreements
Minutes of the Events/Activities

Minutes of the Inception Meetings
 Minutes of the Coordination Meetings
 Policy Briefs
 Training reports
 Other Reports

2 - Primary quantitative data collection via Questionnaire Survey

The quantitative data collection took place via questionnaires completed through direct interviews. Two questionnaires were developed for this purpose as follows:

1. Survey targeting Parents of Children with Disabilities
2. Survey for professionals who have been trained during the project implementation.

The parent's survey was designed to assess the extent to which CWD rights' were realised, the level of knowledge on child protection regarding CWD, as well as the level of satisfaction and appreciation of the project. The teacher and other professionals survey was designed to assess the impact, effectiveness and sustainability of the project interventions.

Quantitative Tool Development

Two structured questionnaires were prepared by the evaluators in both Albanian and English language. The questionnaires were shared for approval with World Vision and project team. The questionnaires were composed of open and close questions in order to gather data that could be further elaborated statistically

Quantitative Sampling Methodology:

Parent's Survey

The evaluation process at the beginning had originally planned to target 200 CWD. The sample size was expected to yield adequate representation of data at a confidence interval 95% and a recommended alpha error 0.05. The sampling criteria suggested was the location and number of beneficiaries. However, following the desk review and based on the project documents shared by WV it was decided to sample only parents of CWD enrolled in the project targeted schools, for a total of 61 CWD. The planned sample size was as follows:

- for Dibra 33 parents of CWD enrolled in the 5 targeted schools of the project,
- for Elbasan 28 parents of CWD enrolled in the 5 targeted schools of the project.

During the implementation of the survey, which was conducted over a very limited number of days it was not possible to contact all parents of CWD due to the holiday season. As a result the actual sample consisted of 56 parents of CWD located in Dibra and Elbasan as follows

Target groups	Population/ sample size	Instrument
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CWD	28 in Dibra	Questionnaire
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The survey was administrated through direct interviews with the parents of CWD in Dibra and Elbasan. The surveys were conducted from local experienced experts. Prior to the survey the local experts were trained on how to manage the questionnaire and conduct the interviews.

Teacher and Professionals Survey

The survey targeted 50 teachers and professionals which had been trained by the project. The survey was conducted through email with 50 professionals from 9 regions (teachers, health staff, social workers, CPUs, psychologists). Project partners provided the evaluation team with a complete list of all teachers and professionals trained by the project, which included 58 in Dibra and 68 in Elbasan. The questionnaire was sent by email to all of the teachers and professionals on the list. Due to the limited time available to conduct and elaborate the data, the data from the first 50 respondents with completed questionnaires was considered in the evaluation.

This survey was conducted from IPSED experienced staff in the Tirana office. Prior to the survey the staff was oriented on how to conduct the interview. The questionnaire was sent by email and was followed up through phone calls to the direct interviewees and to the school directors in order to ensure that the questionnaires were completed accordingly and sent back on time.

3.Primary qualitative data collection via Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions and interviews with key stakeholders and field visits:

- I. **Key Informant Interviews (KII):** Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a structured discussion guide that was tailored to each stakeholder.
- II. **Focus Group discussions (FGD):** FGDs were conducted in Tirana, Dibra and Elbasan with project partners, Government and CSO stakeholders and parents of CWD.

Interview Guide Tool Development

To conduct the FGD and interviews a discussion guide was developed to solicit information from stakeholders. The questions developed in the Discussion Guide led the qualitative interviews as well as the Focus Group Discussions. The guide was based on the key research questions identified in the evaluation matrix, developed during the planning stages. The evaluation matrix main purpose was to guide the evaluation through balanced and relevant interviews and discussions as well as a tool to briefly review the collection of information during the assignment.

III **Field Visits:** Field visits conducted from the evaluators in Dibra and Elbasan during the assignment aimed to ensure that primary sources of information from the field and project end-users such as parents of CWD, professionals and teachers were directly accessed.

Qualitative Data Sample

A purposive sampling methodology was adopted, targeting the most important and influential stakeholders to the project outcomes. The stakeholders included in the FGD and KII were selected and proposed in cooperation with project partners and World Vision. During qualitative data collection, attention was placed on the geographical coverage by ensuring inclusion of national stakeholders, but with particular attention to Dibra and Elbasan.

Focus Groups

The following FGDs were organised:

- 1 Focus group in Tirana with the participation of Project partners, where the Evaluation Outline was shared and the next steps for finalising the report were discussed.
- 1 Focus Group in Dibra, with the participation of Project partners, Social Services representatives, School directors.
- 1 Focus Group in Elbasan with the participation of project partners, DAR representative, school Directors, CSOs representatives and parents of CWD.

Key Informant Interviews

A total of 16 KIIs were conducted with a variety of stakeholders including partners and WV staff, Government stakeholders, parents, school directors and other education professionals. The full list of interview participants is included in Annex 2. The direct interviews were conducted from both evaluators separately in order to respect evaluation implementation schedule.

3.3 Methods of Analysis

Quantitative Analysis Methodology

The questionnaires used in the quantitative data collection were structured according to clear defined research questions, related to the evaluation purpose.. The data gathered from the questionnaires was further gathered in excel tables and elaborated using SPSS techniques. The questions raised by the quantitative analysis were combined to inform the framework for the the qualitative analysis.

Qualitative Analysis Methodology

The qualitative analysis used data gathered from literature review and from the KII and FGD.

Each evaluator recorded the results of each interview manually. The results of each interview were shared and discussed among the evaluation team and analysed according the questions indentified during the quantitative analysis.

4. Limitations

The evaluation process was conducted over a one-month timeframe. During this time period different experts and World Vision staff exchanged documents, shared experiences and requirements on the Evaluation Methodology and the different tools (questionnaires) for conducting the research. Within the same timeframe there were organised meetings between experts, the project staff and project partners to discuss and agree the evaluation methodology. Bringing together the project partners (Partnere per Femije, MEDPAK and World Vision) and coordinating their schedules for joint meetings required more time than it was foreseen from the contract.

