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**AssistIMPACT**

## Quarterly Report #11

April - June 2015

# BUILDING HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN ALBANIA

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



## GOALS AND RESULTS TO BE ACHIEVED

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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.

Since Assist Impact had achieved or exceeded all the goals of the BHIC project by the end of September 2014, it proposed the following new goals:

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

- Strengthen the performance of at least 13 (instead of 5) Albanian central and local governmental organizations, including Albanian ministries and municipalities.
- Strengthen the performance of at least 55 (instead of 15) 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 55 (instead of 45 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 370 (instead of 45 per year) technical specialists – across sectors including business, economics, human rights, governance and democracy.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THIS PERIOD

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### 1) PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS

#### TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND GRANTS

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During the 11<sup>th</sup> quarter of the Building Human and Institutional Capacity project, thirty-one programs begun in March 2015 or before were in various stages of implementation as the quarter began. They include a course for footwear operators and matching grants in Durres, a grant to Protik for high level ICT training, two PPP mentoring technical assistance programs, four PPP preparation projects, seven youth grants, eight democracy grants, a LGBT technical assistance program and a grant for an LGBT shelter. Seven new programs were initiated during this quarter, including three large and intense elections support programs. Seven were completed. As the quarter ended, 23 programs were in various phases of preparation/implementation.

	<b>FY 2013 Building Human and Institutional Capacity Programs</b>	<b>Status as of June 30, 2015</b>
	<b>Strengthened rule of law and improved governance</b>	
1	TA/PPP Support CO-PLAN-Street Lighting in Fier	completed
2	TA/Public-Private Partnership Support-International Expert/compendium	completed

	<b>FY 2014 Building Human and Institutional Capacity Programs</b>	<b>Status as of June 30, 2015</b>
	<b>Strengthened rule of law and improved governance</b>	
1	TA/PPP Support round II – training/mentoring organization	on-going until Nov
2	TA/PPP Support round II – Elbasan Public Parking	on-going until Nov
3	TA/PPP Support round II – Kucova Recycling	on-going until Nov
4	TA/PPP Support round II – Saranda Beach Management	on-going until Nov
5	ICT/Bankruptcy Administration	on-going until July
6	Youth Empowerment Grant – New Epoch	on-going until July
	<b>Conditions for broad-based, sustainable &amp; inclusive economic growth</b>	
1	GR/Protik ICT Resource Center Support	on-going until Oct
2	GR/Youth Empowerment Grants for youth employment (6)	5 completed, 1 on-going until July
	<b>Support to LGBT</b>	
1	GR/LGBT Shelter in Tirana	on-going until Aug

	<b>FY 2015 Building Human and Institutional Capacity Programs</b>	<b>Status as of June 30, 2015</b>
	<b>Strengthened rule of law and improved governance</b>	
1	GR/Democracy grants (8)	on-going Nov/Dec
	<b>Conditions for broad-based, sustainable &amp; inclusive economic growth</b>	
1	GR/Matching Grants for Footwear Machines with donations/internships (DR) 3	on-going until July
2	ICT/Vocational Training for Footwear Operators (Durrës)	on-going until July
3	ICT/Vocational Training for Footwear Operators (Kruja)	in preparation
4	TA/Medicinal Aromatic Plants (MAP) Market Study	on-going until Sept
5	GR/CBS Support	on-going until Oct
6	GR/AAC-Lushnje	on-going until Oct
7	Cochran Ag Policy & Food Safety US programs with J-1 visa processing (2)	in preparation
	<b>Support to LGBT</b>	
1	ProLGBT & Aleanca LGBT proposal writing training and mentoring	on-going until July
2	ProLGBT proposal writer	on-going until Aug
	<b>Support to 2015 Elections</b>	
1	GR/CFFESD Election Monitoring	on-going until Aug
2	TA/iVote IT support to CEC	on-going until July
3	TA/NDI support to CFFESD Election Monitoring	on-going until Aug

## CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF INSTITUTIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

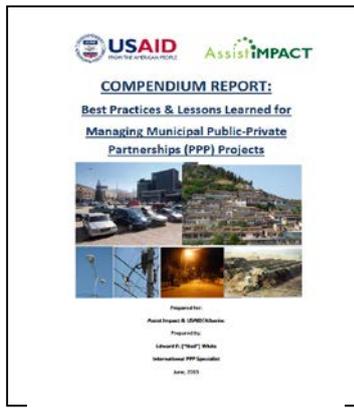
### CAPACITY BUILDING FOR GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

The Central Elections Commission (CEC) was provided with important IT support for the administration of the June 21, 2015 municipal elections. The experts from iVote in Macedonia provided updates to election administration modules (which they had already developed for the local elections) reflecting gender issues in the election's list, participation in elections and candidate nomination criteria. The experts also provided critical support in the run-up to the elections, during election day and during the counting. The technical support of the iVote experts was crucial when a last minute decision regarding prisoner voting resulted in a change in the number of polling centers and the voting lists required serious adjustment in the software within hours of the opening of the polls. Thanks to the technical support provided, the CEC was able to provide both journalists and normal citizens with up-to-date voting information and results of the ballot counting. More than 141,000 users viewed the CEC website more than 6.3 million times.



