

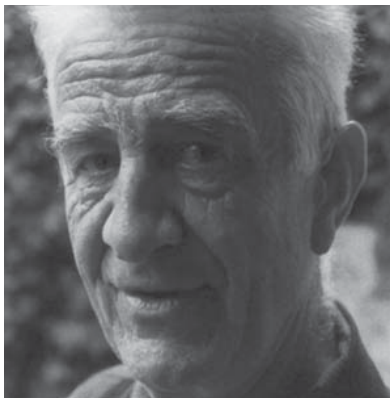
## GREETINGS FROM PATRICE DE MESTRAL

FOUNDER AND COORDINATOR OF “KAPE TË ARDHMEN”

Who would have thought five years ago, that the project “Kape të Ardmen” would still exist today?

It is indeed a great success-story, but let us not forget that without the diligent and patient work of a qualified team of social workers, led by a very competent manager, Irena Dono Jorgaqi, our project would have died a long time ago...

**In a recent letter dated March 2nd 2004 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Madame Micheline Calmy-Rey pointed out, that she is very proud of the fact that this successful team of Kape consists primarily of women. It is to them that goes the credit, to have developed a project for one of the most difficult target group, the repatriated young Albanians, who left the country to flee the poverty of their homeland in the hope to find a better life somewhere in Europe.**



When I look back to the beginning of this project, started in April 1999, in the midst of the Kosovo-war, I remember, that after six months, we were almost ready to give up this project, because only a handful Albanians had come to our office, overcoming their deep seated mistrust, that a

Swiss led organization would indeed be willing to help them to get a new start in Albania, after having been repatriated by the Swiss police.

Today, the project of “Kape të Ardmen” which is a project of the Albanian NGO “Shpresë për të Ardmen” has gained recognition throughout Albania, and also in Switzerland. As its initial founder and coordinator, it is my great hope, that Shpresë për të Ardmen will be able to “Albanize” this and other projects, thus showing to the Albanian people, that it is worthwhile to develop projects, which have not only material goals, but a broader scope and vision for the future of a prosperous and sane Albania.

On this occasion of the fifth year of its existence, I would like to thank all the countless donors who have helped start and carry through this project all these years. I would like to mention especially the Swiss agency of the Protestant churches HEKS and its responsible monitoring person Madeleine Hirsch, the DEZA offices in Tirana and Berne, the Deutsche Entwicklungs-Stiftung of the EKD and IOM London, with whom contracts and support have been guaranteed until the end of 2004. We do hope that all the donors in Switzerland, Germany and England

will continue to support this unusual project, started on a private basis, out of the troublesome experiences of a prison chaplain in Switzerland, who realized, that young Albanians need to have a positive outlook on their own future, after having been sent back from Europe to Albania.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all our clients, who have gained confidence in this project, but also all the “shop-keepers” who were willing to give these young Albanians a chance for a new start in their homeland.

**THE KAPE TË ARDHMEN PROJECT WAS AN ADORED CREATURE OF ITS CREATOR, PATRICE DE MESTRAL. THE PROJECT’S STAFF TRIED HARD TO RAISE THIS ADORED CREATURE WITH THE CARE AND DEVOTION OF A GOOD PARENT FOR HIS BABY.**

**THE BABY IS NOW FIVE YEARS OLD AND CAN SPEAK HERSELF...**

**I. Dono**

**“HOPE FOR THE FUTURE”  
ASSOCIATION**  
and **“TAKE THE FUTURE”  
PROJECT**

**- RETURN TO RETROSPECTIVE -**

## **EMIGRATION**

**“In Zyrich we stayed around six months. During this period we looked for a job, but it was impossible. Day after day our hope to find a job vanished and our financial situation worsened. Both disappointment and unemployment forced me to come back to Albania, but with empty pockets”.**

The same story is repeated for hundreds of Albanians, who migrated to Switzerland. The emigration is one of the greatest social problems the Albanian society faced in the last 10 years. The increase of unemployment, the low living level and a series of very old difficulties forced the Albanian youth to sacrifice their family warmth, love and friendship in the search of a better life far away from Albania. Switzerland was one of the countries that excited and awakened the Albanian curiosity for “a fabulous and fast enrichment”. It was one of the most favourable countries for emigration due to the high level of the living standard and the good conditions offered to them. Plenty

of young Albanians considered and still consider Switzerland as a paradise in which one can make a lot of money very easily by drug dealing and other illegal activities. The major part of those people becomes the contingent of prisons and is expelled from Switzerland, losing the right to re-enter to this country for several years or forever.

