



UN

Volunteers

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UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME IN ALBANIA



UNV ALBANIA NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2008 - JUNE 2009

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The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development.

Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation.

UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UNV volunteers, throughout the world.

UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity, as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS PROGRAMME IN ALBANIA

By Ingrid Charlotte Baken, UNV PO

I am the Programme Officer for United Nations Volunteers (UNV) in Albania. I am relatively new to the job but not to Albania or UNV which made my start quite smooth and pleasant. But real work started immediately with the visit of the acting UNDP Administrator Mr. Ad Melkert, the visit of Ms. Sezin Sinanoglu, Chief of UNV APEC section and International Roma Day on the 8th of April, which were all very successful. To all of you who have made these events a great success I would like to thank you for all your hard work and time.

Before I touch on the content of this attention-grabbing UNV newsletter, I would like to thank Fran Deans who was my predecessor and lead the programme in 2008. She has placed UNV firmly within the UN Country Team and strongly advocated for strengthening volunteerism nationally. Once again many thanks for the stimulating work she has done. I wish her all the success in Burundi where she is working now.

During 2008 several new initiatives started. We will focus in this newsletter on our contribution to the One UN Programme under the Empowering the Vulnerable Communities in Albania (EVC) joint programme and the Albanian Model UN project. Equally important are the visits of highly qualified consultants under the Cooperate Private Sector Scheme. We will also highlight several events connected to Volunteering for Development such as International Volunteer Day. Included is also a great article from one of the few Albanian International UNV Volunteers currently serving in Indonesia. We hope that she will stimulate more Albanians to apply for UNV as it is such a rewarding experience.

In addition, we will also hear from our *Volunteer of the Year* for 2008, Gavin David White. Working as an Information Officer with the UNRC, Gavin has made an outstanding contribution to the work of his host organization throughout the year. He also found the time to support the communications needs of the UNV Office in Albania; most notably through the creation of a new dedicated UNV in Albania website.

One of the ways UNV is support the One UN Programme in Albania is through the UNDP/UNV joint programme "*Empowering the Vulnerable Communities of Albania*". This two-year programme is implemented in Tirana, Elbasan and Fier and supports the Government of Albania in the implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Roma Living Conditions and its inclusion within the region wide Dec-

ade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015).

Another contribution is related to the Model UN project that supports high school students to learn about the different UN bodies and how they function. In Albania 15 high schools defined small-scale volunteer project in their community's with the support of UNV to promote the values of volunteerism and raise awareness of the benefits of civic engagement as a healthy source of effective development.

The Corporate Private Sector missions cover a range of diverse fields including support to tourism development, environmental protection, urban planning, and production methods. UNV continues to promote and place Cooperate Private Sector missions strategically across UN agencies, private business and other organizations.

A study research on volunteerism in the Albanian Youth Sector was part of the work of UNV Albania this year. The initiative was undertaken by the UNV Country Operations Assistant, Blerina Gjeka. The findings and recommendations of this research will be useful to UNV Volunteers and to other organisations and state institutions working to foster and support volunteerism in the country.

UNV Albania joins forces with other volunteer involving organizations in the country in organizing activities to celebrate the International Volunteer Day and further promote volunteerism for development and the achievements of volunteers in Albania. On International Volunteer Day 2008 UNV and its partners organized the roundtable "*Volunteerism for Development and Integration*" where the challenges and opportunities for young people to volunteer in Albania were discussed followed by a volunteer fair to promote youth volunteerism and give practical advice on volunteer opportunities in the country.

And finally, read about UNV's participation in the World Environment Day of 2008 and 2009 raising awareness on energy saving and climate change.

I take the opportunity to acknowledge our fruitful cooperation with all our partners and hope this newsletter encourages Albanian and international organizations to request our support, and encourages others in the development community to join hands with UNV.

I am looking forward to developing the UNV programme in Albania further and to work with all of you closely.

I wish you pleasant reading!



"The language of citizenship suggests that self-interests are always embedded in communities of action and that in serving neighbours one also serves oneself."

Benjamin R. Barber

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

5 December 2008

International Volunteer Day (IVD) provides an opportunity for volunteer-involving organizations and individual volunteers to work together on projects and campaigns promoting their contributions to economic and social development at the local, national and international level. IVD was established by the UN General Assembly on 17 December 1985. Since then, countries have used the day to highlight the valuable contribution made by volunteers to sustainable national development.

Round Table

To mark International Volunteer Day, United Nations Volunteers and its partners organized the roundtable *Volunteerism for Development and Integration* at Tirana International Hotel in Tirana.

Representatives from central and local government, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Volunteer (UNV), civil society and academia participated in the event that featured presentations and an open forum. The aim of the roundtable was to explore best practices and challenges encountered in engaging volunteers in community work in Albania.

