

SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM IN ALBANIA



- Social Care Services are part of the Social protection Program funded by the state budget. Currently there are gaps in coverage of all needs for services of the vulnerable groups at the national level.
- Specialized social care services are provided by NGOs or other partners. Services are mainly available in the large urban areas (90% of the services are available in urban areas) and 75% of these services are available in the western and central parts of the country.

In difference from the social assistance (NE) scheme and disability benefits, (called “cash programs) the challenge here is related to the establishment of a system of social care services (care system) that can cover more broadly the needs of the vulnerable groups, in need for integrated and efficient social services.

Challenges related to Social Care Services

Policy challenges are related to the introduction of a functional and effective social care system, based on the principles of decentralization and de-institutionalization, aiming at inclusion of vulnerable groups in the social protection programs.

The 1st challenge remains the analyses and finding the most appropriate model for the decentralization of services, in harmony with the territorial reform currently under implementation in the country.

SECOND CHALLENGE

The government of Albania is supporting social care delivery in the community at the best possible, while aiming for reducing institutional care. De-Institutionalization remains a challenge, since it requires the establishment of a network of territorial services, a re-structuring of processes and procedures for case management, and increasing capacities of the professionals.

THIRD CHALLENGE

The data of social care services could be integrated in an information management system, while facilitating the exchange of data with other services, but also improving the quality of activities, from planning to control.

The reform of the social care system will be based on a new current assessment of Government priorities:

Reform aims at:

- the modernization of social services according to the European social model, the creation of a sustainable, integrated, inclusive and accessible system for all social categories in need
- Facilitating services with beneficiaries through decentralization and community service delivery
- Creating Integrated Services
- Creating alternative services
- Harmonization of current social policies
- Developing new standards of specialized services
- De-Institutionalization - the transformation of institutions into the Service Center

VISION

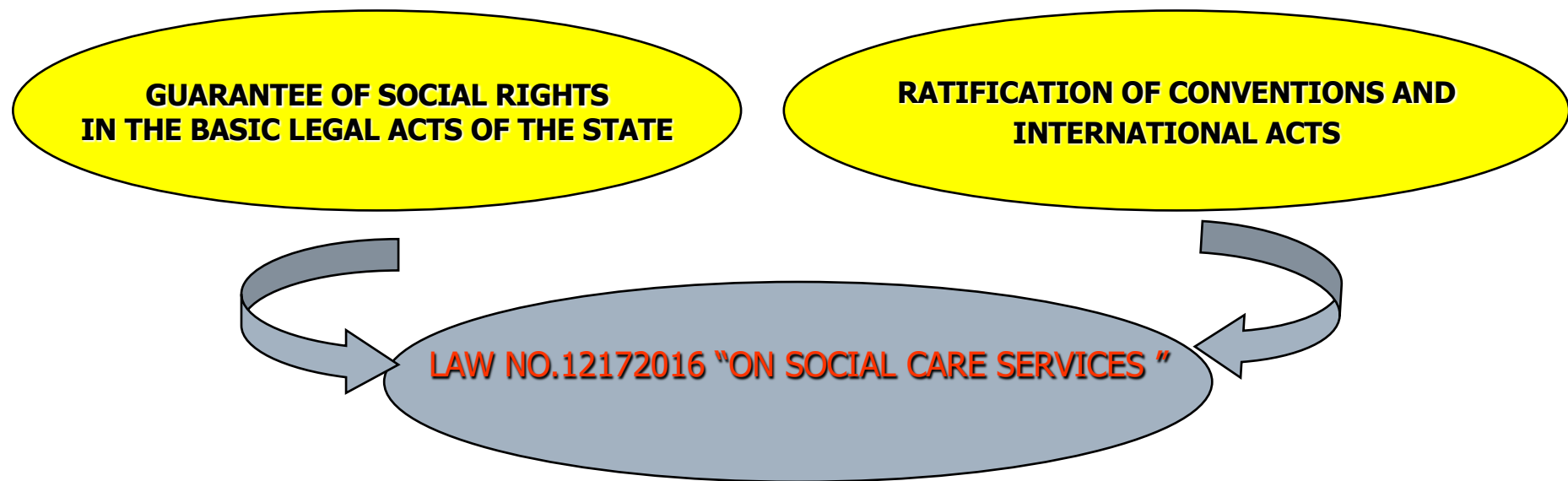
Development of social care services based on the principles of decentralization and de-institutionalization, for the inclusion of vulnerable groups in Social protection programs, and encourages full and effective participation in society

PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL CARE REFORM

- ❑ *Civil rights, equality, and non-discrimination*: Every individual in need, despite his/her gender, religious belief, age, disability etc. is entitled to social protection.
- ❑ *Protection*: Particular groups, including children, should be subject to special protection based on their needs, and rights.
 - *The right to life, survival and development*:
 - *Independence, autonomy, and respect for points of view*: Individuals are responsible for their lives. They should be encouraged to take decisions for their lives, within the norms places by the society.
 - *Inclusion and integration*
 - *Respect for the rights and needs*
 - *Partnership*: coordination of central structures, regional and local governance, and other partners in the community.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF THE SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM

- **The social care system is based on a new, fully reformed legislation that is in line with EU standards and the principles of the European Social Charter**



Beneficiaries of social care services shall include these social groups:

- families and children, as well as the child who enjoys international protection in the Republic of Albania, according to the legislation in force on asylum;
- disabled persons;
- adults who have social problems, victims of violence, victims of trafficking, established drug and alcohol addiction;

- pregnant girls or single parent of a child up to one year old;
- children and young adults in conflict with the law who have completed the period of sentence and who need social care services for re-integration into society, as well as those who enjoy international protection upon the decision of the authority responsible for asylum and refugees in the Republic of Albania;
- elderly people in need.