### **Some figures on the repatriated Albanians, returned by the Swiss authorities in the last five years**

These figures are only unofficial, because they are not available to the public. These are approximate figures, which correspond to P. de Mestral’s regular inquiries at the border police (Grenzpolizei) at the airport of Kloten. These figures include repatriation from all the cantons in Switzerland executed through the border police in Kloten. These figures do not correspond exactly with the figures from the BFF (Federal Office for Refugees) Bern, who have somewhat another counting system, since there were also voluntary repatriation, but as a whole the figures for 1998-2001 could be pretty much accurate. For 2002 and thereon, he has less direct information,

Year	Persons returned / in years	in months about
1998	2543	212
1999	1613	134
2000	1100	82
2001	830	69
2002	415	35
2003	216	17

but they are based on his visits to their office prior to his trips to Albania and they were willing to inform him unofficially.

### RETURN

The Albanian youth, more than ever disappointed, were forced to come back to Albania. And the reality confirmed once again the fact that dreams never come true and remain far away from the truth. The repatriated people found themselves at the cross road, expelled from a foreign country and abandoned by their government. But somebody should help the long-suffering people who needed support, somebody should listen to their troubles, somebody should offer their hand and make them have self-confidence and believe in the human strength as well.

**The project “Take the Future” emerged as an absolute necessity to assist this category of people to re-find the roots in their country.**

### THE PROJECT “TAKE THE FUTURE”

“Take the Future” is a project of the social-humanitarian association “Hope for the Future“. The beginning of the project dates since November 1998 when the initiative of Dr. Patrice de Mestral, a prison chaplain who had close contacts with the Albanian youth penalized in Switzerland, enabled this project not to remain just an idea of the author, but to develop as well in Albania. Along with Mr. de Mestral, in this difficult undertaking was involved the Swiss social worker Franciska Camenzind, who played a significant role during the first phase of the project for staff recruiting and training and for the establishment of the initial targets of the project. Kape të Ardhmen was a pilot project opened with the following objectives:

- To re-integrate repatriated young Albanians into the Albanian society.
- To develop new educational & professional perspectives for their own future in order to help them to re-find and re-discover new roots in Albania.

- To bring into public focus the problem of so many young Albanians who seem to see no future for them in Albania except to migrate to other countries.
- To encourage craftsmen & businesses of all kinds in different European countries to take the challenge to invest know-how and finance in the re-building of Albanian society.
- To create new alternative job-employment for these repatriated Albanians, as a first step of re-integration in Albania.
- To help Albanians to re-discover their pride of being Albanians and take an active part in the development of their own future in Albania.

Work started with the recruiting of the repatriated people from Switzerland and to this served also the one-month investigation on the repatriated young people at Rinas airport, the distribution of a questionnaire and explanation of the project's goal. The requests of the questionnaire had to do with the age, education level, the reasons for leaving Albania, identification of the needs and wishes of the youth, etc. in order to define the most efficient services provided for this target group. The additional information was required from Switzerland.

In April 1999 an Information, Counseling and Support Office was opened in Tirana

to implement the project.

In November 1999, the Tirana Court legalized the NGO under the name "Hope for the Future".

## PRIMARY SERVICES

The work started with the collection of information for:

- Vocational formation courses
- Training courses, as foreign language courses, computer courses etc.
- Associations providing social services.

The collection of this information was realized through direct contacts with those organizations and their representatives. Also the staff of the project prepared a leaflet that was distributed in Switzerland, Tirana and several districts of Albania and enabled the coming of first young people to the office. Within the months April-October 1999, the office provided for the repatriated Albanians information on vacancies and training courses, counseling for personal problems and created some employment micro-projects. The period April-August 1999 was not a very intensive period; despite the information, the concrete chances offered to the clients were little. During the emergency period of Kosovo war the office provided short-term employment services for the Kosovars in Tirana through the micro-project "Flowers decorate the environment". The project was implemented in June and provided support for the Kosovo refugees, who were

selected in the refugees camp on the basis of several criteria defined by the staff of the office. The work was carried out in the area opposite to the premises of the Association office. Regardless of the difficulties confronted, that micro-project was estimated as successful. The Kosovo refugees were very satisfied to have access to such employment chance: in addition to the financial support this work helped them to alleviate frustration and the terror of the war. The few services provided at first for the repatriated Albanians were considered later as insufficient and not fruitful, so the need for changes emerged.

