



UNV ALBANIA Newsletter

Year I, Number 4
October–
December 2004

The International Volunteer Day 2004

IVD in ALBANIA is EVERYDAY!

Volunteering enables ordinary people to perform extraordinary tasks. In **UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan** words *'the strength of volunteerism is its universality – the countless acts of solidarity and assistance that take place every day, in developed and developing countries alike. There is no right or wrong way to volunteer. All that is needed is a willingness to share time, a skill or a good idea'*.

The contribution of volunteers and young people is of paramount importance in meeting the challenges that the Millennium Development Goals represent. As **Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, Administrator of UNDP**, notes *'vital to the success of getting the MDGs on track now is civil society mobilization, where young people in particular have a critical role to play. Young people not only represent the future, they are also a rich source of the kinds of innovative solutions needed to address some of the most pressing problems facing us today. As such, young people have the potential to be a powerful force as advocates for the MDGs and agents for change in their societies, and already, thousands of young people, in the North and South alike, are showing what is possible in the fight against global poverty in their own communities and across borders'*.



Young volunteers in Gjirokaster

Mr. Ad de Raad, UNV Executive Coordinator, highlighted *'more and more governments, civil society, volunteer-involving organizations, and ordinary citizens are using International Volunteer Day to recognize and promote volunteering for development. The Millennium Development Goals are providing a valuable framework for this participation, as growing numbers of people associate themselves to the Goals through voluntary action'*.

Volunteerism is ... giving hope

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IVD in ALBANIA is everyday... continued

Catching with such a volunteerism spirit the message by Ad de Raad, to celebrate the IVD 2004 the UNV programme in Albania decided to focus on the theme of “**Youth, Volunteerism and MDGs**” and to **spread the activities during the whole week** in order to have a greater impact in all the country.

By doing this, UNV aims at reminding that December 5th is ‘more than a day’. On December 6th, newspapers may turn their attention elsewhere, however the work of volunteers goes on with or without publicity and well-deserved recognition. Therefore, the motto adopted for this year has been **"5th December 2004 in ALBANIA: IVD is everyday"**.

United Nations Volunteers’ past experience has shown that innovative approaches appealing to all ages and genders can succeed in mobilizing communities and raising awareness on the contribution volunteers make to development. The activities organized by UNV for the IVD 2004 aimed at involving almost all the categories of the civil society (children, disadvantaged groups, women, youth, artists, educators, academics) through different and original methods: debates on the media, artistic shows, fairs, organization of social work and awards.

IVD in Albania

This past decade, Albania has experienced rapid political, economic, and social transformations, which have increased the expectations and challenges faced by the population. Though the early gains, which were brought about by radical reforms during the period 1991-1997, were promising, they were mitigated by the near anarchy that followed the 1997 crisis. Although Albania’s main political aspiration is its integration in the EU community, there remain numerous obstacles to the fulfillment of this goal. Weak democratic governing institutions, lack of foreign direct investment, rampant criminal and black market economy activity, poor infrastructure, and a high rate of poverty in the predominantly rural agricultural areas are just a few of the challenges that face Albania.

The country’s socialist background, which emphasized forced cooperation, has made it difficult to mobilize communities to work together to address their development issues throughout this emerging democratic era.

People of Albania used to have a strong will and desire to help other people in need, even if they had to sacrifice their own interests. Conversely, the traditionally positive concept of volunteerism was weakened under the communist regime and the free will to volunteer (to help and to service) was replaced by “coercive volunteerism”. While this period was characterized by high rates of involvement of people of all generations, particularly youth, in various forms of voluntary work, it has also created a negative image of the concept.

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

Aesop

IVD in Albania...continued

The emergence of active civil society organizations though, particularly over the last decade, is gradually restoring the traditional forms of volunteerism to its rightful position. Recent research initiatives on volunteerism carried out in Albania intended to identify the actual situation of volunteerism and its impact on development of the respective countries, as well as challenges and opportunities to be further addressed for the promotion of volunteerism.

