

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

Country Report Albania

20/12/2020

FOREWORD

The voice and action of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in non-formal and informal learning supports young and adult people to access lifelong learning and contribute to attaining a quality education for all, as described by Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the CSOs are revisiting their activities in non-formal and informal learning and support to employment as a way forward in the new reality. Fast-moving global developments and Covid-19 disruptions have forced CSOs to rapidly adapt their services to stay closer than ever to local beneficiaries, and often to innovate.

These are among the overall conclusions of the ETF survey on the response to Covid19 by CSOs that act on human capital development (HCD), specifically non-formal and informal learning and support to employment. The ETF survey was conducted in 2020, building on previous work in this sector. It covered six countries: Albania, Jordan, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The ETF survey results feed the reflection about the role of CSOs as a mediator between public authorities and citizens. They provide relevant input in national and local policy dialogue as monitors, advocates and partners, although often they are merely consulted with limited effect on the policy decisions. Together, CSOs and institutional bodies could do more to promote HCD in changing societies and ensure that learning is effectively accessible, and that no one is left behind.

The objective of the survey was to appraise the CSOs' operational capacity in HCD, and their dynamics and resilience in the context of the pandemic crisis. For example, the survey appraised CSOs' proactivity vs reactivity in a time of emergency, their capacity to mobilise resources (human, financial), innovation and anticipation context, organisational learning capacity, complementarity concerning the action of local and national governments, and plans for the future.

Regarding the CSOs work in HCD, the survey focussed on:

- Skills development through non-formal and informal learning of young and adult people;
- Employment-related services that support the learning-employment link;
- Awareness-raising and advocacy on skills development and employment;
- Knowledge creation, utilisation and exchange on skills development and employment.

The Albania Country report provides the results of the ETF survey on CSOs that implement HCD-related activities in the country. It draws a portrait of the CSOs that in Albania contribute to HCD, including the challenges and opportunities they face.

The report starts with an introduction of the study's objectives, methodology and the CSOs country policy framework. Chapter 1 provides the profile of the CSOs that took part in the survey. Chapter 2 presents the findings related to the CSOs response to the Covid-19 pandemic effects on HCD. The report analyses the CSOs and Stakeholders and policy dialogue in Chapter 3 and the potential for future contributions to HCD in Chapter 4. The findings of interviews with a small group of CSOs beneficiaries are presented in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 structures the conclusions around key issues and presents recommendations about the CSOs' current engagement, role, and potential for the future in the HCD sector.

The author of this report is Entela Kaleshi, who has carried out the survey in Albania. The concept, design, and methodology of the survey is the ETF team's responsibility, namely the team of experts, Siria Taurelli (coordinator), Margareta Nikolovska, Stylianos Karagiannis, Ian Cumming, and Nadezda Solodjankina. The ETF has also prepared a summary of the main findings across all 6 countries that participated in the survey to overview their commonalities and differences, which can be found in the ETF Open Space. The aim is to draw general conclusions and support mutual learning and allow a joint reflection on the conditions that enable CSOs to be active in designing, implementing, monitoring, and assessing policies on HCD.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ETF	European Training Foundation
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CSOSI	CSO Sustainability Index
HCD	Human Capital Development
HQ	Headquarters
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
VET	Vocational Education and Training

INTRODUCTION

This study builds upon a survey that ETF carried out in late 2020 in Albania, Jordan, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The objective of the survey and of the study was to investigate the contribution of CSOs towards Human Capital Development in the context of lifelong learning and in the changing situation dictated by COVID-19 pandemics. Particularly in Albania, the study sought to understand better the added value of the CSOs in providing multilevel VET governance towards non-formal and informal learning and employability.

Albania is implementing various educational reforms aimed at improving the country's human capital. The non-formal education is stipulated in different legal regulations issued by the Ministry of Education, Sport, and Youth, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection¹. In this process, CSOs were assigned to providing their specific role regarding vocational education and training and lifelong learning opportunities in addition to other stakeholders. In practice, CSOs were widely involved in non-formal education through provision of capacity building programmes, services, and professional courses. In 2019, over 319 CSOs possessed a license and provided social and educational services. This study presents data analysis resulting from the survey conducted for the first time in Albania during November 2020.

There were 41 CSOs contacted initially, selected through various channels such as donor organizations that work in Albania, the Albanian Civil Society Agency, author's own personal contacts with organizations working in the field and through online searching based on the profile provided by ETF. For the profile of CSOs the following criteria were considered:

- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) and other non-state actors
- CSOs that operate in the field of non-formal learning, informal learning, and employment-related services (HCD).
- CSOs must be active in HCD to be included in the survey, regardless of their size
- Geographical distribution

The survey investigated the role of CSOs in skills development through non-formal and informal learning of young and adult people; employment-related services that support the learning-employment link; awareness raising and advocacy raising in the HCD sector; knowledge creation, utilisation and exchange in the HCD sector; and complementarily and value-added compared to the action of government in the same sector.

Based on the responses provided by 28 CSOs and 5 beneficiaries, this report shares some insights into the role CSOs play in Human Capital Development in the context of lifelong learning, in Albania before and during COVID 19 Pandemic. In addition to providing some lessons learned and recommendations for highlighting CSOs' added value in HCD, it also reflects on the challenges faced by CSOs regarding their capacities and their engagement with other stakeholders and with the Government.

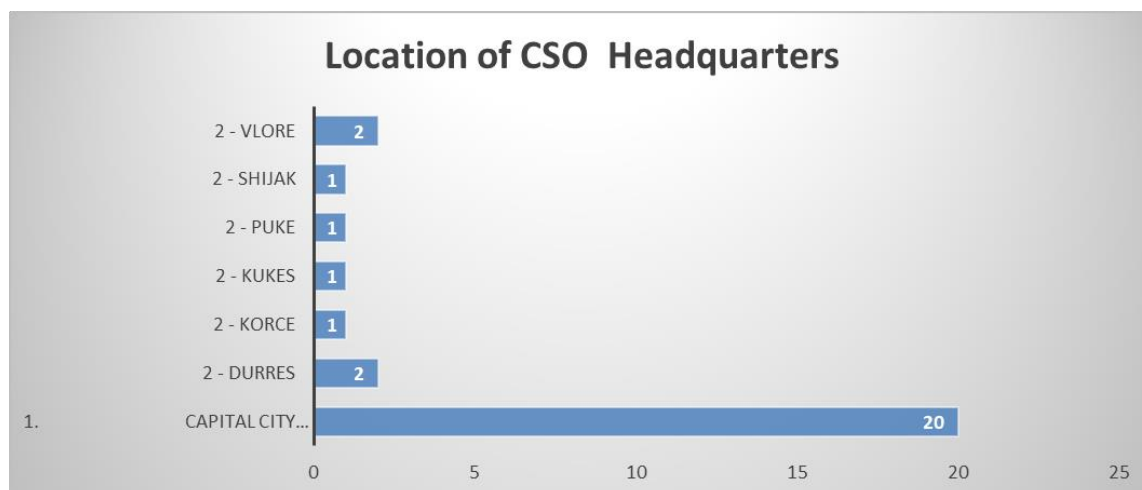
The author recognises the study limitations such as the fact that the data is gathered from face-to-face interviews with CSO's representatives and as such it provides individuals (subjective) perceptions, not their objective impact.

¹Law 15/2017 *On the Vocational Education and Training in the Republic of Albania*.

CHAPTER 1 – ORGANISATION PROFILE

1.1. Overall Profile

There were 28 CSOs that participated in this survey². The majority of the CSOs, 71 % of them, had their HQ located in Tirana, capital city, and the rest had their HQ located in various towns of Albania spread even geographically, (Graph 1). There were 7 CSOs that had additional regional offices.



Graph 1 - Location of HQs for surveyed CSO in Albania

Regarding the level of operation 93% of surveyed CSOs work at community/grassroots/local level, 61% work at the national level and 36% operate at Sub-national (e.g. regions within country). **Only one organization is also operating at the European Level³.**

In comparison with the CSO Sustainability Index 2019 for Albania (USAID, 2019)⁴, the survey responses showed the same characteristics of CSOs sector with demonstrated stronger organizational capacity as they benefited more from donor support programs. Furthermore, the sector benefited in terms of sectoral infrastructure from the launch of the National Resource Centre for Civil Society in Albania (NRCS) in 2019. Nevertheless, organisation capacity and sustainability of most of the CSOs rely on donor support with financial viability continuing to be the weakest dimension of sustainability.

²Although limited in numbers, the sample of 28 CSOs is considered a good response given the diversity of their profile and geographical distribution given the 'niche' target group and the rather technical nature of the questionnaire presented to the respondent. Furthermore, the survey is not intended to be statistically representative. Based on the above, the author believes to have valuable indicative results on the situation of CSOs in Albania and their contribution in Human Capital Development in the context of Lifelong Learning.