Overall, the data collection process encountered difficulties due to the limited time available to conduct the quantitative research because of the unavailability of beneficiaries to be interviewed due to the holiday season. Another limitation was the database contacts provided from the project partners, where many of the contacts in the data base were not correct. The evaluation process was first foreseen to end by the end of June and because of on-going correspondence between the project partners the contract with the evaluators was signed the third week of June. This delay impacted the entire evaluation process as the extension fell on the holiday season, which increased the complexity of contacting the project beneficiaries as well as the project partners staff. While the consultation process between the project partners and the evaluators was successfully conducted within August, limitations on the time left for the qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey were encountered by the evaluators.

5. Findings

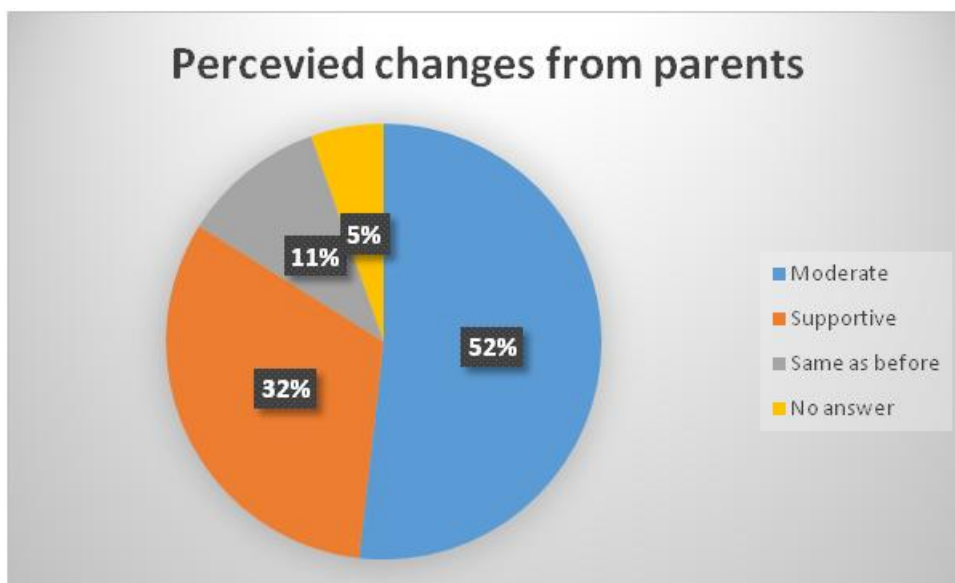
The findings are organised according to the key evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability, specified in the evaluation methodology.

5.1 Relevance

In general, the project was considered relevant and appropriate with a particular attention in considering local needs.

All the interviewed stakeholders, reported that the project brought about an important change in relation to awareness raising of parents, teachers, children and community on child rights-related issues and specifically on CWD rights-related issues. From the survey 53% of the parents of CWD interviewed stated that the project brought about moderate changes in the child behaviour and 32% of them considered the project supportive to the child behaviour, while 10% of parents stated that their child's behaviour had not changed and only 5% stated that the project was not supportive.

Figure 1 – Perceived changes from parents



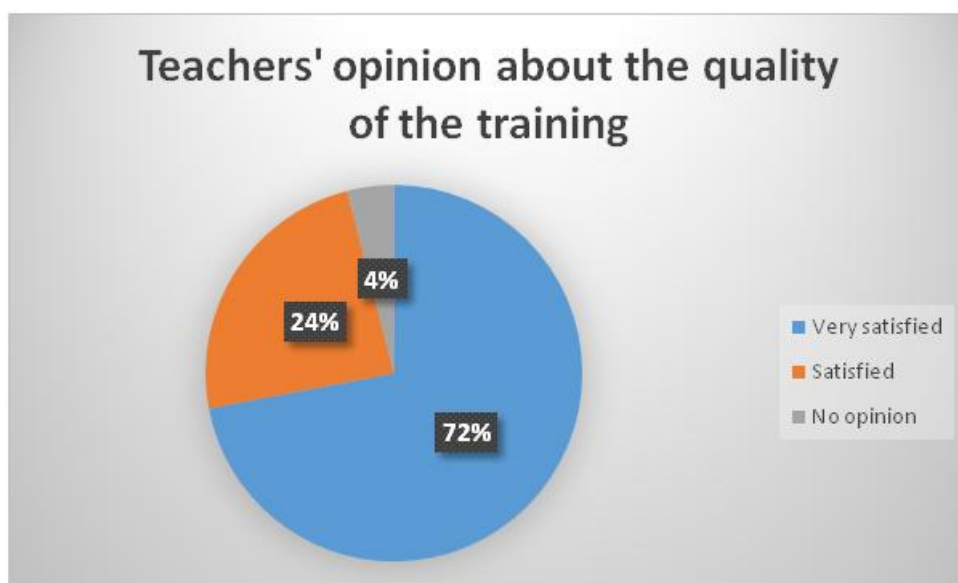
Source: Data from the parent's survey

These results are supported by the fact that all (100%) interviewed parents said that they wish the project and its activities continue in the future.

Key informants (school directors, RED specialist, parents and teachers) report that project activities, such as trainings for the teachers, meetings with parents and school boards, seminars with student government, students' internships at schools, different activities with children at schools, especially in villages, were very important components that increased the opportunity for the inclusion of the children and affected the attitude of different stakeholders towards CWD.

72 % of teachers expressed that they were very satisfied by the quality of training received and 24 % of the total said they were generally satisfied by it (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 2 - Teachers opinion about the quality of training



Source: Data from the teacher and professional's survey

Regarding the knowledge that teachers have received in training, 100 % report that the training has improved knowledge and skills in the education of children with disabilities in inclusive settings.

According to the parents and teachers interviewed, the extension of the project in rural areas was very significant because parents' and community's attitudes to CWD were more discriminatory and excluding prior to the project intervention compared to urban settings.

Cases of discrimination and exclusion of CWD were identified and addressed from the project also in the urban areas. All the interviewed stakeholders report a significant change of attitude of the community toward CWD rights. On the other hand, parents themselves became more open-minded to accept their integration into the community and inclusion in the education process.

