



**COMMUNITY CENTRE LITTLE ANGELS**

**1. DESCRIPTION**

**1.1. Title**

**To address poverty and social exclusion by building effective models to support children, youth and families in need, especially the Roma and Egyptian community in Tirana.**

**1.2 Location(s)**

Rr. Jordan Misja<sup>1</sup> near the Train Station, Municipality 9, Tirana, Albania  
 Municipality Nr. 8<sup>2</sup>  
 Lake Hills<sup>3</sup>, Municipality 5, Tirana, Albania

**1.3 Summary**

Total duration of the action	36 months
Objectives of the action	<p><b>Overall objective:</b>          To address poverty and social exclusion by building effective models to support children, youth and families in need, especially those of the Roma and Egyptian community in Tirana.</p> <p><b>Specific objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To reduce the vulnerability of children who are being exploited and abused in the area of Municipality nr.9 and the area of Municipality nr.8 by supporting them with formal and non-formal education.</li> <li>2. To empower youth in difficulties to face life challenges, by working on capacity building and skills development.</li> <li>3. To strengthen the capacity of marginalized families from these areas and provide child care, freeing them to access the social services, especially for the children and families of the Roma and Egyptian communities.</li> <li>4. To coordinate the action between the government and civil society in relation to the response to child protection issues and the fight against poverty in the city of Tirana.</li> </ol>
Partner(s)	Mary Ward Loreto (MWL) Foundation Tirana and ARSIS in the Lake Hills

<sup>1</sup> Rr. Jordan Misja areas refer to a relatively large area that covers Municipality Nr.9 of Tirana.

<sup>2</sup> Municipality nr 8 area refers to a close area where CCLA work.

<sup>3</sup> Lake Hill area refers to area that covers Municipality Nr.5 of Tirana.

Target group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children of Tirana, aged 5 – 14 years who are at risk of labour exploitation, in Rr. Jordan Misja (mainly Roma and Egyptian);</li> <li>- Street children from Municipality Nr. 9 and Nr. 8 community (mainly Roma and Egyptian);</li> <li>- Youth of Tirana aged 15 – 18, in area of Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr. 9 and Nr. 8, especially youth in difficulties from the Roma and Egyptian community.</li> <li>- Women and Men from poor families in the community of Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 Community, Lake Hills Community.</li> <li>- Young parents of children at risk of exploitation;</li> <li>- Local service providers to these children and to these disadvantaged communities.</li> </ul>
Final beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The overall community of Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 and Lake Hills Community;</li> <li>- Local and central institutions responsible for the formation and implementation of social inclusion policies in the country.</li> <li>- Community centres in the country, delivering services to disadvantaged communities.</li> </ul>
Estimated results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At least 50 children at risk of exploitation and the street children in Rr. Jordan Misja area, Municipality Nr. 9 and Nr. 8 who have a right to education. They will become less vulnerable to abuse of all kinds through this participation in a formal and non-formal education.</li> <li>- At least 70 disadvantaged families in Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 and Lake Hills Community area will be strengthened and able to protect and provide care for their children.</li> <li>- At least 20 youth of Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr. 9 and Nr. 8 will be able to have a professional counselling and vocational trainings preparation to face life.</li> <li>- Government actors and civil society will be better coordinated and efficient. This will enable them to deliver services to these children at risk, their families and communities in an effective manner. This will address poverty issues in the targeted community.</li> </ul>
Main activities	<p><b>1. Formal and non-formal education for disadvantaged children in the targeted community</b>  Literacy, numeracy and a general education programme at the Little Angels Community Centre; Orientation in the Second Chance Program of the MoES; Recreational activities at the Little Angel Community Centre, social education.</p> <p><b>2. Formal and non-formal education for targeted youth in risk, especially in Roma and Egyptian community.</b>  Group meeting and consultations, awareness about dangerous situation while working in streets, juvenile justice, finding the possibilities for the youth to attend vocational courses in public and private institutions, collaboration with the third partners to help the youth to get a job.</p> <p><b>3. To empower the families in need to improve their socio-economical conditions.</b>  Families meetings, group non-formal trainings, finding the possibilities for the adults to attend vocational courses, continued</p>