### PERMANENT SERVICES

Since October 1999 and on Hope for the Future via Take the Future project has provided for its clients a 9-months period of apprenticeship and facilitation to job employment at the small workshops or other larger businesses. This is realized with the signing of a contract between the representatives of the office and the businessman under the terms accepted by both parties. The project undertakes to pay **60%** of the payment for the young people trained for a profession. Since that time the project has provided too, a complete financial support for several training courses.



First beneficiary of the project

### THE “OPEN HOUSE” MEETINGS

“Open House” meetings are one of the periodical social activities of the project. This remains a good chance for the youth to come together and talk freely exchanging their life experiences, discuss on several issues, problems and plans for the future. They are asked to give their ideas and rational opinions for the development



“Open House” meeting



“Open House” meeting

of the project that will serve as a feedback to the staff for the future. Keeping continual contacts with the young people, our staff can be more close to their needs and problems. This fact helps them to make an accurate assessment of the situation and define the following steps.

“Open House” meetings are organized not only in Tirana, but also in the districts in which we have considerable beneficiaries. These activities are accomplished in the context of developing a community work.

## THE YEAR 2000

The year 2000 marks obvious changes in comparison with the year 1999. During the year 2000, 185 repatriated young people visited our office, of which 173 were male and 12 female. It is clear that compared with the previous year, the number of both clients is increased significantly.

Another obvious specific is the increase of

the number of clients who have migrated from the rural areas towards the large urban areas. Taking into consideration the difficulties of integration into the capital life the staff paid special attention to this target group, as its needs were greater.

Another direction on which work was focused was the contacts with the Swiss repatriated youth at the Rinas

airport. The continuity of those contacts enabled the spread of information not only for the repatriated young people, but also of other interested entities (various people or police employees, etc).

It is worth mentioning also the attempts of the staff to be included in a collaboration network with governmental and non-governmental organizations that operated in the migration field. Those attempts proved to be efficient, they served to the enrichment and updating of the information of the office on the services provided for the repatriated persons from various European countries. Due to the work accomplished, the concept “Stories on Emigration” was born and became a reality. Each emigrant who comes to our office is asked to write his own story of emigration. One can read between the lines about the sufferings and the drama of Albanian emigrants and is aware on the causes and consequences of the illegal migration. All the stories collected enabled

the creation of a special file, which is going to be published very soon.

## VISITS

In June 2000 a group of 10 Swiss people led by the project coordinator Mr. Patrice De Mestral visited our project. They visited our office and met the beneficiaries young people as well as their trainers in Tirana, Durrës, Berat, Fier, etc. They got known closely with the hardships of the Albanian business, and at the same time with the hardships of these young people such as employment, their adaptation with the new work conditions, and life in general after their repatriation.

The main goal of this visit, the first of such kind for us, was to know closely the Albanian reality and the way of project implementation in our country. It is worth mentioning that the first impressions on the work realized by our staff were very positive. They considered this project fruitful and necessary for the re-integration of the young people repatriated from Switzerland.

## YEAR 2001

The year 2001 was a period of consolidation for the activity of the project “Take the Future”. The difficulties of the



Swiss group visit

first steps of work, due to which we had a slow progress, with a low pace and lack of the expected beneficiaries for our service access, were overcome.

The period January-December 2001, especially the months January-May, marked a very intensive work for our office with a great flow of repatriated young people from Switzerland who applied for support from our office. This year 258 young people have applied in our office of which 233 male and 25 female. As seen above, the major part is male, but compared with the two first years, the number of female applying to our



Silvana



Aldona

office is on the increase. The project favours the female, to whom the beneficent access of the program is offered at once. Most of them belong to the youth who have come from the North of Albania and are settled in Tirana, whereas the rest are young people from Berati, Shkodra, Fier, Durrës, etc.

The project has tried to consolidate the services in several areas of Albania, in the districts of Berat, Shkodër, Tirana in which a large number of repatriated youth exist, but the project has never ceased to assist too the young people from the districts of Elbasan, Lezha, Librazhd, Saranda, etc.

During the year 2001 are signed 133 contracts to attend the 9 months vocational courses for different professions such as workers in duralumin workshops, mechanics, electricians, carpenters, cheffs etc.

The interest for training courses such as computer, foreign languages etc. has been less. Although we have pushed the young people for such courses, their will is lacking. Our opinion is that the justification for this is the actual situation in Albania. Most of them live under extreme living conditions

and a low living standard. Under these circumstances, they are more interested to learn professional skills and gain money, rather than complete an English or computer course. So, having a vocational training fits their needs.