Seventeen participants attended the two-month course for **footwear operators** at the **Professional Training Center in Durres** and began their **internship** in the three participating firms. Assist Impact had developed the curriculum including input from footwear industry specialists and sent it to the appropriate ministry for approval. The program also provided the Professional Training Center with some essential instructional equipment such as tables, tools and a laptop and projector and a capable instructor with years of experience in footwear production. The main machinery used by course participants was donated by some nearby footwear firms in exchange for matching grants for new equipment.

Although the City Council of the **Municipality of Fier** had approved the procurement for **Energy Efficient Public Lighting PPP in Fier**, procurement did not begin until April with bids due June 1. No bids were received, probably at least partially due to the municipal elections later in the month that would produce a new mayor and city council.



A 100-page **Compendium of best practices regarding municipal Public-Private Partnerships** as well as lessons learned from the Public-Private Partnership support in Korca, Berat and Fier was prepared in English and shared electronically with Assist Impact partners. Assist Impact plans to translate this valuable document into Albanian and distribute it at a forthcoming workshop for municipal decision-makers and interested private sector organizations.

The cities of **Kucova and Elbasan postponed procurement** of the approved **PPPs** regarding recycling and public parking respectively until after the local elections in June 2015. The city of **Saranda also postponed** steps to develop new management contracts with businesses on beach fronts until after the local elections.

## CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

The **Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and Sustainable Democracy (CFFESD)** trained and deployed more than 1000 long term and short term observers to monitor the June 21, 2015 municipal elections. The observers were assigned to polling stations based on stratified random samples at both the national level and the level of three hotly contested municipalities (Tirana, Shkoder, Durres and Himara). Using SMSs and calls, observers reported in to the CFFESD call center, enabling the Coalition to provide informative, timely press releases to the media which were widely publicized in electronic and print media. Response from the national sample was 100% and for Tirana, Shkoder and Durres a respectable 95%. CFFE observed that voting procedures were conducted largely peacefully in voting centers throughout the country, without major irregularities that could influence the outcome of the elections. CFFESD observers noted in almost one-quarter of voting centers nationwide instances in which voters were not able to find their names on the voters' lists. Eighteen percent of voting centers across the country witnessed up to five individual cases. Seven percent of voting centers reported six or more individual cases. In Tirana, Shkodër, and Durrës, voters did not find their names on voters' lists in 32%, 31%, 38% of voting centers, respectively.





The **National Democratic Institute (NDI)** provided invaluable technical assistance to the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and Sustainable Democracy for their Election Monitoring effort. NDI experts provided especially helpful advice and coaching regarding planning including a minute by minute election day action plan, writing interesting, evidence based press releases and other reports/ statements, conducting effective media appearances, obtaining complete and timely

reports from long term and short term monitors, and use of SMS technology for election day reporting. The SMS reporting using codes proved challenging for many monitors but significantly shorted the time needed to collect and analyze the monitoring data.

A grant to **Protik** continued to help them to fulfil their goal of offering **high level ICT technical training** courses while experimenting with true market interest. A 5-day training course in Microsoft SQL Server 2014 Querying in collaboration with Semos Education was held in April for 10 IT specialists. In June a course for Microsoft SQL Server 2014 data warehousing was held for seven IT specialists. Such high level specialized IT training is generally available only outside of Albania.



Intern in footwear firm Xhuliano

Matching grants awarded to **three footwear manufacturing firms in Durres, Hotova, Alba Shoes and Xhuliano**, in exchange for donated machines for the Professional Training Center and internships for the participants of the footwear operators course continued. Xhuliano purchased five new PFAFF one-needle leather footwear pillar machines and donated a single needle machine, a zig-zag machine and a double needle machine. Hotova and Alba Shoes both purchased two new double-needle footwear machines from Joyee. Hotova donated a double needle machine and two single needle machines. Alba Shoes donated one double and one single needle machine. All three firms hosted the course participants for internships. Even before the internship had finished, Xhuliana hired nine of the interns.

Charity Gala in support of the LGBT Shelter



A grant to Aleanca to establish and operate the first **LGBT shelter** in Albania progressed well. During this period, the shelter provided housing, counseling services facilitated their attendance in vocational courses aimed at job skills to six members of the LGBT community. As of the end of this period, three from the community were being accommodated at the shelter. In May, a large charity Gala was held to raise funds for the shelter. The first of its kind for the LGBT community, the gala was very successful and raised enough funds to cover rent for ten months.

**Aleanca and Pro-LGBT** continued to be strengthened through the technical assistance provided through Assist Impact. ProLGBT was provided the additional support of a full time proposal writer. In support of both Aleanca and ProLGBT's need for sustainability, a highly qualified consultant was provided to assist the local proposal writer **to write winning proposals** with LGBT themes.



A grant was awarded to **AAC-Lushnjë** to develop a strong strategic plan as well as an internal technical and administrative **management information system**. The system will allow the AAC-Lushnjë offices in other locations to provide timely information regarding project indicators as well as access important documents such as training modules and studies.

