



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

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Tackling corruption

Raising a greener generation

Meet the Fish of Prespa Lake!

Unemployed does not mean untalented

A new reality TV show - The Key is Under the Mat

# DEVELOPMENT STORIES



UNDP's activities in the country are within the framework of the UN Development Assistance Framework 2010-2015, agreed between the Government and the UN Agencies in 2009.

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Dear Readers,

It is a great pleasure to introduce a new and exciting magazine to highlight the work of UNDP and our partners in promoting sustainable development.

Development is about people and Development Stories brings people and their stories to the forefront—the people we work for and the people we work with. Through interviews and feature stories, news and reviews of all our latest projects, and interesting facts from UNDP-backed research, this magazine brings our development work to life.

All the UN agencies and our partners are committed to helping the country increase its capacity to achieve inclusive, environmentally responsible and sustainable development.

With the launch of this magazine we hope to showcase the work of UNDP and the positive and tangible results we have achieved throughout the country.

In this first issue alone, readers will find news about the first ever energy-efficient kindergarten, a new TV series celebrating cultural diversity, personal stories of people who have escaped unemployment by becoming self-employed, as well as features on all our major projects to increase energy efficiency, to protect biodiversity, promote good governance and—of course!—much much more.

I very much hope you will enjoy catching up on all the latest news and views in development and we welcome your feedback.

Deirdre Boyd

UNDP Resident Representative

# UNEMPLOYED DOES NOT MEAN UNTALENTED

For over 30% of the population in the country, a steady job providing financial independence is either a fading memory or an opportunity they have never had the chance to enjoy. Almost a third of those currently out of work have not had a job for eight years and over a quarter are aged between 15 and 29.

Reducing unemployment is an absolute priority for the Government and for UNDP. Many of our most important aims for advancing sustainable development and increasing social inclusion depend upon people having greater opportunities to develop their skills and gain sustainable employment.

One of UNDP's main area of work in the country to date has been to support the relevant state institutions develop a national employment programme with active labour market measures to expand training and employment services for the unemployed. Since 2007, more than US \$22 million dollars have been invested in measures aimed at job creation, with the government providing 90% of these funds.



I was in a rut when I heard about the project,' says Ivan, 'So the idea of becoming my own boss - my own employer - was really attractive.

Photo: Ljubomir Stefanov/UNDP



Photo: Ljubomir Stefanov/UNDP



Photo: Ljubomir Stefanov/UNDP

## CREATING JOBS WITH PROSPECTS

Many people who are currently unemployed, like 30-year old Ivan Usaovski from Skopje, have only ever had part-time or seasonal jobs. Such irregular employment cannot provide financial independence. 'You can't build a career with these kinds of jobs,' says Ivan, 'You can't plan a future.'

Creating sustainable jobs in a largely stagnant labour market is an immense challenge, especially in the current economic climate when investment is difficult to attract. Overcoming this challenge requires national employment and training strategies with active measures designed to meet the specific needs and capacities of the country's labour market.

In developing such strategies it is crucial to include measures that tap into the entrepreneurial potential of the unemployed. This is why UNDP's technical assistance to the Government has been especially focussed in recent years on developing measures to encourage self-employment.

The aim of the self-employment programme is to encourage and support those with entrepreneurial skills and business ideas, so they open their own businesses or improve their skills to increase their competitiveness in the labour market.



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## TAPPING INTO ENTREPRENEURIAL TALENT

‘Unemployed does not mean untalented,’ says Ivan—and his own story proves the truth of his words.

Ivan spent his childhood in foster care after being orphaned, and on leaving school at the age of 19 he took whatever jobs he could find both in the country and abroad—mostly part-time and low-paid, and always short-term.

‘It’s very discouraging going from one short-term job to another,’ Ivan recalls. But he didn’t give up hope. His singing skills and self-belief even took him all the way to the finals of the national talent competition Macedonian Idol. What Ivan needed most, however, a job with prospects that made use of his entrepreneurial skills, remained beyond his grasp.

The self-employment programme is designed to reach out to people like Ivan and help them develop their skills to create their own businesses. This nationwide training scheme is open to anyone who is currently unemployed and has a viable idea to set up their own company.

‘I was in a rut when I heard about the project,’ says Ivan, ‘So the idea of becoming my own boss—my own employer—was really attractive.’

## TURNING IDEAS INTO PLANS

Selected applicants for the self-employment programme attend a two-day workshop of intensive training organized by the Government and UNDP to help them develop their business plans.

Ivan successfully applied for the programme in 2009 and attended his first workshop later the same year. ‘The trainers helped us turn our ideas into realistic business plans and taught us the basic principles of management and planning,’ says Ivan.

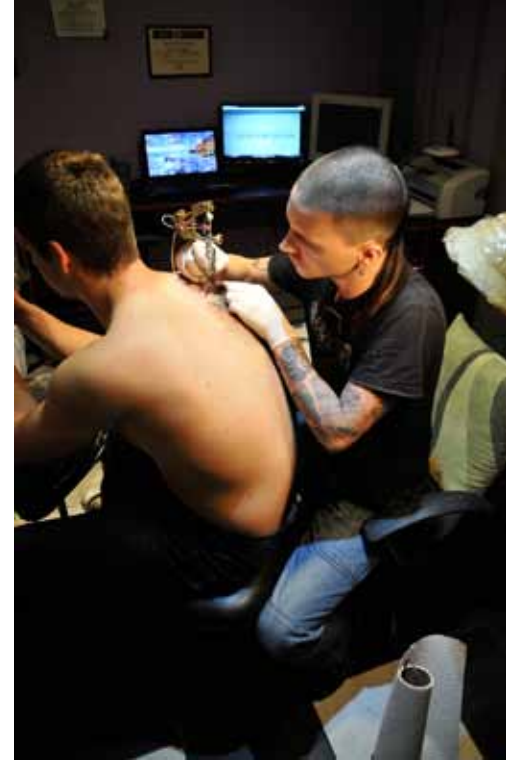


Photo: Ljubomir Stefanov/UNDP

**‘Working with the Employment Service Agency and local Employment Centres, the programme identifies people with business talent and helps them realize their dreams by showing them how to turn their ideas into reality’ - explains Vesna Dzuteska Bisheva of UNDP**

“Working with the Employment Service Agency and local Employment Centres, the programme identifies people with business talent and helps them realize their dreams by showing them how to turn their ideas into reality,” explains Vesna Dzuteska Bisheva, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative.

