



UN
Volunteers



The true adventure is not exploring new lands, but gaining new views.....

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Volunteering for gender!

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the issuing of the eight **UNV Albania Newsletter**, conceived and created by the UNV team. After the last edition on the International Volunteer Day 2005, this issue focuses on **Gender**.

Global overview



The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.



The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted unanimously at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, reflects a new international commitment to the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere. Following the Beijing Conference and endorsement of the International Platform for Action, the UNV programme joined forces with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to develop a project proposal titled "Follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action: UNV Support to Gender Mainstreaming".



Gender mainstreaming is not a women's issue — it is just as much an issue for men, and is a social and community issue. It is about how men and women have access and control of resources and about how boys and girls are schooled and fed in different ways. This leads to different levels of health, education, salary, jobs and decision-making. The UNDP/UNIEFM/UNV project addresses these issues and targets men, especially with the help of Luis Mora, the first male UNV gender specialist.



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January – April 2006

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For more information:

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

"Men, their rights, and nothing more; women, their rights, and nothing less." (Anthony, Susan B., Women's rights leader, 1820-1906)



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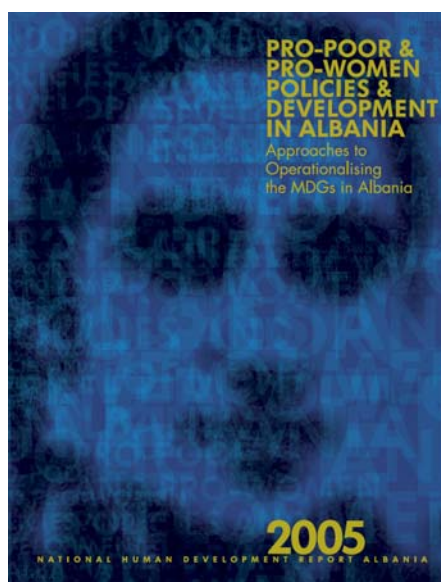
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Volunteering for gender!

Global overview

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Using gender-responsive budgets to recognize and strengthen women's role in governance and resource allocation in Latin America is the focus of a new initiative launched by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. The two-year project, "Engendering budgets: Valuing women's voluntary contributions to national development in Latin America," will work to mainstream a gender perspective into local government expenditure plans. Through this project, UNIFEM and UNV will make women's unpaid and volunteer contributions to the health of their communities, which is still largely unrecognized, both visible and valued. (www.unifem.org)



In Albania

The Albanian government has become signatory of the CEDAW in 1993.

Volunteer activists form the back-bone of the international's women's movement, raising their voices on policies that have impact on women, speaking from the everyday practical experience on the ground. Working to mainstream gender through society, they assist development institutions to map and collect data on gender disparities; develop the capacity of institutions to properly use gender specific data at local and national levels; provide technical support to programmes targeting single mothers; promote the potential of the Internet and other information and communications technology (ICT) as a library of information and research tools, and to raise awareness and assist national initiatives promoting female education.

Through volunteer-involving organizations (VIOs) the concept of volunteerism can work for pro-women policies helping local groups advocate for compulsory education for girls as well as boys; supporting initiatives related to protecting female teenagers, including family planning; promoting advocacy activities for a greater gender balance in key institutions such as parliaments and training fender-focused organizations in intensive use of information and communication technology for advocacy work. Finally volunteer networks help expand national and international networks of gender promoting VIOs and facilitate the exposure of gender-oriented VIOs to innovative approaches on gender equality by like-minded organizations.

UNDP National Human Development Report Albania 2005, "Pro-poor Pro-women Policies & Development in Albania"

www.undp.org.al

"Our true nature is free of any and all notions of gender, of any notions of difference whatsoever." (Andrew Cohen)



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Volunteering helped gender equality among *Kuksian* students

by Genta Konci, UNDP Local Governance Programme

Green Club Bicaj is trying to sensitize, students of Bicaj High School and other schools of the region on gender equality. Green Club organization has been formed in early 2004, with the scope of involving young volunteers in the environment protection and preservation. Later on this organization increased membership and type of activities, which have expanded to other subjects like gender equality.

The Green Club organization represents the voices of the students in Bicaj commune. Female members, are also very active in the decision making process of the organization. With the 35 per cent of its member female, girls' voice is now being heard in the organization.

"What we're trying to do is to inform our friends, boys and girls, on gender issues," says Artiola, member of Green Club association. "Boys and girls have to understand why it's important to have gender balance in our life."

