



AMPLIFYING LOCAL VOICES FOR EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Small Grants for Local and Grassroots Civil Society
Organizations in Kosovo and South Serbia

2021



Alliance 2015

towards the eradication of poverty

About ALVED

"Amplifying Local Voices for Equitable Development" (ALVED) is a British government funded project running from September 2020 through March 2023.

The project is implemented in five municipalities in Kosovo and three local self-government units in South Serbia by a consortium made up of Peaceful Change initiative (PCi), a UK-registered charity, People in Need, a Czech-based non-governmental organization, NGO Aktiv (Kosovo), Peer Educators Network-PEN (Kosovo), and Civic Initiatives (Serbia).

The overriding objective of the project is to ensure that citizens in Kosovo and Serbia are better able to empathise with one another's perspectives, play active civic roles in society, and celebrate diversity. Grassroots civil society actors are offered capacity-building opportunities as well as funding for local initiatives that aim to improve cooperation between local authorities and residents.

The Grant Scheme

This grant scheme supported local-level, grassroots initiatives to help deal with the impact of Covid19 on local communities. Selected CSOs addressed the impacts of the pandemic on youth (four projects), women and girls (four projects), and persons with disabilities (four projects) while incorporating cross-community activities.

PIN selected grant recipients based on their ideas and vision for supporting their communities during this global pandemic. For several of the grant recipients, it was the first project funded by an international donor.

Twelve projects in total were funded over a six-month implementation period from 1 April through 30 September 2021: seven in Kosovo and five in Serbia.

The total number of direct beneficiaries reached through this grant scheme was 1,150.



A total of GBP 202,000 was disbursed.

PIN took a pro-active, open-communication approach to supporting these grassroots CSOs in improving their capacities for complying with PIN's contractual requirements, including financial and narrative reporting, procuring of goods and services, etc., as well as in achieving the objectives of the projects, including implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of activities. This capacity building will improve the ability of these organizations to continue their important work in their communities.

Gjilan/Gnjilane:

Qendra e Kujdesit Ditor – PEMA

(Daily Care Center PEMA)

Project title:

Psychosocial support for children with disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic

Objective:

To improve the well-being of children with disabilities in Gjilan/Gnjilane by providing them with psychosocial, rehabilitation, and educational services and opportunities for recreational activities.

Results:

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 62 children with disabilities: 25 girls and 27 boys
 - 71 parent/guardians

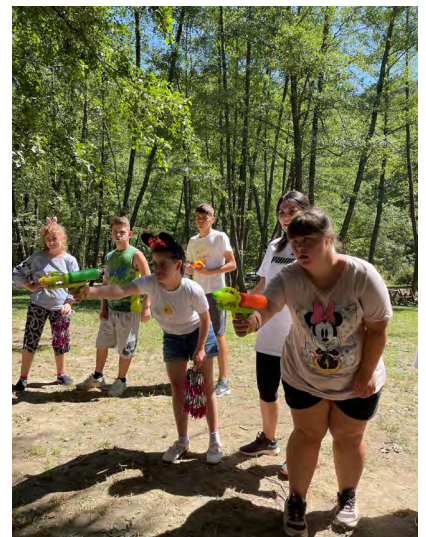
PEMA operates a local center where children with disabilities benefited from a variety of support, including speech and communication development therapy, play-based learning, and other activities to improve their physical and cognitive skills. PEMA also provided recreational opportunities for these children, such as visits to the gym, bear forest, museum, and local zoo, as well as baking classes, a sculpture demonstration, picnic, and summer cinema.

Parents of children with disabilities were provided support through counselling sessions and support group meetings on a variety of essential topics, such as managing behaviour, self-care and hygiene of children with disabilities, integration of their children in schools, improving life skills, etc. Some parents also learned speech therapy techniques to support their children with speech difficulties. Such support helps strengthen the capacities of families to offer their children greater chances of thriving.

PEMA connected these parents with municipal institutions to, on the one hand, learn about municipal services, and on the other hand, give parents an opportunity to discuss their needs and advocate on behalf of their children and themselves.