After the initial workshop, those whose business plans are selected and approved are assigned expert consultants to advise them on how to put their plans into practice. Guidance and support is also provided on company registration. Each successful candidate, moreover, can submit proposals for help with covering the expenses involved in starting up their business: up to 3,000 euros is available for this purpose, depending upon approval of the candidate’s procurement requests.

‘Knowing I would get help registering my company made the bureaucratic process much less intimidating,’ says Ivan, ‘And, of course, I could never have started out at all if the money hadn’t been available to cover the initial costs.’

The workshop helped Ivan and the other participants tailor their business plans to the needs of the local market. Ivan’s plan to open a take-away pizzeria in Skopje was one of those evaluated as feasible by the experts who run the programme and a suitable consultant was selected to help Ivan set up his company.

## **SETTING UP BUSINESS**

‘Making a success of a take-away pizzeria obviously requires some business skills,’ explains

Ivan, ‘But the costs of setting it up are manageable and I was convinced there was a market for the products I wanted to sell. Through the programme I was able to buy all the equipment necessary to get started—the oven, the fridge, the work surfaces. . .’

Ivan opened his business in 2009 and the popularity of his pizzas has shown his entrepreneurial instincts were correct. His original recipe for chocolate pizzas—the first of their kind in the country—has proved a big hit with his customers!

Ivan is now one of more than 4,000 unemployed people in the country who have started up their own business or found secure jobs since the programme was introduced in 2007. As part of the same programme, special training is additionally provided for those from the most vulnerable groups of society—such as people from the Roma community and victims of domestic violence.

## **GENERATING ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

An important part of the rationale behind promoting self-employment is that encouraging small businesses not only generates sustainable employment for the people who run these firms but also has the potential to create additional jobs if their companies succeed.

The success of Ivan’s business, for example, has already made it possible for him to take on an extra employee—an old friend who also spent his childhood in foster care. ‘The programme helped



me help myself. Even better, it's made it possible for me to help other people too.'

## A HIGH RATE OF SUCCESS

After initial piloting and thorough impact-assessment by UNDP, the Self-Employment Programme was first incorporated as an official active labour market measure within the government's National Programme for Employment in 2007. In the past five years this measure has helped to establish a great variety of small businesses, including firms providing legal and accountancy services, dental surgeries, cafes and restaurants—even goat farms and tattoo parlours!

Recent analysis shows that almost 70% of these companies have managed to survive and prosper, which more than matches global rates of success for new businesses. Working on his latest pizza recipe, Ivan hopes the programme will grow and give other people like him the confidence and support they need to follow their business instincts. 'I wasn't sure I had the skills to run a business or the confidence to take the risk,' he says, 'But now I know I've got what it takes and I'm planning to build on this success.'

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Photo: Ljubomir Stefanov/UNDP



# RAISING A GREENER GENERATION

Some of the country's youngest generation are now enjoying the benefits of greater energy efficiency thanks to the model refurbishment of a kindergarten in Skopje earlier this year—the latest successful outcome of efforts by local government and UNDP to help reduce energy costs and consumption in the building sector.

The Srnicka-Kalinka kindergarten in the capital's municipality of Aerodrom was given a complete overhaul to become the country's first ever energy-efficient kindergarten: "We changed the

windows, the façades, and the roof and installed a hot water solar system," explains Ilija Szdovski, the overall project manager for UNDP, which is overseeing the project with backing from the Austrian government and, crucially, with funding, support and close involvement from the municipality of Aerodrom itself. "We estimate the savings in energy costs will amount to almost 60%."

Such remarkable savings in bills are amongst a number of substantial benefits to be gained



from upgrading buildings to use energy more efficiently. Besides the opportunities for re-investing saved costs, energy efficiency makes buildings healthier and more comfortable while greatly reducing any harmful effects on the environment.

“The children will have much better conditions to learn and play in,” says Ilija, “And other municipalities are already showing an interest in carrying out similar projects.”

Indeed, one of the key aims of the project is to demonstrate and raise awareness of the financial and environmental advantages of greater energy efficiency in the building sector. Buildings currently account for some 40% of overall energy demand and over 70% of the country’s yearly carbon dioxide emissions. With projects like the kindergarten refurbishment, UNDP is keen to send the message that investing in energy efficiency in buildings is the cheapest, easiest and simplest way to cut energy costs, reduce harmful pollution, and preserve the planet for future generations. “Just by introducing simple efficiency measures,” explains Alessandro Fracassetti, the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, “the energy costs of any building could be reduced by 20% to 30%.”

Since 2009, UNDP’s drive for greater energy efficiency in public and residential buildings has resulted in the creation of Local Energy Efficiency Teams in all 85 municipalities in the country, each seeking new ways to reduce energy consumption. Helping these teams to identify potential savings is a new software programme called ExCITE, developed with UNDP

support, which greatly assists local and central government bodies in regularly monitoring energy use in public buildings.

Hundreds of municipal staff have also taken part in UNDP-supported training in energy-monitoring techniques, while twelve municipalities have participated in a study visit in cooperation with the Czech government to exchange best practices with their counterparts in the Czech Republic. And the first ever climatological map of the country has been designed to help with the implementation of the EU’s Directive on the Energy Performance of Buildings and improve monitoring methodology.

