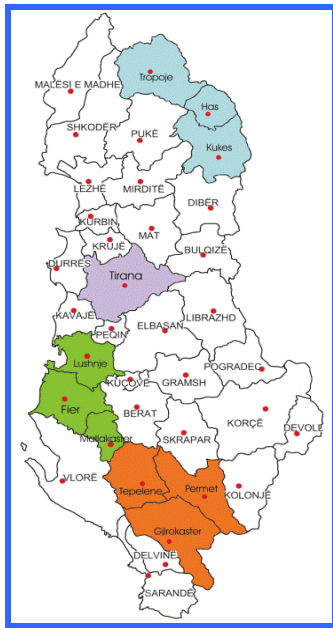


UNV Albania Newsletter July-September 2004

Year I, Number 3

July– September 2004

UNDP Local Governance Programme (LGP)



Empowering people, enriching lives...

The Local Governance Programme (LGP) represents the UNDP proper support to the need of the Albanian Government in strengthening the on-going process of decentralization and democratic systems of local governance as the institutional basis for equitable development, poverty alleviation and human security in Albania.

The LGP applies a comprehensive and systematic approach by focusing its interventions at the central, regional, and local municipality and commune levels in three Municipalities: Fier, Kukes and Gjirokastr. In this way, it takes advantage of linkages between grass-root experiences and policy and institutional development at all levels.

The programme gives special emphasis on promoting participatory community development to ensure people's participation in local development initiatives and decision-

making processes by linking the capacity building of the municipality and communes with the support for institutional development at the regional council level. The LGP's capacity building assistance to the local governments and the community creates strong linkages of community needs to local and regional level decision-making and implementation process. The programme is being implemented in collaboration with NORAD, SOROS Foundation, UNV through its Special Voluntary Fund, AGFUND and Sida as cost sharing partners.

On of the key components of the Local Governance Programme is to support the establishment of "Democratic Governance" at the local level. The concept of Democratic Governance includes both the capacity building and strengthening of government institutions, as well as the process of enabling and encouraging citizens to participate in democratic processes. More specifically, LGP focuses on:

- Development of Local Government bodies through training and provision of expertise;
- Fostering partnerships with the State as well as with civil society;
- Encouraging efficient Governance over public resources through the implementation of small initiatives including community infrastructure works.

Clearly, these areas fall within UNVs mandate, as *"the UN organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism and the mobilisation of volunteers. It serves the causes of peace and development through enhancing opportunities for participation by all peoples. It is universal, inclusive and embraces volunteer action in all its diversity. It values free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity, which are the foundations of volunteerism"*. Indeed, the UNVs of LGP have been the essential link between citizens and their elected representatives.

Volunteerism is...hope

Inside this issue:

<i>UNDP Local Governance Programme</i>	1
<i>LGP activities</i>	2
<i>LGP activities ..continued</i>	3
<i>Message from Mr. Kalyan Pandey, UNDP LGP CTA</i>	4-5
<i>The LGP Teams</i>	5-7
<i>LGP and Social Mobilization</i>	8
<i>UNV HQ Mission to Albania</i>	9
<i>Volunteering on line</i>	10
<i>Benefits of volunteerism: a global perspective</i>	11
<i>TOKTEN scheme</i>	12
<i>A successful TOKTEN story from Afghanistan</i>	13
<i>UNV contribution to the CCA Albania 2004</i>	14
<i>An energizing workshop in Bonn for 24 POs</i>	15

For more information:

www.unv.org
www.unv.undp.org.al
www.undp.org
www.undp.org.al

In the next issue:

- The International Volunteer Day 2004
- How volunteerism can foster the Youth, Sport and Development Framework
- UNV and Security... and much more

LGP activities

More concretely, the LGP activities include:

- ❖ Develop policies to strengthen decentralization and local governance;
- ❖ Strengthen partnerships between the Government, donor community and local authorities;
- ❖ Develop training modules to increase the capacity of local governments;
- ❖ Strengthen organizational capacity of Regional Councils to undertake their administrative and managerial functions and to provide technical support services to elected authorities at the municipality and commune level;
- ❖ Establish Human Resource Development Centers at the regional level to provide training to government staff and elected authorities of local governments;
- ❖ Increase institutional capacity of municipalities and communes;
- ❖ Support formation of Self-governing Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) through process of social mobilization;
- ❖ Mobilize self-help groups linked with micro-credit institutions for small income-generating enterprises.



CBO meeting in Gjirokaſter region

Strategic implementation principles

- Ownership of the programme by the Local Government;
- Institutional set-up at local government levels;
- Communities' participation and strong linkages with local government bodies;
- Involvement of Volunteers as Change Agents at the grass-roots level;
- Twinning arrangements between International and National Volunteers for capacity development;
- Partnerships with other NGOs, financial institutions and donor-supported projects operating in similar areas.

Central level

LGP supports the Government in developing long-term strategic policies and partnerships based on programme experience to further strengthen the process of decentralization and governance

Municipality and Commune level

LGP strengthens self-governing community-based organizations directly at the municipality and commune level as the entry point for alleviating poverty and increasing human security.

Regional level

LGP strengthens the institutional capacities of Regional Councils, as the second level of local government, to manage more effectively regional development functions and provide support services to the municipal and commune authorities.

