

Supporting the
needs of children
through social
care services

SOCIAL

PROTECTION BUDGET BRIEF

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Albania 2020



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The social protection expenditure in Albania accounts for about 9 percent of the GDP, representing the largest budget contribution among the other public sectors such as health and education. However, the share of social protection is still lower compared to countries in Euro Area where the average was 19.6percent in 2018.

Expenditure in social protection sector rose from 131.4 million All in 2015 to 163.7 million ALL in the budget for 2020. The share of social protection budget expenditure in the national budget is about 40 percent in 2020 and on an increasing trend.

The social protection budget is allocated through three main programs. The Social Insurance program accounts for 26.3 percent of social protection budget and the Social Care for 14.9percent. The Social Inclusion has a much smaller share and since 2019 is merged with social care program.

The budget of social care program has remained in stagnant values during 2015 – 2019. The budget of social protection is increased in nominal values by 5 percent in 2019 compared to 2018.

The two main components of the social protection expenditure are internal current transfer that represent 83 percent of the spending in 2019 and the transfer for families and individuals,14.7 percent in 2019.

The execution rates among the programs goes from 100 percent for social insurance to 98 -99 percent for social care and 76 – 90 percent for social inclusion program. This is the program with the lowest rate of execution.

Local government units spend part of their revenues for social protection services, but there is no data about their annual budget or MTBP document. Local government units should plan at the beginning of the year based on the needs or the trend of their revenues.

Spending per child in social protection sector is difficult to be defined. The only element that is clearly identified is the indicator for children receiving social care. Spending on vulnerable groups is mainly part of the budget of Social Care budgetary program.

Improving the linkage between social protection performance indicators and fund allocation would be important in increasing efficiency in budgeting.

Share of the families getting social assistance is higher is for families with 4 members and for families with 5 members. The share of families with 4 members to the total number of families getting social assistance for the period 2015 – 2017 was 30 percent, increasing to 35 percent in 2018.

ABBREVIATIONS

ALL	Albanian Lek
CHIF	Compulsory Health Insurance Fund
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	European Institute of Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics of Albania
MTBP	Medium Term Budget Program
MoFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
NE	Ndihma Ekonomike (Social assistance)
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAK	Disability and special needs persons
PFM	Public Finance Management
USD	United States Dollar



INTRODUCTION AND CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

The social protection system comprises the support to various vulnerable and population groups. The provision of social protection in Albania is a shared responsibility of the central and local government institutions. The sector includes the Services of Social Care, the Social Insurance Institute, the Social Care budget program of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Social Insurance program of the Ministry of Finance and Economy. Social protection covers Unemployment Allowance, Economic Assistance, Urban and Rural Pensions in the Social Security Scheme, payments for disabled people, support of the vulnerable groups etc.

The social protection sector has been under constant reforms undertaken recently, most notably in the pensions, non-contributory social protection programs, social assistance and disability benefits. The social assistance (NE) system was reformed by introducing a new methodology for calculating the eligibility for the individuals/families.

1.1 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS AND PFM DEVELOPMENTS

Ministry of Health and Social Protection

MoHSP is the main central government institution responsible for the formulation and the implementation of the social protection policy in Albania, as well as for financing a considerable number of social protection services. The Ministry's mandate has often been redesigned and its social protection functions are under the current structure, merged with the health functions.

Ministry of Finance and Economy

In addition of the main responsibility for managing the public finance and government's budget management, MoFE is also responsible for managing the budgetary program of Social Insurance that provides payment to various categories of the Albanian population.

State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights

The Agency is the main executive body for monitoring and protecting children's rights. It is a subordinate agency under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in charge with monitoring the implementation of the national strategy and legislation on protection and children's rights.

State Social Service

The State Social Service, under the responsibility of the MoHSP, is a government institution in charge to implement policies, legislation on economic assistance, support for people with disabilities and social services throughout the country through the 29 Social Care Institutions, the 12 Regional Directorates, and coordination of the State Social Service with the 61 local government units.

The Local Government Units (municipalities)

Following the territorial reform of 2015, some functions in the sectors of education, health and social protection were transferred or delegated to the municipalities from the central government¹. The law 139/2015 'On the local government', through the article 24 defines the responsibilities of local government which include:

- Creation and administration of local social services, for groups in need, disabled persons, children, women, women head of family, battered women, victims of trafficking, mothers or parents with many children, the elderly, etc., as provided by law.
- Construction and administration of housing for social housing.
- Construction and administration of centers to offer local social services.
- Creation, in collaboration with responsible ministry for social welfare, of social fund for financing of services

Recent PFM developments

The PFM since the early 2000s has been undergoing a series of reforms aiming to improve capacities in charge with the state budget formulation and implementation. Albania has enabled a thorough analysis of the goals and objectives in different sectors of the economy. Since 2017, Albania is implementing changes in the Medium-Term Budget Program (MTBP) process directly related to inclusion of performance indicators in the MTBP on outcome and target level.

The new methodology 'Program and Performance based Budgeting' aims to provide a clearer link between the funds allocated to the different sectors with the objectives and policy goals in these sectors. A feature of the MTBP improved methodology is the implementation of the baseline budgeting approach². Since 2018, the Standard Budget Preparation Guidelines issued by MoFE³, introduce an improved and distinct separation of institutional responsibilities in the strategic and technical phase of the budget preparation, which applies also to the preparation of the social protection budget.

