

## ANNUAL REPORT 2016



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## **Summary of the National Association Work for the year under report**

Albania was granted Candidate Status by European Council in June 2014. The Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) has been in force since April 2009 and Albania has implemented smoothly its obligations. Regular political and economic dialogue between the EU and Albania has continued through the relevant structures under the SAA. The government engaged in EU-related reforms and continued to make progress in meeting the objectives set out in the five key priorities for the opening of accession negotiations. Albania has continued to have a constructive and proactive role in regional cooperation and maintains good neighbourly relations in line with its commitments under the Stabilization and Association Agreement.

The legal framework for the protection of human rights is broadly in line with European standards. Albania has ratified most international human rights conventions. However, enforcement of human rights protection mechanisms remains to be strengthened.

Albania has made some level of preparation in social policy and employment. Some progress was made, notably through the adoption of amendments to the labour code and the law on economic aid, the social protection strategy and the 2016-2020 occupational, safety and health policy document and its action plan. Implementation of the national jobs and skills strategy has started. The employment rate and labour market participation remain low, and the informal economy is still a significant job provider.

On labour law, the amended labour Code entered into force in June. The new law aims to transpose various EU directives covering non-discrimination at work, parental rights, and right to information, employer-employee relations and teleworking. It also increases the minimum working age from 14 to 15, in line with International Labour Organization conventions. However, the provision on forced labour remains vague and the law does not provide for sanctions in case of breaches.

The unemployment rate estimated by the labour force survey decreased slightly from 17.5 % in 2014 to 17.1 % in 2015 but remains high, particularly among women, young people and persons with disabilities. Unemployment rates for men fell from 19.2 % in 2014 to 17.1 % in 2015, while the female unemployment rate increased from 15.2 % to 17.1 %. A strategic approach needs to be developed to tackle labour market challenges such as youth unemployment and informality. The law on employment promotion programs was finalized, but remains to be adopted by the Council of Ministers. As regards to social inclusion and protection, the new national strategy on social protection and a 2015-2020 policy document on social inclusion were adopted. Both policy documents define policy objectives for reducing poverty, monitoring cross-sector inclusion policies, enacting reforms in the area of non-discrimination and establishing a social care system. Most social care services remain donor-driven and lack adequate budgets. Employment rates for Roma and Egyptians are very low, and with many being active in the informal sector. The 2016-2025 National Housing Strategy was adopted. Child labour remains a major concern, including in hazardous environments. More effective measures need to be undertaken in order to prevent child labour.

On the rights of the child, a revision of the current law on the protection of children's rights was initiated. There is a need to improve data collection and reporting mechanisms in child protection, and to improve cross-sector and inter-institutional coordination and cooperation mechanisms.

The territorial reform had a disruptive impact on the functioning of child protection units due to high rates of staff turnover, in particular of staff trained in child protection, and the reduced ratio of child protection workers per capita, in particular in rural areas.

The emigration of unaccompanied minors from Albania to EU Member States remained a matter of serious concern. An inter-institutional working group was set up in October to revise related legislation with a view to dealing with this phenomenon. Between September 2015 and March 2016, 18 cases were referred to the prosecutor for mistreatment of minors.

## 1. One Child

### 1.1 Family Based Care

SOS Children Villages Albania has a long experience in alternative care and has shown its commitment toward of children's care through: *20 years of experience in Family Based Care services in SOS Families, 15 years of experience in Youth Care.* Family Based Care is part of SOS Children's Village Programme Tirana and consists of SOS Children's Village linked with two Youth Facilities.

*128 children* were provided with family care ensured through psycho-pedagogical support given by SOS mothers/Aunts/Family assistants and child and family development co-workers. In the end of the year, 67 children in SOS village were provided with care in SOS Village, 27 young persons in Youth Facilities and 34 young people through Semi Independence Leaving Care program and Other After care forms. 12 new children were admitted this year (7 children were part of state institution where the Ombudsman has discovered facts concerning violence and abuse of children at Shkoder State care institution) and fully independence was reached by 9 (nine) youngsters who have shown skills to rely and to take care for themselves and 8 (eight) of them were reunified with their families of origin. *Capacity utilization* of SOS Children's Village Tirana has been at the rate of 79.2%.

*Through the Families 1st project*, SOS Children's Villages Albania assessed and reconsidered changes in the life of SOS Children's Villages Tirana in order to move forward a family type approach. Co-workers (47) of SOS Children's Villages Albania were part of the reflection process through details workshops and fruitful discussions and relevant recommendations came out of the process by them, children and young people. Diverse methodology was used for reflections in order to have the most relevant information and sincere one. Till now, most of the recommendations are about:

- i. Child Care (for e.g. change of number of children/ family;) Human Resource (increasing of aunts and family assistants per house)
- ii. Finance and Budgeting (Every expenditure including utilities will be included in the family budget.
- iii. Administration (organized shopping should be avoided giving flexibility to buy in the shops that near; all the structures, village, NO and also program all set up in one location lead to an institutional environment than familiar) and other issues (for example, dismissal of logo; reduce of visits from donors and not so much publicity).

Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth during this year has emphasized the necessity to accelerate the already started procedures *for de-institutionalization*. For this purpose, teams of experts will be set up who will work at any public institution for carrying out this process. SOS has already start being part of this process through implementing De-I action plan in Tirana public care institution (funded for SOS Netherland) and through a project recently started in Shkoder municipality (with Save the children funds) focusing on strengthening the capacity of municipality regarding services to prevent the institutionalization and starting the integration of children from state care institution to families of origin.

A national action plan for introducing the *SOS couples* was prepared together with Human Recourses Department. By integrating couples SOS Children's Villages Albania will further develop their system of social work in the Children's Village respecting the principles of family-based care and the quality standards for the social services offered. *Actually, we see some difficulties in recognizing the legal aspect of presenting the supporting SOS parent to the state social service and diverse steps are taken: meetings with lawyer of the organization for more clarification, meeting with state social services in Municipality of Tirana.*

Implementation of a case management approach in FBC will be applied next year due to some important changes in organizational structure of CVP Tirana (incorporated Leader of FBC and Head of Child and Family Development Support). All tools were provided by SOS Kosovo translated in Albanian language in order to reduce costs. Future steps will be taken for implementation of case management in FBC services based on action plan prepared by the team.