Volunteering is an unlimited process with its background being the overall welfare of the people...



LGP activities...continued

At the Central level LGP supports the Government in developing long-term strategic policies and partnership based on programme experience to further strengthen the process of decentralization and local governance. Initiatives have included the review of the 'Implementation Law on Organization and Functioning of Local Government', a report on new territorial and administrative division of local government units; and recently the first publication of the National Decentralization Bulletin.

LGP works to strengthen the institutional capacities of Regional Councils, to manage more effectively regional development functions and to provide support services to the municipal and commune authorities. In the past year, two Regional Development Strategies in Fier and Kukes have been drafted by the Regional Councils. The Millennium Development Goals, advocated by the international community, underline the objectives outlined in the RDS of both Fier and Kukes.

The Programme strives to strengthen self-governing Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) at the municipal and commune levels, as entry points for tackling issues related to poverty and human security. Most of the CBOs formed have been legally registered within their respective local governments. To help sustain the CBOs and better consolidate their work in the communities micro-capital grants are being used



Women workshop on employment and career building, Fier Region

as incentive for their participation in the development works. The micro capital grant scheme has been created for financing social infrastructure projects but moreover to create social cohesion and active citizenship within local communities.

Similarly, to the micro-capital grant programme, a revolving fund scheme has been developed to provide access to fund for individual or group-based entrepreneurial activities, particularly of women CBO members. Last year,

17 loans have been distributed to more than 60 women to kick-start their income generating activities. The loans, alongside training on management and administration of businesses help women participate in boosting their local economies.

Overall, the micro capital grant schemes provides the necessary incentives for the local governments and communities to develop their institutional capacities for strengthening democratic local governance through interventions that require collective and individual initiatives.

Moreover, the Local Governance Programme is an umbrella programme for several projects implemented mainly at the local level, referred to as cluster programmes.

Volunteer action is of key importance for the implementation of the Programme. Full-time UN Volunteers recruited for the LGP work in close cooperation with all programme partners. At present, a team of national and international UNVs is serving as regional coordinators, municipal and commune development officers and promotion of volunteerism specialists in the three pilot regions of Albania. They are carrying out series of extensive orientations and consultations with community members, local government and village leaders to introduce the concept of social mobilization. More than **126 CBOs** have been formed and actively engaged by UN volunteers in the process of planning local development projects in their communities. LGP UNVs work at the grass-roots level to support social mobilization efforts that ensure transparent and participatory methods of socio-economic development planning and implementation.

LGP Cluster Programmes

1. Support to Civil Society Organizations on Monitoring Millennium Development Goals and National Policies in Albania project
2. Capacity Building for Gender Mainstreaming
3. Showcasing Regional Dimension of the MDG through Local Governance
4. Support to Women CBO through Revolving Fund
5. Partnership Facility to form Partnership for MDG
6. Environmentally Compatible Development and Promotion of Cultural heritage in Albania
7. Korca Clean and Green Project
8. Beautiful Gjirokaster

If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else...
Booker T. Washington

Message from Mr. Kalyan Pandey, UNDP LGP Chief Technical Advisor



LGP gives a substantial contribution in achieving the MDGs in Albania. UNDP has been using its local governance programme as platform for localizing the MDG at the regional levels. All sub-projects under Local Governance Programme are aligned with MDG goals and its interventions at the local level are geared towards the fulfillment of MDGs. Such interventions include capacity development in strategic planning and programming, CBO gender mainstreaming at the local level, capital grant projects related to MDG targets at the regional level and partnership among the local government, civil society and private sector in MDG related activities at the local level. The Programme has supported the regional level of local government in preparing the **Regional Development Strategies (RDS)** that are aligned with MDGs. LGP has been involved in the preparation and launching of the Fier and Kukes RDS, which by 2015, will offer to the regions a sustainable development and will assure the increase of welfare for every inhabitant of respective region.

The Programme has supported the voluntary **establishment of 126 community-based organizations**, at the municipal and commune levels, considered the entry points for tackling issues related to poverty and human security.

A total of 850 men and women of the villages are involved and participating in making decision on planning and implementing small community development projects. A total of \$ 1.7 million worth of 74 small community projects were planned and implemented by the Community Organization and a total of around 17500 households benefited from these community initiated projects of their choices. The implementation of the project was funded not only externally (from donors) but about \$ 0.5 million was contributed by the community and the local governments. Some of the projects completed or currently underway include constructing local health centers, installing water supply lines, building roads, constructing sewerage systems, creating 'green' areas, building irrigation channels and reconstructing kindergartens. Through the implemented projects the de-

mocracy has been increased among community members and local government, and all this is having an impact in improving community's members life. In this way, by urging the local people to form their own community organizations, and plan and implement the development projects by themselves in collaboration and partnership with the local governments, **LGP helps to promote their development through their own and other resources and to actively participate in decision-making process that affects their livelihoods and their surroundings.** With their unity as their main strength, people not only improve their well-being but also move towards self-empowerment, self-sufficiency and self-governance.

