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AssistIMPACT

Annual Report #2

FY2014

For the period October 2013 – September 2014

BUILDING HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN ALBANIA

Cooperative Agreement No. AID-182-A-12-00001



GOALS AND RESULTS TO BE ACHIEVED

The goal of the Building Human and Institutional Capacity (BHIC) project in Albania is to build the capacity of institutions, governmental, non-governmental and private sector, as well as leaders and technical experts who play a key role in Albania's development as it strives to bring about the reforms necessary for European integration. Within the Mission's overarching goal of *European integration through strengthened democratic institutions and inclusive economic growth*, Assist Impact focuses on building capacity to address the two stated Development Objectives of 1) *strengthened rule of law and improved governance* and 2) *conditions created for broad-based, sustainable and inclusive economic growth*. With substantial involvement of the Mission, Assist Impact provides a flexible approach to meeting capacity building needs that includes in-country, U.S., and third-country training of current and potential leaders and experts, institutional assessments of key private organizations/public institutions, targeted technical assistance and focused grants.

By the end of the three-year period, BHIC will achieve the following results:

- Strengthen the performance of at least 5 Albanian central and local governmental organizations, including Albanian ministries and municipalities.
- Strengthen the performance of at least 15 (approximately 5 per year) Albanian non-governmental organizations and private sector entities, including associations, civil society organizations and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- Build the performance of at least 45 (approximately 15 per year) leaders of Albanian governmental, private sector and non-governmental organizations and institutions – across sectors including business, economics, human rights, governance and democracy.
- Build the expertise of at least 45 (approximately 15 per year) technical specialists – across sectors including business, economics, human rights, governance and democracy.

As detailed below, Assist Impact had achieved or exceeded all the goals of the BHIC project by the end of the September 2014. The last year will be devoted to deepening and extending those achievements.

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THIS PERIOD

1) PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS

TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND GRANTS

During the 2nd year of the Building Human and Institutional Capacity project, six programs begun in FY2013 were still on-going but were completed by the end of the fiscal year. Another two started in FY 2013, which were related to Public Private Partnerships, were still on-going at the close of FY 2014. Forty-six new programs were initiated during this fiscal year and twelve were completed. One was cancelled. Therefore thirty-five programs begun in FY2014 or before were in various stages of implementation as the new fiscal year began. They include six women's empowerment grants, five garment machine matching grants, CEC software technical assistance, assistance to Protik for high level ICT training, two PPP mentoring technical assistance programs, four PPP preparation projects, seven youth grants, a grant for a health survey, two LGBT technical assistance programs and a grant for an LGBT shelter.

	FY 2013 Building Human and Institutional Capacity Programs	Status as of Sept 30, 2014
	Strengthened rule of law and improved governance	
1	TA/PPP Support CO-PLAN-Street Lighting in Fier	on-going
2	TA/Public-Private Partnership Support-International Expert/compendium	on-going

	FY 2014 Building Human and Institutional Capacity Programs	Status as of Sept. 30, 2014
	Strengthened rule of law and improved governance	
1	TA/PPP Support round II – training/mentoring organization	on-going
2	TA/PPP Support round II – Elbasan Public Parking	on-going
3	TA/PPP Support round II – Kucova Recycling	on-going
4	TA/PPP Support round II – Saranda Beach Management	on-going
5	TA/Central Election Committee IT software update	on-going
6	GR/CFE Strengthening Through a Survey of Health Centers	on-going
7	ICT/Bankruptcy Administration	on-going
8	GR/Mobile Units to Identify Victims/Potential Victims of Trafficking	on-going
9	Youth Empowerment Grant – New Epoch	awarded
10	TA/Disability Video Building Code Video	cancelled
11	Women’s Expo	completed
	Conditions for broad-based, sustainable & inclusive economic growth	
1	TA/OSR recycling roundtable and technical support	completed
2	ICT/Garment Machine Maintenance Course – Tirana	completed
3	ICT/Garment Machine Maintenance Course – Shkoder	on-going
4	GR/Matching Grants for Garment Machines with donations/internships TR (4)	completed
5	GR/Matching Grants for Garment Machines with donations/internships SH (5)	on-going
6	ICT/Garment Machine Maintenance Course – Fier	on-going
7	GR/Women’s Economic Empowerment Grants (6)	on-going
8	GR/Women’s Economic Empowerment Grant in Pogradec	completed
9	GR/Protik ICT Resource Center Support	on-going
10	GR/Youth Empowerment Grants for youth employment (6)	awarded
11	GR/ACIT 2013 Trade Report, Conference, Marketing	completed
12	GR/Medicinal Herbs Research Abstract	completed
13	UST/Cochran Agricultural Extension	completed
14	UST/Cochran Agricultural Policy	completed
	Support to LGBT	
1	TA/Aleanca Finance Officer and Commodities	on-going
2	TA/Aleanca Financial/Administrative/HR Manuals	on-going
3	TA/PRO-LGBT English Courses, NGO Finance, Manuals, Commodities	on-going
4	GR/LGBT Shelter in Tirana	begun

