

NPO EXCHANGE PROGRAM



© Partners Albania for Change and Development. All rights reserved.
Tirana, Albania 2023

Contact:



www.partnersalbania.org



partners@partnersalbania.org



U.S. EMBASSY
Tirana, Albania

This publication was made possible thanks to the financial support of the US Embassy in Tirana. Its content is the sole responsibility of Albania Partners for Change and Development and does not necessarily reflect the views of the US Embassy in Tirana.

NPO EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The "NPO Exchange Program" is one of the newest initiatives of Partners Albania, following several years of work in supporting the strengthening of the NPO sector, building inter-sectorial dialogue for the involvement of NPOs in policy-making and decision-making processes.

The program contributes to increasing the capacities of newly established organizations, operating in various cities across the country, enabling improved access to information and collaboration with other important organizations and institutions in the country."

Participants in the program are selected through an open call for expressions of interest. The program is a combination of onsite visits to NPOs, public and private institutions, discussion sessions with experts from different fields, as well as mentoring sessions to implement the acquired knowledge into practice.

This brochure presents a series of testimonials from participants in the programs organized during 2023. Partners Albania plans to organize additional programs as part of a long-term intervention in support the civil society sector.

PARTNERËT SHQIPËRI
PËR NJË QYTYRIM DHË ZHVILLIM

THIRRJE PËR SHPREHJE
INTERESI

**PROGRAMI I
SHKËMBIMIT
TË OJF-VE**



Vizito faqen tonë të Internetit
www.partnersalbania.org



APLIKO TANI !



Programi i Shkëmbimit të OJF-ve

Apliko tani

PARTNERËT SHQIPËRI
PËR NJË QYTYRIM DHË ZHVILLIM





29

representatives
of 22 NPOs in
15 cities



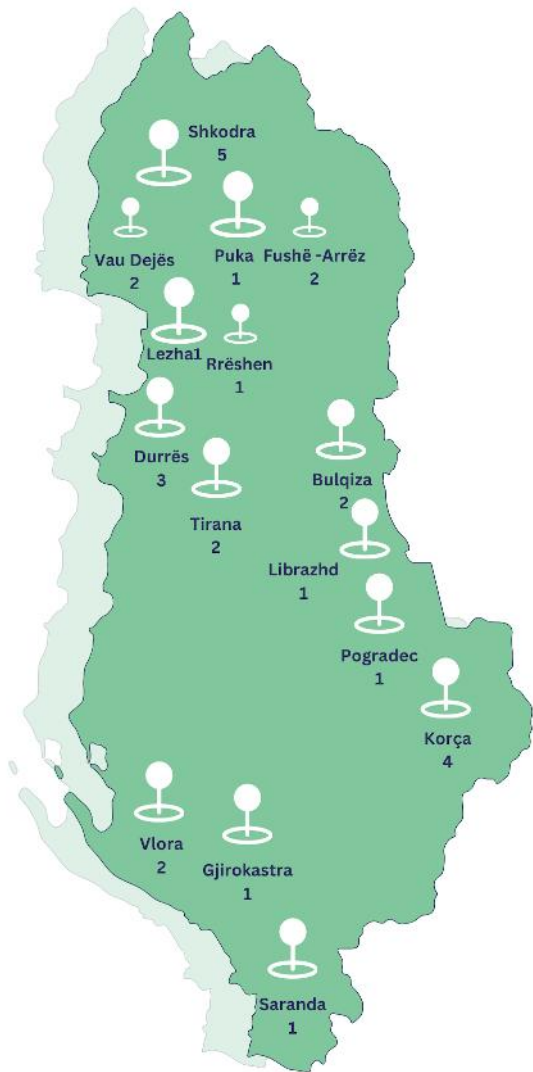
2
programs



56

mentoring
sessions





Program 1

PARTICIPANTS	ORGANISATION	CITY
Abdyl Arifaj	Shoqata e Apiterapisë	Tirana
Arbërora Leti	Opportunity, Balance & Overcoming	Rrësheni
Ardiola Alikaj	Visit Saranda	Saranda
Arnisa Xhaferi	Qendra e Gruas - Hapa të Lehtë	Shkodra
Bleona Kadana	Qendra Rinore Pukë	Puka
Donika Marashi	Komuniteti Papa Xhovani XXIII	Shkodra
Klaudio Hyseni	Qendra Durrësi Aktiv	Durrës
Meliha Zyberaj	Artizanët e Vaut Dejës	Vau Dejës
Mira Prekperaj	Komuniteti Papa Xhovani XXIII	Shkodra
Sara Marku	Pranë Teje	Lezha
Shaqir Jugu	Soek-In	Librazhdi
Valbona Lluqa	Artizanët e Vaut Dejës	Vau Dejës