Ms. Vibeke Risa, UNDP Deputy Country Director in Albania opened proceedings presenting an overview of the important role volunteers can play in the development process. The representative of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Chances Ms. Vilma Prendi greeted participants and expressed the interest of the Ministry of Labour to support volunteer initiatives, highlighting the importance of coordination and collaboration with the civil society sector. Subsequent presentations went on to explore successful case-studies of volunteer mobilization in community work through volunteerism, including a volunteer scheme managed jointly by the Municipality of Tirana and



New York University of Tirana. Following the roundtable agreement was reached on

several key recommendations to further volunteerism nationally. These included the incorporation of a volunteer component within the school curriculum and the advancement of legislation to consolidate volunteerism through the appointment of a government focal point to over-see future volunteer initiatives.

Results:

- Promoted volunteerism as an important element to social development;
- Sensitized public opinion, civil society and decision makers on volunteerism and its importance for development in the country;
- Advocated for a sustainable social volunteer supporting infrastructure in the country;
- Established lines of communication and cooperation with all participating actors, creating a platform for the establishment of a volunteer network.

Volunteer Fair

In addition to the Round Table, a volunteer fair was organized to promote youth volunteerism and provide practical advice on volunteer opportunities in the country. United Nations Volunteers together with

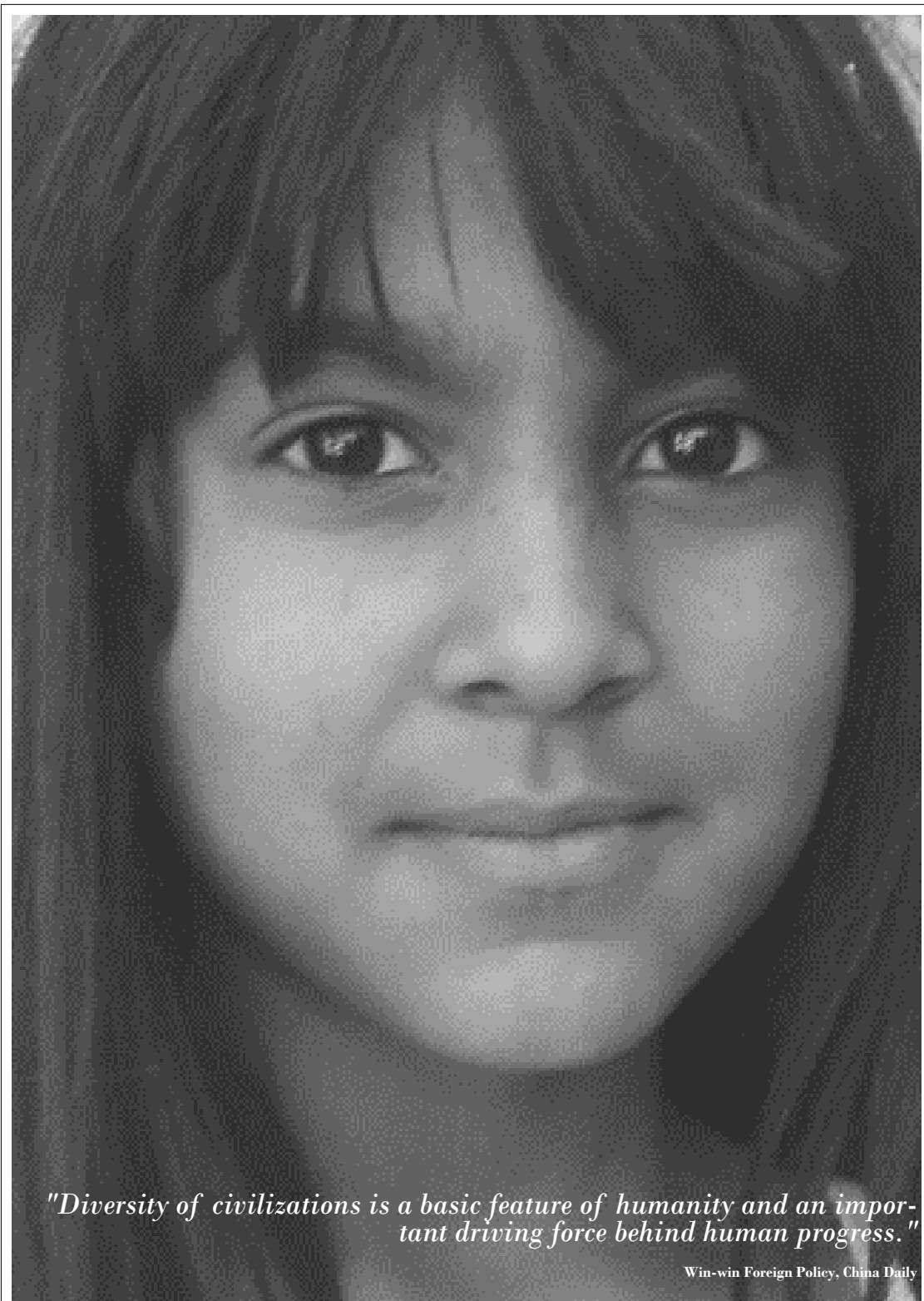
several volunteer-involving non-governmental organizations showcased their work and were on hand to answer questions from young people. While relaying practical information and advice, the event was also an opportunity to celebrate International Volunteer Day with free drinks and live music. Participating organizations included; PVN, International Social Services, Red Cross Albania, Mjaft!, WUS Austria, Vodafone Foundation, Rromani Baxt, TAMAM Albania, Tirana Legal Aid Services and Walk Together.