Amongst other initiatives to inform and raise public awareness of the advantages of making buildings more energy-efficient, UNDP has helped design a highly user-friendly web portal [www.eeportal.mk](http://www.eeportal.mk) with easy links to information, available funds, relevant legislation and useful tools or tracking public opinion on matters related to energy efficiency.

This portal has recently been voted ‘web portal of the month’ by all NGOs working in the field of environmental protection. It is now managed by the Association of Local Self Government Units (ZELS).

For Alessandro Fracassetti, the kindergarten project is especially rewarding. Speaking at the re-opening of the school—now spick and span with a garden full of freshly planted flowers—UNDP’s Deputy Representative remarked that ‘It’s days like this when the results of our efforts are so tangible that I especially love this work!’

## THE KEY IS UNDER THE MAT

A new TV show will air this autumn that takes a fresh and innovative approach to promoting cultural diversity. The Key is Under the Mat, is a series of five short films that document two-day visits between young people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The first TV show of its kind in the country, the series is the outcome of a UNDP-supported initiative that forms part of a wider UN programme being undertaken by UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO and the Government for enhancing inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration.

The result is a bright and positive look at how embracing diversity enriches experience. Filmed in a pacy but down-to-earth style that's part documentary, part reality show, each 30-minute episode starts with the participants and their families telling us about their lives and values before each visit begins.

The series takes 18-year-old Boban Mazucanec from Prilep to Tetovo, for example, where he stays with the Roma family of Dzengis Huseini. Another episode takes 22-year old Refik Tair, from the Turkish community in Kumanovo, to the family of Agon Celiku in Skopje. And Laura Krliu, a 20-year-old Law student and former finalist of Macedonian Pop Idol who describes herself as half-Albanian, half-Macedonian, travels from Skopje to stay with the Serb and Macedonian family of Milena Stojmenovska in Kumanovo.



Photo: UNDP/CIRA





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Photo: UNDP/CIRA



Photo: UNDP/CIRA

“The personalities of the participants and their values of tolerance and open-heartedness really shine when they come together in families and take part in everyday rituals like cooking meals and eating together,” says the programme’s producer Irina Janevska.

The open-hearted spirit is captured in the note on the door that greets each guest’s arrival—‘the key is under the mat’. We follow as the participants let themselves inside to meet their hosts.

The films nicely combine everyday activities and spontaneous conversation with more structured tasks. The guests not only share family meals, meet friends and get shown around the neighbourhood, they also co-operate to get specific tasks completed during their stays.

The collaborative tasks were selected from the participants’ wish-lists to be achievable in a short time while offering the participants an opportunity to highlight their talents, express their personalities and showcase their neighbourhoods.

When Tamara Kotevska, born in Prilep, visits the Vlach family of Marija Brova in Skopje, for example, her tasks include learning how to cook some of Maria’s mother’s specialities as well as working together with Maria on a music video.

“It was really fun making the video,” says Tamara, who plans to study Directing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, “And the music we chose was special—a Vlach folk song Maria performed when she won a contest this year, the Fontana di Malme.”

“The great thing is we’ve stayed in touch since the programme,” says Maria, “And Tamara knows she’s always welcome here.”

When twenty-seven-year old Arben Hajrulahi, from the Albanian community in a village near Skopje, goes to visit Andrej Pavlovski in Kratovo, he gets to visit Andrej’s favourite places in the locality and choose five sites to publicise in Albanian before his second task—learning how to work with wrought iron in Andrej’s father’s workshop.



“It was a great experience having Arben here,” says Andrej, “There should be more opportunities like this for the different communities to mix and learn more about each other.”

For UNDP, one of the main aims behind the film project was to address the partnership gap between media organisations and civil society, while also developing capacities to produce local content for TV that reflects the rich cultural diversity of the country.

The story began when UNDP opened a call for applications to the public to participate in a training workshop last December targeted at producers, script writers, editors, NGO leaders and other interested individuals. Twenty-three participants were selected to attend a five-day workshop providing the country’s first ever training in the development of social content media.

The workshop was designed and organized with the help and supervision of UNDP by two local agencies, Partes Social Advertising and Idea O.K.

“The goal of the workshop was to help the candidates with concept development and quickly introduce them to effective media formats for promoting a tolerant society that values its own diversity,” explains Nebojsa Ilievski at Partes Social Advertising. “We wanted to help the participants find new ways to overcome media stereotypes and explore ideas that educate and

entertain while highlighting social cohesion.”

Eight concepts for TV programmes were developed in five different groups at the workshop. The groups worked in close cooperation, enjoying specialist input and feedback from the trainers.

“The sessions were very hands-on,” says Nebojsa, a participant at the workshop. “We covered a lot of ground in five days—from the sociological aspects and impact of this kind of media to concept development, script-writing and characterisation. And the brainstorming approach meant we had to learn how to pitch ideas effectively and identify the strengths and weaknesses in each other’s ideas. Practical considerations like planning and logistics were shown to be as important as focussing on the key message. These are skills we’ll all take away with us and use in our future work.”

Each group’s ideas were evaluated by all the participants according to criteria that included originality, relevance, characterization and feasibility.

“Loads of great ideas came up,” says Eleonora Veninova, a Hollywood script-writer recruited as a national trainer for the workshops, “Like having children from different ethnicities travelling across the country in a bus, and another based around a multi-ethnic classroom... But time and achievability were also big factors.”

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Photo: UNDP/CIRA

“The results of the workshop should significantly enhance the capacities of social partners from across the country to promote inter-ethnic understanding more effectively in popular media,” says Gregory Connor, UNDP’s Peace and Development Advisor. “The module on social advertising and education through entertainment included skills that all the participants can apply in their daily work, whether that be PR, media and communication, marketing or developing projects in the civil sector.”

Innovative in concept and design, the project behind the vibrant new series brought together and trained a unique mix of professionals.

