

Hope



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The year we left behind

As the curtain of 2008 dropped, a year full of hard work and attempts to achieve our goals ended. The year we left behind marked the final stage of most of our projects.

The three-year ALBAMAR project provided an integrated support for the returned migrants from Italy. 254 returnees were assisted in job placement and vocational training. A considerable amount of those benefited from the psychological, legal and business start up counseling. The first steps were taken to establish an association of returned migrants interested in developing social and cultural activities and lobbying for their rights.

“Take the Future” project provided job placement and social reintegration activities for 72 returnees from Switzerland and Germany. The reintegration assistance lasted for a nine-month period.

“Open up a new path in your life” project implemented in the village of Bërksullë, Vora Municipality gave 55 women of that commune the opportunity to attend vocational training courses in tailoring, hair dressing, cooking and computer skills, thus, facilitating their access in the labor market.

Six voluntary returnees from the UK were assisted by the “VARRP” project and one female returnee from Belgium and her son were assisted by the “Individualised Reintegration Assistance after Voluntary Return”.

Fourty returnees were provided with training on how to start up a business or strengthen the existing enterprise capacities. Ten returnees were financially supported to start up a business.

“MIGRAVALUE” project ended in August. In its framework, five study packages were drafted to analyze a managed structure of the “migrant” phenomenon, as well as to highlight the services and policies of an active management of the migratory mobility and promote local development.

The year 2009 finds us in a pleasing balance of achievements and developments, but oddly enough in a



shortage of projects, settings us in front of great challenges to blaze new paths in the vast, current problems of the Albanian society; as well as to intensify the search for potential donors willing to support our future projects. The actual experience with returnees and internal migrants, especially the women, taught us what the priorities are and where there is a need for intervention, but investigating deeper in the problems is apparently indispensable.

In 2009 we shall keep working with “Take the future” project giving attention to the rural areas by assisting the returnees living in those areas.

I avail the opportunity to express my gratitude to a special long-term donor, HEKS (Swiss Interchurch Aid), which has constantly supported us from 1999, as well as to Mr. Patrice de Mestral, who has been a companion, a supporter and a contributor in our development.

Irena Dono
Executive Director



Reflection on migration

Irena Dono

Migration as an international phenomenon is an early occurrence affecting all nations in the world. In different times, migration has had different dimensions. The similarity between them stands in the fact that migration is a rowing towards a world that can offer something more than the surroundings where one lives; it is a flight towards a dream everyone expects to come true and no one thinks he will have either success or disappointment.

Migration in Albania is a phenomenon occurring in the early 19th century, although Albanians have migrated and served in different countries, in the Ottoman Empire in particular. It is a well-known fact that the most significant migration oc-

curred after 1990 and later. For most Albanians this late migration was like a run-away, like a state of intoxication from freedom, like a state of a short-duration delirium, which ended as soon as they had the first contact with the new reality. The struggle for survival was tough in the new land. We could have never imagined this to happen: almost every Albanian family has an emigrant member.

Causes of migration

The causes of migration are not very different between nations; on the contrary, they are almost the same: i.e. poverty, unemployment, life insecurities, lack of prospect, in-

dividual wish to see, know, live in a better world, get a better education etc.

Generally, it is the young who migrate abroad whereas Albanians migrated at an advanced age, simply to do their uttermost for their children's future. This is what makes the Albanian migration peculiar, besides its dimensions.

Migration as a positive phenomenon

Migration brought about many positive aspects to the Albanians. First, it gave them the chance to face a different world, a system dif-

ferent from what they were used to live in for about 50 years; to compete with another world and prove how capable they were to accustom to it. It was a proof of life but not all managed to survive.

Most of those who left in the critical periods of the Albanian transition anarchy suffered various challenges while submitting to the rules of the hosting countries and acting accordingly. Most of them managed to adapt and integrate.