	<p>education, collaboration with institutions and private business to create the possibilities for the families to get jobs.</p> <p>The families are divided into 2 groups, men and woman groups. With the women's group the year objectives are: coping with family issues (pregnancy, economic, education, ecc), continued education for awareness in the community life, psycho-social development and empowerment, social orientation.</p> <p>The men's group is focused on: professional counselling for work, empowerment as community leaders, psycho-social development and empowerment.</p> <p><b>4. Service delivery to the targeted community to provide care and protection of the children</b></p> <p>Counselling, medical, food assistance, administrative support, registration; community empowerment through education and an introduction to employment skills and opportunities for parents of children at risk (career guidance, job placement).</p> <p><b>5. Coordinated action of stakeholders on child protection issues</b></p> <p>Establishment of a network of community centres and local government in the different areas; Organisation of round tables relating to child care at the community centres in the local government areas.</p>
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## 1.4 Objectives

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### **Overall objective:**

To address poverty and social exclusion by building effective models to support the families in need, especially the Roma and Egyptian community in Tirana.

### **Specific objectives:**

1. To reduce child vulnerability to exploitation and abuse in the areas of Municipality nr.9 and nr.8, by supporting formal and non-formal education;
2. To empower the youth in difficulties to cope with the challenges faced in life. This will be achieved by working in development of youth`s professional skills.
3. To strengthen the capacities of marginalized families in these areas, for child care and for access to social services, especially for the Roma and Egyptian communities;
4. To coordinate actions amongst the government actors and civil society in response to the need for child protection and to fight against poverty in the city of Tirana.

### **a. Relevance of the action (max 3 pages)**

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- **Detailed description of the target groups and final beneficiaries and estimated number.**

#### **The project will target the following categories of beneficiaries:**

1. **Children at risk of exploitation** and street children at Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 Community; At least 100 children will have the right of an education through participation in formal and non-formal education. In particular their development will be enhanced because their parents and the whole community will be sensitive to the importance of education and to the exercise of basic human rights for their children.
2. **Youth.** At least 20 youth of Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 Community will be able to have a job to afford the life, finding the possibilities for the youth to attend professional courses in public and private institutions, collaboration with the third partners to help the youth to get a job through formal and non-formal education for targeted youth in risk, awareness about dangerous situation whilst working in the streets, juvenile justice, especially in the Roma and Egyptian community and Group meetings and consultations.
3. **Marginalised families;** At least 50 children at risk and their respective families in Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 Community area will be supported with medical, food assistance as well as administrative assistance.
4. Young parents of children at risk will also be empowered through education and support to start up income generating activities.
5. **Marginalized minority groups (Egyptian and Roma)** will be particularly empowered and able to play an active role and promote minority's rights. 80% of the beneficiaries of the action will be from Roma and Egyptian minorities living at Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 and Lake Hills Community.
6. **Policy makers and stakeholders** delivering services to disadvantaged communities; All community centres in the country, together with Regional Directorates for Education, in all prefectures and officials of the Ministry of Social Welfare, will be engaged in the action and coordinate the work to deliver efficient social services to children at risk and their families.

The **final beneficiaries** of the action will be the **Local and central institutions** responsible for the formulation and implementation of social inclusion policies in the country (Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health and their relevant structures at the local level). Moreover, the action will have a positive impact on family members and communities surrounding those directly targeted by this proposal.

- **Specific problems to be addressed by the action and the perceived needs and constraints of the target groups.**

Since 2003 SHKEJ has been implementing projects in support of disadvantaged adolescents, street children and the poorest and marginalized target groups in the suburbs of Tirana. In 2008, SHKEJ established a community daily centre, in collaboration with IBVM and now Mary Ward Loreto. This daily centre is called “Little Angel”, currently located at Rr. Jordan Misja, near the Train Station, which provides social, education and reintegration services for children in risk. Most of these children are street children from Roma and Gypsy minority groups, or “new comers” from the northeast areas of the country. They live in conditions of extreme poverty, in substandard housing situations. Some of these families have no running water or electricity; they have poor clothing and humidity in the “barracks”. All of this poses real threats to their health. They also face discrimination which in turn has a negative impact on their access to education, employment and social services.

