



**THE SUCCESS STORIES OF JOINT ALUMNI
PROJECTS SUPPORTED WITH SMALL GRANTS BY
THE GLC SHAPING PARTICIPATORY
DEMOCRACY PROGRAM IN 2021**

ALBANIA

SUELA
KOÇIBELLINI



SPRING 2018

BLERINA
KURETA



SPRING 2019

U-CHANGE

LOCATION OF THE
PROJECT

BURREL

12

PEOPLE INVOLVED

70

PEOPLE IMPACTED

The youth in Burrel, Albania are lacking possibilities to get developed and empowered although they are constantly asking for opportunities. Being about 2 hours away from Tirana (by car) keeps them away from the ongoing chances. They want to make changes, but they do not know how! That is why, we thought to introduce U-CHANGE, a bootcamp on Design Thinking, involving youngsters from the high schools of this area to gain first hand on experience in brainstorming on actual problems (identifying the problem), generating solutions (proposing ideas) and focusing on possible opportunities to make a change together (prototyping a product or a service).

We published a registration form for the activity U-change and 14 youngsters got registered. On the 9th - 10th of October we did the bootcamp with the youngsters based on the design thinking methodology. It was the first time for them to go through this process. At the end we decided together for the next steps to be carried out regarding a problem that they face and the change they wanted to achieve. We decided to make a change concerning a problem that they face every day and that together we can resolve it, with the minimum resources available. So we decided to revitalize the school yard through art. The actual school yard is just white or gray, like in prison (that is what the youngsters think).

The scope of this action was to be active actors in the change procedure, and to advocate for education in the local level. We plan to take the next step together with the youth activist and to engage other schools as well.

Thanks to the small grant support it was possible to increase the youth capacities in analyzing the problem and engaging for a solution and to make a real change in a problem that they face every day as a model for empowered schools. Together with Blerina Kureta (alumni) we prepared the workshop and the respective material. In addition, we invited one expert for advocacy strategy which involved the youngsters for the next steps.



KRISTI
QENDRO



FALL 2020

MEGI
KUSHI



FALL 2020

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP ESSENTIAL FOR DEMOCRACY

LOCATION OF THE
PROJECT

TIRANË, FUSHË-KRUJË

30

PEOPLE INVOLVED

71

PEOPLE IMPACTED

Trust in public institutions is constantly low in Albania. The roots of this situation can be found in the high level of corruption, low efficiency of public administration and a lack of long-term visions. Politicians often discourage citizens' activity by claiming they can take care of everyone. All these things have a significant impact on citizens' engagement and interest in public affairs. Active citizenship is a key element of democracy.

To help increase citizen engagement and interest, several activities were organised through this project, including:

- A kick-off meeting to present the project concept, principles of active citizenship and a community needs assessment. This was done at Gonxhe Bojaxhi community centre on October 7th, 2021, where participants were women and men from vulnerable communities living in Ad. Unit No.4, Tirana;
- One training session "Learn to participate" on active citizenship principles and practices. This was also conducted at Gonxhe Bojaxhi community centre on October 7th, 2021, where participants were women and men from vulnerable communities;
- One training session "Learn to participate" on active citizenship principle and practices at Fushë-Krujë community centre (public area) on October 8th, 2021. Here participants included women and girls of the Roma community living in Fushë-Krujë, Lagja Kastrioti;
- A workshop with community leaders on local decision-making;
- A closing event with project results at a bar-coffee area in Fushë-Krujë, on October 8th, 2021. Participants included community leaders and activists from vulnerable communities and groups living in difficult socio-economic situations (Roma, Egyptian and Albanian) in Fushë-Krujë.

It's always inspiring to collaborate with professionals from Albanian civil society cherishing such honesty and passion towards human rights and active citizenship principles by bringing together more resilient communities in terms of injustice and corruption in public institutions. Thanks to this grant, we could contribute to the never-ending journey of a better democracy system in Albania.



ALBANA
HASMETA



FALL 2018

LORELA
MUSTA



FALL 2018

POSITIVE PRACTICES TARGETING MENTAL HEALTH

LOCATION OF THE
PROJECT

TIRANA

21

PEOPLE INVOLVED

2000+

PEOPLE IMPACTED

During the past year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world faced significant challenges impacting all areas of development. Governments placed a great emphasis on addressing physical health related issues, while leaving behind mental health wellbeing. Being a core element of progressive development, it was important to come up with an action that would make young people and the wider public aware on the importance of mental health and expose them to positive practices targeting mental health self-care.

