



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*



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The future's looking up for Lake Prespa!

Rome, Paris, London, Negotino: Supporting entrepreneurs

Looking for solutions from citizens: The first UN
social innovation challenge

DEVELOPMENT STORIES

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Dear Readers,



Welcome to the 5th edition of Development Stories, a magazine that keeps you up to date on our latest projects and highlights the ways they affect people's lives.

Each edition of Development Stories reflects the diversity of our work, and this issue is no exception, with articles on climate change, the restoration of Lake Prespa, a regional conference on corruption, awareness-raising about domestic violence, the self-employment programme, and efforts to promote the social inclusion of young people. If a single theme stands out in this edition, however, it is that of innovation.

Over the last few years, UNDP has been involved in a number of innovative solutions to development challenges — including the creation of a mobile application to warn and inform citizens of risks and disasters and an app to help farmers apply pesticides with less harm to the environment. Several exciting new initiatives are reported in the following pages, including four innovative projects to increase the social inclusion of youth, a fresh approach to raising awareness of domestic violence and breaking down stereotypes associated with this problem, and a new mobile app being developed to help young people find jobs. Many of these solutions make use of the latest social media technology to tackle social problems in new ways, and all of them reflect our commitment to trying out new approaches to development.

This issue of Development Stories also highlights the substantial progress being made to restore the health of Lake Prespa. As you will see from our interview with Dr. Mary Watzin, Dean of the College of Natural Resources at the University of North Carolina, the upcoming installation of a modern monitoring station and state-of-the-art laboratory in Prespa mean there is now room for considerable optimism about the future of the beautiful lake.

Real gains are being made, too, as our self-employment programme continues to be refined. Thousands of people have already found work through this programme, and as you will find out in this issue, we are now seeing many of the participants branching out their businesses and creating new employment opportunities for others.

The aim of promoting greater inclusiveness and cooperation at local and national level is common to all our programmes. And this is an objective clearly achieved in a recent live talk show event held to raise awareness of domestic violence. I hope that our report on this event and other stories in this issue will serve as an inspiration to our readers.

Alessandro Fracassetti



UNDP Resident Representative a.i.

ROME PARIS LONDON **NEGOTINO!**

"In many ways we're at very different stages in our lives," says Milena Ajtova, "I'm already married and bringing up two children, while Stevo is young – just starting out on life, really. I didn't expect us to have too much in common when we met..."

"But we shared the same dream! It was destiny!" says Stevo Sharec, his hand on his heart, his eyelashes fluttering madly.

And though they laugh at the joke, you can tell they don't really find Stevo's words so ridiculous. After all, despite the differences in their age and lifestyle, their meeting one another has truly helped them both achieve their ambitions.

Only months ago, Milena and Stevo were both at something of a crossroads in their lives and careers. Stevo was working as an apprentice hairdresser in Skopje – enjoying his job but wishing he could be his own boss and make a better living. Milena, meanwhile, was unemployed in Negotino, but feeling the time had come for some great challenge. "I always knew I wanted to run my own business some day," she explains, "But I'd put off the decision time and again. And now that my children were a bit older, I realized I was running out of good excuses."

Negotino

Since the
Programme began
in 2007,

**MORE THAN
5,000 PEOPLE**

have found
employment by
creating their
own companies or
formalizing their
existing business.



© UNDP/Ljubomir Stefanov

Like so many people who are thinking of starting up their own companies, Stevo and Milena felt quite apprehensive about the initial steps.

“To be honest, I didn’t know where to start,” says Stevo, “Business plans, accounts, tax invoices, regulations... I really wasn’t sure if I could cope with all that bureaucracy. It’s not exactly my strongpoint.”

“Hmm, I guess I wouldn’t disagree with you on that,” says Milena, smiling, “He’s the creative one! Really, I mean he’s got great ideas and he’s got the confidence to put them into practice. That’s so important for starting a company, having confidence. That was something I had to build up in myself before I could take the leap. In my case, it turned out I was better at all the figures and paperwork than I ever thought I’d be. That was a big boost. And so now we help each other out – I look over the numbers when he needs advice about investment and so on, and he brings all his ideas and energy.”

“She means she gets to do the boring stuff,” jokes Stevo, “while I just set the latest fashions!”

“Well, the second bit’s true anyway,” says Milena, “You should see how many women in this town have gone for a new look since he set up his salon. He’s dragging us into the future!”

“Rome... Paris ... London ... Negotino!” laughs Stevo.

It’s easy now to see how these two people’s different skills complement each other. But each first had to find the courage in themselves, individually, to make a go of running a company on their own. And the decisive factor for both came with the opportunity to obtain guidance and support through the Self-Employment Programme.

The Self-Employment Programme has helped thousands of people to start their own businesses in recent years. Designed and implemented with close support from UNDP, the Programme has become a key part of the government’s national strategy to tackle unemployment.

Each year, the Programme organizes short training courses in starting and running a business. Applicants are invited to submit their business ideas and, once accepted, they are helped by the trainers to develop their ideas into business plans.

“I applied as soon as I found out about the Programme,” Milena says, “It was all I needed to go ahead. And then once I was at the workshop I just felt my confidence growing by the hour. The trainers had a really encouraging attitude. They made me realise I could do this – that the risks aren’t so drastic after all. What I mean is the risks aren’t something you can’t do something to control - if you plan ahead carefully and realistically.”