Migration improved the Albanian economy. The emigrants' remittances enhanced the individual household economies affecting the economic increase in general. Migration gave people the chance to find a job and save money to send to their families in Albania. Migration built the working skills and taught them that nothing can be achieved with crossing arms. Migration taught them to lower their heads and do any kind of job they would not condescend to do.

Migration gave them the opportunity to receive a different education and alter their understanding. Migration taught them the code of conduct

which had started to be forgotten. Migration taught Albanians foreign languages, which was something awkward in the past, when the contacts with foreign countries were rare and the foreign languages remained as a laboratory experiment, impossible to be brought to life.

Negative consequences of migration

Migration brought about negative consequences, too. The structure of the family broke up and this had its impact in the children's education, the increase of divorces, etc.

The impossibility to find a job and make a living abroad made many Albanians undertake illegal activities, such as drug and child trafficking and prostitution. The craving to make quick money drove others into criminal activities at large. The integration in the hosting countries deepened the parent-child contradictions. As it was easier for children to adapt, they drove away from their parents, and as they did not have the time to communicate, they started to forget their native language, which I

personally find sorrowful. I am afraid that sooner or later the Albanians will assimilate despite their survival in the course of centuries. In centuries they preserved their traditions and customs in order to survive the tempests of time. Nowadays, few are those thinking of patriotism as the majority view it as outdated and a product of a bygone age.

Will these people be helped to find their place in the changed Albanian society?

Very little or not at all; Albania has not host structures and capacities to treat these people. Moreover the Albanian society is in a dizzy rush where people struggle to make a living by all means as it is terribly hard to foresee what the future brings. Laws are constantly changing causing confusion and insecurity. In this rush, the returnees remain unnoticed; no attention is paid to them though they need support.

continued to pg. 11





The end of project ALBAMAR

In its third and last year, the ALBAMAR project continued with its objectives to build an integrated support for the Albanian returnees from Italy. During 2008, 59 repatriated youngsters were assisted in job placement and 12 other people received specialized psychological and legal counseling.

The project was also implemented in Morocco with Moroccan returnees from Italy.

One of the objectives of the ALBAMAR project was the creation of an association of returnees to get together these people with similar problems as emigration itself has the same problems, and at times different interests due to the unequal reintegration of returnees in the Albanian society.

The first attempts were made; a core of youngsters interested in organizing was established although they have not yet gained the legal status to get more motivated to work together.

The Italian organization COOPI, leader of the project, held the final conference that marked the completion of the ALBAMAR project in Milan on November 21st, 2008. All partner organizations were invited to highlight the work done, the achievements and gaps due to the

difficulties and make recommendations for the future. It was interesting to notice the approaches to the basic services the implementing organizations, that is the Moroccan one AFVIC and our association "Hope for the future" had thought, acting under the specific conditions of the each country.

AFVIC had provided assistance for reintegration by offering the returnees trainings close to the artisan enterprises and different businesses; whereas our association had facilitated the employment of individuals close to the small enterprises where they had been trained.



Pictures from the final conference



Meetings with beneficiaries

Briefing from the association in Shkodra

Shkodra branch continued in 2008 the implementation of the “ALBAMAR” project as well. It is important to highlight that this year the number of the female beneficiaries was higher than previously. The age of the beneficiaries varies from 23 to 41 years old and their education varies from the primary to the high school one. There are also a few cases of beneficiaries who study in the University of Shkodra.

The returnees have been provided with job placement and training; psychological, legal and business start up counseling. A series of awareness raising activities have been organized where some returnees participated and made their contribution in the school debates.

Several social and cultural activities were held last year such as the meetings known as “The Open House” aiming at acquainting clients with one another, receiving information on our activities and services, exchanging experience and contributing with ideas on certain events that may facilitate their integration in society; football matches for the male clients; a meeting with a Swiss group to discuss the situation in Albania, the challenges the returnees encounter in the reintegration process and the services provided by the association staff as well as other activities.

It is worth emphasizing the fact that from its opening day and on, the Shkodra office has had many visitors interested in participating in the association program. As the “ALBAMAR” project closed down, our chances to assist a vast number of returnees reduced, however, we hope to find new donation opportunities.