Program 2

Aishe Tufa	Rural Voice	Bulqiza
Arjola Bajramaj	Gjelbërimi 2000	Vlorë
Bruna Flamuraj	Dorcas Aid Internacional Albania	Korçë
Bruna Gerveshi	Shoqata "MKEZH"	Gjirokastra
Dentila Garipi	Lunah - Qendër Edukimi	Durrësi
Elda Vendresha	Lunah - Qendër Edukimi	Durrësi
Emand Agolli	Shoqata Kujdestari i Fëmijëve	Pogradeci
Ervin Dallaku	Fondacioni Misioni Emanuel	Korçë
Ilda Mitre	Fondacioni Misioni Emanuel	Korçë
Kristina Gjinaj	Shoqata "Në ndihmë të Njerëzve në Nevojë"	Fushë-Arrëzi
Nordana Hasa	Horizont Sërisht	Shkodra
Marinela Sela	Horizont Sërisht	Shkodra
Oliana Manaj	Qendra psiko-sociale "Vatra"	Vlorë
Paola Qafa	Shoqata "Në Ndhimë të Njerëzve në Nevojë"	Fushë-Arrëzi
Pranvera Dhima	Shtegu i Shpresës	Tirana
Sali Xhaferri	Rural Voice	Bulqiza
Xhensila Mirashi	Act Think Center	Korçë



TESTIMONIES

OF REPRESENTATIVES OF NPOS, BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROGRAM



Olijana Manaj

I had the honor to be part of the 'NPO Exchange Program' organized by Partners Albania. I consider this program inspiring and important because I got to know young activists and new organizations operating in Albania, who are a source of inspiration for the work they do for our country. Additionally, visits to institutions and other civil society organizations helped me better understand the work being done in addressing various social issues in Albanian society. I strongly recommend the program to other organizations. You will have the opportunity to meet young people, learn more about the work of institutions, and share experiences and best practices. Thank you for this experience.!



Kristina Gjinaj

My name is Kristina Gjinaj, and I am a member of the "Social Center in Helping People in Need - QSNNN". I am very happy to have been part of these exchange meetings, as I have met potential organizations to collaborate with in the future. I also became acquainted with grant support opportunities for new projects. I had the opportunity to be in the Albanian Parliament to meet important representatives, allowing me to present my organization and explore partnerships for the future. Looking forward, I aspire to engage in consultative processes for upcoming legislative initiatives in the Albanian Parliament. Thank you!



Aishe Tufa

I am Aishe Tufa from Bulqiza. I participated in the "NPO Exchange Program" organized by Partners Albania, representing the "Rural Voice", a newly established organization, focused on the environmental issues. During those four days, we had the opportunity to closely interact and communicate with many other institutions and associations, which were highly productive. I can confidently say, that this is one of the most practical and realistic programs I have ever been a part of. I highly recommend participation in this program for every newly established organization. I am grateful to have been part of this program. Thank you!



Pranvera Dhima

I am Pranvera Dhima, the Executive Director of the "Path of Hope", a counselling and therapy center for children and adults in Tirana. For the first time this year, I became part of the "NPO Exchange Program", organized by Partners Albania, where I had the opportunity to meet colleagues, professionals, leaders and representatives from various organizations of civil society, operating throughout Albania. Collaboration with other NPOs holds an immense significance for us. While we can accomplish certain tasks individually, coming together enables us to achieve greater outcomes. In this program, we had the opportunity to get to know institutions that support civil society, and also had the chance to explore potential funding opportunities for the organization. It's important to be part of a larger network, and Partners Albania is doing an excellent job in creating opportunities for the networking of NPOs throughout the country. I would highly recommend the program to each of you. The time invested in the program is of a significant value!



Ilda Mitre

I am Ilda, representing the "Emmanuel Mission Foundation" based in the city of Korça. I want to emphasize that the experience in this exchange program has been exceptional for me. It has had a significant positive impact on my personal development, and I believe it will also contribute to the growth of my organization. It has allowed me to get to know numerous institutions and organizations, and I had the opportunity to learn more about them and their work. In my view, this experience is valuable for any organization, and I strongly recommend it to all. If Partners Albania has plans to implement a similar program in the future, I encourage everyone to participate, as it is an excellent opportunity."