³These findings from the survey responses are in line with two similar reports for Albania respectively the CSOSI report for Albania (p.2) stating that CSOs are concentrated in Tirana and the main regional centres and are relatively scarce in small and medium-sized municipalities and rural and remote areas. Also, according to a 2019 report by Partners Albania for Change and Development (PA) entitled "Capacity and Needs Assessment for CSOs in Albania (Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2019)," 61 percent of organizations operate at the national level and 42 percent work at the local level.

⁴ CSO Sustainability Index (CSOSI) for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, Albania 2019

During 2020, seven interviewed CSOs coordinated a network in the country, while nineteen of them participated in one or more networks and/ or associations. The list of networks which interviewed CSO managed and the list of networks the CSOs participated, are presented in the Figure 2 below.

Networks CSO Manage	Networks and Association CSO participate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albanian businesses and producers in the HORECA sector • Albanian ICT Association • CODEWEEK Albania Robotics Week Albania ROES • Local Youth Network • National Albanian Coalition for Roma Integration in Albania – NACRIA • Nucleus Albania • River Basin Management and Transparency Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albanian Sommelier • Albanian Chefs & Cooks Association • Albanian Food Industry • Albanian National Youth Network European Voluntary Services • Albanian network for European Inteeegration • CSO Network in Vlora • European Alliance for Apprenticeships • HORECA ALBANIA • ILGA EUROPE & ILGA WORLD ERA • Olof Palme Network in Albania • POP (Perballja e ofertave politike), Kualicioni zgjedhor KRIK Albania • Public Administration Network • Regional Union of Civil Society • Rrjeti I Monitorimit kunder Dhunës me Bazë Gjinore • Tirana Youth Leadership IRIS Network, Balkan Coalition for Social Services Justice for All Coalition • YOUTH VOICE ALBANIA National Youth Congress

Figure 1- List of networks CSO managed (left) and the list of networks the CSOs participated (right)

The lack of partnership and inter-sector networking between CSOs in the country as well as with networks abroad is another major need identified in the sector.

This is also confirmed by the NGO Albania 2019 Needs assessment report (Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2019), which reveals that the surveyed CSOs stated that the partnership is mainly seen in the application and implementation of joint projects within organizations with similar mission and scope, as well as in gaining knowledge and experience from more developed organizations mainly in urban areas (especially in Tirana). Capacity and needs assessment for civil society organisations in Albania 2019 (Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2019) state that lack of activities and support for networking and partnerships; the limited number of exchange programs to learn from good models and best practices; study visits that enable further advancement of CSOs etc. are some of the needs identified by CSOs. Low access and participation in regional and European networks was also a need that remains to be addressed, aiming at institutional strengthening, fundraising and increasing visibility and public relations with other actors⁵.

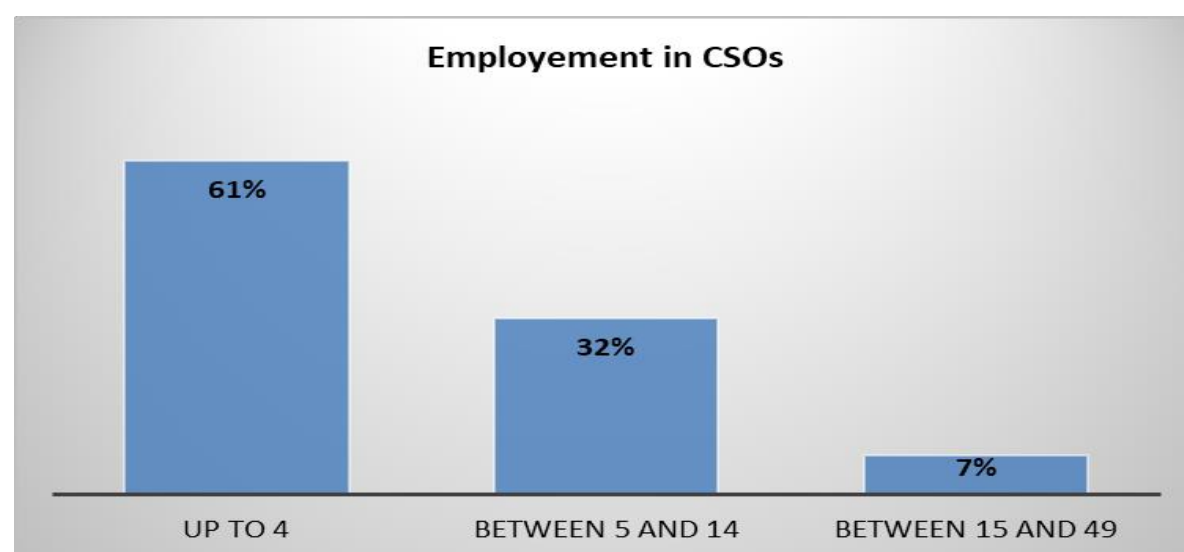
Regarding their online presence all the surveyed CSOs claimed to have a website and/or social media presence. 96 % of the CSOs surveyed, claimed to have and operate through Facebook (90%) and 32%

⁵ Capacity and needs assessment for civil society organisations in Albania 2019

of them have a dedicated website as detailed in the Annex 1 attached to this study⁶. The 2019 PA study “Capacity and Needs Assessment for CSOs in Albania” (Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2019, p. 45) indicate almost similar results regarding the three most used communication channels by organizations to inform and interact with the public which are: Facebook (90 percent); organizational websites (56.5 percent); and local audio-visual media (55 percent). The lack of CSO presence through web site is explained further in the 2019 CSO Sustainability Index for Albania (USAID, 2019, p. 9) stating that “... Most CSOs do not communicate effectively since only a small number of CSOs have dedicated staff for communications and public relations”.

1.2. Human Resource Capacities

This Survey also explored the staff capacity of CSOs and inquired both employees and collaborators including volunteers. Graph 2, below provides an overview of numbers of paid employees and collaborators in surveyed CSOs.



Graph 2- Number of Paid employees and collaborators in surveyed CSOs

61 % of surveyed CSOs have from 1 to 4 paid staff and collaborators and only 7% of them have between 15 and 49. These finds are in line with the overall staffing situation in Albania as noted in CSOSI 2019 report for Albania (USAID, 2019, p. 4), stating that the Albanian CSOs find it challenging to maintain permanent and full-time staff, mainly because they are constrained by project-based funding. The 2019 PA report (Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2019, p. 11), also finds that 20 percent of CSOs due to lack of funds had no full-time employees in 2018, and that 3 percent of CSOs had neither full-time nor part-time employees and relied exclusively on volunteers. Other studies show that the volunteer engagement in Albania remains low. According to the Charities Aid Foundation’s 2019 World Giving Index (Charities Aid Foundation, 2019), an average of just 9 percent of Albanian respondents reported volunteering over the past ten years.

Overall the Albanian legislation in place does not hinder nor stimulates the employment in CSOs. The Labour Code and all related legislation treat all the employees in an equal manner, including those employed by CSOs. In 2019, the Law 15/2019, “For the Encouragement of Employment”⁷ was

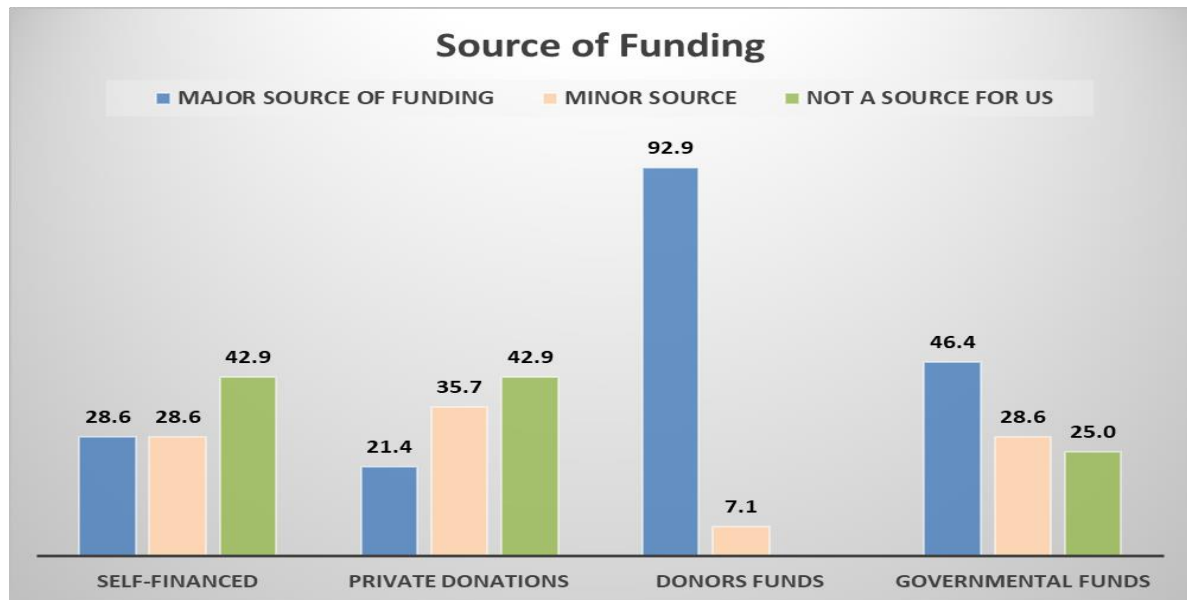
⁶ A full list of the online presence of surveyed CSOs is provided in Annex 1.

