**Press release**

 **“Hello…Life” social program starts in Dibra**

**The survey: 14.6 % of children 2-17 years old in Dibra Municipality result to have a disability**

**2 April** - World Vision Albania and Kosovo signed today a cooperation agreement with Dibra Municipality for the implementation of the social program “Hello…Life” (“Tungjatjeta…Jete”)

36 children with disabilities in the areas of Peshkopi, Maqellara, Tomin and Kastriot will receive specialized services in their houses.

The “Hello…Life” team, consisting of a social worker, a psychologist, a physiotherapist and a speech therapist, will develop and implement an Individual Development Plan based on the needs of the child and their families by providing specialized services.

According to the data of the Directorate of Social Services in Dibra, 4.2% of the total number of people with disabilities in Dibra Municipality are children. However, the survey of the disability prevalence showed that 14.6% of children 2-17 years old in Dibra Municipality result to have one disability.

Lack of centers offering specialized services, lack of financial opportunities and information or mentality, are some of the reasons why these children do not get the services they need. For this reason, Dibra is the second municipality in Albania to implement this intervention model and will include the “Hello…Life” team in its organizational chart.

**Eljona Boçe Elmazi, the National Director of World Vision in the Western Balkans said: “***Each municipality should include these local social plans in their annual budget. The local government should plan, budget and provide specialized services for children with disabilities. ”Hello…Life” is the first program and to date the only one in Albania to provide therapeutic assistance services at home for 72 children with disabilities in Librazhd and Dibra.”*

From the local plan for inclusion of people with disabilities, it resulted that in Dibra Municipality 2472 people with disability receive MCWCA financial aid, and 108 of them are children.

1 year ago, World Vision started implementing in Librazhd the social program for 36 children with disabilities in the remote areas of the country. Health improvements are evident for every child of the program. Arta has begun to walk, Selma can stay sit and Flamur can articulate a few short sentences.

"There is nothing more beautiful than seeing your child improving. I see that Selma is better physically and emotionally. I hope her improvement continues like this and one day to be able to walk…” – says Lindita, Selma’s mother.

The survey conducted by World Vision and Save the Children on the prevalence of disability, showed that 10.4% of children aged 2-17 years old face at least one high difficulty in performing one activity or fail to perform it at all. The study also showed that only 7.8% of children with disabilities in Albania have received services from social centers.

For further information, please contact:

Klodiana Kapo - Mob: +355672056944 E-mail: klodiana\_kapo@wvi.org

Vasilika Bargjo - Mob: +355682035068 E-mail: vasilika\_bargjo@wvi.org

Aimona Hotova Mob: +355693368017 E-mail: aimona\_hotova@wvi.org