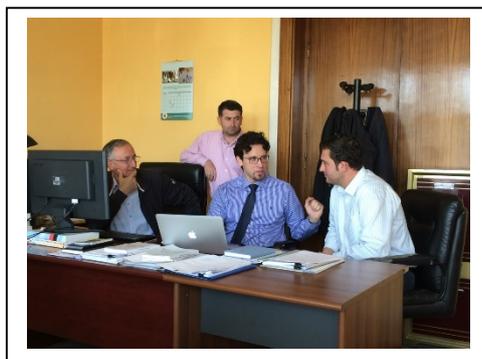
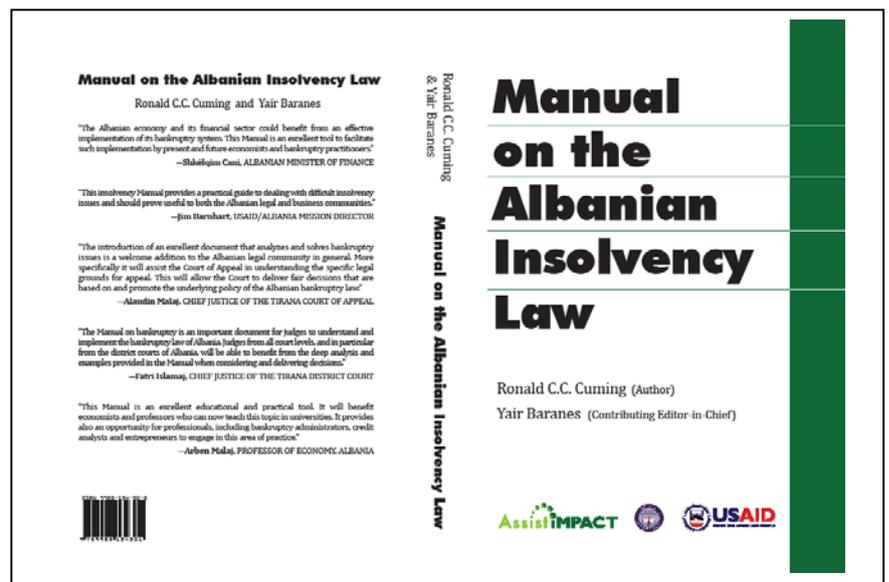
CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF INSTITUTIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS



The **Agricultural University of Tirana** received valuable support with the construction of a landscape demonstration garden in October-November 2013. The garden demonstrates 30 types of shrubs and trees, five types of decorative wall, paths of various materials, a pond and a gazebo. Students and professors of landscape architecture as well as those of other subjects use it enthusiastically, aware that the opportunity for practical hands-on experience that the garden provides greatly enhances learning.

The **School of Magistrates and Agency for Bankruptcy Supervision** were provided with printed manuals entitled **Manual on the Albanian Insolvency Law**. This book, originally written with the technical assistance of the World Bank, was significantly updated to include more concrete examples and reflect recent changes to the Albanian insolvency law. The book was also used to train 140 judges. The School will use the book both for instructing current and future magistrate students as well as for its program of continuing education for judges.



The **Central Election Committee (CEC)** received technical assistance through Assist Impact to improve the **software** of the CEC **to administer local elections** scheduled for 2015. After the software requirements were agreed upon, the software experts developed a beta version of the new software and installed it on the CEC servers for testing. With final fine-tuning, the software will allow the CEC to provide accurate and timely election results ballot box by ballot box, thereby increasing confidence in the fairness of elections.



The **Professional Training Center #1** in Tirana completed in July 2014 the first state-sponsored garment machine maintenance course offered in the country in twenty years. Assist Impact wrote and obtained approval for the curriculum which included a basic level eight week course followed by an eight week advanced course and an 80 hour internship. Assist Impact identified and hired a capable master technician to teach the course and recommended that the Professional

Training Center ensure the participation of someone who would be able to teach the course after Assist Impact's support ended. Of the original 16 participants, 14 successfully completed the entire course and internship. Five were employed in firms. One is self-employed, working when contacted by firms. Still others have found technical maintenance jobs with government. Visits and internships in the four garment manufacturing firms near Tirana, who had donated machinery and agreed to take interns in exchange for a matching grant to purchase needed machinery for their factories, enhanced the practical aspect of the course. The Ministry of Welfare, which is responsible for workforce development through the Professional Training Centers, is very pleased with the course and highlighted it in a TV emission regarding innovative workforce programs. The Professional Training Center #1 in Tirana has already begun a second course using a capable course participant as instructor as well as the instructor originally hired by Assist Impact.

The **Professional Training Center in Shkoder** in cooperation with Assist Impact and the Employment Office recruited and selected course participants for the basic level training course in garment machine maintenance. Among the 15 participants, one was a woman. The basic level course took place in June and July. Two highly experienced machine maintenance technicians were hired as instructors and the Professional Training Center in Shkoder was provided with sets of tools, tables, an air conditioner and a ventilator. All machinery necessary for the course was donated by five garment manufacturing firms near Shkodra who have also agreed to take course participants for a one-month internship in exchange for a matching grant to purchase needed machinery for their factories. The eight-week advanced level course began in September with twelve participants, ten from the basic level course and two who already had some basic training.

Professional Training Center in Shkoder



At the end of the garment machine maintenance course in Tirana, Assist Impact conducted an evaluation of the course and concluded that some hours could be reduced in the curriculum making time for footwear machine maintenance. These changes were made in the curriculum and the revised version including footwear machines was approved by the Ministry. Therefore

Professional Training Center in Fier



the course offered by the **Professional Training Center in Fier** includes both garment and footwear machine maintenance. As in Tirana and Shkodra, the Professional Training Center in Fier was provided with tables and other classroom amenities to ensure the success of the course which was slated for an early October start. Used machinery for course participants to practice on is planned to be donated by local firms.

In the framework of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) project, **the City Council of the Municipality of Korca** completed the contracting process for the Public Parking PPP in Korca and the implementation began to collect parking fees and manage over 400 parking places in four areas of the city. A thorough feasibility study was conducted by the Regional Development Agency of Korca (RDA-Korca) under contract to Assist Impact. After the municipal council approved the PPP parking project, RDA-Korca prepared the procurement documents and then the contract for the winner of the open tender.

New private firm enforces orderly parking in Korca – a public-private initiative.