While sensitizing young people to the importance of volunteerism and active participation in community life, the event gave participating institutions the opportunity to network and exchange experiences of volunteer mobilization. This activity was organized with the generous contribution of Club Seven (who offered the venue for the activity), Agna Group (who offered free drinks), IDI Electronic (for provided the sound equipment) and Erjon Lleshi (who DJ on the day).

Results:

- Promoted UNV and opportunities to volunteer;
- Informal meetings with young people for UNV and volunteerism in general, encouraging people to register on the UNV roster;
- Distributed promotional materials in order to promote UNV and sensitize young people.



"Diversity of civilizations is a basic feature of humanity and an important driving force behind human progress."

Win-win Foreign Policy, China Daily

VOLUNTEERISM AND MINORITY RIGHTS

Empowering the Vulnerable Communities of Albania Project

The "Empowering the Vulnerable Communities of Albania" joint-programme coordinates the activities of agencies working with minorities groups (Roma and Egyptian) and provides direct assistance to the poorest and most marginalized minority communities by facilitating their access to basic services, promoting participatory planning, the development of local infrastructure and increasing access to the labour market.



The programme is a joint initiative between UNDP and UNV, working in close partnership with civil society organizations to strengthen, support and benefit from the expertise and work of the organizations. Terre des Hommes, Tirana Legal Aid Services, the Albanian Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and the Regional Environmental Centre provide input to the different project activities in three target areas: Tirana, Fier and Elbasan.

The programme uses volunteerism and volunteers as core features of all activities. The programme engages seven National and one International UNV Volunteers, some of whom are from marginalized communities themselves and work closely with local communities and local government to carrying out project activities. The project also facilitates the formation of community based organizations, volunteer community education and health mediators, and voluntary Regional Committees.

Civil registration to ensure access to social services
Registration is a key issue for Roma and Egyptian minorities in Albania as often they lack the basic legal documents (i.e., birth certificates, personal identification cards, resident certificate, custody of child, certification of marriage and divorce, certificate of unemployed etc.) The programme is assisting vulnerable Roma and Egyptians to obtain civil registration and thus enabling them to access public services and exercise their legal rights. This assistance is provided in partnership with the Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS) an NGO specialized in legal services.

Infrastructure development and participation in decision-making

Community based organizations have been established in each region to identify and prioritize the infrastructure needs of their communities. Local authorities are co-financing 20 percent of project costs. A total of 9 infrastructure projects will be implemented by April 2010, 3 within each region. They include the construction of kindergartens, community centres, water supply systems etc. To support this process, 60 local and 100 central government officials will be trained in minority rights and intercultural understanding.

Enhancing employment opportunities
Vocational training is one of the project components. Courses are identified in collaboration with employment offices based on the needs of the labour market and the profile of candidates. An awareness raising campaign on the importance of vocational training is being carried out in the three project areas. This process has been reinforced through the training of employment center staff in minority issues.

Mobilizing community health, education and child protection mediators

Health, education and child protection mediators are being trained to facilitate information sharing and ensure equitable access to services, and liaise between services providers and the community. While receiving training within their specialized areas, mediators are also being guided on mediation and conflict resolution techniques. Mediators will conduct trainings within their local community with the assistance of project staff.



Supporting the implementation of the national Roma strategy

The project also supports the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities (Roma Technical Secretariat) and the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination at the Council of Ministers to review the National Roma Strategy and its action plan while preparing guidelines for its implementation and monitoring. The revised document will reflect new developments since its adoption in 2003, making the action plan more responsive to needs as well as easier to implement and monitor.

5 JUNE, WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Millennium Development Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

5 June, World Environment Day is celebrated all over the world. The yearly event was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972.

World Environment Day focuses worldwide attention on the importance of the environment and stimulates political attention and action. The event seeks to give a human face to environmental issues; empower people to become active agents of sustainable and equitable development; promote an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing attitudes towards environmental issues; and advocate partnership, which will ensure that all nations and people enjoy a safer and more prosperous future.

05 June 2008: United Nations agencies and the World Bank in Albania marked World Environment Day with activities aimed at raising awareness of environmental protection, with the theme: Protect the Environment, Protect Life. National and International UNV volunteers joined the working group and offered small plants and information leaflets to the public with a message of environmental protection and support.

05 June 2009: Students of “Petro Nini Luarasi” School in Tirana came together to talk about climate change and send a message to their peers—Your Planet Needs You!!- Plant a Bulb!

In addition, an awareness activity was organized to educate the general public on the challenges of climate change and the reducing energy consumption through the use of energy efficient and renewable energy. UNV volunteers were on hand to distribute information flyers, energy efficient fluorescent light bulbs and T-shirts.