Low levels of education are common, as is illiteracy. Rates of unemployment are extremely high. Investments of the Ministry of Education and donors have slightly improved the public education system in Tirana; but schools located in the outskirts of the city face immeasurable difficulties. The average number of students per classroom in basic education is 36, whilst for high schools this ratio goes up further to 50-60. The schools are overcrowded and cannot meet the demands of the children who live in this area. The number of children who work in the informal labour market and do not regularly attend school is increasing. This situation is influenced by the economic conditions, traditional life styles and the problems in the public education system. Of these school drop-outs, 85 per cent are from the poor households of Rr. Jordan Misja, mainly from the Roma community or poor migrants. Therefore the families of these communities remain in a vicious circle, in which the lack of education makes it impossible to move out of poverty, contributing this way to the social exclusion of the families. In addition, many parents do not register their children, this limits their access to services and may increase their vulnerability to being trafficked or exploited. Some children are abandoned by their parents and are raised by extended family members.

- **Relevance of the action to the needs and constraints of the target country (ies) or region(s) in general and to the target groups/final beneficiaries in particular and how the action will provide the desired solutions, in particular for the targeted beneficiaries.**

In the last two decades Albania has been highly affected by the extreme mobility of its population, often considered as a survival mechanism to the overall poverty in the country. Internal migration has positively affected the lives of those who have migrated, but also posed a number of challenges for migrants and their families and the communities where they have settled. The “new comers” have mostly settled in informal areas with no infrastructure and services; cultural adaptation has also been a challenge. In many cases, the new comers to these new quarters have joined their traditional inhabitants “*Roma and Egyptian community*” living in slums and deep poverty. The distressing situation in these communities has made it very difficult for the younger generation to grow and live in a healthy environment. Children are in particular **highly exposed to labour exploitation** because of poverty and because child

labour is often considered as one of the survival mechanisms. The National Inclusion Strategy recognises that in Albania it is common for children from poor families to work, mainly in the informal market selling cigarettes, washing cars or begging. **Almost half of the children working in the street come from families that have migrated to the major cities during transition. Low levels of education and school dropout amongst children of these communities,** remains a major concern. Early childhood education for disadvantaged children is important for their educational success. According to the same strategy less than 50% of children are enrolled in early childhood institutions, public and private. **Malnutrition** because of poverty is also a concern as it directly affects the life of children and the overall family in these communities. In addition, the traditional inhabitants of these informal areas, Roma and Egyptian minorities, live in extreme poverty. **Discrimination, lack of regular income and lack of employment opportunities** combined with larger households has led to lower educational attainment, **poorer health, debt** and poor or no accommodation. **Traditional lifestyles** and poverty also lead to the uprooting of the family which further impacts on the educational opportunities for children and their access to social services. A UNDP study conducted in 2004 showed that the majority of Roma children spend on average less than half the time in education. As result, one in four Roma is illiterate.

A common feature for both major target groups target by this action, the “internal migrants” and ‘Roma and Egyptian” is **their low enrolment rate in access to social services.** The reasons are many and combined with one another; lack of information, poor quality of services, stigma, discrimination and lack of services or their poor quality. They all contribute to further strengthening the “poverty cycle” in which they live. It is therefore of paramount importance that an integrated approach is undertaken when addressing child protection issues in disadvantaged communities. This must take into account different facets of poverty and social exclusion, whilst there is a need, where possible, to address all of them at the same time. The proposed action takes this approach and builds up a positive model of community empowerment in Rr. Jordan Misja and lake hills areas. It involves activities that include a combination of formal and non-formal education, psychosocial counselling, material support, referral and recreational activities for socially excluded groups and especially the minority groups of Roma and Egyptian. The activities will take place in close collaboration with other national and local actors.