The International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001 created global awareness about the massive contribution individuals make to the development process through volunteer service, through mutual aid and self-help, and through campaigning and other expressions of voluntary participation. However, raising awareness on

the importance of volunteering needs a constant attention and promotion. Every year, on **December 5th**, the **International Volunteer Day** is celebrated in more than half the countries of the world. The annual "**International Volunteer Day**" (IVD) was proclaimed by the United Nations 18 years ago and has played a central role in drawing global attention to the work of volunteers all around the world. IVD is dedicated to volunteers working in communities around the globe, and celebrates the efforts of those who have made an important contribution to society through volunteer service. Since 2003 UNV Albania took the lead in joining forces with six other volunteering organizations in the country, organizing activities to celebrate IVD and further promote the message of volunteerism and the work of volunteers in Albania.

IVD in ALBANIA is everyday: DECEMBER 4th

TV Discussion on Gender and Volunteering

Location: Kukes

In the city of Kukes was organized a **TV Talk-Show on volunteering** aiming to raise the public awareness on the importance of volunteerism in the development of civil society. During the debate, representatives of the Regional Council, experts and civil society representatives made interventions. Examples of volunteerism at regional level have been presented, and among others, the experience of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that have considerably contributed to the development of their own villages.

*There is no better exercise for your heart
than reaching down and helping to lift someone up.
Bernard Meltzer*

IVD in ALBANIA is everyday: DECEMBER 5th

Promoting MDGs and Volunteerism among children through the CIRCUS

Location: Tirana



The Circus show

UNV, along with the Circus of Tirana, the Albanian Youth Council, and the NGOs MJAFT! and VIS have used the power of the Circus to bring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) closer to the children of Albania. The MDGs and the concept of volunteerism were promoted amongst children by organizing Circus Show. Skits of clowns, trapeze artists, magicians and dogs were voluntarily performed by more than 20 professional Albanian artists who are part of the historical tradition of the Albanian Circus. Between the many different performances, an MDG Fairy Tale was told to 200 children coming from orphanage houses ways to achieve the MDGs in Albania.

The **MDG Fairy Tale**, prepared by the UNV country team, presented the 8 Millennium Development Goals through children's language and invited all the children to start with their friends in being part of the efforts to make the world a better place. An overview of each goal was shown, as well as messages for children on

how to achieve them. The slogans used to promote the MDGs among the children were: **"No More Poor, Let's Stop Poverty and Hunger; Education for All; Friendly Schools for Each Albanian Child; Boys and Girls are Equal, Healthy Moms and Babies, A Disease Free Albania, A Clean and Green Albania, Working Together for a Better world"**. Additionally, MDG T-shirts with the slogans used in the Fairy Tale were provided to each child; posters, banners and printed material on the MDGs and UNV were displayed throughout the venue as well.

The event was also attended by representatives from the UN, the Municipality of Tirana and the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport. The private sector – **PEPSI** – also participated in the project by providing free drinks and snacks that were offered to all the children at the end of the show.



The dogs performance

There are many wonderful things that will never be done if you don't do them.
Charles D. Gill



Promoting MDGs and Volunteerism among children through the CIRCUS... *continued*

“Inviting 200 disadvantaged children to attend a Circus show is not only an opportunity to let them spend a special day, but also a new way to sensitize people on the importance of volunteering for children in need. The Circus project has succeeded not just in mobilizing community participation, but above all in increasing awareness about MDGs among children using simple but powerful slogans. The Circus has always been a special way to touch children’s hearts directly and telling them about the MDGs through a Fairy Tale has been a very efficient way to promote them”

Ms. Alketa Hila
Director of the Zyber Halluli
Orphanage House of Tirana

“UNV past experience has shown that innovative approaches appealing to all ages and genders can succeed. The previous success of the “Regional Cinema Screening for the MDGs” demonstrated the effectiveness of promoting the MDGs in Albania through arts and how one such way of mobilizing communities as an initial step to more concrete action was through film and culture. Following that experience and focusing the IVD’s activities on children of vulnerable groups, UNV decided to organize another event where the MDGs and the concept of volunteerism would be promoted using arts, particularly through one art form that children enjoy the most: the CIRCUS”

Chiara Pace
UNV Programme Officer in Albania



The audience...

“This brilliant UNV idea was not only helpful for the promotion of the MDG’s by raising the awareness about some very important issues in Albania, but it was an enormous help for the Albanian Circus promotion and distribution considering that the 45 years of history of the Circus of Tirana shows that the Albanian strong cultural identity is widely applauded, and should be encouraged even further”

Kuitim Dumi
Director of the Circus of Tirana



The clowns...