“This was a really important initiative for helping promote cultural diversity in the country—now and in the long-term,” says Gregory Connor. “All of the people involved, including professionals from all different sectors, will be taking back with them new approaches and new skills in using social content in the media. I’m confident this means we’ll be seeing ever more effective use of media in the country to send out positive messages about tolerance and diversity—messages that will succeed in countering some of the negative stereotypes that are too often portrayed.”

***The Key is Under the Mat will be shown on national television this Autumn.***

# WORKING TOGETHER FOR BETTER LOCAL SERVICES

Accurate maps to guide fire fighters, better roads and water systems, training for teachers of children with special needs—these are among the many public services that smaller municipalities in the country can now offer their citizens.

As part of a UNDP-supported project, municipalities with limited resources have formed joint administrative bodies. Through cooperation, they have been able to better serve their citizens, reduce costs and improve tax collection and management.

According to Zaklina Zitosanska, a civil servant from the joint tax collection agency of the towns of Krivogastani and Dolneni, new tax administration skills and an updated taxpayers database have helped increase revenues by 30%.

“We have much greater abilities now to raise the resources we need to work for our communities,” she says.

We have much greater abilities now to raise the resources we need to work for our communities.

**800,000**

**60%**

**3/4**

people have benefited from better public services.

increase in property tax collection rates.

of all municipalities in the country participate in inter-municipal cooperation.

## TOWARDS LOCAL PARTICIPATION

The national decentralisation strategy aims to boost education, healthcare and social protection services, as well as improve urban planning, environmental protection and economic development in all of the country's 85 municipalities. While decentralisation moves forward smoothly in larger cities, smaller towns and villages sometimes struggle and disparities between municipalities can increase. .

## PILOTING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

In 2005, UNDP piloted a new approach to Inter-Municipal Cooperation, working with Bosilovo, Vasilevo and Novo Selo, three small municipalities in the south of the country. Three joint administrative bodies were formed to manage taxation, urban planning, and public inspections of licensing and compliance with local regulations. Each municipality hosted and staffed one of the joint bodies.

Training was provided for the municipalities' civil servants, citizens' service centres were opened for better public outreach, local government websites were created for each municipality, and vehicles were provided to help civil servants access remote areas.

Within two years, Novo Selo had improved telecommunications, water, electrical and transportation infrastructure, Bosilovo had repaved roads and purchased new school equipment, and Vasilevo had repaired water

and sewer systems. Tax collection rates within the three municipalities increased by 60%, while expenditures fell by 12%.

## SUCCESS GOES NATIONAL

Impressed by the success of the pilot project, the Government has adopted this model of cooperation for a national rollout.

By early 2011, 62 municipalities had signed on to participate in 26 inter-municipal partnerships. UNDP continued to help train more than 800 local officials, and worked to set up a grant strategy to provide seed money for innovations in service delivery.

Today the country is a regional leader in inter-municipal cooperation, hosting a major conference last year for stakeholders from governments in neighbouring countries interested in applying the model in their own institutions.

Over 800,000 people have benefitted from initiatives like the formal agreement in the town of Zajas to prioritize social protection for vulnerable groups.

"Before the project, it seemed no one from the local authorities cared about these people," says Lutfi Osmani, president of the Zajas village council. "Now with the municipalities visibly working together to map their needs, there is a lot more hope."

# FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

*The issue of equitable and predictable financing of local government is one of the most important aspects of decentralization. UNDP has been working with the Ministry of Finance, ZELS, municipalities, and others, to look at possible new models of inter-governmental financing, to support the decentralization reform agenda. The technical support has been provided by a team from the International Centre for Public Policy at Georgia State University, USA, led by Professor Jorge Martinez-Vasquez, a leading expert in this field.*

*The key findings of this work were published in May 2012 in a collection of studies entitled Fiscal Decentralization for Local Development. Below is the interview given in May 2012 by Professor Martinez to Kanal 5 TV.*

**Q: The country is now undergoing the second phase of fiscal decentralization. Professor Martinez, you have recently supported the preparation of a study on fiscal decentralization. Can you tell us more about its findings?**

**A:** The country is right now a relatively well decentralized but still it has some way to go. In comparison to European Union countries, the level of expenditures at the municipal level is about half of what is the average in the European Union. So, progress has been made but there is some road ahead.

**Q: The municipalities keep asking for the central government to provide more funding. How justified do you think this is?**

**A:** What we think is fair is that the system will provide the municipalities with more revenue instruments over time. There are two ways of going about giving the municipalities more revenues. One is to give them more transfers, more shared revenue, so that revenue is collected at central level and then



Photo: UNDP/Nikolaos Kalkounos

**'Increasing the property tax is usually best done when there are also significant increases in services to citizens, such as street paving, sidewalks, lighting, and green spaces...'**

it trickles down. The other is to give them more capability to raise their own taxes. Of the two choices we are clear that the second one is the better. True, it is harder, and actually, if I were a mayor of a municipality, I would like to get transfers and wouldn't like to raise my own revenues. However, the capability to raise own taxes is in the long run fairer and more sustainable.

**Q: What types of reforms should the municipalities undertake in order to increase their own revenues?**

**A:** They need to spend resources on qualified people, on updating the cadastre, and on collection. And that also might require better cooperation between the central authorities and the municipal authorities. So there is a big role for the central government to enable, to qualify, to train local administrations to collect the existing taxes more efficiently.

**Q: Based on your experience, in what other ways can municipalities increase their revenues?**

**A:** Property tax is a hard tax to administer. It is expensive and very unpopular. But it is a very good tax for local governments. And the proof is that many countries in the world use it and use it well. Increasing the property tax is usually best done when there are also significant increases in services to citizens, such as street paving, sidewalks, lighting, and green spaces. So, this is one main option. We also have been discussing other possibilities such as seeing what other taxes could be devolved, could be devolved to the municipalities, such as motor tax for example.