1.2 MACROECONOMIC SITUATION

During the recent years Albania has experienced a modest positive economic growth. The real growth rates since 2016 amounted between 3 and 4 percent per year. The GDP per capita, adjusted by purchasing power parity, was slightly under 14,000 USD in 2019, or 31.3 percent of the EU-28 average.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought a severe negative impact on the economy as the GDP is estimated to shrink by 8 percent, with unemployment and poverty levels raising at concerning

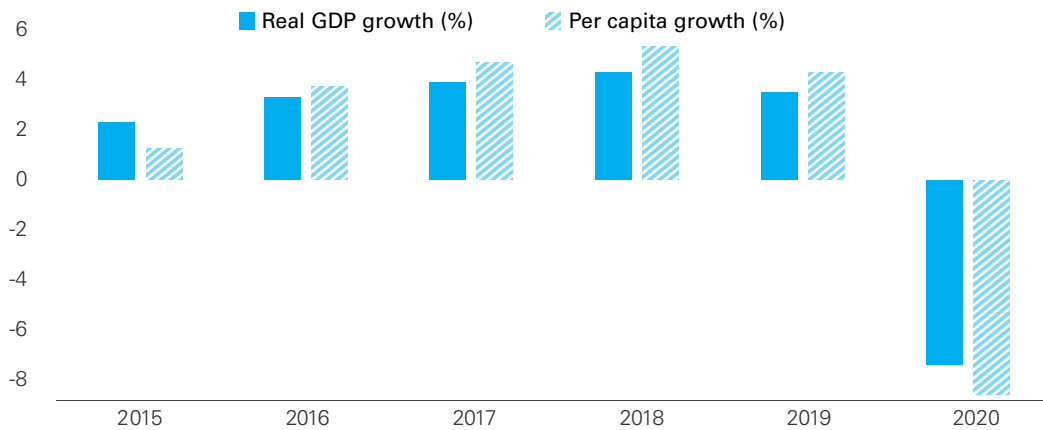
1 Law no. 139/2015 'On Local Government', chapter 7, article 23

2 The general principle is that the baseline represents only the costs to implement policies and programs already approved and which is anchored in the regulatory framework. New spending initiatives refer to the additional costs arising from the introduction of new services, improvement of existing services or increase in outputs.

3 Released each year before Technical phase of budget preparation

rates. The government was forced to revise four times the budget during 2020 to reflect declining revenues due to Covid-19 pandemic on economic activity, and the social protection and business support extraordinary packages introduced during the year to mitigate the negative health, social and economic impact in Albania. As a result, the social protection budget (MoHSP) for 2020 slightly increased to 24 billion ALL from the the initial budget.

FIGURE 1.1 Real GDP growth, real GDP per capita growth

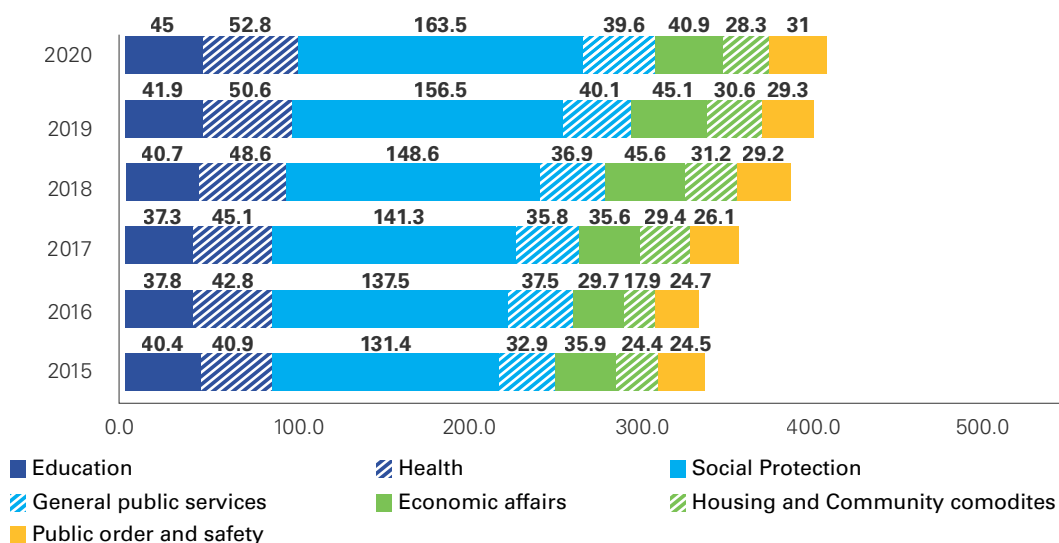


Source: INSTAT (2020), IMF, own calculations

1.3 DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SECTOR

The Social Protection is the largest component of the public expenditure in Albania, accounting for about 40 percent of the government budget, while the health and education sector respectively receive about 13 and 9 percent of the budget.

FIGURE 1.2 Trend of public expenditure during 2015 – 2020 (Billion ALL)

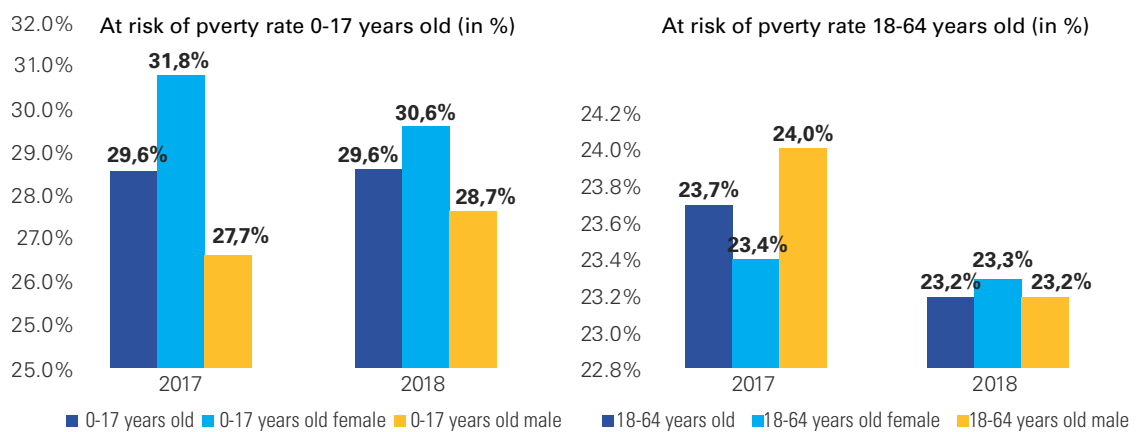


Source: MoFE, Annual Budget 2015 - 2020 (Table 6 – Spending according government functions),

The analysis in this section on social protection will be based on the children related indicators. Whenever the social protection policy is considered, poverty is the most critical concern factor and it becomes even more relevant in the children context. Unfortunately, there are no official statistics on the poverty headcount since 2012 and the latest results of the Income and Living Standards Survey, which shed light on the poverty indicators related to at-risk of poverty, shown in the following chart, indicate that over the period 2017-2018 there is a slight improvement of the at-risk-of-poverty indicator on the national scale by about 1 percent, with no significant change among the children.