For the past 12 months, Arlinda's responsibilities have been the organization of various awareness activities with students of different schools, in the framework of UNDP Gender Programme. The activities have included drawing and poetry competition at Havzi Nela school, Gender Equality Week in Bicaj High School, Gender Equality Moving Theater in Kukes region and the publication of two editions of Sheja magazine – "The youth magazine on gender equality". All these awareness activities have involved more than 1500 students throughout the region.

One concern for many girls is that they do not get equally involved in after-school activities. Boys are organized in music bands, dancing groups, and other. While, girls are discriminated from participating in these groups, mainly because of fam-



Still in their families, men take decisions on women's behalf. To fight against this, Green Club members have involved parents in many of their activities.

"What we're doing is raising awareness on gender equality," says Artiola. "Hence, there's no point in just having women showing the importance of gender issues. We are fighting against the stereotype which sees gender as a women issue. It is both women and men issue, so that's why our activities involve equal number of boys and girls." Equally important is that after each activity, discussions are conducted, allowing to bringing out concerning issues.

While she says it's still too early to measure the impact of these activities, she has received some feedback from female students, who are saying they notice a change, especially in attitudes of boys towards them.

"We're at the beginning," she says. "We would like to get where boys and girls in our school get equal treatments and rewards, but our first steps have been their active equal involvement, and awareness activities on gender equality."

(www.lgp.undp.org.al)

"Peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men "
- United Nations Security Council



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IOM, A PERSPECTIVE ON GENDER AND VOLUNTEERISM

by Alessia Montanari, UNV within IOM, *Provision of Information and Services to Migrants in Albania*
Migrant Service Center



IOM - OIM

IOM in Albania is mainly committed to support and assist the government in implementing the National Strategy on Migration as well as the Action Plan, aiming at assuring a proper management of migration, through a pro-active attitude of Albanian authorities facing a question of great impact on the country's economy and labour market.

A key area of intervention is the prevention of trafficking in human beings, as well as the related promotion of regular and safe channels of migration. Within this framework, IOM is currently shifting from directly assisting to gradually strengthening local partners in developing and implementing a wide range of activities addressing victims of trafficking (provision of shelter, reintegration assistance and socio-economic inclusion) as well as the general population (information and raise awareness campaigns).

In addition to governmental bodies, IOM is closely cooperating with a wide range of national and local NGOs, strongly encouraging women and fostering gender issues reaching the top in the political agenda. Operating in Tirana as well as in specific and targeted areas of the country, these organizations play a great role in guaranteeing an effective implementation of the projects, in the meanwhile creating a positive and deep network of structures and people committed to similar purposes, sharing experiences and ideas in order to further improve the quality of services as well as the level of interest and participation of the population.

www.iomtirana.org.al

It is worth to focus on the **contribution of volunteerism** to a greater efficiency into several NGOs' daily activities.

That is, for example, the case of **VATRA**, a well-known and appreciated organization providing victims of trafficking with assistance, counselling and training, facilitating their reintegration into Albanian social life. Not only project assistants and social workers in the organization demonstrate their absolute involvement as well as their human and professional commitment spending much more time at work than they are supposed to do, but also the presence of a number of volunteers is of key importance in assuring a better and continuously improving quality of services.

Students offer their time to assist social workers in their duties and disseminating information among the general community, teachers are used to contribute with their knowledge and abilities in the preparation and implementation of language courses as well as vocational training for the beneficiaries, while municipalities do cooperate in terms of technical and logistic assistance.

On the other side, beneficiaries seem to welcome and enjoy the presence of volunteers, widening their social network and soliciting them in accelerating their successful and complete reintegration.

Actually, volunteerism is one of the pillars of social work I was familiar with also in Italy, where I used to work in a reception centre for stranger girls victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation. From this experience, I could firstly learn that volunteerism is one of the most effective way to deeply widen the number of real 'beneficiaries', because the whole community gets vigorous enrichment when a general interest on social issues starts to be conveyed among large portions of population.



"You don't have to be anti-man to be pro-woman." (Jane Galvin Lewis)



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At people, where environment and gender (also) meet

By Mihallaq Qirjo, Country Director—The Regional Environmental Center, Albania

A few months ago, there were some news aired on TV, which might have gone with no special attention for many other viewers, but as I was preparing some material on the relations between gender and environment, it look not only my curiosity. It was presenting a case of Durres city, where some kindergarten was closed due to poor hygiene conditions caused by the sewerage water system, therefore mothers were the most ones to take care of children, refraining temporarily themselves of work. It became the case around which I stirred that presentation. Traveling across Albania, one can easily observe the impact of different gender roles to environment. But after a closer investigation of the links between environment and gender related issues, show that both of them still remain not discovered and addressed properly.