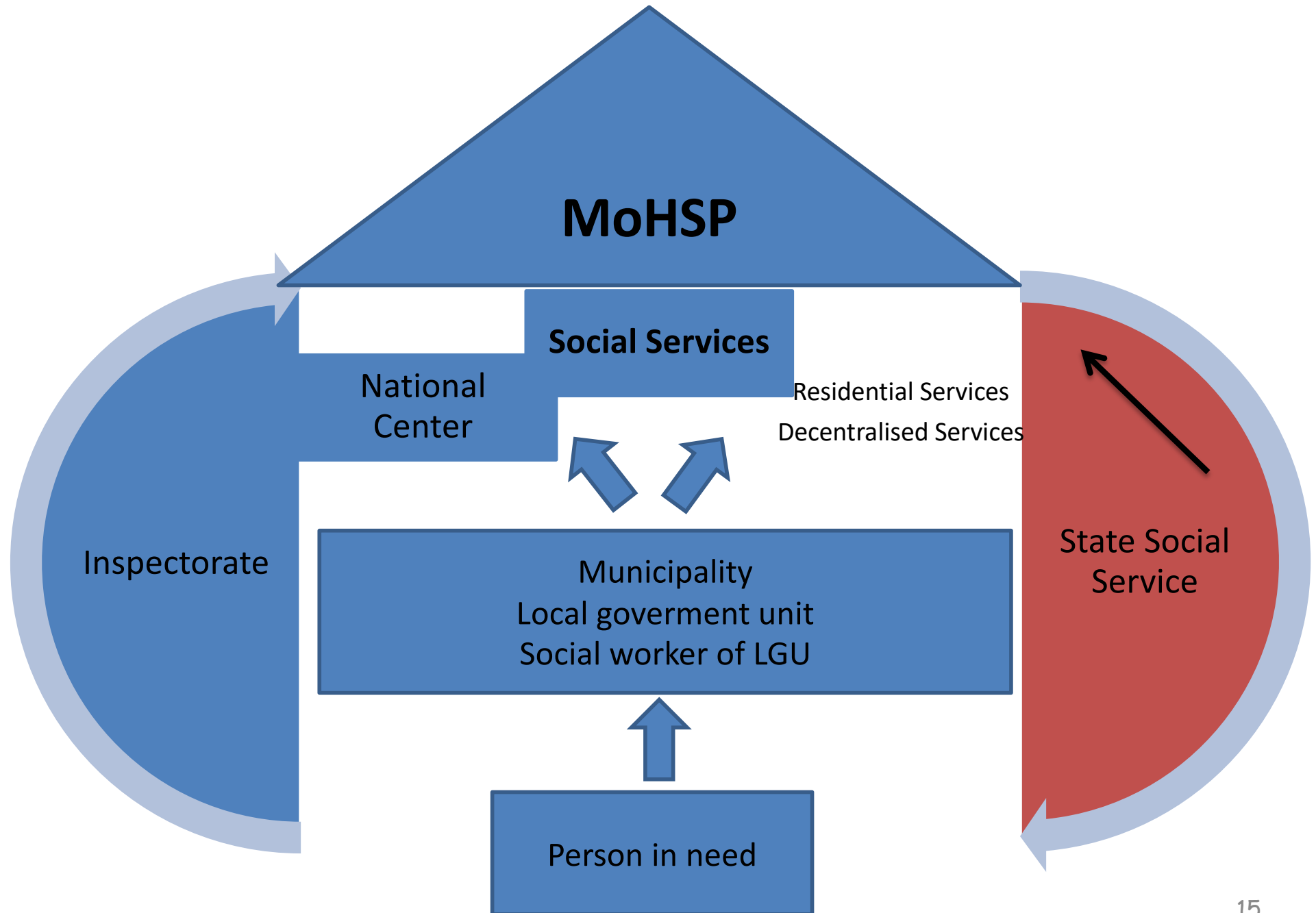
BASIC BASKET OF SOCIAL SERVICES

- *Homecare services* are social care services provided at the home to the children, elderly people, disabled persons, who are unable to take care of themselves and who may not be assisted by family members or the guardian.
- *Community services* are services provided to all the categories of beneficiaries of the social care services in local community centres or other premises, including day-care services or temporary replacement of the guardian.
- *Alternative care services* to children without parental care shall be provided in foster family, according to the specific needs of the child, foreseen in the legislation in force.

BASIC BASKET OF SOCIAL SERVICES

- *Emergency services* for all categories in need, which consists in assessing the case within 72 hours and referral of the case to other services.
- *Specialised services* are services provided by the professionals of various specialisations. These services are provided at regional and municipal level to children with pervasive disorder of development, mental illness, communication disorder, children in need of physical recovery, sexually abused children, children in conflict with the law as well as abused, violated or trafficked women and girls as well as all the other categories in need of these services.
- *Services in residential centres* shall be considered long-term and organised sheltering services provided to categories in need, who may not be provided the homecare service.

Organigrama of social care services delivery



The ministry responsible for social affairs shall have the following main roles and functions:

THE ROLE OF MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

- draft the policy documents of reforming and modernising the system of social care services, in order to improve effectiveness and their provision;
- draft and update the minimum standards of service provision;
- draft and/or propose the legal and sub-legal acts to complete the regulatory framework of functioning of the system of social care services;
- define the criteria and conditions to be met by the subjects providing social care services;
- draft and undertake awareness campaigns that encourage assistance, voluntary work and other forms of support to the individuals and families in need of social care services;

The Ministry responsible for social affairs shall create a mandatory programme for the continuing professional education, known as “Certification programme of professionals of social care services”, a programme which is a periodic-cycle based system, under which the professionals must collect certain credits of continuing professional education based on the procedures, criteria and standards approved by the Council of Ministers.

The professionals of social services are obliged to undertake updated professional continuing education to improve their knowledge and professional skills, in a way that improves quality of service

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Government has a political responsibility to define standards for the education and training of social workers. Government, through local government bodies, will also be a major employer of social workers. In the longer term social worker posts of social care staff in government and non-government services to undertake assessment and case management of vulnerable children and families should be filled by graduates of modern social work courses that comply with international standards.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Employment or contracts in the public and non-public social care institutions shall be terminated if the professionals of the social care services fail to receive any credits during their continuing education. The professional shall be re-entitled to the right of employment or conclusion of employment contract with the institutions after taking the certification exam.
- If the professional of social care services collects the credits of continuing education, but below than the required limit, he/she must take a certification exam within six months from the date of notification. Employment or contracts in other institutions shall be terminated in event of failure to pass the exam. The professional shall be re-entitled to the right to employment or conclusion of the contract with social care institutions, public and non-public, after taking successfully the certification exam.

- Accreditation is the process of approval of continuing education activities or/and provider of continuing education activities, based on the procedures, standards and criteria approved by the decision of the Council of Ministers.
- The providers of continuing education activities shall be all the public or non-public structures, profit or non-profit, local and foreign, that have expertise and experience in organising continuing education activities in the field of assistance and social services, according to the approved criteria by the CoM.
- The providers of continuing education activities shall be obliged to ensure the quality of activities performed by them, through compliance with the quality criteria and accreditation and standards of continuing professional education.
- The criteria, standards and procedures of accreditation of continuing education activities as well as providers of continuing education activities shall be approved by decision of the Council of Ministers.