Stevo first heard about the Programme from a friend and decided to look up the details online. “The more I found about it,” he says, “the more I liked it. I was like, ‘Wow! This thing was made for me!’ You see, there’s nothing else really like it in this country - nothing so accessible and neatly designed. The workshop was spot-on, especially the marketing stuff. I really liked coming up with promotional ideas and I’ve never stopped working on that since the course. Getting the plan into the shape they wanted was a bit tougher, I have to admit. But that’s how I met Milena – asking her for help during the breaks and talking about our ideas.”

“Stevo’s originally from a village near here,” says Milena, “So of course we got talking about Negotino and all our plans. He was really interested in my ideas for the beauty salon and gave me a lot of good suggestions for how to make it popular and where the best locations might be. After a few conversations it was clear we could both really benefit from cooperating.”





70% OF THE ENTREPRENEURS

who have received training start-up equipment through the Programme over the past five years have remained in business- well above the average global success rates for new companies.

Which is why today on the main street in the centre of Negotino you can find the two salons right next door to each other: Stevo's salon Papilon and Milena's beauty salon, Arlet.

"Our customers really like it that they don't need to go through the whole town to get a pedicure or haircut – now they can get all these services in one place. And when one of us is really busy, we can often send customers to each other's salon. That's increased both of our client bases. And Stevo has added to that again by coming up with joint marketing plans and special joint promotions. All these things have upped our profits. It's all turned out better than I could have hoped."

"Oh you'll see," says Stevo, "This is just the beginning!" And he may well be right. Both plan to apply next year for help from the Programme in taking on more employees. And right now they are looking at investing in a larger, shared workplace.

Combining resources and working together closely has clearly proved fruitful for Milena and Stevo – providing a model of cooperation for others on the Programme.

"Milena and Stevo are a perfect example of how the applicants should understand business – to do what one really loves and at the same time to have a clear picture of what one wants to achieve. Milena and Stevo cooperate, share information and have a clear vision of their business in the future – something that should serve as a positive example for the future applicants of the Programme," says Goran Cockov, the UNDP Monitoring Officer responsible for this region. "I wish them the best of luck – though I'm quite sure they'll make that luck happen themselves."

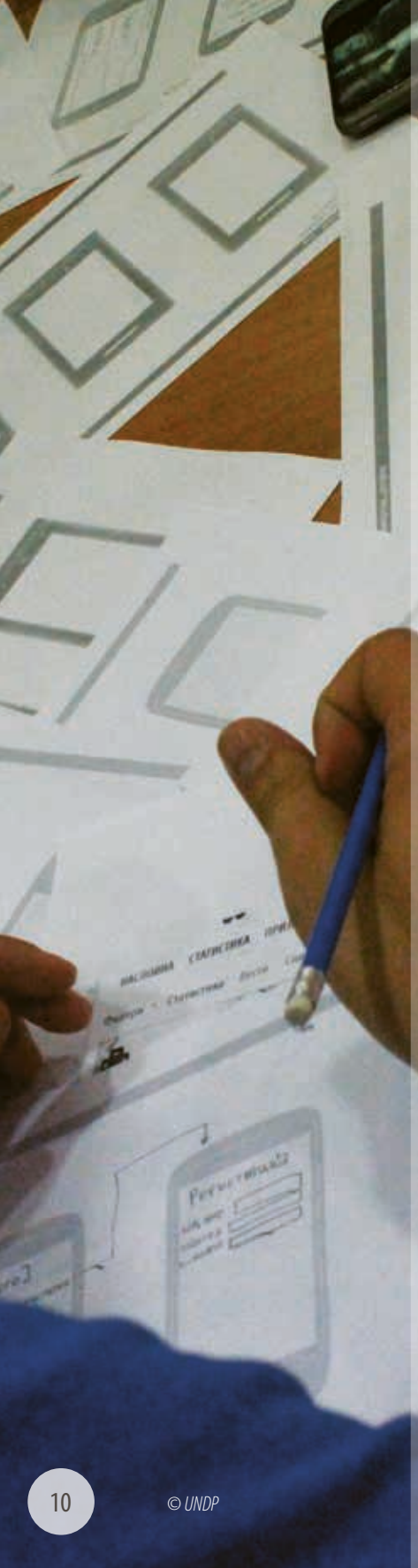


GREAT YOUNG MINDS THINK ALIKE: INNOVATING FOR DEVELOPMENT

A new app for unemployed youth

“Over 54 percent of young people in the country are unemployed but there are still no online tools to provide regular information and updates on job and career development opportunities,” says Dejan Dokuzovski, one of the youngest recruits to UNDP’s Office in Skopje.

“That’s quite surprising when we know 90 percent of young people have access to the internet – at least half of them through cheap smartphone deals.”



Dejan was already working on a youth project when he came up with the idea for an app for smartphones and a website that will map all existing data on opportunities for jobs, training, internships and volunteer programmes.

“We know this information is out there and we know our partner organizations, like the municipalities and university faculties, NGOs and private companies, are all ready to provide us with the data. It’s just a matter of bringing it all together in one place.”

Dejan teamed up with Nina Nikolik, another of UNDP’s youngest staff-members from the good governance team, to develop the idea into a prize-winning proposal for an internal competition. The competition encourages UNDP offices to prototype new ideas informed by five open innovation principles. The ideas should tap into citizen experts and experiment with approaches which are already mainstream in some sectors but relatively new for development organizations.

“The moment Dejan’s idea was put forward I knew it could genuinely help a lot of people our age,” says Nina. “I mean, what could be more useful than a one-stop site where a job opportunity or an internship is just a click away?”