Women and men are likely to have different roles in family and community, and they are likely to have different priorities in environmental protection issues. Women's domestic responsibilities (e.g. water and detergent use) may mean that they adopt unsound/sound environmental practices when these resources are scarce. due to low economic incentives and environmental awareness.

Most of Albanian families are not aware of the negative impacts of phosphorous-based detergents for the eutrophication of surface waters. They tent to buy the needed product mostly driven by the low price and/or the mark. Such effect might be of special importance for consideration in cities, which are closer to big lakes such as Shkodra and Pogradec. In addition, no water saving sensitivity is developed.

Men and women are also likely to have different interactions with the environments, which present each gender with different opportunities to protect it. Traditional attitudes around masculinity may make men reluctant to adopt environmentally



sound practices, for example, in terms of motor vehicle use. In Albania, the number of car users is increasing, but dominating considerably by men. They tend to be also the owners as the car may be seen as

status symbol in a man's professional life. While, women are the ones to use and suffer more by the non-qualitative public transport in the traffic jungle of Tirana and other big cities. Who suffers the most out of the air pollution, daily delays and stress to reach at working places, etc? Is bicycle tradition lost?



"We have been very conditioned by the cultures that we come from and are usually very identified with the particular gender that we happen to be a member of." (Andrew Cohen)



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At people, where environment and gender (also) meet

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It is agreed that there is no any natural predisposition on environmental protection at women more than men or vice versa. Because women often play the role of “care” or “healer” in the community, they may poses knowledge of environmentally sustainable practices, such as benefits driving from medicinal plants and other non-timber forestry products. In rural areas of Korca region as in many other areas of the country, women and children are the most engaged in collection of different medicine plants, wood for fuel, produce handcraft for family use and small scale sale. People has brought to today many environmental sustainable practices, which due to high socio-economic pressure are at high risk of being lost of the tradition and cultural heritage and therefore the nation collective memory.

It is visible, there is enormous room and opportunities for everybody to work and contribute in promoting such patters of behavior that ensures a long term healthy living in the family, community and the whole planet. Understanding the issue on different gender roles and their impact on environment will help us on addressing it properly though the individual and collective initiative. Schools, non for profit organizations, community based groups can dedicate their time and energy on unveiling these links, promoting gender equity not only on equal share of resources and workload, but also supporting new ideas and life style towards reducing the consumption and pollution.

The daily reality provides many cases of gender impacts on environment, and much more should be the environmental impacts to different gender groups. We are used to see them quite separated in time and content, but it is hard to escape out of any, if we do all work to built Albania as prosperous European society.



“Sexual, racial, gender violence and other forms of discrimination and violence in a culture cannot be eliminated without changing culture.” (Charlotte Bunch)



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ONGOING PROJECTS

UNV/Civil Society Initiative on Volunteerism for Regional Integration and Youth Volunteerism

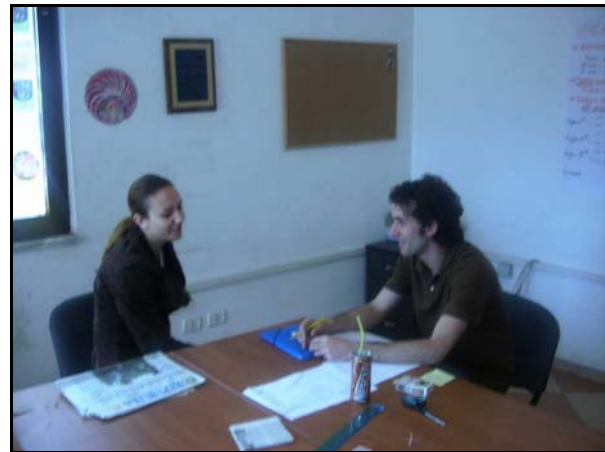
The UNV/UNDP Regional Integration through Volunteers Exchanges for Reconciliation in South East Europe (RIVER SEE) programme seeks to develop regional confidence and connect people and governments within the Balkan region. The project aims to contribute to regional integration, social cohesion and poverty reduction in the Balkans by strengthening networks through East-East volunteer exchanges, promoting volunteerism and proactive citizenship, and capacity development of civil society to deal with local development and governance processes.