UNDP Cross-Cutting Programming: Environment, Gender, and CSOs Cluster Manager, Adriana Micu, provides more information regarding climate change:

“Climate change is happening and urgent action is required to limit it to a manageable level. Recent studies reaffirm the enormous costs of failure to act. These costs are economic, but also social and environmental and will especially fall on the poor, in both developing and developed countries. They have fewer resources for coping with storms, with floods, with droughts, with disease outbreaks, and with disruptions to food and water supplies. They are eager for economic development themselves, but may find that this already difficult process has become more difficult because of

climate change.

If we continue to do what we are doing now the world is in deep trouble. The current warming trend is expected to cause extinctions. Numerous species of plant and animal species are not expected to survive the next 100 years. The best estimate for the 21st century is an increase in temperature of 3°C. But a rise of more than 1.5-2.5°C could place approximately 20-30% of plants and animals at increased risk of extinction and a temperature increase by 3°C would have largely negative consequences for biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services, such as water and food supply.

Human populations are expected to face increasing flooding and heat waves but reduced cold spells. Heat-wave related deaths and illness episodes are expected to increase. Population with heart problems, asthma, the elderly, the very young and the homeless can be especially vulnerable to extreme heat. The geographic range would spread for many infectious diseases like malaria and dengue fever (which currently impinge on 40-50% of the world population), yellow fever, and encephalitis. Algal blooms could occur more frequently as temperatures warm — particularly in areas with polluted waters — in which case diseases (such as cholera) that tend to accompany algal blooms could become more frequent. With winters becoming milder, there are likely to be up to 20,000 fewer cold-related deaths. However, there is a danger that bacteria would no longer die-off seasonally during the prolonged cold spell meaning that diseases may spread more widely.

The climate change negotiations are the biggest international negotiations. It is a time with unprecedented public awareness of the importance of weather, climate and water and their relation to sustainable development.

Most solutions are readily available, however governments must now adopt policies to implement them. Already 42 possible measures have been identified. Beside technologies and policies, it is needed for human society as a whole to start looking at changes in lifestyles and consumption patterns changes.”



“A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under whose shades they will never sit.”

Greek Proverb



SENIOR UNV VOLUNTEERS 2008

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Alfonso Fasola (VSP) | Elio Sannangelo (VSP) | Mauro Braga (VSP) |
| Anna Maria Nanni (VSP) | Faustino Rani (VSP) | Mete Bruncaj (Kraft) |
| Antonio Capassi (VSP) | Giovanni Cafiero (VSP) | Orlando Piergiorgio Ramundo (VSP) |
| Carlo Bravi (SI) | Lucia Weber (Kraft) | Pietro Rovigatti (VSP) |
| Carlo Buffa di Perrero (VSP) | Marco Rampilli (SI) | Renzo Grimaldi (VSP) |
| Claudio Bo (SI) | Massimo Carpinteri (VSP) | Vito Consoli (VSP) |
| Edoardo Gautier (VSP) | Maurizio Crocco (VSP) | Walter Scheda (VSP) |

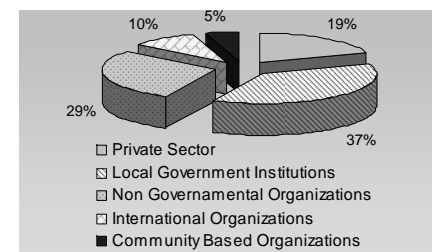
CORPORATE/PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMME

Contributing to MDGs' achievement in Albania

Partnering Private Sector Skills to Development Needs

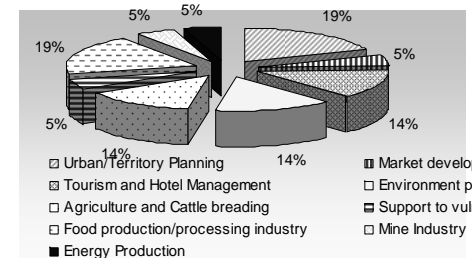
The Corporate/Private Sector Programme (CPS) gives current and retired management executives and professionals the opportunity to pass on their invaluable expertise in the service of national development in Albania.

Engaged as volunteers under the CPS programme, individuals provide short-term advisory services to UNV clients, which include small to medium scale enterprises, trade and industry groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as national policy makers and institutions working to strengthen private sector development.

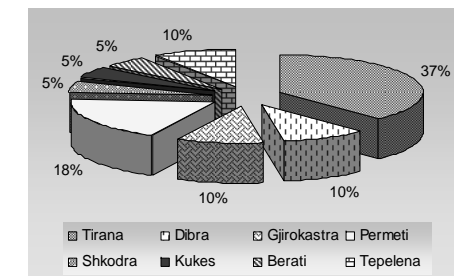


The programme aims to create jobs, raise production efficiency, support socio-economic growth, promote environmental protection, introduce Information and Communication Technology (ICT) within the private sector and aid national market expansion.