*An electronic version of the 'Fiscal Decentralization for Local Development' study is available at [www.undp.org.mk](http://www.undp.org.mk). Please feel free to contact the UNDP office if you would like to get a hard copy of this publication.*





## MEET THE FISH OF PRESPA LAKE!

Just published, *The Fish of Prespa*—a 150-page guide to the many species of fish in the Prespa lakes - offers readers the country's first ever comprehensive description of the extraordinary forms of life found in the lakes and extensive information about the changing conditions of these ancient waters.

Amongst the oldest freshwater tectonic lakes in the world, the Prespa lakes are home to some 23 different types of fish, with nine of these being unique endemic species and several—such as the Prespa Trout and the Prespa Barbel—now at a high risk of extinction.

Amongst the oldest freshwater tectonic lakes in the world, the Prespa lakes are home to some 23 different types of fish, with nine of these being unique endemic species and several—such as the Prespa Trout and the Prespa Barbel—now at a high risk of extinction.

“The focus is on practical information,” explains the book’s main author, Zoran Spirkovski, from the Ohrid Hydrobiological Institute, “showing what the local population, scientists and decision-makers can do to combat over-fishing and reverse the effects of pollution so that the fish of Prespa have a future.”

UNDP provided technical support for the new publication as part of the project for Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes basin. The Fish of Prespa is one of numerous initiatives supported by UNDP to help protect the country’s natural biodiversity from further depletion and support protected areas. In 2010, UNDP supported country’s first official National Catalogue of Species detailing some 17,604 different animals and identifying those in need of protection—including a number of endangered mammals such as the Balkan Lynx, the Marbled Polecat, the Brown Bear, wildcats, otters and wolves.

The Fish of Prespa has been designed to appeal to and inform the general reader. With its glossy pictures and a text translated into the three main languages of the countries that share the lake region, the book is certain to increase public awareness of the rich biodiversity of the lakes and the steps that need to be taken to ensure the long-term future of the precious and vulnerable life-forms in the waters.

*Please feel free to contact the UNDP office if you would like to get a hard copy of this publication.*



Photos: UNDP/Ljubomir Stefanov

## WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH US\$95 LUNCH

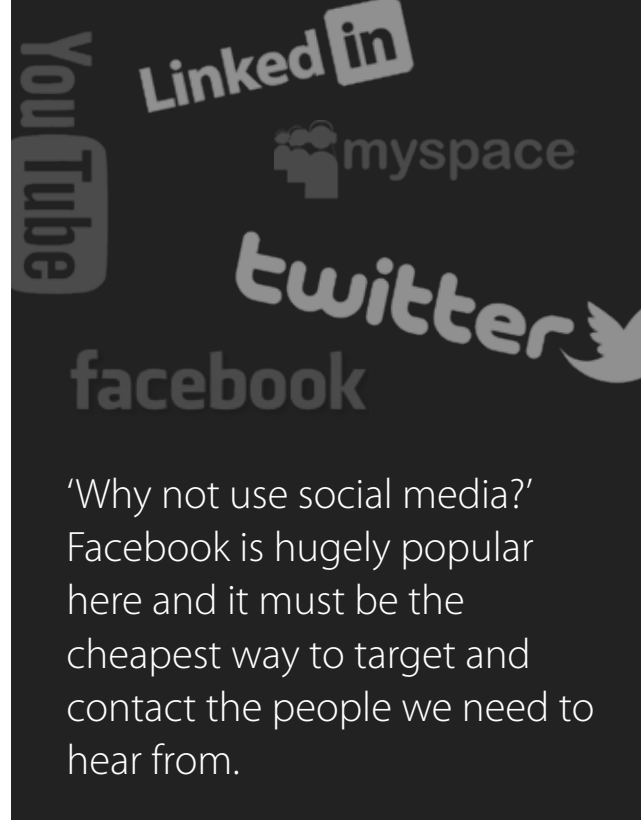
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If you want to design an effective programme to promote the efficient use of energy, you will need to carry out extensive information-gathering to ensure that policies and measures are well-targeted to the needs of the population.

This is especially so in the case of encouraging greater energy efficiency in households. The first step here is to find out about people's existing habits and knowledge of techniques so as to help them reduce their households' consumption of energy. Analysing this data further helps to identify the main obstacles that need to be overcome in order to bring about more sustainable energy use amongst the general population.

Gathering such a large amount of accurate and relevant data can be a daunting and resource-consuming task. However, UNDP's Energy Efficiency Project Manager Ilija Sazdovski has recently tried out a new and highly cost-effective way to obtain the necessary data.

Ilija hit upon the idea earlier this year while developing an online survey on energy efficiency in households throughout the country. "We designed a questionnaire for the general public and all the relevant stakeholders," explains Ilija,



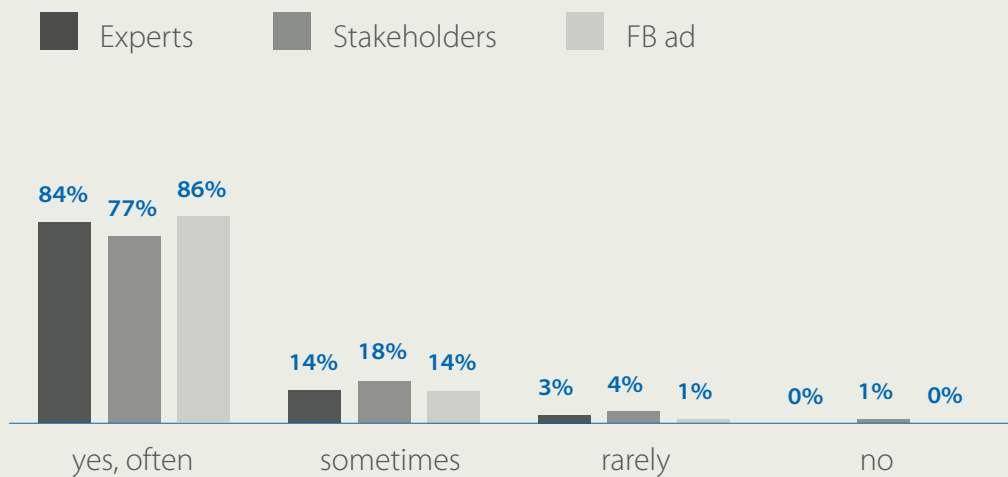
"And obviously we wanted to get good feedback from as wide a section of the adult population as possible. At the stage when the questionnaires were ready to be sent out and we were compiling the mailing lists, it just occurred to me 'Why not use social media?' Facebook is hugely popular here and it must be the cheapest way to target and contact the people we need to hear from. So we sent out the questionnaire in three different forms to Facebook groups—a slightly more detailed version for 'experts' in the field of environment and energy efficiency, a more general version for the websites of municipalities and other stakeholders, and—something we're especially proud of—another version in the form of a Facebook ad. This was to make sure we got feedback from as wide a range of people in the country as possible, not just specialists and