For more info visit: www.riversee.org

Updates:

During March the selection process of the volunteers and of the hosting organizations has been done in the 7 areas of the project.

On 3^d and 4th April in Tirana, 10 Albanian volunteers have been selected for the exchanges.



A Regional Board meeting has been held in Skopje on 27th – 29th April to approve the pre-matching of volunteers and hosting organizations.

At the end of May, beginning of June the first exchanges will start to take place among the 7 areas.

"Volunteers don't necessarily have the time, but they have the heart." (Anonymous)



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Promoting MDG 7 in Albania through Awareness and Volunteerism

In December 2005, funds were secured through the UNV MDG Small Grant Facility to implement awareness raising initiatives on sustainable development and mobilize specific target groups to actively participate in local development and the application of MDG 7 in collaboration with the Regional Environmental Center (REC). The main activities will focus on organizing public events to promote and facilitate public participation in decision making processes, establish specific stakeholder structures to support and facilitate the achievement of MDG 7; and promote access to relevant information through the dissemination of educational material and collaboration with academic and educational institutions.

For more info please visit: www.unv.undp.org.al

Updates:

On 6th April in Berat it has been organized an MDG Forum with the Local Authorities and civil society.

In parallel an MDG Day in a secondary school took place, with a symbolic demonstration, drawing competition, and planting of the MDG tree in cooperation with the Vlova MDG Youth Ambassadors.



During May similar activities will be repeated tentatively in Tirana, Kukës, Fier, Vlova and Shkodra.

"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give." (Winston Churchill)



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Joint Strategic Campaign to promote the Millennium Development Goals

The partnership consist of awareness activities with a specific focus on the youth of Albania and builds on the strong media relationships that UNDP, UNV, REC, OXFAM and SNV have established, including the UN Press Club. The campaign focuses on creating opportunities for development partners/ stakeholders (media, youth, Roma, minorities, civil society organizations, private sector etc.) to advocate for the MDGs so that a broad cross section of society is fully represented. Advocating includes pushing for the achievement of the MDG Plus agenda (more ambitious targets) so that the MDGs are achieved by 2015. The campaign seeks to ensure that the voices of those most affected by poverty are heard the loudest.

For more info please visit: www.mdg.org.al



keep the promise
Millennium Development Goals



The Regional Environmental Center (REC)
for Central and Eastern Europe



"Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be



UNV SCHEMES

Corporate/Private Sector (CPS) development

Albania has been an important recipient of UNV Corporate Private Sector (CPS) advisory missions. Over the past four years, more than 50 UNVs have been deployed in more than 100 missions for developing business plans and feasibility studies, particularly in the agro-industry and tourism sectors. Since the beginning of 2006 already 2 missions have been realized.

For more info please visit: www.unv.undp.org.al



Mr. Renzo D'Attoma, member of the Italian Association Volontari Senior Professionali (VSP), made several missions in Albania, to support the development of farming of vineyards and production of wine and raki.

During the last mission Mr. D'Attoma, in October 2005, focused on the possibility to organize and to make operational small family based wine-producers. Hence, to the winegrowers have been presented simple plans for the wine cellars, with modern equipment to rationalize the production.

UNITeS

UNITeS, the United Nations Information Technology Service, promotes volunteer involvement as fundamental to efforts focused on information and communications technologies for development (ICT4D). The UNV coordinates this UN ICT initiative.

For more info please visit: www.unites.org

Online Volunteering Service

The UN Volunteers programme promotes online volunteering as a way to help organizations and initiatives serving the developing world. Hundreds of organizations, including OneWorld, UNDP, and various NGOs recruit and manage online volunteers through our free Online Volunteering service.

For more info please visit: www.onlinevolunteering.org

"We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop." (Mother Theresa)



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FACTS AND FIGURES

The UN Volunteers country office was officially established in Albania, in September 2001. It has been focusing since then on building on the Albanian Government predisposition for democratic governance and civic engagement, and tapping into the growing potential for collaborating with the civil society and local government in promoting volunteering for development.

3 Albanians are currently serving abroad as UN Volunteers: one with the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), one with the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire ((UNOCI) and one with the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC).

4 International UN Volunteers and **2 National UNVs** are currently serving in Albania with different UN organizations and Albanian organizations and institutions.



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