

Phase II **KEY  
ACHIEVEMENTS**

2019-2023





# Key Achievements

Phase II

2019-2023

## Health For All Project (HAP)

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## 01. QUICK FACTS

## PROJECT NAME

**Health for All Project (HAP)**

## FOCUS AREA

**Primary Healthcare**

## PHASES

**3-Phase Project:** 2015-2019 | 2019-2023 | [2023-2026](#)

## PHASE II OBJECTIVE

The Albanian population benefits from better health thanks to improved primary health care services with two main outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** MoHSP and its regional entities improve the stewardship, management and effectiveness of primary health care services.

**Outcome 2:** Citizens in target regions have access and use effectively primary health care services of better quality.

## PHASE II TIME FRAME

**April 2019 – March 2023**

## IMPACTED REGIONS

**Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Berat, Korçë, Shkodër, Dibër**

## DONOR

**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation**

## IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

**Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute**

## PARTNERS

### **National**

- Ministry of Health and Social Protection & affiliated entities
- Faculty of Medicine
- Faculty of Technical Medical Sciences
- Faculty of Economy
- Local Government Units
- Local NGOs

### **International**

- World Health Organisation
- World Bank funded Health System
- Improvement Projects



Përdorimi i Pajisjeve Mjekësore  
në Kunder të Vizitës Mjekësore

## 02. PROJECT BACKGROUND



The Health for All Project (HAP) is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation that is being implemented in Albania since 2015 with the aim of improving primary healthcare services for the Albanian population as a whole and vulnerable groups in particular.

Albania has demonstrated encouraging developments in recent years, underscored by notable economic growth. However, the healthcare sector is concurrently grappling with a wide spectrum of challenges. There appears to be inadequate consideration of the effects of demographic shifts and the escalating burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes and hypertension. A significant portion of the population, particularly those residing in rural areas, encounters limited access to Primary Health Care (PHC) services due to a subpar quality of care, insufficient availability, and financial constraints in some instances. Furthermore, the development of home-based care is embryonic, and the role of nurses in addressing NCDs is inadequately defined. These trends are exacerbated by the prevalent migration of healthcare professionals from rural to urban areas and from Albania to Western Europe - all of which contribute to insufficient healthcare coverage and geographical imbalances in the distribution of the healthcare workforce.

During Phase One (2015-2019), HAP made a significant contribution to the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for the Dibër and Fier regions, significantly influencing patient satisfaction with these services. The project continuously supported the capacity building of healthcare centre management teams through training programs and continuing education, as well as study visits abroad. In addition, large investments in rehabilitating infrastructure and equipping family medicine teams with necessary medical tools have elevated the quality of primary healthcare services offered to the population in these two regions.

In Phase Two (2019-2023), HAP continued collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and other stakeholders to extend the Project's interventions to six additional regions: Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Berat, Korça, and Shkodër. HAP supported the development of important strategic documents with a focus on the development of primary healthcare services in Albania, including important aspects of human resources development and healthcare reform. New study programs, continuous medical education for family teams, updated and new profiles within primary healthcare, as well as the introduction of new services such as home healthcare, were an important part of the Project's contribution to enhancing the quality of services provided by primary healthcare centres in the country.



**03. 2015-2019  
PHASE I  
SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS**



## IMPACT ON PRIMARY HEALTH CARE QUALITY AND ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

- 20-30% increase in the quality of care in Dibër and Fier as doctors have improved their adherence to standardised procedures and protocols for NCD screening.
- 89-95% satisfied or very satisfied patients with health services in both regions.



## ASSISTANCE FOR POLICIES AND STRATEGIES AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

- HAP contributed to the elaboration and dissemination of the National Action Plan of Health Promotion 2017-2021.
- HAP provided technical support for the elaboration of the National Strategy for the reform of PHC in Albania, a process launched by MoHSP.



## ENHANCING CAPACITIES OF PHC MANAGEMENT TEAMS AND BEYOND

- 80 HC managers and 97 head nurses attended managerial training modules on Albanian legislation, HR management, leadership & communication etc.
- 80 Albanian PHC health managers and providers attended study visits abroad on the organisation and functioning of PHC services.
- A new Master's program in Health Management has been established for the first time and is being offered by the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Economics of the University of Tirana.