⁷ Ligji 15/2019 Per nxitjen e punesimit available at <http://www.parlament.al/Files/ProjektLigje/20190318131036ligj%20nr.%2015,%20dt.%2013.3.2019.pdf>

approved. Its implementation is expected to increase the level of employment by offering services and public programs for employment, self-employment and professional qualifications.

1.3. Financial capacities

With regard to how CSOs finance their activities, Graph 3 below provides an overview of major source of funding for surveyed CSOs stated in percentage.



Graph 3- Major source of funding for CSOs stated in %

Almost 93% of surveyed CSOs rely on donor funds and some of them (about 46%) rely on government funds and there is a very low percentage of CSOs (21.4%) relying on private donations. Other reports on status of sources of funding for CSOs in Albania show their dependence on donor's funds. According to CSOSI 2019 report for Albania (USAID, 2019, p. 4), CSOs continue in 2019 to rely on funding from international donors, while government support remained low. Overall, CSOs continued to be worrying because of lack of funding and a lack of diversity in funding modalities and especially smaller CSOs,

In general, Albanian CSOs lack the organizational capacities and resources needed to raise donations through fundraising activities. According to the World Giving Index (Charities Aid Foundation, 2019), an average of 21 percent of people in Albania have donated to a CSO over the past ten years. However, PA's monitoring of philanthropic activity (Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2019) over the last five years shows a steady increase in the total value of private donations, with individual donors consistently giving more than businesses

Another challenge for CSOs remain the self-financing activities. Only 29% of surveyed CSOs are self-financed. The 2019 CSO Sustainability Index for Albania (USAID, 2019, p. 5) reports that only some CSOs engage in service provision as an alternative form of revenue generation. Their services include vocational training and agricultural expertise, which are usually offered at below-market prices.

Regarding alternative forms of revenues, only in 2019, CSOs in Albania were able to apply for the status of social enterprises with high expectations about the future of social entrepreneurship, fuelled by the implementation of the Law on Social Enterprises and the government's allocation of \$2.2 million to finance social enterprises over the next three years. However, the CSOs were increasingly concerned

about their treatment by tax authorities, local governments, and banks, which do not differentiate between non-profit and for-profit entities. In this regard, alternative forms of revenues are still unexplored by CSOs in Albania until further improvements are made regarding applicable laws.

1.4. Support to SDGs

The Agenda for Sustainable Development is a global policy document adopted in 2015 by United Nations and its 193 member countries. The Agenda is an instrument designed to overcome different global issues which are long-term dynamics that international community decided to eradicate by 2030 in order to pave the way for a more equal and sustainable world. This policy document asks for a definitive solution on 17 broad issues positively converted in “Sustainable Development Goals” and, for this purpose, calls in governments and civil society active participation. With regard to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030, the UPR-SDG Data Explorer (The Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2019) is a tool designed to put in order high-quality recommendations coming from international monitoring bodies and directed to countries with regard to specific sectors and topics directly or indirectly connected with human rights and with the sustainable development goals. The tool can be used by right-holders and civil society organization to make their lobbying and protection activities more coherent and effective. Albania situation within the tool is assessed and the total amount of recommendations directed towards the country are provided in the Figure 3 below.

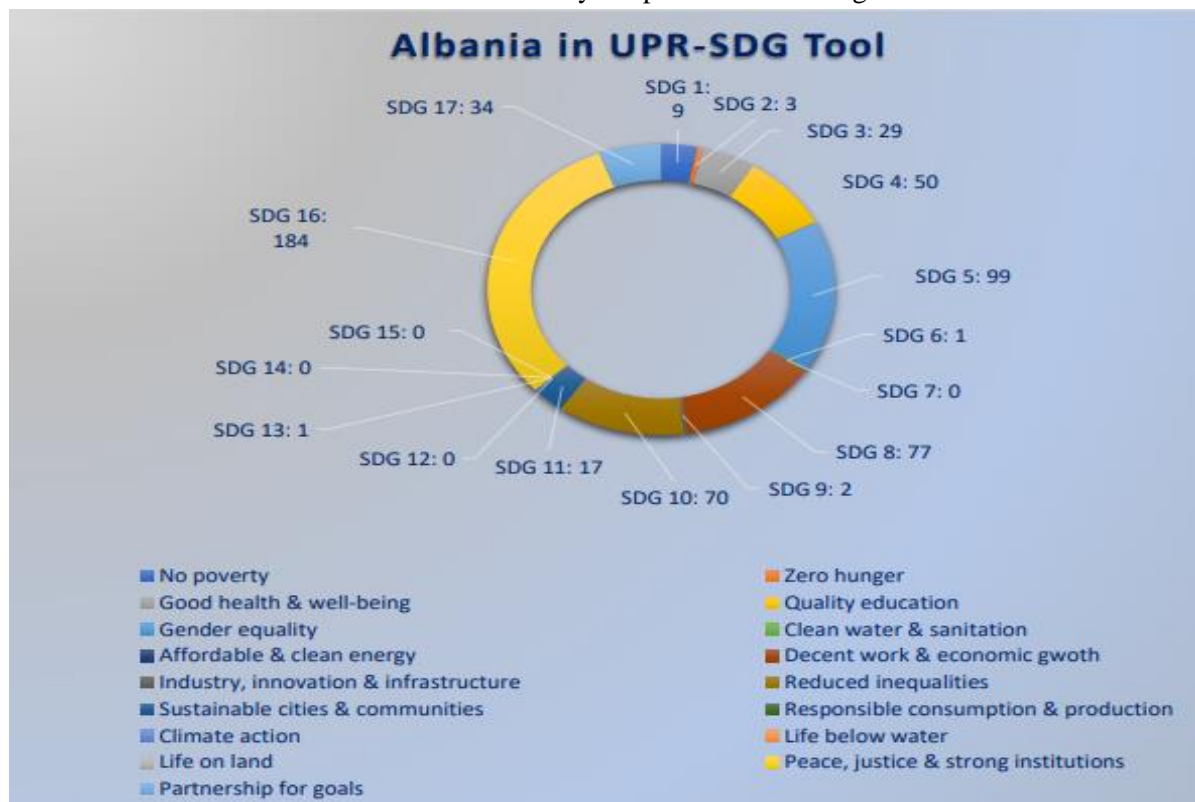
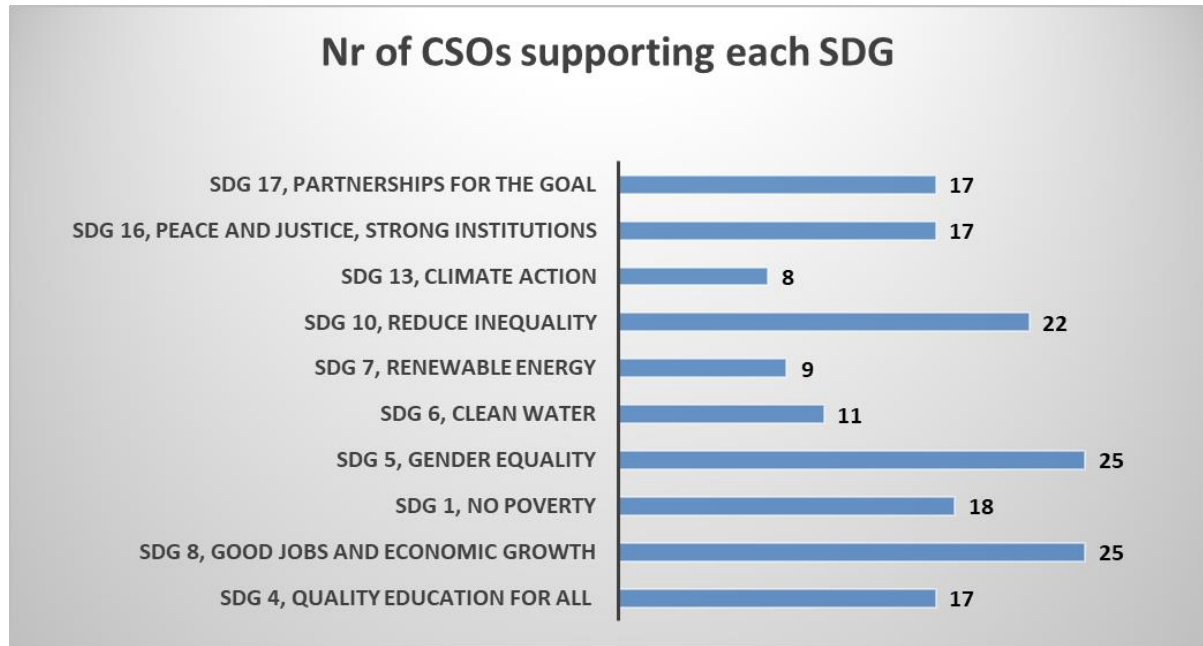


Figure 2- Albania in UPR SDG Tool

Major areas of recommendations are provided for SDG 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions, SDG 4 “Quality education”, SDG 5 “Gender equality”, SDG 8 “Decent work and economic growth” and SDG 10 “Reduced inequalities”. These areas at the same time call for an additional support also from the CSO sector.

