



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

AGENCY FOR THE SUPPORT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Empower together...

October – November – December 2019

ASCS ➤ Newsletter 24

Date: 23.1.2020

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The Second ReLOaD Western Balkans Conference

Tirana, 8 – 9 October 2019



The representative of Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS), participated to the second ReLOaD Western Balkans conference *“Enhancing transparency and accountability towards improving local democracy in the Western Balkans”*, which took place in Tirana on October 8 - 9, 2019.



This conference presented the experiences of cooperation between the local authorities and the civil society related to transparency of procedures and clarity for funding civil society organizations (CSOs) across the Western Balkans.

Specific focus was given to legislative differences and similarities across the region as well as existing practices and experiences from the European Union.





The event was divided into 3 plenary sessions:

1. *Transparent funding of the CSOs and its benefits in a local community – local governments perspectives*
2. *Transparent funding of the CSOs and its benefits in a local community -perspectives from CSOs as grant recipient*
3. *How to Improve Civic Participation, Activism and Youth Involvement in Local Communities – Can We Do Better?*



The conference was attended by more than 120 representatives of local authorities and civil society organizations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.



Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) organizes the 5th edition of Tirana Connectivity Forum 2019 – “Weaving the fabric of the union”

Tirana, 29 – 31 October 2019



Representative of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) participated to the 5th edition of Tirana Connectivity Forum 2019 – “Weaving the fabric of the union”, which was held in Rogner Hotel, organized by Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) in partnership with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung–FES, Hanns Seidel Stiftung–HSS and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung–KAS; in association with the Regional Youth Cooperation Office-RYCO, and; with the support of the Western Balkan Summit in Poznan and of the Regional Cooperation Council-RCC.

The event was attended by experts, researchers, academicians, CSO, WBS coordinators and other policy-makers involved in EU Enlargement in WB6, in Regional Cooperation, and Connectivity dynamics.



This forum edition analyzed the progress of the Connectivity Agenda in transport and energy, as well as people 2 people connectivity, and then debate about the role that connectivity infrastructure projects have in improving WB6 institutional governance, anchoring WB6 countries in their EU path, as well as on helping the engaged WB6 institutional reforms.

The program has been organized in in six panels and designed to cover both the sector and the transversal dynamics:



- On October 30th – “State of affairs of connectivity in WB6”, panels covered the Connectivity Agenda spatial component in the sectors of energy and transport, as well as P2P connectivity.
- On October 31st – “Connectivity and convergence”, connectivity in the WB6 region has been analyzed in the larger context of EU integration dynamics and of the engaged reforms.



The Meeting of the National Council for Civil Society (NCCS)

Tirana, 12 November 2019



The meeting of the National Council for Civil Society (NCCS) organized by the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) has been held at the premises of the Center for Openness and Dialogue (COD), at the Prime Minister’s Office, where civil society organizations were invited.



In this meeting was approved the Minutes of the last NCCS meeting held on 22.6.2018; Discussions on the tasks, progress of the NCCS and its engagement in monitoring the Council of Ministers Decision Nr. 539, date 25.7.2019; Involvement of Civil Society in the Negotiation Process; Organizing the first National Conference for Civil Society; Setting up a Working Group on Volunteering.

Study visit of the participating CSOs to the NGOs Academy Program

Tirana, 21 November 2019



The Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) in the framework of the NGOs Academy Program for Civil Society Organizations – by National Resource Centre for Civil Society in Albania, organized a meeting at the premises of the institution with the participating CSOs in this program.



The Academy is a 9-month program dedicated to Leaders and Managers of civil society organizations, which aims to increase their capacity in organizational management and sustainable development of the organization.

The representatives of the ASCS made a brief presentation of the role and activity of the Agency, the National Council for Civil Society (NCCS) and the Roadmap as well as discussed with the guests on these topics.



IDM Albania presents the CSO Sustainability Index 2018 – Report for Albania

Tirana, 22 November 2019



A representative from the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) attended the presentation meeting of the findings of USAID CSO Sustainability Index 2018 for Albania, organized by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), which was held at the premises of Hotel Tirana International.