people already involved. We all agreed to go with the idea and the result was that we managed to contact well over seven hundred people!”

Developed by UNDP as part of a complementary programme to support national institutions in meeting the EU energy efficiency objectives, the online survey asked for answers to three sets of questions: a short set of general questions related to household size, income, gender and age and other characteristics of the respondents; a second set of questions asking about the use of energy in the respondents’ households, including the types and relative efficiency of the heating fuels they use and the main expenses in their monthly energy bills; and, finally, a more extensive set of questions focusing on the respondents’ knowledge of and opinions about energy efficiency.

“The Facebook advertisement undoubtedly had an impact on people’s awareness of energy efficiency issues and the benefits to themselves and the environment of using energy more responsibly,” says Ilija, “And the survey method we used proved extremely effective since all of the respondents completed the questionnaire.”

## Do you consider decreasing your energy bill



## KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS INNOVATIVE ONLINE SURVEY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING DATA:

- Electricity is the single greatest expense on the average household's energy bill, followed by central heating and gas.
- When asked about heating their houses, the great majority of all groups reported that electricity was their main source of heating, with wood being the second fuel of choice for 40% or more from each group.
- When asked about the steps they had already taken to increase energy efficiency in their households, the expert group listed energy-saving light-bulbs, house insulation, low emission windows, domestic appliances certified for energy-efficiency, solar collectors and other measures. Most of the remaining respondents showed an awareness of some of these measures, but there was a notable lack of knowledge of more complex techniques to save energy, such as condensing boilers, thermostatic valves and air-conditioning inverters. Of those respondents who reported that they had no plans to implement energy-saving measures, most cited the chief reason as lack of financial resources or unfavourable terms for bank loans, potential conflicts with neighbours, a lack of adequate contractors, insufficient information and the absence of adequate products.
- Many respondents remarked on the need for better sources of information about energy efficiency.
- Asked 'Who is Responsible for achieving energy efficiency?', well over 75% from all groups said it was the responsibility of 'all the citizens', but 50% felt the state and the municipalities have an important role to play in reducing energy consumption.

"The funny thing is," says Ilija, "that I don't have a Facebook profile myself so I had to 'borrow' my cousin's profile to do the survey. In return for the favour I bought him a meal at his favourite restaurant. And even with the bill for lunch it was still the cheapest way to gather data."



## TACKLING CORRUPTION

Transparency and accountability are crucial to good governance and equitable, socially inclusive development. Tackling corruption is an essential aspect of UNDP's commitment to good governance and a top priority for the country's government.

Effective measures to root out unjust practices and monitor accountability in administration are needed to ensure that all citizens have fair and equal access to public services. Such is the seriousness of this issue, the EU has made it a core requirement in the process of EU accession.

"Corruption can be a major obstacle to progress," says UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, Alessandro Fracassetti, "Above all because it prevents people—and typically the people who are most in need—from having access to quality services. But also because it actively discourages direct foreign investment and hinders the process of European integration."

UNDP has supported the country's anti-corruption reforms in a number of ways over recent years at national and local levels, notably in the preparation of the State Programme for the Prevention and Repression of Corruption for 2011–15. In the course of designing these reforms, a key finding was the immediate need for action to strengthen existing systems of integrity in local and national administration.

# KEY RESULTS

To meet this need, UNDP has partnered with the Government of Norway to fund and implement a new project entitled Strengthening National and Local Integrity Systems. The project is implemented in cooperation with the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, and ZELS, the Association of Units of Local Self-Government.

"Integrity systems are a powerful weapon in the fight against corruption," says UNDP's Sonja Stefanovska-Trajanoska. "Adopting an integrity system means aspiring to maintaining the highest level of ethical standards and committing to abide by the principles of transparency, accountability and openness to the citizens. Fortunately, we can



In partnership with the Association of Local Self Government Units, UNDP supported the creation of a Code of Ethics for Local Officials to ensure that local authorities are more responsible towards the citizens. The Code has already been adopted by all 84 municipalities.

Over 250 civil servants received specialized training in administrative procedures, urban planning, communal activities and financial management.

UNDP supported the first ever ISO certification in quality management in four municipalities: Veles, Tetovo, Gevgelija and Bitola. These municipalities are now providing better and more transparent services for all their citizens.

already build on the basis of our previous work here, since UNDP already introduced a Code of Ethics for local government five years ago.”

The first stage of the project involves a close assessment of current levels of integrity in selected municipalities, identifying any systemic weaknesses that may foster corruption or allow corruption to go unchecked. This assessment will form the basis of recommendations for measures to strengthen the capacity of local administrations in their efforts to make government more open, fair and accountable.