In our study majority of surveyed CSOs supported SDG 5 “Gender equality” SDG 8 “Decent work and economic growth” and SDG 10 “Reduced inequalities”. The number of CSOs supported each respective SDG is provided in Graph 4. Three other CSOs added SDG 12, Responsible Consumption and

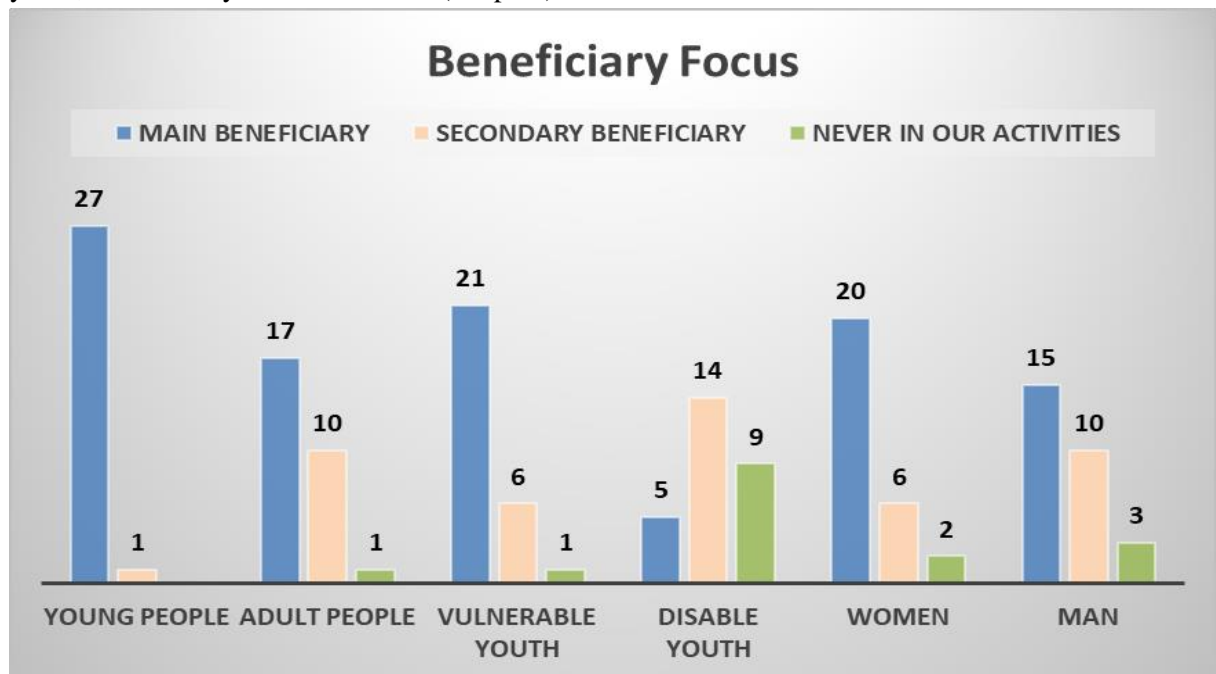
Production as another area of their support. This specific role of CSOs must be further explored, supported and recognized by all stakeholders.



Graph 4- Number of CSOs supporting each SGD

1.5. The beneficiaries of CSOs' activities related to skills development and areas of support

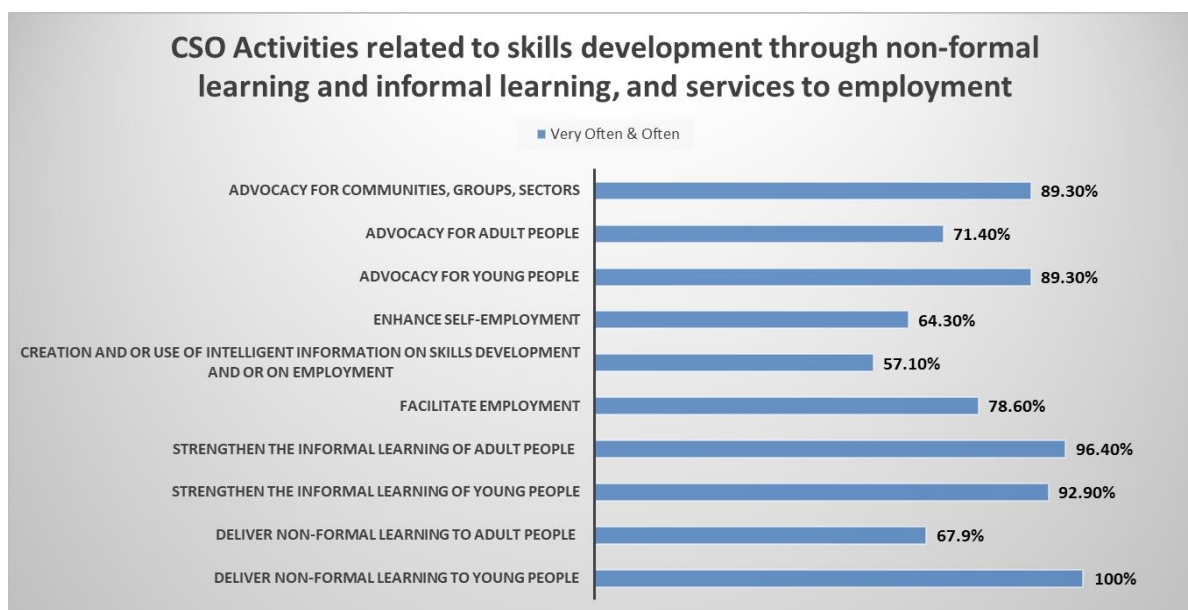
In line with their areas of development support, the beneficiaries of CSOs' activities related to skills development through non-formal learning and informal learning, and services to employment were youth, vulnerable youth and women (Graph 5).



Graph 5- Beneficiary focus of CSOs

Two other social groups were added to this list of beneficiaries and included LGBTI and Minorities

Graph 6 below, provides an overview of surveyed CSO of their activities related to skills development through non-formal learning and informal learning and services to employment.



Graph 6- CSO activities related to skills development.

Results of the survey shows that majority of surveyed CSO focused their activities related to skills development on delivering and strengthening non-formal learning to young people and on advocacy activities. They had less activities focused on Creation and/or use of intelligent information on skills development and/or on employment (e.g. qualitative or quantitative data collection, independent data analysis, analysis of data from different sources, formulation of policy advice, etc.)

They reported other activities related to skills development they were involved are related to

- Education, awareness raising and advocacy for the promotion of human rights, democracy and volunteering.
- Skills promotion and Development Platform through the organization of the National Skills Competitions in yearly base in Albania

The findings from the survey are in line with other studies in Albania such as the Albania Adult Education Survey Report ⁸ (INSTAT, 2017) noting that 67.8 % of population aged 25-64 have participated in informal learning and 74% of them are young at age (25-34). The CSOSI report for Albania 2019 (USAID, 2019) also notes that the CSO advocacy continued to be strong in 2019, despite persistent challenges, CSOs actively engage in decision making and policy-making processes at the local and national levels. The same report (USAID, 2019) reveals that in general, CSOs at the national level continue to have stronger advocacy and lobbying capacities than CSOs at the local level.