Being a man or a woman is a matter of birth. Being a man or a woman who makes a difference is a matter of choice.
Byron Garrett

DECEMBER 5th ... continued

Volunteers Award 2004 Ceremony

Location: Tirana

United Nations Volunteers, along with the Albanian Youth Council and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, organized the 'Volunteer Awards 2004 Ceremony' to express the gratitude to all those volunteers who better represented the spirit of volunteerism and contributed to the overall community benefit. Five categories of people have been awarded during the ceremony:

1. The best group of volunteers
2. The best male volunteer

3. The best female volunteer
4. The best expert volunteer (that has contributed voluntarily with his expertise)
5. The best foreign volunteer that had worked in Albania

Mr. **Luan Pustina**, the volunteer who assists UNV Albania with **Corporate Private Sector (CPS) Missions**, has been awarded as the "**Best Male Volunteer of 2004**". By actively supporting the deployment of CPS Volunteers Mission in Albania, Mr. Pustina not only is involved in sup-

Radio and TV programmes

Location: Kukës and Fier

In the city of Kukës a **radio programme** was organized aiming at raising visibility as regards the contribution women and volunteers make for the economical and social welfare of their own communities.

In the city of Fier the Volunteer Promoter and training Specialist of LGP gave a live 30 minutes television interview on TV Apollonia focusing on the different forms and characteristics of volunteerism. In addition, TV Apollonia broadcasted the LGP documentary which showed many volunteer-involving activities carried out in the region.

Working for the community welfare

Location: villages in Kukës region

In Shtiqen village (Shtiqen Commune): in collaboration with the teachers, UNV organized the painting of the newly internal walls of the High School.

In Krenxa village (Shtiqen Commune): The volunteers, who were CBOs members, children, students, LGP staff and local authorities, planted some willow trees around the newly constructed health centers.

In Bicaj village (Bicaj commune): UNV, along with the Green Club members (youth groups of the village) and local authorities, organized an activity of territory maintenance and plant of trees. The main aim was to mobilize to the maximum extent strong groups of volunteers able to protect and improve ecological system in region.

Volunteerism is ... hope in a better future for everyone



Working for the community welfare ... continued

In **Osmanaj village (Bicaj commune)**: the United Nations Volunteers helped local people to repair the water spring in order to secure possible future water sources.



Volunteers working for territory maintenance and plant of trees

IVD in ALBANIA is everyday: DECEMBER 6th

Volunteering for the Community

Location: Fier

Cleaning of the Hospital Surroundings - Around 17 members of CBOs and student were involved voluntarily in the cleaning up of Hospital territory of Cakran commune. This small activity will soon be followed by construction of a relaxing green area in front of the hospital building for patients to enjoy during warmer climate.

Construction of Varibop School Wall by Students and CBO members - Members of the Community Based Organizations of Varibop village in the Commune organized an activity to help reconstruct the surrounding wall around the local school. The wall was constructed with iron material to secure the safety of the students who play in the sports ground near the road. More than 25 students participated in the event volunteering to clean the grounds surrounding the school land painting of the newly constructed wall.

Painting of kindergarten fence, surrounding wall - CBO members painted the wall of the kindergarten's fence, with a length of 100 m and 2 m depth in white and green. Prior to painting the territory of the kindergarten was cleaned. At the end of the work CBO members opened a discussion on International Volunteerism Day stressing out the need that such kind of activities should be carried out during the whole year and not only on celebration's days.

Volunteerism is...to serve, not to be served

IVD in ALBANIA is everyday: DECEMBER 9th

Documentary 'For Tomorrow' on local TV and articles on newspapers

Location: Gjirokaster

The LGP Documentary entitled 'For Tomorrow' has been transmitted on TVGj and Channel 7. The documentary was focused on highlighting the paramount importance of communities contributing on a voluntary basis to their own development and well-being. At the same time some articles on the same topic have been published on the local newspaper "Dita Jug" and the national newspaper "Korrieri".

IVD in ALBANIA is everyday: DECEMBER 10th

Gjirokaster Clean

Location: Gjirokaster



Children and MDGs!