Most of the parents have understood that sending CWD to school brings more benefits than medical treatment only.

Parent of CWD, Peshkopi

The key informants report that many parents participating in project activities gained both personal confidence and self-esteem, by improving their abilities as a parent. Gains in confidence were highly valued by parents of CWD. Sharing the 'experiences' with others increased their level of confidence on raising a CWD.

The project brought about a considerable change for the teachers who, despite being legally obliged to include CWD in school, had a tendency to exclude and refuse them to be part of their classes. 34% of respondent teachers have expressed that in addition to the legal obligation to include these children in school they have taken other measures such as elimination of the discriminatory practice against children with disabilities.

The data also showed considerable changes in the teachers' attitudes toward CWD and the extent of their collaboration with the parents of CWD following the project implementation. The project was the first of its kind for all the schools and teachers involved. Despite the positive aspects there is still a need to continue with the teachers training in a continuous and systematic way.

"Before I did not know that I had the right to register my child at any school I would consider appropriate for my child.."

Parent of CWD Elbasan

70% of the teachers interviewed reported that following the project their school has taken measures for the inclusion of children with disabilities. A more important result is the training of school teachers on individual educational plans and inclusive education. Teachers say they have learned how to develop an Individual Education Plan from the training, and for some of them this was a challenge.

The view of the staff has changed completely. They are a lot more accepting. The school principal firstly reacted by asking what the parents wanted from this child, but now he is the main promoter. He is also interested because he is more informed owing to the project and strongly believes in the results and achievements of these children.

Parent of CWD, Peshkopi

Almost 100%, of parents participating in the survey have reported that the collaboration with teachers for better social and academic achievements of their child in school has been improved.

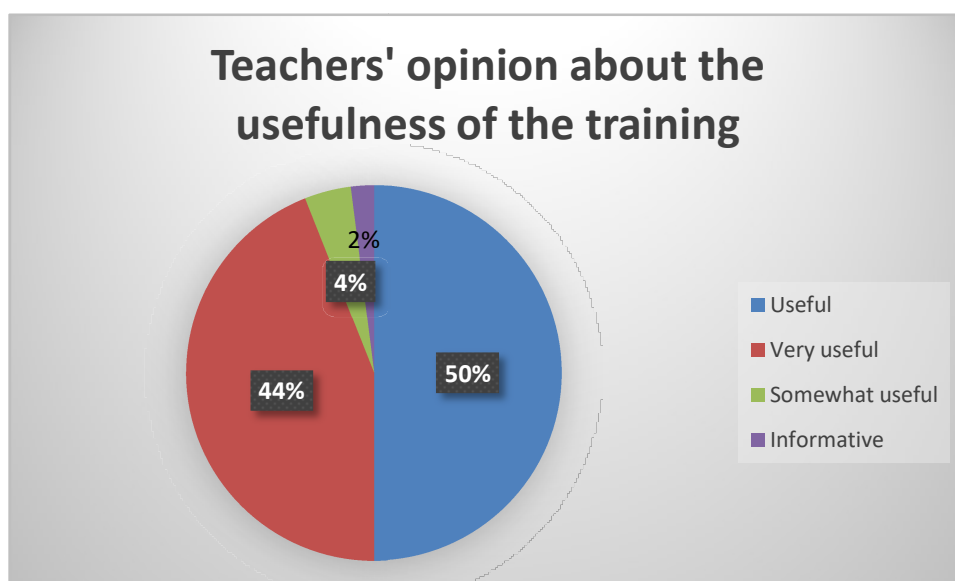
Parents have used statements of positive connotation for the teachers such as: 'supportive', 'helpful', 'encouraging', 'adapts the lessons to the child's capacities', 'accompanies the child to the school door', 'prepares the IEP' etc, to describe this collaboration. Only one parent interviewed from Elbasan has stated that the collaboration with the teacher has been problematic.

The school principal has retained a very important image of someone who is able to create the opportunity for a comprehensive environment and guarantee the protection of children's rights. For this reason in the project, the schools principals have been considered as an important chain to orientate and organize school opportunities and capacities to serve CWD needs. Other stakeholders that collaborated with schools and their principals highlighted the change of attitude and support that the principals have shown to enable a comprehensive education for all children.

The positive and accepting attitudes received by the project are an important starting point to address inclusion. For the coming school year, the principals have requested from RED assistant support teachers, which had not happened before even though there were CWD attending schools. Therefore, owing to the project and a common understanding by most stakeholders of the importance of CWDs' education have had results in the family, school and society.

One of the most relevant and successful activities of the project was considered to be the teachers training. 50% of the interviewed teachers and professionals found the training received useful and 44% of them find the training very useful, 4% found it somewhat useful and 2% found it informative.

Figure 3 - Teachers' opinion about the usefulness of the training



Source: Data from the teacher's survey

After receiving the training, teachers appreciated that the school has supported them to prepare Individual Education Plans to address the needs of the children with disabilities. Furthermore, 20% of the teachers have stated that they have also worked with other children of the class to accept the children with disabilities. 46% of the teachers said that one of the most important changes is that they have started for the first time to measure the progress of children with disabilities.

5.2 Effectiveness

The following section considers the extent to which project outputs and outcomes have been achieved and how the project benefited the target beneficiaries. The objectives of the project were:

- Contribute to promotion and protection of child rights focusing on fulfilling the rights of children with disabilities (CWD).
- Support civil society (CSOs & CBOs) to more effectively influence policies that provide increased support to vulnerable children (especially CWD)
- Civil society organizations (formal and informal) and government structures are strengthened to promote and protect the rights of children with disabilities, particularly to education

The evaluation data gathered from the different sources provided evidence to suggest the project was appropriate to the needs of CWD and in line with the new on-going development on the policy context at local and national level. The project was effective in achieving its planned results and objectives. Overall the project has successfully managed to increase awareness of parents, teachers, children and community on the child rights-related issues and especially CWD rights.

The effectiveness was particularly high in regard to the capacity building activities that have resulted in increased opportunity for inclusion and has also positively affected the attitude of different stakeholders toward CWD.