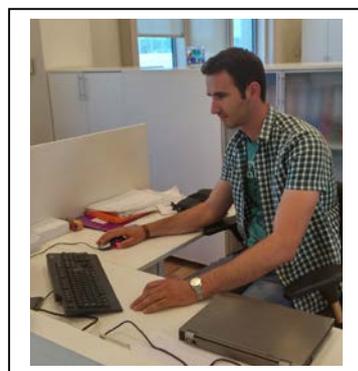


A grant was awarded to Creative Business Solutions (CBS) to develop an aggregation software to track all relevant news regarding agriculture in Albania and the region as well as calls for proposals related to agriculture. The grant also includes expert training for the CBS marketing team to learn the most effective ways of attracting on-line advertising to CBS's agroweb,

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 aim at addressing youth employment. The seventh is designed to mobilize youth for active citizenship. They include the following:

### **Creative Business Solutions (CBS):**

During the grant intervention period, CBS trained a total of 137 young people in skills related to five agro-business sub sectors: Cold Storage, Green Houses, Dairy, Herb and Spice and Fruit and Vegetables (Olive Oil) and distributed in 16 towns or regions. Of those trained, a total of 40 youth signed employment contracts and started working with agribusinesses (10 female and 30 male). This is 11% more than the original target of 36 youth employed and marks a reduction in informality in the agro-processing sector where many work without contracts and therefore without social insurance.



- The **Albanian Students Network Alumni (AS@N)** aimed to train, find internships and employ students or young graduates in a variety of work situations in Shkodra, Vlora and Tirana. They created their website [www.unepunoj.com](http://www.unepunoj.com) as an interactive online portal with information on the labor market and career counseling. They also provided a one-day training to a total of 107 students, 77 females and 30 males, in the three locations. Whereas they aimed to train 80 youth and find internships for 25, they managed to find internships for 60, 20 in Shkoder or Vlore and the rest in the capital city, Tirana. All but

six of the internships were in private businesses. Of the 60 interns, 29 were employed, 45% more than the original 20 planned and all but one of them in private businesses. Of those employed, 16 or 55% were female. Over 75% of the jobs were in Tirana. Although many started with jobs paying the minimum wage of approximately \$175/month, 37% started with considerably better salaries averaging nearly \$300/month.

- The **Association for Communitarian Integration and Development (ACID)** trained and facilitated employment of youth in Bulqize in video production skills and youth in Laç in plumbing, and electrical work for a total of 25 youth employed/self-employed. Eight youth were employed in Bulqize, 4 at TV Bulqize and 4 at a private video/photography studio. Five additional youth were provided with cameras thereby enabling them to find self-employment. In Laç, two youth trained as electricians were employed at the electricity company, OSHEE, and two were employed at a company repairing coffee machines. Eight other youth were provided with tool kits (4 for electricians, 4 for



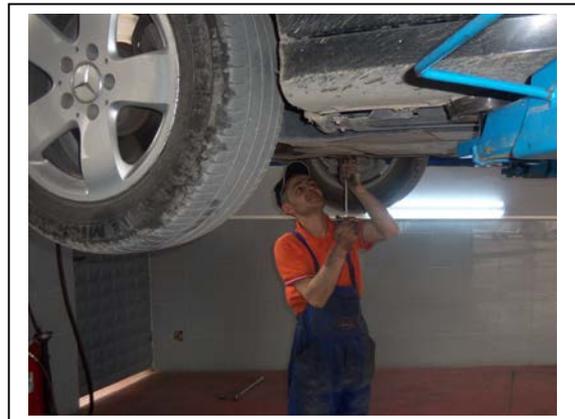
plumbers) which will enable them to be self-employed. Several have already found some clients.



- The goal of the **Albanian Rafting Group (ARG)** project was to encourage tourism in the area by developing hiking trails, offering improved rafting experiences and ensuring better guest houses. During the six month project, a total of 34 people were trained (19 males and 15 females) in hospitality services, hiking and/or rafting/kayaking. A very important achievement was the development and marking of 3 pilot trails in the Gorrice hill near the city as well as Tomorr

and Shpirag Mountains, promoted on the [www.beratexperience.com](http://www.beratexperience.com) website as well. As a result of the project, 19 youth were certified as guides (13 males and 6 females) that will be part of the ARG team during the touristic season of 2015 and beyond. Nine of these guides are employed by ARG with contracts earning the minimum wage of \$175/month while the other 10 are working part-time as self-employed, depending on the number of tourists and requests for guides.

- Through its grant for youth economic empowerment, the **Regional Development Agency in Korca (RDA-Korca)** aimed to train 120 youth in skills needed by the local labor market. They also aimed to employ or self-employ 60 youth and set up a Youth Council to continue advocating for youth in Korca. RDA-Korca achieved significantly more than it set out to. It assisted 152 youth (103 males, 49 females) to obtain training in professional skills ranging from cooking and electrical work to car mechanics and sewing and facilitated the employment or self-employment of 81, 52 males and 29 females, almost all receiving the minimum monthly wage of \$175. Approximately 25%-30% were of those trained and employed/self-employed were from the Roma or Egyptian communities. The youth council it established was very active, signed memoranda of understanding with several agencies and will continue advocating for youth issues.





