



Co-PLAN

INSTITUTE FOR HABITAT DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTI PER ZHVILLIMIN E HABITATIT

annual report

2013

Co-PLAN Annual Report 2013

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Dear Partner,

We take pleasure in sharing with you the highlights from work here at Co-PLAN for 2013, as well as some of the vital developments in the fields of urban and spatial development, environmental management, and public finances.

Overall, 2013 marked an important year in terms of reforms, particularly concerning developments in the field of territorial planning, such as the Territorial-Administrative Reform initiated with the election of the new government in June, the discourse on Decentralization, the reform of the higher education system, etc. These dynamics were also reflected on an organizational level, such as: the development of a Policy Platform for Territorial Governance, which was submitted to the political parties and other interest groups prior to the June elections. Based on this platform, Co-PLAN supported the Minister of Urban Development and Tourism in drafting the program of the Ministry and the overall Government of Albania's program for the territorial planning pillar. Further, Co-PLAN became part of the experts working group that will review within 2014 the decentralization strategy.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution and cooperation in our joint efforts to positively change the urban development panorama in Albania, and invite you to look at this report as a source of inspiration for new ideas of cooperation in 2014.

Dritan Shutina
Executive Director



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01

Co-Plan Profile

Organizational Mission

Co-PLAN is a non-profit organization that has contributed to sustainable development by enabling good urban and regional governance, tackling key environmental issues, developing civil society, impacting policies, and promoting community participation knowledge-making since 1995.

We work with people and institutions, to foster tangible social transformation and positive change on the ground by inducing change-driving knowledge in our society for smart management of our habitat. Co-PLAN fulfils this mission through means of pilot activities and advisory services financed by national and international institutions and direct involvement with communities, local government units and other non-governmental organizations in the field of urban and regional management, environmental management, and municipal finance.

We are based in Tirana, Albania, and have developed a solid-project-outreach-network at a national, regional, and international level, including many of the Local Government Units in Albania, numerous organizations in the Western Balkans region, Europe, and beyond.

The organizational structure of Co-PLAN is expertise-oriented, whereby each expertise is developed and supported by individual teams. The activity of Co-PLAN is built upon four expertise areas: namely Spatial Planning and Land Development, Urban and Regional Governance, Urban Environmental Management, with Research constituting a cross-cutting, shared feature by all three teams.

1. Spatial Planning and Land Development - Co-PLAN's ambitions, involvement and commitment to this field have matured, clearly reflected in the multiple scale activities (i.e. the neighbourhood, city, regional, inter-regional, and national levels), and a multitude of actors such as communities, local and central government, businesses, donors, and civil society organizations. Co-PLAN has supported local governments, NGOs, and business communities in addressing urban development issues through the preparation of city development strategies, urban regulatory plans, neighbourhood development plans, and other guiding documents. Today, Co-PLAN plays an important role on a policy-making level, proactively engaged in the reviewing of the law 'On territorial Planning', capacity building for a correct implementation of the law, coaching and assistance to the LGUs for the preparation of their Local Development Plans, etc.

2. Urban and Regional Governance - Finances constitute an inseparable element of any development, and as such since many years Co-PLAN has seized the importance of municipal finance management to the current urban developments in Albania. To this end, Co-PLAN works with local governments to improve municipal finance management practices through the preparation of the capital investment programs, annual budgets generated through participatory practices, cost analyses of public-private-partnerships, and the improved levying of taxes. Social accountability, and transparency matters make for an important part of the Co-PLAN project portfolio, focusing on the importance of open data for improved local government performance in terms of accountability and transparency in quantifiable terms.

3. Urban Environmental Management - Territorial development, particularly when rapid and informal, has vast and irreversible consequences on the environment. As a result, sustainable environmental management makes for an essential part of Co-PLAN's core expertise and project portfolio. The focus on this particular field has been on the improvement of the environment related service standards and efficiency (particularly in solid waste management, energy, etc.), upgrading capacities, strengthening institutions through the provision of guidelines and on-the-job assistance, connecting environmental management projects to the concept of public private partnerships, etc.