Bruna Flamuraj

I am Bruna, representing "Dorcas Aid International Albania". I want to express my gratitude to Partners Albania for this exchange program among organizations. I believe that these programs should be frequent, offering an opportunity to learn from the best practices of peer organizations. For me, this program has been very valuable, and I hope it will have a positive impact on my organization as well. Thank you!



Ermand Agolli

Hello! I am Ermand Agolli, and I come from the city of Pogradec. I represent the “Kujdestari i Fëmijëve” foundation, an organisation that helps orphaned and children in need. I would like to express my gratitude to Partners Albania for the exceptional support it has provided during these days, enabling us to meet many institutions and seek support for our projects from various organizations. Thank you very much!



Bruna Gërveshti

I am Bruna Gërveshti, a member of the “Multifunctional Association for Culture, Education and Development” (MKEZH) from Gjirokastra. Participating in this program has been a great experience, allowing me to connect with numerous non-profit organizations across Albania, from the southern to the northern regions. The program provided a unique opportunity to learn from the diverse experiences of these organizations, particularly in the field of advocacy for various issues and their approaches to addressing these concerns. Moreover, engaging with public institutions during this program has been exceptionally enriching, contributing to my growth both as an individual and as a member of the organisation. I highly recommend this program with great enthusiasm, as it has significantly contributed to my professional and personal development.



Dentila Garipi

I am Dentila Garipi, the Executive Director of the "Lunah - Education Center", in the city of Durrës. The "NPO Exchange Program" has been valuable for me and my colleagues at the center in extending our knowledge and assisting in our professional development and motivation. We have expanded our network thanks to this program. I am grateful to the host organizations in this program, on behalf of all other members of our center, and I believe that every newly established organization should strive to provide their organizations with a more contemporary approach. Thank you, Partners Albania, for this opportunity.



Elda Vendresha

I am Elda Vendresha and I was part of this program implemented by Partners Albania, contributing to the development of non-profit organizations. Given that our organization is relatively new, this program has been very enriching for me. It has allowed me to understand more deeply how a non-profit organization should function. Also, we had the opportunity to collaborate with many other organizations that share similar goals. I enthusiastically recommend this program.



Sali Xhaferri

Participating in the "NPO Exchange Program" among non-profit organizations, has been a highly beneficial opportunity, for the Rural Voice" organization. This program has enabled us to establish new connections and crucial collaborations within the sector. Additionally, it has provided us with information on both private and public institutions. We firmly believe that these newfound connections will play a pivotal role in supporting our future projects.



Xhensila Mirashi

Collaboration is the key of our work, where everyone involved stands to gain, and no one loses. The "NPO Exchange Program" gave us the opportunity to further develop partnerships within the colleagues in the sector and extend them beyond. The expansion of our network and the exchange of experiences among fellow organizations, as well as with colleagues from public institutions, greatly enhanced the purpose and objectives of this program. We are grateful to Partners Albania for the excellent opportunity they have provided us, as we feel empowered to address our causes and be more productive within the community we represent.



Ervin Dallaku

My name is Ervin Dallaku and I work at the "Emmanuel Mission Foundation" in the city of Korça. Participating in the "NPO Exchange Program", organized by Partners Albania, has been a truly excellent experience for me. It is a program that provides the opportunity to get acquainted with information on the functions of institutions, as well as facilitates the exchange of experiences among organizations in different cities of the country. I encourage and recommend non-profit organizations to become part of this program.



Klaudio Hyseni

I am Klaudio Hyseni, representing the organisation "Durrësi Aktiv". I attended the "NPO Exchange Program" which I consider important for all NPOs. We had the opportunity of visiting both local and central government institutions, and organizations operating in the city of Tirana. Based on this enriching experience, I highly recommend this program to other organizations in other cities. The program contributes to advancing of advocacy work of NPOs, fostering connections with other organizations, and gaining a comprehensive understanding of central government institutions' roles and functions. I encourage all eligible organizations to participate in this program.



Arnisa Xhaferi

I am Arnisa Xhaferi, a lawyer at "Qendra e Gruas - Hapa të Lehtë", operating in Shkodër. I actively participated in the "NPO Exchange Program" organized by Partners Albania. Throughout the program, we delved into insightful discussions and gathered valuable information. Important topics as public funding, importance of NPO standards, significance of engaging in networks and development of fee-based services in support of target groups were covered during the program. This experience has been enriching, not only for me personally but also for other young professionals. It provides a practical and insightful exposure to diverse activities of NPOs not only in the capital but throughout Albania.