## STRENGTHENING CLINICAL SKILLS OF PHC TEAMS

Peer Groups as an innovative tool for Continuing Medical Education were introduced to PHC providers in Dibër and Fier leading to an improvement of 20% and 22% in how family doctors provide advice to diabetic and hypertension patients respectively.



## IMPROVEMENT OF PHC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPLY OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

- 316,150 inhabitants are benefiting from improved healthcare service thanks to the rehabilitation of 17 health centres and one polyclinic of specialties (5 in Dibër; 10 in Fier, 2 in Tirana).
- 223 family doctors were equipped with the doctor's bag and trained on the use of the 17 medical tools.
- 1,181 family nurses were equipped with a nurse bag containing 16 basic medical instruments and trained on their use.



## FOSTERING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO PHC

- Anti-corruption units were set up at 6 Directorates of Public Health.
- 6,465 community members attended the 182 citizen information sessions organized to increase community awareness of patients' rights, responsibilities and new initiatives introduced by MoHSP and other health institutions.

activities for Year 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020  
Summary of activities

... of PHC and  
... in Albania is  
... approach  
... and socio and  
... PHC Strategy in  
... CHH in Albania



MAP

... projects

04. 2019-2023  
PHASE II  
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

# SUPPORT FOR THE ELABORATION OF NATIONAL HEALTHCARE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN ALBANIA

HAP supported the elaboration, approval, and implementation of the **Strategy of Primary Health Care 2021-2025**, approved by the Council of Ministers on May 20, 2020. HAP contributed to the:

- elaboration and piloting of the new model(s) of home care for home-bound and elderly patients;
- revision and elaboration of up-to-date staff profiles necessary for sustainable PHC services;
- improvement of the quality of care through elaboration and support for implementation of clinical guidelines and protocols for the treatment of NCDs;
- elaboration and dissemination of the Manual for Management of Mental Health Disorders in PHC and the Manual for Treatment of Elderly Patients in PHC;
- elaboration and dissemination of the Manual of Clinical Audit.

The project contributed in the domain of **Human Resources for Health (HRH)** through different elements such as:

- elaboration of the HRH situation assessment in Albania, drafted with the technical support of HAP and approved by MoHSP in early 2020;
- a study on “work-time allocation patterns at Primary Health Care level in Albania”, completed in September 2020;
- elaboration and approval of the revised and new profiles and job descriptions for all categories of personnel operating in PHC;
- several specific studies focused on personnel satisfaction in PHC in urban and rural areas of Albania, published on the website of HAP in the form of technical/policy briefs.

## New organisation of PHC Centres approved by MoHSP



**Basic Health Centres**



**Health/Social Centres**



**24/7 Health Centres**



**Specialized Health Centres**

HAP will continue to provide inputs for the implementation of this new reconfiguration of PHC Centres.

# UPDATED JOB PROFILES OF PRIMARY HEALTHCARE PERSONNEL

HAP has revised and developed a package of **10** job descriptions/profiles including the core professions of the workforce operating in PHC. The package includes the following profiles:



**Health Centre  
Manager**



**Family  
Physician**



**Head  
Nurse**



**Social  
Worker**



**Physiotherapist**



**Nurse for Health  
Education and  
Check-Up**



**School  
Nurse**



**Family  
Nurse**



**Family  
Community  
Nurse**



**Home  
Care  
Nurse**

HAP has provided support to create enabling conditions for the implementation of the new nurse profiles in three directions:



**Nurses in selected health centres have been trained to perform the tasks and responsibilities contained in the revised and new profiles.**

**249** NURSES

**75** TRAINING SESSIONS

**21** HEALTH CENTRES

**1350** TRAINING HOURS

# NEW MASTER'S PROGRAM FOR FAMILY NURSES

HAP supported the development of a new Master's Program in Family Nursing following a formal request by the Faculty of Medicine and Technical Sciences. International and local expertise was mobilised to support the working group and a new curriculum was elaborated and approved. 27 students have participated in the two academic years, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.