When asked on the **content of CSOs' activities** related to skills development through non-formal learning and informal learning, and services to employment, 75% of surveyed CSOs responded to have provided support with Technical competences (e.g. vocational skills, technical skills, digital skills, other job-related skills, etc.) and 60% provided support with Key competences (e.g. learning to learn, teamwork, leadership, communication, languages, public speaking, self-confidence, entrepreneurship,

⁸Albania 2017 Adult Education Survey, INSTAT

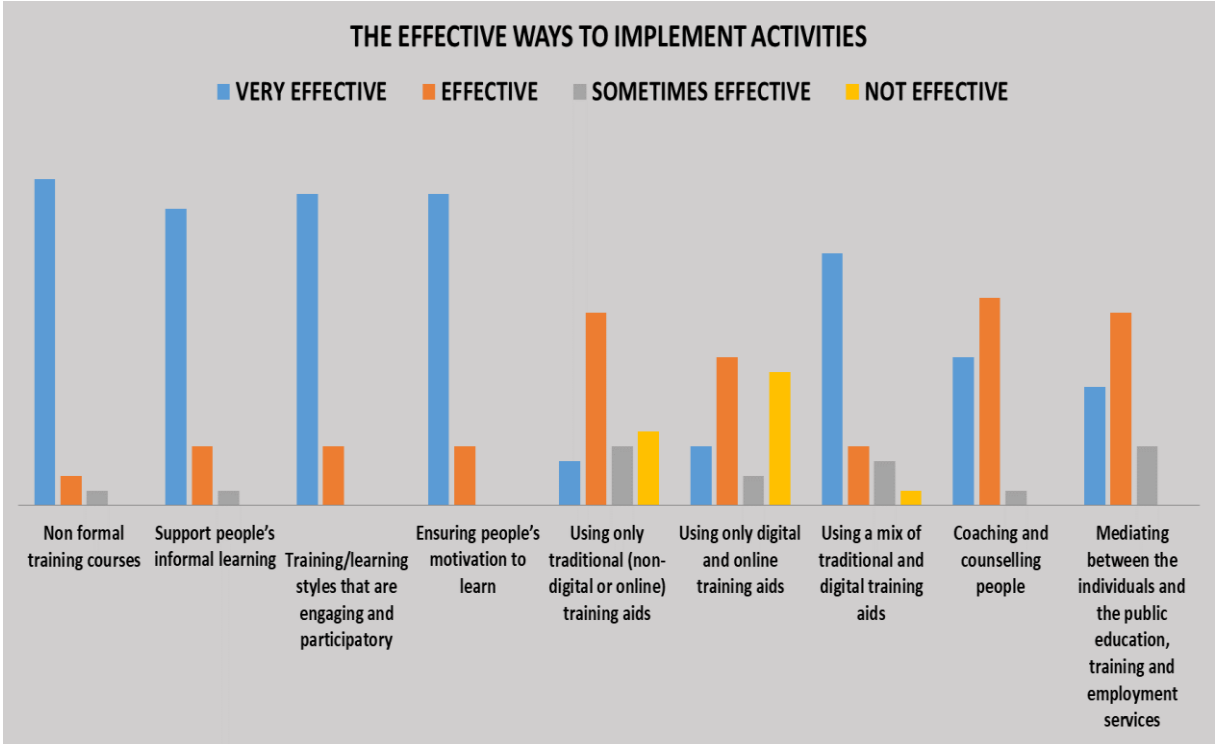
etc.) and were less involved in Relationship with authorities and public sector (21%) and to micro and small enterprises support and development (10%)

85% of surveyed CSOs stated that they **publish their analysis**, publications and researches in their online channels of communication such as Website, Facebook or Instagram and also they are willing to share the results with networks and stakeholders.

Regarding the **most Effective Ways to implement activities** related to skills development through non-formal learning and informal learning, and services to employment CSOs noted the following effective ways (Graph 7).

- Non formal training courses
- Supporting people’s informal learning from peers, self-learning etc.
- Training/learning styles that are engaging and participatory
- Ensuring the motivation of people to learn
- Using a mix of traditional and digital training aids

It is important to note that these effective ways to implement activities were also in line with the surveyed CSOs activities of focus.



Graph 7- Effective ways to implement activities

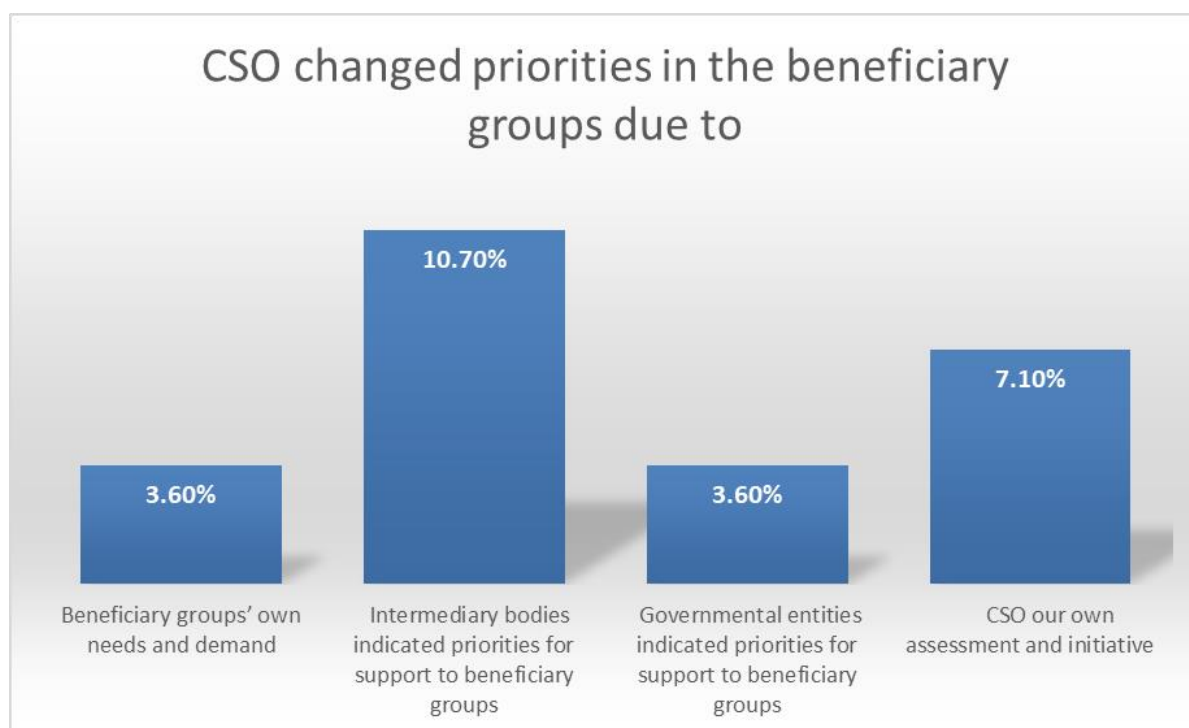
Most of the respondents from surveyed CSOs, found the classroom, training centre, advisory centre or similar learning environment (89%) and On-the-job (64%) as a very **effective learning environment** followed by Informal places (46%), while Online and at home were less preferred or deemed less effective.

CHAPTER 2- CSO RESPONSE TO THE COVID19 PANDEMIC EFFECTS ON HCD

The questions addressed in this section were about the changes in the CSOs beneficiary groups and activities in 2020 due to the COVID19 pandemic.

It is important to note that overall the emergency situation of COVID 19 brought many uncertainty overall to population regarding their economic stability and social issues. The CSO sector had also to face these uncertainties on whether to put on hold their planned activities, how to deal with social distancing and what to change in their strategies for implementing their activities and in reaching their target beneficiaries, making some time their entire operations and decision making very challenging.

Only seven (7) of surveyed CSOs responded to have changed their **beneficiary groups of the activities for HCD during the COVID19 pandemic**, in 2020 and in such instances the decision was made based on recommendation from Intermediary bodies and CSOs own assessments (Graph 8).

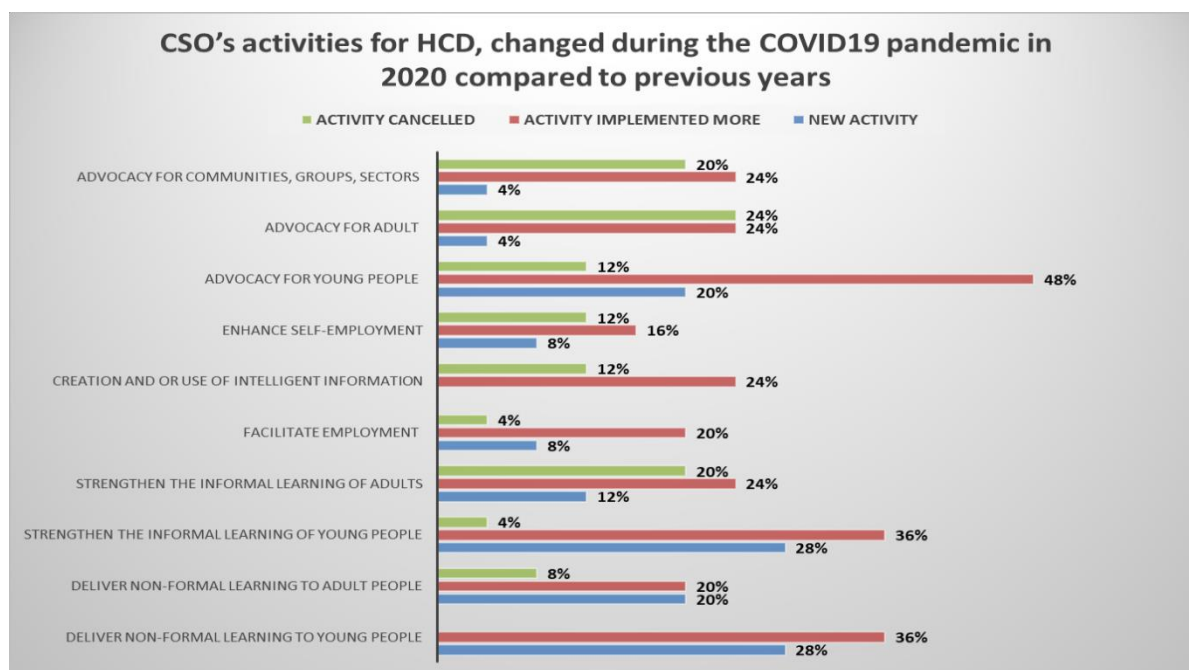


Graph 8- CSOs' reasons for changing their beneficiary groups

Inquiring on whether the surveyed CSOs changed priorities regarding their activities for HCD during the COVID19 pandemic, only 4 CSOs stated to have changed their activities, 21 CSOs changed up to some extents and only 3 CSOs did not changed their priorities.