Beneficiary Reach

Reports from partner organizations confirm that the planned number of beneficiaries was achieved as per the output planned in the project proposal of 200 CWD with a total of 129 CWD reached in Dibra and 71 in Elbasan as follows:

- 33 CWD have been enrolled in school in Dibra region
- 86 CWD during the summer camp benefited from the activities during the summer camp period in Dibra
- 10 CWD in Dibra accomplished as result of internship activity
- 28 CWD have been enrolled in school in Elbasan region
- 36 CWD during the summer camp benefited from the activities during the summer camp period in Elbasan
- 7 CWD in Elbasan accomplished as result of internship activity

RI. Advocacy and lobbying will result in monitoring and supporting the full/ equitable implementation of the Pre-University Education Law based on good practices in Dibra and Elbasan districts.

The relevance of the project in relation to policies, laws, guidelines of MES in Albania in view of child rights and rights of CWD has enabled project effectiveness. Indeed, the project brought about significant changes to the schools where it was implemented compared to the schools that were not part of the project, and this has been reported by the staff of the Regional Directorates of Education. Different activities conducted as part of the project encouraged the implementation of comprehensive education policies at schools which can serve as models to be followed by other schools.

For the first time in Elbasan the Municipality is holding regular meetings during the year with all actors including Civil Society Organizations to discuss CWD issues.

Social Services, Elbasan

Multidisciplinary commissions in Regional Education Directorates have been more active despite the barriers for the inclusion of all the professionals and creation of a multidisciplinary group. The difficulties that have been reported are related to the lack of continuous engagement of a doctor, which was overcome due to the project and the support that was provided to empower this group. The support of commissions and their training was a very important element.

It was the first project to work with the multidisciplinary commissions of CWD and make them functional.

Specialist of Ministry of Education and Sport

In the meetings with the MoES, the staff of the project recommended a rulebook for the functioning of commissions in RED and this was seen as a necessary element for a better functioning of such commissions. MoES is taking measures to prepare this document.

The request to prepare a rulebook for commissions was an initiative presented by the implementing organizations of the project. It is drafted, but still is not approved due to the financial terms not being defined yet.

Specialist of Ministry of Education and Sport

It is very important to further cooperate with commissions so that they recommend specific approaches with children and do not leave it to the teachers. This requires continuously increasing the capacity of the commissions in RED and clarifying their role and the way they function.

However, most key informants considered the local government as merely participant and enabling implementation of the project. Informants reported a lack of engagement and ownership of local government to develop more strategies at the community level to address challenges, problems and the needs of CWD and their families. There is a lack of planned social services to meet the identified needs by local stakeholders in the community.

Parents voiced the need for community centres where they can receive different psycho-social services and various therapies for their children. This need is bigger in Dibra where 50% of the interviewed parents said that they want the Municipality to further support their children through the setting up of a multifunctional centre. In Elbasan, parents viewed the role the Municipal Social Services to be quite good, while 39% of interviewed parents of CWD has suggested to have more outdoors activities as a supportive element for CWD inclusion and education.

Municipality was simply a participant and has no other initiatives. Municipality can't find other ways how to include CWD in festivals for other children, e. g., New Year's Eve, etc. To these children, every kind of activity and attention has a great effect because of different gaps in their childhood.

Parent of CWD, Peshkopi, Diber

Nevertheless local government and public social and health services were not involved at a satisfactory level in all the project activities. Although many efforts were put by the project staff their participation remained ad hoc and did not contribute much in a better inclusive approach for the rights of CWD.

R2. Civil society organizations' management skills to implement rights-based projects for CWD are improved.

Initiatives undertaken by civil society organisations were reflected through joint meetings between project partners with MoES to draft together important documents such as "The regulation of functioning of multidisciplinary commission in RED for the evaluation of CWD".

The different project activities such as trainings for School Boards, School Students Government, professionals of Municipality and RED, and local civil society organisation staff have raised their capacities to protect and lobby for the rights of children with disabilities at local level, but also for influencing the national legislation such as the law foreseeing the role of assistant teachers in school.

Within the framework of the project, civil society stakeholders, supported by project staff lobbied for the inclusion of assistant teachers in schools. Despite the law for pre-university education that requires inclusion of assistant teachers in schools, in reality very few schools have assistant teachers.

As a result of the project activities four assistant teachers started to work in the project schools, three in Elbasan and one in Diber.

Key informants (teachers, RED specialist, parents) reported that round-tables held with different stakeholders of civil society have brought about changes in knowledge and attitude that have been later reflected in work practice. The RED have supported the “Irfan Hajrullai” school with an assistant teacher as a result of a meetings and consultations organized as part of the project. Parents have increased their knowledge and understanding of the needs of CWD and the greater opportunities that their children might have if they are part of an inclusive education in school and community. A multidisciplinary approach is required to meet the needs of CWD, where different stakeholders discuss the best way of working with these children according to the specific needs of each case. Such meetings have resulted in a common understanding of the problems of CWD by all the stakeholders and in lobbying for the fulfillment of their rights.

However, during the project MEDPAK tried to bring together the Albanian Disability Development Coalition (ADDC) which represents a coalition founded in June 2007, to defend the interest of people with disabilities. Since 2012 the coalition had been inactive and during the project implementation MEDPAK were only able to bring the coalition together for one meeting.

Summer camp was a special experience for CWD, since it was the first time the children were able to take part in such activity. Two local CSOs in Diber “Albanian Red Cross” and “Knowledge is Power” have raised their knowledge and capacities to deliver services for children with disabilities. The staff of the local organizations was trained and increased their capacities on organizing inclusive activities.

Stakeholders reported that some of the children cried when it was the time to leave the camp because of the supportive, welcoming and developing environment they experienced. Parents saw it as a very special gift for their children in a more challenging environment which tested the skills they had acquired during the school year.

The project has brought about a considerable change for parents of CWD and CSO as well by significantly increasing the level of information available to them on CWD rights. Twelve people (five members of Partnerë për Fëmijët and seven from MEDPAK) were trained in basic advocacy skills, strategic planning and financial sustainability for small NGOs.