Volunteers serving as part of this scheme are recruited from an extensive network of private sector partners, professional and retiree associations. They bring with them a wide range of skills and technical expertise in areas such as: project planning, engineering, financial management, industrial design, product development, food processing, marketing, quality control and waste management.



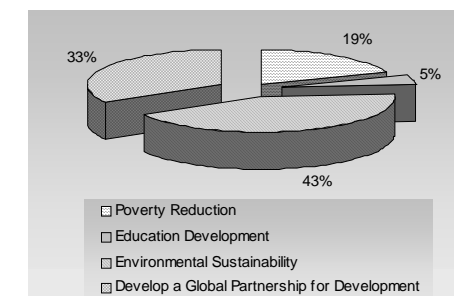
In 2008, UNV Albania implemented 21 CPS advisory missions in different regions of the country.



Volunteer advisory missions last from between one to two weeks up to a maximum of three months. In general, their mission expenses (airfare, insurance, accommodation and visa) are covered by the sponsoring companies or organization.

Most volunteers that come to Albania as part of the initiative are Italian nationals recruited via the Italian-based organization Volontari Senior Professionali (VSP), but also from Seniores Italia. These volunteers are retired professionals fully-funded by the Government of Italy. Another partner organization for the year 2008 has been Kraft Foods International.

These missions not only have a positive impact in the development of the beneficiary companies, NGOs and state institutions, but also contributed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the country.



During 2009, UNV plans to enlarge the spectrum of these activities, and continue to work for sustainable development in the country.

UN Volunteers 2008 -2009

Alessia Cecchini

Anja Baier

Blerina Xhangolli

Brunilda Peqini

Eduart Koci

Eliane Furrer

Elisa Calza

Fran Deans

Gavin David White

Gjolek Mera

Ingrid Baken

Klodiana Tosuni

Mirjeta Ramizi

Manjola Veizi

Manuela Brunero

Orsiola Kurti

Stefania Rigotto

Unarose Hogan

UNV ALBANIA RETREAT

November 2008

As a practical way of encouraging UNV volunteers serving in Albania to share positive aspects and the challenges they face in their work, a retreat-meeting was organized in November 2008, in Vlora, Albania.

The retreat brought together 13 UNV volunteers serving in the country (national specialists, national community field workers, and international specialists) with the main aim of fostering volunteerism and increasing support for and among UNV volunteers. The retreat strengthen the volunteers' sense of purpose regarding their missions volunteerism for development.

An interactive methodology was used to create an open atmosphere and working environment: presentations, role plays, work in small groups, discussion, case studies, brainstorming, background materials and experiencing exercises.

The first part of Day 1 was spent on ice-breaking and group-building activities. A navigation course exercise was used to highlight communication issues and how in a group setting different persons cover different roles. This set the stage for successive sessions and provided a positive start to the whole retreat.

Furthermore, participants were asked to brainstorm and write down on cards examples of positive aspects of their daily work. A number of short life stories were collected and, upon further refinement, are presented by UNV Albania as public information materials. The main positive aspects identified related to the contact with beneficiaries and spoke of the sense of empowerment deriving from being able to make a difference in people's lives. Moreover, working in a multi-cultural environment and the opportunity to learn and develop both as persons and professionals in their posts were also identified as positive elements of working as UNVs.

On Day 2, participants were asked to share the challenges they face in their work. Delphi techniques were employed to collect examples anonymously. The resulting list was then summarized along themes and mainly related to: challenging working environment communication issues; and conflict resolution issues.

Three separate sessions attempted to address these areas covering interpersonal communication skills, stress management and conflict resolution and negotiation.

Finally, a wrap-up session concluded the retreat. An action plan covering those the main areas discussed was developed and specific actions and responsibilities agreed.

Below are presented the benefits of volunteering as identified by International and National UNV volunteers.

Benefits to the society:

- Social development
- Civic participation
- Sustainable change
- Creating a sense of community and solidarity in the society
- Bridging communities and authorities
- Transferring the experience/skills of someone to an individual or a group from the community
- Make a difference in somebody's life
- Bridges divided communities, as a tool for reconciliation and reconstruction, especially in the divided societies/communities
- Significant economic contribution
- Building links of cooperation
- Volunteerism can change the society, even the world.

Benefits to the individual:

- Learning new skills
- Professional development
- Mental and physical benefits
- Being able to make a difference in somebody's life
- Work in a multi-cultural environment
- New experiences;
- Learning about new people and new places
- Career self-perspectives
- Enriching yourself: meeting new challenges/ discovering own potentials
- Gaining experience/knowledge
- Learning from others/colleagues
- Being part of networks
- Making friends/New connections
- Makes you feel precious, and good in yourself





MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2009 Implementation of the Volunteer Projects

Promoting Youth Volunteerism in the Albanian Model UN 2009

The "Model UN Project – A Students Portal to International Affairs and Negotiations" is a joint initiative of the UN System in Albania, the Ministry of Education and Science, the US Embassy in Tirana and the Peace Corps Albania. The project aims to introduce the young generation to important concepts such as democracy, global affairs, diplomacy, and the market economy.

