



**TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY**

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**Dear colleagues and partners!**  
**Partners Albania staff presents to you their warm and sincere wishes for a happy and prosperous year 2010!**

**Partners for Democratic Change celebrate the 20th anniversary!**

In November 2009, all members of Partners for Democratic Change International network (PDCI), were gathered in Washington DC to celebrate Partners for Democratic Change US 20th anniversary. PDC is the founder of all the Centers member of the network, established in 20 different countries on four continents.

In this occasion, PDC organized the *"Innovations for Tomorrow"* Conference co-sponsored by the Center for Transatlantic Relations at the Paul H.

Nitze School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University (SAIS).

Innovations for Tomorrow convened practitioners and academics from the field in a series of workshops reflecting the experience of the Centers in topics such as democracy and governance program evaluation, climate change, minorities in Central and Eastern Europe and development goals.

Partners Albania presented the Albanian experience in **Citizen Participation in Elections** and **Role of Citizens in Promoting Transparency and Improved Decision-Making**.

These cases can be downloaded from Partners Albania website in the following link: <http://www.partnersalbania.org/?fq=brenda&m=news&lid=37&gj=gj2>

For more information on workshops please visit PDC website <http://www.partnersglobal.org/celebrating-20-years-of-partners>



Promoting a "conversation" with key policy and foundation leaders, the Conference focused on three critical deficits which undermine international development: Leadership; Capacity building; and, Sustainability of effort. What new policies, innovations, and opportunities are envisioned by the National Security Council, the Department of State, USAID, the World Bank and foundations that address these deficits which thwart mid- and long-term reform?

During the event, PDC awarded four people for their contribution to Partners work: William S.White, President of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and Robert L. Corcoran, President of the General Electric Foundation for their sustainable support to PDC activities; Dusan Ondrusek from Partners-Slovakia, for the various trainings that he conducted on conflict management; and Daniela Kolarova from PDCI, for her commitment to building up the Partners Network.



## Improve women visibility and outreach at local and central level

In November 2009 PA started the implementation of a new project **"Improve women visibility and outreach at local and central level"**, as part of a three year project **"Enhancing Women's Role in Governance"**, supported by OSCE, funded by SIDA and The Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands Embassy.

The project will contribute in promoting women leaders and increasing the number of women elected in local and central governmental institutions, through enhancement of their visibility.

During November and December Partners prepared a detailed activities plan and then conducted eight regional forums in Fieri, Vlora, Berat, Kucova, Saranda, Tepelena, Permet and Gjorkastra aiming to give to the 138 women participating in these events, an opportunity to profile themselves in public life. Participants were women leaders in political forums, civil society, business sector, and representatives of the central public administration and academic sector.

The following activities will include the conduction of 12 two-day trainings on gender mainstreaming

### Building the capacities of civil society organizations to promote participatory consultation in policy formulation processes in Albania

*"Building the capacities of civil society organizations to promote participatory consultation in policy formulation processes in Albania"* is the newest project of Partners-Albania which started to be implemented in December 2009. The project funded by Balkan Trust for Democracy aims to build the capacity of Albanian civil society organizations to advocate for and participate more effectively in government-sponsored consultation processes on policy & strategy design through the development of advocacy, networking and monitoring skills.

The project will last ten months and will involve representatives of local non-governmental organizations from North, South and Central Albania, as well as representatives of public administration from the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration. Civil society representatives will be trained on how to advocate and participate in policy development, law drafting and amendment of respective laws which are in the agenda of these ministries during 2010, while government representatives will be trained on how to involve civil society in participatory consultations processes.

During the first phase of the project, Partners-Albania organized preliminary meetings with representatives of the above mentioned ministries to facilitate the dialogue among all stakeholders involved.



Pictures during some of the forums

and women's rights for municipal and commune councilors, administration staff, political leaders at local level. In addition PA will facilitate 24 community discussions for men and women on local public services such as social aid, solid waste management, street cleaning, education, health care, and water supply, with a gender perspective.

