



Intelektualet e rinj, Shprese (IRSH)

YOUNG INTELLECTUALS, HOPE



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THE ORGANIZATION

Mission:

"Young Intellectuals, Hope" works for development of civil society in Albania as well as promoting peace and stability in the Balkans.

Vision:

- a) Improving the human rights state especially in the Northern part of Albania, mainly promoting women rights, children rights, minorities rights and of other unprotected and unsupported classes.
- b) Helping in the creation of an intellectual stratum and of a network within Albania and abroad in service for building a civil society.
- c) Contributing in the drafting and implementation of a strategy for the development of Shkoder city in particular and the North Albania in general.
- d) Promoting the cultural, artistically and sporting life approaching the youngster between them in a local, national and international level.
- e) Improving the role and the influence of the youth in society upholding and supporting their initiatives.

History:

During 1990-1994, Albania is involved in a number of democratic processes and at the same time changing the political system of governance. But ordinary people and especially intellectuals were not participating actively in developments that have involved our society. So with the purpose to promote the Albanian civil society was founded "**IRSH**" in 1994. It was an initiative of the students and professors of the University "Luigi Gurakuqi" Shkoder. In order to be more realistic, students decided to include in the name of organization the word "HOPE" which has a general understanding for these students:

"HOPE" to be the best intellectuals

"HOPE" to change the Albanian reality

"HOPE" to promote civil society in Albania.

Executive Summary

Youth participation is one of the permanent objectives of IRSH organization. Monitoring of the Local Government decisions and their engagement to solve citizens and specifically youth priorities remain in the focus of the IRSH activities. Main problems youth are still facing is lack of financial resources, jobs placement, encouragement of youth entrepreneurship are issues that still need higher attention. In cooperation with our Partners from Albania and Montenegro we have been able to work in a cross-border project which intends to promote youth employment.

Our initiative aims to contribute to increased employability and fostered social inclusion among young people in the cross-border area Albania – Montenegro. It had a specific focus on creating an enabling environment for the community of young entrepreneurs in the cross-border area committed to starting their own business (Shkodra region in Albania, and municipalities of Podgorica, Tuz, and Bari in Montenegro).

The interaction among youngsters was increased and led to the establishment of new connections for potential partnerships for the further development of their business ideas with an impact on the socio-economic development of the cross-border area. The Final Conference of the Work4Youth cross-border initiative, held in December, brought together about 90 young entrepreneurs, representatives of local institutions, and important stakeholders in the field of entrepreneurship development, to share together the achievements and challenges of Work4Youth in two years, policy recommendations and mechanisms in support of entrepreneurship and youth employment.

More details can be read here: <https://www.partnersalbania.org/News/work4youth/>

During the year an important activity has been the monitoring of the local decision-making processes and encouragement of youth and women into local government. In that regard an international partnership has been established supported by the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. More info can be read here: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=succesful%20together>

Range of Activity:

Our work during 2022 focused into:

- 1. Promoting youth employment in Cross Border area among Albania and Montenegro***
- 2. Promoting Youth Cooperation and encouraging Women Participation into the social life***
- 3. Participation and monitoring of local governance decision making processes***

Cooperation:

During 2022 IRSH has cooperated with different actors at local, national and international level as:

Municipality of Shkoder
City Town Council of Shkodra
Partners Albania
ZID Podgorica, Montenegro
The regional network of the Olaf Palme organizations
Human Dimension Association
Light Steps Association
National Endowment for Democracy
Zdravi Grad Split Croatia

Donors:

For the achievement of its goals IRSH during 2022 has been supported by:

European Commission IPA Program
Olof Palme Center
Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration
National Endowment for Democracy
Anna Lindh Foundation

ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. Promoting youth employment in Cross Border area among Albania and Montenegro

In March 2022, we launched the call for applications for the “Innovation Boot Camps 2022” program for young people aged 18-30. The call remained open until April 4, 2022, and during 16-18 of March, three information sessions were held, aiming to encourage young people to participate in the program. Info-sessions were held in the Municipality of Shkodra for interested people in Shkodra and Vau i Dejës, in the Municipality of Puka for interested people in Puka and Fushë-Arrësi and Malësia e Madhe for those interested in this municipality. For the second consecutive year, the interested applicants submitted their applications through the Dua Partner Invest Platform.

The Innovation Boot Camps 2022 were organized in Shkodra on April 11-15 with participants from Albania, and in Podgorica on April 17-22 with participants from Montenegro. Young participants received technical knowledge and mentoring to prepare a business plan for their business idea, which can be further supported by the project as a new “start-up”.

Eight winning ideas from each Boot Camp in each country were selected and during May-June were further mentored by experts to develop their business idea. They will be supported and promoted by the project until finding opportunities for funding and development. Ideas selected for Albania were:

Dorina Ndreu – Green Beauty

Enida Haka -SA Bio Nature Purenness

Dajana Brahimi – Aloe Vera Greenhouse

Marketa Lleshaj- Entertainment for kids

Altin Dycaj – Algesi Natural

Doris Kuci – Healthy Drinks

Aida Haxhari – Handmade with love

Shqiponja Idrizi – Stamping

On July 6, 2022, we held the “Cross-Border Forum of Future Cooperation”. Youngsters from the cross-border area Albania-Montenegro used this opportunity to interact, discuss and share experiences with each other regarding the further development of their business ideas, and also get the Experts’ recommendations on specific issues.