Those CSOs that changed their activities for HCD during the COVID19 pandemic in 2020 compared to previous years', (**including those that changed to some extend**), reported to have worked more to deliver non-formal learning to young people, strengthen the informal learning of young people (e.g. learning from peers, self-learning, learning from own experience, etc.) and work more on advocacy for young people. In line with these, the survey found an increase of new activities under the same areas. Graph 9 below, also shows in which areas the CSOs cancelled their activities and reports that less actions

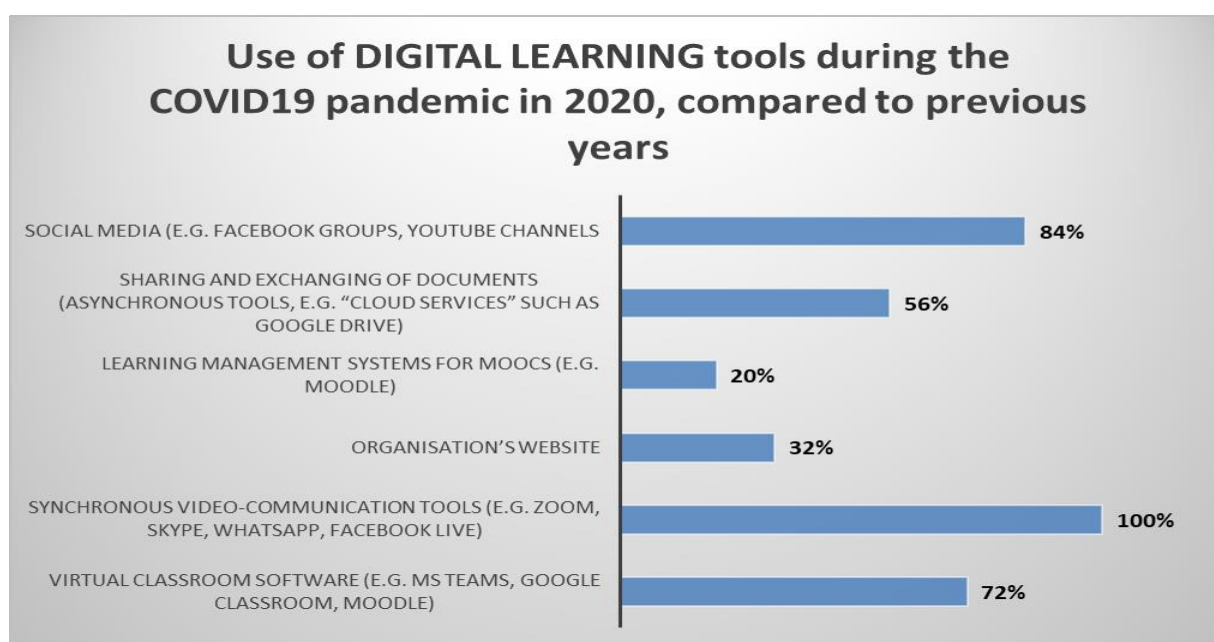
were taken or that overall some activities were cancelled on Advocacy for community / groups / sectors, Advocacy for adults and to strengthen the informal learning of young people.



Graph 9- CSO activity changes made during the COVID19 pandemic in 2020 compared to previous years

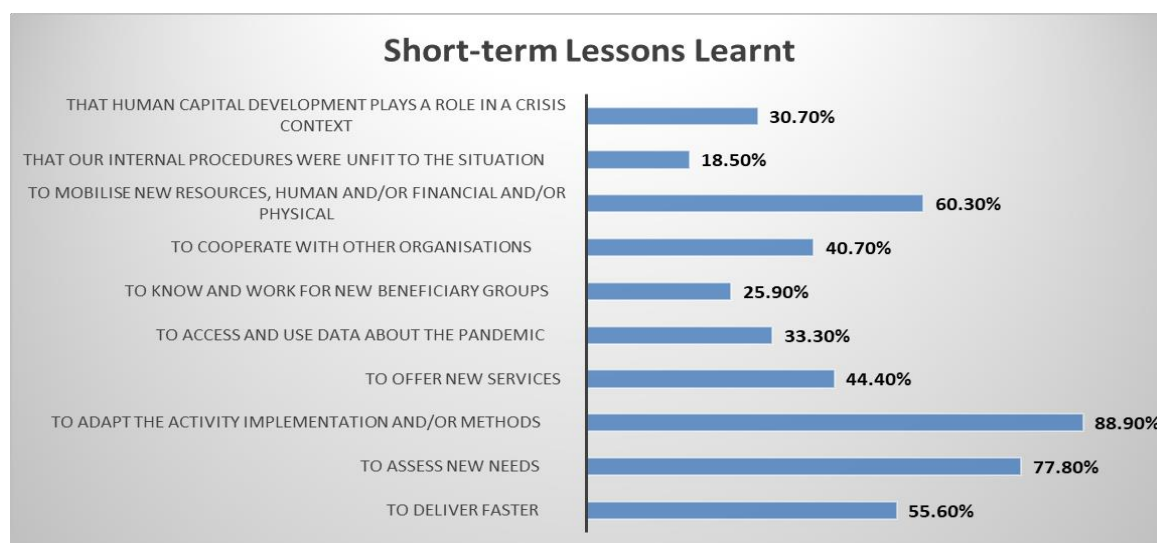
As we will see in the following finding (Graph 10), some of these activities could also be impacted by the use of technology of the target group of beneficiaries of CSOs due to social distancing restricting protocols of government.

89% of respondents reported to have used more Digital Learning tools during the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, compared to previous years. Virtual classroom software (e.g. Ms Teams, Google Classroom, Moodle), Synchronous video-communication tools (e.g. Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, Facebook live) and Social media (e.g. Facebook groups, YouTube channels) were tools used more by them compared to previous years (Graph 10)



Graph 10- Use of Digital Learning tools by CSOs during Covid19 Pandemic in 2020

96 % of surveyed CSOs reported to have learned short-term lessons, in emergency or under pressure (Graph 11) and 89% of them to have learned long-term lesson (Graph 12)



Graph 11- Short term lessons learnt during emergency



Graph 12- Long term lessons learnt during emergency

Both results from lessons learnt show the resilience of CSOs during COVID 19 pandemic crisis.

To a great extent Short term lessons learned include:

- To adapt the activity implementation and/or methods
- To assess new needs
- To Offer new services and
- To mobilise new resources, human and/or financial and/or physical

And to a great extend the long-term, the CSOs strategic or forward-looking lessons from the implementation of HCD activities in response to the COVID19 pandemic crisis in 2020 include:

- To innovate our existing services & re - prioritise our existing services

- To offer new services
- To re -train our staff members and/or volunteers and
- To attract additional funds
- To cooperate with other organisations
- To improve our organisational skills
- To increase our expertise

CHAPTER 3 - STAKEHOLDERS AND POLICY DIALOGUE

From CSOs included in this survey, **21.4% of them said to be often involved** in the policy dialogue regarding non-formal learning, informal learning and employment. **42.9 % were involved occasionally and 35.7 were not involved but** would like to participate in the policy dialogue.

The issue of lack of involvement of CSOs in policy dialogue is found in many other studies in Albania. The Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development, Country Report: Albania (Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2019, p. 43) shows that from the surveyed CSOs, 34% of them have participated in the work of advisory, consultative or working group bodies and committees . The same report notes that one of the main concerns of CSOs with their participation in public consultations remains the lack of trust on whether their comments / inputs will be taken into account by public institutions (Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2019).

The surveyed CSOs reported that thy were more frequently involved with the following stakeholders.