## RESULTS FOR THE YEAR 2001

The work results for the year 2001 were really positive. They are measured not only by the number of clients or the realized contracts, but also by the number of clients who have continued to work after the 9 months vocational training. They are also measured by the assessment of the young people involved in our program. Right after the 9 months period of apprenticeship during the year 2001 we can say that 80% of the young people continued to work in the same working place.

Also, the conclusions obtained by the questionnaires prepared for this aim demonstrate that all the young people estimate the 9 months apprenticeship as very useful and the office service as very good.

## PUBLICITY

During the year 2001 a great work was done in terms of the publicity on the activity of the project "Take the Future". In addition to the distribution of the leaflets everywhere in Albania, the publicity was realized through both electronic and written media. Several articles were published on the project "Take the Future", interviews were realized with

the director of the project for several main Albanian newspapers. The realization and the performance of a documentary film "Take the Future" was appreciated deeply. This film was realized by the well known film director of the Albanian television Ylli Pepo, and the film was performed on February 2001. The film was broadcasted on the ATV and abroad via satellite. The documentary movie provides a real view on emigration in Switzerland, it also speaks about the activity of our Association. This activity served as a good opportunity to bring together several governmental and non-governmental organizations that deal with the migration and helped for the increase of the clients. Since that year several Swiss journalists visited our Association and they have published in the Swiss newspapers several articles on our re-integration programme.

## MORE ACTIVITIES IN 2001

The year 2001 marked something new for the project. This has to do not only with the great flow of clients to our office, but also with the initiatives and new directions of the project. The NGO board along with the coordinator of the program decided to put into reality an already thoroughly discussed idea in the joint meetings: support for the youth after the 9 months apprenticeship period. To be more concrete, support was provided for four groups of young people to open a small business. The goal of this support was to help those young people to develop their own business, through the promotion of their free initiative and use their business place as training centers for the new clients of the project. The project aimed as well to promote their will for staying forever in Albania, through a combination of their individual interests with the general interest of the country. The office staff, being aware of the problems and the risk of the loan, has shown a special care in the selection of the clients who would have access to this service. The office followed step by step the progress of the businesses and noticed that the young people tried hard and worked for long hours. But due to several objective and subjective reasons (three) groups closed their businesses, but they paid back only a small part of the financial obligation they had towards the office.

The movie team with our clients



The closing of the activity was due to the difficult situation in the country, such as the hard electricity situation, high taxes and unfair competition. The first group who consists of four former clients of Kape, was able to overcome the difficulties and survive due to both their hard work and great will. The carpentry named by them “Kape të Ardhmen” continues to work and be successful.

Following a research work, the Association “Hope for the Future” in March 2001 published its first edition, which is titled “Hope”. This publication is prepared by the director of the project and speaks about the activity of the Association and it provides a rich factual material.

## VISITS

In September 2001 another group of Swiss people visited Albania to closely know the work of our Association. The group consisted of people who knew a lot about the emigration issue of Albania. The major part of them was Swiss prisons employees such as social workers, prison educators, teachers, who had direct contacts with the Albanian youth in Switzerland. Among them were also three newly graduated students of Social Sciences, who had written the thesis of their diploma on “Kape të Ardhmen”.

The Swiss group visited Berat, Shkodra,



Meeting with beneficiaries in Shkodra



Visit in Berat

Lezha, Fieri, Kruja, Tirana where they met our beneficiaries at their job places. They appreciated deeply the work done by our staff and made their suggestions for the future. The most significant suggestion was that it was high time for the institutionalization of the Kape të Ardhmen.

## YEAR 2002

The Association and the project were already consolidated, but still the need for changes and new achievements remained evident. The experience of the previous years had demonstrated real achievements of the objectives set up as well as a considerable increase of the number of clients. Under these conditions the will and the possibility to work with this target group was strong, but the staff of the project, backed up by the board members of the Association thought that it was the right time to make improvements and progress at work. In this context, several meetings were arranged with governmental and non-governmental organizations aiming chiefly to the future cooperation such as e.g. International Social Service, National Employment Service, Tirana Youth Social Center, etc.

The Association “Hope for the Future” also collaborated with the Association “RIART”: the common objective of both was to focus on the youth issue who do not see their future in Albania, but through migration to other countries; they enabled the preparation and the publication of the brochure “VIRUS”.

The Association “RIART” was a new Association the members of which came from different fields. The goal of the youth was to serve to the Albanian society with their handicrafts by identifying and fighting against various social issues, which threaten this society during the transition period. The illustrated booklet “Virus” a product of the Association “RIART”, sponsored by the Association “Hope for the Future” was distributed for free to the high school students of three schools, respectively “Sami Frashëri” Tirana, “Kristaq Capo” and “Babë Dudë Karbunara” Berat.