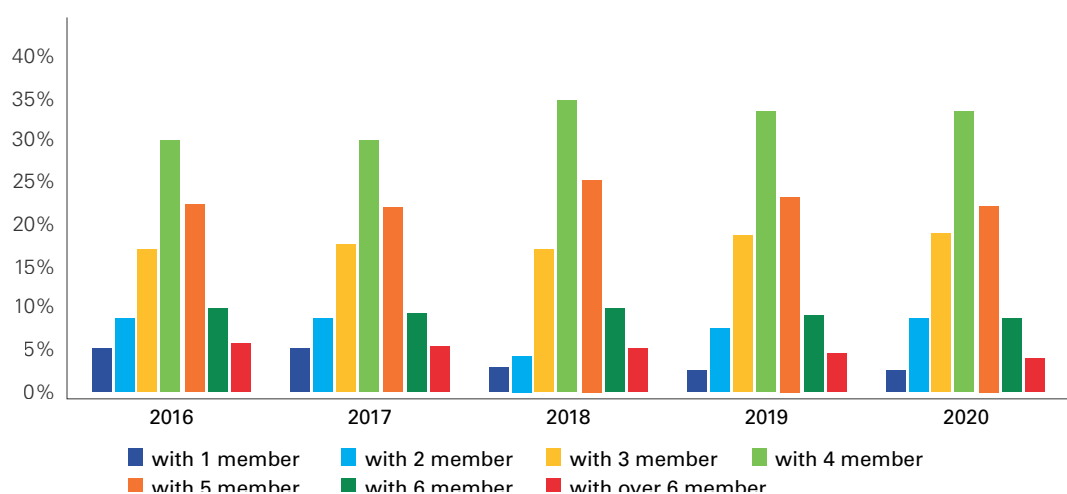
However, the data suggests that in absolute terms, the risk of poverty is particularly high among children – about 30 percent on a national scale. This indicator is higher than in the adult population, and as it might be observed in the charts, even higher among the girls, which leads to the need of addressing the poverty concerns among the children and girls through the right policies and mechanisms in place.

FIGURE 1.3: At risk of poverty rate data



Source: Survey of Income and Living Standards 2017-2018

The social assistance support includes cash allowances, disability payments, babies bonus and personal mentor for disabled persons. Data from INSTAT reveal the trend of persons receiving economic support as per following:

FIGURE 1.4: Average number of families receiving social assistance payments

Source INSTAT <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/social-condition/social-protection/#tab2>

The most common family configuration receiving support is composed by 4 family members, which are typically families with children younger than 18 years. The share of these families to the total number of families receiving social assistance for the period 2015 – 2017 was 30 percent and increased to 35 percent in 2018, while the share of families with 5 members increased from 22 percent in 2017 to 25 percent in 2018. According to World Bank data for Albania, some indicators about coverage and benefits incidence of the social protection programs through different quintiles of the population are presented in the following table. Although the information provided in this table is outdated (2012), it is useful to depict the structure of the social assistance support by the quintiles of the population.

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total	8.2%	8.3%	8.6%	9.2%	9.2%	9.1%	9.4%	9.3%
Old age	5.2%	5.4%	5.5%	5.8%	5.9%	6.1%	6.4%	6.4%
Illness/ disability	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.8%	2.0%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%
Means tested	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Survivors	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Maternity/ child benefit	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Unemployment	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Social care services	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Social n.e.c.	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Administration	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%

Source: Ymeri, S. 2019. *ESPN Thematic Report on financing social protection: Albania*, European Social Policy Network

Adequacy of benefits for social insurance for the first quintile is higher than the other quintiles mostly because the total welfare of this group is lower than the others. If we refer to the coverage of this program, it is mainly at the same level through all the quintiles. The beneficiary

incidence of the poorest quintile is 21.1 percent and of the richest quintile (fifth quintile) is 19.1 percent. The social assistance program has a different distribution among the quintiles. The coverage varies from 27.7 percent on the first quintile, to 22.8 percent on the second and 19.8 percent on the third quintile. The adequacy of benefits for social assistance in the first quintile is lower than that of cash transfer for the same group.

The provision of the social care and social protection services is organized through a network of public institutions operating across the country, as summarized in the following table:

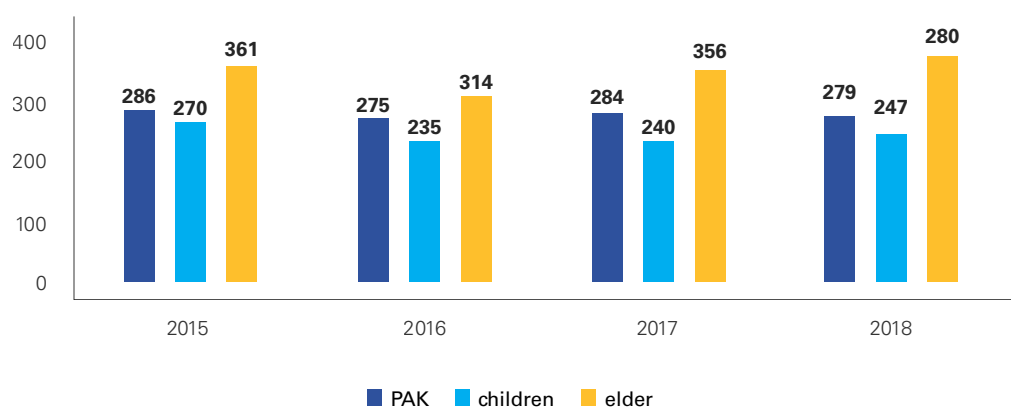
TABLE 3: Public Institutions offering social services to all categories of population

Type of institution	No
Social Care Public Institutions	29
Residential Public Institutions	25
Orphanage Institutions for children 0-5 years (Tiranë, Korçë, Shkodër, Vlorë, Durrës)	5
Orphanage Institutions for children 16-18 years (Shkodër)	1
Orphanage Institutions for children 6-15 years (Tiranë, Shkodër, Sarandë)	3
Institutions for Elderly (Tiranë, Kavajë, Gjirokastrë, Shkodër, Fier, Poliçan)	6
Residential Development Centers (Tiranë, Durrës, Korçë, Vlorë, Berat, Shkodër)	6
Public Daily Centers PAK (Lezhë, Korçë)	2
Elderly Public Daily Centers (Kamëz, Sarandë)	2
National Centre of Treatment of Domestic Violence Victims	1
Accommodation Centre for Victims of Trafficking	1
Elderly daily Centre, Kamëz	1
National Transitory Centre for groups in need	1