Nordana Hasa

My name is Nordana Hasa from the "Sërisht Horizont" organization, in Shkodra. Participation in the "NPO Exchange Program" was a valuable experience, both on a personal and professional level. I wasn't familiar with this program initially, but I got valuable information regarding the operations of public institutions and organizations based in Tirana. During the program, we learned about various advocacy campaigns and acquired knowledge on new tools and mechanisms for advocating on human rights and public participation. The program facilitated the creation of meaningful partnerships between participants and the hosting institutions. I strongly recommend this program to other organizations, as it offers the needed experience to create a positive impact on the community. Thank you!



Paola Qafa

I am Paola Qafa and I come from the "Social Center for Helping People in Need" (QSNNN) organisation, operating in Fushë Arrëz with the mission of advocating for the elderly and the environment, as well as assisting other marginalized groups in Fushë-Arrëz. I have been a volunteer in our organization for several years, and I recently assumed the role of project manager. The "NPO Exchange Program" has proven to be exceptionally valuable for me, offering a comprehensive understanding of civil society operation across Albania. This exposure has been profoundly inspiring, revealing the vast potential within this field and showcasing what can be achieved. Despite my limited experience, this program has enlightened me to the fact that every individual holds the power to bring meaningful changes within society. Thank you!



Sara Marku

I am Sara Marku from Lezha, a member of the "Prane Teje" organisation. The "NPO Exchange Program" was highly significant for me personally, but also beneficial and informative for the association I represent. As a new NPO, this experience acquainted us with information on numerous initiatives of civil society organizations and institutions, helping us to explore opportunities for future collaborations. In addition, we had the opportunity to be introduced with the central government institutions. I extend an invitation to newly established organizations and encourage them to engage in programs like this. It represents an outstanding opportunity to broaden their network significantly.



Arbërorra Leti

I am Arbërorra, the founder of "Opportunity, Balance & Overcoming," an organization operating in the city of Rrëshen. I am delighted to share my experience from the comprehensive four-day program organized by Partners Albania. During the program, we had the privilege of visiting various central government and civil society institutions, where we learned about advocacy actions and the importance of management, administration, and monitoring of our actions. These acquired techniques are proving to be highly successful to be implemented in our communities. I recommend this program to every organization, as it presents a remarkable opportunity to engage in networking, share innovative practices, learn from others, and elevate awareness within our respective communities.

As a direct outcome of this program, our organization was financially supported by one of the hosting organisations in the program - "AWEN" to implement a project with focus on prevention of direct and indirect discrimination against women and girls with disabilities in Mirdita Municipality. I express my gratitude for this opportunity and extend my recommendation to any organization with the aspirations and determination to bring development and positive change within their community.



Testimonies

OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF HOST INSTITUTIONS



15
host
institutions



List of host institutions

- 1.ADRF (Albanian Disability Rights Foundation)
- 2.Agency for the Support of Civil Society (AMSHC)
- 3.Albanian Legal and Territorial Research Institute (Qendra A.L.T.R.I)
- 4.Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN Albania)
- 5.Credins Bank
- 6.Credins Foundation
- 7.Initiative for Social Change – ARSIS
- 8.Jonathan Center
- 9.Parliamentary Institute
10. People's Advocate
11. Roma Active Albania
12. Science and Innovation for Development Centre (SCiDEV)
13. The Assembly of Albania
14. The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
15. The Women Empowerment Network in Albania (AWEN)



LEFTERIJE LUZI

*Director of the Committee Service,
Albanian Parliament*



The "NPO Exchange Program" proved to be an engaging and enlightening initiative, contributing significantly to the empowerment and advancement of civil society. The partnership with numerous institutions, along with informative presentations and collaborations, highlighted the vast opportunities available to NPOs. Recognizing the pivotal role civil society plays in the overall development of the country, this collaboration is important. Credins Bank, as a partner in this program, has been deeply involved in various activities and had the pleasure of hosting over 30 NPOs at its premises. During these interactions, we took pride in sharing insights into our Corporate Social Responsibility and introducing our online platform, Smile.al. This platform offers a valuable and alternative opportunity for the NPOs to showcase their projects and activities, undoubtedly making a significant impact on the development, education, and well-being of Albanian society.

TESTIMONIES
OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF HOST INSTITUTIONS

As the representative from the Albanian Parliament, I am pleased to affirm the longstanding and successful collaborations that the Albanian Parliament has maintained with civil society, including Partners Albania. I endorse and support initiatives as the "NPO Exchange Program". It is not only beneficial for newly established NPOs, but also for our institution, enabling us to come together, exchange ideas, share information, and collaborate on impactful initiatives that transcend geographical boundaries and draw upon shared expertise. Through such collaborations, organizations can significantly enhance their capacity to positively influence the lives of the diverse groups and communities they are dedicated to serving. I firmly believe that supporting and participating in this program aligns with our institution's overarching goals of openness, transparency, and fostering collaboration for the betterment of the public good.