To put the proposal into practice, UNDP will work with partners from the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering at the newly established Social Innovation Hub. The new app will also benefit from the experience of a joint employment programme with the Government which has helped more than 5,000 people find secure employment by creating their own small businesses or formalizing existing ones.

The development of the app has gained the attention of UNDP’s national partners in efforts to tackle youth unemployment, especially the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the National Employment Agency —all of them keenly anticipating its success.

The UNDP office in Skopje is embracing social innovation for development. In addition to setting up the social innovation hub, the office is testing new ideas including a disaster app and a phone line for citizens to provide feedback to local governments.

“The moment Dejan’s idea was put forward I knew it could genuinely help a lot of people our age,” says Nina. “I mean, what could be more useful than a one-stop site where a job opportunity or an internship is just a click away?”



Early warning for disasters only a swipe away

UNDP-supported mobile application helped reduce the risk of suffering and damage during recent flooding.

“In February, three days of heavy rain flooded hundreds of homes around here. We were cut off for two days and without drinking water, but at least we were able to keep informed about what was happening through our smart phones and this new app,” says Vase Krstev of the village of Murtino in Strumica municipality.

In early 2013, Murtino was one of several villages in the southeast of the country to be hit by floods, with more than 80 percent of the land under water and damage to over 400 homes.

The country is exposed to various types of natural hazards, and floods are increasing in frequency, intensity and losses. With the recently released app, developed by UNDP and supported by the Crisis Management Centre, for the first time emergency services were able to use smart phones and tablets to keep people informed with up-to-date and on-demand information that is easy to navigate during a disaster.

Have you downloaded our Disaster App yet?

The mobile app was tested for the first time during floods in February 2013 which damaged

OVER 400 HOMES

The programme was developed by local university students with support from UNDP's Innovation Fund in the amount of

US \$10,000

The fact that

BILLIONS OF PEOPLE

use mobile phones increases the potential for applications that can provide vital information and help during disasters



Scan here for Android



Scan here for iOS

Designed to give users updates and provide rapid early warnings when needed, the app can reduce the potential impact of a disaster - especially when information is needed in a hurry. Because the app gives users access to such a large amount of data, information can be customized and specific, giving it an advantage over traditional emergency broadcasting services such as radio. For example, users can access a map to find out the location and status of the disaster and whether their area is likely to flood or remain safe.

"We're all very thankful the flooding wasn't much worse," says Alessandro Fracassetti, UNDP Resident Representative a.i., "The app was very useful in keeping people informed of developments as they happened. Updates and flood warnings were sent out, information was provided on places to avoid, and emergency contact information was shared, as well as protection procedures. These details can make all the difference in preventing unnecessary loss of life."

Developed jointly with students and staff at the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering of Skopje University, and drawing on data from the National Crisis Management Centre, the app is designed to be a user-friendly way to quickly and efficiently share disaster awareness and information on prevention and preparedness. UNDP helped pay for the development of the app through its regional Innovation Fund and provided support for its design and release.

"It's a great app," says Mr. Ljupco Jankov, Secretary of the Red Cross in Strumica. "During the February floods, with a lot of infrastructure damaged or inaccessible, the app helped updates and alerts to be sent out that kept people out of harm's way and advised them on how to protect themselves."

"It's also really easy to use," adds Vasko Popovski, UNDP's Project Manager for Disaster and Climate Risks and designer of the app. "You can find details on any hazardous event in the country, whether it's a landslide, a flood, a storm, or anything else that could be considered dangerous. Before now, people mostly got information about dangers and hazardous events through newspapers and the television, but these aren't the most relevant and immediate channels anymore."

Having successfully tested the app during the floods, the Crisis Management Center and many of those who faced the rising waters are now confident in its potential to provide critical information during any large-scale disaster.

"This marks the critical next step in early warning," notes Jordan Ryan, Director of UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery in New York. "We are now witnessing constant improvements in the ability to track tsunamis and weather patterns, but getting the word out in a timely manner remains the most difficult challenge of early warning. We need to reach as many people across a wide territory as quickly as possible. Apps like this make it much easier to get the job done. UNDP is excited to play a part in fostering innovation in the use of mobile technology with results that reduce disaster risk."

UNDP has been supporting the use of innovative technologies to reduce disaster risk, such as mobile phones and apps, in a number of countries throughout the world.





PHOTO STORY:

ON THE CREST OF A WAVE

The future's looking up for Lake Prespa

"Lake Prespa has been a lifelong project for me," says Zoran Spirkovski, senior scientist at Ohrid's Hydro-Biological Institute, "Even as a child it was my ambition to help restore the health and beauty of this ancient lake—to do something to ensure a future for all the forms of life that depend on the water here. This has driven my work at the Institute all these years. And now, with the launch of this new monitoring boat and the new laboratory soon to come, I can truly say we are making a difference—that my childhood dream is coming true!"

Zoran was speaking aboard the first ever monitoring boat on Lake Prespa as he captained the vessel on its first trip to take samples of the water for inspection at the Hydro-Biological Institute in Ohrid. Equipped with state-of-the-art monitoring equipment, the boat has been purchased with the help of the Swiss Development Cooperation as part of UNDP's major ongoing project for the restoration of Lake Prespa.