The **added value of volunteers working for LGP** is another key element: it is promotion of Volunteerism together with development at the grass root level. This project promotes volunteerism through social mobilization through three main approaches i.e. the individual, household and local communities. Through the UNV volunteers, the project assists to strengthen the local form of volunteerism (self-help and mutual aid) through which communities are organised at the local levels for self-development. It is expected that the social mobilization of individuals and households would bring people together to address their problems and set their development priorities in line with the Government's objective to strengthen democracy at the local level. The act of social mobilization through volunteerism creates social cohesion, since by bringing people together to address their own needs one strengthens social solidarity.

The use of UN Volunteers in local governance programme, particularly in combination of International and National with UN Volunteer i.e. twinning in approach, is an effective means to build and strengthen local and national capacity, thus a tool to achieve project objectives. The **twinning-in approach** combines inter alia;

- (i) impartiality through the use of international volunteers,
- (ii) local knowledge and culture proximity with the use of Albanian volunteers,
- (iii) the required substantive expertise and commitment of volunteers with highly professional backgrounds and selected through a competitive process.

Volunteering is an act of heroism on a grand scale. And it matters profoundly. It does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds
Bill Clinton

Message from Mr. Kalyan Pandey ... continued

This project has served as a pilot experience in firmly establishing an Albanian National UN Volunteer scheme whereby Albanian professionals were provided with opportunities to volunteer their time and expertise in contributing to development activities in their own country while gaining new knowledge and experience with the UN and International UNV. The use of Albanian UN Volunteers under the LGP presents an opportunity to provide highly qualified and motivated nationals willing to serve as volunteers at community levels under difficult conditions thus building local capacity and increasing visibility of role of local volunteerism. The local population as well as the local government authorities duly recognized the contribution made by UNVs in the regions.

Finally, I would like to conclude by citing the main challenges for LGP in the future. The first phase (2002-2004) of the project has been implemented as a Pilot with the objectives of scaling up this successful practices in other regions, communes and municipalities. So the future of the project will be geared towards two folds. One is to mobilizing the resources for scaling-up the programme activities in as many areas as possible with both donors as well as government's involvement and secondly to expand the programme approach towards Area Based Development to support directly for the implementation of regional MDG-RDS to achieve the regional Millennium Goals and targets. In this regard, efforts have already initiated to look for resources to implement an Area based Development Programme in Kukes.

The LGP Teams: Kukes, Gjirokaster and Fier



Kukes LGP team



Gjirokaster LGP team



Fier LGP team

1) What are the main challenges for LGP in Fier/ Gjirokaster/Kukes in the next year?

Gjirokaster: LGP in Gjirokaster over the past years established a very good working partnership with local authorities and local community. Therefore, some challenges are: to continue to keep alive the active participation of the new CBOs in the decision making process and further supporting them to develop project proposal to implement their priorities pointed out at the community development plans; to further support to the local authorities (not only of the pilot communes and municipality but even to other local governance entities in the region) through trainings on different subjects coming out from the training need assessment conducted by the mobile training team on April-May 2004; to support to the women organized in women CBO and Women Associa-

tion by providing them micro credits.

Moreover, the "Beautiful Gjirokastra project" will be a real challenge for next year, focusing on: 1) preservation and/or refurbishment of cultural / historical / archaeological sites; 2) cleaning and environmentally rehabilitating selected public places; 3) skills building and temporary employment for the unemployed youth of the city for the capacity development of the Gjirokaster Municipality.

Fier: Continuing the implementation of the Fier Regional Development Strategy (RDS), working with local government to localize MDGs at commune and municipal levels. Moreover, empowering the CBOs in order to enable them to become more institutional and sustainable groups as well as reliable partners for local government, civil society and the private sector.

Kukes: Empowering CBOs in the existing working area

Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough, money can be got, but they need your hearts to love them. So, spread your love everywhere you go
 Mother Theresa

The LGP Teams ... continued

towards exploring and transforming as well as better networking and wider collaboration is a major challenge right now. For the remaining areas, where LGP is not yet spread, we should be providing the opportunities to get facilitated in organized way. The biggest one would be to address the LGs and community to expand LGP to the increasing demand in the whole region.

2) What have been the major developments in 2004 in your region?

Gjirokaster: In 2004, through the Micro Capital Grants projects, the Arab Gulf Fund, the Trainings, the LoSD project in Gjirokaster municipality, the support in revising the Regional Development Strategy to be aligned with the MDGs, a tied cooperation has been established not only with local authorities, but even with local communities.

Fier: In 2004 we have been developing one of the first Regional Development Strategy (RDS) projects at the commune level (the Hekal Commune Strategy that is aligned with RDS and MDGs is being used as a guide). Furthermore, we established and approved the Regional Training Unit which is providing assistance and trainings to all communes and municipalities of the region in relevant topics that include needs assessment, strategic planning, leadership, decision-making, project prioritization, recourse mobilization and so on. Finally, we are getting local government formal commitment to collect data and related information for the monitoring of the RDS.

Kukes: The first strategic plan, Kukes MDG Regional Development Strategy (RDS) is the most significant output. The 10 micro-grant projects, that directly supported to achieve the MDGs, were implemented by the respective CBOs in 2004 alone. The others include systematic start of the RDS implementation, specific capacity enhancement for both LGs and civil society including CBOs.

3) What have been the main difficulties encountered by UNVs in implementing the LGP activities ?

Fier: Mainly logistical problems as traveling to some pilot areas of the region where there is no public transport.

