



Hope

Hope for the Future Association newsletter



Meeting with the representative of HEKS, Madeleine Hirsch



Programme beneficiary

New developments of the association

The year 2006 has been very successful for the association as it strengthened the programs and activities and signed agreements with local and foreign partners. An important step has been taken to institutionalize the association and meet the required standards.

We have paved the road of cooperation with the Regional Employment Offices in Durrës, Tirana and Shkodra and the Municipality of Shkodra and coordinated the joint actions and services. We aim to sign similar agreements with other regional offices as well.

We have signed three agreements with foreign partners such as: COOPI (International Cooperation) on the ALBAMAR project, to assist Albanian returnees from Italy; VENETO Lavoro on the MIGRAVALUE project to build a new social reintegration model and the Flemish Refugee Council on the "Individualized Reintegration Assistance after Voluntary Return" project. We have also renewed the contract with IOM Tirana on the VARRP project.

We have expanded our work with the internal migrants, and the very proof of it is the successful implementation of "Take the Step", from which 50 girls and women benefited in the suburbs of Tirana. We are planning to expand the project in other areas.

These achievements make us proud and raise our strengths and spur to move forward with our programs in the aid of the people in need.

Irena Dono
Executive Director

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EED

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(AENEAS and Interreg IIIB CADSES programme)

IOM

(International Organisation for Migration)

COOPI

(International Cooperation)

for their financial support

ALBAMAR Project

In May 2006 started the implementation of the ALBAMAR Project in Albania. To carry out this project Hope for the Future Association opened up a new office in Shkodra and made the capacity building of the Tirana office. New centres for service provision to Moroccan returnees from Italy were established in Morocco as well



Meeting with international partners

The project "ALBAMAR" aims at the definition and implementation of an integrated support to Albanian and Moroccan migrants forcedly or voluntarily repatriated from Italy to their country of origin. Overall objective of the project is to contribute to the development of a culture of legal migration and socio-economic reintegration of returning migrants.

Support to the returnees will be provided in terms of psychological assistance and job placement in the Moroccan and Albanian labour market. Vocational trainings and psychological preparation to return will be offered in Italy.

Quantitative data will be collected in Italy and in third countries on returnees flows and reintegration, thereby providing the basis for a detailed monitoring of the return process's sustainability.

The specific objective is the definition of a sustainable and integrated support to returning migrants which covers the diversity of factors related to the return (psychological, social and economical).

The approach proposed by the project is based also on a great degree of multi-dimensionality of operations in the sense that the sustainability of return is analysed not only in relation to the concept of duration, but also on the basis of a wider evaluation based on the degree of (re)integration of migrants in the country of origin, starting from a consideration of economic, social, relational and psychological factors. Evaluating the sustainability of return with respect to the multiplicity of indicators involved can therefore contribute to a better understanding of the specific difficulties that migrants with different experiences

in the host country face in the process of reintegration. This is why it is taken into consideration also the involvement of young people at risk of illegal migration belonging to the community of origin of returnees.

In the framework of this three year duration project, Hope for the Future will provide assistance for 450 repatriated people from Italy. The assistance will consist in job placement and salary supplement, training courses, psycho-social assistance and legal counseling. The persons interested to apply for loans will be referred to APM (Albanian Partner in Microcredit). The project beneficiaries will be also involved in the socio-cultural activities to promote their social reintegration.

Sensitization activities on the issue of illegal migration will be performed with the returnees as main actors. This participation will allow to take advantage of their experience to better deliver the message.

The returnees assisted in the centres will be involved in a series of activities finalised at building their capacity and awareness on the needs of returnees in general, not focusing only on their specific personal situation. These persons will be supported in the creation of an association of returnees that will operate in collaboration with the centres with the mission of providing cultural and social support to other returnees and their families.

Partners involved in this project are:

COOPI (Cooperazione Internazionale), SRF (Societa Ricerca e Formazione) and CNCA, (Coordinamento Nazionale Comunita di Accoglienza) in Italy;

Hope for the Future Association and PSHM, Albanian Partner in Microcredit in Albania.

AFVIC (Association des Amis et Familles des Victimes de l'Immigration Clandestine), and Fondation Zakoura Microcredit in Morocco.

ALBAMAR is co-financed by European Commission, AENEAS Programme.

A new office in Shkodra



A new office of "Hope for the Future" opened in Shkodra on July, 1st. The staff consists of a job coordinator and a social worker.