*FBC database* remains an essential tool for the co-workers of Family Based Care. 90 % of active children and youngsters are part of PDB. Co-workers had attending ongoing refreshment training on PDB. In the future,

the focus should be more on regular update of data regarding children and young people in the system and use the data's for in planning, monitoring and reporting activities.

*Youth employment* remains a high priority of our work. SOS Albania has taken good initiatives related to youth employment through increasing employability skills of them. 17 University students are combing the study and working activities (part time and full time basis) and 94 % of youth of Semi Independence Program are working. The cooperation with FR department is reinforced in finding employment through businesses or internships program.

According to the long term strategy of SOS CV Albania, there are intentions for SOS CV to get recognized as foster care and also the Care4ME covers actions related to policy change for recognition of professional and other forms of foster care. Recognition as *foster care model* remains a priority. Different meetings were organized with local and central government to find opportunities to be recognized. SOS Foster Care Model is an opportunity to increase state financial resources in long term perspective for SOS NA Albania.

## 1.2 Family Strengthening

Family Strengthening Program with more than 12 years of experience in supporting children and families in need as community service providers is one of the main programme areas that SOS Children Villages Albania is implementing successfully. We can speak here for *751 children and young people supported at 31 December 2016 and 268 families. 67 out of 68 families (98, 5 %) have left the project as self-reliant families* as they achieved the family development plan objectives during the year meanwhile only 1 has left for other reason.

### Highlights of 2016

Based on the good results of the work done in the first year we succeeded to extend for another year the contract with ANTEA CEMENT sh.a to deliver social services in rural areas of Thumane and Borizane. Total budget in disposal is 28,177 Euro.

- ⇒ Program participant numbers has been slightly decreasing for 2016 aiming to increase service quality and reduce staff ratio
- ⇒ Strengthening Family Program (parent capacity building manual) was implemented for all Family Strengthening Projects and the results were really amazing. Caregivers and children have expressed their high appreciation for this new working method on building and reinforce their family communication and problem solving attitude among family members.
- ⇒ Family Strengthening pillar in Programme Database system had a more proactive usage from all co-workers during the year, enhancing thus monitoring and evaluation processes in program and national level.
- ⇒ Family Strengthening Shkoder is implementing "Improve Child protection system in Albania"-project. The project started March 1, 2016 based on a trilateral cooperation between Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages Albania and Shkoder Municipality. The project supported 54 children (23 families).
- ⇒ One of the social workers in Family Strengthening Sauk was promoted As Head of Child and Family Development for Children Villages Program Tirana and a new social worker was recruited.
- ⇒ Family Strengthening Sauk premises were further adapted and re-organized to meet child and family individual and group needs. Intensive and devoted work done by all co-workers resulted into a lovely child and family environment.
- ⇒ Family Strengthening Shkoder is considered as skilled partner in preventing cases of child abandonment. Child Protection Unit has been part of the multidisciplinary team in all meetings and round tables organized for children's cases at risk, reported by the project.
- ⇒ Within the frame of the global campaign "Youth Voice-The future we want", was established Youth Team with young people from Family Strengthening program in Shkoder and residential care institution (6-18 years old).
- ⇒ Through concrete advocacy action from Family Strengthening co-workers it was made possible to register for the first time 16 children in nursery and kindergarten, free of charge.
- ⇒ For 30 families' part of our services after being oriented and fulfilling all the needed documentation, was made possible to profit from municipality procedures on social housing program in Tirana Location.

Within 12 year of lifespan Family Strengthening program has *increased, shaped and further diversified* its services to better fulfil individual child/youth and family's needs. For 2016 we can underline the below service results :

- (i) We can speak for more than 80 % of participating children being supported with different educational services.
- (ii) Based on programme database 91, 9 % of children are taking health services and on average 70 % of them have improved their health situation.
- (iii) In average, more than 85 % of children and caregivers have profit from psycho-social services thought different approaches and more than 60 % of them have improved their psycho-social wellbeing. Child Protection Policy activities have been part of our trainings with children and caregivers as well.
- (iv) *Speech therapist* is now well known and integrated service for children but also supporting caregivers on how to work with simple methods and materials with their children.

Main positive practices of Family Strengthening for 2016 that we can mention are:

- (i) Creating models / positive examples of empowered families has encouraged other families to improve their livelihoods.
- (ii) Fathers Club is a unique positive experience for male caregivers to be socialised.
- (iii) Family Strengthening staff is actively participating in Child protection round table for different child abuse cases where responsibilities are shared among partners increasing the profile of the organization as community service provider.
- (iv) Working with child re-integrations as part of DE-I process in the country.

Challenges

- (i) Families being reintegrated from other emigration face lots of difficulties and we need strong efforts and more financial support on working with them.
- (ii) Deterioration economic situation of different businesses in country decrease funding source or other types of support for our target groups.
- (iii) Vocational trainings for caregivers increase their abilities to find and maintain a job ( permanent/ part-time).
- (iv) Although the good efforts done during the year regarding Programme Database there is still needed to have a more daily proactive use of the system.

### 1.3 Advocacy

During 2016, advocacy with the dynamic contribution of PD department has been an actor and factor in important social developments in the country. It is important to highlight the fact that SOS Albania has been part of consultations and has given crucial contribution in inputs for important (various draft laws of social welfare) social policy developments in the highest legislative institutions in the country (Parliamentary commissions). On the other side advocacy, has actively contributed in the process of influencing plans and strategies at central and local level as well. The advocacy actions are executed under 3 main pillars: “Care for Me” campaign; “Youth Voice” project supported by UNFPA; “I Matter” – follow up.