4. Public Policy, Research and Advocacy- Research forms an integral and extensive part of Co-PLAN's working methodology and project portfolio. In addition to individual research and consultancy projects commissioned by various international agencies, research is always used in the ongoing projects, mainly in the form of feasibility studies, environmental assessments, and audits, focusing on planning, participatory processes, local governance, service provision, etc. Co-PLAN, is part of the POLIS University Research and Development Institute – POLIS IKZH, and has a consolidated, regularly reviewed research agenda, which aligns Co-PLAN's research interests, priorities and efforts on an annual basis.

Through its solid research-backed studies and reports, as well as knowledge extracted from direct field-work and involvement with the community, Co-PLAN has increasingly sought to influence policy-making within Albania. To this end, Co-PLAN has undertaken policy research aimed at generating policy recommendations, which are provided to stakeholders and main political parties in the form of Political Platforms. In May 2013, Co-PLAN prepared and shared "A Platform of Policies on Territorial Governance", preceding the parliamentary election campaign, held on June 23, 2013. The platform, which was circulated among the main political stakeholders, media representatives, donor organizations, and general public, provided a clear set of recommendations for a Good Territorial Governance, a good part of which were reflected in the government program.

The Board of Directors



Dr. Sokol Çelo (Head)

Has been acting as the Chairman of the Board of Directors since 2002. Currently working as Assistant Professor of Management and International Business at Suffolk University, Boston – USA. A mathematician by qualification, Dr. Çelo furthered his studies in the field of business administration, and focused his research on location decision making for international investments of multinational corporations.



Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj (Member)

A co-funder and current Rector of Polis University, the International School of Architecture and Development Policies, where he also teaches Urban Design. Dr. Aliaj is an urban planner by qualification and profession, author to numerous publications in this field, and guest speaker in various international conferences. Currently a member of the Municipal Council of Tirana, and 'Citizen of Honour of Kamza Municipality', and active contributor in a number of Reform Commissions.