The action was organized between the 25th of September and 10th of October, with the support of 21 young activists who contributed to make the action a great experience. It started with a workshop dedicated to exploring mental health aspects and develop messages that promote mental health care (held on September 25th, 2021). This was then followed by the "Mental health awareness days - 10 days of activism" activity, an online campaign that addressed awareness messaging on the importance of mental health (1st-10th of October 2021). Passers of the Skanderbeg square were delighted by the flash mob performance "How I feel today?" and the beats of Bad Habits song - the closing activity of the action that aimed at raising awareness on the importance of mental health wellbeing (conducted on October 10th, 2021 - World Mental Health Day).

The implementation of the action ensured the needed active engagement and eagerness of the activists who made it possible to accomplish the desired outcomes. 20 young people were capacitated to be agents of change in promoting healthy behaviors and positive practices targeting mental health wellbeing. 2000+ community members were exposed to practices promoting the importance of mental health, increasing the value of care.

The action will have a dedicated space during National Activism Day, as a way to further promote youth activism and awareness on mental health importance.

Success cannot be achieved alone, and this action was made possible due to the support of the PFP program, Co-PLAN, and the young activists who engaged actively throughout the whole process.



ARBËR
KODRA



SPRING 2018

ALEXANDRU
PALAS



SPRING 2017

LGBTI CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

LOCATION OF THE
PROJECT

TIRANA

50

PEOPLE INVOLVED

50

PEOPLE IMPACTED

There is a lot to do in Albania to combat hate speech, including here internet providers, online media, citizens etc. as new challenges and problems. Politicians and MPs have a great role to play in public discourse. The new parliament elected started their job on the 9th of September, and the LGBTI Community, during the IDAHOT 2021 and prior to the elections of April 2021, have sent a list of important requests for the government to fulfill, that will change the life of the LGBTI individuals in Albania. This very important list, and especially the requests made to the government, inspired me to continue the fight for equality and non-discrimination.

The activities of the small grant, happened during the end of August 2021 until mid-October 2021. Involved were, the LGBTI Community, young people, general public, politicians etc.

The achievement in raising awareness not only in the capital Tirana, but also outside in other areas, helped the young people and the community. The meetings conducted also discussed the young LGBTI participants, but not only, about the politics and the new government. We created the educational campaign, with information's about the human rights of LGBTI People, no hate speech and non-discrimination.

Vote for Equality as an advocacy tool - The Vote for Equality is a voter education and advocacy tool that analyzes and provides public education and information on the inclusion of LGBTI issues into the party platforms. We monitored and followed the politician's speeches and what they said or not, about the LGBTI community prior and after the elections of April 2021 in Albania, regarding the inclusion efforts of the parties.

In order to direct more traffic to this campaign it is posted in all our social medias, Instagram, Facebook page, twitter and LinkedIn, and it will be use further as an accountability measure in order to make sure that the officials stick to any promises they made to the LGBTI community.



**BLERINA
KURETA**



FALL 2019

**SUELA
KOÇIBELLINJ**



SPRING 2018

INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

LOCATION OF THE
PROJECT

TIRANA

79

PEOPLE INVOLVED

50

PEOPLE IMPACTED

The main idea for this activity was the inclusion of women in entrepreneurship. The inclusion of woman in entrepreneurship is a key contribution to the revitalization of rural areas and encourages the prevention of the growth of gender inequality. Target groups are: Women in rural areas and Roma women. The intended impact will be accomplished through training and mentoring for members of vulnerable groups in advocating for their own rights and social inclusion, educational activities that promote inclusion, equal opportunities and introduction of social innovations.

The training took place on different days in both areas, 1 day in Thumanë and 2 days in Lezha. The activities took place on October 5th, 12th and 14th. About 15-18 people participated each day. These activities were organized in the form of a picnic in Thumanë and in conversation groups in Lezha. The meeting was organized on 3 different days in both areas, and has come in the form of a picnic. In the training were members of vulnerable groups (moms from the Roma community, single moms etc.) in the protection of their rights and social inclusion. These trainings contributed to the following:

- Awareness of the personal resources of all participants;
- Development of new personal skills and their use for basic individual and family needs;
- Strengthening self-confidence;
- Development of organizational culture and innovations in work techniques;
- Teamwork;
- Empowerment for productive time management and empowered public action in the community.

I, together with a small group of these mothers, in Lezha and Thumanë, have decided that we will hold these types of meetings voluntarily once a month. This was also a request and idea from the mothers themselves. Mothers will also meet each other and organize such initiatives whenever possible.

I am very pleased that this small grant was given to me as an opportunity, and that this idea was supported and had a very positive impact on the mothers who were involved. Also, collaboration with other alumni is a great opportunity to expand the range of the network and that together we can bring a positive change in the community.