Imelda Aga
Social worker



Home sweet home

I want to begin here the story of my life:

After graduating in the “Oso Kuka” high school in Shkodra, I studied law for one year, but due to the difficult conditions, I had to interrupt my studies and help my family. I started a small business from which I earned enough

to live. As the business did not progress as expected and I would mostly walk around than work, I started to search for someone to get me to the Western Europe. After I found someone, I used the savings of my family and someone’s else passport to emigrate to Germany in June 1995.

Upon landing in the Frankfurt airport, I destroyed the document. The people who received me explained

many things I found strange as I had only seen them in movies...

I registered as a Kosovo man in a center where emigrants from European and non-European countries were gathered. After some time I managed to find a job; I worked for years and was paid very little. However, I was happy to be able to save something and help my family in Albania.

In the beginning of 1999 I met someone who was to become my wife but at the end of that year I was arrested in her place by the German police and sent to prison charged with false identity. For my misfortune, I was sent back to Albania in 2000. After many ordeals, by the end of October of that year I returned to Germany, in "my town" Essen. I say "my town" because I lived there for several years and got accustomed to it. I married the woman who, for the truth sake, I loved and was not marrying to get the papers.

After 4 years of marriage we did not have any children, we divorced due to some personal reasons I want to keep private. I fell into depression for two years because of this divorce and other causes...

In May 2006, after a fight in a club, I was hit and insulted by two Arabs. I reacted aggressively and hit one of them with a bottle injuring him badly. I was turned in to the police station without knowing what I had done exactly.

Eight months later I learnt the truth about the event and after two hearings I was sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment.

I did my time for one year in Bochum prison, and for one year and a half in the GelsenKirchen one. According to the German law on foreigners, after suffering half the sentence, that was two years and a half, I was returned to Albania in November 2008.

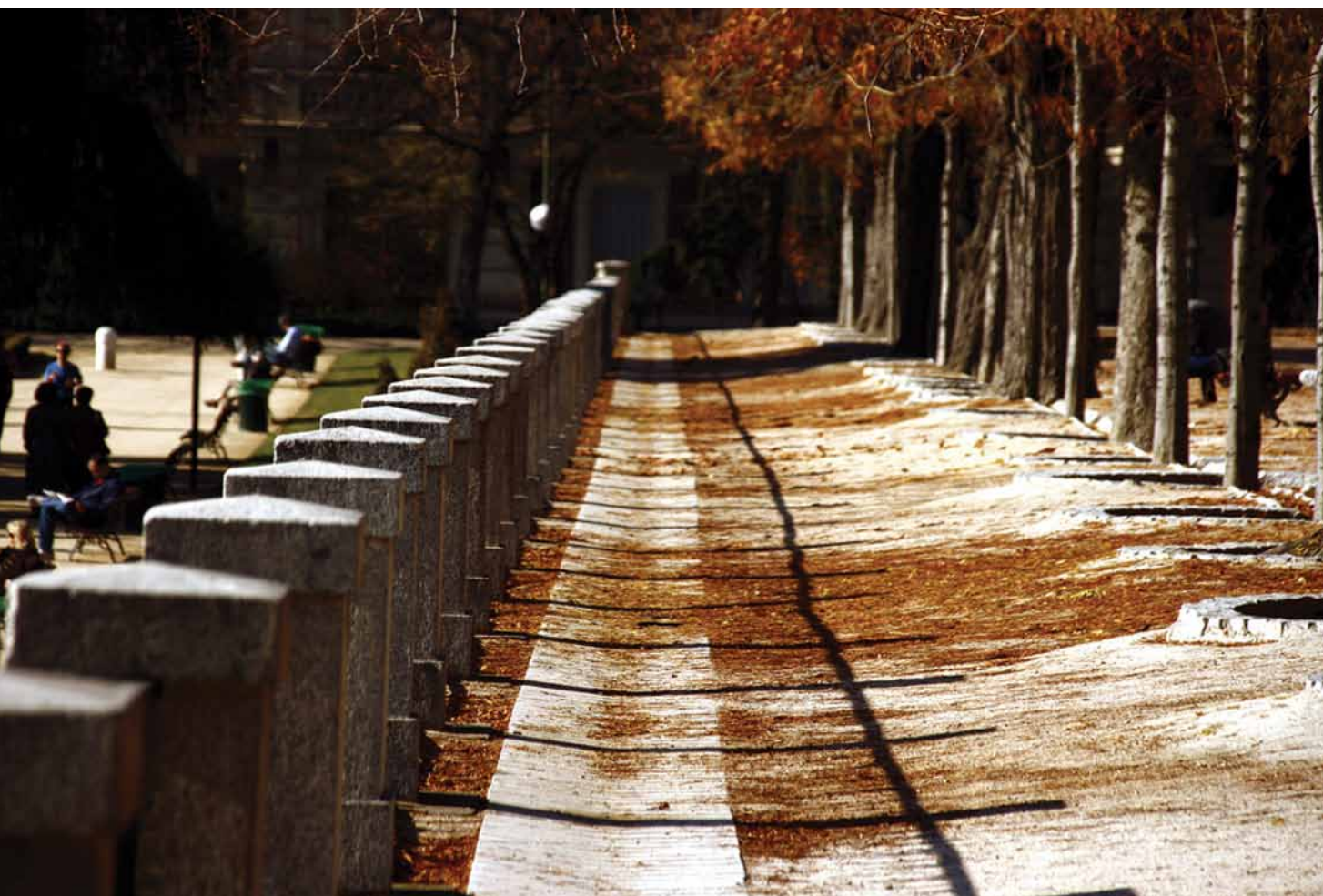
I am sorry this happened, but maybe it could have happened to any Albanian because of our temper, but I do not want to excuse myself. This should not have happened.