- Contribution and participation at the “Sub commission on Juvenile Affairs, Gender Equality and Domestic Violence” in May 2016 in the public hearing session of "The rights of children against violence and abuse - a focus on recent violence cases in residential care centres for children" with representatives from the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, municipalities and civil society organizations.
- In September 2016, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth organized consultation with CSO regarding “National agenda of child rights 2016 – 2020”. SOS Albania contributed and provided its input regarding topics of alternative care (especially foster care and leaving care issues) to considered and become part of Agenda. Majority of our input were integrated in the document and become part of agenda.
- Input, cooperation with CSO and advocacy in consultation hearing session for “The draft law on Social Care Services in the Republic of Albania” at the “Commission for Employment, Social Affairs and Health”, October 2016. SOS Albania reflected in the draft law its main advocacy issues.
- Participation in consultations for the “Project Budget of 2017” at the “Commission for Employment, Social Affairs and Health” in November 2016. Input to increase state budget for children issues with focus children and young people without parental care. Suggestions provided by SOS Albania in public consultation for Albanian State Budget for Education and Services for Children and Young People organized by CRCA, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth.
- Contribution in drafting a resolution and input of our youth in “Hearing Session on youth in the Republic of Albania” organized by “Sub commission on Juvenile Affairs, Gender Equality and Domestic Violence”, December 2016. Our young people presented their concerns and suggestions for improvement to the commission.
- In December 2016, productive collaboration between Advocacy and Fundraising for promotion of C4M campaign. In postcards season the Prime Minister Office bought/ordered 700 postcards by SOS Albania stamped with the logo of C4M campaign. Through these postcards, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and 3 State Ministers without portfolio sent out their wishes.

- SOS Albania is one of the main actors of DE-I action plan implementation in the country. Ongoing cooperation and individual meetings were carried out with an external expert of UNICEF who supported the preparation of the action plan. Inputs were given related to foster care and leaving care services and our input was reflected in the national action plan for child and family services of MSWY.
- Meeting with the staff of the online platform of Child Hub where the topics of Care for Me campaign were reflected and discussed.
- “State Agency of Children’s Rights Protection” organized the National Mobilization Plan with the motto “I protect Children” during March – June 2016. On International Child Rights Day - 20 November, for one week, it was organized the Week of Child Rights by this Agency in cooperation with CSO. SOS Albania was part of the National Plan and joined those national initiatives with concrete actions for child rights.
- In December SOS Albania made a presentation called "Youth Involvement in Advocacy" in a Project workshop of United Voices for Children and Coalitions for Children across the region - sharing good practice, with the support of BKTF taking place in Tirana
- Young people of Thumana and Shkoder location organized and participated in “Youth Voice” project supported by UNFPA. Through this national campaign young people increased their capacities in voluntarism topic, peer to peer, children/youth rights, international days, networking and advocacy for their rights etc. Youth practices acquired skills by mobilizing and raising awareness for their peers; they informed their community, organized animation and outdoor activities with children in Child Home in Shkoder, making aware and cooperating with public institutions (health care institutions, elementary schools, high schools, administrative units etc.) cooperating in network with CSOs youth, organizing massive events which were broadcast by local TVs, advocated for their rights in highest local bodies such as Mayor of Shkoder Municipality. In this campaign 103 young people, 71 adult/parents and 25 children participated and benefited directly, while 390 adult & young people were indirect beneficiaries.

## **2. ONE Friend - Raise SOS Friends around the World to Fund 1150 Children**

SOS Albania is working hard on local fundraising field. Day by day we are building strong relationship with companies in order to attract them to be donors. On the other hand, we are working strongly on keeping our donors and make them partners for a long-term relationship.

We still have all our Friends, Supporters and Partners and we consider this as one of our biggest successes being this great challenge in Albania.

On the other hand, we are working very hard to have more Supporters and Partners and in this perspective, we are happy to say that now we have two Big Partners who support us and we are committed to create long-term relationship with them.

In October, we organized our 20-th anniversary and invited all our Donors and they were impressed to see our 20 years of work and also that our youngsters already created their life and families.

This year together with a new Supporter, we organized a Social Media Campaign which was very successful for both of us.

We also consider as success our third year of collaboration with the Austrian Embassy in Tirana and the Theatre of Opera and Ballet for one Fundraising Event!

We are still doing very well with the Greeting Cards Campaign and it was a success in the field of fund raising. We also spread our Advocacy Campaign message “Care for Me” through Greeting Cards ordered by the Prime Minister and some Ministers in Albania.

Antea Cement, the big Greek company that opened a new project, totally financed by them, in partnership with SOS Albania to support the local community where their business is located, decided to extend the project for another one year. The contract value is 28.177 Euro.

We are happy to say that we have two Partners who support us through Family Packages, 7.560 Euro each and also a lot of Supporters and Friends who supports us through Child Packages. In total, we have 35 children supported through Child Package and Family Package.

## 2.1 Cash Income:

For 2016 our Gross income target (Corporate fundraiser + public funding) was 112.000 Euro and we managed to raise 113.683 Euro, which means 101.5 %.

For 2016 our target was 82.000 Euro. We managed to raise a gross income 76.549 Euro or 10.470.410 ALL which means 93.3 % of the annual target.

These incomes are from:

- |                                                        |                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ➤ Renewal of agreements already in place and FR event: | 2.845.024 ALL or 20.800 Euro, |
| ➤ New agreements:                                      | 2.325.260 ALL or 17.000 Euro  |
| ➤ Christmas Card Campaign:                             | 3.454.652 ALL or 25.257 Euro  |
| ➤ Others                                               | 1.845.435 ALL or 13.492 Euro  |

## 2.2 Public Funding

In total, we have applied for 6 projects & concept notes during 2016. It was a productive year because in cooperation with HGFD, SOS Albania won a big three-year project supported by BMZ (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development).

- Cooperation, application and completion of "Supporting child protection system in Albania" project, financed by Save the Children - 5,600 Euro
- Ongoing partnership and cooperation with UNFPA, implementation and finalization of "Youth Voice" project - 5,100 Euro;
- The successful completion of one year project and application for the second/another year of the project "Extension of FSP Tirana in Rural Areas", Thumane - Antea Cement - 28,177 Euro
- Development, finalization and application of BMZ, 3-year project - 527.142 Euro which has already started implementation

Participation in regional initiative/application for BMZ and contribution in the preparation of a concept note related to Foster Care

### 2.2 Donation in Kind

The annual target for 2016 was 55,000 Euro and we managed to raise 5.015.312 ALL or 36.667 Euro. From this amount the booked – budget relief was 4.631.374 ALL or 33.860 Euro which means **61%** of the annual target.

### 3. One Movement – Strong People Strong Association

2016 was another demanding year for our MA and Human Resources Office as well, which had made every attempt to contribute to the overall success of the organization by providing continuous support to Managers and Staff.

The Human Resources KPI for the last year were positive. We can mention here a very low general turnover, 2.6% as well as low turnover for the caregivers, 4.4%.

The following are the main activities that took place and our priorities during 2016.