The office opened in the frame of the "ALBAMAR" project serves for the association capacity building. It supports mostly the Albanian emigrants who are forcibly or voluntarily repatriated from Italy but, at the same time, it is open and welcomes returnees from

other countries as well who wish to get information on the association and its programs.

The returnees are pretty interested as this is the first office of its kind in Shkodra. In the first two months around 30 people have come to the office and 12 have been admitted in the program. This is a very positive step, as the office is at the starting point yet but proves very successful.

Working with the returned emigrants is nice but hard but the staff is committed to be these people's hope. One's identity and integration are in one's homeland only and this is the objective of our work.

The business hours are 8:30-16:30 and the office welcomes everyone interested in applying in the reintegration program.

Address: Lagjja "Vasil Shanto",
Rruga "16 Nëntori" Pallati Ademi
Hyrja I Kati II Shkodër.

Antonela Melonari
Social worker



At Shkodra Office

New agreements of cooperation

In the framework of the ALBAMAR project that is being implemented in Tirana and Shkodra aiming the reintegration of the returnees from Italy, our association is interested in growing the cooperation with the public institutions that provide social services for the people in need. Two agreements of cooperation were signed with the municipality, on January 9th, 2006 and the Regional Employment Directorate in Shkodra on April 4th, 2006.

They aim to build bridges of communication and information exchange between the association and public and private bodies to accomplish every party's services.

The municipality shall refer the returnees to our programs and inform them on the plans and actions the local government has undertaken to assist the persons we are currently assisting. It shall also give them the chance to participate in workshops or public debates on the returnees' issues and make the public aware of the risks of illegal emigration.

The Regional Employment Directorate shall regularly send job offers to our office in Shkodra and mediate the employment of the returnees.

The cooperation has been very fruitful up to now and we hope to implement joint projects with the public institutions in the near future.

Chasing the dream

I was born in northern Albania. I come from a middle class, honest family (like all families were in the earlier regime). Since I was little I was educated to respect the others' rights and not to hurt anyone and these principles guide me today. I am an adult now but my parent's advice rings in my head.

There were four children in my family, three girls and one boy who was the last to be born but who is always the first in anything and I am so proud of him.

After graduating from high school I entered the contest in Law school but did not make it, thus I ended up in the Faculty of Belle Letters in 1997. I started living in Tirana while my family was still living in the north. I insisted into coming to Tirana to be together and so they did. We rented a house, half the size of the one we had, but considering it was temporary we did not notice its size. We moved from that house and from several others till we bought our own.

While I was in the university I worked to provide for my family. I felt good to live with them and be close to them. They felt like a sanctuary anytime I had to face people's judgments that identified the highlanders as "good bumpkins"

But such nicknames did not last long because I was able to

reveal my dignity and show that the place of origin is not important and that not everything rising in the north is wild.

I was lucky to find a "good" job in an important institute. I was the youngest in office, about 22 years old and the only one from the north. But this was not all. As Marx says: "Every fulfilled wish, breeds a new wish". In fact, I am always on the go to find something better. But at times, we have silver in our hands and run around to find gold. At the end of our quest, we are left empty-handed...

In 2004, my brother who lived in London paid my trip to England to pursue my private studies and so I got a student visa. At that time, 20 people lost their lives trying to cross the sea border illegally in a frizzy night, quite aware of their warned death. The government was powerless in front of the waves and the dark. And i, I was cozily leaving this small wonderland. I was thinking I could run away from Tirana; the poor, the rich, the blackouts, the mud, the lack of water, the life insecurities, everything good that we were missing.

My colleagues, my friends and relatives admired and envied me as if I had won the biggest lottery because I had received a student visa (which is quite usual for foreign students).

I cannot forget my arrival in London. It was a new beginning, just like I had envisaged. Though I was well-informed about England, I could not help being astonished from the architecture. The old houses laid in a straight line. Each one had a small garden at the front. It looked like the dwellers were competing on the best house decorations.

When I laid foot on that land, though I don't doubt the air is much polluted, I felt like I could breathe easily. It was my promised land. I wished I could stay there forever. I did not care about my hometown. I was in the right place. I could walk free in the public places like an old citizen of the country.

I dreamt how I could settle there forever, but being born an Albanian, impeded me. I struggled to find a job to cover my expenses but it was not simple. But I kept hoping I would settle one day and that made me somewhat optimistic. I wanted to get a Masters but my calculations were wrong. I had to standardize my diploma to the British one and afterwards apply to a private university, which meant an awfully expensive fee for me. I was not allowed to apply for financial support to any university or organization that granted scholarships because

I had to stay on a student visa for three years to win the home student status.