Model UN is recognized as an efficient method for students to learn the principles of negotiation, peace-building, conflict resolution, international cooperation and development, through role-play and participation. Acting as representatives of member countries to the UN, students have to think, act and approach problems as the country's real delegates would. Participants are encouraged to think critically, analyze problems, and develop strategies in order to achieve their country goals in the conference.

An important part of Model UN Programme this year was the volunteer component, through which each team learned how to develop and implement their own volunteer based community development project.

As the Model UN Programme provides a strong framework which encourages young people to take an active role in decision making as an integral part of achieving durable peace and sustainable global development, the volunteer component supported this process by giving young people the opportunity to become ambassadors of change in their communities.

The implemented projects not only promote volunteerism and foster team spirit among the group members, but also addressed important issues in their respective communities. The spectrum of activities was very large and the combination between two or more activities was an added value to each of them.

Thematic areas included: environmental education, animal protection, a volunteer awareness raising campaigns; the collection of food, blankets and books to donate to poor families in the community; film festivals, concerts and cultural activities for marginalized groups; environmental re-generation, trainings and seminars on gender equality, discrimination and the prevention of human trafficking; the organization of volunteer fairs, and the prepara-

tion of posters, leaflets.

Each team presented their own Volunteer Project in two separate sessions during the Conference on February 26-27, 2009. Based on a set of criteria, which included: volunteerism promotion, community development, innovation, teamwork, and sustainability, the Volunteer-Evaluation Committee awarded the prize of "Best Volunteer Project 2009" to "Baking the Community. We believe in Change" the initiative implemented by Lezha MUN Team.

Some testimonies from participating students are highlighted below:

- The project offered us the opportunity to feel part of the community. We had the chance to talk to different people and volunteer for our city. (*Lezha*)
- The initiative helped us foster leadership and self-initiative skills, through the implementation of different tasks, sharing of responsibilities, taking initiative, implementing important activities for our community and other peers, and of course sharing success and meaningful results together as a team. (*Berati*)
- This activity was a good opportunity to build capacity, we are now experienced in: preparing action plans, identifying community needs, selecting the priorities of the community, tackling difficult issues, working with young people/their peers and undertaking concrete activities in their community. (*Bilishti*)
- Through different activities implemented as part of the volunteer project we managed to raise awareness on different local, national and global issues. Such activities were: campaigns, seminars, public debates, publications, direct meetings, activities in infrastructure improvement, concerts, books delivery and other such activities. (*A group of young participants during the conference.*)



STUDY RESEARCH on Volunteerism in the Albanian Youth Sector By Blerina Gjeka, UNV COA

Living in a world of upheaval makes civic participation all the more important. Recent events in Europe and other parts of the world show that citizens, be they students, young or old people, want to be closer to the decision-making process that shapes their present and their actions to be the driving force of change for the future. The most well known dictum among young people today is "Act locally - Think globally" which shows that young people should and are playing an important part in the irreversible process of globalization.

As a form of civic participation, volunteerism plays an important role in the democratic process, social cohesion and human development. While encompassing a myriad of activities, including assisting old people, raising awareness about peace and human rights, planting a tree or constructing roads, volunteerism also offers an enormous contribution to the achievement of global strategies, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Volunteerism is an old phenomenon, deeply rooted in old traditions and customs and in most societies regulated more by moral and cultural values, than laws and regulations. However, a culture of mutual support and altruism can play a great role in small communities, while in society, at large, there is need to encourage and develop such values through continued education, promotion and engagement.

Nonetheless, good traditions can be easily destroyed if force or coercive methods are used to engage citizens in such activities. This was the case in Albania during the communist era, where volunteer work was forced and often used as a punishment for the opponents of the regime. And, of course, 50 years of dictatorship left deep scars within the Albanian social conscience.

Today after 18 years of democracy, volunteerism in Albania is not only underused, but also understudied. Both these features are interwoven and influence the advancement of the other. On the one hand, the lack of data and thorough studies means that volunteer initiatives are neither based on the real needs and priorities of the community, nor do they influence appropriate policies and programmes. On the other hand, insufficient volunteer initiatives leave little space for research, appraisal of good practices and lessons from the experience, resulting in a vacuum of information and practical expertise.

Because of scarce research and evaluation in this sector, there is a general need to encourage and undertake research in volunteerism. This is why, UNV Al-

bania supported a study in order to collect data and information on the involvement of young people in volunteer activities, their perceptions, enabling and obstructing factors to participation as well as the existing social and legal supporting framework for volunteerism in the country.

The findings and recommendations, along with positive practices provided in this report (<http://unv.undp.org.al>) can serve as a guide to a broad range of audiences: policymakers at the national, regional, and local level; practitioners and researchers; grant-making organizations; media; educators; non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, and volunteer involving organizations; encouraging in this way a supportive environment to volunteerism as a strategy to foster civic participation *Locally* and to contribute to the achievement of development goals *Globally*.