- The **Livestock Entrepreneurs Association of Albania (LEAA)**, through this youth employment grant, provided hands-on practical training in artificial insemination, hoof care and mastitis control to a total of 87 young men in Lushnja, Shkodra, Korca and Diber. Fifty especially active participants were provided with California Mastitis Test (CMT) kits and have tested nearly 800 cows for mastitis. The results of these tests show that 13% of cows have heavy mastitis but the zone of Kutalli Berat reports nearly 43% heavy mastitis. The results of the findings once complete will be shared with the Ministry of Agriculture. Fifty Artificial Insemination manuals and record books were also delivered to participants with the highest frequency of attendance in both theoretical and

practical training courses. Of those trained, **24 youth** have become self-employed, with the most active earning an average income of \$150-\$200/month over the first six months. During the busiest months, some earned \$300-\$400/month.

- From October 2014 through June 2015, **New Epoch** worked in Fier and Patos to encourage youth participation in the democratic process. The project surpassed the original goal to involve 30 youth. Twenty-four youth from seven different localities including Roma, Egyptian and disabled communities participated actively in the Youth Advisory Group in the newly enlarged Fier municipality. Fifteen youth from three different localities participated in the Youth Advisory Group of Patos. A total of 55 youth took part in the various training workshops to learn to advocate with government officials for issues of special interest to youth. The Youth Advisory Group of Fier was invited to participate in a participatory budgeting meeting and their suggestions included in the plans of the social services office. The Youth Advisory Group of Patos developed a social contract and made efforts to get it signed by both mayoral candidates. Only one candidate agreed to sign it but she won the June elections and will now be held accountable to fulfil the contract. Both Youth Advisory Groups will continue to be active in their municipalities now that they have become empowered.



The Youth Advisory Group of Patos developed a social contract and made efforts to get it signed by both mayoral candidates. Only one candidate agreed to sign it but she won the June elections and will now be held accountable to fulfil the contract. Both Youth Advisory Groups will continue to be active in their municipalities now that they have become empowered.

Under a program entitled “**Democracy Grants**”, Assist Impact awarded eight grants focusing various issues of democracy. They will run from April – November, 2015.



- Through this Young People for Community Change project, Partners for Children (**Partnere per Femijet**) is implementing the concept of “Schools as Community Centers” in Diber prefecture. The project aims at empowering young people in Bulqize, Peshkopi and Kastriot to participate in the political life of their community. During this period, a Facilitator’s Guide to Working with Young People was developed, tested and distributed during training for nearly 80 youth

aged 14-17. The guide contains basic information and activities about understanding and conducting simple research, development of questionnaires, collection of data and planning interviews, analyzing the information and developing action plans. The young people in each of the three locations developed new skills and a sense of being agents of change to meet needs of their community. Out of 80, 73 participated in all the activities, 28 boys and 45 girls. Each group identified one priority theme to address in their community and developed the respective questionnaire. The Dobrove (Peshkopi) community will address the attitudes and gender inequalities as obstacles for young people’s participation in community activities. The group in Kastriot Commune will address the need for young people to partner with the community to support the development of agriculture. The group of young people in Bulqize will address the need to increase community awareness on child labor in mines.

- The **Albanian Institute of Science** is promoting accountability and transparency by providing on-line access to well-structured data on assets declared by politicians and judiciary officials. During this period, assets declarations were uploaded for 271 high public officials. In addition, these declarations were linked to an on-line database on commercial firms so that journalists and other interested citizens can more easily identify the commercial interests or conflict of interest these officials may have. Moreover, payments made to all 1500 public institutions were updated on the site every five days. Media started using the open data site effectively. For example, a request to abrogate the mandate of a member of parliament was based, in part, on the information provided on line that the member of parliament’s private firm had received 150 payments from public institutions. Training for 30 journalists enabled them to better use the open data. During April – June, more than 19,000 unique users viewed the Spending Data Albania website. See [www.open.data.al](http://www.open.data.al)





- **Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN)** is implementing a small grant to enhance independent and professional investigative journalism as a means to increase accountability, transparency and anti-corruption mechanisms on Public Procurement procedures. During this period, BIRN trained 14 journalists from various independent media outlets regarding the public procurement system and ways to dig out stories on conflict of interest, abuse of office, corruption and

procurement fraud. All the participants were then encouraged to apply to investigate one or more topics on public procurement cases. An independent jury then selected the 6 winning applications to receive a scholarship as part of the 4-5 month mentoring program. The topics to be investigated include the apparent abuse in the following procurements: Bank of Albanian, the University Hospital in Tirana laundry services, Port of Durres, E-taxation, use of public funds for political parties and the fictitious pay of private police.

- **The Center for Research Cooperation and Development** is implementing a project to support the citizens in the newly extended Vlora municipality to actively participate in election debates, especially regarding environmental and health issues. The project organized eight meetings in various locations where more than 500 people could question candidates about their programs and or discuss the voter's guide that was prepared through the project. It will hold elected officials accountable for their election promises.



- **Meridia** is implementing a project to protect human rights of women and girls who have been in conflict with the law after their release from the penitentiary institutions. Through this project the organization aims to assist the women and girls in their reintegration process by providing them on-the-job training and employment opportunities. During this period, motivational sessions were held with 74 women/girls either in pre-detention or prison. Seven women were released and it was possible to find jobs as saleswomen for two. The others were either not interested in reintegration or did not want to give their phone number. One had never worked before and would have been nearly impossible to place.