Gjirokaster: The creation of a real and tangible partnership with communities and local authorities has been the major difficulty encountered during the implementation of LGP activities in Gjirokaster.

Kukes: Due to the inadequate professional work culture, different surprises appear commonly, resulting in more time being spent to follow up and for corrective actions.

4) LGP as an umbrella cluster program: what are the most important and successful projects in your region?

Gjirokaster: In the framework of the micro-capital grants project the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the three pilot areas, Cepo and Dropull Commune and Gjirokaster Municipality, supported by LGP and respective local governance authorities, have submitted their project proposals based on their priorities. At present 7 projects are under implementation, 3 have been already completed. 24 CBOs have been created through social mobilization process and they are continuing the voluntary development activities. These projects highlighted the local capacities to carry out community development works and strengthen self-governing.

Four Women CBOs have been supported by Revolving Fund Scheme project funded by Arab Gulf Fund, in developing income-generating activities. Some training on starting up business and management skills have been provided to 17 women during 2004. In the meantime, the necessity to create Women artisan association came out through constant meetings. Therefore, 14 women expressed their willingness to be member of this association and created it. A "computer training" and "making cents training" has been provided to them during August and September 2004. The loans, along-side trainings will help women participate in boosting their local economies.

Fier: Development projects jointly implemented by CBOs, local governments and LGP; trainings for increasing capacities of both CBOs and local government; providing loans for rural women in communes for small scale businesses.

Kukes: Drinking water systems, health centers, kindergartens were directly related to gender-supportive activities (MDGs 3,4,5,2) while improvement of systems for irrigation, electrification, and sewage were directly supportive to poverty alleviation activities (MDGs 1 and 7).



The LGP Teams ... continued

5) What has been the reaction by the population to LGP activities in your region?

Gjirokaster: In general there is a positive atmosphere towards LGP. People are welcoming and becoming part of the LGP staff in each and every activity related with them. During the implementation of the projects a high and broad community involvement is registered. The relations with the local authorities are very stabilized as contacts with them are on daily basis.

Fier: We have often received requests from communities and even local officials of other municipalities to expand our project in these areas as well. In the implementation of development projects this year the contribution offered by community and local governments is higher than that of last year's.

Kukes: Widely applauded.

6) What categories of population is LGP mainly targeting? Which of them has reacted the most?

Gjirokaster: LGP is targeting the communities, in the broad sense. Particular attention has been paid to women who always reacted really positively to the initiatives proposed. The adult population has been the main responsive while certain indifference has been noted in the young population.

Fier: We work in urban and rural areas and as our programme is more expanded into rural ones these seem to react more to LGP initiatives. We also give special emphasis to women, trying to empower them through initiating small family businesses as well as providing vocational trainings.

Kukes: All-men and women-farmers and students of the selected commune and communities are part of it. General community people were comparatively found to be receptive.

7) What is the added value of volunteers at LGP?

Fier: LGP gives volunteers the opportunity to get experience in local government issues and become experts in things like trainings, development, and democratization etc.

Gjirokaster: The presence of the volunteers in LGP team made possible the vast spread of the idea of volunteerism and achieving that the concept be accepted and understood by the communities. Most importantly, the same concept of "volunteer", perceived in negative way by the people because of the recent history, changed and started regaining its positive values. The communities now see themselves as an important factor for the local development and their well-being.

Kukes: Neutrality and transparency as the essences of social mobilization process.

8) What activities are used to promote volunteerism? How is voluntary work perceived? Can it be improved?

Gjirokaster: The micro-capital grants project highly supported the idea of community mobilization, through financial and labor contribution. The projects could be realized only in partnership with local authorities and with CBOs. The communities that couldn't afford providing financial contribution realized that through voluntary job they were able to improve their living conditions. In general it has been registered a very positive and wide participation in the volunteer activities even if volunteerism is still somewhat difficult to be reached among all the members of the communities. The voluntary work is starting to be positively perceived especially if in connection with the local development. To improve and promote further the volunteerism the LGP/UNDP team needs to keep working in tied connection with the communities, spreading the concept through activities, meetings, trainings. Even the local authorities should be more sensitized towards the concept of volunteerism.

Fier: Mobilizing other volunteers to implement activities is very much promoting volunteerism as a value. Sharing good volunteerism experiences among different areas of the region has a great impact on promoting volunteerism. This is done through publishing a Newsletter, organizing TV talk show, posting poster etc. Generally speaking volunteerism is often perceived as unskilled work. In order to fight against the stereotypes we organize open debates.

Kukes: LGP working modality is conceptually erected on social mobilization-based processes. Self-help spirit acts both as engine and fuel to the whole process. Development of national capacity toward professional work culture is the best way not only to tap the potential capacity fully but also to enhance their capacity simultaneously.

LGP and Social Mobilization: involving the community

“The act of social mobilization through volunteerism creates social cohesion, since by bringing people together to address their own needs one strengthens social solidarity”

Kalyan Pandey, UNDP LGP CTA

Kukes experience

Mrs. Fermete Hoda, a widow, 50 years, has 1 son of 28 years old, a daughter of 22, a com and 1000 sq.m. of land and lives in Kolosjan village, a remote hillside in Bicaj commune. She volunteered for about 10 weeks during the construction of the new kindergarten, supported by LGP. She offered snacks/day meal and clean the site. Her driving energy was to create possibilities of better life in her own village so that her son would not leave the village in search of better live for his child. She has seen that the men CBO is working well with different programs including group savings, discussions on their common development agenda etc. Hence, she has started discussion among women members of the village to form a women CBO.