Follow PEMA on Facebook


<https://www.facebook.com/Qendra-e-Kujdesit-Ditor-PEMA-515151145325213>



Gjilan/Gnjilane and Lipjan/Lipljan: Education Code + Association of the Deaf Ana Morava

Project title: **Silent and Forgotten**

 **Objective:**
To support young deaf people and their families in Gjilan/Gnjilane and Lipjan/Lipljan.

 **Results:**

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 65 deaf individuals: aged 10-50
 - 64 parent/guardians
- Indirect beneficiaries:
 - 109 deaf individuals identified and mapped

Municipal officials were provided for the first time with accurate figures about the number of deaf persons in their territories as a result of a mapping exercise: 91 identified in Gjilan/Gnjilane, and 18 identified in Lipjan/Lipljan. This information can help both the municipality and the community in their decision-making processes.

Gjilan/Gnjilane signed an MoU for hiring an official sign language interpreter and thereafter hired an interpreter. Lipjan/Lipljan also committed to hiring an interpreter.

Deaf individuals improved their reading and writing abilities in the Albanian language through a five-day workshop.



Parents/family members, municipal officials, and teachers were introduced to sign language through a five-day training. This type of training had never before been offered in the target municipalities.

Follow Education Code on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/educationcode/>



Leposavić/Leposaviq:
Udruženje Roditelja "Podrži me" Sever
(Parents' Association "Support Me" North)

 **Project title:**
Together Again

-  **Objective:**
 To benefit children and young people with disabilities from Leposavić/Leposaviq who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

-  **Results:**
- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 26 young persons with disabilities: aged 10-24; from Kosovo Serb, Bosniak, and Albanian communities; 18 from rural areas

The grant recipient succeeded in reaching out to, gathering together, and supporting young persons with disabilities from all over the municipality, which consists of nearly 70 poorly-connected villages.

Young people practiced graphomotor, fine, and rough motor skills in creative workshops and improved physical coordination through sports activities. Progress of the participants in these areas was observed and evaluated by the educators. The activities also contributed to creating friendships between participants.

This project helped elevate the grant recipient's stature in the municipality, thereby making the organization better-placed to advocate for longer-term solutions.

Follow Podrži me on Facebook
<https://www.facebook.com/UdruzenjeRoditeljaPodrziMe/>





Project title:

Improving the lives of communities in times of the Covid-19 pandemic



Objective:

To cultivate a spirit of volunteerism in Lipjan/Lipljan while offering support to populations rendered most at-risk from the effects of the pandemic.



Results:

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 35 individuals aged 55+
 - 60 young people

YAHR created the Co-Assist group of 60 young volunteers. The volunteers visited rural areas to deliver medicines to older individuals in need. Funds for the medicines were secured through a donation from the municipality as well as the participation of several of the volunteers in a television quiz on the Oxygen show on Klan Kosova.

A core group of volunteers (12 women and 9 men) received a three-day training on volunteerism and social activism. This group also organized a panel discussion about women's activism and interviewed local residents about the impact of Covid19 on their lives and talked about the importance of vaccination.

Follow YAHR on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/YAHR.Kosovo>





Project title:

Štrpce/Shtërpçë Against Covid-19



Objective:

To work directly with the local authorities in Štrpce/Shtërpçë to improve the flow of accurate information about Covid-19 to residents.



Results:

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 34 municipal officials/civil servants
 - 11 young people for the youth challenge

The project enabled the better transfer of messages to local residents about Covid19 and contributed to better implementation of protection measures. A public communication campaign reached a wide audience to provide information on the virus and protection measures, and to debunk and simplify interpretation of measures adopted by the Kosovo government. Before the project, information was unclear, with community members not understanding the measures due to poor translation into Serbian as well as confusing language in general. In the grant recipient's observation, protective measures were more accepted, followed, and properly implemented by institutions, health authorities, and businesses.

A youth challenge was launched as a way to involve local young people in the public communication campaign. There was a competition to research and create fact-driven messages and materials, which contributed to a change of behavior among youth.



The grant recipient gathered municipal officials across directorates and offices (social services, education, mayor's office), civil society, and media to attend workshops on public services, with Covid19 a focus of the agenda. An infectious disease specialist was brought in to talk to participants about the virus and its affects.