	No.	Age				Your opinion on emigration			Have you ever emigrated ?		If you would have the opportunity to emigrate:		Would your family support you??		Among two alternatives, what would your choice be?	
		15	16	17	18	Pos.	Neg.	Pos. & Neg.	Yes	No	I would do	I would hesitate	Yes	No	Emigrat. in a West country	Education in Albania
F	165	36	65	38	26	28	118	19	11	154	73	92	71	94	24	141
M	95	14	40	31	10	31	60	4	21	74	48	47	32	63	14	81
Σ	260	50	105	69	36	59	178	23	32	228	121	139	103	157	38	222
%	100	19	41	26	14	23	68	9	12.3	87.7	46.5	53.5	39.6	60.4	14.6	85.4

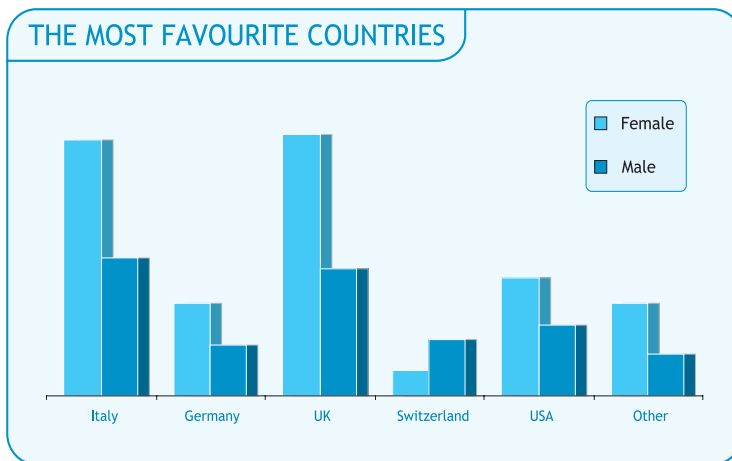
Through illustrations and talks between the characters, the booklet aimed to raise the awareness of the youth about the dangers and unexpected events deriving from the illegal migration in general and in Switzerland in particular. The distribution of the booklet was organized in the form of an open talk with the young people in which many aspects of emigration, the potential and individual, family and social experiences were discussed. The last page of the booklet included a questionnaire to get the opinion of the young people on emigration, our government policies regarding this phenomenon and their solution for the future. It is worth mentioning the fact that many young people considered emigration as a second hand thing or not at all necessary, on the contrary for them the most important was education or professional skills. This activity is already a part of the program of

the Association and is organized in several schools of the country, with the aim of raising the awareness of the youth on the risks and dangers of illegal emigration.

### MEETING WITH BUSINESSMEN

Another important activity was organized during the year 2001; meetings were arranged with the small business entrepreneurs, who we cooperate with to realize our professional re-integration programme. The main goal of the organization of such meetings was the identification of the needs, issues and their interests in terms of the working plan. Also the office required the provision of ideas and suggestions for the future collaboration. During those meetings discussions were held on the difficulties the entrepreneurs confront in their private activity as well as for a more efficient cooperation with our office. Plenty of ideas

What's to your opinion the most important factor that contributes in the reduce of emigration?			Would the progress in Albania come from the emigration?	
Increase of economic level.	Fight against illegal migrat.	Liberalization of the migration policies.	Yes	No
147	13	5	107	58
85	5	5	63	32
232	18	10	170	90
<b>89.2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>65.4</b>	<b>34.6</b>



were provided, which served to determine the future forms of cooperation and mutual assistance.

### PARTICIPATION IN THE FAIR

The participation in the Fair of Lifetime Learning, organized by PARSH and CIVET during 21-24 October 2002 was satisfactory for our Association. It was our first experience in such kind of activity that pleased us and served as a nice form of publicity. The visitors were very interested to learn on the activity of our Association, got almost all of our copies of newsletters even in English. We had also the chance of contacting entities and Associations that deal with vocational training; we were able to exchange the relevant material with them.



## FIGURES FOR THE YEAR 2002

### Several statistics

During the year 2002, 156 persons were registered in our office, of which 152 male and 4 female. The major part was from the South of Albania, but also clients from the Middle Albania and the North participated as well. Out of them, 120 young people gained the right to be included in our program. 10 young people had access to our financial support to accomplish computer courses, foreign language and driving license courses.