My dream was slowly fading and I had no choice but return to Albania. I returned thinking that the time I had spent in a great country would be considered a good experience in a job position. This was not the case. After I returned I stayed jobless for four months. As if this concern were not enough, life seemed unbearable, a total disillusion, a complete loss, a backward step and everything looked evil, except for my family.

By chance I learned about "Hope for the Future" and its program. I turned to this association that welcomed me. It was the first time I found such services and such devoted staff that make you realize you are always welcomed. "Hope for the Future" involved me in a nine-month program and provided me with social assistance in my reintegration in Albania. This was a very valuable help. My small wage made me feel useful and able. Now I have gone back to my old dream. I have entered a private Law school and I hope it ensures me a stable future.

I would like to thank and appreciate the humanitarian activity of the association, the help to the people in need and the economic and psychological assistance.

Thank you "Hope for the Future"

*Yours truly,
Sa. Sadria*

Meeting the Minister



Photo from the meeting

On 21 June 2006, the Hope for the Future Executive Director and its public relations officer had a meeting with the Minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Mr. Kosta Barka. Two directors of the ministry were present as well.

The meeting was held in the frame of the recognition and the accreditation of our association as a NPO and as a social service provider. After the general introduction of the association activity and projects, we discussed our work with the returnees in details. The minister was interested to learn more on the number of the returnees the association had assisted, their ages, the host countries they were coming from and other details.

The minister suggested that NPOs work with the local gover-

ment. We highlighted the fact that after the Readmission Agreement the Albanian government has signed with some European countries, it is undisputable to institutionalize the assistance to the returnees, which requires a close cooperation between the governmental bodies and the NPOs. Hence, NPOs must meet the standards required and have the capacities and measurable results that prove the efficiency of their services. The ministry shall monitor the NPOs services and it may not be achieved unless the NPOs are registered in the State Social Service.

We shared ideas and opinions to build the bridges of cooperation between the government and the NPO in order to enhance the performance and achieve better results in accomplishing the objectives.

Workshop in Khouribga

The increasing rate of emigration worldwide in the last years has made the phenomenon a major issue many countries are facing. How can



Photo from the meeting

emigration be predicted, decreased or prevented? To answer these questions, one has to understand the phenomenon. ALBAMAR is a project that aims to know the phenomenon and deal with it.

“Hope for the Future” started implementing ALBAMAR since May 2006. The project aims to provide reintegration services to returnees from Italy in the society of their countries of origin, such as Albania and Morocco and contribute in developing the culture on legal migration. Transnational exchanges are also planned be-



Visit to AFVIC

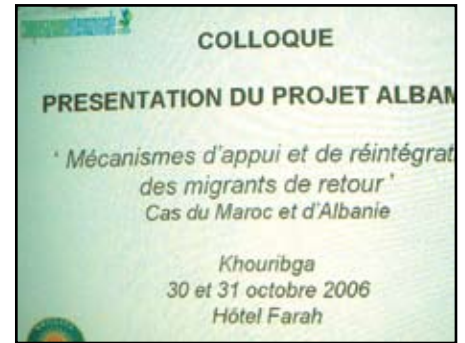
tween Albania and Morocco.

In this framework, a training workshop was held in Khouribga on October 30th-31st, 2006. The object was the exchange of information and experience between the Albanian and the Moroccan staff in order to assess the best experiences and use them to prevent and heal the phenomenon. The workshop was organized by COOPI (International Cooperation) and was the first of a range of workshops that will be held in

Albania and Italy after.

Partners of the ALBAMAR project and representatives from organizations working on the field in Morocco and Algeria participated in the workshop. Albania and Morocco have been suffering the illegal emigration for years. Differently from Albania, Morocco is not only the country of origin of the Moroccan returnees, but it is also the transit country for all sub-Saharan emigrants who migrate to Europe. Morocco is on the verge of turning into a “host country” for all transit refugees who do not manage to pass the European border and do not want to get back to their country of origin because of the tough life and the unsuitable climate conditions.

AFVIC (the Association of the Friends and Families of the Clandestine Victims) is a partner that develops its activity in Morocco. The objectives of AFVIC are:



- to sensitize the local population on the risks of illegal migration;
- to sensitize the Europeans on the consequences of the political decisions;
- to support the development in areas where emigration is an issue;
- to support the families of the clandestine victims;
- to advocate the rights of emigrants.

The cases and figures AFVIC presented were really gruesome (5544 dead clandestine refugees since 1988).