Now I am in Albania with my beloved family who I had missed for years. I see Albania is changing and improving every day and I hope we can soon become a member of the European family.

I am rounding up with an old saying: "It is nice to be a guest but it is nicer to be at home"...

A. K. (Shkodër)





Everyone can make a living in his own country

I will tell you something of my life and my history of migration, which is likely not very different from those of my fellow citizen.

After many years of tribulations in Switzerland and Italy because of lack of papers I decided to return and apply for a visa to study in Italy hoping to end my living as an illegal migrant.

After many attempts I had the chance to become a legal migrant. I was lucky and on the day I got the visa I thought my tribulations ended but they did not. After getting to Italy I realized life with papers was not very much different from the previous one.

I studied for three years but it was all in vain. I

was at work all the time and had very little time to study. I managed to pass some of the exams but had failed in many. When I saw some of my friends who had graduated I was eager to graduate, too, but when I noticed that their lives were the same, as they could not find jobs, I decided to stop feeling sorry for myself and stop staying in Italy hoping I could make it one day.

I came back to my country eager to start fresh in Albania. Some of my friends thought this was an abrupt decision but later they agreed. I returned to Berat and with the little money I had saved and the financial support and trainings provided by the "Hope for the Future" Association I rented a shop. The beginning was very tough because I had not

lived in Albania for a long time and did not know the present market but was determined never to leave.

After a few months I was living the same way as I did in Italy but this time I was close to my family. The standards of living may be somehow different from Italy but I am sure I'll never feel the aloofness and indifference I experienced there. Albania is a poor country with a fragile future but everyone can make a living here just like me or like many others who have decided to live here and need will and perseverance.

I managed to live happily in my country just for once; however I would prefer the government to provide more opportunities for the people living in their country.