## Improvement of Teaching Capacities

HAP has enabled the provision of higher teaching quality through new training on pedagogical and clinical skills in the simulation laboratory, as well as through practical internships in the workplace, thus investing in a new generation of nurses with advanced abilities. The training supported by HAP has been offered to lecturers of the Faculty of Medicine and Technical Sciences, to Master's program professors, clinical practice supervisors, and personnel of the clinical simulation laboratory, in the form of special training sessions, online programs, or as study tours in cooperation with the University of Basel in Switzerland and Leuven in Belgium.



## Improvement of the Clinical Internship Infrastructure

HAP improved the physical infrastructure of the new clinical practice laboratory at FMTS by supplying modern teaching equipment and material, elaborating guidelines for its management as well as a set of manuals for operating every single piece of equipment during the teaching process. An IT classroom was also fully renovated and supplied with the necessary furniture and technology.



## Improvement of Teaching Infrastructure

HAP supplied medical and nursing equipment to 10 urban health centres in Tirana where the master students carry out their clinical internship activities.

Thus, 295 physicians and 345 nurses operating in these facilities have been equipped and trained on the use of this new equipment.



# MASTER'S PROGRAM IN HEALTH MANAGEMENT

The master's program in health management has been provided for six consecutive years since 2017. Out of the 173 students formally registered, 99 students have successfully graduated up to 2022.



## Improvement of MHM Program Content

An external evaluation of MHM was carried out in 2020 with HAP's support and a series of recommendations were established. Consecutively, the faculties of Medicine (UoM) and Economy (UoT) successfully implemented the most important recommendations aiming to improve the program's quality and better adapt its content to the country's healthcare situation.



## Support for the Teaching Infrastructure

HAP supported the improvement of the teaching infrastructure at the Faculty of Economy, University of Tirana, which shares the responsibility for the master's program. One classroom of this department was supplied with IT equipment, desks and chairs for the students, as well as computers and projectors as necessary.



## Support for Master's Students

HAP supported the lecturers of the two faculties since the beginning of MHM to elaborate textbooks and compendia in Albanian, which were then printed and distributed for free to the 164 master students. Since the beginning of the program, every student of the master has received a set of 14 handbooks for the respective modules. Moreover, four students have been granted financial and technical support to conduct a problem-oriented master's thesis in close collaboration with health service organisations that operate in collaboration with HAP.

33%

graduates promoted  
to higher positions  
after graduation

52%

graduates  
holding managerial  
positions

79%

graduates saying  
MHM helped them  
perform daily work  
better

# CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT OF THE OPERATOR OF HEALTH SERVICES

HAP supported the elaboration of the **Strategic Planning** of the Central Directory of the Operator (CDO) that guides the organisational development as well as its decisions, actions, and activities.

## Support for Capacity Building of Operator's Personnel

### 14 participants



from four Regional Directories and the CDO attended a six-day training course that helped them produce standardised forms for collecting specific indicators at the level of PHC centres.

### 24 directors



of PHC, public health and statistic services from four RDO offices participated in a training workshop on the standardisation of health indicators' reporting forms.

### 6 professionals



from the Regional Directorate of Operator of Vlora attended the Lugano Summer School (LSS) courses in 2021.

## Support for Upscaling New PHC Services

### 40 professionals



representing LUHCs and health centres of Durrës, Elbasan, Korçë and Shkodër have joined 5 field visits in the health centres of Fier, which are implementing home care, NCD protocols, and the appointment system.

# OPERATIONAL RESEARCH CAPACITIES ON HEALTH SYSTEM AND SERVICES

HAP's support in strengthening research capacities on the health system and services has contributed to fostering critical thinking and reflection on health systems operations in Albanian resulting in more patient-centred, effective and efficient PHC services.

## Training program on research methods and practices

**67**

students, young researchers, and academic personnel successfully completed the training program on operational research in health.

## Support for operational research

**10**

micro-grants were offered to researchers successful at the end of an open competition to strengthen research capacities in health.

## Support for evidence-based information

**4**

studies and baseline & endline surveys on quality of life, quality of care, PHC access, work-time allocation patterns in PHC, and support for patient satisfaction data collection were supported.

## Presentation of evidence in national and international conferences and events

**3**

important scientific events were supported: the International Conference of Public Health of Albania (2021), International Nurses Conference of Albania (2022), Health Congress of Albania (2023).

## Increase of the capacities of the Ethics Committee for health-related research

HAP provided technical support for the revision of the regulatory frame related to the functioning of the Ethics Committee at the Medical University.