“Increasing social accountability is a vital part of the project, too,” explains Project Manager Ivana Dojcinovska, “And that means we’ll be

redesigning existing tools for monitoring accountability and elaborating new measures at all levels of government. This is essential to ensure that everyone in society, especially the most vulnerable people, have equitable representation and are truly part of the local and national dialogue on anti-corruption.”

To support the work of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, UNDP and its partners will also be preparing a comprehensive capacity-building programme as part of the same project. This programme will ensure that the Commission has strong systems in place to implement the reforms of the new State Programme for the Prevention and Repression of Corruption and to monitor their effectiveness.

Integrity systems are a powerful weapon in the fight against corruption.

Twelve municipalities in the country have already fully committed themselves to introducing systems for ensuring greater integrity in local government. June this year saw the mayors of Veles, Gostivar, Strumica, Kavadarci, Gevgelija, Kocani, Debar, Sveti Nikole, Kratovo, Petrovec, Brvenica and Aerodrom sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and UNDP—an agreement pledging the mayors to undertake the introduction of integrity systems in their municipalities.

“This is a comprehensive action plan to tackle corruption head on at local level,” says Goran Petrov, the Mayor of the Municipality of Veles. “And its chances of success are all the greater because it involves people from so many sectors—not just members of the municipal council but associations of citizens, representatives of the business sector, the media and local communities.”

The project for strengthening national and local integrity systems has also received high praise from the President of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, Ljubinka Koraboska: “This is an innovative initiative with the potential to inspire and embrace many more leaders,” says Ljubinka, “We hope and believe that it will become standard policy and practice throughout the country at all institutional levels.”



# WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

## Managing Waste for Better Business in Prespa

Natural beauty and rich ecological diversity combine to make the Prespa Lakes basin one of the most environmentally valuable regions in the country. Home to an abundance of rare endemic species, many of them endangered, the ecosystem of the region surrounding the ancient freshwater lakes has faced many challenges over the years, but none more threatening than the impact of human activity—primarily in the form of harmful practices in the local agricultural sector.

UNDP is strongly committed to supporting all efforts to promote environmental protection and sustainable development in this beautiful and vulnerable area, in cooperation with local farmers and other stakeholders and authorities in the three countries whose territories share the Prespa lake region.

Major projects implemented by UNDP in the Prespa region over recent years—with the strong support and financial backing of the Global Environment Facility, —include the development of a Watershed Management Plan identifying the pressures exerted on the waterbodies by intensive farming and pollution from the region's major conurbation, the town of Resen, and

recommending numerous measures to help monitor and mitigate pollution in line with the EU's Water Directive.

The long-term success of these efforts to conserve and develop the region, particularly to increase its tourist potential, depend on changing local farming practices. Agriculture has a highly significant role in the challenged local economy and employs some 60% of the population. Lack of environmental awareness and over-use of fertilizers by farmers to boost production in the short term have an especially detrimental effect on the vulnerable ecosystem, and this has been greatly exacerbated by the lack of suitable systems in place for responsible waste management.

Apple cultivation is the main form of farming in the region, with annual production amounting to as much as 110,000 tons. Strong fluctuations in the market demand for apples, however, mean that huge numbers of these apples are regularly discarded. In a particularly bad year, as many as 10,000 tons of fruit are dumped. This waste is neither treated nor recycled but simply dumped directly into the Golema River and along the shores of the lakes, posing a serious threat to the environment.

UNDP is strongly committed to supporting all efforts to promote environmental protection and sustainable development.





UNDP, in partnership with the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency which provides the funding, has recently taken the initiative to tackle this problem head-on through a project for Biodegradable Waste Management in Prespa. This project addresses both the need for greater public awareness and the need for the establishment of an efficient system to deal with biodegradable waste without harming the environment or the livelihoods of local farmers.

“Convincing people to deal with this massive waste more responsibly is a lot easier when we can show them the savings they’ll make from treating and recycling the apples,” explains Astrit Zekir, UNDP’s Project Manager. “Recycling the waste will not only reduce the damage to the environment but turn the apples into compost and natural fertilizer. And the knock-on effect is that farmers will stop using such harmful chemicals to boost their production.”

Convincing people to deal with this massive waste more responsibly is a lot easier when we can show them the savings they’ll make from treating and recycling the apples.

Construction has already begun on a central composting plant in the region and several stations for collecting biodegradable waste.

“We used to think that the cheapest way of dealing with the apples we couldn’t sell was just to throw them away and let them rot,” says local farmer Frosina Georgievska, “But now we can’t wait to have the waste system in place. Not only we will save money but we’ll also have a clearer conscience knowing we aren’t damaging the beautiful nature.”

These major improvements in waste management are in line with recommendations from the Environmental Impact Assessment Study earlier conducted with the support of UNDP. And the introduction of these new facilities is being accompanied by an extensive programme of training and awareness-raising activities for the local population—a programme that should not only help with specific solutions to the problem of waste but also impart the principles of sustainable development that can be applied to all farming practices.

Once the waste management systems are in place in the town of Resen and the village of Jankovec they will serve as the foundation for implementing a comprehensive management solution throughout the entire Prespa region.

“We’re very much hoping that other regions with similar problems will follow the example here in Prespa,” adds Mihail Volkanovski, the Mayor of Resen. “Then we can truly say this project has benefitted the environment throughout the whole country.”