Source; <http://www.sherbimisocial.gov.al/raporte/>

From the above institutions, 74 (out of 83) provide services to children and their activity is complemented by 18 Non Public Residential Centers for children⁴. The number of children in 28 day care, social, and residential institutions is shown in the following chart:

FIGURE 1.5: Beneficiaries in 28 day care, social, residential and day care institutions



Source: Report 2018 – Sherbimi Social Shtetëror

4 <http://www.sherbimisocial.gov.al/qendra-zhvillimi/>

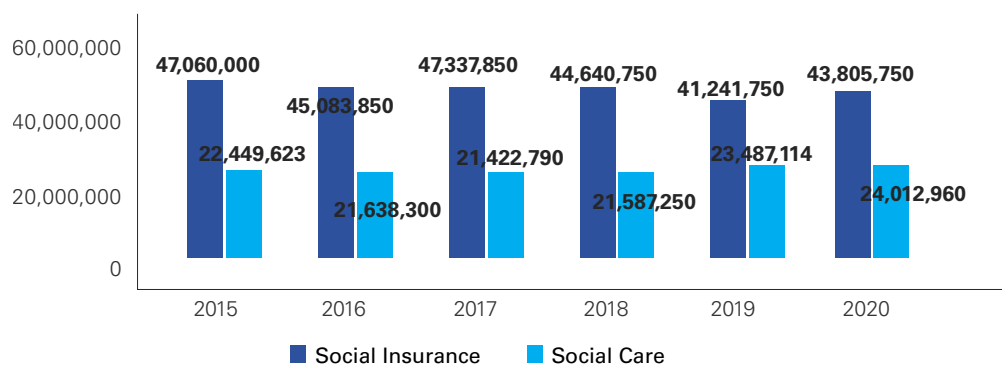
2 COMPOSITION OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION EXPENDITURE

2.1 EXPENDITURE ALLOCATIONS BY THE MAIN PROGRAMS

The social Protection Budget is allocated within three main programs: Social Insurance, Social Care and Social Inclusion. The Social Insurance budget during the period 2015 – 2020 has fluctuated with a decline in 2016 and 2018, followed by an increasing trend over the next year until 2020. The budget for Social Care spending during 2015 - 2020 was more stable. Both programs as a share of social protection budget are declining with the social insurance trend on a more rapid decline. In 2015 the social insurance program accounted for 35.8 percent of the social protection budget and in 2020 this program accounts for 26.3 percent of the respective budget. The social care program represents 15.6 percent of the social protection budget in 2016, down to 14.7 percent of the same budget in 2020.

The third program, social inclusion, has a much lower share on the social protection budget, accounting for just 0.1 percent of this budget in 2018. Since 2019, the social inclusion program is integrated in the social care program.

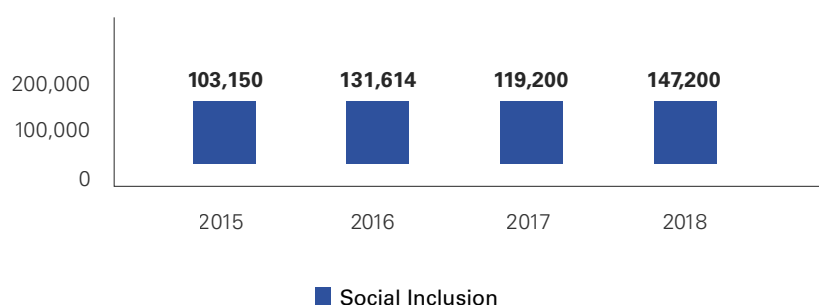
FIGURE 2.1 The trend of spending in Social Insurance and Social Care Programs for the period 2015 – 2020 (in 000/All)



Source: MoFE, Annual Budget 2015 – 2020, (Table 1 – Institutions with programs),

As depicted by the charts above, the budget of the programs does not show a clear trend and this could be explained also by the lack of appropriate long term planning.

FIGURE 2.2 The trend of spending in Social Inclusion Program for the period 2015 – 2018 (in 000/ALL)



MoFE, Annual Budget 2015 – 2018, (Table 1 – Institutions with programs),

2.2 COMPOSITION OF SPENDING BY OUTPUTS FOR CHILDREN

The two most important components of Social Protection sector are: (i) Social Assistance Scheme and (ii) Support to disabled persons and in special need groups. The Social Assistance Scheme is the main pillar of the social protection program that aims to alleviate poverty by providing payments and support to families and individuals most in need, to take out of poverty and to find opportunities for social and economic reintegration. Within this budget program it is rather impossible to identify clear outputs dedicated for children. For this reason, in the analysis of this program are considered outputs related also to the children. The main outputs identified in Social Care budgetary program are listed in the table below.

Identified children related outputs for Social Care budgetary program (000 ALL)

Sub- Program Social Care									
2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
Output name	Budget	Output name	Budget	Output name	Budget	Output name	Budget	Output name	Budget
children benefiting social care institutions services no. of children= 345	195.400	children benefiting social care institutions services no. of children= 370	199.553	children benefiting social care institutions services no. of children= 350	181,112				
social assistance benefiting families no. of beneficiaries = 80.000	4.493.762	social assistance benefiting families no. of beneficiaries = 79.000	4.600.000	social assistance benefiting families and individuals no. of beneficiaries = 70.000	4.700.000	social assistance benefiting families and individuals no. of beneficiaries = 70.000	4.700.000	social assistance benefiting families and individuals no. of beneficiaries = 70.000	4.650.000
		Persons treated in Emergency Transitory Centre no. of persons=250	172,000	Females and children treated in Emergency Transitory Centre no. of persons = 250	21,548,000			Baby Cheque (bonus) No. of beneficiaries = 30.000	1,913,755
Total	4,689,162		4,816,753		4,902,660		4,700,00		6,563,755