- **Number of recruitments** for 2016 was 8. Since our organization aims to promote and retain the best employees, two of the recruitments, FBC Leader and Head of Child and Family Development were internal ones. They took place in the framework of CVP reorganization. In addition, 1 Social Worker in FSP-Sauk and 3 Aunts have been recruited. The recruitment process for Aunts is carried out during the whole year. For this process, we have required also the collaboration of other NGOs which have on their focus the women development, and the labour offices in different cities of Albania. We are collaborating with a Recruitment Agency as well. Despite, our continuous efforts, the recruitment for SOS Mother / Aunts remains one of the most difficult. While, the recruitments for the positions of Project Manager and Finance & Administrative Assistant were carried out in the framework of a new project implementation (BMZ) funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. In addition, for the first time, last year it was introduced the SOS couple concept. This was a step in perfecting the family based care offered by SOS Children's Villages Albania by diversifying the profile of caregiver. The first SOS couple is recruited in accordance with the internal quality standards and recruitment regulation.
- **Staff training and development**, as usually was in the focus of our Organization even during 2016. Several internal and external trainings were delivered to the employees. Main trainings were as following:
  - **Group trainings: Mother and Aunts** - "Effective Communication and Team Building"; "How to communicate and build relationship with teens"; "Positive child disciplining methods". **Youth Leaders** – "Difficult cases treatment and alternative solutions". **Managerial staff of different levels** - "Risk Assessment for NGO". **Social Workers** – "Different approaches to increase local funds"; "Strengthening family program"; "Risk management".
  - **Individual trainings:** "Capacity building for save child investigation" in Bulgaria; "Children and young people with trauma, behavioural and psychological problems in SOS alternative care and support for their care-givers" in Vienna.
- Continuous importance is given to the **performance appraisal talk** and in order to better carry out this process, last year was also carried out an assessment of the implementation of the performance management system to the **Caregivers**. This assessment revealed that all the Caregivers had carried out the performance appraisal talk (PAT), while in the organization level the PAT is in high percentage, 93.6%.
- **Engagement and retention** of staff is one of the main objectives of organization. Besides the working conditions, benefits, team spirit and good atmosphere every employee finds in SOS, salary is a good factor to attract and retain qualified personnel who make every effort to the overall success of the organization. This is why a considerable **wage increase** is approved for 26 employees, whose salaries were below the respective bands. In addition, during the ceremony of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization for the employees with 10 years of working experience in SOS **dedicated awards in crystal** were given. We aim at keeping this way of motivation year after year. We got the certificate of property for all the buildings of SOS Children's' village and reduced the price of electricity by saving around 1000 euro per month.

### Time schedule of major events in the following year

January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organising PAT-s</li> <li>- Preparations for RAP</li> <li>- Recruitment of BMZ staff</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Board Meeting</li> <li>- Financial audit</li> <li>- Fundraising even in cooperation with the Austrian Embassy and Opera and Ballet Theatre</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Official launching ceremony of BMZ project</li> <li>- Celebration of Mother's Day</li> <li>- Trainings</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Painting auction with children and famous artists' works</li> <li>- RAP Workshop</li> <li>- Visit to PSA</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Board meeting</li> <li>- General Assembly Meeting</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Celebration of children's day in CV</li> <li>- Donor's Day</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extra ordinary GA where MA, PSA and GSC will sign an agreement on mid-term plans</li> <li>- Summer holidays</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youth days in youth homes</li> <li>- Preparation for strategic planning</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participation of 2 SOS Mother in the Ring Ceremony organized in Croatia</li> <li>- Board Meeting</li> <li>- Preparation of the budget 2018</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NMT meeting</li> <li>- Strategic planning</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trainings</li> <li>- Fund raising campaign</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christmas Card Campaign</li> <li>- Board Meeting</li> <li>- Open week in SOS village</li> </ul>

## Board Members of Association

<b>SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES</b>	<b>ALBANIA</b>	<b>Date Prepared</b>	<b>15.02.2017</b>
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No.	Name of Board Member	Position
1	<b>Mr. Tom Malvet</b>	SOS KDI Representative
2	<b>Mr. Damir Coric</b>	SOS KDI Representative
3	<b>Mr. Mirush Bejko</b>	Board President
4	<b>Mr. Lulzim Kapllanaj</b>	Deputy
5	<b>Ms. Kreuza Lubonja</b>	Member
6	<b>Ms. Silva Radovani Banushi</b>	Member
7	<b>Ms. Lauresha Basha</b>	Member
<b>Chairman of Board</b>		Mr. Mirush Bejko
<b>Address:</b>		Rruga: "Muhamet Gjollështa"
<b>Tel. / Fax / e-mail:</b>		+355 69 20 20 718 <a href="mailto:mirush_bejko@yahoo.com">mirush_bejko@yahoo.com</a>

## 4. SOS Children's Villages Program Tirana

Programme of Tirana offers services for our target group through FBC and FSP. In FBC we offer care through SOS Village and Youth care, in two youth homes. Our FSP offer support to the community, in the area of Sauk, Don Bosco and from last year in Thumane sponsored by ANTEA-CEMENT, a company that operates in that area. This project supports 19 families and 48 children.

**In 2016 the structure of the Programme of Tirana was reorganized** and was followed by a re-division of duties for many positions.

In September 2016, **the new FBC Leader was hired**, a position which was covered before by the CVPD. All the support given to the child and family was reorganized as well, with the recruitment of **Head of Child and Family Development**. This reorganization came together with the implementation of Case Management the review and clear division of duties, of each psychosocial staff. Tirana Programme Management Team was reorganized, and led by the CVPD and is compounded by FBC Leader, HCFD, FSP Sauk Coordinator, FSP Don Bosco Coordinator and the programme finance officer. During 2016 the implementation of the national action plan for **Family First** started at the programme level.

**The premises of former SOS KG** were reconstructed and BMZ project is implementing as a Social Service Centre for the children and families of the community.

Programme of Tirana has built a professional relationship with local administrative units where we offer our services as well as with the Child Protection Unit, throughout the country (based on the needs).

There is a good cooperation between programme units throughout the year.

On March 2016, we welcomed the PSA Germany here. During their stay, here they had the opportunity to pay field visits and learn more about our services, spent time with the young people in both youth homes. They learned about the achievements and plans our young people have for the future. On the next day, they visited SOS families. Our guests visited some FSP families in Sauk and in Don Bosco. On their last day, they pay a field visit the new project in Thumane visiting some families there.