- **Hapa të Lehte (Light Steps)** is aiming to empower communities in Shkoder and Puka municipalities by giving them a direct participatory role in the decision making process. During this period, the project met with approximately 550 members of rural communities



in Shkoder and Puka and produced Community Based Scorecards indicating each community's priorities for the new local government. From the scorecards, social contracts were developed and signed by the two main mayoral candidates in Puka and the three main candidates in Shkoder. The new mayors will be held accountable to these social contracts.



- **Women's Network Equality in Decision Making** aims to raise the visibility of women experts through media in order to change the perception of the public on the role of women in the society. During this period, 20 female experts with diverse backgrounds and 20 journalists were identified in each of the focus cities, Tirana, Vlora and Shkodra, for a total of 60 each. The women experts were provided with media training and a special platform created outlining their competencies so that journalists looking for

experts could easily contact these women. (See [www.platformmagjinore.al/eng/experts/](http://www.platformmagjinore.al/eng/experts/)) In addition, a gender sensitive reporting handbook was prepared for journalists.

- **The Center for Transparency and Freedom of Information (CTFI)** is promoting accountability and transparency by monitoring the implementation of the recommendations provided by the High State Audit Institution to public institutions in Tirana, Elbasan and Korca Municipalities. During this period, CTFI signed an MOU with the High State Audit, selected and informed the 25 institutions to be monitored, provided training to six auditors. It also collected the many necessary documents to conduct the audits. In addition to the original proposed 23 institutions, Albpetrol and the Prosecutors Office in Elbasan were added to the audit list.



## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LEADERS AND SPECIALISTS

### TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LEADERS

The technical assistance offered by the National Democratic Institute provided important training and mentoring for two **leaders of the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and Sustainable Democracy**, Mirela Arqimandriti and Erjona Muellari, a leading board member and the executive director, respectively. Of particular value to both was mentoring regarding the writing of effective press releases and the management of trouble-shooting during election monitor reporting.

The technical support provided by iVote to the Central Elections Commission provided mentoring to the head of the IT department.

Preparation began for **two US Department of Agriculture Cochran programs** in the US, one in agricultural policy and one for food safety in the meat and dairy industry. A third for meat and poultry inspection is planned for the fall. These programs require J-1 visas, airline tickets and Health and Accident Coverage.



During this period, a **technical expert in the herbs and spices** business was brought to Albania to assess the current situation regarding herbs and spices or medicinal and aromatic plants in Albania and to recommend next steps to industry leaders as well as governmental institutions. Preliminary findings suggest that the US continues to prefer Albanian sage and will grow by 3%/year. Also a simple technology like drying racks would greatly improve the value added before export.

### TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS

Seventeen people, seven men and ten women, participated in course for footwear operators at the Professional Training Center in Durres. All of them successfully completed their internship and before even finishing the internship, 9 of the 17, including two Roma, had been employed. Although they had voluntarily decided to attend the course, in the beginning only four indicated their intention of working in a footwear firm. The reluctance, it turned out, was due to their misunderstanding regarding



wages paid by footwear manufacturers. Once the monthly wage was shown to be well above the minimum wage and issues of transportation were clarified, almost all were willing to work in the industry. By the end of the internship, **14 of the 17 were employed**, 5 men and 9 women. At \$185/month, their net monthly wages were all more than 17% above the net minimum wage of \$156/month.

**ASSESSMENTS**

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No assessments were conducted this period.

**J-1 VISA PROCESSING SERVICES**

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	<b>This period</b>	<b>Project Cumulative</b>
# of contractors provided services for	1	3
# of trainees processed for other contractors	3	7

J-1 Visa processing was requested by FSVC for three Bank of Albania employees. The process was begun this period and the visas will be obtained next period.

**2) RESULTS**

**PERFORMANCE IMPROVED OF THOSE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE**

**GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS**

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The **Professional Training Center in Durres** has improved significantly as a result of Assist Impact’s intervention regarding the course for footwear operators. Not only is it the first Professional Training Center in Albania to offer such a course, having a classroom complete with the necessary machinery and equipment, but it has **established strong links to the industry**. For future footwear operator courses, Hotova and Alba Shoes have offered to provide additional used machines plus leather and other materials necessary for the course as well as take future course participants as interns. Hotova is also willing to provide one of his machine maintenance technicians to maintain the machinery for the course at the training center.

The Agency for the Support of Civil Society (**AMSHC**) reports that it has established a working group for the proposal writing and has already started the application procedure for two projects. With regards to co-financing, one of their strategic goals, the agency is in the process of completing a co-financed project with a Slovenian development agency in Albania.

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVED OF THOSE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS:

The **Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and Sustainable Democracy (CFFESD)** demonstrated its ability to conduct citizen-led, nation-wide, statistically based observation of elections.

The **six grantees** who implemented the youth employment grants removed a barrier to improving performance by demonstrating that they could train and employ or self-employ youth thereby paving the way for future funding.

New Epoch, who implemented a youth empowerment grant regarding democracy reports having learned to overcome some of the challenges of involving youth outside the school system from localities outside the main city. Empowering youth 18-30 increased their experience working with that age group.