THE ROLE OF STATE SOCIAL SERVICE

The State Social Service shall have the following roles and functions:

- draft the template documentation for the beneficiaries of social services;
- make the needs assessment of social care services;
- collect, analyse and process information on the progress of the system of social care services and report on regular basis to the ministry responsible for social affairs

- draft the annual report of needs assessment for the social care services and for the capacity of public and non-public services;
- train the staff of the local government units dealing with aspects of social services;
- coordinate the process of drafting of social plans, by ensuring compliance of these plans with the national strategies;
- update and maintain the National Electronic Register with data on the beneficiaries and subjects requesting social care;
- send to the minister the social statistics related to social care and social payments.

THE ROLE OF INSPECTORATE OF SCS

- control enforcement of the criteria and conditions by the public and non-public subjects providing social services, according to this law, the sub-legal acts in implementing this law and other legal acts in force;
- inspect the standards of services provided by the providers of the social care services;
- cooperate with and give information to other state bodies over cases falling under their competence, concerning the activity of provision of social care services;
- inspect the premises and documentation of subjects that provide social care services, which have the obligation to allow and make available to the Inspectorate the information and documentation necessary for inspection;
- impose fines and other administrative measures against public and non-public subjects, when violation of provisions of this law is found;
- propose to the minister responsible for social affairs, the removal of the licence of the social service provider, who within ten days, shall take the final decision on the proposal;
- report on regular basis on the results of inspection of social care services to the ministry responsible for social affairs.

THE ROLE OF MUNICIPALITY

The municipality shall provide and administer the social care services within its territory by:

- identifying the needs;
- assessing the needs based on the vulnerability map;
- drafting the local social plan;
- planning local budget;
- planning the main basket of social services
- contracting the provider of social care services through procurement procedures, according to the legislation in force on public procurement;
- coordinating the necessary social care services with the State Social Service.

Special structures shall be established for the social care services to administer the social care services.

The needs assessment and case referral unit shall be established in each administrative unit, under the municipality.

The municipality shall assign one social worker of the local government unit for six to ten thousand inhabitants.

The municipalities, with a population of less than six thousand inhabitants, shall be guided and supported by the regional office of the State Social Service to perform their functions.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKER AT LOCAL LEVEL

The social workers of the local government units shall be part of the special social care services structures and/or needs assessment and case referral unit and they shall have the duty to:

- verify the social and economic situation of individuals and families in need of social care services through case identification;
- help in preparing documentation for the persons who apply for social care service through counselling, mediation and referral to the social services at national, regional or local level;
- participate in the process of drafting of social care plans concerning persons who will be provided with or who will be refused the social care services through assessment, follow-up, monitoring and closure of the case;
- prepare the documentation and proposals to be approved by the municipal council;
- collect and prepare information, statistics and keep the register of beneficiaries, follow the expenses for persons in need of social care services;
- collect information on the public and non-public service networks that operate in the territory of the municipality.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The sources of funding for the social care services provided by public and non-public institutions shall consist of:

- funding allocated by the State Budget, including the social fund;
- funding allocated by the budget of local government units;
- income generated from assets and other activities of the municipality;
- service fees to the beneficiaries of social care services.

THE SOCIAL FUND

The municipality, in cooperation with the ministry responsible for social affairs, creates and administers the social fund, through which it shall be ensured financial support to the local government units, in order to improve the standards and administering capacities of existing services of social care, to create new services and to develop social policies, which is recently approved by the CoM.

The *social fund* consist of:

- annual income from the State Budget;
- extra-budgetary funding by local or foreign organisations or other persons;
- income from application of fees for various social care services;
- income from own sources and assets of the ministry responsible for social affairs;
- income from own sources and assets of the municipality.

A photograph of several hands stacked on top of each other, creating a sense of unity and support. The lighting is warm and golden, giving the scene a soft, intimate feel. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with fingers slightly curled. Overlaid on this image is the text "Thank you" in a bold, blue, stylized font with a dark blue outline. The text is centered horizontally and slightly below the vertical center of the image.

Thank you