



PROJECT FACTSHEET

Western Balkans November 2015

SUPPORT FOR THE HEALTH SYSTEM IN ALBANIA



The SDC promotes better primary health care. ©SDC

As part of the 'Health for All' programme launched in 2015, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is helping to promote public health in the Albanian regions of Fier and Dibër. This project focuses in particular on disadvantaged population groups.

Following the collapse of Communism in Albania and the subsequent exodus of large numbers of qualified health workers from parts of the country, the public health system was severely weakened. There is now a lack of suitable infrastructure and equipment, qualified staff and efficient management. Under the auspices of the 'Health for All' programme, the SDC programme is promoting a reform of the health system and improving primary healthcare. The SDC also ensures that vulnerable population groups gain equal access to health services. Under the programme, pilot measures are being introduced in the Dibër and Fier regions, and recommendations drawn up for the reform of the health system.

FOCUS ON PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

The public should be given access to efficiently managed basic medical services. The SDC is working closely with the Albanian health ministry, a range of civil society organisations and the local authorities in the selected priority regions. Measures introduced to improve public access to the health system, and indeed the system in general, include the following:

- *Strengthening management:* Managerial skills at local and regional level are improved in order to strengthen the primary healthcare system and make it more efficient.
- *Infrastructure:* Health facilities are being expanded and their management improved where this is necessary in order to ensure quality.
- *Public involvement:* Civil society can play a decisive role in health promotion and health service provision. It helps to ensure that the health services provided meet needs and that available funds are properly used. Public involvement also raises the transparency and accountability of local health providers, and so plays an important role in fighting corruption in the health service.
- *Funding:* Patients making informal payments is still a very widespread phenomenon in the Albanian health system. The SDC-supported reform of health service funding is designed to improve general access to the national health insurance scheme, and inject more funds into primary healthcare. This will ensure that even the poorer members of society have access to primary healthcare services in future.



Continuing Medical Education
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- *Continuous Medical Education (CME)*: Improvements in primary healthcare can only be effective if healthcare workers' skills are also improved. The programme gives medical specialists such as doctors and nursing staff the opportunity to attend continuing education courses. These CME courses allow healthcare staff to maintain and update their skills on a regular basis.

IMPROVING HEALTH AWARENESS AND THE PREVENTION OF NON- COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Non-communicable diseases are a common cause of death and illness in Albania. They include diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory disease, cancer and mental illness. There is still very little health awareness promotion and health prevention in the Albanian health system, although these are key elements in the fight against non-communicable diseases. For this reason, the programme focuses on raising awareness of healthy living. People are encouraged to recognise that in addition to a healthy diet and exercise, social contacts are also important for health, and that smoking and alcohol increase the risk of ill-health. Preventive medical examinations are also important in the prevention of non-communicable diseases.

FURTHER INFORMATION

SDC activities in Albania (en):
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/laender/albanien.html>

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THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

NAME

Health for All

DEPARTMENT

SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe

THEME

Health

LAND / REGION

Albania

National priority areas: Fier and Dibër

PARTNERS

Consortium: Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, Terre des hommes CH, Save the Children CH
Health ministry
Public health institutes
Healthcare officials in the Fier and Dibër regions
Ministry of Education

BACKGROUND

The Albanian health system faces huge challenges. There is no universal system of primary healthcare; healthcare staff is poorly trained and corruption is rife. In particular it is the vulnerable elements in the population, for example the Roma and older people, who suffer as a result. Furthermore, awareness of health issues among Albanians is low.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Thanks to the programme, the Albanian population, including the most vulnerable population groups, will be given better access to improved healthcare services.

TARGET GROUP

Inhabitants of the Fier and Dibër regions/entire Albanian population, including vulnerable population groups
Doctors, nursing staff and other employees in the healthcare system
Albanian health and education authorities
Civil society
Health institutes

PHASE DURATION

Phase 1: 01.01.2015 – 31.12.2018

PHASE BUDGET

Phase 1: CHF 10'000'000