New linkages were created among professionals and parents therefore contributing to stronger network to advocate for rights of children with disabilities

R3. Capacities of multidisciplinary professional groups in the 9 regions working for and with CWD rights are increased.

Multidisciplinary Groups (MDGs)

Information sessions on new laws/ by laws and roles on inclusive education for multidisciplinary groups (MDGs) were organised in cooperation with CSOs. 10 information sessions and 3 two day workshops with at least 45 MDG members spanning 9 regions were conducted. A key output of the sessions was that an official document about Roles and Responsibilities of MDGs was drafted and

sent to MoES for further elaboration and approval in order to be operational by starting of new academic year 2016-2017.

Capacity Building of Teachers and Other Professionals

During this phase of the project, trainings and roundtables were organised for teachers and professionals across 6 regions on inclusive education. Specifically, the participants exchanged their experiences on cooperation with parents of CWD and CSOs in relation to inclusive education. 342 beneficiaries from Elbasan, Dibra, Vlora, Korca, Kukes, Tropoja were trained and raised their capacities on teaching strategies with children that have the Autism spectrum, with learning difficulties and IEP.

However, the teacher training, originally foreseen to be implemented in 9 regions, over two years, covered only 6 of them. In 2015 MoES released an order to suspend all training programs for teachers in light of a needs assessment to be conducted at national level. For this reason the training foreseen for teachers and professional of Lezhe, Shkoder and Tirane did not took place as was planned in the project proposal.

The project has been effective at changing the mentality of teachers in school toward CWD. This happened following the training they received and the professional support received from the project staff. Most of the teachers were never trained before specifically on how to work using inclusive methodologies with CWD.

From the evaluation of the training, teachers felt that they were becoming each day, increasingly skilful in managing an inclusive class with CWD. Teachers reported that they were very satisfied with the support they had received from the RED and from CSOs through continuous trainings and coaching.

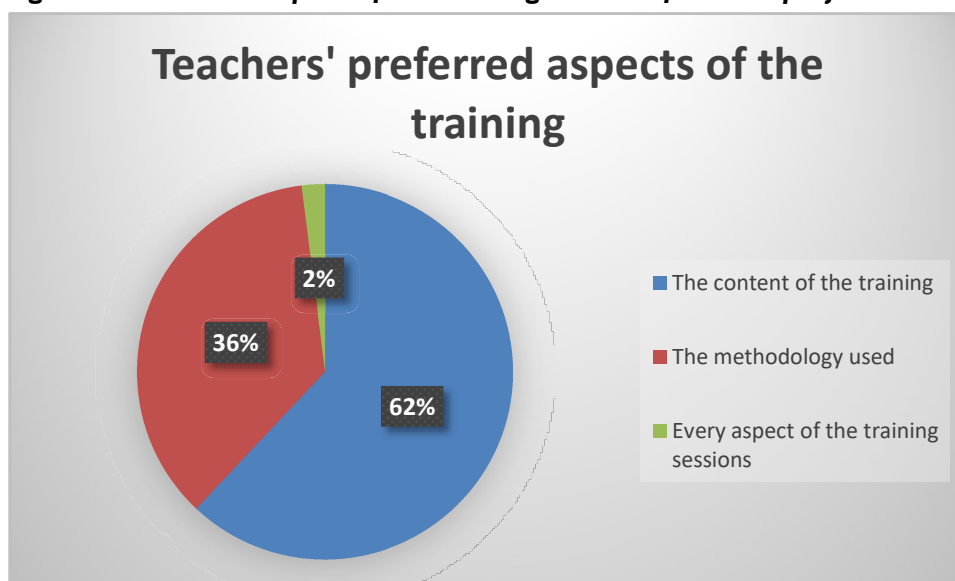
The project impacted all the schools by achieving such results as the development of individual educational plans (IEP) for CWD and promoting a standard format to be used in all schools. As a result, the teachers that have been part of the training program now use a standard form for the IEP. RED specialists report that school commissions are clearer and more active in their work with CWD. The methodology of work was created by the teachers themselves and is therefore more relevant and enables teachers to have higher level of confidence in their work with CWD.

Training on Individual Educational Plans was rated highly by all interviewed people in Dibra and Elbasan and was considered as one of the most effective elements that the project brought in improving the lives of CWD.

“Teachers in our school have learned to develop Individual Educational Plans for all children and they continue doing them despite the end of the project”

Ms. Vjollca Qose, School Director Elbasan

Figure 5 – Teachers aspect of the training received from the project



Source: Data from teacher's survey

R4: Children, parents, CBOs and school actors raise awareness and knowledge on inclusive education through community based programs for CWD that are established in Dibra & Elbasan.

The project was effective in increasing the sensitivity of the main stakeholders and community to children rights-related issues and especially CWD.

Promotion for participation and education of CWD was one of the main results that brought about important changes for both children and their families. Increasing teachers' capacity, parents' awareness, children's education and school boards created the opportunity for the school environment to be inclusive and supportive for children.

In the first grade we had two CWD that were included as a result of the project work with these children. School principals, teachers and internship students succeeded in making these children come to school willingly and this was realized even by their parents.

Principal of "Irfan Hajrullai" School, Peshkopi, Dibra

Change in attitude and engagement of parents

Major changes were identified in regard to the parents of CWD and other children who became more accepting and avoided barriers and difficulties for the inclusion of CWD in the learning process together with other children. 16% of the interviewed teachers reported that there is a significant increase in the level of information of parents, school children and teachers on issues related to CWD.

Awareness of parents not only to take the children to school, but also to ask for information and to take more responsibility for their children.

Municipality official, Peshkopi, Dibra

Parents do not always accept that their child has a disability and may refuse to collaborate. This is due to the lack of information and considerable stigmatization of the children and their parents. During the project implementation process, there have been new cases of CWD who were included in social service programs and were included in schools.

34% of the teachers surveyed found the lack of cooperation with the parents of CWD as one of the most problematic issues, as they refuse to accept their child as being 'different' because of the learning difficulties.

Considerable work (such as organization of meetings with different school actors and parents, individual work of teacher with parents, involving parents in school activities etc.) has been done, not only to help parents understand the importance of their child's education, but also to be partners in the education process, so that the results of the work with these children can be sustainable and have an impact on the child's life and their family.