Follow Primo la Tolleranza on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/strpceprotivpandemije>



 **Project title:**
Headspace

-  **Objective:**
 To provide young people from Pejë/Peć with skills, knowledge, and methods for coping with pandemic-induced stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

 **Results:**

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 97 young people: 73 girls and 24 boys; 25 from rural areas and 72 from urban areas

Young people from different socio-economic backgrounds were brought together in a safe space for sessions as well as summer camp on well-being and taking care of their mental health, particularly during these trying times. Before the camp, 21 percent of participants felt very informed about mental health; after completion of the camp, that percentage rose to 83.

Blogs were published by 12 by project participants about their camp experience and the skills they learned, and a video was produced.

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<https://www.facebook.com/YMCAinKosovo/>



Pejë/Peć:

Qendra për Jetë të Pavarur – QJP

(Center for Independent Life)

Project title:

Provision of daily services and mitigation of the consequences of Covid-19 for persons with mental disabilities in the municipality of Pejë/Peć

Objective:

To support the participation and personal autonomy of mentally disabled persons, mostly women and girls, from various communities in Pejë/Peć town and surrounding villages.

Results:

● Direct beneficiaries:

→ 35 persons with disabilities from Kosovo Albanian, Kosovo Bosniak, and Roma and Ashklali communities

The level of personal autonomy of 35 persons with mental disabilities was increased, specifically in terms of their abilities to independently use public transport, go shopping, prepare meals, and do laundry. Activities for beneficiaries focused on providing them with educational and recreational opportunities – from art and cooking classes, personal hygiene and relationship courses, to guidance and practice with using public transport and grocery shopping.

Families of persons with mental disabilities were also engaged in the project, with the grant recipient meeting regularly with them to provide support and advice.



Follow QJP on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/qjp.vitomerice/>



Bujanovac:
Shoqata Beyond
(Association Beyond)

 **Project title:**
Ready for challenges

-  **Objective:**
-  To provide young people from Bujanovac with tools for coping with stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues associated with the pandemic.

 **Results:**

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 257 young people: Albanian, Serbian, and Roma communities
 - 15 adults

The project provided an immediate response to stress and mental health challenges faced by youth as a result of the pandemic. Through a mental wellness program delivered at workshops organized in schools and at summer camps, young people learned techniques such as yoga, breath, and meditation as methods for coping with common reactions to the pandemic, such as anxiety, stress, feelings of insecurity, panic attacks, etc.

The activities brought Serbian and Albanian young people together, and the concentration of project activities in the rural areas of Bujanovac, where there are very few opportunities for young people to be engaged in any sort of extracurricular activity, was a particularly positive achievement of the project.

An unexpected activity which arose based on needs expressed in the communities was the organizing of a training-of-trainers with an expert from North Macedonia for 15 personal assistants for children with special needs.

Follow Shoqata Beyond on Facebook

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Bujanovac:

Udruženje Romkinja Bujanovac

(Association of Roma Women Bujanovac)



Project title:

Together we are stronger



Objective:

To build a local, cross-community support network of women who will work to prevent and address domestic violence.



Results:

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 30 women: 10 Albanian, 10 Roma, 10 Serbian
 - 15 municipal representatives
- Indirect beneficiaries:
 - 300 women

An informal network of 30 women was created to address the problem of domestic violence in the municipality. All members of the informal network engaged in a cascading initiative: each was tasked to share their knowledge and stress the importance of addressing domestic violence with ten other women in their communities, thereby amplifying the need to address this prevalent problem.

Through workshops, panel discussions, and meetings, awareness of the network members on the prevention and responses to domestic violence was raised. They also received career development training.

Follow Udruženje Romkinja Bujanovac on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Udruzenje-Romkinja-Bujanovac-347507038935537/>



Project title:

Your Customers Are Only a Click Away – Support for Women from Rural Areas for Online Placement of Domestic Products

Objective:

To enable women farmers in Lebane to improve their economic conditions by supporting them in establishing themselves in on-line marketplaces.