Already this project has had a major impact in combating water pollution—helping farmers in the local area switch to more sustainable practices, establishing a comprehensive system of wastewater management, combating erosion through reforestation, and reducing the risk of erosion by restoring the most degraded section of the Golema Reka river. These measures have done much to revive the ecosystem of this beautiful byr environmentally vulnerable region—home to thousands of species, including many endangered animals dependent on the health of Lake Prespa.



The boat will play a key role in the restoration project and in the future maintenance and monitoring of the lake's environmental status. Samples of the water will be taken on a regular basis from eight sampling stations in the lake—'pressure points' which the project has identified as most susceptible to pollution. The samples will initially be taken for inspection to the Hydro-Biological Institute in Ohrid, one of the oldest research institutes of its kind in Europe.



From 2014, however, with the opening of Prespa's first ever comprehensive lake monitoring and management station—another major result of the restoration project—the samples will be taken to a brand new laboratory. "The equipment at the new lab will make our monitoring all the more accurate," explains Zoran, "And it is part of an even greater step forward—the new Monitoring and Management Station in Stenje. With this station opening next year, we'll be able to keep a very close eye on conditions in the lake and to act quickly to prevent further degradation."

The samples already taken from the lake confirm that the greatest single threat to the health of the lake is that of eutrophication. Eutrophication is a process whereby concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorus and organic matter—typically resulting from by-products of farming—dangerously accelerate the growth of algae and higher forms of plants, leading to a disturbance in the balance of the ecosystem.







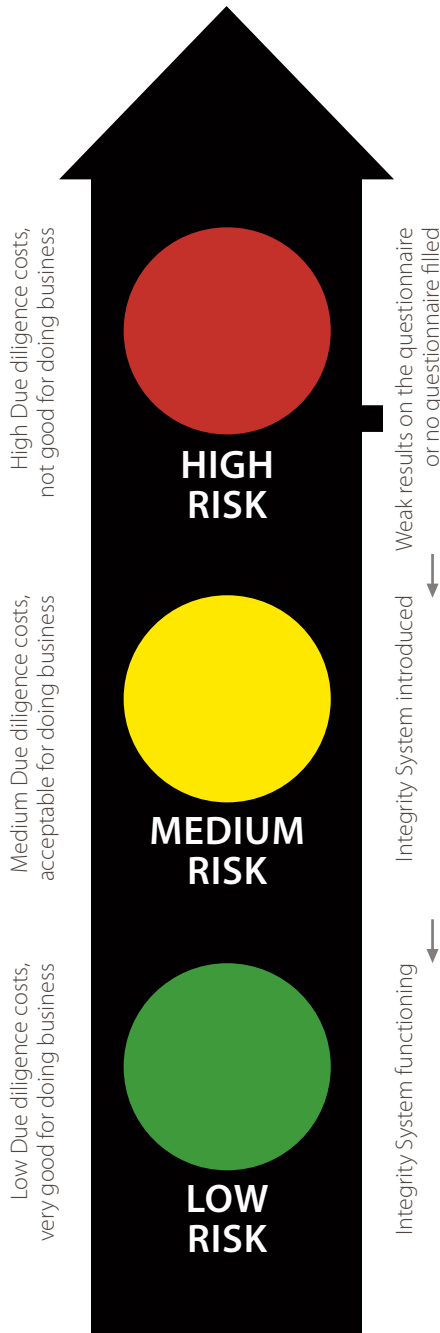
“Regularly sampling the waters will help us identify and address the main causes of eutrophication,” explains Nikola Zdraveski, one of several specialist UNDP staff from the local Prespa project who are crewing the boat on its first trip. “It’s vital to keep track of changes in the status of the water and this boat is a major contribution to making this monitoring possible.”

The boat does not only take samples, however; its onboard equipment includes a fish finder and a lake-bottom survey sonar. “The fish finder is important because the population of fish in the lake is an important indicator of the health of the water,” explains Nikola, “And the sonar helps us keep an eye on the overall condition of the lake”.

Nikola and the rest of the crew comprise the boat’s most valuable assets of all – specialized human resources committed to ensuring a sustainable future for Lake Prespa. Like Zoran, Nikola has already dedicated many years of work to this task after specializing in limnology – the study of the biological, chemical and physical features of freshwater bodies. “We are so lucky to have Nikola and the others,” says Zoran, “They bring a host of skills to this project and we are all learning from each other with the same goal in mind. The feeling of optimism among us today is greater than ever.”

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Are you resistant to corruption?



UNDP helped introduce the first ever methodology for measuring the level of responsibility, transparency and accountability in local government.

The methodology was piloted in 2009 in the municipalities of Bitola, Gevgelija, Tetovo and Veles – by measuring resistance to corruption in three important areas: urban planning, financial management and procurement. These four municipalities have since then become the first ever ISO certified in quality management in the country and are now providing better and more transparent services to their citizens.

This methodology is currently being upgraded to ensure integration of the latest anti-corruption trends and particularly the principle of ‘openness’ – to ensure greater citizen engagement in decision-making processes and the plan is for next year, to start replicating it on a nation-wide level, in partnership with the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption. The idea is to translate this methodology into a web platform, where local governments, by answering a few simple questions, will immediately see how they rank in terms of being resistant to corruption and their progress in introducing integrity models.

The latest trends, experiences and ideas in the fight against corruption were just recently presented at a regional anti-corruption conference organized by UNDP in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption in Skopje. This conference gathered government representatives, mayors, civil society, international organisations, and experts from all over Eastern Europe, all of whom stated that tackling corruption is a key priority on the reform agenda of countries throughout the Eastern European region.