Sub- Program Social Care									
2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
Output name	Budget	Output name	Budget	Output name	Budget	Output name	Budget	Output name	Budget
Social Inclusion Policy Document	2,900	Society awareness against Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence no=3	13,200	Strengthened mechanism againsts domestic violence no= 4	9,770				
Evalutation Report of Imolemen-tation of Action Plan for Children 2012-2015	6,420	National Agenda for Children Rights Protection 2016- 2020 no. of docu-ment =5	39,089	Strengthened mechanisms for the rights and protection of children rights no. of mecha-nisms =5	12,600	Monitoring report of children protection no=1	127,200	Monitoring report of children protection no=1	12,000
National Plan for Roma and Egyptians	22,350	Implemen-tation of National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians no. of report=1	3,190	Drafted Annual Report of im-plementation of National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian no. of reporting/ meetings=3	8,870				
Total	31,670		55,479		31,240		127,200		12,000
Total for "Social Care" program	4,720,832		4,872,232		4,933,900		4,827,200		6,575,755

Source: MTBP documents of MoHSP for the period 2015 - 2020

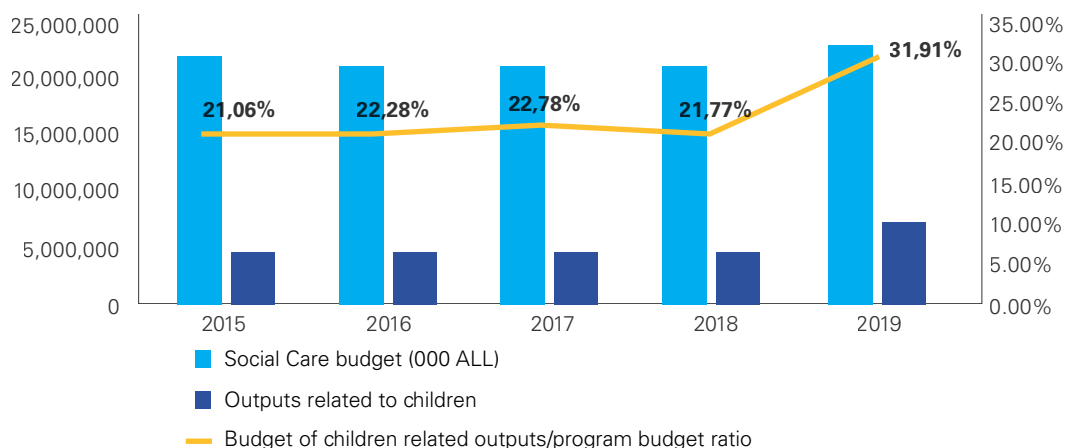
The Social Care sub-program

This subprogram comprises budget expenditure for social care in the country and it is directed to a larger population sample with children included. The performance indicators in this sub-program⁵ reflect the performance of the sup-program over time as shown in the following chart. The budget of the outputs directly related to children amounts to 32 percent of the budget program, up from 22 percent in 2018 due to the introduction of the output 'Babies check' as a new policy of the government with about 30,000 beneficiaries and a cost of 1,9 billion ALL.

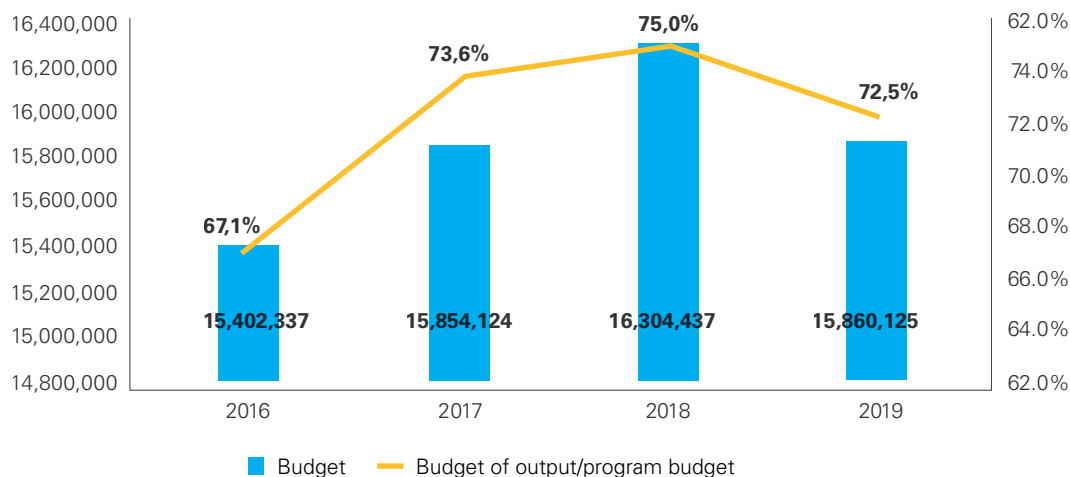
Although it appears very challenging to link the 'People with disabilities (PAK) and their mentors' component with the impact on children (not identified as one of the children related outputs), it is important to assess the budget allocation for this component, which accounts for a significant share of the program's budget.

Although the number of beneficiaries for this component increased from 156,396 in 2016 to 165,233 in 2019, the total budget and the share of the budget of the output to the budget of

5 The performance indicators of the sub- program include: % of poor recipients receiving NE over total applicants; % of female-headed households receiving NE over total female-headed applicants; % of people with disabilities who are commissioned through information management system; Reintegrated women and girls in need after treatment in social care institutions, and number of children receiving social services from residential and day care centers

FIGURE 2.3: Social Care program Budget – children related outputs budget

Source: MTBP documents 2015 – 2019, Ministry of Finance

FIGURE 2.4: Nominal value (in 000 ALL) and share of output budget PAK to the budget of the program