In October SOS Children's Villages Albania celebrated 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and it was great pleasure to brief to all our guests our successes and achievements and care experience in SOS Albania. We had many visitors and donors, representatives from international and regional offices. They visited also the Programme of Tirana (FSP and FBC). Our young people were the promoters of the whole ceremony held for this event.

### 4.1 SOS Children's Village

During 2016 in Family Based Care services and care was offered to 128 children and young people from 132 that was the actual Capacity Building Plan 2016. This target was not reached because of the state social services system of referral – evaluation of cases which does not work properly. The process of referring cases from the Child protection Unit, has started and they have been evaluated by the Social Administrators. Even though SOS Children's Village has followed all full procedures for evaluating 4 new cases, the process was not finalized to put the children under our care, because of the aforementioned reason. In national level, placing children in alternative care, remains still a challenge for the Albanian government. Efforts are being made for developing standards and implementing other forms of care, such as foster care but the process is still slow.

#### **Admissions, transfer, reunification of children with their biological families**

Year 2016 started its work for SOS Children's Village with 69 children, of which 37 boys and 32 girls. 12 new children were admitted in total, 11 in the Village and 1 in the Youth facility 1. As a consequence of violence in public care institutions being published in the media, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth established a Task Force and analysed the standards of services in all forms of alternative care. Many cases of children were referred by the State Social Services, of which 7 children were admitted in the SOS village in Tirana finding quality care and services for their development and upbringing. All new children were supported in

accordance with their needs. Because of the reunifications with biological families and transfers in youth facilities, the number of children at the end of December went to 67 children.

### **12+ Programme and transfer of young people**

12+ Programme and preparation of young people to be transferred in the youth facilities, is one of our strongest points which is getting stronger year by year. For the first time, this year we have practiced a different approach for the transfer from the village to youth facilities. Children can stay with their SOS family until they turn 18 years old (we have one case). The challenge in this process is to strengthen the capacities of care co-workers so that this form of care is practiced in a smooth and successful way. **11 children** were transferred in the Youth Facilities and **2 children** have been supported during their reunification with the biological families. **Another** child who was reunified before 2016 with his biological family has been supported with an aftercare plan.

**The process of individual development plan of the child** is now consolidated and is performed based on clear plans and continuous reviews. Each child living in the SOS village has their own individual development plan, which is reviewed 3 times a year. The number of children fulfilling IDP objectives has **increased** because:

- Active participation of children in IDP meetings has been completed for each case.
- SOS mother's role is strengthened in the whole process of IDP.
- Cooperation with schools of the community and partners offering support services for children (sport, foreign languages etc.) has become stronger.

In order to fully fulfil the objectives defined in IDP, a range of specialized services has been offered and all individual cases have received support which is now a practice of our work. The progress of children in these services is monitored and evaluated by the multidisciplinary team. The main directions children have been supported was: education, psychological support, promotion and protection of rights, inclusion in social, development and entertaining activities.

**Education** has been provided through preschool and school education in three public schools, one private school and one public kindergarten in the community. Services have continued effectively throughout the school year. All children have concluded successfully the school year, 4 of which had their final compulsory education exams. 15 children have reached high results in school while 3 children have learnt reading and 2 others have corrected the sounds they could not articulate properly.

**Psychological service is a** very important part of IDP. Each child has a psychological evaluation and based on the needs an intervention plan is developed. The main services were: psycho-emotional support with individual counselling, evaluation and therapy from external experts, psycho-emotional support from the psychologist of the programme, evaluation and reevaluation of IDP for transfers in Youth Facility, group sessions etc.

Child/young people protection has been one of the priorities of work with children not only for the SOS organization but for the whole system of alternative care. Awareness of children, support staff, partners and community on this issue, has been one of the strongest points of our work.

This year we have been focused in these directions:

**Promoting and protecting children's rights** through activities and trainings with children as well as with the staff where the main topics are: effects of bullying in schools; consequences of violence on children; management of group conflicts; verbal violence and psychological effects; Sexual abuse and psychological effects.

**Children's parliament** has been an active participant in dealing with different issues and has been active throughout the year. On the International Day of Child's Rights, during the period 14 – 20 November, it was organized the "Week of child's rights" in programme level, in cooperation with partners.

**In January 2016**, the CPP assessment tool 2015 was discussed and filled out in programme level, to be later filled out in national level. In accordance with CPP, internal and external incident cases have been evaluated and followed up.

**On the three cases of reported violence** all steps have been followed. In the evaluation of these cases, staff has shown professionalism and has given all the support to persons included. For any case, there have been actions followed in continuity.

**During January 2016**, System Based Audit in CV Tirana focused on CPP implementation issues, took place. The results were discussed in Programme level from all participants in the audit and in June an action plan based on the recommendation of this audit was developed with participants from the programme and national level.

**In May 2016**, the village was audited by a Task Force of the MSWY, on the situation of protection of children living in alternative care. Results of this audit came out in the same month and were positive with a few recommendations for which we have worked on.

This year the programme of Tirana **has had lots of activities focused** on child's issues and needs and their specifics, as far as academic, social and emotional development is concerned. One of the challenges of our work has been, decreasing the institutional features in the services we offer.

One of the most important days for the year was the 20th Anniversary of our Association where children and young people were the main protagonists. The main activities have been organized in programme level which has had a positive influence in socialization of children and their integration into community.

**Cooperation with partners** has helped in improving the quality of services, promoting our talents by including children in activities and national competitions very often resulting in prizes and trophies from these representations.

**Keeping contacts with biological parents and managing these contacts the best way possible**, has been done very carefully based on individual evaluation of each case. **Some of the challenges have been:** difficult adaption situation with biological parents in some cases; cases of parents with mental health problems or emotional stability problems, and parents serving prison; careful management of disaster cases in biological families so that children go through the trauma of losing their relatives in a smoother way, lack of interest in some cases from parents/relatives; follow -up meeting with them  
Despite difficulties encountered, teamwork has made these relations develop carefully and positively influence the development and welfare of children.

### **Staff support and development**

Assessing staff as the most important asset in child service, its support and development has been the centre of attention. SOS mothers/aunts and other support staff has taken part in trainings based on the needs presented during their work and during the process of Appraisal Talk. New employees have been supported and oriented with priority in order to better fulfil our mission. All staff has been supported with supervisor specialists, individually as well as in group, in accordance with their requirements and needs bases on SOS standards.