In this panel discussion were participants from civil society, donor community, state actors and media participants who together discussed trends in the sustainability of the sector.

The overall sustainability of the civil society sector did not change significantly in 2018, although slight improvements were noted in both the advocacy and financial viability dimensions.

For more information: www.idmalbania.org



**ASCS supports the initiative #ShqipëriaSolidare
for the situation created by the earthquake strike**

November - December 2019



e-albania.al/dhuro
e-albania.al/donate

After the earthquake struck on November 26, 2019, the Albanian Government launched the "**Solidary Albania**" initiative immediately, where through a single online address www.e-albania.al every Albanian can contribute to alleviating the devastating earthquake. All contributions and assistance will be addressed by the State Civil Emergency Structure, to facilitate and support citizens and families affected by this major natural disaster.



**Donate online
via e-albania**

**Contribute via bank
accounts**

**Other
contributions**



“Voluntary contributions, Emergency”

Account numbers in second level banks

Banka Credins

IBAN in ALL: AL29 2121 1016 0000 0000 0030 0001
IBAN in EUR : AL72 2121 1016 0000 0000 0030 0003
IBAN in USD: AL02 2121 1016 0000 0000 0030 0002
SWIFT: CDISALTR

Banka Raiffeisen

IBAN in ALL: AL38 2021 1013 0000 0000 0015 7945
IBAN in EUR : AL85 2021 1013 0000 0000 0115 7945
IBAN in USD: AL35 2021 1013 0000 0000 0215 7945
SWIFT: SGSBALTX

Banka ProCredit

IBAN in ALL: AL92209110810000108613500001
IBAN in EUR : AL81209110810000108613500102
IBAN in USD: AL70209110810000108613500203
SWIFT: FEFAALTR

Banka Kombetare Tregtare

IBAN in ALL: AL44 2051 1014 3288 86CL TJCL ALLA
IBAN in EUR : AL11 2051 1014 3288 86CL TJCF EURA
IBAN in USD: AL55 2051 1014 3288 86CL TJCF USDA
SWIFT: NCBAALTX

Tirana Bank

IBAN in ALL: AL47 2061 1183 0000 0108 2000 0011
IBAN in EUR : AL20 2061 1183 0000 0108 2000 0012
IBAN in USD: AL74 2061 1183 0000 0108 2000 0010
SWIFT: TIRBALTR

Intesa SanPaolo

IBAN in ALL: AL37 2081 1008 0000 0020 2453 0701
IBAN in EUR : AL10 2081 1008 0000 0020 2453 0702
IBAN in USD: AL80 2081 1008 0000 0020 2453 0703
SWIFT: USAALALTR

Union Bank

IBAN in ALL: AL50 2141 1209 0111 1009 2516 0413
IBAN in EUR : AL40 2141 1209 0111 1009 2525 0221
IBAN in USD: AL66 2141 1209 0111 1009 2525 0141
SWIFT: UNALALTR

OTP

IBAN in ALL: AL86 2131 1013 0000 0000 0084 1534
IBAN in EUR : AL32 2131 1013 0000 0000 0084 1536
IBAN in USD: AL05 2131 1013 0000 0000 0084 1537
SWIFT: PUPPALTR

Banka Amerikane e Investimeve

IBAN in ALL: AL38 2101 1012 0000 0000 0003 8968
IBAN in EUR : AL21 2101 1012 0000 0000 0007 1963
IBAN in USD: AL38 2101 1012 0000 0000 0004 8280
SWIFT: EMPOALTR

Banka e Bashkuar e Shqiperise (UBA)

IBAN in ALL: AL60 2031 1003 2010 1520 1101 0928
IBAN in EUR : AL71 2031 1003 2010 1490 1101 0929
IBAN in USD: AL88 2031 1003 2010 1400 1101 0929
SWIFT: AAISALTR

Banka Alpha

IBAN in ALL: AL219021 1364 0191 2500 0067 1917
IBAN in EUR : AL889021 1364 0191 2500 0067 0905
IBAN in USD: AL789021 1364 0191 2500 0067 2928
SWIFT: CRBAALTR

The Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) in the framework of managing of the state of emergency that was created by the earthquake strike, besides of its solidarity, also invited volunteers from psychology field to become part of **#ShqipëriaSolidare** initiative to orient and to counsel parents in the family in case of an earthquake strike.