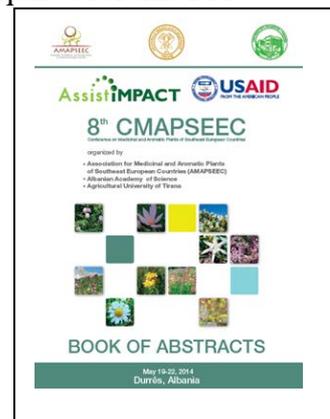
In July 2014, the City Council of the **Municipality of Fier approved the feasibility study for Energy Efficient Public Lighting PPP in Fier** and set up a new working group for the procurement. A change in the PPP law specifically mentioning public lighting allowed for a contract of longer than five years, paving the way to attract investors who, according to the feasibility study, could recoup their investment and turn a profit within ten years. Assist Impact had contracted Co-Plan to prepare the feasibility study and assist the municipality with procurement documents and a performance-based contract once the municipal council approved the necessary budget.

Testing mixed & recyclable trash collection in Berat



Assist Impact had contracted the preparation of a third Public-Private Partnership for recycling in Berat. Unfortunately the municipality decided that it could not provide the additional budget required for this PPP.

The **Academy of Science and University of Agriculture** benefited from a grant from Assist Impact to the **Albanian Medicinal Plants - Essence Producers and Cultivators Association** to produce the Book of Abstracts for the 8th Conference on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants of Southeast European Countries which took place in Durres, May 19-22, 2014. The Book of Abstracts published the research results of approximately 400 senior and young researchers, PhD students and professionals, principally from Southeast Europe.



Assist Impact began to procure a firm to produce a video on **Building Codes related to People with Disabilities**. This program was cancelled when it was discovered that renovations that would provide important visuals were postponed for 2015.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

A program to conduct a market study of high level IT training needs and willingness to pay in support of **Protik**, a public-private partnership to support Information & Communication Technology innovation, was completed in March 2014. The research showed that demand and willingness to pay for advanced ICT training among banks, telecommunications and IT firms is high, ranging from Information Technology Infrastructure Libraries and Analysis and Monitoring of IP traffic to Data Backup and Recovery Systems and Data Mining. Based on the research findings and Protik's application, Assist Impact awarded a grant to assist Protik ICT Resource Center to improve its products and service offering, strengthen its internal financial reporting processes and better measure the outcome of its interventions. In 2014, the grant supported improved financial reporting and monitoring of performance for the organization. In FY2015, the grant will support the introduction of high level ICT technical training.



OSR Recycling Roundtable with high level participation



The **Youth Solidarity Organization, OSR**, was supported with its request to hold a round-table to address critical issues regarding recycling. A law passed in 2013 prohibiting the importation of waste caused a crisis among local recycling companies who could not obtain enough raw materials to make their investment profitable without importing clean waste materials such as paper and plastic. Technical assistance was offered to the organization in the form of a local consultant experienced in the field of recycling

and organizing round-tables which include government officials. The roundtable was held March 13, 2014 with the participation of high level officials, including the Deputy Chief of US Mission in Albania, the Albanian Deputy Prime Minister, the Deputy Minister of the Environment and the Deputy Minister of Infrastructure. A high quality video regarding the issue of recycling in Albania was also produced to generate discussion among the 30 attendees. The event was widely covered by the media.

As part of the efforts to link the Professional Training Center of Shkodra to the Garment Industry for its Garment Machine Maintenance Course, Assist Impact awarded matching grants to **five garment manufacturing firms in**

Professional Training Center in Shkoder



Shkoder: Bellaconfex, Bellador, Reaconf, Ergotex and Melgushi. These firms donated a total of ten machines to the Professional Training Center to be used for hands-on instruction and will provide one-month internships.

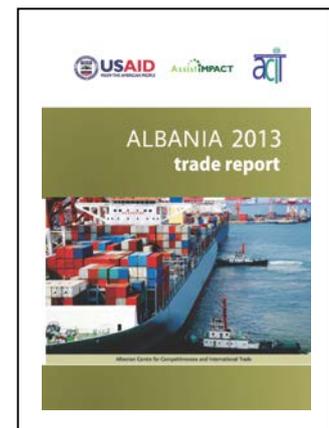
During the training on PPP



In support of a **second round of Public-Private Partnership Preparation**, a Consortium of Co-Plan & Urban Research Institute delivered a two-and-a-half day training to interested local organizations who would be eligible to submit proposals for new small scale PPP preparation. The training program achieved its objectives, providing a solid understanding of PPP issues and implementation to a total of 33 representatives of local organizations and local government units who participated in

the training. Participants represented 13 local organizations and 8 local government units. Following the training, eight local organizations submitted project proposals for development of PPPs in collaboration with a participating local government unit. Three organization/city partners were awarded programs: **RDA-Tirana for Elbasan Parking, Institute for Public Private Policies for Sarande Beach Management, and RDA-Fier for Kucove Recycling.** As of September 2014, the feasibility studies were progressing well.

The Albanian Center for Competitiveness and International Trade (**ACIT**) assesses Albania’s trade performance with a focus on exploring the bottlenecks. Since 2002 ACIT has produced and published eleven Annual Trade Reports, all sponsored entirely with USAID funds. For the **2013 Trade Report**, in addition to the assessment of trade flows, ACIT assessed the Stabilization and Association Agreement to the European Union and the recovery of Albanian trade from the impact of the international crisis. ACIT also developed a **sustainability plan** to sell the Trade Report to provide revenue to the organization and reduce dependency on donors.



A six-month project started in late June to strengthen the **Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and Sustainable Democracy** through a monitoring exercise called “Survey on Health Centers in Albania” using statistically based observation methods. As of September 2014, CFFE had built a network of more than 25 coalition organizations, developed a detailed questionnaire and obtained approval from the Ministry of Health, conducted training of trainers and trained more than 550 monitors all around the country in preparation for activating them for the one day survey of health centers planned in October. The one-day

survey with results of 550 monitors sent within the day will allow the Coalition to provide solid data quickly in a way that will catch the attention of the media and the public, creating conditions likely to lead to real change in the provision of health services.

The Women's Network Equality in Decision Making was provided with a grant to organize a two-and-a-half day **Women's Expo** in Tirana. The leader of the Women's Caucus in parliament addressed the opening.