NENSI
DRAGOTI



SPRING 2018

MARSELA
ALLMUCA



FALL 2018

EMPOWERING YOUTH, A POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LOCATION OF THE
PROJECT

CËRRIK

20

PEOPLE INVOLVED

850

PEOPLE IMPACTED

Boot camp 'Empowering youth, a potential for community development' was one of the few activities undertaken for the youth of this municipality. Most of them were from low income families that had less development opportunities. Also from stakeholders (local government) there was no action taken for improving the life of youth in the community. Based on public data, zero budget was invested for youth and sport until 2021.

The boot camp "Empowering youth, a potential for community development" in Cërrik was organized in two weekends, specifically on October 2-3 and October 9-10 where there was a participation of 20 young people, aged 15-18 years with different backgrounds from rural and urban areas. Participants during the four day boot camp were introduced and trained on topics such as self-confidence building, communication skills, gender equality and domestic violence, human rights, advocacy, leadership and social activism, etc. The boot camp methodology was interactive, which included discussions, individual and group work, various games, video and documentary and where the participants evaluated the used methodology at the maximum level.

Through this activity:

- 20 young people were empowered and involved in addressing community problems in local institutions;
- Social problems (like engagement and inclusion of girls in sport activities, lack of alternative education programs, hate speech and bullying) were identified according to the youth perspective through the designing of project ideas;
- A Campaign was prepared by youth to address their problems.



ERISA
MEÇOLLI



SPRING 2018

GEORGI
NIKOLOV

SPRING 2018

EMPOWERING YOUTH TRAININGS IN ART, PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

LOCATION OF THE
PROJECT

TIRANA

20

PEOPLE INVOLVED

20

PEOPLE IMPACTED

Due to situation of isolation, created from Covid-19, many families have lost their jobs. Albanian teenagers have lack of opportunities to gain crucial knowledge for their future. Especially those teenagers that come from low-incomes families.

The proposed project is in line with the learned experience in the US and my personal experience at Toledo School for the Arts. We organized two intensive days with trainings in Photography, Video Creation and Photoshop happening in a photography studio, Gesti's Studio, and at "Musine Kokalari" bibliotech. We developed all the activities in two days due to the engagements of the students and the Covid situation, dividing them in two big groups with a maximum of 10 people each. There was a participation of 20 teenagers overall and three professional speakers.

Participants took valuable information on how a nice photography should be made. We also designed a poster for an event and learned how to create a short video with all the photos of these days. We hope that they will further develop this knowledge in their future paths and careers. Evaluation forms were given at the end of the day.

Each contact of the participants and their parents have been taken in order to progressively help them with information on other similar trainings, or invite them on a future project that might happen with the support of Professional Fellows Program or another program.

This was my first project as an alumni of Professional Fellows Program and it has been a unique experience mixed with a lot of love, dedication, knowledge and entertainment. I am very grateful to Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development and especially Elizabeth for this opportunity.

**BREJDON
XHAVARA**



FALL 2019

**KLAUDIO
HYSENI**



SPRING 2021

PHOTOVOICE - CREATIVE TOOLS FOR ADVOCACY

LOCATION OF THE PROJECT

DURRËS

10

PEOPLE INVOLVED

100+

PEOPLE IMPACTED

We live in a digital age and with social networks every day we see and publish different photos. Social networks can be a tool to influence local decision-making therefore young people need to learn about photography ethics, avoid violations of photography ethics principles, assess the community situation, understand the lived experiences of disadvantaged communities and how they can give a voice to underprivileged individuals.

The young people were introduced to the basic concept of Photovoice and how it was born as a research methodology. After getting acquainted with the basic concepts we moved on to the practical topics of how we can realize a Photovoice project ourselves. The essential issues that were discussed were the ethics of photography and how to make quality photos. Part of the presentation was journalist Brejdon Xhavera from Community Reporters Albania who joined through the Zoom platform. Participants were then introduced to the ethical principles of photography, what to do and what not to do in photography. They were introduced to Copyright and the Photographic Consensus. They learned how to use the photographic consensus in their professional work as well. Then we went on to reflections and discussions on various photos and videos.

At the end of the training the participants managed to successfully implement a Photovoice project through an advocacy campaign. They took photos by addressing the problems and for each photo they put the description of the situation and the message of the photo. They learned how through Photovoice they could approach the community and develop in them a sense of cooperation, non-exclusion, trust, respect, empathy, raising issues, and so on. With the photos from their community on the issue of urban waste management, they sent an advocacy letter to the Municipality of Durrës.

It was a great opportunity to have a deep collaboration between alumni and mentors in throughout the continent, I felt being part of a global network. The support was essential to give a clear message to the participants in the mini-project that only by being a good community organizer and having the right people we can do great things.