### Several results

111 young people completed successfully the 9-month apprenticeship, simultaneously 14 contracts were breached due to the re-emigration of the young people. 84% of the young people involved in the program completed successfully the 9 month apprenticeship and continued to work in the same profession, whereas a part of them got self-employment putting into life the obtained knowledge. 77.5% of the young people considered the apprenticeship program as “very useful” and 19.8% “useful”. 96.4% of the beneficiaries evaluated the service of the office as very good while 3.6% as good. Among the requests stood out the financial support and finding a job whereas only a few of them wanted to attend the interrupted studies.

Alongside in June of 2002 the regular

meeting of the board of the Association “Hope for the Future” was held. During this meeting a special attention was paid to the further enlargement of the activity as well as the strengthening of the organizational capacity of the Association as a guarantee for a successful continuity. The idea of providing support for both sides was introduced: for the beneficiaries young people and for the entrepreneurs or trainers of the youth as well.

## YEAR 2003

The year 2003 was a turning point in terms of the evident changes and developments for the Association “Hope for the Future”. In addition to the project “Take the Future” which entered into its fourth year, the Association started work with two new projects: 1. The Professional and social integration of the internal migrants and 2. The re-integration of the voluntarily migrants returned from the United Kingdom. This was achieved on the basis of an agreement between our Association and IOM Tirana on the cooperation and implementation of the VARRP programme, initiated by IOM London. Thus, in February 2003, the first agreement was signed between the Association “Hope for the Future” and IOM Tirana, which was followed by another agreement signed in October of that year. The services provided for those target groups were the standard services provided for the beneficiaries of



NGO board

the project “Take the Future”.

As a start, the number of persons referred by IOM was only 9, of whom 7 people could be placed in the job places and restarted their normal life in the country after several years of emigration.

On the 21st of October the second agreement between IOM Tirana and Hope for the Future was signed. This agreement includes the involvement in our re-integration programme of 30 young people voluntarily returnees from England.

Our staff started to work and established the first contacts with them binding the first employment contracts. By December 2003 more than half of them were placed.

The Association was involved in the NGOs migration network operating in our country. Thus, once a month the secretariat of this network organizes meetings with a defined subject or reports from the guests. The goal of these meetings is to further

increase the collaboration as well as the lobing or issuing of recommendations for governmental organizations on several issues such as illegal migration, the New Family Code, violence to women, trafficking of human beings etc.

## VISITS

In April 2003 our Association would receive another Swiss group of visitors. The group consists of 13 persons, who worked as social workers in prisons, prison educators, jurists and teachers. Some of the participants had direct contacts with Albanian youth who suffered the sentence in the Swiss prisons.

The group showed great interest to know closely our beneficiaries of the program. They visited several cities of Albania such as Shkodra, Berat, Fier, Lezha etc. The young people of those cities who have emigrated to Switzerland tried to be re-integrated into the Albanian society. The foreign visitors were impressed especially with the attempts, inner strength of the Berati youth, who regardless of having a few possibilities in their small town, tried to exploit them to set up their life in their hometown. The group appreciated the work of the project "Take the Future" considering it as an indispensable project to the repatriated Albanian youth. Below follow some of their impressions:

- .....● **Good job!**
- .....● **Excellent work! I wish you as much strength as possible to go ahead.**
- .....● **Thank you for the invitation!**
- .....● **You have my admiration for participating in the construction of something great on the Albanian land.**
- .....● **You have my encouragement to proceed with this work.**

## SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ACCOMPLISHED BY OUR ASSOCIATION DURING THE YEAR 2003

In the context of the socio-cultural re-integration program during the year 2003 are realized a series of activities with the project's beneficiaries. In addition to the monthly Open House Meetings, the novelty of this year was the activities organized in collaboration with the clients and the project staff.

During the "Open House" meetings, last year a series of interesting topics were discussed such as: "Gender issues in the Albanian society", "Emigration", "Drugs and their consequences", "Education and the school-abandoning issue", "How about being successful in a job interview", "Environmental issues" etc. These

meetings serve as a very good opportunity to the beneficiaries to establish closer relations among themselves; they are a concretization of the wishes often expressed by the youth; something that is one of the objectives of the programme of our Association. Precisely, to achieve this objective, during the year 2003 two football matches were organized with the programme beneficiaries, the watching of football match between our national team and Ireland, collective going to the movies to watch “Letters of Wind” the topic of which was the emigration and its bitter consequences, a visit to Kruja, and the organization of Christmas and New Year party in the premises of the office. In the future we will believe to have more socio-cultural activities as well as an increase of youth participants. This should be seen not only as an estimation of such initiatives, but also as an increase of the collaboration with the programme beneficiaries which will surely lead to the improvement and efficacy of our services.