Another interesting story comes from a neighboring village. A person from Bushat village used to go to Gjallica village health center construction site in Shtiqen commune and took photos in different days with regular intervals. When I enquired the reason behind this peculiar activity, he replied the plan of intending to teach his growing kids how to develop their own village. He would like to show the photos of the successive stages of the construction done by the CBO in order for the kid to learn the community-owned development works.

A testimony from Gjirokaster

In the Municipality of Gjirokaster, with the support of LGP, the Granica CBO was formed in August 2002 in order to start the implementation of a micro-capital grant project and the community selected the construction of the sewage system, as their priority. For the first time in Albania a CBO conducted a tender process, in April 2003, and the project was completed in September 2003. The CBO using the lessons learnt through this experience continued to meet and, after one year, they presented independently this month, September 2004, a new project to the Gjirokaster Municipality for the construction of a pedestrian road and this event has been broadcasted by the local public TV. This is a great example of empowering people through pilot projects and social mobilization as the community understood through LGP project that by working together they can effectively enrich their life.

Another revealing story regards the Dervician community in Dropull i Poshtëm commune. The LGP programme has covered 80% of the villages in this commune through its Social Mobilization and MCGs, but even the other villages which were not covered by the programme embraced the idea of Community Mobilization. Dervician, one of the largest communities of the commune that has been not covered by the LGP micro-capital grant independently gathered in a meeting to discuss the priorities of the village. As result they decided to construct the road of the village at their own expenses and contribution. Therefore, using the LGP practice in other villages they worked together to implement the project that is now successfully finished.

Experience from Fier

On March the 8th, international woman’s day, in the new constructed health center of Mollaj village Hekal commune, LGP Fier organized a discussion on women health issues. This event was attended by rural women of nearby villages. The local doctor and nurse were present to answer all questions raised and provide further information. This was the first time that rural women got together in a discussion of health. At the end of the meeting, some women suggested organizing more often this type of health discussions. Besides giving women more information about health they also increased their confidence in gender equality.



Community gathers for a road rehabilitation project in Bicaj Commune, Kukes Region.

Volunteerism is ...working/living with com+passion

UNV HQ Mission to Albania



Mrs. Junko Sazaki and Mr. Thuan Nguyen visiting Cakran commune

From the 19th till the 22nd of July 2004, a high level mission from UNV Headquarters in Bonn visited Albania. The mission team lasted included **Mrs. Junko Sazaki**, Chief of the Asia/Pacific/Europe and CIS (APEC) Section and **Mr. Thuan Nguyen**, Senior Programme Specialist, APEC Section.

The main objectives of the mission were to monitor the UNV programme in Albania with focus on the progress and work plan of the joint UNDP/UNV governance programme and the role and contribution of volunteers to MDGs. Moreover the mission sought to explore further programming and resource mobilization opportunities with UNDP, UN agencies, the government and local partners.

The team mission met all the UN agencies working in Albania (UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, UNFPA, WHO, UNHCR) to present the UNV programme strategies, discuss ways to enhance collaboration and identify possible areas for this.

Mrs. Sazaki and Mr. Nguyen highly appreciated the meeting with the UNVs based in Tirana. Each UNV made a 10-minute presentation on his/her work/project, followed by a brief discussion on both UNV task-related activities and the "V". All UNVs had the opportunity to present their experiences and feelings as volunteers working abroad.

The mission had then the opportunity to meet representatives of the government and of partners closely cooperating with UNV in Albania. They discussed with the Albanian Implementing Partner Organization of the RIVER SEE initiative (Albanian Youth Council) how to finalize and implement the regional co-operation initiative for the Balkans, supported by EVS.

With the Director of the Youth Directorate of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport the mission explored further forms of collaboration. Finally the mission met the representatives of SOROS and the author of the book on

volunteerism in Albania to discuss the technicalities for the publication of the book.

On the 21st of July Mrs. Sazaki and Mr. Nguyen participated to a one-day field trip to Fier to visit UNVs working for SVF/LGP



UNV Unit with Mrs. Junko Sazaki and Mr. Thuan Nguyen

The mission found that both national and international volunteers are successfully mobilizing and promoting community participation. Among other meetings were those with representatives from the Fier Regional Council, the Head of Cakran Commune, which was followed to a site visit to ongoing Micro-Capital Grant project – Reconstruction of the Second Floor of Commune Hospital for Cakran Village. The mission was subsequently invited to the house of Katerina Sulemanaj, the Head of women based CBO in Vreshtas whose family contributed about 50USD for the building of the water system.

Chiara Pace, UNV PO, underlined that the mission was a unique opportunity for UNVs to meet the UNV Headquarter management and feel their appreciation for their daily commitment and work. At the same time it was a great chance to give to UNV HQs a tangible impression of what UNVs are achieving in Albania.

At the end of the mission Mrs. Sazaki and Mr. Nguyen emphasized the importance of the observation made during the field trip in Fier, the fruitful cooperation that UNV Albania has promoted with UN agencies in Albania as well as with other partners. The mission acknowledged and cherished the important work done by the UN Volunteers in mobilizing communities in the project regions where UNVs have served as catalysts for a greater involvement and ownership of the communities.