They learned about Dua Partner Invest platform as a funding and supporting mechanism, ready to assist them during their entrepreneurial journey.

The event was concluded with hands-on experience pitching tips to use in front of potential investors and securing the opportunity for financing the business idea.

At the Pitching Event held in Shkodër in November, young entrepreneurs from the cross-border area Albania – Montenegro presented their business plans developed together with mentors and experts. These plans are ready for support from available local and national funding schemes, as well as private investment in both countries.

The event was addressed by Mrs. Edona Bilali, Minister of State for the Protection of Entrepreneurship, who announced various government programs and initiatives in support of entrepreneurship and youth employment, inviting young entrepreneurs to apply to these supporting mechanisms.

Representatives of local government from the cross-border area discussed about other opportunities available to young entrepreneurs at the local level.

The Final Conference of the Work4Youth cross-border initiative, held in December, brought together about 90 young entrepreneurs, representatives of local institutions, and important stakeholders in the field of entrepreneurship development, to share together the achievements and challenges of Work4Youth in two years, policy recommendations and mechanisms in support of entrepreneurship and youth employment.

2. Promoting Youth Cooperation and encouraging Women Participation into the social life

During this period, IRSH has undertaken an important advocacy campaign in the city of Shkodra, directly influencing one of the main priorities of the citizens, which is included in the Social Contract. After a series of trainings developed by the POP network for the realization of advocacy campaigns, we have launched the campaign on "Public Transport" in the city of Shkodra on our social networks. On September 8, 2022, our social networks Facebook and Instagram launched the first public transport publications.

- In the attached link, the post of September 8

Facebook: <https://bit.ly/3tBI03q> The post has reached 150 views

Instagram: <https://bit.ly/3AIF4vi> The post has reached 164 views

- In the attached link, the post dated September 9

Facebook: <https://bit.ly/3AkCRAi> The post has reached 124 views

Instagram: <https://bit.ly/3EMXcRH> The post has reached 174 views

- In the attached link, the post dated September 12 <https://bit.ly/3tzeMC3>

The post has reached 96 views

- In the attached link, the post dated September 14 <https://bit.ly/3UGGBEI>

The post has reached 103 views

Public transport in the city of Shkodra has been monitored for some time and has been set as a top priority in the Social Contract. After the issue raised by IRSH and the successive requests for information that were sent, the Municipality of Shkodër has reacted in relation to this issue. As a result, the Municipality of Shkodër has added 5 new buses, increased the frequency of bus movement as well as the addition of lines, thus promising to intervene in the bus stations to give them the image they deserve. Attached is the link of the Mayor's response <https://bit.ly/3UO0Obt>

Attached is the link of IRSH's publication after the reaction of the Municipality <https://bit.ly/3AJcMLJ>

IRSH, as part of the POP network, has participated in the Cultural Week of Sweden held in Shkodra on September 13, 2022. The fair held by the Swedish Embassy in Shkodra's pedestrian area gathered hundreds of citizens and representatives of public institutions, where we shared the goals and objectives of the project. Various citizens got acquainted with the work of the POP network, the Social Contract in the Municipality of Shkodër and addressed some other important issues.

- Attached is the link of the activity posted on Facebook <https://bit.ly/3hQmjtK> <https://bit.ly/3ApGJ31> , where the post has reached 509 views.

- The Instagram post link <https://bit.ly/3TLU5xk> has reached about 220 views.

- Insta post link <https://bit.ly/3tyIzuC>

The interview in the local media Star Plus Tv took place in the morning show "STAR Plus" on September 13,

2022. The guests were: Mrs. Esmeralda Hoxha Coordinator of the PO Network as well as the representative of IRSH Mrs. Ganimete Perseku. Ms. Hoxha has reflected the work of the POP network over the years, the initiatives that have been undertaken recently as well as the objectives and purpose of this program. While, Mrs. Perseku is focused on presenting the priorities of the citizens included in the Social Contract. Also, public transport has been raised as a problem that requires immediate intervention and where a petition would be created to address the problem.

Attached is the link to the interview <https://bit.ly/3UH5NLa>

3. Participation and monitoring of local governance decision making processes

The Association "Young Intellectuals, Hope" continues with the implementation of activities according to the working plan, thus fulfilling the main objectives of the project.

During this year, IRSH's work is mainly focused on monitoring the work of the Shkoder Municipal Council. As well as the activity of Shkoder Municipality in the function and fulfillment of citizens' needs.

The Municipality of Shkoder has developed various activities in the social field, assistance to residents affected by floods, awareness-raising areas for the environment, persons with limited abilities, as well as intervention in the school infrastructure to improve sports facilities and guarantee of heating in the pre-university education system.

IRSH has monitored the work of these institutions through the approved decisions, their reflection in the media as well as direct contacts with citizens and beneficiaries of these services.

In the frame of "Successful Together" project, in partnership with Zdravi grad and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Croatia are organized:

- A study visit for 10 civil society representatives in Split Croatia
- Capacity Building Program for children on the topic "Using online tools and platforms", 10 children of different age groups learned more about online platforms, their use and the effects of the Internet in everyday life.
- Training for young people and CSO representatives regarding European Programs for CSO leaders

At the end of this project a closing conference has been organized with participation of CSO leaders, local representatives and representatives of Zdravi Grad organization from Croatia.