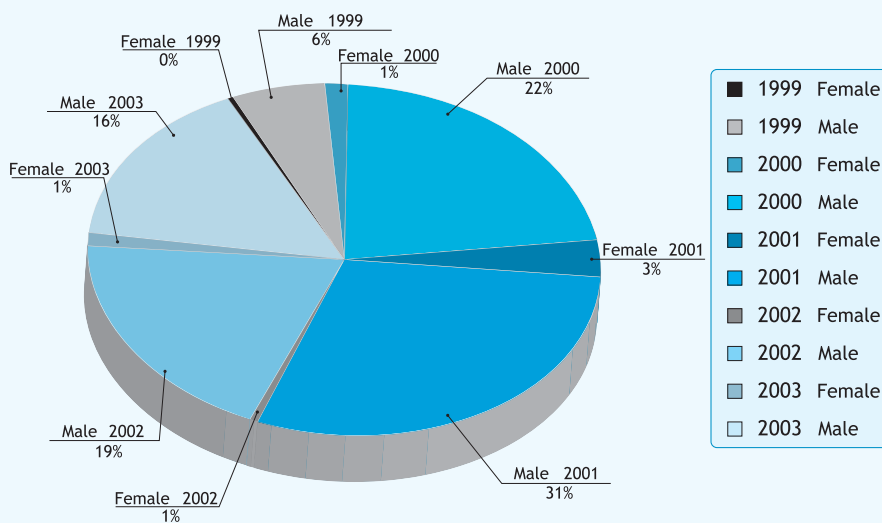


## REPATRIATED YOUTH REGISTERED IN THE OFFICE WITHIN THE PERIOD 1999-2003

Summarizing table

1999		2000		2001		2002		2003	
Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2	47	11	173	25	233	4	152	8	127
		49		184		156		135	
<b>Total</b>		782							

STATISTICS DURING 1999-2003



### GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF THE PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES.

The number of young people registered in the office up to March 2004 is 732

male and 50 female. The persons come from all over Albania. The major part of it is located in Tirana; another large group comes from Berat. But there are many others who come from Lezha, Puka, Tropoja, (Northern Albania) Durrës,

Elbasan (Middle Albania), Fier, Lushnja, Kuçova, Skrapar, Vlora, Saranda (Southern Albania). The diversity of the zones is easily distinguishable, because they bear the specific characteristics of the zone.

Apart from the particularities of the zone, all have more or less the same problems in the Albanian society of the transition period such as unemployment, poverty and shortage of housing etc.

## D O N O R S

**THE PROJECT “TAKE THE FUTURE” WAS BORN AS AN INITIATIVE OF MR. PATRICE DE MESTRAL, WHO MADE FUND-RAISING TO PRIVATE SWISS DONORS SINCE 1999 UP TO THE END OF THE YEAR 2000.**

During the years 2001-2002 the **Association “Shpresë për të Ardhmen”** was supported by **SDC (Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development)** in Bern and **HEKS**.

In 2003 a new donor accepted to support for two years our Association: **EED (German Evangelist Church Aid for Development)** and **HEKS** in continuity.

The Association is also funded by **IOM** for the common part of the program in line with the mutual agreement.

In 2003 several Swiss private donors, who have recognized and got familiar with our achievements regarding the Albanian repatriated young people, had the kindness to give their contribution as well.

We consider the relations with the donors as very good ones. These relations have a partnership and fair basis, which serves to the further progress of our activities and the success of our Association.

We would like to express our gratitude and thank them from the bottom of our hearts, being fully convinced that without their contribution we could never implement our program and be successful.



Irena Dono and Madeleine Hirsch, HEKS representative

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

“Hope for the Future” is already an Association, which through its program, will continue to assist and support financially, psychologically and morally the repatriated youth not only from Switzerland, but also from other Western European countries, with the aim of enabling them to be re-integrated into the Albanian society. Also we will continue to help the internal migrants as well as their integration is equally difficult.

A part of our program will be focused on

the women internal migrants who belong to the groups most in need.

To achieve these aims we need to further promote the cooperation with other local and international NGOs. We need to be more involved in the migration related issues network and we would ask for a good understanding of the donors who hopefully might support our projects.

We are quite ready for new directions and changes that surely will secure our projects to more emphasis and fruitful results.



NGO logo carved by our beneficiary, Hektor Kurti

The document was prepared based on the material available at our office by:

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This is a general overview of the progress of our Association. We think that this material should be restructured, enriched with facts, data and figures, which will constitute the material for a separate brochure.