Clean' on December 10th. Almost 2500 students coming from all the secondary and high schools of Gjirokaster have been mobilized to clean the school's surroundings every day and put garbage in the nearest waste collection place. The activity started at 12 am and, after cleaning the territory of their schools, all the children and students went

UNV along out and started cleaning the neighboring streets and with local eas. Children and teachers have been part of a big sen-NGOs and sibilization process in the communities of Gjirokaster the 14 Di- municipality by spreading different brochures, MDG rectors of all posters, UNV posters and some more materials pro- the schools vided by Red Cross. Being interviewed by local media, in Gjiro- many participants stressed the significance of the mes-

kaster have sage be-organized hind the ac- the activity tivity: the 'Gjirokaster importance



A cleaning team...

You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give...
Winston Churchill

IVD in ALBANIA is everyday: DECEMBER 13th

NGO Fair and Distribution of posters on local strategic goals (MDGs)

Location: Fier



The NGOs Fair

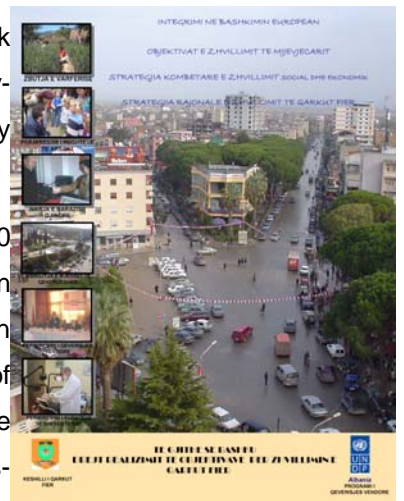
UNV in Fier organized the 'NGO fair' to bring together the different NGOs working in the region. The main objective has been to favor information share and peer exchange concerning the activities and projects carried on by the NGOs.

More than 20 NGOs participated in the event to display their activities at the Regional Council. Other agencies representatives such as Soros, World Bank, Norad, OSCE and UND have been invited as well and introduced to the work of local organizations. In the afternoon, the NGO members participated to a round-table on

The round table



Regional Council and contribute to the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy. Orion Hoxha, Prefecture Law Office, facilitated the discussion. The event has been more than welcomed by both the NGOs who expressed the willingness to network more frequently in the sharing of information through different channels such as meetings, internet, annual NGOs fair and by participating to the 6 RDS action groups. The Regional Council was suggested to act as an appropriate coordinator for NGOs network of Fier Region and as the voice of NGOs to coordinate with Donors and outside communities. Furthermore, the NGOs suggested to formalize the recent launch of the Fier NGO Network through documents, by laws, and recognized by the Regional Council. Finally, a quantity of 100 posters have been printed and posted in different public places of the region. Some of the posters were also distributed to various local government institutions.



The poster on local strategic goals

Volunteerism is ...learning and sharing

IVD in ALBANIA is everyday: DECEMBER 15th

Launch of the first book on Volunteerism: *“Volunteerism: a multi-functional tissue for the society”* by Zyhdi Dervishi

Location: Tirana

On December 15th UNV and SOROS foundation launched the first book on Volunteerism in Albania. More than 80 participants attended the event.

During the launch representatives from UNDP, UNV, SOROS and Albanian Youth Council intervened. The speakers have highlighted the significance of the contribution volunteers can make to the development of the country and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The findings of the book and the launch itself aimed at raising awareness among government, international community and civil society organizations of the importance of including volunteerism in their action and strategy frameworks.

The book, entitled *‘Volunteerism: a multi-functional tissue for the society’*, has been written by **Prof. Zyhdi Dervishi** (University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences) and represents the first book in Albania devoted to this issue. The book shows the necessity to increase the "volume" of the volunteering work at the community level, the importance to explain and clarify the concept of volunteerism among families with low and very low level of education, and the need to support the government in designing a national strategy and action plan for the medium term future of volunteerism.

By containing documents, analyses and interpretations, the book will help not only to overcome the post-communist prejudices on volunteerism in Albanian society, but will also support the promotion of volunteerism and will serve as referee point for media, academics, students, future researches and studies, government structures, UN bodies and other international organizations active in Albania.



The author, Z. Dervishi



The speakers



The audience

Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.

Marjorie Moore



UN
Volunteers

Albania



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With UNV's Albania
best greetings
for 2005!!!

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