The main recommendations of the study are listed below:

Youth:

- Inclusion of information on volunteerism combined with practical sessions in the primary/secondary/high school and university curricula;
- Design and implementation of sensitizing campaigns to raise awareness of the social importance of volunteerism and create a culture of citizenship participation.

Civil Society Sector:

- Creation of a National Network or Steering Committee of volunteer organizations and other NGOs which include volunteer actions in their activities, to serve as a representative, consulting and advocating body on volunteer issues in the country;
- Mainstream volunteerism in development projects, programmes and strategies;
- Capacity building for trainers, teachers, youth workers, and business managers through the design of a Training Manual on Volunteerism and the facilitation of different trainings in volunteerism.

Government Institutions:

- The development of a specific law on volunteering in Albania is essential;
- Establish a focal point as part of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Chances for the promotion of volunteerism, and coordination and harmonization of all efforts, activities and strategies; achieving sustainable and tangible change;
- Establish a government start-up fund to support volunteerism development in the country and encourage contributions by other donors.

VOLUNTEER STORIES

By Gavin David White
International UNV Volunteer in Albania

When volunteering to make a positive contribution to the lives of others – you inevitably enrich your own life. This is a basic truth that has inspired me during my time volunteering with UNV during 2008.

There have been many challenges since I arrived in Albania; adjusting to living and in a new country and culture, grappling with the rudimentary of the Albanian language and working with a new organization and in a new development context. All of which have proved to be both personally rewarding and enriching. Working as an Information Officer within the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator I have been fortunate enough to support a variety of engaging projects, programmes and events within the One UN Programme in Albania. One of the most memorable experiences to date has been working with the UNDP/UNV Joint Programme, Empowering the Vulnerable Communities of Albania. I designed an overall communications plan, undertook field visits to the project's intervention areas, produced articles and communication materials to promote the key issues of minority rights and integration and the projects' key milestones and achievements and coordinated press visits.

In addition, I designed and produced a documentary entitled "Roma Voices" with the support of the Joint Programme's UNV Community Development Officers working in Tirana, Elbasan and Fier. The documentary is narrated by members of the Roma community themselves as they describe the challenges they face and their hopes and aspirations for the future. Throughout my communications work in 2008 I have worked to place individuals at the heart of development process. The documentary can be viewed online at the following link:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YH_7aliXlfk&feature=related

I am very thankful to UNV Albania for giving me the opportunity of volunteering for development. Through their support I have been able to make a tangible contribution towards improving the lives of people in Albania while supporting the invaluable work of the United Nations in the Country.

A life changing experience...
By Genta Konci
Albanian UNV Volunteer in Indonesia

Most of my UNDP colleagues here in Indonesia begun their international career by volunteering with UNV and that was my intention too. I registered on the UNV programme in January 2008 and in a few weeks I received a call and an interview followed.

I was assigned as a Monitoring and Reporting Officer with UNDP Indonesia, in Banda Aceh, a region devastated by a 30 years conflict, and the 2005 Tsunami. They requested my expertise to monitor the efficiency of UNDP's technical assistance provided to local government. I was very interested and eager to work on this subject.

What I experienced as an international volunteer for the United Nations was far more interesting, fulfilling and valuable than I could have imagine. It helped me understand development in communities with a diverse and particular cultural and social context. Working in Banda Aceh has also given me the opportunity to witness the short term impact of the rehabilitation and reconstruction works.

By exercising your profession in the context of the UNV programme you also benefit from all UNDP capacity building activities, knowledge sharing and networking. Overall, as a UNV you get an international experience, upgrade your skills and significantly grow in your career.

After finishing my assignment with UNV, I joined UNDP Jakarta, in a different position with a project that aims to support central government improving coordination and cooperation on rehabilitation and reconstruction in Banda Aceh. It was the UNV insight which turned me into an active and an efficient contributor in the development sector. It also helped me bring real change to people's lives.



A significant Impact of our work was people's relocation in new houses

"The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others."

DeAnn Hollis

VOLUNTEER VOICES COLUMN

Volunteering impressions

By Lucia Weber and Mete Bruncaj, CPS Mission

A successful mission was completed in 2 weeks by two KRAFT volunteers, Mete Bruncaj – Kraft Foods PSR Tarrytown, US and Lucia Weber – Kraft Foods R&D/Q Banbury, UK with the host Albanian company “Kresha Prod. Shpk”. The mission was based in Tirana and consisted of sharing and transferring knowledge on the fundamentals of coffee roasting and quality control, developing an understanding of product development tools, product quality, food safety, and GMP.

The impressions of the volunteers are quoted below:

It was a great experience to work as a volunteer (vs. a paid consultant). Soon after the start of the assignment we saw that our voluntary support was so greatly appreciated and the cooperation between the client and us grew on a daily basis. A lot of decisions, recommendations and training sessions were two-way dialogues or constructive discussions, rather than simply show and tell.

Both the client and I learned a lot, technically and personally, during the assignment. With this type of a working relationship, we managed to achieve the objectives of the mission in the limited time frame we were given.