During this year the following trainings have taken place:

- Strengthen relationship of mother – aunts
- Training on positive discipline by “Save the Children”
- Team building with Programme staff
- Orientation meetings for “Case management”, followed by reorganization of psycho-pedagogical staff.

One of the new developments this year was the implementation of SOS couple concept. The procedure started in national level and Family Based Care has contributed in applying the procedures and duties based on the Plan drafted for this process.

Placing children in **legal custody of the organization** has continued in cooperation with TLAS legal service which has offered free of charge service even for this year.

9 cases have been followed during 2016 and 5 of them were placed under the legal custody of the organization. One of the cases is still in process while 3 others have been dismissed for different reasons.

Also, all procedures for completing the file of one child who is in adoption process in the Albanian Adoption Committee have been followed. Procedures have also been followed for 2 cases of children who have their property inherited by their biological family yet to be legalized.

**Status Quo – By the end of December 2016: 9 children are under the legal custody of the organization, 3 children have no custody (1 is still in process), 55 children are under the legal custody of their parents/relatives.**

## 4.2 Youth Facilities

Programme of Tirana continues to keep the same capacity for youth care in Youth homes. Service has been offered to 27 young people in both youth facilities (13 YF 1 and 14 YF3) by the end of 2016. 33 young people are receiving services in the Semi Independence Programme and After-Care Programme (17 YF 1 and 16 YF3), taking the number to 60 young people supported throughout the year. During 2016, 12 children have been admitted in both Youth Facilities, 11 being transferred from the village and 1 transferred by the state institution, where he went back in three months. 5 young people supported with After Care Plans have left the organization and have been reunified with their biological families, while 9 young people are in full independence. In total, 14 young people have left the semi independence programme and other care forms in YF.

Our young people are successful and represent the organization in various event organized in national and international level. During 2016 the objectives of work with young people have been focused in issues aiming at improving their skills towards the final mission of the organization by:

- offering quality service for SOS young people
- orienting and supporting SOS young people towards a profession
- supporting and orienting young people in semi independence
- supporting young people in finding and keeping a job
- increasing pedagogical staff skills
- supporting and motivating young people to receive scholarships in public universities
- increasing young people's skills on income management etc.

All these objectives have been translated in concrete achievements and developments for the young people.

**Education:** The major part of the young people in youth facilities and semi-independence programme, attend compulsory education, high-school and university. 3 of our young people attend professional high school education for IT, "Hermann Gmeiner", which is now a public professional school. 17 young people attend Universities and a part of them have received half or full scholarship. It is worth mentioning one of our young people which managed to win a full scholarship for studying a school term in Portugal through Erasmus Plus programme. Young people with lower academic skills, have been supported with professional courses so they can have a profession in the future.

**Employment** is still a challenge of the work in Youth homes, even if many initiatives have been taken for employing our young people such as: Registering them with the state labour offices; finding professional training opportunities for free, or at a reasonable price;

Youth Employment continues to be ensured mainly by personal acquaintances of the staff. 76% of the young people above 16 years of age have had at least one work experience during 2016. They have mainly worked in travel agencies, internet cafes, electrical installations, shop assistants, tailor shops etc. full time as well as part time.

**Housing** is safe and provided by the organization for all the young people. Young people live mainly in rented apartment or in dormitories.

**Special achievements; Advocacy activities:** During this year, successful young people, mainly from the youth facilities, have taken part in different activities and advocacy activities inside and outside the organization where the most important ones are:

- Participation of 4 young girls from 1 – 3 April in the activity held in Tirana with the topic "Training and Workshop on Advocacy" in cooperation with the SOS International office.
- The young person had an excellent representation of herself in the advocacy planning meeting held in Innsbruck in 6-7 June.

- Excellent representation of young girls in the General Assembly of SOS International held in Innsbruck in 25.06.2016.
- Participation of the young girl as representative of SOS Albania young people in the meeting “Quality standards for youth care” in Innsbruck (in 8 – 10 November 2016).

Besides the achievements, Youth Facilities have faced challenges too. Taking care of 2 young people with emotional and behaviour disorder was one of them. Dealing with this cases in continuity by supporting and following them with specialists, requires many efforts to be made by staff.

### 4.3 Main achievements, good practices and challenges in FSP’s for year 2016

#### FSP SAUK

**Family Strengthening Project Sauk** has 10 years of experience in offering services to families and children in need and improving them year by year. Community and partners in areas we operate are aware of the target group and services our project offers. High demands from families asking for support and coming from areas our project does not cover, show the need for extension and increase of FSP projects in other areas as well. The project has supported in total 72 families with 189 children of which 30 families with 77 children have left the programme successfully while 25 families with 62 children part of our target group have become part of the project.

#### Services offered by FSP Sauk

**Paediatric service:** is offered to cover the needs of the project with check-ups, group and individual counselling sessions. 50% of the children have improved their health state through medicines, check-ups, test and seeing the doctor. **Education service** has been the most attended by children in programme level supporting them with after school sessions to pass the difficulties. 98% of children are in the age of compulsory education and attend it regularly. 87 children of the project have been supported with school packages for the academic year 2016-2017.

**Psychological service for children and adults:** Around 45 % of children of our project have improved their psycho-emotional state through group/individual sessions as well as through activities they organize. Self-help groups have functioned regularly through Mothers Club and Fathers Club. Our objective is to include in these groups caregivers from local community so that the network in this community is strengthened.

**Legal services** are offered for free by TLAS Legal Service which is our main partner for legal issues.

**Speech therapy:** 12 children have attended speech therapy sessions during this year and they have improved their speech and shown good progress in behaviour.

**Activities for improving living conditions and food packages:** 20 families have been supported to improve their living conditions making their life safer. Families have been strengthened through support from donations by various individuals (in home equipment such as fridge, washing machines, blankets, etc.).

**Parenting capacity building during 2016:** 65 % of parents have increased their capacities through trainings/seminars/ workshops organized in the self-help group, **Fathers Club** and psycho-social activities. Topics of the trainings include: a) Family Planning Methods b) Employment c) Child Protection Policy d) violence and abuse forms. In **December FSP Sauk** started the implementation of **SFP(strengthening family program)** training. So far, 4 training sessions have been organized and it has been noticed that beneficiaries have a great interest on the topics treated. On the last years, CPU employees and social administrators have changed very often and we have had to increase their capacities with continuous information about the services we offer and in some cases about the location of the families.