**Shyqyri Kërpica,
Berat**



Reflection on migration

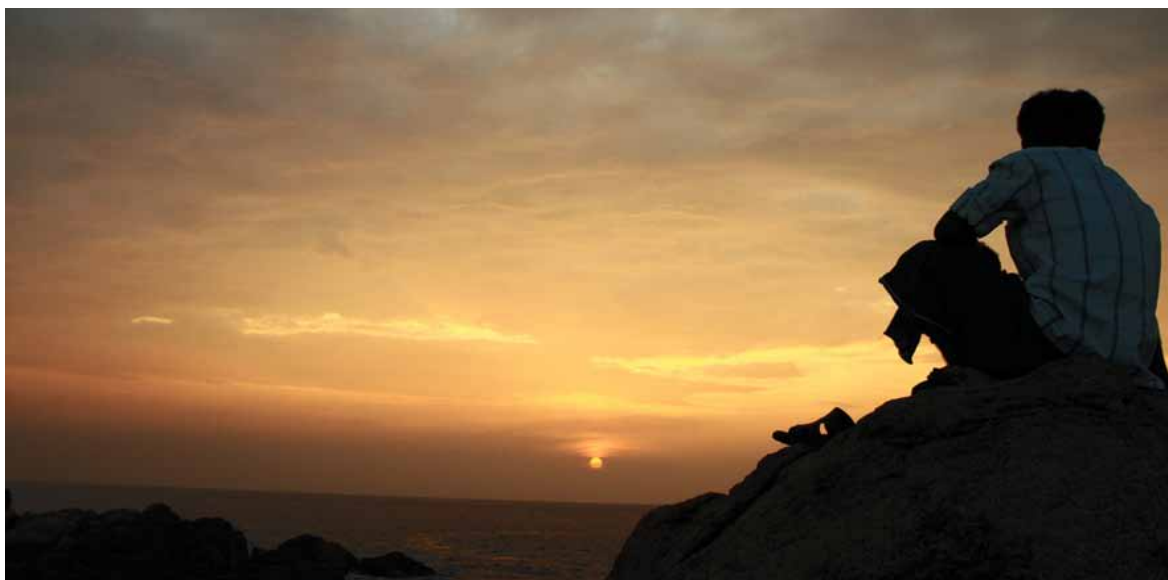
from pg. 5

I can never forget what a returnee who had lived in Greece for 14 years told me: "I do not know what would have happened to me unless I had had your support and understanding. I am really thankful!" He was in a grave psychological state due to the bitter experiences in Greece (he had experienced many traumatic situations) and needed to

be heard and supported. The worst thing today is that we do not have the patience to listen to each other or mention the word "solidarity."

There is so much to say and do in this changing society...

Irena Dono





Small and Medium enterprises capacity building with a special focus on migrants

This annual project, financed by the EED (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst Deutschland), implemented during 2008 aimed at providing specialized services for the returnees and the internal migrants, benefiting from the association projects and their employers as well.

In the frame of this project, the capacities of 20 employers who provide the beneficiaries with jobs increased and their managing knowledge and business strategic planning enhanced. Our association facilitated their participation in five training sessions with business experts in the areas of “Planning and strategy”, “Registration of a business”, “Clientele and suppliers”, “Marketing and services” and “Registration of financial transactions”.

Support was provided for 20 beneficiaries – returnees and internal migrants in a two-week training, which provided information on business start up and management. The scope of this cycle of trainings was broad and covered considerable relevant business procedures on enterprises and the loaning system in Albania.

After training in business issues, 10 of the trainees were selected and supported financially in starting an income generating activity. The support consisted of an amount of 1050 Euros, 70% of which in the form of a grant and 30% in an interest-free loan.

The financed businesses consisted of hairdressing, tailoring, cyber cafes, coffee bars, video stores, fast food shops and agricultural sowing and harvesting.

In order to arrange an exchange of information between the employees/employers and the institutions providing services in business development, two training workshops were held (June and December 2008). The workshops aimed at getting the public entities, the loaning institutions and the association beneficiaries together to elaborate on business development topics and share the best experiences of the most successful businesses. Representatives from the Tirana Municipality, the National Employment Service, different loaning banks and associations working in the business area participated in the workshops.