Mrs. Junko Sazaki and Mr. Thuan Nguyen visiting Cakran Commune

Volunteerism is ...making the difference for yourself and for the others

Volunteering on-line: **how to get involved in a development project without leaving home**

www.onlinevolunteering.org



The idea is simple but effective: to allow more people to volunteer and be involved in development projects without leaving their own home. In an increasingly globalised world an Internet connection, expertise and commitment are the only requirements to volunteer and to make a difference

in people's lives by supporting them to actively participate in development.

Not everyone has the concrete opportunity to volunteer on-site at the grassroots level. Thus, on-line volunteering is a concrete way to mobilize even more people to volunteer and give them the chance to make a tangible difference in supporting development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Skills requested could be a programming knowledge, good writing ability, experience in project management, knowledge of another language, expertise in law or education or another profession, or simply the time to offer expert advice or answer email for that organization.

On-line volunteering has an enormous potential to supplement, extend and maximize the engagement of on-site volunteers and NGOs. Through this initiative on-site volunteers can get a concrete and tangible support by on-line volunteers while they are serving in the country.

Online Volunteers have skills and expertise non-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may not have, or that these organizations need to supplement the work of onsite volunteers. Online Volunteers help

organizations stretch their onsite resources even further and to serve more clients. These Online Volunteers may have sophisticated hardware or software an organization serving a developing country lacks. Online volunteering allows for the participation of people who find onsite volunteering difficult or impossible because of a disability, home obligation, transportation difficulties or work schedule.

How does the system work? People willing to volunteer can register in the online database in order to be able to sign up for opportunities. On the other side hosting organizations (non-profit organizations in country of origin), once realized that they need help from on-line volunteers and registered as a group in the database, can start creating Online Volunteering assignments in order to receive applications and select candidates. For individuals and/or hosting organizations willing to take part into this service, more detailed information can be found on the website (www.onlinevolunteering.org).

The online volunteering service has been created just 3 years ago and more than 12.000 people have signed up on this service in order to volunteer on-line. These are people who understood that on-line volunteering means developing a new constituency for development, and has the potential to increase support for the MDGs among this new constituency worldwide.

People willing to volunteer can register in the online database in order to be able to sign up for opportunities.



Caring is a reflex... You live, you help
Ram Dass

Benefits of volunteerism: a global perspective

What is volunteering?

People all around the world have different opinions and perspectives on what can be defined as volunteering activity. It can be anything; the range of answers is wide and comprehensive of many individual and societal actions. It can be laying a helping hand to people less fortunate, or giving assistance to street kids, being helpful towards elderly people, creating an entertainment facility for the community.

To others it may be a campaign for change — fighting for a better environment through a pressure group or being supportive towards an international movement to peace education and disarmament. And to the most committed it means spreading around the globe their will and expertise, helping others to attain a better life, to increase development, achieve human rights standards. The list is measureless.

Whatever form it takes, voluntary activity stands apart from paid work or leisure in three ways. Firstly, it is not carried out primarily for monetary gain. Secondly, it is carried out freely and without coercion. Thirdly, volunteering must benefit the community. **But what is the approach to measuring the values of this activity?** Given the variety of forms it takes, we run the risk of overstating the divisions between industrialized countries—which are perhaps richer in formal volunteering—and developing ones, where the informal tradition of volunteering is



often more pronounced yet less visible and applauded. In emphasizing the recognition of volunteerism's place in society, the UN General Assembly has repeatedly urged governments to do a better job of supporting those who contribute to their communities without any financial return. It is an apt culmination to the International Year of Volunteers that has mobilized people in 130 countries.

It is hardly surprising that governments around the world are waking up to volunteerism's economic and social benefits. In the United Kingdom, for example, volunteering contributes an estimated £40 billion (\$64 billion) to the economy; in Australia it reaches some 35 billion whilst in Canada its economic value has been put at \$16 billion. A recent comparative study in 22 countries estimated that volunteers put in hours equivalent to the work of 10.5 million full-time employees!

But the benefits of volunteering for the society are not solely economical. Many studies have suggested that a society rich in social capital will tend to have lower rates of crime, lower levels of school absenteeism and inter-racial conflict, and (coming full circle to economics again) higher levels of economic growth.



Volunteering works best in the context of a healthy and well-resourced public sector. Also, the benefits of volunteering are great for the individual. People suffering from social exclusion are particularly likely to benefit. Disabled people taking part in volunteering can aid social integration and challenge the negative stereotypes of themselves as passive recipients of care. For the young, volunteering offers opportunities for self-development and risk-taking, and provides a valuable grounding in citizenship.

For senior citizens, it could help the process of 'active ageing'.

In short, volunteering provides a classic win/win situation, benefiting both the volunteers and the human society in general.

Societies need to recognize and promote volunteerism as a valuable activity. And they must encourage volunteer action at home and abroad.
Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General



TOKTEN scheme

Transfer of knowledge through Expatriate Nationals

In 1977, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) Programme to contribute to reducing the adverse effects of the "brain-drain" phenomena in many developing countries. Much of the skilled intellectual and technical know-how capital of these countries, in fact, was being depleted through the immigration of its skilled personnel. To counteract this process, the UNDP initiated the TOKTEN programme offers a window of opportunity for expatriate nationals to return to volunteer for their motherland for a period of time and to engage themselves in the recovery and reconstruction of their home country.

