



Promoting Human Rights and Minority Protection in South East Europe

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SMALL GRANTS UPDATE (ALBANIA), FEBRUARY – JUNE 2015¹

Five workshops with representatives from the respective institutions and minorities aiming to draft the Local action plan for integration of Roma and Egyptian communities were organized in the municipality of Fier; three workshops organized in Përmet with the participation of more than 120 people; Renovation and opening of the multicultural center in Shijak municipality; a Montenegrin language courses for 20 children started in Rrethina commune; Two parallel embroidery courses have started in Dropulli i poshtëm commune - these are among the many activities designed to assist minorities in Albania within the framework of the Project.

¹ The Project secretariat notes that the pace of the implementation of the small grants is influenced with the local elections planned for 21 June 2015 as well as the new territorial and administrative reform in Albania.

Dropulli i poshtëm/Sofratikë Local Self-Government

Theme covered: Culture

Affected minorities: Greek

The project aims to establish craft production, marketing and sales in the Greek minority area. Efforts will include business and retail sales training (including topics such as embroidery, musical instruments, planning, accounting, pricing, and retail sales), support for design and development of stores, design of a web-based tool to sell craft products to retail and commercial buyers.

The small grant in Dropulli I poshtem/Sofratike is off to a good start. In the first reporting period a local instructor has been selected to conduct sessions for the six month training. The trainees were selected among unemployed women who met with the municipal task force in individual meetings. The women/trainees were selected from the lists of the social aid department of the municipality. From the initially planned 15 participants, the number of trainees was increased to 24 (this is not expected to make any impact on the planned budget). The municipal task force issued tenders to purchase all items needed for the trainings and for production of traditional costumes. The key activity of the small grant project is planned for 22 August 2015 - Folk Festival in Dropulli I poshtem/Sofratike.



NOTE: The municipal task force will develop a webpage on the small grant project.

Fier Local Self – Government

Theme covered: Effective participation

Affected minorities: Roma and Egyptians

The project idea is to draft and implement an inclusive Local Action Plan for minorities in the Municipality of Fier. This Plan will include concrete activities to address the needs of Roma and Egyptians. It will contribute also to the enhancement of capacities of these minorities, which will be involved in the process of drafting of this Plan, gathering and analysing different necessary data.

The first five weeks of the small grant implementation consisted of the preparations of the structure for the developments of the local action plan (LAC). The municipal task force organized seven activities that resulted in the following outputs:

- The small grant project introduced to key stakeholders;
- The working group to draft the LAC selected;

- In separate workshops, Roma and Egyptian communities together with representatives of different state institutions discussed and shared their employment, health care and civic registration needs with relevant departments of the municipality;
- Issues of intercultural dialogue and its development analyzed on the level of the municipal authorities.
- Understanding how to include Roma and Egyptian communities in the social care system discussed with the relevant authorities.

In the forthcoming period, the municipal task force will focus on the organization of workshops on themes such as housing, proper budgeting, sharing experiences of good practices from other municipalities, and draft the Local Action Plan based on the results of the workshop findings.

Përmet Local Self –Government

Theme covered: Effective participation

Affected minorities: Roma, Egyptians, Aromanian/Vllah

The project aims to enhance the participation of minority groups in the local and regional decision-making institutions. Minority community members will be trained on civil and human rights in order to enhance their understanding of their rights.

Permet municipality organized three trainings with more than 110 participants aiming to encourage minority communities to establish Civil Society Groups that will act as a liaison and a voice of the minorities in the municipal councils. Next to this effort, the task force of Permet municipality organized a meeting with more than 80 minority representatives on the theme of reproductive health and family planning. The small grant financed 200 copies of a leaflet on this topic.

The trainings already show results as several minority representatives have decided to run for office at the local elections - a Vlach candidate for Mayor and an Egyptian running for municipality council member.

In the forthcoming period the municipality is planning to hire a Coordinator for minorities who will be based on the premises of the municipality. The issue of health in general and reproductive health in particular will be on top of the agenda of the Coordinator for minorities.



Rrethina Local Self –Government

Theme covered: Media/Culture

Affected minorities: Montenegrins

The project aims to support and promote education, employment, traditions and culture of Montenegrins living in the Commune of Rrethina, as well as to promote equal chances for Montenegrins in local and regional level through new education and employment opportunities.

The small grant project in Rrethina is implemented as planned. Every Saturday and Sunday, 20 children from Rrethina Commune take classes of Montenegrin language. The aim of the classes is to ensure language proficiency when talking about familiar topics related to daily life. The children are accompanied by their parents and closely supported by an NGO (Alba Montenegro).

Rrethina Commune also organized five meetings with representatives of the Montenegrin community and discussed ways to coordinate the project to the best of their needs. The small grant project launch was also covered in media (TV and newspapers).

Shijak Local Self -Government

Theme covered: Education/Non-discrimination

Affected minorities: Bosniak community and Roma

The project aims to establish and furnish a community center which will offer different services to the Bosniak community, such as courses in Bosnian and other languages, human rights, tailoring, art courses etc, to enhance the capacities of the Bosniak minority in different aspects with the final aim to improve their lives. The center will offer also social services to people in need.

The municipal task force thus far focused on the reconstruction of the multifunctional center in Shijak as a place where Bosniak can meet and organize activities to promote their culture and provide training and education opportunities. The center was officially opened on 21 May 2015 in the presence of the Mayor of Shijak and more than 60 members of the Bosniak communities and representatives of the municipal structures. The municipal task force is closely cooperating with the local association of Bosniak in Shijak region - Zambak. As a result of this cooperation, the representatives of Zambak association are regularly invited to attend municipal council meetings and participate in the decision making process at municipal level. As a result of the small grant project, the municipal council decisions are being translated into Bosnian language. As part of the small grant activities, the Shijak municipality will organize Days of National Minorities in Shijak in September 2015.