Meetings at school to make parents, teachers, children and students' government aware were very positive. But even more positive was the continuous participation of parents and because their opinion was asked, parents were seen as a key partner.

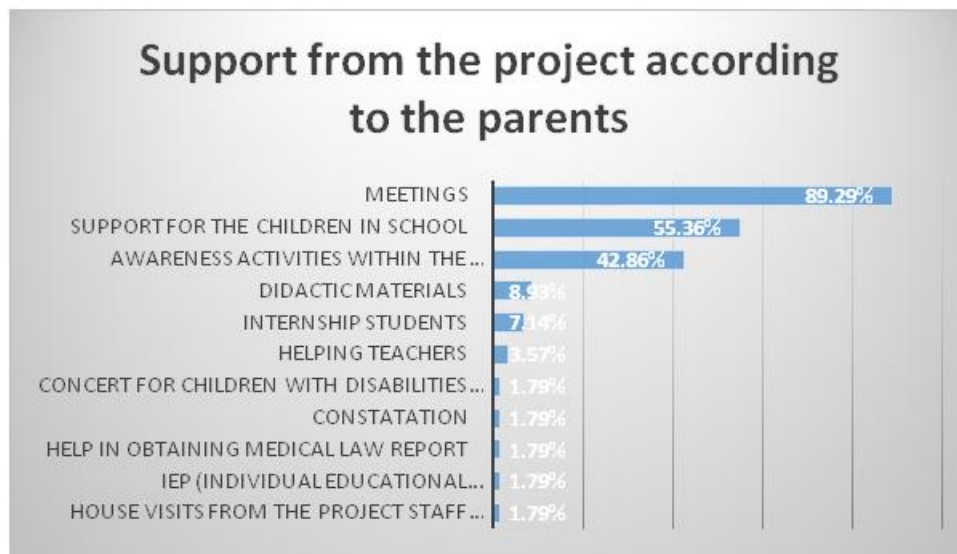
Parent of CWD, Peshkopi

Referring to the survey conducted with parents of CWD, 89.29% of the interviewees selected the meetings at school as most supportive of all project activities, followed by the support for children while at school noted by 55.36% of parents and the awareness raising activities selected a noted by 42.86% of surveyed parents.

Previously the other children were not accepting well CWD in the school environment. Now they are much more open to include them. In one case they have also proposed to organize 'events' to raise funds in their support.

School teacher, Elbasan

Figure 6 – Support offered from the project according to the parents experience with the project



Source: Data from the parents' survey

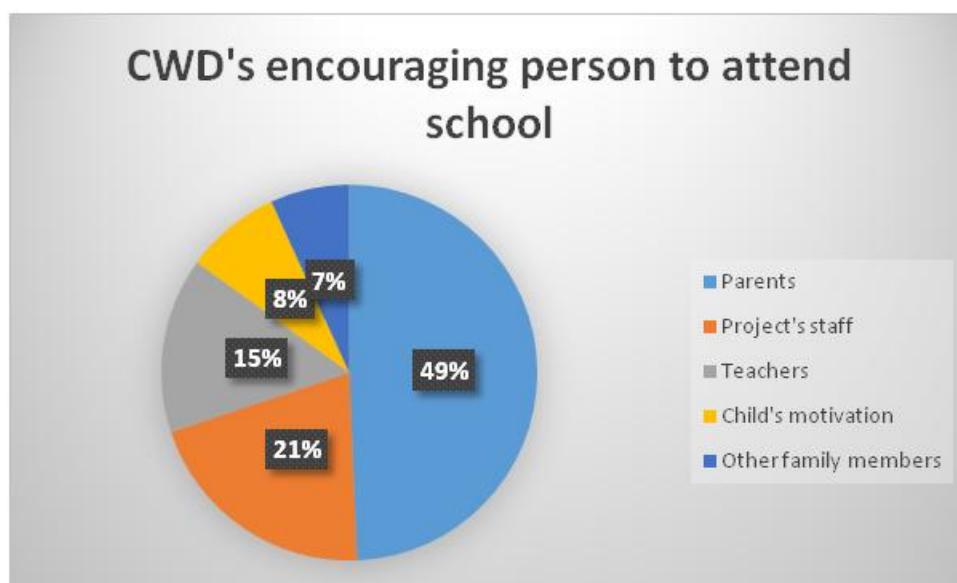
Different stakeholders (specialists of RED, parents, school director, specialist of municipality) report that education process and raising awareness of all parents to address needs of CWD and their inclusion in education is critical because other parents do not always approve of their children being in the same class with CWD. The project had great success in the work with parents and their awareness as reported by parents themselves.

Parents themselves accept to be a model and take the initiative to convince other parents and teachers and this happened only in schools that were included in the project.

Specialist of RED, Elbasan

Parents were asked about the person who encouraged the child to attend school and it resulted that 49.3% of them chose themselves as the key person who registered the child in school. The project' staff has been very supportive of this process and this is demonstrated by the fact that 20.5% of the interviewed parents identified the project staff as the person who encouraged their child to attend school.

Figure 7 - Person responsible for encouraging CWD to attend school



Source: Data from parent's survey

Students' internship in schools is considered by the key informants (teachers, school director, parents and RED specialist) as the most important activity because it creates a positive model of CWD involvement in school. The school director and the RED specialist report that the support offered by students during the internship was very helpful because they provided the needed assistance for teachers during the learning process in school.

Role and effectiveness of Student Governments

During the project implementation the Students' Governments were informed of the project and the role they would play in schools before the project began and as a result they became an effective part of the comprehensive practices. The engagement at the planning stage was an innovation that was supported and appreciated by the teachers, parents and school principals.

The Students' Governments have been active structures at schools and have served to lower the level of discrimination and exclusion amongst children and school staff. They were initiators of different activities for child rights and their inclusion, with a special focus on CWD.

Eighteen meetings and 5 training days with 5 Student Governments in Dibra and 6 reflection meetings with 5 Student Governments in Elbasan were held. As a result Students' Governments have a better understanding of their role in the school and about children with disabilities. The structures are stronger and are being included in decision making processes in their school and have made their school more friendly and accessible for every child.