Volunteerism can be instrumental in supporting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in numerous ways. Demonstrating our willingness and ability to give freely of our time to support a local business and share knowledge and technologies boosts the awareness of the UN support schemes within the developing country and community and also within the volunteers home countries. We were provided with the opportunity to share technical and business expertise and to demonstrate our solidarity our hosts in realizing the Millennium Declaration.

We were able to broaden our horizon by getting to know a different style of work and getting to know a different culture.

Living and working in a developing country proved to be a great experience and we will surely remember the place and the people for the rest of our lives.

Better networked, more volunteered

By Blerina Xhangolli, National UNV volunteer

“There's no big or small work in achieving sustainable environment. Every volunteer work counts.”

This is a slogan you find on the World Volunteer Website (www.worldvolunteerweb.org) and it is a worthy piece of advice for anyone. Increasingly nowadays, there are many public campaigns that ask “How Green are You?” Once a year, World Environment Day focuses our attention on this issue as 5th June is the day painted in green to remind us that we live in an environment that we need to care for and to respect. On this year's World Environment Day in Albania, volunteers from UNV, PVN and the Youth Voice Group Albania supported the UN and World Bank's awareness-raising activity by distributing potted plants to passer-bys. The intended message was to remind the public that the environment needs us to survive.

While the passer-bys' responses to this activity were positive, recognizing that “every volunteer act counts,” people in Albania often face a dilemma as to the value of volunteering considering financial constraints and the negative feelings associated with volunteer activities due to the past communist regime.

More and more nowadays we have become witnesses to another way of getting involved in volunteer activities that has been possible with the development of technology. Volunteerism, like many other sectors (government, commerce, etc.), has gone online (www.onlinevolunteering.org).

As a National UNV volunteer working as a Specialist for Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD) Programme for Information Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives of UNDP Albania, I am also promoting the spread of both new and old forms of volunteerism through academic networking. In many parts of the world online services are being used to enhance skills, to trade, collaborate and exchange information.

The indirect effect is that the world becomes a more open-minded and multidimensional place in which diversity and unity are valued.



“The human contribution is the essential ingredient. It is only in the giving of oneself to others that we truly live.”

Ethel Percy Andrus

JOIN UN VOLUNTEERS

Join Us

<http://unv.org> or <http://unv.undp.org>

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. In Albania the programme was officially established in 2001.

Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation.

UNV volunteers share their skills and contribute to the development process and the reduction of human poverty. Typically volunteers have at least five years of professional experience, are a minimum of 25 years of age, and serve in development projects with UN agencies, government and non-governmental organisations. They offer a broad range of expertise, including administration, agriculture, communication, community development, commerce, education, engineering, environment, health, human settlements, information communication technology, logistics, media and social sciences. Assignments usually last 24 months, however, assignments of 6 to 12 months are increasingly common. As a UNV volunteer, you offer your services on a voluntary basis. You are supported through several benefits, including a monthly living allowance. There are several ways to volunteer your time, as an international UNV volunteer working in a developing country abroad, as a national UNV volunteer working here in Albania or via your computer as an online volunteer. Explore the options below.

International UNV Volunteers

International UNV volunteer opportunities are open to professionals from any countries who want to share their expertise with counterparts in developing countries. To take part you are invited to join the UNV roster. Your details will then be matched against requests from UN agencies, governments and non-governmental organisations throughout the world. This can be done directly on the <http://unv.org>.

National UNV Volunteers

National UNV volunteer opportunities are open to Albanian nationals who would like to volunteer their time in-country. Upcoming openings will be listed periodically at <http://unv.undp.org> and are open to direct application.

Online Volunteering Service

<http://www.OnlineVolunteering.org>

The Online Volunteering service is one of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme's corporate tools to mobilize volunteers for development.

The Online Volunteering service connects volunteers with organizations working for sustainable human development:

- Volunteers contribute their skills online to help organizations address development challenges.
- Organizations collaborate with online volunteers over the internet to strengthen the impact of their development work.

The Online Volunteering service connects organizations working for sustainable human development with volunteers. Organizations collaborate with online volunteers over the internet to strengthen the impact of their development work. Thousands of volunteers are ready to provide their support: professionals, students, retirees and expatriates from across the globe volunteer their skills online to help organizations address development challenges. If you are an Albanian youngster, elder, student or professional, having a limited amount of time to spare, but would still like to make a volunteer commitment, you may like to consider becoming an online volunteer. UNV online volunteering service connects development organisations and volunteers over the internet and supports their effective online collaboration.

As an Albanian volunteer you can engage in:

- Project development and management
- Design
- Coordination and facilitation
- IT development
- Research
- Writing, editing and translating
- Training and coaching
- Consulting

As an Albanian NGO you can:

- Enhance your capacities in responding to development challenges through the involvement of online volunteers;
- Leverage the knowledge of professionals, retirees, students and expatriates;
- Create a global network of support;
- Offer engaging opportunities to other people and make your organization more visible.

June 2009

Produced by
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