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVED OF THOSE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

### LEADERS

The two leaders of **Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and Sustainable Democracy (CFFESD)**, board member Mirela Arqimandriti and Erjona Mulellari both say that their performance improved with the help of the technical experts from the National Democratic Institute. They both say that they are now better able to formulate press releases and statements based on solid evidence that highlight the most useful and interesting conclusions for the public. Ms. Mulellari also better understands how to trouble-shoot regarding monitoring reports and other processes.

Due to the support and mentoring provided by the elections IT experts from iVote, the head of the IT Department at the Central Elections Commission, Petrit Gjokuta, says: "I learned to manage with greater confidence and transparency the process of processing and transmitting the election data."

## PERFORMANCE IMPROVED OF THOSE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

### TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS

All **four active insolvency administrators** who participated in training under the insolvency administration program greatly benefited from the training. They are all dealing with bankruptcy cases and the training clarified a lot of legal and financial issues. Arjeta Çumani, is the administrator dealing with a very large bankruptcy case that involves many creditors. She stated that the workshop answered questions she had regarding both legal and financial aspects regarding creditors, the role of experts and other issues.

From the Youth Economic Empowerment grants, **218 youth started jobs or self-employment.**

Forty youth signed employment contracts and started working with agribusinesses (10 female and 30 male) as a result of the youth economic empowerment project implemented by CBS.



Twenty-four young men were self-employed conducting artificial insemination or hoof care through the youth economic empowerment project implemented by LEAA.

Twenty-five young men were employed or self-employed as electricians, plumbers, or cameramen through the youth economic empowerment project implemented by ACID.

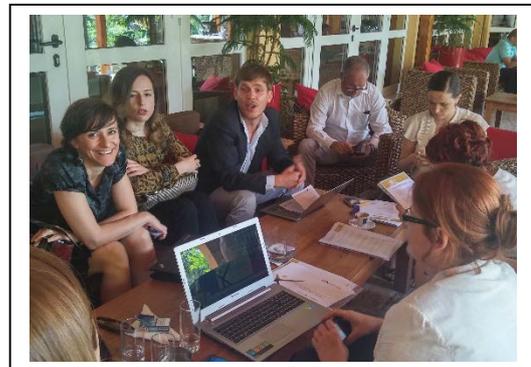
Twenty-nine youth (13 males, 16 females) were employed in a wide variety of mostly private businesses after internships through the youth economic empowerment project implemented by AS@N.



Nineteen youth (13 males, 6 females) were employed or self-employed as tour, hiking or rafting guides through the youth economic empowerment project implemented by the Albanian Rafting Group.

Eighty-one youth (52 males, 29 females) were employed or self-employed in a wide variety of trades through the youth economic empowerment project implemented by RDA-Korca.

Nine specialists working with CFFESD on Election monitoring improved their skills as a result of the technical mentoring/coaching provided by NDI. They included the two statisticians, the elections analysis, the public relations specialist, the political specialist, the managers of both long-term and short-term observers and the on-line platform developer.



Intern in Durres footwear course now employed



Seventeen participants at the **Professional Training Center in Durres** successfully completed **the course for footwear operators**. Fourteen were employed by the end of the internship and earning a higher monthly wage than beginners in the industry.

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

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target for FY 2015</b>	<b>Actual for 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr</b>	<b>Cumulative for FY 2015</b>	<b>Cumulative for Project</b>	<b>Target for Project</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Number of government institutions receiving capacity building assistance</b>	6	1	8	18	16
	FY13: Central Inspectorate, Central Elections Commission, School of Magistrates					
	FY14: Agricultural University of Tirana, Agency of Bankruptcy Supervision, Professional Training Center N#1 Tirana, Professional Training Center in Shkodra, Korça Municipality, Academy of Sciences; Professional Training Center in Fier					
	FY15 Q1-Q2: AMSHC; Fier, Berat (not counted in FY13), Elbasan, Saranda, Kucova Municipalities; Professional Training Center in Durres;					
	FY15 Q3: Ministry of Agriculture (MAP); the Central Elections Commission has already been counted					
<b>2</b>	<b>Number of non-governmental institutions receiving capacity building assistance</b>	21	9	19	58	59
	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: OSR, 7 Women Grants, Protik, Ola 1, Kler shpk, Omega, Women's Network Equality in Decision Making, Dika, Bellaconfex, Bellador, Reaconf, Ergotex and Melgushi, CFFE, Tjeter Vizion, Vatra, Different & Equal, Aleancea; RDA-Fier, RDA-Tirana, IP3, Pro-LGBT Essence Producers and Cultivators Association					
	FY15 Q1-2: Food Bank/AL, Blue Sky, Krel's Luck, Picari, CBS, AS@N, ACID, Rafting Group, LEAA, New Epoch (RDA-KO already counted)					
	FY15 Q3: footwear firms: Hotova, Alba Shoes, Xhuliano; (CFFE, Equality in Decision Making already counted): Partners for Children, Albanian Institute of Science, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, Center for Research Coop & Dev, Meridia, Light Steps, Center for Transparency & FoI					