According to the constant monitoring by the “Hope for the Future” staff, all financially supported beneficiaries continue with their profit activities and some are expanding and improving their services.

Monika Hasani



Results and achievements of MIGRAVALUE



The Migravalue Project: Steering Economic and Social Cohesion in the CADSES Space: Valuing Migration as a Development Tool, partly financed by the European Union through INTERREG IIIB CADSES program during September 2006 – August 2008, developed concrete proposals to connect the mobility and personal interests of migrants with local development goals.

Grounding its findings on a thorough investigation of the migration impact on the social and economic development, Migravalue project puts forward a twofold operational proposal that has a strong policy relevance, combining the economic and social realms of the link between migration and local development, and thus fulfilling the project goal on structuring models that can effectively put remittances to productive use for individu-

als, their families and the community social and economic needs.

Under the stewardship of the Union of the Veneto Chambers of Commerce and the Italian-Slovakian of Commerce, the Migravalue project developed the model “Using remittances to expand credit availability in neighbor countries: a trans-national model to connect migration and local development”- a multidimensional guarantee system operating at trans-national level, that makes use of migrants’ remittances transfers and resources to increase the credit availability for financing entrepreneurship in the countries of origin.

A valuable contribution was provided by the experts of “Hope for the Future” association by the national report

“A study analysis of existing trans-national guarantee funds and the best practices in Albania” completed in February 2008.

The assessment of the social dimension of the impact of international migration on local development was carried out under the responsibility of Regional Authority of the Emilia-Romagna and “Hope for the Future” association. Migravalue considered the remittances impact in the human and community development in the country of origin and drafted the guidance for actions to increase their effect on the social sectors: “Fostering the effects of remittances on community development: the work on Albania and its migration to Italy”.

Migravalue operational proposals are based on the findings of the quantitative and qualitative researches on the migration and remittance effects on the spending, saving and investing habits of Albanian household, as well as on family structure.

In the frame of Migravalue communication plan, “Hope for the Future” jointly with the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities held the Regional Seminar “Remittances and Local Development in Albania” on May 9th, 2008.

This workshop was a good chance for public discussions on the operational models, to seek the feedback of decision makers, target groups and concerned stakeholders in the country, on the role of remittances in the local development.

The Migravalue findings were discussed in the Core Team of different stakeholders promoted by the project with the institutions that participate in Albanian National Strategy on Migration, which allowed finalizing the guidance for future actions.

By the end of the project (June–August 2008) a series of traditional and distance training sessions were held on Migravalue developed operational models. The trainings aimed at providing an overview of the project from the economic perspective and acquaintance with all social policy aspects addressed to migrants and their families in the countries of origin. Partners of the Migravalue project, public officers in charge of international cooperation, stakeholders of migration and economic development, representatives from the civil society and others were involved in these trainings.

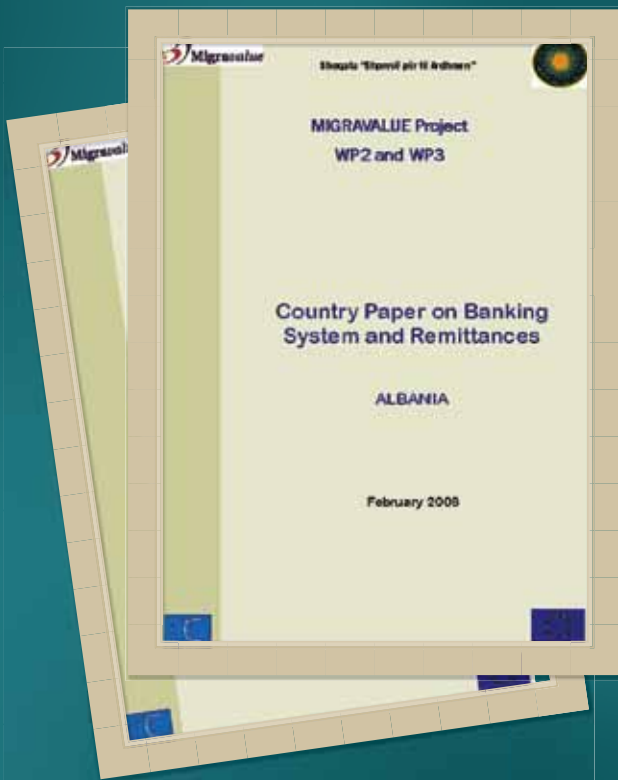
To make Migravalue achievements public, a final conference was held in Rome, on June 26th, 2008. All partners and some stakeholders of the Italian politics attended. The project goals and achievements were introduced and compared to earlier experiences of the same field in the EU and the Neighboring Countries.