# YOUNG ALBANIANS GRASP THE FUTURE

A small project in Albania is providing a pinprick of light amid the darkness and confusion surrounding asylum and migration issues in Europe.

Western Europe's cities are full of young Albanians, who have left one of the continent's poorest countries in search of a better life. Many work illegally, some are involved in drugs and crime. A recent survey of 260 15 to 18 year olds in Albania found that 46.5 per cent would emigrate if they had the chance.

Since 1998 the Swiss government has returned 4,900 people to Albania. 'Behind these figures are people whose dreams have not come true,' says Patrice de Mestral, the Swiss coordinator of the Kape të Ardhmen (Take the Future) project, which has given 412 returnees a chance to make a new start.

The project offers to carry 60 per cent of the wage bill when an employer takes on a young returnee for a nine-month apprenticeship. Eighty per cent of participants have continued in employment afterwards. The scheme, which is active in 17 towns and villages, also contributes to rural development and so helps to stem the

flight from the countryside to the shanty towns of the capital, Tirana.

De Mestral has 17 years' experience as a prison chaplain in the canton of Zürich, and also piloted the post of chaplain to the city police. When he retired, he could not stop thinking of the young Albanians he had met in prison - some waiting for deportation from Switzerland after illegal entry or failed asylum claims, others serving drug-related sentences. 'By the time I met them, their cases were closed and they were going home,' he says. 'All I could say was, "One day I'll visit you in your country."'

A few months after retiring de Mestral kept his promise. He based with a women's project in Tirana, linked to Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS). In December 1998, he funded a survey of all the Albanians coming through the airport on their way back from Switzerland. Only 25 per cent said they planned to stay in Albania.

By early 1999, Kape të Ardhmen had been set up under the management of Irena Dono, and de Mestral was distributing leaflets in Swiss prisons, inviting Albanians to find help in rebuilding their lives by visiting the project's office in Tirana after their return.

The outbreak of the war in Kosovo in March 1999 brought everything to a halt. 'For four months, hardly anyone came to our office,' says de Mestral. 'People were afraid that we were working with the Albanian secret police. By August 1999 we were almost ready to give up.' Instead, the project's staff distributed leaflets addressing these fears in Tirana's coffee shops. The first clients began to drop in and by the end of 1999, the first 20 contracts were in place.

The project deliberately focused on a small target group - those who had been returned from Switzerland and whose families depended on them for support. Many rural families scrape together large sums to get a young person to Europe, in the hope that they will make good and send money home. 'When they return with nothing, they're seen as a failure,' says de Mestral. The project helps them to salvage their self-esteem.

Those who are selected for the project are asked to find someone who will take them on as an apprentice and bring them to the office. In Albania's closely-knit society, these 'mini-bosses' are often family members. They benefit from subsidized labour, while the apprentice benefits from training.

Business life in Albania is hard, with corruption and organized crime to contend with. Lack of banking and postal facilities

mean that the wage subsidies have to be delivered by hand every month. These monthly visits provide support for both the employer and the apprentice, and the project also arranges gatherings where participants can meet and discuss their problems.

Funding came initially from HEKS and from Catholic and Protestant parishes along the 'gold coast' of the Lake of Zürich. Since then the Swiss department for technical aid and humanitarian relief, the Swiss police, the Development Agency of the Protestant Churches (EKD) in Germany and, most recently, the International Organization for Migration have contributed. As a result, the project is being opened to Albanians repatriated from countries other than Switzerland.

The project's parent association, Hope for the Future, also works to raise awareness in Albanian high schools about the problems facing migrants. As their survey showed, a large proportion of young people want to leave Albania because of its economic problems. 'I had no money, no clothes like my friends, at home we lived a very bad life, we didn't have even bread to eat,' writes one failed migrant in the association's newsletter. 'They watch Italian and American TV, and they think, "Why stay?"' says de Mestral.

When I met him, he was just about to

return to Albania for the 20th time. The project's success has led to suggestions that it could be replicated in other countries, but de Mestral, with his 70th birthday rounding the corner, will leave that to someone else.

I'm quite clear that what I am doing is just a few drops of water on a hot stone,' he says. But, as Mother Teresa (herself an Albanian) once said, 'the ocean too is made up of drops'. And for the 412 young people who have benefited from the scheme it is more than just a symbolic gesture.

**Mary Lean**

**Note:** Article published in "For a Change" magazine



# “SHPRESE PËR TË ARDHMEN” ASSOCIATION ACTIVITY