“Hope for the Future” introduced the Moroccan staff with its experience with the returnees. The entire activity of the association was presented first, and the cases were presented in the latter session. The participants congratulated the seven-year experience of the association. The experiences of the two associations brought insight into the problems, the obstacles and the difficulties of cases in the respective countries.

Both parties viewed the workshop as valuable and fruitful. They learnt from each others' experiences and that will definitely be reflected while coping with the phenomenon of emigration.

The “Hope for the Future” staff visited the AFVIC office the third day, saw the work of the association up close and met several beneficiaries.

Brunilda Qevani



Emigrants in the West

Under the metropolitan lights as the clamor of life flows hastily, the Albanian emigrant commutes from home to work and from work, home, as speedy as a machine as every part of his life is a machine. Rarely does he see the sun, and when he does, he is always exhausted. The sun is brighter in Albania but it is hopeless to enjoy it when he wants. The permit of sojourn is delayed while it will be about to expire by the time he gets it. If he has the permanent papers, he won't have the finances to plan what he wishes. The women rush in two or three jobs every day. Children are somewhat more comfortable. They go to school while their parents work to pay them additional courses but they are so far from their children's current needs. By now, it is the state institutions to

look after their education.

In this whirl of similar and different experiences, the Albanian emigrant struggles to hold to the strings that attach him to his country. Sometimes there are parties that swirl them to talk about their homesickness and the earnings in the host country. But life goes on in the sorrowful reality. The duality of personality is the least bad result of such a living. Everyone has a job to provide for the family needs but still something is missing. Maybe it is the homeland, he friends and anything left behind. But deep down he is very well aware that the free return would not bring anything from the daily, practical comfort which he's got used to. However he is obsessed to deny the values of the host country where he lives and works until he faces the reality in his homeland.

Emigrants - Vacations in Albania

Besides the nostalgia and homesickness for his relatives, the Albanian emigrant expects another Albania because he's changed his views. Bearing in mind the examples of correctness in jobs in the western countries, he finds it hard to accept the great antithesis which he had already forgotten. There are rules he is accustomed to that dictate a different way of self and world perception. He freezes in front of a reality below his standards. Therefore, the other side of the coin appears in the duality of personality. He starts denying the values of the reality in the face of the original memories that held him tight to his country. The people have not changed and look old-fashioned while the country looks like a chaos of buildings and wrecks. The tourist resorts are equally

and “decently” represented so as to satisfy or disappoint. Real beaches are rare. This is satisfactory but not enough. The mentally tired emigrant suits his needs and wishes by digging into the early memories of the homeland and knowing he has the return ticket and a permit of sojourn.

The returned migrants

The forcefully returnees compose the majority of the cases. The forced return makes it tougher. A well-thought return would have made them assess what they leave abroad and expect in the country. The forced return is really depressing. In front of a reality that does not provide what's expected, the economic insecurity is an existential condition for the emigrants. The trauma of adapting to a different, backward homeland is substantial. In the best case, there is the chance of self-employment to solve the matter of unemployment. But there are so many illegitimate and unwritten links that hinder the free initiative and investments in the country. The newcomers are able to build houses but they do not find it easy to build a business. The women who do not have any profession but who worked and maintained their families abroad find themselves in a crossroad. The reality does not have much to offer.

The cycle of the duality of personality is already complete. The emigrant is disillusioned and hopeless. He will never recover to the normal standards he was used to and wonders what awaits him in the future.

Amalia Bifsha

“Take the Step” project



Cooking course

“Take the Step” project - the integration of women internal migrants - started in October 2005 by the initiative of the “Take the Future” staff and funded by HEKS (Swiss Interchurch Aid) and was implemented for a one-year period, till September 2006. In the frame of the project, 50 women from the village of Laknas, Kamza area, were offered assistance. The project aimed to provide a package of integration services for such target group and cover its professional and social integration.

To begin with, the project staff contacted and met several times with local government authorities in the Kamza municipality in order to identify the needs and problems in the area and lay the

foundations for a close cooperation with the local government. Some of the beneficiaries were referred by this public body and provided with the services according to need.

An agreement of cooperation was signed with the Regional Employment Directorate in Tirana, to enroll the women in tailoring and computer courses and to mediate with recruitment agencies on job opportunities after the termination of the courses. The cooperation was extended to other non-profit organizations such as “Useful to Albanian women” which could provide with cooking and hair-dressing courses.



After graduation

“Take the Step” mediated in offering 50 women from Laknas tailoring, hairdressing, cooking, computer and language courses, paid the courses and guaranteed the women’s transport.