### Training on Investigative Journalism

On December 2009, Partners Albania organized two training workshops of two days each, on "Investigative Journalism" for journalists in Shkodra and Vlora regions, on behalf of the Rule of Law Program for Albania. Participants were 51 journalists representing local printed and electronic media, as well as national correspondents participated in these training workshops. The training aimed to increase the participants capacities by providing them with new instruments and techniques of investigative journalism, as an effective civic monitoring and engagement tool against corruption.

The training was provided by an experienced trainer from Croatia, since 30 years journalist and internationally authorized as Investigative Reporting Trainer and Media Consultant. Partners Albania facilitated the training by using a participatory methodology which enabled participants to share their experiences in the field of investigative journalism, and discuss on real cases of corruption to be reported by local media.



## Assessment of National Registration Center services

Partners-Albania is conducting an assessment of National Registration Center (NRC) services in terms of consistency, quality, professionalism, transparency, fairness and effectiveness. Partners Albania was selected among other NGOs which competed for this task in the MCC Albania Threshold Program 2, Support for Civil Society Monitoring Initiatives.

The assessment also focuses the NRC's interaction with other government agencies of crucial interest to the business community in Albania, such as the General Tax Department, Labor Inspectorate, etc.

This monitoring initiative will include 17 NRC windows, 3 in Tirana and 14 other districts.

The monitoring will target:

- all NRC services;
- all the stages of service delivery at NRC service windows;
- customer experience with both service windows and the NRC website;
- NRC's interaction with other government agencies.

## Partners Albania Work in Gender Programs

Partners-Albania training managers were involved in a series of gender related activities during November-December 2009:

- **Gender training courses for high schools' teachers.** The training course delivered in Shkodra for high school teachers of Shkodra region, was part of the extra-curricular programs for high schools in Albania which started earlier with a Gender Equality Mainstreaming Book.

- **Training program in Vora Municipality in "Basics of Gender for Local Government"**. The training program aims to enhance skills and capacities of Albanian municipalities to engage in gender equitable planning and policy implementation, in the framework of the support that the Austrian-funded Equity in Governance (EiG) project is providing to the Directorate of Equal Opportunities Policies at the Ministry of Social Services and Equal Opportunities in implementing Albania's National Action Plan for Gender Equality.

- **Gender training and expertise** for representatives of Lezha Municipality on Gender Budget Monitoring, in framework of the UNIFEM project "How to improve the policy and budgetary monitoring process from a gender perspective".

- **Gender Mainstreaming in Local Government.** Three PA training managers participated in the "Training of Coachers" organized by the EiG project. This PA team is working with the project to develop a Gender Mainstreaming Manual that will be implemented in six Albanian municipalities. PA training managers will be part of the coachers' team that will assist the Municipalities to draft and implement an action plan for Gender Mainstreaming.

## "Strengthening the capacities of non-for-profit sector", a new PA assistance program

Partners Albania conducted a swift assessment of institutional capacity building needs of a core group of NGOs. In the conditions when donors funding is shrinking and the competition for funding is becoming harder, it is not surprising to see the biggest need for assistance in financial management and fundraising.

Close to 100% of the respondents have identified **fiscal issues** (NGO tax obligations, reporting and management) as their biggest need, followed by fundraising skills. Due to frequent changes in the NGO fiscal legislation and limited human resources expertise of the sector in financial management, this topic remains very high in the NGO sector needs. Because of its complexity and so far inexistent

assistance for the sector, this is a need across the board regardless the size and funding management experience of the NGO.

The other assistance topics that follow are **Proposal Writing** and **Project Management, Social Enterprising** and **Human Resources Management**.

There is a lower demand on **Community Mobilization** and **Institution Policy and Procedures**.

Based on these findings, Partners Albania will launch in March open trainings for the sector according to program criteria and procedures. For more information please visit Partners Albania website <http://www.partnersalbania.org/?fq=brenda&m=shfaqart&aid=191&gj=gj2>