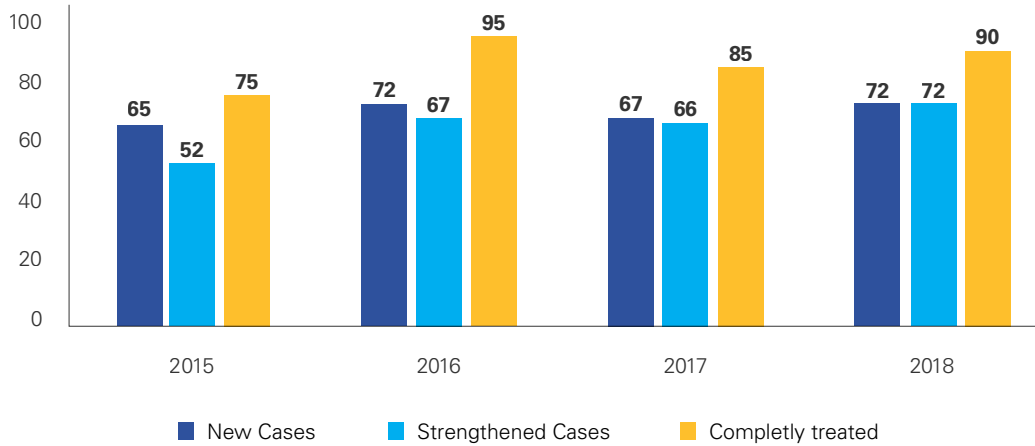
Source: MoHSP Annual Budget 2015 – 2019, Monitoring reports (2016 – 2019)

the program is fluctuating. The nominal value decreased in by 2.7 percent 2019 and the share of the output budget to the budget of the program decreased by 2.5 percent.

The Social Inclusion sub-program

The main objective of the social inclusion sub-program is '*Equal social and economic inclusion of men and women, children and marginalized groups*', and monitored by the performance indicators: *Cases dealt with immediate protection order / Reported cases of domestic violence; Reports designed to monitor the social inclusion data system*. None of these performance indicators has a direct link to child policies. A link can be found to the violence indicator shown in the following chart:

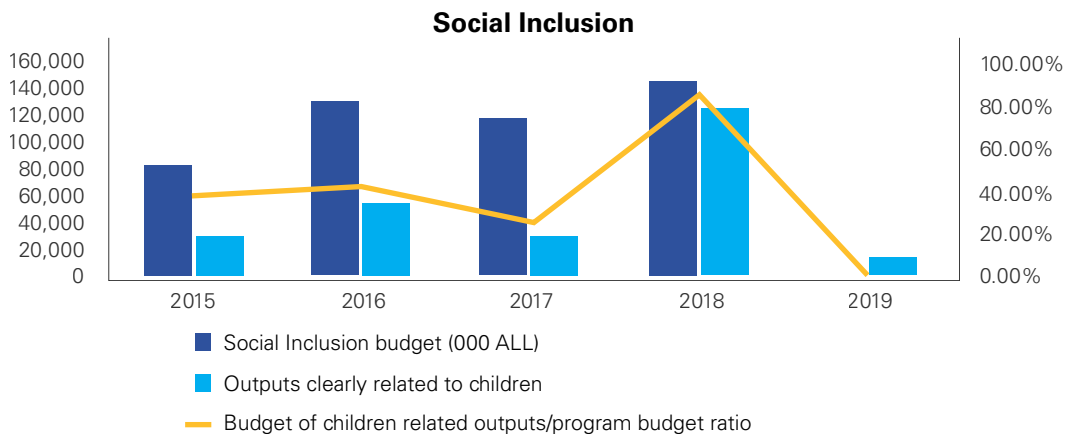
FIGURE 2.5: Domestic violence victims treated in QKTVDH



Source: Raport 2018 – Sherbimi Social Shteteror, Janar 2018

Very few outputs of this component are related to children, as identified by the analysis of the MTBP documents for the period 2015 – 2019. The following chart shows the budget performance of the sub-program during the period 2015-2019.

FIGURE 2.6: Budget of sub-program Social Inclusion – children related outputs budget



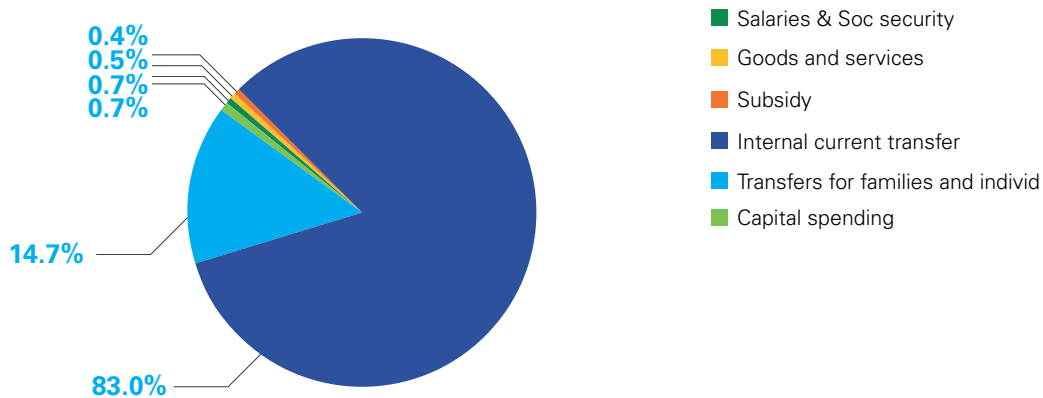
Source: MTBP documents 2015 – 2019, Ministry of Finance and Economy

2.3 COMPOSITION BY EXPENDITURE TYPE (CURRENT AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE)

Social protection internal current transfers account for about 83 percent of the annual social protection budget while the direct (cash) transfers for families and individuals for 14.7 percent of the budget, reflecting the concentration of the public expenditure on the two main components of the social protection – direct transfers and the cost of the public institutions providing social care services in the country.