Another aspect of working with this target group is the psycho-social counseling provided

for the beneficiaries based on their needs and individual cases. The association organized three training sessions on health, gender roles, domestic violence and components of self-introduction in a job interview where expert trainers were invited from the respective fields.



Seminar with women

Women were also involved in the “Open House” meetings and cultural events the organization holds regularly so that they could have the chance to share their concerns and receive information on different aspects of their lives.

During the implementation of the project, the staff encountered many difficulties and obstacles. To convince the women participate in the programs, we had to cope with old-fashion stereotypes, the patriarchal mentality according to which, the man is the only decision maker in the family, the woman is a housewife, a child bearer and forced to live within the house walls. Other obstacles consisted of the low trust in the services because they did not know much about the association; difficulties in transport because of the bad roads etc.

Despite all difficulties, we managed to achieve the objectives of the project: all courses were completed; 62% of the trainees were employed in the private sector; 10 women received complementary courses in specific fields; the awareness of their role in the family and society was raised.

We saw these women change, gather in groups, articulate mature thoughts on their future. We saw them change their look and their outfits. We saw them be more determined to fight for their rights.

“Hope for the Future” association and its role in institutionalizing the assistance for the returning migrants through the Regional Employment offices and NGOs

In December 2004, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) started the implementation of a two-year project “Combating irregular migration in Albania and wider region. Targeted support to capacity building within the framework of readmission support to the Government of Albania”, funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization of the Hellenic Republic. aiming to support the Albanian government to fulfill successfully the tasks defined in the Agreement of Readmission signed with the European Community. The project, which has come to an end, consists of four components: research on the policies of return in Albania; the capacity building to readmission; the support of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the re-admission; and the mechanisms for the reintegration of the returnees.

In the progress of the institutional cooperation with local partners on the implementation of projects that stimulate the returnees’ reintegration, IOM invited five local associations, among which, “Hope for the Future”, to contribute in the draft of the policy document that aims to help in institutionalizing the assistance given to the returnees in compliance to the Albanian labor market; and help in the capacity building of state structures in providing reintegration services.

The specific aim of the policy paper was to structure the actions undertaken for the implementation of the measures envisaged in the Action Plan of the National Strategy on Migration, those measures related to the expansion of the reintegration services in order to



Photo from the seminar

insure a sustainable return. Such measures are quite urgent considering the Agreement of Readmission signed with the European Community which is in force since May 1st, 2006. A task force was set up to draft the document. It was composed of representatives of the state institutes, IOM and the five selected NGOs. For seven months the representatives made their continuous contribution in presenting the current reintegration services in Albania and analyzed the future of these services and the roles different stakeholders may play.

A special attention was given to the role the local NGOs have played in reintegrating the returnees. Several recommendations were made to institutionalize the cooperation between the NGOs and the state structures in formal contracts. At present, the draft is compiled and sent to the Ministry of Labor, So-

cial Affairs and Equal Opportunities together with the request that demands this draft to be part of the ministry’s working plan (like the National Employment Service).

In the progress of strengthening the capacity building of the reintegrating structures in the country, in July 2006, IOM supported by the Regional Employment Office in Tirana, Durrës and Vlora and the “Hope for the Future” association held four training sessions with the staff of these regional offices on the migratory issues and the policies/practices of the return. All participants appreciated the experience of IOM and “Hope for the Future” as very valuable and avant-garde in the services they provide for the returnees.

*Teuta Grazhdani
Expert on the Return Issues
Project developer, IOM*

“MIGRAVALUE” Project

Steering Economic and Social Cohesion in the CADSES Space: Valuing Migration as a Development Tool



Meeting with partners involved in the project

A latter, important development in the association activities was its involvement in the MIGRAVALUE project. This project aims at launching a model for the active management of migration as a key tool for the integrated economic and social development of host and source regions. It involves 14 partners from EU as well as EU Neighbour countries, representing a broad network of public and private stakeholders, including businesses and migrants. It shall enhance the spatial cohesion of interested regions by valuing the financial and human capital of migrants.

This project aims to develop spatial development visions associated with migratory movements and with regional development strategies. Close cooperation be-

tween migration host and home countries to attain this goal shall improve cohesion within the EU and with border regions in the CADSES area, in accordance with the policy goals of cooperation and spatial integration set forth in the New Neighbourhood Instrument.

It is also foreseen to support investments in the migrants' origin countries by mobilizing migrants' resources to finance entrepreneurial initiatives, thus limiting negative brain-drain effects and promoting the circulation of the positive outcomes of migration, including knowledge of new organization and competition methods.