- 83.6% with Education and training providers
- 61.1% with CSO platforms forums
- 55.6 % with Governmental institutions
- 55.6 % with National Employment Service

The findings that most of the surveyed CSOs were more frequently involved with education and training providers, confirms also the findings above. This information correlates also with why CSOs are influenced to change their beneficiary groups based on recommendations from Intermediary bodies (See Chapter 2, p14)

35.7 % of CSOs stated to be regularly **connected to and/or reporting to any of the above stakeholders**, 25 % occasionally **and 39.3 % reported that they are not**, but would like to be connected. From those CSOs reporting to be regularly connected with the above stakeholders, the main content of the connection/reporting was for monitoring and reporting purposes (Graph 13)



Graph 13- CSO connection purposes with their stakeholders

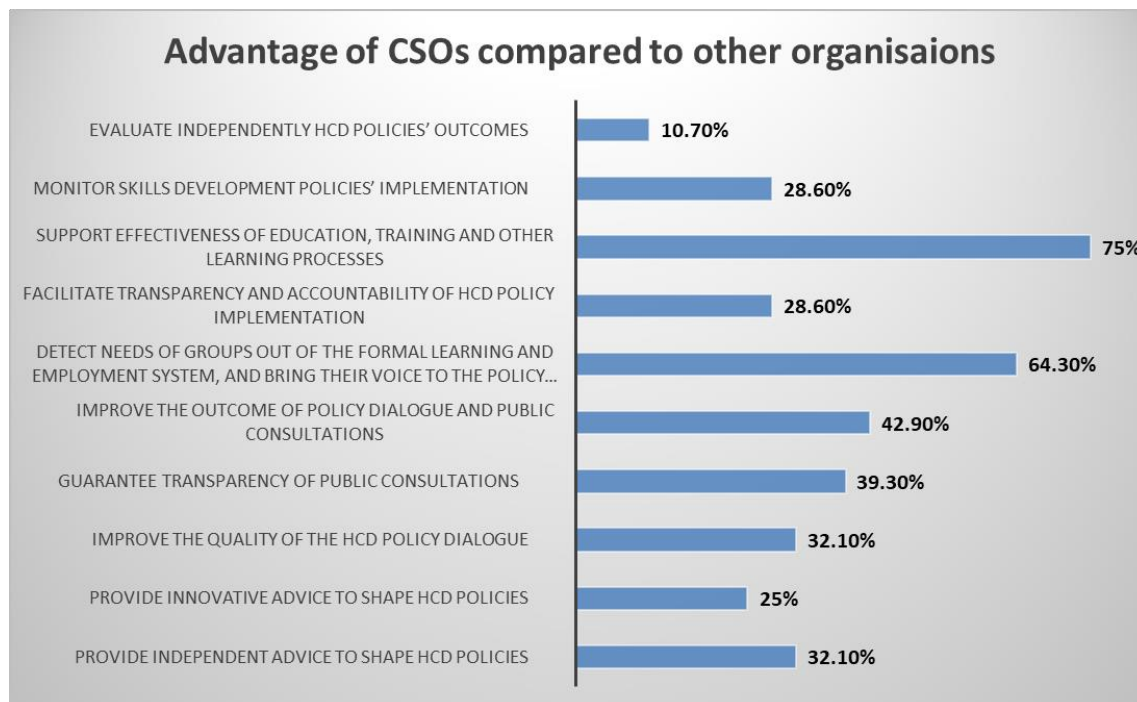
CSOs described their role with stakeholders as Complementary (19 CSOs); Advisory (6 CSOs); Collaborative (11 CSOs); and Alternative (4 CSOs), while 11 CSO stated to be Indifferent (we are not informing the government and the government does not inform us) and 1 CSO felt Dis-aligned (we are in contrast with the government's policies and measures)

CHAPTER 4- POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE CONTRIBUTION TO HCD

This section investigated information on CSOs perceived present advantage, and possible future contribution to the HCD sector.

With regard to **the major advantage of CSOs compared to other (public, private, non-governmental), the interviewed organisations identified the following areas (Graph 14):**

- 75%, Stated to Support effectiveness of education, training and other learning processes
- 64.3%, Stated to Improve the outcome of policy dialogue and public consultations
- 42.90%, Stated to Detect needs of groups out of the formal learning and employment system, and bring their voice to the policy dialogue



Graph 14- Advantage of CSOs compared to other organisations

On whether the surveyed CSOs were **planning to strengthen their contribution to HCD**,

- 53.6% CSOs said that they will,
- 42.9 % said that they will to some extent and
- 3.6 % stated NO, the conditions are not in favour of this choice.

Regarding the main domains that CSOs were very likely or likely to strengthen they contribution to HCD, the survey found that:

100% of them considered

- Accessibility of formal, non-formal, informal learning
- Inclusiveness of learning opportunities (regardless of age, gender, abilities, citizenship, vulnerability, employment status etc.)
- Quality of learning opportunities

92.6% of them considered

- Learning and employment needs of individuals
- Learning and employment needs of local communities

77.8% Self-employment and entrepreneurship

70.4% - Provision and promotion of technical competences

74.1% Sustainable living and green economy

63% Future of learning and piloting innovation in learning

60% - Provision and promotion of transversal competences

And less domains were considered

- 59.3% - Knowledge creation, data collection and analysis, independent monitoring and evaluation of the HCD sector, policy advice
- 44% Future of work and piloting innovation of work

- 23%- Digital society and economy

CHAPTER 5- BENEFICIARY VIEWS ABOUT THE USEFULNESS OF THE CSOS WORK

Five beneficiaries of the following CSOs were contacted to collect their views about the usefulness of the CSO work for HCD.

- SHUM Albania – Association for Food and Welfare
- ICLA – Institute for Change and Leadership in Albania
- VYC – Vlora Youth Center
- WID – Women in development Korca
- NCCS – National Center for Community Services

In terms of demographics of respondents; four were women and one man, three were from rural areas and two from towns, (Vlora and Tirana)

Beneficiaries found peer learning, discussion on practical problems, interactive sessions and concrete examples; as well as practical work as something they really liked about **the training and support they received**. Furthermore, they stated that the support helped them to have new perspectives regarding their skills development and career perspective.

Requirements stated by beneficiaries to improve training and support provided by CSOs included follow up activities to ensure employability of beneficiaries such as follow up support to find a job through provision of linkages and exposure to local employment offices and business providers. Accessibility for financial support in cases to open a new business was another required support.

During the process of support and training, respondents stated to had some thoughts and insights that could be introduced to help them develop their skills or chance for employment such as those linked due to COVID19 pandemic, with more support needed in using digital learning tools. Also overall some training and services could have been improved in combination through blended learning forms such as formal, non-formal and on-job-training provisions.

With regard to follow up training and support, the beneficiaries, although two of them deemed the job placement and economic income as the most important activity, provided concrete proposals regarding their continuous learning and capacity building activities such as

- *Social learning – in using digital tools, to learn from other peers and friends, in particular of soft skills and exchange of use of practical experiences and real stories*
- *Internships training – to gain particular experience on the technical knowledge gain, knowledge and skills in a working environment and gain new ideas to test for opening a business*
- *Pursuing formal vocational education training in the specific area*

When asked about how did they found information about training and support activities form CSOs, the beneficiaries reported different ways such as information from friends, social media and internet, that

they were contacted directly from the organization or were referred to from the Labour Offices in the respective Municipality.

Beneficiaries responded that they were overall satisfied with how well the trainers and counsellors dealt with their specific needs using a variety of methods such as organized individual or group activities to deal with individual or groups specific needs and interest, using a pre-assessment of group or through provision of individual or home based exercises and activities for individuals with specific advice and guidance to their individual interest.

All surveyed beneficiaries' stated to have been given the opportunity to evaluate and / or provide feedback on the quality or usefulness of the services provided through various forms of formal evaluation in the end of the training in the classroom or online. The group review activity and sometimes the feedback process after a learning activity during the day on what was the most important lesson the participants received during the activity, were considered by them as very important activities because it allowed participants to address quickly their needs and for the trainer to reflect those needs in the next sessions.

All beneficiaries stated supportively to advise a close friend or relative to follow the same training/support/guidance –because of the following personal reasons.

- *It gave me insights into new career paths,*
- *I learned new skills and I meet other colleagues*
- *The content and methodology was relevant to my needs*
- *The training helped me to apply for a new job in the cooking sector*

CHAPTER 6– CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the role that CSO's played in the field of non-formal and informal learning and services to employment the beneficiaries of **CSOs' activities related to skills development** through non-formal learning and informal learning, and services to employment were **youth, vulnerable youth and women**. CSOs focused their **activities related to skills development on delivering and strengthening non-formal learning to young people and on advocacy activities**. They had less activities focused on Creation and/or use of intelligent information on skills development and/or on employment (e.g. qualitative, or quantitative data collection, independent data analysis, analysis of data from different sources, formulation of policy advice, etc.)