“Hope for the Future” had invited special speakers from the National Employment Service who introduced the measures the Albanian government has taken in the frame of the National Action plan on Remittances and the employment situation in Albania.

Monika Hasani
Project Officer



MIGRAVALUE Publications





“Open up a new path in your life” Project

Unfortunately, the steps taken in the area of gender integration are still few. The woman continues to be unemployed, lacks information, and suffers the violence in the family and the patriarchal stereotypes especially in rural areas. In order to provide a solution to these problems, “Hope for the Future” in 2006 implemented the pilot project “Take a step” with women and girls of the internal migrants in Laknas area. The project results and impact were very positive and drove towards the second stage.

“Take a step” was followed by “Open up a new Path in your Life” project implemented during January – December 2008. This project aimed at facilitating the integration of the female internal migrants by providing opportunities of vocational training, and getting them skilled to compete in the labor market. We also aimed at providing psychological and emotional assistance and promoting an active participation in the social and cultural life of the country.

“Open up a new Path in your Life” project provided support for 55 women in the area of Bërxull. After 1990, the Bërxull commune was one of the most affected areas from the internal migration. The collected data show that the newly set comprised 42% of the population. The education level is low and the unemployment level is 43%.



Women beneficiaries of the project

The women involved in the project belonged to the 17–45 age group and had no economic opportunities to train. They were provided with training courses in the following professions: 16 women received a degree in tailoring; 11 in hair dressing, 6 in cooking, 10 in computer skills, and 12 in English language skills.

They were very interested to attend and achieved great results. The trainers said that all women were motivated and eager to learn in these courses as well as aware of the certain value of this qualification.

This project implemented in Bërshull was a good opportunity of vocational training and not only. The involvement in the social and cultural activities in the frame of the association program as well as the meetings with specialists of the gender issues domain who discussed on the STDs, gender stereotypes, family violence etc. were very valuable.

“Open up a new Path in your Life” project helped us understand better the situation of women in the rural areas and made us think to take further steps to incite integration in the community.

The project was financially supported by the Swiss Protestant Church Council and fundraising was made by Mr. Patrice de Mestral.

**Brunilda Qevani,
Social worker**

Letter of gratitude to the “Hope for the Future” Association

My name is Redona Lleshi. I was born in Burrel, but moved to Tirana due to personal family reasons. My parents divorced and the misfortune of our family starts immediately. I was very little when our family broke to pieces. My mother got married and had a new family and so did my father. My sister and I have been living with my uncle ever since. My life was very hard psychologically and economically. I was very good at school and fond of studying but the economic difficulties made me quit school after the 8th grade.

Chance and God helped me meet the “Hope for the Future” association. I thought of meeting their staff and express my sorrowing and worries. I took the courage to speak about my problems and the endless, disturbing concerns. I was received very generously. I found hope and liveliness and felt I was to be helped.

With their assistance I had a course in hairdressing. They financed me and supplied me with the tools and I managed to open my hairdressing shop.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the association and their staff for their humane assistance.

**Sincerely,
Redona Lleshi**



Hope for the Future, Thank you!