The concept was first implemented in Turkey in 1977 and since then has been broadened and expanded to other developing countries throughout the world: Syria, Palestine, Vietnam, Lebanon, Senegal, Bosnia Herzegovina and Senegal, Poland, China, India, Pakistan and the Philippines. Since 1994 the TOKTEN Programme is executed by UNV.

The idea behind TOKTEN is rather simple: mobilizing cost-effective technical services of expatriates living abroad to work between three weeks to three months in their country of origin to support the country's development process. The UNV TOKTEN scheme provides an official framework and multidimensional and multisectoral umbrella to facilitate the return of motivated and talented expatriate nationals men and women for short-term assignments to support the development efforts in their countries within an enabling environment guided and supported by the UN System.

Following the UN system approach of building self-reliance, the TOKTEN scheme focuses on capacity building of the national government and UN agencies at the country level .

Volunteers under the TOKTEN scheme have served governments, public and private sector enterprises, universities and other organisations in fields covering an extremely wide range: from agriculture, engineering, and sciences to computer technology and management. It is

based on a spirit of volunteerism because TOKTEN volunteers are not paid direct salaries but are entitled to roundtrip air ticket and a per diem allowance.

The main objectives of this special volunteer programme under the aegis of the United Nations are:

- ✓ Promote volunteerism to contribute to a more cohesive society by building trust and reciprocity among nationals who share one language, one culture, and one history with diverse experiences.
- ✓ Encourage and empower new mechanisms for volunteering such as national and local networks of grass roots volunteerism, national UN Volunteers scheme, and mixed teams of international and national volunteers, which enriches the learning experience and accordingly the development process.
- ✓ Merge the expatriates' acquired learning with their familiarity of local culture and language to process advanced information, knowledge and skills for use of their home countries.
- ✓ Enhance national affinity across borders, which in some cases might result in expatriate nationals returning to their homeland.
- ✓ Contribute to human resource development in science and technology, private sector development, social and cultural sectors to achieve sustainable human development and build the national capacity.

TOKTEN has proven to be a unique and powerful expression of volunteerism among expatriate nationals. During the past 20 years it has enhanced national affinity across borders, has built up knowledge networks locally and between developed and developing countries and, finally, has contributed to human resource development in science and technology, private sector development, social and cultural sectors for achieving equitability and alleviating poverty.

No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted
Aesop

A successful TOKTEN story from Afghanistan: the UNV PO

My name is Bashir Ahmad AHMADI, I am a 33 years old Afghan. I had worked with CARE International for 9 years, in different positions and offices. My first assignment was Admin Assistant then office Manager and last one was Human Resources officer.

I have joined UNV support team as a Country Operational Assistant (COA) in February 2003, after passing 2 interviews and 5 months of recruitment process. On that time our team consisted of 3 persons (UNV Programme Manager, TOKTEN Programme Officer and me). Our TOKTEN Programme Officer had resigned in November 2003 and the post has been vacant till September 2004.

When I joined UNV, there were 40 UNVs assigned to different agencies. Now UNVs in Afghanistan have increased to 64. I have been promoted as a TOKTEN Program Officer since September 2004, after passing an interview and all other recruitment process.

The TOKTEN program has been launched in Afghanistan through UNDP after Bonn Peace Agreement in December 2001. During 2002, 2003 and 2004, 22 TOKTEN UNVs have completed their assignment.

TOKTEN Programme is pleased to facilitate the strong and active contribution to capacity building within Government made by the TOKTEN Volunteers. This programme is much appreciated and we have been able to actively participate in a variety of structural development of TOKTEN supported governmental organizations. Respective TOKTEN Volunteers have been very professionally dealing with the assignments given to them and some of them served at the Deputy Minister post levels.

Among many others, I would like to underline two examples of TOKTEN achievements in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's new currency, introduced in October 2002, has been signed by one of the TOKTEN Volunteers: Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady, a professional banker and university professor. He holds a Ph.D. in political science and an MBA in finance and management policy. His job as governor of the central Afghanistan Bank is to

implement a new banking system in the country. Since taking up his work in July, his main priorities have been currency reform, legal reform, and modernization, structural reform, banking system reform and personnel development. The governor of the Central Bank is supported by another TOKTEN Volunteer who serves as First Deputy Governor and ten other National UNVs.



*Mr. Bashir Ahmad, Ahmadi,,
 Tokten UNV Programme Officer
 in Afghanistan*

The two TOKTEN Volunteers (engineers), working for the ministry of Housing, Building and Town Planning managed the first international conference in Kabul "The Future of Kabul City" to plan the expansion of Kabul city. More than two hundred experienced engineers participated in this conference and shared their views. The plan for the New Kabul is underway and will be implemented soon.