CSOs reported to be more involved in (a) education, awareness raising and advocacy for the promotion of human rights, democracy, and volunteering, and (b) skills promotion as their **activities related to skills development**)

Regarding **the content of CSOs' activities** related to skills development, 75% of surveyed CSOs provided support with **technical competences** (vocational skills, technical skills, digital skills, other job-related skills, etc.) and 60% provided support with **key competences** (learning to learn, teamwork, leadership, communication, languages, public speaking, self-confidence, entrepreneurship, etc.). They **were less engaged in a cooperation with authorities and public sector** and in supporting development based on micro and small enterprises. In this regard findings show that **the state of play of CSOs' involvement regarding HDC was quite clear** and their most effective ways to implementing activities such as non-formal training courses, supporting people's informal learning from peers, self-learning etc. ensuring the motivation of people to learn and the use of a mix of traditional and digital training aids were also in line with their activities of focus.

These findings were also in line with the INSTAT's "Albania 2017 Adult Education Survey" (INSTAT, 2017), noting that the main reason for participation in the non-formal education and training was bettering job-related skills 54.7 %, followed by knowledge increase 39.1 % and improving career prospects 38.2 %. Regarding access to information about learning possibility and guidance, the same report stated that 8.2 % of population aged 25-64 has looked for information about learning possibilities in 2017. Females were more active in searching for information about learning possibilities than males, 9.2 % and 7.3 % respectively (INSTAT, 2017).

Despite the challenges CSOs faced **in 2020 due to the COVID19 pandemic, only a few of them** changed their **beneficiary groups of the activities**. In 2020 compared to previous years', CSOs reported that they have worked more to **deliver non-formal learning to young people, strengthen the informal learning of young people and on advocacy for young people**. In line with these, the study reported an **increase of new activities under the same areas**. This could also be related to the use of technology by the target group of beneficiaries due to social distancing protocol of government (i.e., youth use more digital technology than other age groups). **89% of respondents reported to have used more digital learning tools during the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, compared to previous years,**

Regarding CSOs resilience, the study findings showed the same characteristics of CSOs sector as reported in other similar studies for Albania in 2019. Management capacities and financial viability

continues to be the weakest dimension of sustainability⁹. Our survey showed **limited sustained number of human resource capacities of CSOs with paid staff and collaborators who found it challenging to maintain permanent and full-time staff**, mainly because they were constrained by project-based or donor funding. Furthermore, CSOs in rural and remote areas faced difficulties in attracting qualified human resources due to migration and depopulation in these areas. At the same time volunteer engagement in Albania remains low.

Cooperating with other organisations was deemed by surveyed CSOs as part of their sustainability efforts seen in the application and implementation of joint projects within organizations with similar mission and scope, as well as in gaining knowledge and experience from more developed organizations mainly in urban areas (especially in Tirana). Lack of activities and support for networking and partnerships; the limited number of exchange programs to learn from good models and best practices; study visits that enable further advancement of CSOs etc. were some of the needs identified by CSOs.

Low access and participation in regional and European networks represented needs that remain to be addressed, aiming at institutional strengthening, fundraising and increasing visibility and public relations with other actors. From the surveyed CSOs only one was operating at European level.

CSOs short-term lessons and to a great extent the long-term, strategic, or forward-looking lessons from the implementation of HCD activities in response to the COVID19 pandemic crisis **showed the resilience of CSOs during COVID 19 pandemic crisis and include** (a) adapting their activity implementation and/or methods, and (b) innovating & re – prioritising existing services reflecting on their internal assessment of needs and requirements from their target beneficiaries. This required internal management and resource capacities to be enhanced in terms new resources, human and/or financial and/or physical, increasing expertise and re – training staff members and/or volunteers.

CSOs current engagement and role, and potential for the future revealed that COVID-19 provided not only huge challenges, but also an unusual opportunity for CSOs contributing to HCD given their flexibility to adjustments and their passionate commitment to their beneficiaries. Although a **limited number** of surveyed CSOs report to be regularly **involved** in the policy dialogue regarding non-formal learning, informal learning, and employment, most of **them express their willingness** in the policy dialogue. There was quite a complementary and collaborative role defined by CSOs to play particularly regarding support to education and training providers. It can be concluded that the majority of the participating CSOs in this survey supported **SDG 5** “Gender equality”, **SDG 8** “Decent work and economic growth”, and **SDG 10** “Reduced inequalities”. This specific role of CSOs must be further supported and recognized by all stakeholders. Three other CSOs added **SDGs 12**, Responsible Consumption and Production as an area of their support.

Support effectiveness of education, training and other learning processes and efforts to improve the outcome of policy dialogue and public consultations was seen as **major advantage of CSOs compared to other public, private and non-governmental stakeholders**. Forward looking, **more than 53% of surveyed CSOs were planning to strengthen their contribution to HCD** regarding accessibility of formal, non-formal, informal learning, inclusiveness, and quality of learning opportunities and learning and employment needs of individuals.

⁹CSO Sustainability Index (CSOSI) for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, Albania 2019

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ANNEX

1. Online presence of surveyed CSOs

Website address (URL)

<http://www.fash.al/>

<http://www.sommelier.al/>

<https://albanianictacademy.com/>

[https://cbtl-](https://cbtl-see.com/?fbclid=IwAR35CYxgNd3GfHMBLxehKXYRqWs_nVczQjIUxF_211w0OMzERKkghPovVpc)

[see.com/?fbclid=IwAR35CYxgNd3GfHMBLxehKXYRqWs_nVczQjIUxF_211w0OMzERKkghPovVpc](https://cbtl-see.com/?fbclid=IwAR35CYxgNd3GfHMBLxehKXYRqWs_nVczQjIUxF_211w0OMzERKkghPovVpc)

<https://cyp.al/>

<https://irca.al/>

<https://nucleus.al/>

<https://qek.al/rreth-nesh.html>

<https://shum.al/>

https://www.facebook.com/Allbanian-Center-for-Sustainable-Development-464322891054558/?tn-str=k*F

<https://www.icidalbania.org/>

<https://www.lrd-albania.org/>

<https://www.rcdcalbania.org/>

nccsalbania.wordpress.com

Qendra Rinore e Vlores/Vlora Youth Center

www.albanianskills.org

www.apadi.org

www.icla.co

WWW.OMSALBANIA.ORG

Facebook

AlbanianSkills

<https://www.facebook.com/albanianictacademy>

<https://www.facebook.com/apadi.albania/?pageid=587082641359908&ftentidentifier=3254902671244545&padding=0>

<https://www.facebook.com/cbtlsee/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CenterOfDevelopmentAndSocialInitiatives>

<https://www.facebook.com/cyp.kukes>

<https://www.facebook.com/Euleus-221089978445611/>

<https://www.facebook.com/fashfanpage/>

<https://www.facebook.com/fcselenice>

<https://www.facebook.com/gruajanezhvillimkorce>

<https://www.facebook.com/ICID-Albania-265774886958720>

<https://www.facebook.com/InstituteForChangeAndLeadershipInAlbania>

<https://www.facebook.com/IRCA.AL>

<https://www.facebook.com/levizjarinore.puke.5>

<https://www.facebook.com/nccs.albania>

<https://www.facebook.com/nucleus.al/>

<https://www.facebook.com/OpenMindSpectrumAlbania>

<https://www.facebook.com/OrganizataShqiptareSommelierise>
<https://www.facebook.com/Qendra-Konsumatori-Shqiptar-Albanian-Consumer-Center-895987337113026>
<https://www.facebook.com/qendrabashkepertearthmen/>
<https://www.facebook.com/qendraperedukimkulinar>
<https://www.facebook.com/YDIPorganization>
<https://www.facebook.com/Youth-for-Social-Change-1155047071217681>
Shoqata e Ushqimit dhe Mirëqenies
Vlora Youth Center

Instagram

@inlsh_icla
albanianictacademy
AlbanianSkills
<https://www.instagram.com/apadi.ngo/>
<https://www.instagram.com/explore/locations/863231901/fondacioni-arsimor-shqiptar/>
https://www.instagram.com/forumi_civil_selenice/
<https://www.instagram.com/gruajanezhvillimkorce/>
https://www.instagram.com/irca_albania/
<https://www.instagram.com/omsalbania/>
https://www.instagram.com/qek_kulinari/
https://www.instagram.com/qendra_konsumatori_shqiptar/
https://www.instagram.com/qpr_kukes/
<https://www.instagram.com/rbmt.al/>
https://www.instagram.com/sommelieria_shqiptare/
https://www.instagram.com/ydip_organisation/
<https://www.instagram.com/yscorg.al/>
Levizja Rinore Puke
Shumalbania

LinkedIn

Albanian Skills-National Association for Skills Competitions
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/11806945/admin/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/nucleus-albania/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/regional-center-for-development-and-cooperation/?originalSubdomain=al>
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/open-mind-spectrum-albania-omsa-33a25119b/>
Vlora Youth Center
www.linkedin.com/groups/Institute-Change-Leadership-in-Albania-4008981?gid=4008981&trk=hb_side_g