**Advocacy: FSP Sauk has advocated** for enrolling 4 children in the kindergarten as some obstacles were faced by their families; for 4 families so they could profit financial aid; 1 child to profit the status of orphan; lobbying by the administrative unit so that 30 new families of the project get their rent bonus or social housing; transfer of legal documents for changing living place for 3 families; advocacy for children’s rights in community through awareness campaigns; delivering fliers, posters in cooperation with the Child Protection State Agency during Child’s Rights Week.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Database, financial monitoring of the project; self-evaluation of the project which is performed once a year in September; every year actions taken for the child protection policy are monitored in programme level.

**Main positive practices** we can mention for the FSP Sauk for 2016 are: the self-help group; SFP (strengthening family program) Training module; Database, professional courses.

### **Challenges**

- Application for extra funds in other foreign organizations or state institutions.
- Workload of co-workers and need for extra staff.
- Entering data in the database and filling out documents with the same information for families is too much work and duplication of information
- Labour offices offering inadequate jobs for parents has made that financial aid is denied to these families and so their incomes have decreased narrowing the poverty line even more.
- Low salaries for mothers who have been employed through labour offices in the garment industry and lack of employment stability for the target group we support.
- Change of administrators in the Municipal Unit we operate has been a challenge because local administrators have been changed twice during 2016.

### **FSP DON BOSKO**

By the end of 2016 the project has supported 67 families, 118 adults 8 young adults and 180 children. Number of children has decreased by 16 children at the end of the year increasing the quality of services. 60 families have been investigated and 14 have become part of the project. 22 families have exited the project, 21 as successful and 1 for other reasons. There are no changes of the target group.

**Education service:** 50 children have been regularly supported with education service. 45 children have been supported with transportation to go to school. 130 children have received school packages,

**Psychological Service:** Psychologist for adults has evaluated 14 new families that have become part of the project in 2016 and has had counselling sessions with 50 cases. 70% of the adults have improved their parenting style and communication in the family and they feel better emotionally. Psychologist for children has evaluated 30 children who have become part of the project this year, organized trainings, focus groups where 60% of children have increased their self-confidence and soothed their emotional problems.

**Pediatric service** is offered with check-ups, individual and group counselling etc. 80% of children and 70% of adults who have had health problems have been supported with medicines and have improved their health conditions.

**Speech therapy service:** This service is in its second year of implementation and is offered to 7 children. Through this therapy, 7 children have corrected their spelling disorders.

**Summer Games:** In June – July in cooperation with a Social Centre, the summer camp “Edelon” took place with the participation of 20 children. In September 25<sup>th</sup>, children of the project took part in a summer camp., organizes by the municipality and other organization. These activities influenced in budget relieve.

**Family support:** Families have been supported based on their needs defined in cooperation with the social workers. This year the project has supported 16 adults to find a job and 8 of them have been actually employed. 10 mothers have been certified by the Albanian Red Cross in culinary courses. The courses relieved the budget also.

**Advocacy:** 12 children have been enrolled to kindergarten and day care. It has been advocated that 30 children of Egyptian community get their school books for free.

**Activities on children's rights:** Training with the topic “How to stop bullying” in the framework of CPP; How to improve communication with our peers; “Making our environment beautiful” with talented children; mini-championship organized between children of FSP, Social Centre Don Bosco, SHKEJ and Save the Children; Participation in awareness activity on the International Day against Child Labour; Active participation on child's right week 14-20 November; 10 young people have took part in an activity organized by UNFPA against trafficking “Don't break her dreams”; Entertaining and informing activities have been organizes on Independence day, Halloween and New year.

**Recent developments and positive practices:** In December 2016 FSP Don Bosco started the implementation of **SFP programme**. 12 adults and 18 children took part in the activity. The implementation of the project was a positive experience for the staff too to increase their professional skills. This year the National Advisor for FSP shared as positive experience with the FSP co-workers, the work and results achieved in the Father's Club as a unique service the project offers.

**Meetings with partners:** Cooperation with partners is now stable and roles in joint planning meeting are well determined.

**Evaluation and monitoring:** Staff supervisions have been conducted on a regular basis. Database has been used by the staff for monitoring and evaluating families in project level.

**Challenges:**

- Unstable financial situation of business in the country has influenced the donation in kind.
- Deported families that have no house, no jobs and their children don't go to school when they come back from immigration.
- Frequent changes in the Database system

**Staff development during 2016:** a) 2 days training on SFP (strengthening family program) b) Informing session on fundraising c) "Risk assessment" training for the project coordinator d) Monthly group supervisions

## 5. Family Strengthening Project-Shkoder

SOS Shkoder is operating as a Child Village Programme Unit since January 2015. Based on strategic directions of CVPP, Shkoder location focused its activity on (i) strengthening and enhancing skills of parents to promote optimal child development (ii) advocacy and child protection (iii) alternative care. Target group included (i) children at risk of losing parental care (ii) children in process of reintegration from social care institutions in biological families or extended family (iii) children living in foster/kinship families

At the end of 2016 the project supported 326 children (305 children/21 young people) and 139 families. Key issues the families faced were poor nutrition, poor housing, no preventive medical care, low income, less likely to attend the school, unemployment, experience of living in social care institutions etc.

In partnership with Save the Children and Municipality of Shkoder we implemented the project 'Improvement of Child Protection system in Albania' which aimed to empower social services in the protection and wellbeing of children deprived or at risk of losing parental care in an appropriate family environment and alternative care.

In the frame of Youth Voice-The future we want" campaign, UNFPA supported a youth SOS Team in order to (1) increase advocacy capacities of youth; (2) enhance youth engagement and participation in community activities (3) strengthen youth engagement in human rights, gender equality, sustainability, leadership, participation, health reproduction, volunteerism.

Child Protection Policy has led the work with children / families of Shkoder during 2016. Activities at the program level to the beneficiaries, cooperation with local authorities and with various organizations aimed to (i) improve quality child care (ii) support of children in alternative care (iii) development of community awareness campaigns (iv) increase the capacity of parents and staff who work with children.