Kids corner



*All the UNVs welcome Danil in Albania,
 son of our former IUNV, Mr. Dmitry
 Yakhnov*

*A pessimist, they say, sees a glass of water as being half empty; an optimist sees the same glass as half full.
 But a giving person sees a glass of water and starts looking for someone who might be thirsty.
 G. Donald Gale*



UNV contribution to Common Country Assessment (CCA) Albania 2004

In broad consultation with the Albanian Government, NGOs, and other important financial and political stake-

holders in the country, UN agencies in Albania prepared the [second Common Country Assessment in 2004](#). The CCA is the primary instrument for the United Nations Country Team to evaluate the progress of national development. By contributing to the National Strategy for Social and Economic Development (NSSED), the agenda for MDGs and the accomplishment of other national priorities the CCA is an instrument designed to increase the effectiveness of UN projects in Albania and to foster co-operation and joint programming between the different UN agencies.

The CCA was prepared by the UNCT in Albania in consultation with Albania government institutions, donors, members of civil society, academics, the media, UN agencies, and other partners involved with MDGs, the NSSED, EU integration. The process of preparing the second CCA has been based on the work of six Thematic Groups: development and governance, education, environment, gender, health, poverty. 193 persons participated in the process and, more specifically, 70 people from UN agencies. [UNV actively participated into the process by giving its own contribution in three thematic groups: development and governance, health and education.](#)

The objectives of the CCA are fourfold: identify the root causes and group-specific impact of poverty and other development challenges; determine the opportunities – as well as the obstacles - for active and meaningful participation in national governance and development processes; identify the capacity gaps between rights holders making claims and duty bearers meeting obligations, develop crisis prevention measures and capacities.

Albania published the first CCA report in June 2002. That report focused on the themes of Human Security adapted to the Albanian context, national strategies, the UN niche and international commitments – particularly the MDGs and core human Rights Conventions. The first CCA Report constituted the first attempt by the UNCT to carry out a common assessment of the development situation in the country.

What is the CCA?

The CCA is the primary instrument for the United Nations Country Team to evaluate the progress of national development. The CCA also identifies significant development issues with a focus on the MDGs, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration and international conferences, summits, conventions and UN human rights protocols.

The preparation of the 2nd CCA was based on new guidelines formulated in response to the UN second reform Agenda set by the Secretary General, and on the experience gained since the 1st CCA process. Joint exercises analyzing the 2002 MDG baseline report and the MDG national & regional consensus building process enriched the research and writing of the 2nd CCA.

The 2004 CCA has identified a set of key development challenges and opportunities for the UN agencies in Albania. These include poverty reduction, growth that respects human rights, national education campaigns addressing discrimination and the violation of human rights, initiatives that bring young people into the development strategy, the encouragement of both local and global approaches to economic development, the improvement of data collection regarding social and economic inequalities, and the promotion of regional analyses in the MDGs monitoring process. The way forward is seen in terms of improved public-private partnerships, strengthened modalities of international cooperation and greater involvement of stakeholders in decision-making.

Key CCA Findings in Albania

The CCA identifies the prospects for achieving MDGs and suggests that access to basic services, continuation of fundamental economic and social reforms, decentralization, improving public sector delivery capacity and data availability must be addressed adequately for the country to make substantial progress towards their attainment. The core governance challenges comprise observance of the rule of law and maintaining political stability and accountability.

It is only through the eyes of others do you see yourself !Foo-Ji Wei

An energizing workshop in Bonn for 24 POs



Some of the 24 POs invited to the workshop

Ms. Chiara Pace, UNV Albania Programme Officer was among the 24 POs who attended the UNV Programme Officer Workshop which took place in Bonn at UNV Headquarters from 13th to 20th of September 2004. The general objectives of the workshop were a better understanding of the renewed drive of UNV to promote volunteering for development (V4D), using *inter alia* serving UNVs as best advocates for V4D, as to equip all the POs with basic skills to operationalise V4D. One of the guiding principles of the PO workshop was interaction, and for this reason the active contribution of the UNV POs to shaping UNV's ongoing and planned initiatives was one of the key elements that contributed to reenergized all the participants. Among sessions on the UNV's vision and mission – and how to translate the mission into action – on operations development and management and on staff competencies and leadership skills, a particular focus was on partnership development, in order to cre-

ate a clear understanding by the UNV POs of the importance of strategic partnerships and how to go about building and consolidating them. The 24 POs also had the opportunity to share experiences and best practices on UNV's past, on-



Ad De Raad, UNV Executive Coordinator, in front of the share-fair

going and planned activities, with a specific reference on how to promote MDGs through the concept of volunteerism.



Asia/Pacific/Europe and CIS (APEC) Section with André François Carvalho, Chief of Programme Development and Operations Group at UNV HQ in Bonn

To Contact UNV Albania

United Nations Development Programme
 UNV Unit
 Rr. Deshmoret e 4 Shkurtit Villa 35, Tirana (Albania)
 Phone: +355 4 23 31 48/9
 Fax: +355 4 23 20 75
<http://www.unv.undp.org/al/>
 E-mail: unv.albania@undp.org

For more information please contact

- *Editor in Chief*
 Ms. Chiara Pace, UNV Albania Programme Officer
chiara.pace@undp.org
- *Editor & Designer*
 Ms. Stefania di Paola, UNV Albania Intern
stefania.di.paola@undp.org
- *Editor & Designer*
 Mr. Genci Kojdheli, UNV Albania COA
genci.kojdheli@undp.org

Dear readers, We welcome your feedback!! Please share your ideas and comments with us at: unv.albania@undp.org