Results:

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 22 women from rural areas
- Indirect beneficiaries:
 - 117 women owned/operated farms mapped and invited to participate in the project

With the goal of expanding their sales and increasing their income, 22 women farmers from Lebane gained indispensable skills for selling their products on-line. They received training in on-line registration and marketing, production and packaging, food safety, selling and shipping, and adhering to organic standards.

A particularly positive unforeseen result was that 16 of these women decided to form a cooperative and sell their products under a common brand, called "Face domačice Jablanice". Approximately 15 locally-produced products, such as jam, ajvar, lutenice, pindjur, etc. are sold under this brand.

The project also supported some of the participants in securing certifications of organic production from the competent authorities.

Five young people, who were participants of Civic Initiative's activities, volunteered at Radanska Ruža; three of them decided to continue to work there once their internships ended.

Follow CenTriR and Radanska Ruža on Facebook

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<https://www.facebook.com/radanska.ruza>



Vranje + Bujanovac:
Centar za aktivizam Vranje
(Center for Activism Vranje)



Project title:

Women can do it!



Objective:

To mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on marginalized women in Vranje and Bujanovac.



Results:

- Direct beneficiaries:
 - 40 women: Albanian, Serbian, and Roma communities
- Indirect beneficiaries:
 - 500 women (through a survey)

A report, based on responses from 500 surveyed women, was produced which discussed the impact of Covid19 on the health and well-being of the respondents.

Women from both municipalities had the opportunity to participate in both psychosocial and entrepreneurship workshops. After the latter workshop in Bujanovac, some of the participants formed the foundations of a network, called "Women Entrepreneurs". The grant recipient intends to assist the network members in the preparation of the necessary paperwork for formally registering the network as an association.



Vranje + Bujanovac:

Udruženje građanja Odbor za ljudska prava Vranje (Citizens' Association Human Rights Committee Vranje)

Project title:

Women's health and Covid-19

Objective:

To address the adverse effects of the pandemic on access to women's preventative healthcare in Vranje and Bujanovac.

Results:

- Direct beneficiaries:

- 208 women: Albanian, Serbian, and Roma communities

Over 200 women were mobilized to undergo preventive health exams in local clinics. Additionally, either before or after their exams, they attended health seminars delivered by health care workers, specialist doctors, and nurses to increase their awareness of women's reproductive health.

The project enabled 90 of the 208 women (43%) to receive necessary follow-up exams/interventions. Four of those women underwent surgeries to address the discovered health issue. Many of these women remarked that, if it weren't for the project, the pandemic would have forced them to delay these exams.

The grant recipient secured the cooperation of local health care institutions for these successful results, which was no small task and required perseverance.

Follow OLJP Vranje on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/SOSvranje>



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PEOPLE IN NEED
peopleinneed.net

People in Need (PIN) is a Czech non-governmental organisation (NGO) that has been providing aid in troubled regions and supporting human rights since 1992. Since then, PIN has grown into one of the largest NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe. Today, its work focuses on humanitarian and development aid, advocacy for human rights and democratic freedom, social work in the field, and education, awareness, and information. PIN tackles longer-term problems in developing countries such as shortages of safe water, food insecurity, environmental degradation, and restricted access to quality education and health services.

PIN Western Balkans is part of PIN's Relief and Development Department (RDD) which helps people in emergencies, conflict areas, areas affected by natural disasters, and those living in extreme poverty. RDD operates in 22 countries, each year carrying out projects worth millions of Euros for hundreds of thousands of people in disadvantaged regions.

ALLIANCE2015 – Together We Save Lives
alliance2015.org

Alliance2015 is a strategic partnership of eight European NGOs engaged in humanitarian and development activities to achieve greater impact on poverty reduction and disaster preparedness and response in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. Based on this work on the ground, Alliance2015 strives to influence development and humanitarian policies in Europe and globally. Besides People in Need (Czech Republic), Alliance2015 members are ACTED (France), Cesvi (Italy), Concern Worldwide (Ireland), HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (Switzerland), Hivos (The Netherlands), Welthungerhilfe (Germany), and Ayuda en Acción (Spain).

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