Role and effectiveness of School Boards

School boards were a mobilizing structure for CWD and child rights-related issues despite the difficulties with organizing meetings with their members. The challenges occurred as a result of the inclusion of parents in such structures without informing them of the amount of time and engagement that was required. As a result, in some case the parents withdrew and avoided becoming active participants.

The project has discovered alternative forms (e.g., clear understanding of their engagement and role during the school academic year, a plan of duties to accomplish and results to achieve, discussion of success and difficulties faced during the academic year.) to motivate and include the school board to address and identify more effective forms and ways to promote the inclusion of CWD and other school children with special needs.

Sixteen trainings, 8 in Dibra and 8 in Elbasan for 10 school boards have strengthened their capacities to exercise their functions and advocate for better education for CWD.

Sharing experiences at national level among beneficiaries of the project has increased the confidence and belief of the professionals, since they have encountered not only challenges and difficulties, but also alternative solutions, different experiences and successes.

5.2.1 A summary of changes that the project brought in the life of children , parents, schools and community

Children

- Higher inclusion of children of CWD (inclusion in school activities, community). The experience of summer camp was a very important activity for children and their family. Parents were very enthusiastic to see how CWD were involved and how motivated they were to participate and learn from the activities developed in the camps.
- Inclusion in different activities of schools (Activities that engage both CWD and other children, and activities with parents in school settings)
- Higher desire and motivation to attend school (The school directors and parents mentioned two cases of children that have attended the school because of the project activities.)
- Engagement to fulfil duties (CWD were not only involved physically in school but they were active and participated in the teaching process; they accomplish the home work and feel satisfied by the progress that they made based on the PEI.
- Improved sense of equality with other children (The increased capacity of teachers in the inclusive education have been reflected in the practice of work with children. Parents report of the differences that have happened after the trainings and the project activities)

School

- Improved ability of teachers to develop individual education plans for the first time.
- Organizing comprehensive activities and creating opportunities for the education on children rights for the first time.
- Increasing capacities of school staff in the field of children rights and comprehensive education.

Parents

- Admitting problems and difficulties they have with CWD. The project was very helpful in raising the awareness of parents for the problems and difficulties that face CWD and for their important role as a partner in school and community.
- Awareness that children must go to school. Parents learned what progress their children can make if they are included in schools, community, etc. parents were very important actors in school, they have expressed their concerns and alternatives based on the specific needs of their children
- Engagement to work with children and cooperate with teachers. School directors have reported that the meetings organized with parents have increased their information and their participation in school. Parents have understood that they are part of problem solving of CWD in school and not only actors.

Community

- Raising awareness to accept CWD in schools. Parents of other children and community members have been more open to accept and not to stigmatize CWD
- Lowering the level of prejudice and discrimination. Parents of CWD and school directors report that there is a big positive difference related to prejudice and stigmatization that came as a result of the project activities.

5.3 Efficiency

In financial terms the project partners retain that the project budget was managed accordingly and where possible was used to increase the number of beneficiaries to other regions, not only in Dibra and Elbasan. For example, the budget planned for training the parents of CWD in Elbasan and Dibra, was used to also train parents of CWD coming from other regions as well.

Based on the objectives of the logical framework and the result indicators, the monitoring system of the project was integrated in some levels of the project implementation according to the type of activity.

Project monitoring was done internally from the project manager and no specific monitoring system was used. The monitoring has been conducted regularly and was aligned with the coordination of activities.

Project activities were monitored and assisted by the project staff. The project team was very professional and consistent in their monitoring and follow ups. The internal monitoring of project activities was carried out in accordance with the indicators defined in the Logical Framework.

Monitoring and project reports were carefully prepared to ensure the proper implementation of activities as agreed in the planning documents of the project.

5.4 Sustainability

The project has created some work practices with children in school which will continue to be implemented after its completion. The trained teachers, commissions of RED for disabilities will continue with their work to create comprehensive school environments since it is one of the duties of the law of pre-university education. This data was confirmed from all school directors interviewed from the evaluators.

Teachers, parents, school principals, representatives of RED and children themselves have greater knowledge on child rights-related issues and CWD and will continue to contribute to a greater change in the life of the children and their families.

Even if we want, we can't interrupt this work. The Students' Government doesn't allow us to do it; there is the psychologist, parents and so on. The assistant teacher will continue to be.

**Principal of "Irfan Hajrullai" School, Peshkopi.
Dibra**

Parents, school director and RED specialist noted that certain activities, such as . activities for children rights and CWD, developing the IEP for CWD, discussion of issues related with CWD with the school board, support by the RED specialist etc. will continue because they are related to child rights. . The project helped to broaden the ideas and increase self-confidence in teachers and parents alike. Teachers and other professionals learn while developing their practices and promote new

teaching approaches. Drafting of the individual education plans (IEP) will continue since it is a legal obligation that the teachers must fulfill when they work with CWD. Now they are equipped with more skills to develop IEP to guide their work and as a tool to measure the progress and results of their work with these children.

The teachers are using Individual Educational Plans developed by the project in their daily work and are very satisfied with this. We are planning to identify ways to develop the training manuals also for the new teachers entering our school.

School Director, Elbasan

Project activities have increased the sensitivity of different stakeholders who have worked with CWD despite the requirements of the project which consider some of their duties as part of the education system. There is a gap to further improve and increase the capacity of the teachers but the created models will continue their implementation because even the parents are better informed and as a result more demanding regarding the well-being of their children.

There are some good practices created by the project and we will continue to work for the identification, following and developing of IEPs. We will search for opportunities to provide assistant teachers.

Specialist of RED, Peshkopi, Dibra

Parents of CWD and school directors have mentioned the important role of RED for the sustainability of the work done with CWD. They expressed that it is very important for RED to have a more concrete and practical involvement in measuring the quality of inclusion in education of CWD. Stakeholders noted that they should use the model created by the schools involved in the project and apply it to other schools, in addition to the periodic measurement of the progress achieved by the schools. RED must be engaged more in monitoring the quality of the work done with CWD in schools and create opportunities for sustainable partnerships between parents and schools.