© UNDP/Dragan Mitreski

**OUT IN THE OPEN:
TALK SHOW CHALLENGES
STEREOTYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

In the latest push to break down stereotypical attitudes towards the problem of domestic violence, an open-air Oprah-style talk show was staged this September by the Municipality of Bogovinje and UNDP. This innovative approach to raising awareness was organized as part of a joint UNDP/ UN Women project financed by the Dutch Government to tackle the problem of domestic violence.



The first ever national baseline survey carried out in 2012 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the UN agencies in the country shows that domestic violence remains very common in this country. Eighty per cent of female victims are unemployed or economically inactive, and this major social problem is recorded as being especially prevalent in traditional rural areas.



A major aim in staging the event was to help increase inter-communication and cooperation amongst the many stakeholders working to reduce domestic violence—especially between those at local level and national level. The event gathered hundreds of local women and men together with MPs and representatives from the Government, as well as other partners—such as local and national representatives from the police, the health sector and the judiciary—under the open sky to discuss local services for victims of domestic violence.



The event included a modern dance performance—offering the audience a dramatic artistic perspective on the disturbing social problem of domestic violence.



All speakers urged people not to hide, but to report incidents of domestic violence. Getting people to report this crime and letting them know that local services are at hand to help them is vital if we are to tackle the issue effectively and reach out to those in need—wherever they may be.

We are hopeful that events like this, however small in scale, can make an impact—particularly among younger generations.

DR. MARY WATZIN:

We're on the right track to successfully restore Lake Prespa!

Interview with Dr. Mary Watzin: Dean of the College of Natural Resources at the University of North Carolina

Dr. Mary Watzin is currently serving as International Chief Technical Advisor for the Restoration of Lake Prespa project.

WHAT ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES THAT THE PRESPA LAKES BASIN IS FACING?

Like many other lakes around the world, the Prespa Lakes are suffering from poor water quality. The water flowing to the lake brings with it a variety of pollutants, including organic waste from apple farms and processors, fertilizers, soil particles, and sewage from the villages in the watershed. These pollutants stimulate the growth of algae and other aquatic plants that can choke the lake and cause a cascade of other problems for fish, wildlife, and human users of the lake. Overuse of pesticides, a fragmented irrigation system, unsustainable fishing, and the alteration of once vast wetlands in the basin are also threats to the health of the Prespa Lakes.

Taken together, the key challenge in the Prespa Basin is to provide for healthy and sustainable human communities and economies while also protecting the unique biodiversity of this globally significant ecosystem.



ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK TO SUCCESSFULLY RESTORE THE HEALTH OF THE WATER?

Yes – absolutely. The Lake Prespa project partners have taken a comprehensive approach to restoration that will target some of the most important sources of pollution. In lakes damaged by the accumulation of pollutants from many sources, many small actions must be combined to create the positive change that is required.

For example, the project team is working directly with farmers to introduce improved apple farming practices that will still produce healthy crop yields but will reduce the amount of fertilizers, organic waste and pesticides flowing into the lake. They have implemented an innovative composting pilot project that will help keep apple and other agricultural waste out of the lake by turning it into a value-added commercial product.

In another unique and very promising approach, the project team is examining ways to restore wetlands in the watershed, to filter and clean river water and rainfall runoff before it gets to the lake. And the project is helping to support sewage collection and treatment systems in some of the villages in the watershed.

The project has also wisely invested in a lake and watershed monitoring program to document their progress in restoring the lake. A new decision support tool will be developed, using the monitoring data to help the project team – and the citizens of the Prespa Lakes basin – find the most environmentally and financially effective interventions to implement on an ongoing basis. The faster the optimal combinations of interventions can be identified, the shorter the time until the lake is restored.

WHAT WOULD BE THE POTENTIAL FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF A SUCCESSFUL RESTORATION?

A successful restoration of the Prespa Lakes Basin is essential for continued economic development in the region. In the long term, it will keep agriculture strong and it will also allow this beautiful and biologically diverse region to develop new businesses and livelihoods in areas such as ecotourism, agritourism, and other ventures.

It is also far more cost-effective to provide safe water for domestic and agricultural uses from clean sources than to treat contaminated water to remove an increasing concentration of pollutants.

If you look around the world at the communities that surround degraded lakes and those that surround healthy and restored lakes, you see very different situations. Healthy lakes support healthy and vibrant communities, with stable population bases and good quality of life. Degraded lakes can lead to declining communities that are not economically strong, do not attract new investments, and struggle to achieve a good quality of life.

The key challenge in the Prespa Basin is to provide for healthy and sustainable human communities and economies while also protecting the unique biodiversity of this globally significant ecosystem.

- says Dr. Mary Watzin



© UNDP/Ljubomir Stefanov

COULD YOU SHARE ANY LAKE RESTORATION SUCCESS STORIES FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD?

The most successful lake restoration projects result when a committed community takes action for the long term. When I arrived in Burlington Vermont in 1990, the city had turned its back on Lake Champlain. The lakeshore was a run-down industrial area, an ignored place in a town that many considered not very special. However at that time, the town, state and national governments had also just combined forces to invest in a multimillion dollar sewage treatment system and the remediation of an abandoned industrial wetland. As the water quality improved in the following decade, people's opinions about their lake also changed. They now wanted access to the lake.