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target for FY 2015</b>	<b>Actual for 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr</b>	<b>Cumulative for FY 2015</b>	<b>Cumulative for Project</b>	<b>Target for Project</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Number of gov. institutions that have removed a barrier/constraint to improving performance</b>	5	1	3	10	13
	<b>Governmental Institution Improved</b>	<b>Improvement or Barrier to Improvement Removed</b>				
	FY13: Central Elections Commission, Central Inspectorate, School of Magistrates					
	FY14: Professional Training Center N#1 Tirana, Professional Training Center in Shkodra, Korça Municipality, Professional Training Center in Fier. Note: The Central Elections Commission was counted in 2013 and has not been counted again despite major improvements.	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. 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.				
	FY15 Q1-2: Bankruptcy Supervision Agency, AMSHC	The Bankruptcy Agency is aware of the importance of preservation of priorities during bankruptcy. Training AMSHC staff in Proposal Writing &TA for a Strategic Plan has removed a barrier to obtaining outside funding. Co-financing begun.				
	FY15 Q3: Professional Training Center in Durres	The Professional Training Center in Durres has a well-equipped training room and curriculum for a footwear operators course plus a strong link with several footwear firms.				
<b>4</b>	<b>Number of non-governmental institutions that have removed a barrier or constraint to improving performance</b>	20	6	21	38	55
	<b>Non-governmental Institution Improved</b>	<b>Improvement or Barrier to Improvement Removed</b>				
	FY13: BKT, Credins Bank, ProCredit, NOA; Assn of Journalists for Justice, Coalition for Domestic Observers					
	FY14: Women's Network Equality in Decision Making, Kler, Ola 1, Omega ACIT, RDA-Korça, URI, Co-Plan, Aleanca, Dika, ATACT	The Women's Network fair increased its reputation and capacity to organize other fairs. Machinery purchased through three matching 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. Machinery purchased by Dika has improved quality and competitiveness. ATACT has demonstrated its ability to train and find employment for marginalized women in PG.				
	FY15, Q1-2: GADC, MEDPAK, Counseling Line, GJ Foundation, Diakonia Agapes, Gender Integration Association, Food Bank/Albania; Bellaconfex, Bellador, Reaconf, and Ergotex; Blue Sky, Krel's Luck, Picari, CFFESD	GADC, MEDPAK, Counseling Line, GJ Foundation have demonstrated their ability to train and find employment for marginalized women. Diakonia Agapes, Gender Integration Association have demonstrated their ability to assist rural women to increase their income. Food Bank Albania has a properly furnished warehouse. Bellaconfex, Bellador, Reaconf, and Ergotex are more competitive. Blue Sky, Krel's Luck, and Picari are more competitive. CFFESD has demonstrated its ability to conduct nation-wide statistically based observation.				

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target for FY 2015</b>	<b>Actual for 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr</b>	<b>Cumulative for FY 2015</b>	<b>Cumulative for Project</b>	<b>Target for Project</b>
	FY15 Q3: CBS, AS@N, ACID, Rafting Group, LEAA, New Epoch	CBS, AS@N, ACID, Rafting Group, and LEAA demonstrated the ability to train & employ/self-employ youth so are better able to fund-raise. New Epoch improved their management and reporting and gain valuable experience working with older youth including from villages.				

	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target for FY 2015</b>		<b>Actual for 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr</b>		<b>Cumulative for FY 2015</b>		<b>Cumulative for Project</b>		<b>Target for Project</b>
	M=men, W=women	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	Total
<b>5</b>	Number of <b>leaders</b> trained, mentored, receiving technical assistance or grants	28	9	1	2	23	9	108	94	113/95=208
	FY13: 60 Judges, 7 CEC members, 5 ag coop leaders: 72 (39 m/33 w)									
	FY14: judges trained in Insolvency Law: 35m/45w; Bankruptcy Supervision Agency Director & 1 judge: 2m/0w; PPP: 5m/6w; Cochran Ag Policy: 4m/2w									
	FY15, Q1-2: law partners (bankruptcy) 4m/0w; bankruptcy judges 8m/3w; bankruptcy agency head 1m; law partners (bankruptcy) 1m/0w; VL bankruptcy judges 7m/4w; AMSHC head 1m;									
	FY15, Q3: CFFESD heads 2w; CEC IT Dept head 1m			1	2					
<b>6</b>	Number of <b>technical specialists</b> trained, mentored or receiving technical assistance or grants	310	70	11	15	315	77	965	574	942/528 = 1470
	FY13: 6 ag credit specialists, 682 ag producers/processors, 17 magistrate students: 603m/102w									
	FY14: 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; Cochran Ag Extensionists, 4m/1w; 6 Women's Empowerment grants (more than 2.5 days of training): 336w									
	FY15, Q1-2: FR machine maintenance course, 14m/0w; CBS youth, 34m/2w; ACID, 47m/15w; RDA-KO youth, 97m/23w; LEAA, 78m/1w (more than 2.5 days of training), 4w insolvency administrators 0m/4w; bankruptcy lawyers 3m/4w; AMSHC 5m/5w; ARG (Rafting) 26m/8w									