During 2016 the role of local government has increased significantly. The bilateral agreement with Municipality has been reviewed and is in the process of being signed. SOS Shkoder was member of working-net for developing the Social Plan of Shkoder, is member of the Action Plan of Local Government for the Protection of Street Children. The staff has been part of monitoring groups in the field, to prevent street children from the phenomenon of exploitation and begging. A good cooperation is established with public social care institution 6-18-year-old. An Action Plan for De-I is being implemented which aim to restore the relation between children and families in a comfort and safe environment before their integration. Stakeholder analysis is updated in June 2016. Partner organizations such as World Vision, UNDP and Diaconia International Aid have supported the process of strengthening the families in the area of child protection, employment, improving of leaving standards.

Visibility of the organization has been obvious in the community through participation in local and national fairs, advocacy activities, participation in TV and radio programs.

### Activities and services of FSP Shkoder

Due to the new territorial division, FSP implemented its activities in all Administrative Units of Shkoder Municipality. 4 full-time social workers and 5 part-time specialists (2 psychologists, an educational assistant, an animator and a legal advisor) provided services based on Case Management Procedure.

139 families or 326 children are supported through a range of medical services tailored to their needs, accessing public preschool services as a basic right to education, wellbeing, integration of families into social life through life skills trainings, meetings, psycho-social activities, income generation support.

Throughout the year, 57 children are considered self-reliant and left successfully the project and other 51 children joined the project in accordance with the admitted criteria. Case Management Procedure Is used as basic tool during the social work with families.

58 children (31 families) are considered self-reliant and out of risk to be abandoned by their families. 1 young adult strengthened positive sense of self and decision-making skills and left the project successfully, 53 caregivers improved their parenting knowledge and skills.

15 children (7 families) and 14 caregivers joined the project in accordance with admitted criteria and CM procedure.

Each social worker managed 23-25 family cases (or 80-83 children). The needs of children / families assessed by case workers are reflected in the Family Development Plan.

Health service ensured quality access to health care, health prevention and medication (120 children and 37 parents), dental care (2 children), the ophthalmologist visits (6 children) diagnostics (6 children).

Educational support enhanced equality in educational development opportunities through after school support (20 children), school supplies (38 children), day care centres and kindergartens (36 children).

Two psychologists supported psycho-emotional needs of children and parents and an animator provided for children entertainment and social integration activities.

Database system is updated twice per year with services provided for children and caregivers and is used as a statistical monitoring tool for analysing registered data.

The legal counsel supported 8 children cases for registration since birth, marital status, education and housing.

The staff increased their capacities through trainings organized by Save the Children about "Positive discipline", "Alternative Care", "Communication with Children", World Vision "Celebrating Family", Terre des Hommes "Cross-sectorial work for child protection in Albania".

#### *Positive Practices*

Strengthening the referral system with Social Service of Municipality has improved the involvement of local structures in concrete interventions for families. .

Interaction of projects within the program has increased the visibility of the organization and consolidated its position as a service provider for children at risk of losing parental care or without parental care.

Creating models / positive examples of empowered families has encouraged other families to improve their livelihoods. Employment of an Egyptian mother encouraged three other mothers to be employed.

#### **Youth Voice Project**

In the frame of the global campaign "Youth Voice-The future we want", an established Youth Team implemented an Action Plan during July-December 2016. The activities aimed to empower and increase the capacities of young people in advocacy, participation and peer to peer education through trainings, workshops and social activities. An open meeting was organized with the Mayor to discuss the measures that local government is undertaking for youth. One SOS youth leader took the responsibility to organize two workshops with SOS youth team on reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases. Local Institutions like Municipality, Public Health Department, and Regional Educational Directory were the focus of addressing issues that concern young people

#### **Good practices and lessons learned**

The young people are listened to and taken seriously and they are part of a dynamic team committed to improving local care services for youth. A delegation of 7 people was welcomed by the Mayor on the International Day of Youth, who answered the concerns of young people and discussed regard Municipality projects for young people. The event was shown / covered from all local media.

Young people are empowered enough to advocate for causes that affect so directly their rights.

#### **"Improve Child protection system in Albania "project**

The project started March 1, 2016 based on a trilateral cooperation between Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages Albania and Shkoder Municipality.

A strong relationship was established with the specialist of social service department of Municipality of Shkoder for the implementation of Case Management Procedure for children admitted in the project.

The project involved 54 FS children (23 families). In order to ensure continuity of services and other complementary services, beneficiaries of the project are also admitted in FS project. 6 cases are referred by Social Service and CPU of Municipality while 3 other cases are referred by social care institution 3-6 years old and 6-18 years old which are under custody process.

*The activities included (i) direct services to the children and families (educational, psychosocial, legal, ) (ii)parental capacity building (training for life skills, employment counselling, positive parenting, child care,*

*Fatherhood) (iii) social workers Building local capacity in connection with the case management procedure (from identification until the issue of the family to independence).*

*Good practices and some lessons learned*

*A good cooperation is established among key actors of deinstitutionalization (institutions, providers of social services)*

*The number of cases referred by Social Services of the Municipality has increased and concrete actions have been undertaken in collaboration with them.*

*It is necessary to note that all referred cases under the kinship care process are developed with low steps. During child re-integration process, foster parents must receive an orientation program, in order to increase their skills and knowledge about their parental role.*

## **Success Story**

### **A future full of hope**

"I'm in the second grade this year and I am doing very well" says Ildo happy for his school results. "I want to become a policeman when I grow up so I have to study. I have a teacher who helps me too" "I want to become a famous football player and I am training 3 times a week but I still have to do well at school" says his brother Emilio enthusiastically while I was having a little chat with them.

Ildo, Emilio and their family came to the capital from very poor areas of Albania. They were malnourished and dressed badly at that time. Their father is not able to work due to serious sight problem (he can't see in the dark) and for the mother it was almost impossible to find a job. They could not provide a steady shelter for their children, let alone a secure education or even think about their dreams.

The situation changed completely when they became part of the SOS family strengthening project which helps families in difficult situation so they don't live their children alone. With their intervention, the family found its path and together they started to live like any human being deserves to. The father gets now social benefits and the FSP staff managed to find a job for the mother.

"The desire to look forward and never give up, made me and my family look life in a different picture. We are now more confident and ready to work together for our 3 children" were the words of their father letting us know that there is a new-born in the house now.

Ildo and Emilio (and their little brother now) are among the 751 children who live in the communities around Tirana. With the support, SOS gives them their life has changed because they go to school, they play like any child should, they have activities and they can make their resolutions.