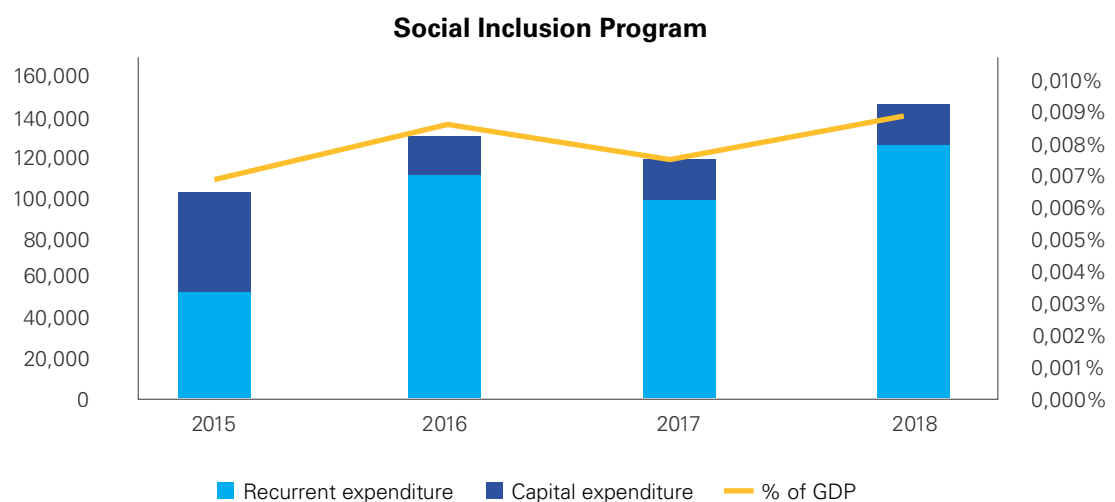
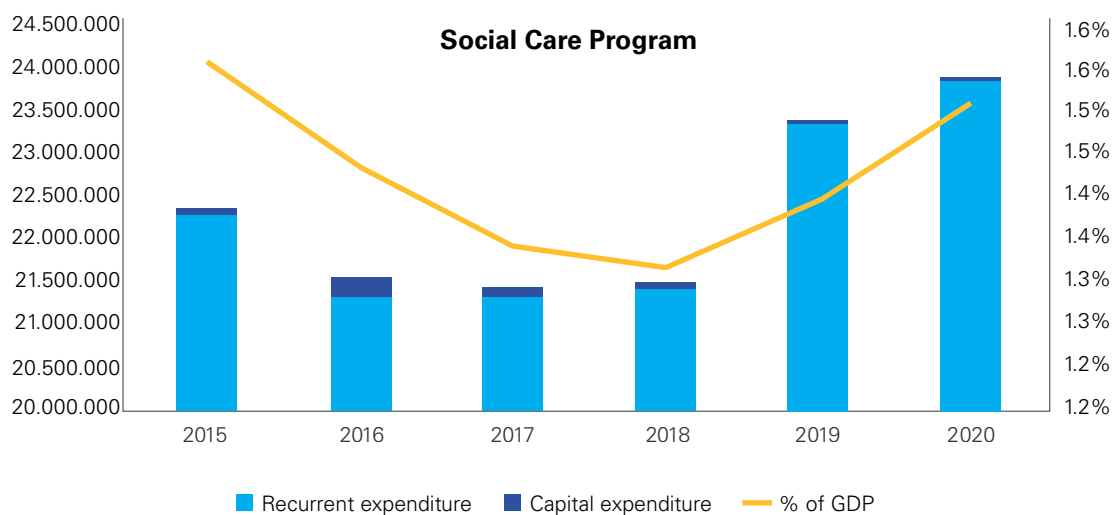
The current expenditure accounts for the bulk of the social protection budget. More than 90 percent of the Social Care budget is composed by current expenditure while the capital expenditure is slightly higher in the Social Inclusion budget due to the support of donor-financed activities in this program.

FIGURE 2.7 Composition of spending on social protection sector for 2020



Source: MoFE, Annual Budget 2019 (Table 6 – Spending according government functions),

FIGURE 2.8: Current vs. Capital Expenditure by program (000 ALL)

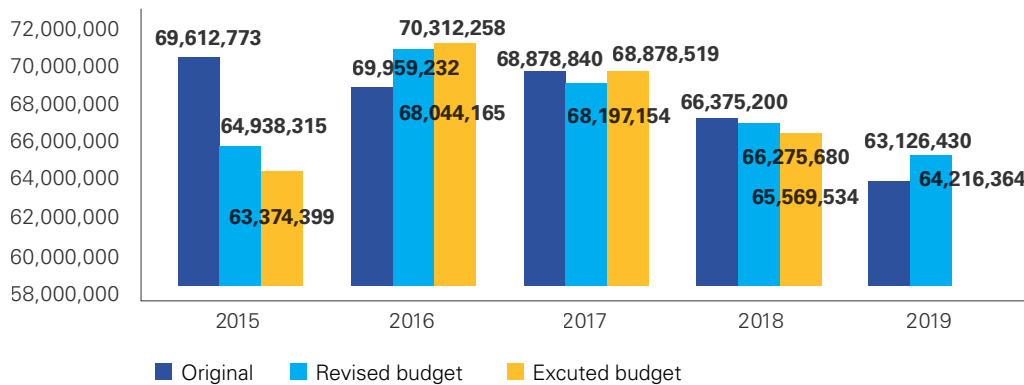


Source: Annual Budget 2015 - 2020

3 BUDGET CREDIBILITY AND EXECUTION

Differences between the approved budget at the end of the previous year, with the revised budget(s) and the executed budget, reveal the credibility dimension of the budget, an important factor for the sustainability of the budgets and the adequacy of the planning processes in place⁶. The chart 3.1 shows the original social protection programs budget (as approved by the government/parliament), along with the modifications of the budget during the current year and the final budget as executed by the implementing institutions.

FIGURE 3.1 The differences between original, revised and executed budget of the three social protection programs (in 000/ ALL)

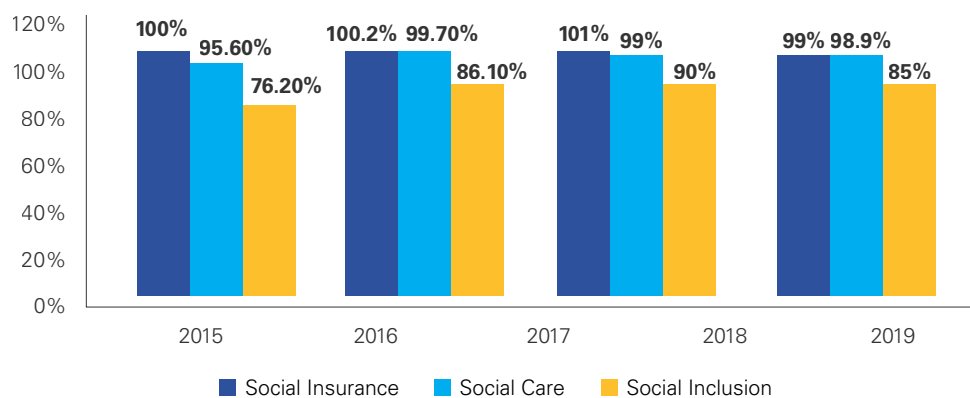


Source: MoFE, Annual Budget 2015 – 2019 (Table 4 – Fiscal Indicators, Consolidated budget, Normative Act (2015 – 2019))