In solidarity and in response to this initiative, at the beginning of December 2019, the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) published a summary entitled "**Tips for Parents in Family in Case of Earthquake Strike**" of questions and answers from some volunteers and experts of psychology field, as follows:

TIPS FOR PARENTS IN FAMILY IN CASE OF EARTHQUAKE STRIKE

Published: December 7th, 2019

1. What should we do in the event of an earthquake?

(Elona Hasko, Child Expert / Psychoanalyst)

- Specialists in engineering, seismology, construction, etc., always suggest that when the earthquake strikes, we need to keep calm, not move from where we are or if we can settle right below the desks, bed or stable parts of the home, office, environment where we are.
- When the shakes are over, as soon as we realize that the earthquake has ceased we must step out of our environment and head out into the open, away from homes, palaces, trees, solid objects.
- Care should be taken when exiting the apartment, office, environment where we are, move carefully to the stairs and do not use the elevator, and taking care that no one, especially children, is killed when exiting the apartment.

2. Should we tell the truth about the earthquake?

(Elona Hasko, Child Expert / Psychoanalyst)

- Yes, we should always tell the truth to the children, but with simple, concise and understandable sentences.
- We need to show them that earthquakes are natural phenomena that occur beyond our will and control, but we can take measures to prevent earthquakes from harming us or when they are too strong to damage as little as possible.
- Telling the truth does not allow children to resort to untrustworthy, uncertain sources that can add to the panic.
- Scientific information, from reliable sources, can help children better understand this natural phenomenon and relieve the anxiety they may have experienced.
- Teachers in schools can provide help in understanding this phenomenon and the measures that can be taken to manage it during and after assisting parents and families, thereby clarifying and alleviating children's fears and anxiety.

3. How can we explain the earthquake to children 3-10 years old?

(Albana Xhemali, Psychologist)

- In the case of natural, unexplained events such as earthquakes, children may experience regression as a result of the anxiety and stress situations that the situation causes. Unlike adults, children, especially those younger than 5, do not understand the situation and also find it difficult to express their experiences. We need to explain to the children that the event that happened is a natural occurrence by constantly telling them that they are now more secure. Feelings of guilt in children are also present. We need to be alert and careful if the child feels guilty. We should tell them that what happened was not caused by them and also to stay close and respond to the needs of the child. Kids ask a lot about what happened, why it happened, are they safer now, etc. They are unclear about the situation, they can say they are fine, they are not scared etc. But in their drawings they show that they are still shocked.
- In ordinary situations, children feel safe when their parents are nearby. But in a situation where unexplained phenomena occur, children are in uncertain territory and seek to explain what happened.
- If we tell the kids everything is over, and try to avoid the questions they ask, maybe this is wrong because it could increase their anxiety. But we can tell the kids what is being suggested by technical and engineering specialists, such as: "The biggest shake has passed, there may be small earthquakes, but we are safe now." It is important to constantly tell children that they are safer already and that we are also close to them. A hug in these cases would be a good thing.
- Children older than 5 years can be asked (since they are better able to formulate sentences that explain their emotional state) how they experienced the event. We can paint with them because that helps. Even from my experience so far I have noticed that the children who had experienced the earthquake clearly showed in their drawings their experience and they also showed how they perceived the event.

4. How to manage my children's panic and how to support anxiety

(Elona Hasko, Child Expert / Psychoanalyst)

- It is important to talk to the children about the fear of the earthquake, this is the best way to ease panic and cope with anxiety.
- Parents should tell their children that it is perfectly normal to be afraid or anxious after an earthquake, to feel upset, sad, etc.
- Talking, discussing, researching information or articles from serious / scientific sources on earthquake phenomena by parents and children together can help understand the phenomenon, the measures taken to cope with it, and so on. Finding the right information can help children, especially to manage anxiety, that after a strong earthquake others are expected to be light, but not harmful.
- Parents need to communicate to their children that it is normal to feel and understand that the earthquake is a situation we cannot prevent or control from happening, but we can take care of ourselves so that it does not harm us physically.