# DID YOU KNOW...

Some key findings from a recent UNDP survey on social exclusion amongst youth

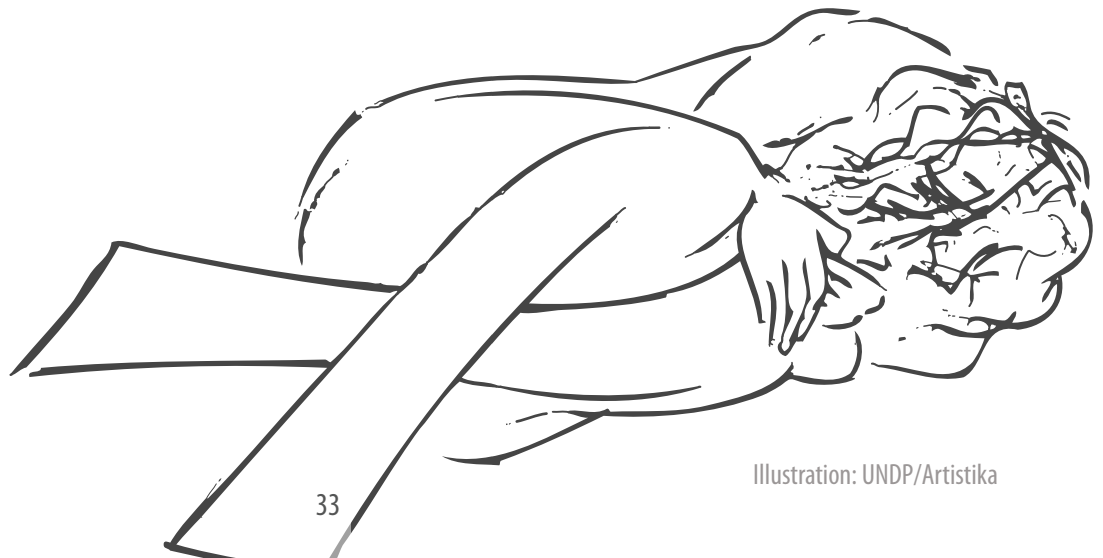
- **More women** than men are now enrolled in tertiary education.
- Some **30% of young people** are currently working without any formal employment contract.
- Social attitudes towards young **people with disabilities** continue to negatively affect their opportunities in the labour market.
- **Two-thirds of the country's young people** do not believe they have any influence on decision-making processes at the level of central government.
- **Almost 50% of the youth** interviewed for the survey said they felt their votes would make no significant difference. Many claim that the interests of the younger generation are not represented by the main political parties.
- **The majority of youth** involved in the survey are dissatisfied with the prevalence of ethnic divisions in politics and are worried about the divisive effects this will have for the future of the country.



Some facts you should know about domestic violence from the first ever national baseline survey carried out in spring 2012 by UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA AND UN WOMEN

- **Almost 40% of women in the country have been subject to some form of domestic violence, predominantly psychological violence.**
- **While men too are victims of domestic violence, the prevalence of physical violence is 3 times higher among women than among men.**
- **80% of female victims of physical violence are unemployed or economically inactive.**
- **Women living in rural areas are much more vulnerable to physical domestic violence.**
- **More than half of all cases of domestic violence affect women with only primary or lower levels of education.**

The social stigma attached to domestic violence means that many victims remain silent and continue to live in fear, with over three quarters of incidents not reported to any of the publicly available services.



## **WHAT UNDP IS ALL ABOUT AND WHAT WE DO IN THE COUNTRY...**

On the ground in 177 countries, UNDP coordinates and assists efforts to improve and empower lives by partnering with people at all levels of society to achieve fairer, more socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable development. UNDP brings expert knowledge and resources to increase the capacity of these societies to overcome development challenges and implement effective reforms in line with the UN's Millennium Development Goals and national development priorities.

As part of the wider UN system, UNDP's work is closely coordinated with its sister UN agencies. The UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2010-2015, agreed with the Government, provides the overall framework for the UN's in-country work and activities.

The focus of UNDP's work in this country is on three main areas: (i) helping to increase the effectiveness of governance at national and local level, (ii) promoting social inclusion, and (iii) ensuring environmental protection and disaster risk management.

### **Good governance - delivering better services to all**

Good governance is essential part of effective democracy. UNDP works closely with Government and institutions at all levels to increase skills and capacities to design more responsive and inclusive policies and to deliver their services more effectively. In recent years, for example, UNDP has provided substantial assistance to municipalities throughout the country to help them meet the challenges of decentralization, achieving significant results through increased cooperation amongst municipalities.

UNDP supports greater citizen participation in decision-making and has helped in the design and development of numerous policies, laws and measures to increase the accountability of public institutions. As part of this commitment to good democratic governance, UNDP has also provided significant support for officials from central and local government to improve aid effectiveness, to combat corruption and increase inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation.

### **Social Inclusion - empowering the most vulnerable people in society**

Increasing social inclusion means empowering people to participate more equally in society—in education and employment, in the decision-making processes that affect their lives, in access to social services and social protection and all other resources

of their local communities. UNDP supports national efforts to improve the social and economic conditions of individuals and groups at risk of exclusion, as well as providing knowledge and expertise to help policy-makers develop more inclusive policies and reforms.

UNDP has concentrated its greatest efforts in recent years on supporting the government's commitment to reducing unemployment as an essential step in increasing social inclusion. Much of UNDP's support for social inclusion in recent years has been focused on developing measures to promote self-employment, helping train the long-term unemployed and other vulnerable groups—such as members of the Roma community, women living in rural areas, and victims of domestic violence—to start up their own sustainable businesses.

### **Energy and Environment - ensuring sustainable development**

Long-term social and economic development requires responsible management of natural resources, the reduction of environmental hazards, and low carbon development. UNDP helps decision-makers integrate environmental considerations and measures in policies and supports the national capacity to prevent pollution, maintain biodiversity, decrease the negative effects of climate change, implement energy efficiency measures and reduce the risks of natural disasters.

UNDP has provided expert assistance to policy-makers in transposing UN conventions on environmental issues and EU environmental directives into the national legal framework. Specifically, this has involved helping the Government to implement the three major UN conventions on Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Desertification adopted at the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, together with the provisions of the EU Water Framework and the EU Energy Efficiency Directive.

**US\$9 million**

**1998**

**60**

Approximate Annual Programme Expenditure

In the country since

Number of staff

Key funding partners: Host Government, Global Environment Facility, Spain (MDGF), Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy and Japan

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