



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# ADVANCING SOCIAL INCLUSION IN ALBANIA



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Drawn by Endri Zeqiri, 13 year-old community member in Durrës, on International Volunteer Day in 2010

## INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the United Nations, through the One UN Programme, launched the programme 'Empowering Vulnerable Local Communities of Albania'. The programme seeks to assist the most marginalized Roma and Egyptian communities and contribute to their social integration while respecting their diversity. It supports the participation of Roma and Egyptian communities in local decision making through identifying their development priorities and preparing and implementing community development plans.

Assistance provided through the programme enables targeted communities in the regions of Tirana, Durres, Elbasan and Fier to access their rights, particularly to access to public services through promoting civil registration, undertakes community policing through establishment and strengthening of a network of Roma mediators, provides support in the areas of health, education and child protection, and facilitates vocational training and employment.

In partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO) and local institutions, the programme is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), while the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides advisory support in the area of civil registration. The programme also involves United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), who work in communities with local stakeholders and promote volunteerism. The intervention will continue until 2013 and is funded by the Government of Japan through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

This brochure explains the people-centred development that has taken place in Albania through community mobilization activities undertaken from 2010 to 2011. The photographs and quotes of beneficiaries taken from the activities highlight the participation of Roma and Egyptians in the self-empowerment process.



## COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

"These people are in need of civil registration, health care, education, employment and personal security. I am proud of working with them as a Roma and as a UN Volunteer."

*Manjola Veizi (UNV),  
Community facilitator in Shkoze*



*Manjola Veizi (UNV), Community Facilitator,  
and Naxhie Korra, community member in Shkoze*



"Domestic violence exists widely in Roma communities. It is a widespread issue and women and children tend to simply accept it as a fact of life."

*Lije Dalipi, Community member in Levan, Fier.*

*Community women exchanging opinions on International Day for Elimination of Violence against women*



"One day, a concern was raised at our community meeting. We heard that some Roma and Egyptian children were not attending school because their parents could not afford the uniforms. Therefore, we worked together for 3 days and made 15 uniforms. We feel fulfilled that our voluntary work has helped these children and promoted volunteerism."

*Mira Çela,  
Community member  
in Laprake*



*Community women in Laprake  
following a volunteer tailoring activity for local school children*



"I joined this environmental campaign because I wanted to contribute towards the cleaning of our community river. We all should be responsible for our environment!"

*Agrone Ademi,  
Community member in Cerrik*

*Environmental  
regeneration activity in Elbasan*



## INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

"The Roma neighbourhood now has a new appearance with a paved road and surrounding walls that have replaced the metal fences. We no longer have problems with the mud or floods, which blocked our way."

*Saimiri Hymerllari,  
Community member  
in Fushë Kruja*



*Constructing a Community  
Service Centre in Levan, Fier*



*Road rehabilitation  
and children coming back from school in Fushë Kruja*





*Rehabilitated school playground in Valias*

This school playground will serve 750 students and the nearby Egyptian community. In October 2011, hundreds of children from Niko Hoxha School in Valias, Kamza Municipality, participated in the inauguration ceremony together with the mayor and UN Resident Coordinator.



*Tapecut in Valias*

"Thanks to the supervision and monitoring of the technical staff from local government, we gained a great opportunity for our community to work together and we are very happy to see the condition of our community improved."

*Ferdinant Seriani, Community member of Mini-Municipality no. 8*



*Self-help community upgrading activity in Tirana*





*Recycled craftwork  
made by Roma and  
Egyptian children in  
Fushë Kruja*



*Book reading  
activity in a Fushë  
Kruja kindergarten*

"In the past 6 months, my English has improved greatly and I enjoy learning with my Egyptian and Roma friends. I hope that more young people will follow the course as English gives opportunities to communicate with people from different countries."

*Samuel Khaibra,  
Community member*



*Self-help English course in Nishtulla*





## ACCESS TO RIGHTS: CIVIL REGISTRATION



"I am grateful that I can send my children to school and also have a health booklet for better health care now that the registration is complete."

*Tasha Zemblaku,  
Community member*

*Community members assisted with the civil registration.*

## ACCESS TO RIGHTS: EMPLOYMENT

"This has been a valuable experience because we gained better cooking skills and also the opportunity to participate in social activities to meet new people."



*Mimoza (left) and Sonila (right) participating in vocational training course in Elbasan*





"I am grateful to UNDP for giving us this opportunity to get out of the house because most of the time, we, women, stay at home. This experience with vocational training broadened my insight as well as that of my family."

*Fatbardha Peqini,  
Community member*

*Vocational training completion ceremony*

"I was once homeless and unemployed. But I took a vocational training course and became a plumber. I am delighted my skills are helping people in my community."

*Panajoti Alushi, Community member in Driza, Fier*



*Self-help activity in repairing plumbing in community kindergarten, Driza, Fier*





"We needed to understand the negative impacts of drug abuse to prevent many youngsters from starting to use drugs. It was very beneficial to meet Adi and hear his personal story. I don't want my friends and neighbours using drugs and suffering addiction the way he and his family once did."

*Englantina Runga,  
Community member in Valias.*

*Health mediators' joint awareness-raising activities*

"The more I learned about Roma and Egyptian communities, the more I appreciated and valued their identity in Albanian society."

Anisa Podra,  
Student and winner  
of best essay



*Essay competition for university students in Tirana:  
the identity and role of minorities in an intercultural society*





## RESPECT FOR THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY



*Respect for Cultural Diversity*

"We are proud of being Roma and participating in this fair today. We feel equal to the majority of Albanian citizens because of the opportunity to introduce our crafts."



*International Roma Day  
celebrated with  
Roma handicraft makers*

"Collaboration with the orchestra has been the most wonderful experience of my life. I learned a lot from performing with professional musicians from the Balkans. I want to be as good as them."

*Kadri Rama, Violinist*



*Young Roma musicians*





An interethnic concert with young Roma musicians and the Balkan Chamber Orchestra moved an audience of 250 people, including representatives of central government, Tirana Municipality, foreign delegations, including the Embassy of Japan, and Roma civil society and communities.



*Harmony for Peace and Prosperity*

## INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

"The introduction of the unified reporting system is the most effective way to measure the progress made for the National Action Plan for the Roma Decade, and at the local level."

*Tahsim Mema, Head of  
Regional Council of Tirana.*



*Workshop on monitoring and reporting system*





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Rruga "Papa Gjon Pali II", II/1  
përballë Ministrisë së Integritetit  
Tiranë, Shqipëri