- Parents should encourage their children, ask them to be patient, and let them know that it may take some time until we feel good again.
- Parents should be more involved with their children in games and fun activities that help relieve fear, anger, stress, anxiety, etc.

5. Who do children trust most: Grandparents or parents?

(Oltjana Sadiku Shehaj, Teacher dhe Elona Hasko, Child Expert / Psychoanalyst)

- Young children are more likely to trust their parents more in everything they are told, given the fact that grandparents are more supportive of parenting decisions.
- Grandparents can be and have been a great help to children after the trauma of the earthquake, helping families with housing, childcare. Also, some children may be more attached to grandparents and spend a lot of time with them, and may therefore trust more grandparents. This is a good thing, and parents simply need to communicate with grandparents how they will explain the earthquake phenomenon to their grandchildren so that the explanations can be similar.
- Grandparents are naturally calmer in explaining risk situations and tend to mitigate the importance of events and are more cautious in reactions, while parents having direct responsibility for the life of their child have an emotional burden that is unintentionally reach out to the child, so their help and role in coping with this event may be even more useful.

6. Do adults and children experience the same earthquake?

(Albana Xhemali, Psychologist)

I don't think children experience the same earthquake as adults. The adult already has some experience and also has information about the situation and natural phenomena. As adult, we have more responsibility and anxiety increases when we need to think about children and other people around us. Children, meanwhile, need safety, and that safety is broken when an earthquake occurs. Children express less than adults about the event, may not understand an earthquake, and in young children feelings of guilt may be present as they may think they are the cause of the event. Children can also take on the role of an adult and take on responsibilities that are not their own.

7. How and how much the mechanism of hope and the resumption affect of life?

(Miranda Doxani, Psychotherapist / Mental Health Specialist)

- Hope is important to our mental well-being. Neuroscientists who study how hope affects the human brain have concluded that a sense of hope changes the brain. The brain pumps chemicals when it experiences the feeling of hope. These chemicals can block the pain and speed up recovery. The result is that the brain can overcome obstacles and recover. Hope brings about a more positive state of overcoming adversity, or trauma. Hope structures our lives in anticipation of the future and influences how we feel in the present.

- The way in which a hopeful person copes with frustration differs from those who are not. Even if the present is uncomfortable, thinking about a positive tomorrow significantly reduces stress, increases confidence, and reduces the impact of negative events. In trauma and collective disaster, hope plays a very important role in coping with the situation, reducing the negative effects of trauma and bringing meaning to life for victims.

8. How should we behave with our children?

(Albana Xhemali, Psychologist)

- We need to be wary of any experiences and emotions children display. First we need to understand what the child knows about what happened and how he experienced the earthquake. We might ask the children: What happened? Do you know what an earthquake is? What were you doing at the time the event happened? During the days in the field, some children were able to tell me what they and their relatives were doing at the time the earthquake struck. Children tend to show that they were not afraid, especially those over the age of 5. In such a situation we can tell them that fear is normal, we can tell them that we adults too were afraid. But now things are quieter and we are safer.
- Avoid children's TV and news exposure. The news certainly keeps us informed but can also increase anxiety. Some of the kids I met said these words, "Did you see the news, how those houses were destroyed, did you see them?". It may seem to us that children do not understand, but experience shows that they are smarter and more alert than we think. So what we can do is get them involved in physical activities like ball games, jumping, taking them to parks and outdoor venues.
- Trying to get kids back into their daily routine, stabilizing their meals and engaging them in some of the activities they did before the earthquake hit.

9. Can we treat this phenomenon as a game?

(Oltjana Sadiku Shehaj, Teacher)

- In Albanian society, we are often taught to overlook serious situations or major disasters by not mentioning them, by not telling the child what happened. One way to deal with such situations is to talk about the phenomenon calmly by treating the issue in the most comprehensible way for the child.
- Earthquake may not be considered a phenomenon, even for the smaller kids, but through play it shows the child the ability to build and how to avoid destroying what we just built, or how children can react during such a situation. Toys, puzzles, or any other instrument nearby can help your child understand how great it is to build great things.
- The game demonstrates to the child by giving practical evidence of what kind of reaction we can have in these cases. For example, in kindergartens in Tirana, on special days of the academic year, concrete situations are organized by specialists on

how to deal with emergencies such as: fire fighting, which can be further extended as incentives in schools including how to behave during and after earthquakes.