Funds were raised to tear down the remaining industrial remnants along the shore. A park and a fishing pier were built along the lake. In the next two decades, restaurants, an aquarium and museum, and other facilities were constructed on the waterfront. These facilities attracted festivals and concerts, and

increasing numbers of local citizens and tourists. Two new computer software design companies decided to locate their businesses in the city, bringing hundreds of new jobs. They made this location choice for their businesses in part because of the high quality of life in this city by the lake. I tell this story because it is a personal one that I have lived. Burlington is a city transformed - one that is thriving and growing and no longer ignored.

There are other stories to be told from Europe, Asia, and around the world. The citizens around Lake Geneva (Lac Léman) in Switzerland and France have significantly improved their lake through a combination of changes in agricultural practices and improved urban stormwater control. The communities around this lake are thriving and it is a growing nature and agri-tourism destination. In each case, the combinations of activities that led to a restored lake were different because each watershed's land uses are unique. The recovery also took time – often more than a decade. But the benefits are many, including improved fish and aquatic wildlife populations, higher property values, lower water supply costs for domestic uses, and new opportunities for socio-economic development.

What do product-branding, pharmaceutical herb collection, catering and craft production have in common?

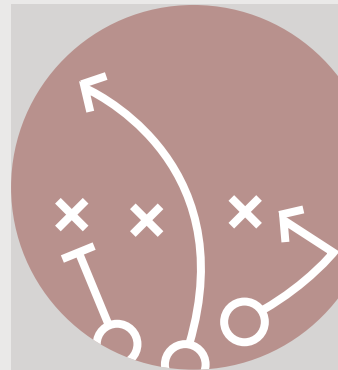


The answer will become clear over the next six months as four highly creative initiatives are launched to promote the greater social inclusion of young people.

Two of these innovative projects are focused on generating socio-economic opportunities for young people living in rural areas in the Municipality of Debar and in the micro-region of Sveti Nikole and Stip. Another is aimed at increasing the social inclusion of young people living with disabilities in Kumanovo, while a fourth project, designed to promote youth entrepreneurship and to create a closer social partnership between young people and civil society, will be implemented in a secondary vocational school in Skopje.

Each of the four initiatives started out as proposals from civil society organizations invited to apply for funding as part of a new UNDP programme launched in July to promote youth entrepreneurship and support social partnerships between the private sector and CSOs working with youth, local self-governments and the private sector.

“What we were looking for with this call for proposals in July,” explains UNDP’s Dejan Dokuzovski “were genuinely innovative ideas from civil society organizations for testing different social entrepreneurship models in the local context. The winning applications actually exceeded our expectations in their creativeness and I’m very much looking forward to seeing them come to life.”



“THIS PROJECT WILL GENERATE NUMEROUS JOB AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE – WHICH OF COURSE IS THE CHIEF OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT. IN THIS WAY, TOO, WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO REVERSE THE TREND OF ECONOMIC MIGRATION FROM THE REGION!” EXPLAINS BLAGICA L’SKOVA OF MARVEL-ADEEL



“THE IDEA BEHIND OUR PROJECT IS TO FIND WAYS OF MAKING USE OF LOCAL NATURAL RESOURCES TO CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE – TO PROVIDE THEM WITH SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE THAT WILL HELP EMPOWER THEM FOR THE FUTURE.” EXPLAINS GOCE LJUBINOVSKI OF THE ASSOCIATION CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

● **Branding small rural businesses – Stip & Sveti Nikole**

Youth unemployment is a major social problem in the micro-region of Stip and Sveti Nikole, especially in rural areas where job opportunities have long been scarce and large numbers of young people leave in search of work elsewhere. This project aims to tackle the unemployment problem by increasing the number of successful businesses and entrepreneurial ventures in the area, creating new training and work opportunities for rural youth.

Designed by the Stip Association for Development, Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Learning, Marvel-Adeel, the project will identify small and traditional rural businesses that have the potential to be turned into profitable companies through improved branding and other forms of support.

“We’re confident there’s a good deal of undeveloped business potential in this region,” explains Blagica L’skova of Marvel-Adeel. “This project will tap into that potential by focussing on better product promotion. This will generate numerous job and training opportunities for our young people – which of course is the chief objective of the project. In this way, too, we hope to be able to reverse the trend of economic migration from the region.”

● **Collecting pharmaceutical herbs – the Municipality of Debar**

“All these rural areas around Debar aren’t only areas of beautiful countryside – they’re also rich in natural plants. Sadly, though, the number of job openings for young people here has been very low. A lot of local youth just don’t have the kinds of qualifications and skills wanted on the labour market. And the result is social exclusion,” explains Goce Ljubinovski of the Association Centre for Sustainable Community Development, “So the idea behind our project is to find ways of making use of local natural resources to create more opportunities for young people – to provide them with skills and experience that will help empower them for the future.”

In a highly interesting and original initiative, the Association Centre will be partnering with the Municipality of Debar and private pharmaceutical companies to provide training for young people of the region in the collection of beneficial herbs that can eventually be sold for use in the pharmaceutical industry.

The training will be provided in part by the Department for Economic Development and Environmental Protection and successful participants will become certified herb collectors.

"This project has multiple benefits," says Goce, "Because the herbs that are collected will be permanently available for use both by the pharmaceutical industries and local people who wish to cultivate them in the fields. By collecting and storing these herbs, we will also be providing an environmental safeguard."

The aims of the project are neatly in line with both the employment and environmental strategies of the Municipality of Debar, which is committed to achieving greater youth inclusion and to developing and preserving biodiversity. As part of its contribution to the project, the Municipality will be providing special free storage facilities for the collected herbs over the following five years.