Meeting with mothers of orphan children

Dear and honorable staff of "Hope for the Future",

On behalf of all mothers and their orphans, we would like to thank you very much for your sensitizing and support for our children. We are very grateful for your efforts in making our orphans smile on Christmas Eve and for wiping off their tears every time they see their happy friends with their parents beside. Lonely as we are, we as mothers, could never provide for our children unless we have your and community's assistance. Most mothers are jobless and those few employed receive low salaries, like all governmental salaries are especially for the uneducated women.

Our children need food and clothing as well as education in order to be integrated and be a decent part of our society. It is important that

they smile, too. "Hope for the Future," thank you for making our children smile this day.

We hope that you will keep assisting and supporting us in the future, as well. May you and your families be very happy. God bless you with his kindness. May he bless those who help orphans and their mothers.

Heartfelt and sincere gratitude from the orphans' mothers.

On behalf of the mothers with orphan children

***Dëshira Gjonaj
Liljana Bako
Vera Mullau
Ibra Allushi***

STATISTICS

throughout years

A total of 1745 persons, 1406 men and 339 women are enrolled on “Hope for the Future” Association list from May 1999 to December 2008.

1362 beneficiaries, 1079 men and 83 women have benefited from our professional and social reintegration programme from May 1999 to December 2008.

Statistics for year 2008

| Projects | No. of Beneficiaries | Percentage |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------|
| Take the Future | 72 | 31,03 |
| Albamar | 59 | 25,43 |
| VARRP | 6 | 2,59 |
| FoKaBi 2 | 40 | 17,24 |
| Take the Step 2 | 55 | 23,71 |
| Total | 232 | 100,00 |

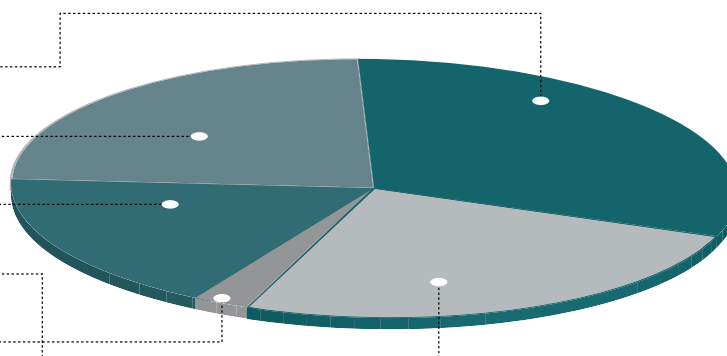
Take the Future (**31,03**)

Albamar (**25,43**)

Take the Step 2 (**23,71**)

FoKaBi 2 (**17,24**)

VARRP (**2,59**)



Our beneficiaries write down:

When I was so much in need, Hope for the Future Association assistance was very helpful to overcome the difficult situation I was experiencing. I have already a good job and I am satisfied with myself. And I have decided to stay here in my country.

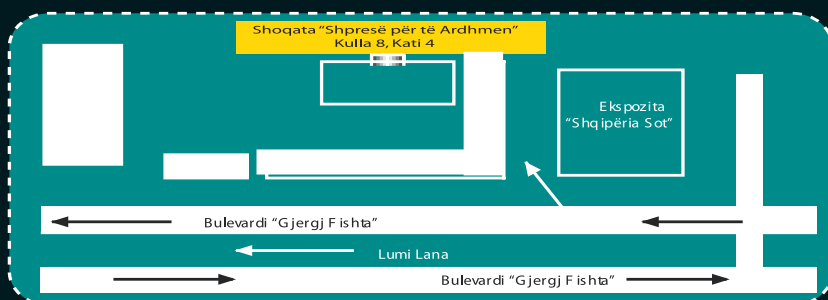
D. G. Durrës

I think that this association has helped many people in need. I personally am wellintegrated and this has come thanks to you. Thank you very much!

A. Z. Tiranë

It is a project to be congratulated. A social assistance come from outside the country and lacked by our governmental bodies. The Swiss experience and association's yearlong work is a good example to expand more.

Gj. Dh. Berat



Hope for the Future Association

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