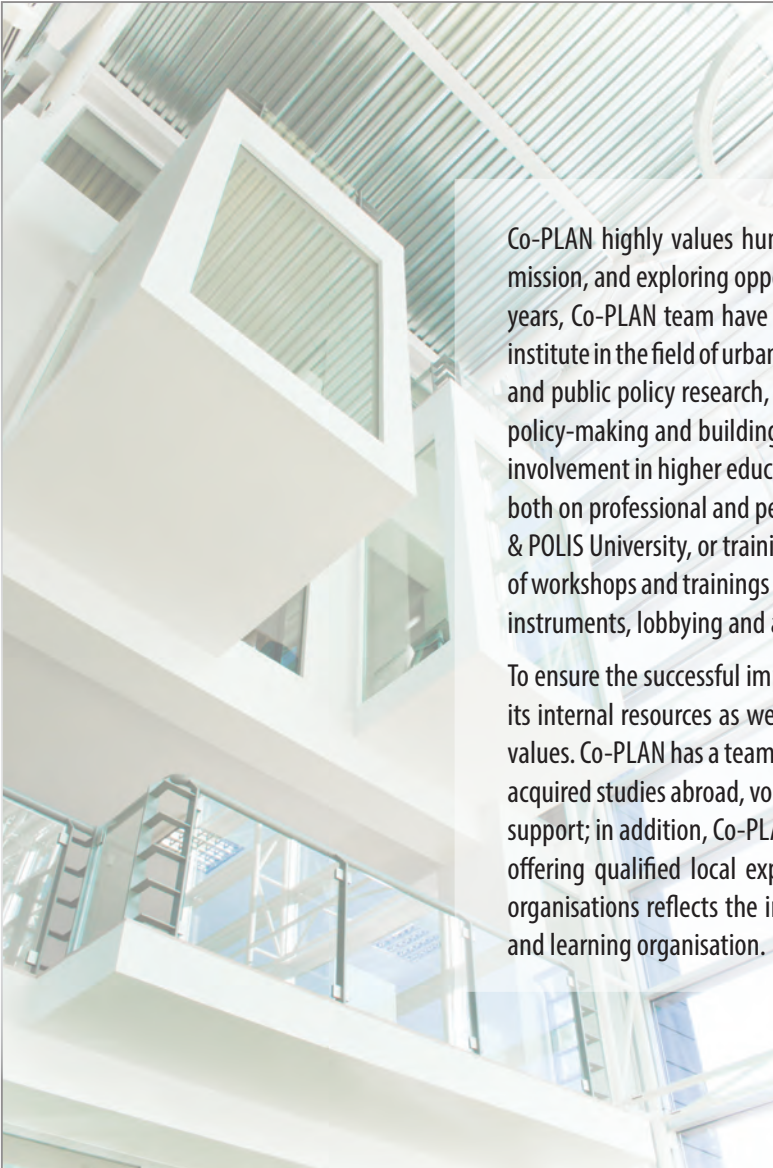


Doc. Sotir Dhamo (Member)

The Administrator of the founding board of Polis University, and lecturer of two courses: Urban Design and Territorial Analysis and Human Settlements. He is the editor of the scientific journal of U_POLIS 'Forum A+P', and engages in consultancy and research activities in the field of urban planning and urban design, and is author to numerous publications in the field.

The Board of Directors is assisted by the Advisory Board, who contributes with ideas and advice in the decision-making process of the management bodies. Co-PLAN Advisory Board comprises of five members: Peter Nientied, John Driscoll, Valdet Sala, Ferry van Wilgenburg and Sef Slootweg.

The Organizational Culture



Co-PLAN highly values human capital as instrumental to achieving its organizational mission, and exploring opportunities for future growth/development. Over the past few years, Co-PLAN team have worked on Co-PLAN becoming an influential and respected institute in the field of urban development, public finances, environmental management, and public policy research, contributing to the Albanian society through strengthening policy-making and building a critical mass in its core expertise fields through means of involvement in higher education. To this end, Co-PLAN have regularly invested in its staff both on professional and personal development, through workshops hosted at Co-PLAN & POLIS University, or trainings organized in partner institutions. During 2013 a number of workshops and trainings were organized, particularly in the field of land management instruments, lobbying and advocacy, communicating for impact, project writing, etc.

To ensure the successful implementation of its projects and activities, Co-PLAN relies on its internal resources as well as a pool of selected experts that share its organizational values. Co-PLAN has a team of 25 fulltime professional experts, with the majority having acquired studies abroad, vouching for its in-depth expert advice and thorough analytical support; in addition, Co-PLAN often relies on its solid network of freelance professionals offering qualified local expertise. Co-PLAN's choice to fit in the small medium-sized organisations reflects the importance Co-PLAN places on maintaining a flexible, agile, and learning organisation.



2013 Co-Plan





02

Highlights 2013

Planning Activities

Political Platform for Territorial Governance (June 2013)

As representatives of civil society since 1995, experts in the field of urban development, and as Albanian citizens, Co-PLAN proposed a political platform for better territorial governance, during the election period May-June 2013. This platform of policies built on our experience with the governing institutions and community, and on a very thorough analysis of the Albanian reality, continuous research work, and good practices from the European Union.

The Political Platform for Territorial Governance tackled the issue of vast costs generated by the temporary, dynamic solutions to the social and economic development of our country; the practices of legal, institutional and development informality, and the mind-set and the civic culture created as a result.

In order to assist policymakers, the platform set forth very practical recommendations for the improvement and strengthening of the territorial policies in Albania. These proposals were in full compliance with the domestic needs of the country, as well as with the EU integration processes, particularly in relation to the issue of territorial control and regionalisation.