MIGRAVALUE promotes trans-national actions for social inclusion in target regions: com-

plement economic incentives and services with innovative welfare programs that can give adequate responses to the social protection needs of trans-national actors, and preserve social sustainability in target areas.

In the framework of this project, two meetings were held in the Veneto Lavoro headquarters (The Regional Employment Agency in Veneto, Italy) which is the Leader partner in the project, where all partners participated.

In the first meeting, (September 25th -26th, 2006) a Steering Committee was established with representatives from all partners which will be in charge for the project implementation and assign each partners' tasks. The working package and each partner's contribution were discussed and defined in order to achieve an effective progress of the action plan.

The second meeting (November 10th, 2006) defined in details the steps to be taken in implementing the first working package which focuses on studying and analysing the economic and social indicators of every country involved in the project. A scientific board was established to monitor and guide the integrated results of the project.

The project started to be implemented in September 2006, and is expected to end by June 2008. It is financed by the EC in the frame of the INTERREG IIIB CADSES program.

Looking for a job

Around the end of the 90's, I was living and working abroad, far away from my family and kin. Every time, I heard my daughter's voice on the phone, my eyes would water and my heart would tremble. When I lived in Tirana, every evening, after I had gone home from work, I'd call my daughter near and say:

"Come to your body 'cause he's not seen you all day and missed you." She would sit near me, lean her little head on my chest and ask if I was tired.

In one of our weekly phone talks, in September 2005 I said to my daughter: "Your body misses you"

"I don't think you miss me more than I do." she said and remarked that years had gone by. Now she was a sophomore in Social Sciences and no longer "the little body". Yes, the years had rushed by. I didn't see my daughter grow up. I didn't share her worries and joys of primary and secondary school. I didn't see her enter the university. A gloomy, sorrowful emptiness is in my heart for the years that have gone and can never return.

"Come back, dad! I am looking forward to seeing you!". My daughter's pleading echoed in my injured consciousness.

"Come back. Albania is changed. It's not like you left it. You can work and live here if you have the good will. Come back! Come back! Come back...!"

Her pleading persecuted me in

every step and every moment. I lost my tranquility. I could no longer work. I missed my people, my homeland, the roads, the fields, the mountains, the blue sky, and the songs. "Come back! Come back!"...

In October 2005 I decided to come back as I missed and hoped to see my homeland.

"I will find a job. I am in my homeland and it will be easy to reintegrate." That's what I thought and hoped. But my disappointment started the very first day, before the plane landed. The police barred our way in an unjustifiable arrogance and harshness as if we were deep-rooted delinquents and not some emigrants who had left years ago to earn a living.

"What's the matter, sir?" I asked. But the officers were too tired to explain. They lined us like recruited privates and headed us to the isolation room. The room smelt like smoking and the fag ends had left black spots on the floor.

"What's the matter, sir?" I asked again desperately.

"You do not have any ID", a police officer answered. "You'll wait here till the police station where your family lives identifies you."

It took a week to satisfy my yearning. I started looking for a job. In two weeks I was recruited in the private police forces. A month later I was transferred to a new station. And afterwards to another, and another and one day I

was told there was no job for me.

I started running around Tirana to find a job but it was in vain. The employers, or the bosses, as we are used to call them, would have a look at me and say: "You are old... you are not strong... we don't have anything for you... you can't do it."

I tried working as a salesman, a carpenter, a manual worker, a guard, but it was impossible. For one whole week I went to the free manual worker market (the Unknown Soldier) hoping to find something. I saw many young men who had been waiting for weeks. There were also some who laughed at me. I left like a beaten dog, totally desperate. After a few days, someone called under my balcony:

"I found you a job". I did not question what job it was as long as I could leave the house and work. There were four workers. We discharged cigarettes from a truck and were paid 2000 lek. Not bad for that day. But what about the next day?! I did not lose hope. I would find a job. "Don't give up", I said to myself, "You are used to work".

One morning I went to the wholesales market, filled a bag with packets of cigarettes, chocolates and others and became a vendor. Damn! This job has got trouble! You need to have a license and the policeman is the boss of every square meter of the sidewalk. I had heard about the policemen's deeds but had not believed them until I suffered them on my own back.

I had nothing left but the sidewalk. I became the soldier of the road, the soldier of the road, the soldier of the road...