10. What is the possibility of the repetition?

Earthquakes occur around the world every year. This natural phenomenon causes fear and panic among the population for the fact that it can cause great material damage or loss of housing or buildings, and can be as harmful as it can be to people's lives. Concerning the November 26 earthquake, local and foreign seismologists with scientific facts and comparisons of earthquakes dropped over the years ensure that the risk of a similar earthquake cannot occur. This is because the aftershocks that have troubled the country are coming down in both frequency and intensity.

11. How to turn the smile to the children?

(Sonilda Barjamaj, Therapist / Psychoanalyst)

- Turning the smile to the children means giving them back their daily lives. Once the physical danger has passed, the children should be explained with great delicacy and understandable words about the earthquake and measures for fear, anxiety and panic, very likely experiences in such cases it is important that children to return to normal life. They should return to their daily routines such as going to school / kindergarten, visiting family or friends, attending certain sports or various activities that entertain them. Along with returning to the daily routine will come the smiles. Of course, security, the explanation of natural phenomena, the management of emotional states, and the return to daily life should not be regarded as separate processes, but as processes that co-exist.
- Parents need to be very careful with managing their emotions in such cases, as the feelings of fear and panic they may experience and the way they express and transmit them to their children can aggravate children's emotional experiences.
- Some children and parents manage such situations very well, but others may need specialist help. The earlier this assistance is asked, the better for the child.

Anyone interested in further advice was invited to contact the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) to the inbox of the Facebook's social network or to email address, where would be immediately notified of the concern.

CONSULTATION MEETINGS

*on the process of electing of civil society members
of the National Council for Civil Society (NCCS)*

November – December 2019

The Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS), in the role of the Technical Secretariat of the National Council for Civil Society (NCCS) during the months of November - December 2019, held several information and consultation meetings with civil society organizations on the process of electing four civil society members for the NCCS.

Vacancies of civil society members in the Council have been created due to the expiry of the 2-year terms, respectively:

- **2 (two) members**
Action field A. Democratization, rule of law, human rights and EU integration;
- **1 (one) member**
Action field B. Economic-territorial-environmental development;
- **1 (one) member**
Action field C. Improving welfare, social services, health care and quality of life.

During this period meetings were held in Kukes and Berat, but due to the emergency created by the earthquake of November 26, 2019, subsequent meetings were suspended until further notice.

At the meetings, representatives of the ASCS and civil society organizations discussed over criteria for candidates, supporting documentation and the stages of the process for selecting candidates for civil society members for the National Council for Civil Society.

The Institute of Social Studies and Humanities (ISSH) presents the "Accelerating Citizen Development and Cooperation" study

Tirana, 17 December 2019



Representatives of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS) participated in the presentation of the "Accelerating development and civic cooperation" study, conducted by the Institute of Social Studies and Humanities (ISSH) with the support of USAID, in the framework of the project "Improving local governance policies, through democratic citizen participation". The findings of the study were presented by the Executive Director of the Institute, Mr. Leart Kola, while the representative of the Ministry of Interior, the Deputy Minister Ms. Romina Kuko, also presented and answered participants' questions about decentralization and change, as result of

the 2013 administrative-territorial reform, as well as the addresses registration and signaling process. Present at the panel was also the Deputy Mayor of Tirana Ms. Anuela Ristani, who responded to the interest of the participants, also on the issue of centralizing some of the functions within the municipalities. This issue has led to some procedures to still need improvements. The suggestion proposed was that the municipality to compile standard forms for various complaints / requests to facilitate the citizens' communication with the institution. This study seeks to improve local governance policies through democratic citizen participation and to better serve citizens' needs, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. For the purpose of the study, a group of experts from different fields have collaborated for over a year, analyzing the municipalities of: Tirana, Lezha, Peshkopi, Korça and Saranda.



ASCS ➤ Newsletter 24

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