Under the program "Women's Economic Empowerment Grants" for marginalized or isolated women, Assist Impact awarded and monitored the implementation of seven grants in seven different districts of Albania. They included the following organizations:

- **Association for Traditional Arts and Crafts (ATACT)**, centered in Pogradec, completed implementation of their six month project with an extremely successful final activity where representatives including the Minister of Youth and Social Welfare Erion Veliaj, the Mayor of Pogradec Artan Shkempi, the Deputy Mayor of Ohrid, USAID and Assist Impact representatives were present at the closing ceremony. More than 40 women, including nine from the Roma and Egyptian Communities were trained by ATACT in cooking or hotel services and tourism. As a result of the training, **37 were employed**, eight of them Roma or Egyptian.



- **Diakonia Agapes** is working in the area of Elbasan in the villages of Shushica, Hajdaran, Milza and Shelcan. As of the end of September 2014, the project had trained 58 women in vegetable cultivation and marketing, greenhouse management and how to make a business plan. Of the thirty-three women who submitted their business plans, twenty were selected to receive materials to build their greenhouses. The women also had to cover about 30% of the cost of these materials. Construction of the 91m² greenhouses is nearly complete in time for the winter planting season.



- **The Gender Integration Association** is working in the remote villages of Bastar i mesem, Murrize and Vilez (district of Tirana) supporting 20 women by providing them with special, highly productive Alpine goats as well as training in goat care and the production of quality goat cheese. A total of 28 women received training. On June 11, an event was organized during which US Ambassador Alexander Arvizu handed over the pregnant Alpine goats to the identified women. The

goats will assist in providing sustainable livelihoods for these rural families in these remote mountain villages of Zall Bastar commune (county). Each beneficiary committed to 'passing on the gift' by giving a kid to a neighbor. In September, 14 of the goats gave birth to kids. The females will be given away when they are old enough.

- **The Gender Alliance for Development Center (GADC)** is successfully implementing its project aiming to employ 25 marginalized women in Puka and Lezha. During the project, a total of 170 women received training in gender awareness, women's rights, the labor code, how to prepare a CV and present oneself for an interview. Nearly 20 also received training in sewing. Fifteen women were employed in Puka, five in the Venetian Mask factory, nine in a shoe factory and one at Agropuka. In Lezhe, a total of 12 women were employed so far. Due to child-care issues all but two left the jobs at the fish factory. Five were employed at a shoe factory and one each at a bakery, school, shop, phone company and a legal studio.



- **Gjirokastra Foundation:** During this project the Gjirokastra Foundation assisted 17 local women and girls in jewelry making, handloom weaving and embroidery. With the help of a fashion designer the young women were able to improve their creativity and production of high quality, handmade products. The women are now able to produce handmade crafts for sale in the workshop and other shops in the Old Bazaar of Gjirokastra. Training in hotel care and hospitality was also organized for 10 women at Babameto

House - Center for Heritage and Culture which serves as well as a Hostel and Hotel. The course included skills in hotel and hospitality, hygiene and service in the restaurants, code of ethics and reception. Particular hours were organized in cooking traditional dishes of Gjirokastra which are requested by a high number of tourists. Some have been employed or are self employed and the Foundation is working to employ the others.

- **Counseling Line for Women and Girls** provided 25 female victims of domestic violence from the suburban areas of Tirana with training on employment rights, violence against women, CV preparation, interviewing and safe housekeeping. Employment had already been found for ten of the young women, with employment for the remainder the focus of the rest of the project. Of those already employed some were doing office work, others working as hairdressers, waitresses or house-cleaners.

- **MEDPAK (Defending the Rights of People with Disabilities)** has implemented a project to train and employ marginalized women in the central town of Librazhd. Twenty-eight women were provided training in women's rights, the family code, domestic violence, the education of children and women, communication, teambuilding, and rights and obligations in the workplace. To date, nine women have been assisted to find work at the recycling plant and sixteen at a new garment manufacturing firm. Another has been employed at a local restaurant.





In April, a grant was awarded to Tjeter Vizion as the lead of a three organization effort (with Vatra and Different and Equal) to improve the **identification of victims and potential victims of trafficking through the use of mobile units**. During the first four months, various meetings were held with over 800 participants and a total of 258 cases were looked into, resulting in 30 victims of trafficking identified and reported to the responsible authority.

Aleanca and Pro-LGBT both agreed to undergo a rigorous Participatory Institutional Analysis in order to identify next steps necessary for strengthening their organizations. The resulting capacity development plans showed strong links with their constituents but weakness in financial and administrative procedures. As a result, Assist Impact developed financial and administrative manuals, which **Aleanca and Pro-LGBT** reviewed and adapted for their respective organizations. A finance/administrative officer hired for Aleanca greatly eased the administrative burden for leadership at Aleanca. Financial software, a laptop, a safe, a photocopier, uninterrupted power supply and security cameras also helped improve work at Aleanca. Pro-LGBT was provided support for English classes, a TV (for monitoring media), an audio-recorder device and a safe. A finance/administrative consultant was hired to coach and mentor Pro-LGBT's finance officer. Other support is planned for Pro-LGBT.



With the improved ability of Aleanca to manage funds, the way was clear for it to receive a large grant to establish and operate the first **LGBT shelter** in Albania. The grant is being implemented together with Pro-LGBT as a partner. The grant foresees the renovation of a house allowing up to eight people from the LGBT community to have a place to stay and access to services for up to six months.

Under a program entitled “**Youth Empowerment Grants**”, Assist Impact awarded seven grants focusing on youth in nineteen different districts of Albania. Six of the grants aimed at addressing youth employment. The seventh was designed to mobilize youth for active citizenship. They included the following organizations:

- **Creative Business Solutions** will work in 13 different rural localities from Malesi e Madhe to Gjirokaster to train and employ young people as specialists in dairy production, fruits and vegetables, herbs and spices, cold storage and green houses.