A. Alla

A Swiss group of 15 people visits Albania



lor of the Embassy of Switzerland in Tirana Mr. Sergio Dini and the second secretary. Hope for the Future staff made an overview of the association's projects and activities what was appreciated by the guests. The Swiss people present in that meeting asked for having some information about the recent situation in Albania, what's the SE perception and opinion about it. They were also interested to hear about the Swiss Embassy activity and projects in Albania. The meeting was very interesting for all the people present.

In the final evaluation, all participants felt that the visits had been very enjoyable and valuable. They also offered different opinions of how to further contribute to the Albanian returnees' reintegration. The visitors considered setting up an association in Switzerland which they would call "Friends of Kape". This association shall sensitize the Swiss people on the returnees' needs and raise funds to assist the youth in Shkodra, where, according to the visitors' perspective, the economic background is serious.

A group of 15 Swiss people visited Albania from September, 30th to October, 6th. This was one of the common annual visits arranged under the care of Mr. Patrice de Mestral, the coordinator of the "Take the Future" project. Such visits aim to acquaint foreign visitors with the Albanian situation and the growing activities of "Hope for the Future" association and "Take the Future" project.

The agenda aims to provide the maximum information on the economic, cultural, and political life in Albania. Visits are held inside business companies, various social and cultural facilities, schools, and museums. Meetings are also held with celebrities like the well-known writer Fatos Kongoli, the stage director Mihallaq Luarasi and the actress Edi Luarasi.

The visitors attended the meetings in "Hope for the Future" association, received thorough information on the projects and congratulated the achievements and success in the establishment of new partnerships and the

development of new projects that play a role in the returnees' and internal migrants' reintegration.

Tours were organized in Tirana, Berati, Kruja, Shkodra and Lezha and the tourists met many beneficiaries assisted by the Hope for the Future different projects.

In one of those days were invited in our office the Counsel-



Success stories

AGIM

Agim is now 41 years old, married, with two children and they live with his old mother. Agim was born in Dibra but lives in Tirana. He graduated in the agricultural trade high school before the 90's and worked for five years in the Chrome Upgrading Factory, Bulqiza.

Agim went to Italy as a clandestine migrant six times during 1997-2003. He passed the border in a ferry boat six times and paid 500 - 1000 €. In Italy, he settled in San Giovanni and always worked as an illegal emigrant. He never managed to get the papers and was always caught and repatriated to Albania.

He worked in the illegal labor market, construction, agriculture and others. Five times has he been forcibly returned but the sixth, and the last, he returned voluntarily, once and for all. He realized that living abroad is very tough, especially if one does not have regular papers.

Agim was one of the 21 beneficiaries returned from Italy, involved in the ALNIMA project. The association funded his six-month apprenticeship of tailoring. Agim was very active in the activities the association held and very interested in the workshops on SMEs. Beside the six-month course, Agim applied for a small loan at the Albanian Partner in Microcredit. "Take the

Future" project helped Agim buy a sewing machine and he was able to pay back in due time.

Agim is a tailor now. He owns a small tailoring shop and works with his wife and a new seamstress they have hired recently.

EDA

Eda is 33 years old. She is divorced, has a son and lives with her parents. She graduated in Chemical Engineering in the University of Tirana but never did she work in such domain. She decided to go to Germany for a better life. After paying a considerable sum of money, she went there along with her husband and son in April 1999. They applied to get the status of asylum seekers and claimed to have Kosovo citizenship, but their application was denied. During a five-year period in Germany, (1999 - January 2004), Eda never worked. She took care of her husband and son and attended a computer and language course. In January 2004 she decided to voluntarily return to Albania after numerous disagreements with her husband. Eda returned to Albania determined not to try the emigrant's living ever again.

"Take the Future" supported Eda for a nine-month period to learn and become a page maker

and designer. She was very active in the activities organized by the association. Considering her hard work and willingness, "Take the Future" provided her with a complementary computer course.

Eda is currently working in a graphic design studio. She is a very good designer and is always trying to broaden her knowledge in the domain.

VANGJEL

Vangjel is 24 years old. She is single and lives with his parents and two brothers. Vangjel has now restarted the university studies he had interrupted when he immigrated to Switzerland due to economic reasons. He emigrated illegally three times. The first two, he stayed only a couple of months and was forcibly returned. The third time, he was imprisoned for three and a half years. While doing his time, he learned French.

"Take the Future" helped Vangjel for a nine-month period. He benefited funding to facilitate his first year in the Department of French, University of Languages, Tirana.

Vangjel is a junior in the University of Languages. He also works part-time to cover the school expenses.