# QUALITY OF PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SERVICE DELIVERY

HAP's consistent efforts have significantly improved the quality of care delivered in primary healthcare centres. Here are some key accomplishments:

- **Elaboration and approval of clinical guidelines and protocols (CGPs)**

**March, 2022** Approval by MoHSP of CGPs for diabetes, hypertension, asthma, COPD, and dyslipidemia and the Manual of “*Medical Care for Elderly Patients in PHC*”. The clinical guidelines and protocols were elaborated with HAP's support.

**July, 2022** Approval by MoHSP of the Guide on “*Management of Mental Health Disorders in PHC*”, elaborated with HAP's support.

- **Support for the implementation of approved CGPs**

**80** **health centres** in Dibër and Fier received 5-day training-of-trainer (**ToTs**) courses for their physicians and nurses on the implementation of the new CGPs.

**77** **Peer Groups** with the participation of **319 family doctors** and **1,210 family nurses** were set up to extend training to the rest of the medical team.

- **Implementation of the appointment system in Patos & Klos**

**36 THOUSAND** **inhabitants** in the Patos and Klos HCs benefited from the appointment system whose design and implementation was made possible with HAP's support

- **Quality improvement for the accreditation of HCs**

**31** **quality teams** were set up with HAP's support to improve the quality of health services and achieve the accreditation standards of the Agency of Quality.

**30** **healthcare centres** in the Fier and Dibër region received accreditation in December 2022.



# NEW HOME CARE SERVICES

At the beginning of Phase II, HAP mobilised national and regional technical expertise, to develop possible models of Home-Based Care (HBC) for homebound patients and elderly living alone. Here's a timeline of developments:



## Piloting, implementing, monitoring & evaluating, upscaling HBC

### Training

92 nurses from piloting regions Dibër and Fier were intensively trained.

### May, 2021

Nurses of the 9 pilot HCs started offering home care services.

A **Monitoring & Evaluation Plan** for home care services was elaborated and implemented including a baseline evaluation to identify the “*Quality of Life and Access to Home Based Care services*”

### December, 2021

Approval of proposed pilot models of home care by MoHSP.

### 22

new health centres in 5 new regions were proposed by MoHSP to be included in home-based care. These patients started receiving visits in February 2023.

### 275

nurses and **19 specialists** from LUHCs in the new regions were trained on advanced nursing clinical skills/procedures.

### 907

patients were registered as upcoming beneficiaries of home care services.

### 317

out of the 907 identified patients received 748 visits by March 2023.



## Supply of medical, para-medical, and IT equipment

**31 HCs** have been supplied with the necessary medical and para-medical equipment for a smoother implementation of home care services.

**31 home care coordinators** have been supported with laptops and teaching equipment necessary to facilitate the activities of continuing education and peer groups.

# CONTINUING EDUCATION OF PHC PERSONNEL

HAP has successfully expanded its Continuing Medical Education initiatives beyond the initial two regions through the use of Peer Groups, which play a pivotal role in advancing healthcare education and services throughout the project's impact regions.



## CME Activity Upscale

HAP provided support for the extension of Peer Groups as a tool for continuing education for PHC providers beyond the two initial regions. A *“Guide for the establishment and operation of Peer Groups”* was elaborated and distributed online and in print.



## Use of Peer Groups

PGs are presently extensively used for the implementation of the protocols for the management of NCDs, the new home care services, implementation of new profiles of nurses in HCs and HPs, quality improvement for the accreditation of HCs, health care of elderly patients etc.



## Elaboration of Educational Materials

HAP elaborated and broadly disseminated clinical protocols and guidelines for the management of NCDs, the manual of health care for elderly people in PHC, the manual of standardised nursing procedures in PHC etc. that are very helpful in PG learning activities.



## Training Activities

**4,249 participants** attended CE activities organised in the framework of HAP:  
a) **2,192 participants** attended HAP supported training sessions for a total of 53,126 hours of training. b) **2,057 participants** attended 196 Peer Groups for a total of 40,050 hours of training. More than **50,000 credits** were granted to PHC providers.