	FY15, Q3: CFFESD specialists 4m/5w; footwear operators 7m/10w									
<b>7</b>	Number of <b>leaders</b> reporting <b>improved</b> performance	8	2	1	2	1	2	27	21	34/21 = 55
	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: 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; Cochran Ag Policy, 1m; P Rapushi							Judges much more able to make decisions based on the insolvency law. Heads of NGOs, LGUs or LGU depts awarded PPP support projects. P Rapushi has focused effort on the new Assn of Cooperatives		
	FY15 Q1-2: none this period									
	FY15 Q3: CFFESD heads M Arqimandriti, E Mulellari 2w; CEC IT Dept head P Gjokuta 1m							CFFESD heads better able to manage election monitoring including writing effective statements; CEC IT Dept head more confident in processing and transmitting election data		
<b>8</b>	Number of technical specialists reporting <b>improved</b> performance	140	166	168	80	191	216	214	265	163/207 = 370
	FY13: Ag credit specialists 1m/3w; Central Inspectorate specialists 2m/0w; magistrate student 0m/1w, CEC staff 0m/2w									
	FY14: machine maintenance technicians TR: 12m/2w PPP: 4m/4w; Pogradec marginalized women (and men) 4m/37w							Garment machine maintenance technicians passed the advanced level. Specialists from NGOs, LGUs participating in PPP training subsequently awarded PPP support projects. Marginalized women (and men) in Pogradec trained and employed.		
	FY15 Q1-2: 12 machine maintenance technicians SH: 11m/1w; FR: 12m; women with jobs due to 6 women's empowerment projects: 135							Garment machine maintenance technicians in SH & FR passed the advanced level.		
	FY15 Q3: 17 footwear operators in DR: 7m/10w; 218 youth employed 157m/61w: CBS 30m/10w; LEAA 24m/0w; ACID 25m/0w; RDA-KO 52m/29w; Rafting 13m/6w; ASAN 13m/16w; insolvency administrators 0m/4w; election monitoring specialists 4m/5w;							Footwear operators with new skill; youth employed/self-employed; insolvency administrators better able to administer cases; election monitoring specialists more skillful in PR, election statistics, managing observers, call center management.		
	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 received a modification to its Cooperative Agreement during this period for significant support to the June 2015 local elections.

During this period, an experienced program officer working mainly on LGBT issues, Participatory Institutional Analysis (PIA) and youth announced her intention to leave Assist Impact in early July 2015. Due to the fact that the project is drawing to a close, she will not be replaced.

#### **REPORTS**

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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 report was submitted in a timely fashion and information and photos frequently provided for USAID’s Facebook/website and/or weekly briefings.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

##### **CONTRACTUAL**

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Since all eight targets for Building Human and Institutional Capacity had been met, some by a large margin, Assist Impact submitted a revised Monitoring and Evaluation Plan with new targets, reflected in this report. These revised targets have generally been met, exceeded or are well on their way to being met with the following exceptions. The target for improved performance of male leaders is lower than expected since many of the judges and law partners trained through the insolvency administration program have not had insolvency cases through which to demonstrate their improved performance. Similarly, the number of governmental institutions that have removed a barrier as not yet reached the revised target, mainly because all the municipalities which were intended to begin PPPs put the procurement on hold.

Although more than 170 women were employed through the women’s empowerment grants, our effort to reach gender balance for technical specialists trained will not be reached because of the large number of men and boys trained through the Access to Rural Credit program as well as the current youth employment grants. However, the number of technical specialists who have improved performance because of project interventions shows a stronger performance for women than men. Because, most leaders in Albania tend to be male, somewhat fewer women leaders have been trained and improved performance.

## IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

### FINANCIAL

Assist Impact foresees no cost overrun. Rather and due mainly to the strong dollar, it foresees the need for a four month no-additional-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.

#### 4) Organizational Issues

One of the observations made by the Post Award Survey Team was with regards to sustainability and the urgency of obtaining other projects. During this period, Assist Impact was contracted by INTRAC to co-conduct a 5 day Participatory Institutional Analysis of Step by Step. As foreseen by Step by Step, Assist Impact subsequently submitted a proposal to offer technical assistance to address the priority issues identified during the analysis expected to be funded by the Open Society, International.

As part of its effort to increase its visibility, Assist Impact changed the platform of its website to allow for easier administration and posting. The Assist Impact Facebook page, created during this period, was frequently used, with nearly 50 new posts and over 300 likes. Assist Impact continued its networking, meeting three potential donors, Albanian American Development Foundation (AADF), RisiAlbania and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Two of these meetings, AADF and RisiAlbania, resulted in an expression of interest to receive proposals.

During this period, with the help of an expert proposal writer/fund raiser, Assist Impact staff met with the Albanian American Development Foundation (AADF) regarding a potential internship project. A brief concept paper was submitted and in June the AADF board approved further research into the project design. Assist Impact is hopeful that it will have a solid role in the project design and implementation. Although initial indications are positive, discussions regarding a proposal to develop a women's entrepreneurial cluster in Gjinar (Elbasan) are still pending. Assist Impact was notified that its Informality Project was rejected by the National Endowment for Democracy and an LGBT project regarding the Moveable Middle was rejected by the Open Society, International. Efforts began to put together winning proposals for two EU funded calls for Albania requiring grants management, one regarding prison monitoring and the other minorities.