The groups that the project worked with have gained experience, by including some elements that are beneficial for the commissions for disabilities in RED and will continue to be implemented as they are related to the obligations that these structures have. In future years, the commissions will find their job easier and more organized as a result of a database with cases of children that will continue to be filled and because of some helpful instruments to improve their work.

6. Conclusions

- The focus areas of the project were largely considered to be relevant at all levels of intervention and progress was made in the achievement of the project's objectives in the areas of promotion and protection of child rights focusing on fulfilling the rights of children with disabilities.
- Stakeholders overwhelmingly felt that the project was delivering the right kind of service (focused on the right issues for CWD, teachers, parents, school children, community, etc, and delivered in a way that worked well for them), and also that it was still very much needed by them, and by others in similar situations.
- The project is in line with policies, laws, guidelines of MoES in Albania in view of child rights and rights of CWD. The support of RED commissions and their training was a very important element.
- The project advocated for the appointment of Assistant Teachers for all project schools, with higher impact in Elbasan where 3 out of 5 project schools have Assistant teacher now. One Assistant Teacher was appointed in Dibra.
- The project has been helpful for parents to reduce their isolation and stress levels. An initiative that has had particular value and impact was the facilitation of parents meeting with other parents facing the same situation and also with other professionals. For parents it is very important when they see each other actively engaging and motivating CWD to develop their abilities.
- Empowerment of civil society was achieved within the schools, among parents of CWD and from local civil society organizations. At the same time, increasing their capacities has contributed to accomplish the project results.
- The planned project activities have been delivered in an efficient and timely manner substantiated by high quality progress reports. The project had a general high impact level, making a major contribution to increasing the number of children with disabilities benefiting from school and community services and in promoting and ensuring a participatory and inclusive setting.
- The capacity building tools, training programs modules and materials developed with project's partners are already in use and could easily be used for future establishment of similar community services.
- The project had a major contribution to the promotion and implementation of child rights with a special focus on CWD rights through opening access to school services, supporting oversight bodies to develop the necessary skills needed to work with CWD, their parents, and other actors.
- Raising awareness of parents and community, in general directly affects the life quality of CWD and their families.
- The coalitions are structures that work effectively only when they are financially supported by the project.
- The project activities mainly focused on Dibra and Elbasan regions. This approach allowed two good practice models on how to support CWD that can be potentially scaled up to other regions and/ or regional schools.

7. Recommendations for future interventions

- Foresee a longer project implementation time frame based on the results and the impact it had on the community, institutions, families and the life of CWD.
- Extend the project results to other schools in the same regions where the project was implemented and to other regions in the country
- Continue working with parents and teachers by enhancing the achievements during the implementation of this project.
- Continue with initiatives which engage parents in their children's education through meetings, trainings, awareness raising and other activities aiming to provide children with the time, space and support they need to learn effectively.
- Continue with increasing the teaching staff capacities in schools and increase their ability to work effectively with every child with a disability or learning difficulty according to the needs and specific problems of each CWD.
- Extend trainings to reach commissions of Disabilities in RED even in other cities in order to empower and increase the effectiveness of these structures.
- Deliver seminars in schools - as a way of reaching more parents in their local area, and potentially engaging school staff who have important things to learn from listening to parents and understanding their perspective.
- Undertake awareness-raising and mobilization activities on the rights of CWD to tackle negative attitudes and perceptions and promote their inclusion in school
- Lobby with the MoES to ensure that the policy, laws and guidelines are executed accordingly for a better promotion and protection of child rights focusing on fulfilling the rights of children with disabilities
- Support school boards to fully take over their responsibilities in the school life.
- Promote initiatives that would engage parents, children and teachers together in school activities.
- Develop inclusive approaches and collaborative cultures within the school.
- Lobby and advocate for strengthening the accountability of the local structures offering community services.
- Support the role of local coalitions to increase and empower civil society to lobby and advocate for CWD rights and improved community services.

8. Lessons Learned from the Evaluation Process

The Project Evaluation was contracted when the project was over, while it is considered desirable by the evaluators to have this process conducted prior to the project termination.

It is the evaluators and project partners opinion that having the Project Evaluation conducted prior to the end/ or during the project implementation would have been of more use and support to the entire project implementation and would have improved the evidence base of the project outputs from the project partners.

9. Lessons learned from the project

Throughout the evaluation some key lessons regarding project implementation were identified and are summarised below:

The assistant teacher's had played an important role in the learning process and individual work with CWD. Children followed by the trained assistant teachers show improved results in relation to IEP compared with children that are not provided with such support.

Partnership, cooperation between stakeholders and clear sharing of the roles and responsibilities can improve the engagement quality. The results achieved through inclusive education increase confidence and motivation to identify new forms and ways of work with CWD by giving each child equal opportunities and chances.

Parents taking an active role and being acknowledged by the teachers, can be engaged in all education processes of their child. Parent's satisfaction should not be only linked to the results children have in school, but must be part of the education and inclusion of their children in the society.

Inclusion of students through internships in schools must be accompanied with (1) training programs to increase their capacity and (2) with mentoring in their work in school to increase the quality of the work with CWD and other groups of excluded children.

Structures built for the first time, such as the Evaluation Commission for CWD, must be regulated by a normative act or legal act that would define roles and responsibilities for each member.

Creating a participatory environment for parents, teachers, community and local authorities it is key for promoting the concepts of the rights of children with disabilities and raising awareness.

Inclusion of many stakeholders affects the process as it changes attitude and behaviour in all group levels engaged. However, a short time period project is considered a limitation to raising awareness and to bring significant changes in the life of CWD.

Ongoing dialogue with parents and those who work and support CWD, it is useful to keep abreast of what is most needed and to identify any new or unmet needs of CWD.

Parents and CWD need ongoing support as their child grows up over the years and their needs therefore change. They need to increase their confidence and be informed regularly on an individual and community level.

By having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, school board members can organize their work based on plans reflecting the school needs.

10. Appendices

- List of interviews,
- Evaluation TOR