- The **Albanian Students Network Alumni (AS@N)** aims to train, find internships and employ students or young graduates in a variety of work situations in Shkodra, Vlora and Tirana.
- The **Association for Communitarian Integration and Development** plans to train and facilitate employment of youth in Bulqize in video production skills and youth in Laç in plumbing, electrical work and handicrafts.
- The **Albanian Rafting Group**, which will be working in Berat, will map out hiking trails and train youth to be hiking guides as well as provide specialized rescue training for their rafting guides. It will also work with guest-house managers and information guides.
- The **Regional Development Agency in Korca (RDA-Korca)** will work with businesses and youth in the Korca area to build capacities sought by local businesses. They will also enable some youth to become self-employed, providing training in skills needed in the Korca area.
- The **Livestock Entrepreneurs Association of Albania (LEAA)** will work in the livestock sector in Lushnja, Shkodra, Korca and Kukes where they have identified the need for specialists in artificial insemination, mastitis control, and hoof care.
- **New Epoch** will be working in Fier and Patos to encourage youth participation in the democratic process. Youth will form Youth Advisory Groups, one each, in the newly enlarged Patos and Fier municipalities. They will learn to advocate with government officials for issues of special interest to youth.



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LEADERS AND SPECIALISTS

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LEADERS

From October 14-23 five one-day **training seminars** were held for **judges** regarding **insolvency law**. The training was held in Tirana, Shkoder, Saranda, Lushnje and Tirana again for a total of 80 judges. The lead trainer, Yair Baranes, presented the criteria and step-by-step process of declaring an entity bankrupt using best practices within the Albanian legal



framework. The judges asked many questions as insolvency is an issue that is not generally well understood and evaluation forms and follow up phone calls showed how valuable the judges found the training. For the training, a 140-page Manual on Insolvency Law was published and provided to each of the judges. A sixth and seventh seminar was held for seven specialists of the Bankruptcy Supervision Agency. As a follow-on effort, training regarding the **implementation of bankruptcy administration**

for the Agency for Bankruptcy Supervision began in September with additional seminars and mentoring planned for professionals dealing with actual bankruptcy cases.

A group of six **agricultural policy experts** were sent to the US to participate in a two-week program organized by the US Dept. of Agriculture's **Cochran Fellows** Program. All of them were heads of their organizations/departments or leaders in the agricultural sector.

As mentioned above under assistance to Non-Governmental Institutions, a total of 33 representatives of local organizations and local government units participated in the training for the second round of Public-Private Partnership support. Of those, 11 were leaders (mayor/deputy mayor, head of NGO or department). Six of them were women.



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS



Sixteen **participants of the garment machine maintenance** course at Professional Training Center #1 in **Tirana** completed the basic level eight-week training course. Of those, 14 completed the eight-week advanced course and then 80 hour internship program in one of four garment manufacturing firms. Another 15 participants at the Professional Training Center in **Shkodra** completed the **basic level training course in garment machine maintenance** in

July with two well-known master technicians from Shkoder sharing the instruction. Eleven participants then began the advanced level course to be followed by an internship

As mentioned above under assistance for Non-Governmental Institutions, a total of 33 representatives of local organizations and local government units participated in the training for the second round of Public-Private Partnership support. Of those, 22 were technical specialists, 14 of them women.

As mentioned above, group of five **agricultural extensionists specialists** were sent to the US to participate in a two-week program organized by the US Dept. of Agriculture's **Cochran** Fellows Program.

ASSESSMENTS

World Learning provided Assist Impact with two weeks of hands-on training in **Participatory Institutional Analysis (PIA)** in January 2014. In consultation with the Mission, it was decided that the main focus of the assessment would be Aleanca, which focuses on LGBT issues and AAC-L, a new organization which is a spin-off of a USAID-funded agricultural project. Once trained, Assist Impact staff, supported by the World Learning specialists, completed the AAC-L PIA. Assist Impact then conducted PIAs for Pro-



LGBT and Creative Business Solutions. (Pink Embassy, an LGBT organization, informed Assist Impact that it did not wish to participate in such an organizational analysis.) Technical solutions to needs identified ranged from basics, like financial manuals, software and training, to sophisticated solutions such as customized software for monitoring and evaluation or automated notification of funding opportunities.

An institutional assessment for the Albanian **National Chamber of Garment Makers** was conducted with the assistance of a specialist from World Learning. This assessment was not done with the PIA tool but had many similar elements. Severe governance problems coupled with a lack of willingness to improve various aspect of organizational functioning led Assist Impact to discontinue the assessment. A survey of board members was conducted in July. The majority of the 38% of board members responding expressed their concern about the transparency of the work of the Board, especially the unresolved governance issues because of the perceived illegitimate elections of the current Chamber Board administration.

J-1 VISA PROCESSING SERVICES

	This period	Project Cumulative
# of contractors provided services for	1	2
# of trainees processed for other contractors	1	4

A J-1 Visa was processed for one other USAID Implementer this year – the United States Energy Association.

2) RESULTS

PERFORMANCE IMPROVED OF THOSE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The **Professional Training Center #1 in Tirana** and the **Professional Training Centers in Shkoder and Fier** were provided with an approved curriculum, tools, furniture and equipment as well as expert instructors enabling them to provide training in garment machine maintenance. In September 2014 the **Professional Training Center #1 in Tirana** began offering the course without the support of Assist Impact.

The **Agricultural University of Tirana** received valuable support for a landscape demonstration garden, which was constructed in October-November 2013. Students of landscape architecture use it, especially for the subjects "Green areas" (bachelor level) and "Landscape architecture" (master level). Topics include use of garden equipments, demonstration of different garden styles and structures, construction and maintenance of garden hedges, a water garden and garden pathways, site measurements, preparing an individual landscape project, form and space composition, material selection and composition. The students, who also do some of the maintenance, appreciate very much the fact that they can work in practical terms. Some of the professors consider the garden a significant improvement in the quality of teaching.