## **b. Description of the action and its effectiveness**

- **Expected results.**

### **The impact of the action on the target groups/beneficiaries**

The project proposal has added value because it concerns the direct intervention in support of children at risk, the youth and disadvantaged families. During the 3 year programme 2013-2015 the Community Center Little Angels has had a wonderful impact in the community of the area. The results of the work are very satisfactory. Trust and collaboration between the community and CCLA has constantly grown which helps both parts to achieve their objectives.

80% of the children identified have now been registered in public schools and frequent the school regularly. The school results, with the help of our teachers in the Center, have been improved and now these children have the chance to continue their studies further.

The work with the youth group, 15 youth, has been mainly in group dynamics to reinforce the relationship between them, the communication in the group and to empower them to become aware of their skills. They are now aware of the dangers of a very early marriage, especially

the girls. This is giving them an incentive to return to school, Orientation/training for work and help is given to find a job. Training is also given in Youth Criminality, law and awareness of human rights.

30 women are part of the women's group and participate twice a month in the group meetings, seminars, trainings. These meetings have given these woman a new prospective of life, helping them to find jobs, to deal with the family issues, opening their eyes to see life differently.

Whilst many efforts have been made by the government and other actors to improve child protection and care in Albania, these actions have been limited only to policy development and a few sporadic interventions at the local level. These have, for the most part involved infrastructural support, whilst in fact there is an urgent need for direct assistance to children at risk and their families. In addition, the added value of the action must be based on an integrated approach which envisions intervening at four levels, child, family, community, stakeholders.

1. **The children** at risk of exploitation and street children (at least 100 children) will have their human right to education fulfilled. All 50 children attending the centre will participate in the public school system. They will be less vulnerable and will increase their literacy, numeracy, social and general education skills through participation in formal and non-formal education. In particular their healthy growth will be enhanced because their parents and the whole community will be sensitised about the importance of education and the exercise of basic children's rights. Children will benefit from an increased and qualified number of services delivered by public service providers and different NGO partners with us. Through this action SHKEJ intends to promote a protective and less discriminating environment for these children.

2. **At least 20 youth** of Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 Community will be able to have a job to afford the basic amenities, will have an awareness of dangerous situations while working in the streets, and juvenile justice. The youth will be enabled to attend vocational courses in public and private institutions, collaborating with third partners to help the youth find a job through formal and non-formal education. This work will be targeted to youth at risk, especially the Roma and Egyptian community.

Involvement and capacity building for youth as Peer Educators and will give their contribution to the CCLA.

3. **Marginalised families** (at least 60 families) in Rr. Jordan Misja, Municipality Nr 9 and Nr 8 Community areas will be supported with medical care, food assistance, as well as administrative assistance in order to facilitate their access to public services.

4. **Marginalized minority groups (Egyptian and Roma)** will be empowered and able to play an active role and promote their human rights. Through this action they will be better informed of the human rights for children and women through the support delivered at the Community centre, Little Angels. The entire action should improve their environment and make them less discriminated and excluded by the majority, especially by local public institutions.

5. **Stakeholders**, including public institutions and local service providers, will be better able to coordinate and efficiently deliver social services to children at risk and their families, through this action and through the network of service providers, as well as through the international expertise of partners offered by the project.

**The impact of the action will be related to the technical and management capacities of target groups and/or any partners where applicable**

The project will build up a model of community empowerment through the education of children at risk of exploitation, and through the support to disadvantaged families. .

In addition, the project will address the need for a better coordination between government institutions and the civil society regarding child care in disadvantaged communities. They will target government institutions in charge of delivering assistance to vulnerable categories (with a particular focus on street children, Roma and Egyptian community). These institutions will include Municipalities of Tirana (Social Service Sections), Tirana Regional Directorate for Education, Public Health Polyclinics, also civil society service providers such as ARSIS, Terre des Hommes, Femijet e Botes Shqiperi – Te drejtat e njeriut (FBSH-DN), Save the Children, World Vision, and Tirana Legal Aid, etc. International expertise on how to coordinate actions for assisting disadvantaged communities. All of this will be achieved in partnership with Mary Ward Loreto (MWL) Foundation.

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