6 The differences between the adopted, revised and executed budgets reflect the credibility of the budget formulation and implementation which are affected by various factors. These differences are often significant across different sectors in the Albanian budget and the assessment of the differences and the analysis of the underlying factors, support policy makers to address these challenges in the future

As acknowledged by the PEFA reports, since 2016 there has been a considerable improvement in terms of budget credibility and implementation for the social protection programs. However, the fluctuations in budgets over different years may lead to potential lack of consistency in expenditure planning which requires further improvements for the future.

FIGURE 3.2 The execution budget rates for social insurance, social care and social inclusion programs 2015 - 2018



Source: MoFE and MoHSP Budget 2015 – 2019, Monitoring reports (2015 – 2018)



KEY POLICY ISSUES

- The strategic framework for the social protection budget formulation and execution comprises several important strategic documents such as “The Social Protection Strategy 2014 – 2020”, “The Children’s Agenda 2017-2020”, “The Skills and Employment Strategy 2017 – 2021”, “The National Agenda for Children Rights” etc. with specific objectives and performance indicators directly related to children’s social protection. Some of these indicators have also been used during the MTBP process, but careful planning is required to identify all the important elements and to link these indicators with the outputs and spending.

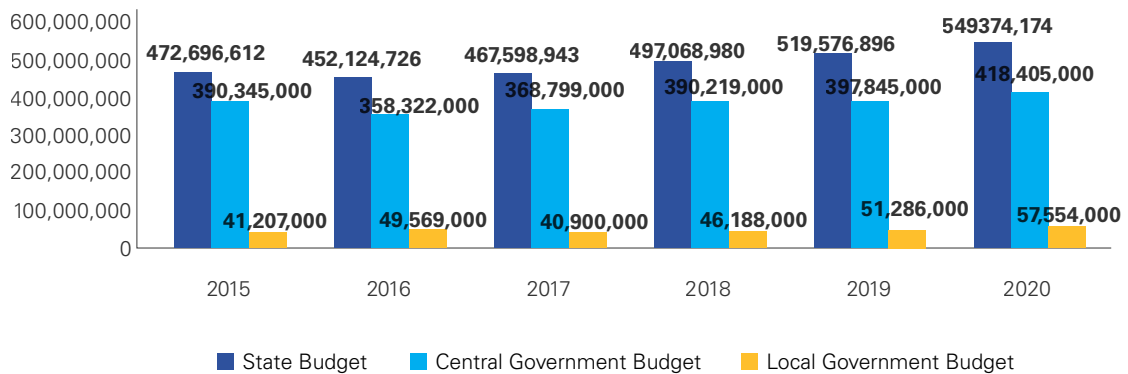
On the MTBP documents:

- The utilization of performance indicators, as a recent trend in budgeting, is not always and clearly linked to the specific objectives. The budget programs of Social Care (and Social Insurance) lack the key performance indicators at the goal level, posing challenges in monitoring and implementing the long term policy.
- At the level of objective, the EMP identifies the performance indicator ‘**No. of children that benefit from social services offered in daily and residential centers**’ but the target is not defined and the trend is decreasing;
- At the level of output, PMT should continue to identify and cost outputs related to children.

On Decentralization

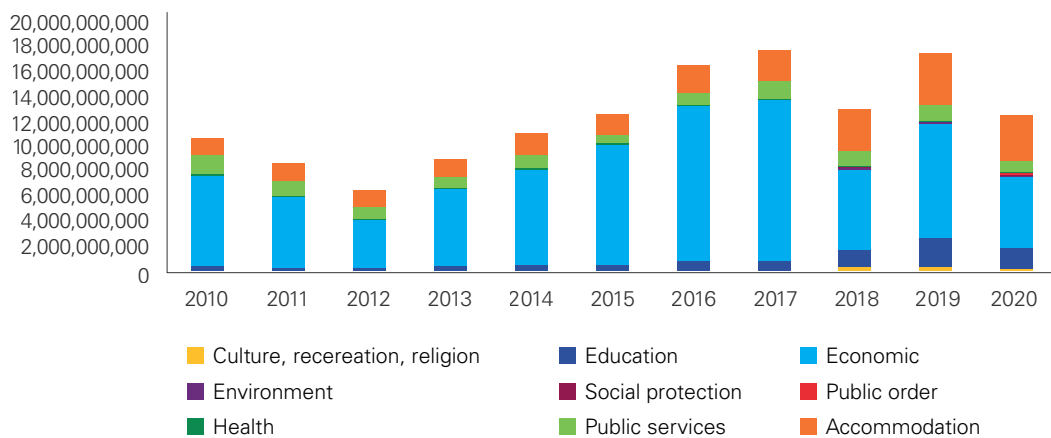
With the Territorial and Administrative Reform in 2015, 61 local government units (municipalities) and 12 regions were created in Albania while the Law no. 139/2015 ‘On Local Government’ defines the rights and responsibilities of the municipalities. Article 15 and 16 of this law emphasize the importance of transparency of the activity of the local self-government units as well as public consultation in the local self-government units.

The budgeting process, at the central level, is composed by two phases, strategic and technical. Upon the territorial reform implementation, the sources of local government financing have diversified. The following chart provides an overview of the local government budget and its comparison with the government budget and the state budget.

FIGURE 4.1 Trend of Budget (in 000 ALL)

Source: Annual Budget Laws 2015 - 2020

The graph above shows the increasing trend of the local government budget which has increased over the recent decade. One of the factors is the growth of own revenues used to provide traditional services, but also to provide services such as social protection or other delegated functions.

FIGURE 4.2: Expenditure with own funds by functional classification

Source: Financat Publike Vendore 2020

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