Total number  
of professionals  
attending PGs



**487** **1523**  
YEAR I YEAR IV

## COLLABORATION ACROSS RELEVANT LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

HAP's planning for the rehabilitation of the infrastructure in collaboration with the municipalities and local health authorities as well as the ensuing infrastructural investments were key in increasing population coverage with essential services as well as improving the quality of care in the respective communities.



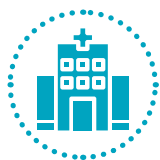
### Co-funding mechanism

HAP signed co-financing agreements with 5 municipalities for the rehabilitation of health facilities. The share of investment funds between HAP and LGUs was 70% versus 30%.



### Implementation of rehabilitation works

During Year 3 and 4, 12 health centres and health posts were rehabilitated by municipalities in close collaboration with HAP.



### Rebuilding of new health centres

3 PHC facilities - in Ishëm, Borizanë and Zall Mner - were built from scratch. Two of them were also furnished and equipped and have started to provide services since January 2022. The civil works in the third facility in Zall Mner were completed in March 2023.



**48,300**  
inhabitants

are receiving health services through the rehabilitated / rebuilt health facilities.



## SUPPORT FOR HEALTH SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

In response to the urgent needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, HAP's comprehensive approach and significant collaborative efforts markedly improved the readiness and capacity of healthcare providers, ultimately ensuring more effective care delivery.

### Support for the Purchase of Ventilators

17 ventilators supplied by HAP in the Covid hospitals contributed to saving the lives of patients during the dark days of the pandemic.



### Supply with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

640 PHC providers from 11 HCs in Tirana and Vora were provided with PPEs, pulse-oximeters and medical equipment and were better protected and equipped to provide health care to the patients of their respective areas.



### Portable Oxygen Concentrators

796,700 inhabitants in Tirana, Fier, and Dibër could benefit from enhanced and better-equipped PHC services and the 58 portable oxygen concentrators distributed by HAP in 23 HCs of these regions.



### Medical Team Training

55 health providers have been trained on how to use POCs and how to instruct patients at home on their use.





## 05. CONSOLIDATION PHASE GOALS

# 01

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The conception and elaboration of updated models of PHC are carried forward along the Strategy on Development of PHC services 2021–2025.

# 02

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Organisational development for effective and efficient operations of key affiliate institutions of MoHSP such as the Operator of Health Services and its Local Units of Health Care, the Agency of Quality, and the Health Insurance Fund, is carried forward.

# 03

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Elderly and geriatric care subject areas are adequately included in existing post-graduate training programs and training is provided to young professionals.

# 04

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The role and capacities of CSOs and media for advocacy as well as evidence generation and dissemination is fostered so as to improve health system governance and policy-making.

# 05

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Digital health solutions for PHC and improved quality of care are developed and implemented.

# 06

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The use of clinical guidelines and protocols for NCD control along peer groups is geographically scaled up.

# 07

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Home care services are implemented and rolled out.

# 08

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Specific vulnerable population groups (homebound patients, people affected by mental health disorders, lonely elderly, victims of domestic violence...) benefit from PHC services at large and from home-based services.

## 06. ACRONYMS

<b>CDO</b>	Central Directorate of the Operator of Health services
<b>CE</b>	Continuing Education
<b>CGP</b>	Clinical Guidelines and Protocols
<b>COPD</b>	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
<b>FMTS</b>	Faculty of Medical Technical Sciences
<b>FMTS</b>	Faculty of Medical Technical Sciences
<b>HAP</b>	Health for All Project
<b>HBC</b>	Home Based Care
<b>HC</b>	Health Centre
<b>HP</b>	Health Post
<b>HRH</b>	Human Resources for Health
<b>LGU</b>	Local Government Unit
<b>LSS</b>	Lugano Summer School
<b>LUHC</b>	Local Units of Health Care
<b>MHM</b>	Master in Health Management
<b>MoHSP</b>	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
<b>NCD</b>	Non-Communicable Diseases
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>PG</b>	Peer Groups
<b>PHC</b>	Primary Health Care
<b>POC</b>	Portable Oxygen Concentrators
<b>RDO</b>	Regional Directorates of the Operator of Health Services
<b>UoM</b>	University of Medicine
<b>UoT</b>	University of Tirana
<b>ToT</b>	Training of Trainers



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC**



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DHE MBROJTJES SOCIALE

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