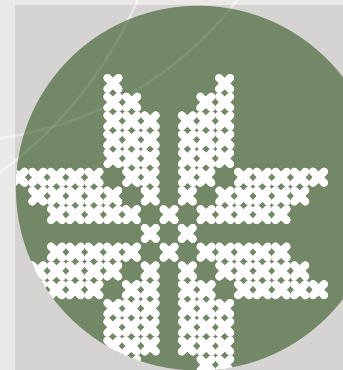
● Traditional crafts – Kumanovo

Study after study has proven that the exclusion of young people with disabilities from socio-economic activities is still very much prevalent in this country. Young people with disabilities are typically dependent on their families and many never have the chance to acquire the skills and opportunities they need to enter the job market. This economic exclusion is exacerbated, moreover, by numerous forms of discrimination.

Now the civil society organization Poraka Nasa, based in the Municipality of Kumanovo, is about to embark upon a project aimed at providing opportunities for young people with disabilities to gain experience and training in marketable skills.

"We want to empower and include young people with disabilities," explains Frosina Simonovska of Poraka Nasa. "We want to help build their confidence and independence. And we are going to do this by creating a realistic working environment where they can get training and support to find jobs. We call this strategy 'inclusion through work' and our project will create a social enterprise - 'The Centre' – that will provide training and support. Specifically, the training will be focussed on developing skills to produce traditional crafts and design."

Training will be provided by creative young artisans, designers and entrepreneurs, who will work together with young people with disabilities on the production and sale of various creative products. In this way, the project will ultimately produce benefits for a range of stakeholders – including young people with disabilities as well as young artisans, designers and entrepreneurs.



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“THIS IS AN AMBITIOUS AND EXCITING IDEA. IT NOT ONLY MODELS THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IN AN ATTRACTIVE WAY THAT SHOULD CAPTURE THE PUBLIC’S ATTENTION - IT ALSO MAKES USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE SOCIAL SERVICES,” SAYS FROSINA SIMONOVSKA FROM THE CSO FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION A.R.N.O.

● Youth Professional Kitchen – Skopje

One of the key aims of UNDP’s programme for supporting youth entrepreneurship is to promote the concept of ‘social enterprise’.

One of the four successful proposals, specifically focussed on raising awareness of the social enterprise concept, is about to be implemented in the Lazar Tanev secondary vocational school in Skopje.

“This is an ambitious and exciting idea,” says Ivan Jovanov from the CSO Youth Can., “It not only models the concept of social enterprise in an attractive way that should capture the public’s attention - it also makes use of new technologies to improve social services.”

Designed by their partner CSO A.R.N.O., the project will develop an online ordering application and mobile platform to greatly enhance the school’s catering services to a variety of clients, including public institutions, other CSOs, private companies and individuals.

Twenty students from the Lazar Tanev school will receive training in basic business skills, an introduction to the social enterprise model, and exposure to the labour market through the creation of a professional database presenting their portfolios for professional placement.

The staff of the school will also be involved in all stages of the project and representatives from the school will be additionally provided with IT training in the supervision of online ordering forms, mobile app management and related project management and SE activities.

Ivan is keen to stress the project’s benefits for the social inclusion of young people. “What we’re doing here will have many beneficiaries,” he says, “because we won’t only be boosting and upgrading the delivery of the social service through the integration of new technologies, we will also be engaging the students in applying these technologies and in developing more effective marketing. In addition, the students who take part will have their visibility greatly enhanced by the creation of a database showcasing their individual skills. By doing this we are further establishing long-term social partnerships between the school, the civil society sector and the private sector in the provision of social entrepreneurship activities and the job placement of graduates.”

LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS FROM CITIZENS: THE FIRST UN SOCIAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE

To mark the 20th anniversary of membership in the United Nations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations launched a competition to find innovative solutions to three key developmental challenges: gender equality, rural healthcare, and environmental protection.

The competition was organized in partnership with the recently established Social Innovation Hub hosted by the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering (FINKI).

Called *Create change – make a positive impact*, the competition is open to everyone in the country and is intended to encourage individuals and civil society organizations to use their skills to develop new ways of overcoming social challenges through technology.

The focus of the competition is on finding solutions that can improve the life of citizens in the country and reach out to vulnerable communities.

The basic guidelines and rationale for each challenge are as follows:

1. Gender equality:

Create an innovative solution that places young people at the forefront of efforts to challenge negative gender stereotypes in private and public life.

Despite the country's extensive legislation to advance gender equality, national statistical data reveals the continuation of gender inequalities in a number of areas.

Stereotypes depicting women as wives and mothers and men as breadwinners still prevail, reinforcing and perpetuating gender inequalities. Such stereotypes have a strong influence on the choices which men and women make with regard to their education and professions.

In some communities, for example, girls are less likely to attend secondary education than boys. And these choices, based on traditional gender roles, serve to further exacerbate inequalities in socio-economic and political power. Professions thus continue to be divided between supposedly 'feminine' and 'masculine' careers, with as many as 64 percent of women not even entering the labour market.

Women remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making positions: only 30 percent of elected office-holders are women and hold only four to eight percent of executive positions.

2. Improving health services in rural communities:

Create an innovative way of bringing health services closer to rural communities.

Availability, affordability and accessibility are key factors in determining people's use of health services.