VALBONA GURI
*Head of Marketing,
Credins Bank*

BLERJANA BINO

Executive Director, SCiDEV



For AWEN, engagements of this kind hold immense value and are of interest. Networking stands as a fundamental pillar for us, encompassing all the dynamics it holds. Our vision has always encompassed a proactive approach to cultivating expansive collaborations with partner organizations, regardless of the formality of the connection. Partners Albania, through this exchange program, significantly contributes not only to the enrichment of our network but also to the cultivation of an open, sustainable environment for non-profit organizations (NPOs). Each organization visiting AWEN, brought a unique and invaluable contribution, providing deeper insights through their dedicated work, sacrifices, and daily commitment to various causes. At AWEN, we collectively learned from their experiences.

TESTIMONIES
OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF HOST INSTITUTIONS

SCiDEV had the pleasure of hosting at her premises, 30 representatives from non-profit organisations (NPOs) from Durrësi, Saranda, Rrësheni, Shkodra, Librazhdi, Lezha, Puka, Vau Dejës, Bulqiza, Gjirokastra, Korca, Maliqi, and Pogradeci. The Program was an excellent opportunity for us to exchange our organizational experiences and engage in meaningful discussions regarding our ongoing initiatives. The opportunity allowed us to gain a more comprehensive perspective on the impact of our collective efforts, as well as to actively learn from the invaluable experiences of fellow NPOs. Such interactions are vital in facilitating collaboration, enabling us and our partners to strengthen our cooperative efforts and extend the positive influence of our work within society.



INES LESKAJ

Executive Director, AWEN

BLERTA DRENOFCI (CANI)

Executive Director, ADRF



The greatest dilemma and primary challenge faced by nonprofit organizations lies in achieving sustainability. Frequently, the ever-evolving nature of the social issue we strive to address, coupled with the financial limitations, leads organizations to approach the introduction of fee-based services with caution. However, by fostering a collaborative environment for the exchange of ideas and experiences, we are better positioned to recognize the opportunities within our operational context. This facilitates the encouragement of creative thinking for innovative solutions and a more pragmatic understanding of the risks that necessitate careful management. Above all, such interactions bolster our collective courage to embark on new initiatives regarding these services. We extend our sincere gratitude to Partners Albania for its steadfast efforts in creating an enabling environment wherein non-profit organizations can be strengthened and sustainable. Additionally, we express our deep appreciation to be a hosting organization in the "NPO Exchange Program. Welcome back to you as well!

TESTIMONIES
OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF HOST INSTITUTIONS

I felt a deep sense of appreciation for the opportunity to share the experiences of the organization I represent with a group of enthusiastic and dedicated professionals. Their passion and determination to create a positive impact within their targeted communities and fields is truly inspiring. The day was intense and rewarding, involving not only the exchange of experiences but also a rich interchange of ideas and strategies aimed at improving how organizations navigate the challenges encountered in their work. This Program is not only valuable for the sector presently but will remain essential for its advancement in the future.



OREADA KITA

*Executive Director,
Jonathan Center*

KRISTINA VOKO

Executive Director, BIRN Albania



Effective communication with the media is important for non-profit organizations, enabling them to amplify their work while upholding ethical standards and considering the interests of all stakeholder groups, especially those that are marginalized. In this regard, I firmly believe that the "NPO Exchange Program" has been immensely significant. It not only allowed representatives of local organizations to exchange experiences with their peers in different regions of the country but also served as a vital reminder for all of us. It reminded us of the challenges that civil society faces in our country and, above all, the common values that unite us all.

I highly appreciate initiatives like the "NPO Exchange Program," which is why I readily accepted the invitation from Partners Albania. The program served as a platform for engaging in discussions with a specific focus on human rights and efforts against discrimination. By fostering collaborative efforts and encouraging the sharing of experiences, this program created a supporting environment for dialogue, enabling organizations to enhance their understanding of human rights principles and effective strategies to combat discrimination. I extend my heartfelt wishes for success to all the organizations involved in their crucial work, and I remain hopeful that various mechanisms will be leveraged to their fullest potential.



DR. ROBERT GAJDA

*Commissioner for Protection
from Discrimination*

TESTIMONIES
OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF HOST INSTITUTIONS