The **Municipality of Korça** reaped the benefits of a well prepared Public-Private Partnership in public parking with the signing of a contract with a private firm to manage 432 public parking places in four areas of Korça.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVED OF THOSE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS:

At the insistence of USAID and Assist Impact, the Albanian Center for Competitiveness and International Trade (**ACIT**) produced its 2013 Trade Report with a plan to sell copies both on-line and in hard copy. Although within the first month 70 hard copies were sold, the plan to sell on-line proved impossible due to PayPal's very long and problematic procedure for opening an account for non-profit organizations in Albania. In addition the Albanian legislation does not enable such cases. Within the first month of publication, 450 copies had been downloaded from the website, but unfortunately, free of charge.

Ola 1, Kler, Dika and Omega, garment manufacturing firms in Tirana, report having improved the quality and competitiveness of their production as a result of the machinery purchased with a matching grant awarded by Assist Impact. With the new plotter, Ola 1 can now produce very high quality images resulting in increased sales and the hiring of two new workers. Kler's custom-ordered button sewing machine increases the quality and longevity of the shirts produced



Omega employee at new sewing machine

and is easier for the employees to operate. Omega's four new line machines allow them to meet the demand for larger quantities. Dika reports better quality production since purchasing a new air compressor used to remove lint and stray threads as well as to cool machines.

The **Regional Development Agency-Korça, Co-Plan and Urban Research Institute** report lessons learned in their compendium submissions for Public-Private Partnerships. The main lesson learned was in regard to the importance of involving the municipal council from the beginning, since the council must make the decision to approve procurement of a PPP. They also emphasized the importance of gathering information regarding 'willingness to pay' for a service on the part of the citizens. This information was gathered in Korça regarding fees for parking and would have been useful had it been done in Berat regarding fees for solid waste pickup and in Fier for public lighting.



Aleanca, an active defender of the rights of the LGBT community in Albania, is now sufficiently well-managed to be able to receive a grant from Assist Impact. The capable finance/administrative officer provided by Assist Impact along with financial and administrative policy and procedure manuals, financial software, a safe, photocopier and laptop ensure sufficiently strong management of the organization.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVED OF THOSE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

LEADERS

Insolvency Law Manual and Training: During this year, 22 additional judges reported having insolvency cases to adjudicate. All reported finding the training and manual very useful. The judges benefiting from the training this year include: Elvana Lluri, Antoneta Prendi, Markeljan Koca, Vladimir Skenderi, Rexhina Merlika, Fida Osmani, Regleta Panajoti, Blerina Muca, Arben Mullaj, Ilir Mustafaj, Arjan Aliaj, Rezarta Balliu, Bledar Abdullai, Marinela Osmani, Dritan Caka, Ardian Kalia, Enkela Bajo Vlora, Manjola Berberi, Patri Islamaj, Ibrahim Hoxha, Astrit Faqolli, Arjana Lico.

Eight leaders who participated in the training in **Public-Private Partnership** subsequently won awards or submitted strong proposals to prepare PPPs, indicating a concrete benefit of the training provided. From NGOs they include: Ilir Rembeci, Director of the Regional Development Agency in Tirana and Dhimiter Marko, Director of the Regional Development Agency in Fier. From local governing units they include: Deputy Mayor of Kuçova, Shpetim Nishani, Deputy Mayor of Elbasan, Anduena Prifti, director of the legal department in Elbasan, Teuta Stroha, director of the economics department in Saranda. The director of finance in Vore, Aida Dedja, and the director of the legal department in Lushnja also were part of a strong team, even though their proposals did not win.

One of the leaders who participated in the Cochran Agricultural Policy Program in the US, Piro Rapushi, reports already making changes. Seeing the importance of cooperatives in the US, he has taken steps to strengthen the new national Association of Cooperatives.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVED OF THOSE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS



Fourteen participants at the Professional Training Center #1 in Tirana successfully completed **advanced level training on Garment Machine Maintenance** including 80 hours of internship at four garment manufacturing companies. All can be considered, therefore, as having removed a barrier to improved performance. To date, eight have found work. Five quickly found work with garment firms. One is self-employed, working when called by firms. Two others have found technical maintenance jobs with government.

Those employed are: Ervin Koce, Armando Koci, Edmond Deda, Ilirjan Luraku, Besim Beti, Gani Zeneli, Dritan Bregasi, Fatjon Hoxha.

Based on the quality of proposals submitted for the **second round of Public-Private Partnerships support** after the two and a half day training in PPP, the following technical specialists benefitted from the PPP training: Besmira Vishe (legal specialist, IP3) Jonida Dobi (financial specialist, RASP), Rovena Joni (financial specialist, Municipality of Vore), Leandro Fimio and Jonida Abdyli (specialists from the Municipality of Saranda) and Arben Rrapo (specialist, RDA-TR).

As reported above, the **Association for Traditional Arts and Crafts (ATACT)** in Pogradec trained more than 45 marginalized men and women, including nine from the Roma and Egyptian Communities in cooking or hotel services and tourism. Although the vast majority were women, some men were included to reinforce concepts of equality. As a result of the training, **37 were employed, 33 of them women**, eight of whom are Roma and Egyptian. Ten of the trained women, one of them part of the Egyptian community, were employed at Perla Hotel (in the reception, cleaning service, kitchen help, dishwashing and other services). Other women were employed in various businesses, including at the Pogradec information office, Hotel Sirena in Tushemisht, Agai Restaurant in Tushemisht, Rrushi Restaurant in Pojske, the Lyhnicas Kompleks, the Kalaja Hotel, Big Market grocery store, a chair factory, as a governess in a family and at Shpk “Voloreka”. In addition, as a cost share from ATACT, ten women were trained in handicrafts, of whom five opened their own family handicraft business complete with tax numbers and four were hired in two artisan production shops.