However, the distribution of health services and health professionals throughout the country is very uneven, with rural areas being the most deprived. Although 42.2 percent of the country's population live in rural areas, and in spite of efforts to provide health services in these areas, children, elderly people and women of reproductive age still face challenges accessing healthcare services.

In some areas, specialist health services are located over an hour's walking distance from the nearest village. The challenge is not only to bring services closer to rural populations but to find new ways of raising public awareness of the benefits and availability of those services.

3. Environmental protection:

Create an innovative way of improving household awareness of the importance of recycling electronic equipment.

Recycling electronic waste is important for technological, economic and environmental reasons. Old electronic equipment can be recycled into raw materials for the production of new devices and can save a great deal of energy.

Recycling a cellphone, for example, can save enough energy to power a laptop computer for 44 hours. Electronic waste contains between 600 and 1,000 toxic components, and when not disposed of properly, old equipment can seriously harm the environment.

The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning has recently developed a Strategy for the disposal of electronic equipment and some pioneering initiatives have already been introduced in this area, such as the collection of batteries and cell phones. But much more can still be done to raise awareness and facilitate recycling.

? WHAT HAPPENS TO THE IDEAS

At the end of the competition, the selection panel will choose three winning solutions—one for each challenge—and the panel's favourite proposal will receive a cash prize of \$500. The three winners will each be awarded the chance to develop their proposal into a prototype, and development costs of up to \$1,500 will be covered. The winners will be announced on UN Day, the 24th of October 2013.

Gender
Create an innovative
the foref

7

Create change

- make a positive impact

SOCIAL INNOVATION COMPETITION TO MARK
THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUNTRY'S
MEMBERSHIP TO THE UN

We seek innovative solutions to 3 important
development challenges:

1. Equality

Create an innovative solution that places young people at
the forefront of challenging gender stereotypes
in private and public life

2

3

2. Improving health services in rural communities

Create an innovative way of bringing health
services closer to rural communities

3. Environmental protection

Create an innovative way to improve household
awareness about the importance of recycling
electronic equipment

After the Rain

“IT ISN'T THE STRONGEST SPECIES THAT SURVIVES, NOR EVEN THE MOST INTELLIGENT, BUT THE SPECIES MOST ADAPTABLE TO CHANGE.”

Charles Darwin

So begins *After the Rain*, the first documentary film made by a Macedonian director about climate change, which will be screened in Skopje this November as part of the European Film Festival Cinedays. The film was produced with the technical and financial support of UNDP, the Global Environment Facility, and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning.

The documentary portrays four women, aged between forty and eighty, who work as farmers in country. The women are from different ethnic backgrounds — Macedonian, Turkish and Albanian — and each has a very different attitude towards their work on the land.

At seventy-two years old, Gjurgja Rizova sees the fields as her ‘medicine’ and she farms the land with love. “We can barely feed ourselves these days,” she says. Many of her crops are dying, and the hybrid seeds she now has to buy are causing unprecedented problems with weeds. “We’ve been through everything,” she says, but never has she known it rain so much nor seen so many crops fail. The only solution, she feels, is to switch to farming only corn and keeping bees.

For Sacie Aliova, meanwhile, farming seems like a prison sentence and she dreams of escape and going to school. Sacie Aliova has been working the tobacco fields since she was only ten years old. “We didn’t have schools back then,” she says, “If I had the chance now I’d prefer not to work in the fields – I’d go to school instead.” But while more frequent hailstorms have ruined her tobacco crops and left her family destitute, she still experiments with different crops in a desperate attempt to adapt to the changing conditions.

Biology teacher, Biljana Ilieva, refuses to be defeated by climate change. “I’m interested in all plants,” she tells us, “It’s beautiful to watch them grow from seedlings to the moment they bear fruit.” She is highly aware of climate change and strives to use alternative sources of energy and water to help the environment. And in the face of hailstorms, she has invested in effective ways of protecting her crops. But her ‘hobby’, as she calls it, is trying out different breeds of tomato. “We hope we’re on our way to success with this hobby of ours” she says.



Despite their many differences in attitude, the four women all share the same sky and all of them are experiencing the same fears and challenges that come with climate change. Agriculture is the sector most vulnerable to climate change. The future will bring warmer summers and ever less rain. Sudden storms and hail will be more frequent. Traditional ideas about the kinds of weather typical of each season will need to be revised.

Rain is a key motif throughout the film and creates a particular dramatic tension as we witness for ourselves the problems these farmers face on a daily basis—destroyed roots, sick leaves and plants, and dried-up fruits.

The overriding message of this innovative documentary, however, comes through from the determination of these women to overcome the challenges they face. And that message, from the mouths of those who know the issues of climate change from the very root, is that those who survive climate change are those who are capable of adaptation. The time to adapt is now!

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Biljana Garvanlieva is a freelance director of documentary films who lives and works in Skopje and Berlin. Born in Skopje in 1973, she studied dramaturgy in her hometown before receiving a grant in 1999 from the German Academic Exchange Service to study theatre and film at the Free University of Berlin (Freien Universität Berlin). In 2006 she directed her first documentary for the TV network 3sat, entitled *Macedonian Dream. A Girl and her Accordion*, which has won several awards, including the Golden Lola German Short Film Award. In 2009 she followed up her first success with *Tobacco Girl*, which has received numerous awards for its direction, including nominations for the Golden Lola and the Juliane Bartel German Media Award. In 2010, Garvanlieva was awarded the Heart of Sarajevo prize for Best Documentary at the 16th Sarajevo Film Festival for her documentary film *The Seamstresses*.

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