Services provided by Hope for the Future throughout 2006

- Apprenticeship opportunities
- Facilitation of job employment
- Subsidy to university studies
- Financial support for training courses
- Financial aid for beneficiaries in difficult economic situation
- Community services (purchase of school supplies for children of poor clients);
- Socio-cultural activities to promote the social reintegration
- Psycho-social assistance
- Legal counseling
- Range of seminars with women internal migrants
- Sensitization activities in high schools for preventing and making people aware against the danger of illegal migration.



In brief



On 17 October 2006 the agreement with the Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen (Flemish Refugee Council) was signed to strengthen the cooperation in the frame of the “Individualised Reintegration Assistance after Voluntary Return” project. The project aims to provide direct or indirect assistance for the emigrants residing in Belgium, those who wish to return voluntarily, to assure a sustainable return to Albania.

On 2 October 2006, the Regional Employment Directorate in Durrës held a fair to introduce job offers in the Durrës district. The association participated in the event and gave some financial contribution for the publication of leaflets.

On 27 April 2006 “Hope for the Future” launched its web-page www.shprese.org

Mirela Millona, Maringlen Duka from Tirana and Xhulia Hila from Shkodër were awarded from Hope staff for the best emigration story 2006.



We give you hope to build a better future in Albania

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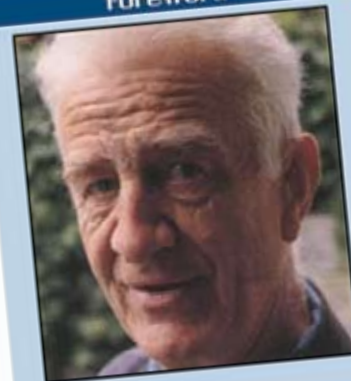
Hope for the Future

Hope for the Future is a non-political, non-religious, non-governmental, non-profit, social-humanitarian organization, founded in November 1999 and is aimed at contributing in the reintegration into the Albanian society of young repatriated Albanians returned by West European countries and at helping in the professional and social integration of internal migrants.



The program of the association provides a complete reintegration scheme which includes: Information, Counseling and support on professional reintegration, social reintegration promotion, migration assistance against the danger of illegal migration)

Foreword



Patrice de Mest
Founder and coordinator

Statistics

- on the activity of Hope for the Future Association -
(May 1999 – December 2006)

A total of 1248 people, 1070 men and 178 women are enrolled in the "Hope for the Future" Association lists.

878 beneficiaries, 747 men and 131 women have benefited from our professional and social reintegration program until the end of December 2006.

Statistics of 2006

"Take the Future" project

109 potential participants (77 men and 32 women) have applied in the apprenticeship program.

The applicants come from 5 districts of Albania: 53 from Tirana and the suburbs, 37 from North Albania, 3 from Central Albania and 16 from South Albania.

67 youngsters successfully completed the apprenticeship program, 5 contracts terminated due to remigration.

56 youngsters classify the apprenticeship program as "very helpful" and 11 as "helpful".

65 beneficiaries classify the office services as "very good" and 2 as "good".

67 youngsters successfully completed the apprenticeship and 48 of them are working in the same job, while 4 are working in another one and 3 are self employed. After nine months of assistance, 3 of the applicants are unemployed and looking for a new job and 9 of them attend their studies.

73 youngsters enjoy the right to involve and benefit from the program.

5 beneficiaries were subsidized to attend computer and language courses, driving license training and university studies.

35 clients in Tirana have arrived from North Albania and 13 from the South.

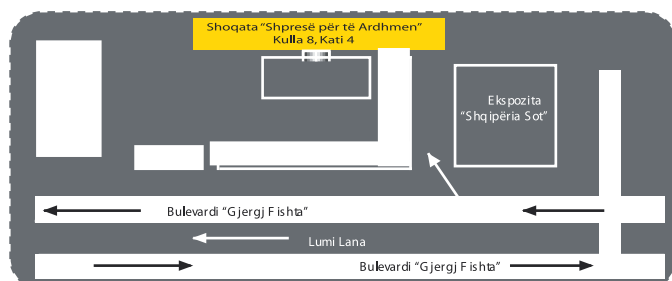
Other projects:

VARRP project, IOM references

17 clients (3 women + 14 men)
17 contracts (3 women+ 14 men)

ALBAMAR project

50 clients (10 women + 40 men)
37 contracts (8 women + 29 men)



"Hope for the Future"
Bulvd. "Gjergj Fishta"
Kulla 8, Ap.11, Tirana, Albania
Tel/Fax: +355 4 224 033
E-mail: shprese@shprese.org
Web: www.shprese.org