Achievements towards the goals during this period are summarized in the following table.

	Indicator	Target for FY 2014	Actual for 4th Quarter	Cumulative for FY 2014	Cumulative for Project	Target for Project
1	Number of government institutions receiving capacity building assistance	2	1	7	10	5
	FY13: Central Inspectorate, Central Elections Committee, School of Magistrates					
	FY14, Q1-3: Agricultural University of Tirana, Agency of Bankruptcy Supervision, Professional Training Center N#1 Tirana, Professional Training Center in Shkodra, Korça Municipality, Academy of Sciences					
	FY14, Q4: Professional Training Center in Fier					
2	Number of non-governmental institutions receiving capacity building assistance	5	4	27	38	15
	FY13: 5 banks: BKT, Credins Bank, Raiffeisen, ProCredit, NOA; 3 PPP NGOS: Co-Plan, URI, RDA-Korca; Coalition for Domestic Observers; Assn of Journalists for Justice					
	FY14 Q1-3: OSR, 7 Women Grants, Protik, Ola 1, Kler shpk, Omega, Women's Network Equality in Decision Making, Protik grant, Bellaconfex, Bellador, Reaconf, Ergotex and Melgushi, CFFE, Tjeter Vizion, Vatra, Different & Equal, Aleancea					
	FY14 Q4: RDA-Fier, RDA-Tirana, IP3, Pro-LGBT					
3	Number of gov. institutions that have removed a barrier/ constraint to improving performance	2	1	5	8	5
	Governmental Institution Improved	Improvement or Barrier to Improvement Removed				
	FY13: Central Elections Committee, Central Inspectorate, School of Magistrates					
	FY14Q1-3: Professional Training Center N#1, Professional Training Center in Shkodra, Korça Municipality	Ag Univ is using effectively the new demonstration garden for improved instruction. Professional Training Center in Shkodra has a well-equipped training room and a curriculum for a garment machine maintenance course. The Korça Municipality has a PPP for public parking.				
	FY14, Q4: Professional Training Center in Fier. Note: The Central Elections Committee was counted in 2013 and has not been counted again despite major improvements.	Professional Training Center in Fier has a well-equipped training room and a curriculum for a garment & footwear machine maintenance course. The Central Elections Committee has the software necessary to administer and rapidly report the results of local elections.				

	Indicator	Target for FY 2014	Actual for 4th Quarter	Cumulative for FY 2014	Cumulative for Project	Target for Project				
4	Number of non-governmental institutions that have removed a barrier or constraint to improving performance	5	2	11	17	15				
	Non-governmental Institution Improved	Improvement or Barrier to Improvement Removed								
	FY13: BKT, Credins Bank, ProCredit, NOA; Assn of Journalists for Justice, Coalition for Domestic Observers									
	FY14, Q1-3: Women's Network Equality in Decision Making, Kler, Ola 1, Omega ACIT, RDA-Korça, URI, Co-Plan, Aleanca	The Women's Network put on a good fair, increasing its reputation and capacity to organize other fairs. Machinery purchased through three match grants has improved quality and competitiveness. ACIT has succeeded to generate some revenue from its trade report and knows it needs to find an effective web-based payment mechanism. RDA-Korça, URI and Co-Plan report lessons learned mainly regarding city councils. Aleanca qualifies to receive USAID-funded grants.								
	FY14, Q4: Dika, ATACT	Machinery purchased by Dika has improved quality and competitiveness. ATACT has demonstrated its ability to train and find employment for marginalized women in PG.								
	M=men, W=women	M	W	M	W	M	W	Total		
5	Number of leaders trained, mentored, receiving technical assistance or grants	8	7	4	2	46	53	85	86	45
	FY13: 60 Judges, 7 CEC members, 5 ag coop leaders = 72 (39 m/33 w)									
	FY14, Q1-3: judges trained in Insolvency Law: 35 men, 45 women; Bankruptcy Supervision Agency Director & 1 judge: 2men; PPP: 5 men, 6 women									
	FY14, Q4: Cochran Ag Policy: 4 men, 2 women			4	2					
6	Number of technical specialists trained, mentored or receiving technical assistance or grants	8	7	4	337	29	356	632	497	45
	FY13: 6 ag credit specialists, 682 ag producers/processors, 17 magistrate students- 603m/102w									
	FY14,Q2-3: Bankruptcy Supervision Agency specialists: 3 m/4 w; PPP: 8m/14w; garment machine course TR: 14m/2w; PG marginalized women: 4m/37w; SH machine maintenance course 14m/1w									
	FY14, Q4: Cochran Ag Extensionists, 4m/1w; 6 Women's Empowerment grants (more than 2.5 days of training): 336w			4	337					

	Indicator	Target for FY 2014		Actual for 4th Quarter		Cumulative for FY 2014		Cumulative for Project		Target for Project
7	Number of leaders reporting improved performance	8	7	1	0	18	16	26	19	45
	FY13: 3 Judges: E Hoxha, A Tahiri, L Kola Trebicka 0m/3w; 7 agroproducers, 1 coop leader: Xh Zakaj: 8m/0w. Total: 8m/3w									
	FY14, Q1-3: Judges: E Lluri, A Prendi, M Koca, V Skenderi, R Merlika, F Osmani, R Panajoti, B Muca, A Mullaj, I Mustafaj, A Aliaj, R Balliu, B Abdullai, M Osmani, D Caka, A Kalia, Enkela Bajo Vlora, Manjola Berberi, Fatri Islamaj, Ibrahim Hoxha, Astrit Faqolli, Arjana Lico: 13m/12w PPP training: 4m/4w			Judges much more able to make decisions based on the insolvency law. Heads of NGOs, LGUs or LGU depts awarded PPP support projects.						
	FY14, Q4: Cochran Ag Policy, 1m; P Rapushi			P Rapushi has focused effort on the new Assn of Cooperatives						
8	Number of technical specialists reporting improved performance	8	7	20	35	20	35	39	47	45
	FY13: 4 Ag credit specialists, 2 Central Inspectorate specialists, 1 magistrate student, 2 CEC staff									
	FY14: Q3: machine maintenance technicians TR: 12m/2w PPP: 4m/4w; Pogradec marginalized women (and men) 4m/37w			Garment machine maintenance technicians passed the advance level. Specialists participating in PPP training from NGOs, LGUs subsequently awarded PPP support projects. Marginalized women (and men) in Pogradec trained and employed.						
	NOTE: an individual attending/receiving multiple capacity building activities within a program is counted only once. An individual participating in multiple programs is counted per program. Institutions are counted only once.									

3) PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Assist Impact requested and received approval for two modifications to its Cooperative Agreement during year two. The modifications provided additional focus and funding for capacity building of LGBT organizations and allowed new staff to be hired. Four new staff members joined the Assist Impact team, one foreseen in the original project and three as a result of the modifications. USAID also donated a vehicle to the project.

In December 2013 the senior person foreseen as project coordinator was able to join the Assist Impact staff. An additional full time program officer was hired to handle chiefly the LGBT programs. And an office assistant/driver/IT support and procurement person was hired to procure the many commodities needed principally by the LGBT and machine maintenance programs.

The hiring of a part-time person for grants management and compliance allowed us to totally revise our grants management systems and launch our grants program. She also proved invaluable on compliance matters such as restricted commodities and international travel approval requests. In addition, the second half of the year she also devoted some of her time to identifying possible donors and developing proposals to obtain funding to ensure the sustainability of Assist Impact.

One of the observations made by the Post Award Survey Team was with regards to sustainability and the urgency of obtaining other projects. During the second year of BHIC, Assist Impact submitted a proposal and was awarded a small grant from the **Australian Development Aid Program** to provide twelve Alpine goats for another village in the commune of Zall Bastar, namely Mner i siperm. The Australian Ambassador came from Rome to attend the donation of the goats on June 11, 2014, together with the US Ambassador.

The Australian funded project was the result of the donor mapping and relation building of a very capable intern. In the framework of sustainability, two other proposals were developed and submitted. Another intern proved to be an especially able photographer whose services Assist Impact frequently uses for documenting success stories.

Assist Impact continues to appreciate the considerable effort USAID has made in order to support Assist Impact.

WORLD LEARNING'S SUB-AWARD

World Learning provided input chiefly in the area of institutional assessment. Two staff members from World Learning flew to Albania to provide all Assist Impact staff with training in Participatory Institutional Analysis (PIA) from Jan 13-24, 2014. After presenting the methodology, the World Learning PIA specialists demonstrated for several days how to implement PIA with Aleanca LGBT, a human rights NGO advocating on behalf of the LGBT community in Albania. Afterwards they coached Assist Impact staff to implement PIA with AAC-Lushnje, a local NGO working in the agricultural sector. The lead World Learning specialist also provided off-site input into the Capacity Development Plans prepared for ACC-Lushnje as well as PIAs conducted by Assist Impact staff for Pro-LGBT and Creative Business Solutions. In June this main World Learning institutional assessment specialist came to Albania to head an Assist Impact assessment of a garment manufacturers trade association using a different assessment tool. Unfortunately severe governance problems resulted in the abandonment of the full assessment. She also worked with Assist Impact staff to develop and implement a survey of this association's board members using Survey Monkey.

World Learning made one payment for a Public-Private Partnership specialist and provided minor compliance advice.

World Learning's subaward was modified to remove any reliance on it to provide experts or training and free up funds for more programs.

REPORTS

Financial reports with actual versus budgeted expenses as well as the 'checkbook' showing program related 'obligations' and actual expenses were provided to the Agreement Officer's Representative on a regular basis. Advance requests and liquidation of advances were

submitted monthly as requested including justifications for requested but as yet unexpended funds.

The quarterly narrative reports were submitted in a timely fashion.

The Intervention Plan or work plan was developed early, giving USAID time to comment and for Assist Impact to make adjustments so that the actual submission contained no surprises.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

CONTRACTUAL

As can be seen from the indicator table on pages 13-15, of the eight targets for Building Human and Institutional Capacity, all have been met, some by a large margin. The remaining year will be used to consolidate and extend the achievements.

Although a very large number of men were trained during the Access to Capital for Agriculture program, BHIC made great strides towards reaching the target of 50% women trained because of the training provided under the women's empowerment grants. It should be said that the people trained under Access to Capital received only two-three hours of training, while the women trained during the women's empowerment grants received 18 hours or more of training.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

FINANCIAL

Assist Impact sees no significant cost overruns. Rather, it foresees the need for a three month no-cost extension in order to enable a number of current programs to be completed and several foreseen democracy grants to have sufficient time for proper implementation.

Assist Impact underwent an **audit** this period performed by Baker-Tilly, one of two organizations approved by USAID. The audit required a significant amount time and effort on the part of mainly but not only Assist Impact's financial/administrative officer. The audit disclosed no material weaknesses or material instances of non-compliance. Four recommendations regarding immaterial matters were made and immediately implemented by Assist Impact. They involved timely submission of the VAT refund request, timely private health insurance contribution deduction, amending the written policy regarding fixed assets and amending the written policy regarding fringe benefits to reflect the approved budget.

Considerable effort continued to be devoted to providing documentation for the financial management center in Sarajevo regarding requests. Assist Impact improved its estimate of needs regarding advances, with final balances well below the required threshold all but one month during the second half of the year. The fact that Assist Impact has extremely different funding needs from month to month, depending on expected programs, as well as delays due to late submission of deliverables on the part of service providers/grantees, remains a challenge.

A modification to allow for a no cost extension will be necessary in the next few months.