The platform aimed to serve as a solid ground of arguments and concrete proposals for the main political parties in the country, particularly relevant for the drafting and presentation of development alternatives in the election period, but most importantly in the period following the elections. The developments following the elections, and the new government priorities, particularly related to the Regionalisation of Albania and the Territorial Reform, showed that Co-PLAN's proposal was very much welcomed.





National Conference on Territorial Reform (October 17, 2013)

On October 17, 2013, the Government of Albania held a national conference to declare the commencement of the Territorial-Administrative Reform and the 20-month lasting process. The conference focused on the establishment of a consensual and sustainable dialogue platform among the interested parties, as well as discussion and validation of the findings emerging from the assessments conducted by the experts, potential scenarios for its implementation, etc.

The conference, which was organized by the State Minister for Local Affairs, in cooperation with OSBE, ADA, SDC, and SIDA, hosted the Prime Minister of Albania, Mr. Edi Rama, the State Minister for Local Affairs, Mr. Bledi Çuçi, and representatives from central and local government institutions, civil society sector, donor organizations, experts, etc.

Co-PLAN, on the basis of the analytical work conducted over the years, at least dating back to 2005, and based on its role as an implementing party for the Regional Development Project in Northern Albania, played a significant role in the discussion on the Territorial Reform, particularly that of the second tier, where it also presented on the Needs, Challenges and Recommendations in view of the territorial reform and multi-tier governance.

Co-PLAN, under Planning and Local Governance Project (PLGP), financed by USAID, continued to support NTPA and Local governments on issues regarding Territorial Planning and Development control. During 2013 Co-PLAN supported National Territorial Planning Agency (NTPA) in reviewing the territorial plan of the Municipality of Kukes. In this framework several workshops were organized with the Urban Planning Department specialists of the Municipality of Kukes with the aim of assisting them in the process of adopting their General Local Plan with the law on "Territorial Planning", no. 10119.

Following the first phase of the project, NTPA was supported to assist the local government units to review their existing Regulatory Plans and adopt them to General Local Plans (GLP) according to the new law on territorial planning, the work of Co-PLAN, through PLGP, continued the second phase. This assistance mainly focused on coaching the LGUs on implementing their reviewed (now officially approved) GLP. First step of implementation of GLP is drafting a Detailed Local Plan (DLP), which is a land management and control instrument. Co-PLAN experts worked together with each of the assisted municipalities' staff of Berat, Lushnjë, Vlorë, throughout the whole process of DLP drafting; from taking of the initiative to the official approval of the detailed plan proposals. The process of DLP elaborations, besides introducing new practices of land management, provided an added value in participatory territorial planning and development issues. Moreover, Berat Municipality was also assisted in elaborating the Territorial Development Control Regulation (TDCR). All of the assisted DLPs and the TDCR were approved and came into force in 2013.

Besides on the job assistance, another way of supporting the Local Governments in territorial planning issues was through training sessions focusing on several main components such as: Detailed Local Plans elaboration, procedures and provisions about issuing building permits and GIS application and the National Planning Register.

Parallel to the support provided to NTPA to assist LGUs, support was also provided to NTPA regarding their role in assisting the National Territorial Council (NTC) in their decision making processes. This year the support was focused on research and assessment of the criteria necessary to be followed by the NTC for issuing building permits, for interventions which need NTC approval following the provisions of the Territorial Planning law.



T

Technical Assistance to the NTPA and the Local Government Units



C

ompletion of the Matra Project (19 April, 2013)



The successful completion of the project “Fostering Partnerships For Equitable Cities - Capacity building for participatory spatial planning”, has been celebrated together with distinguished guests and His Excellency Martin de Beij, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Tirana. Over the past three years, the Dutch government (MATRA) funded project has worked to promote participatory neighbourhood planning, and develop capacity building in spatial development. To this end, Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, have worked in close cooperation with the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), and POLIS University, piloting the project in the municipalities of Durrës, Shkodër and Fier.

The know-how and the case-studies developed during the project implementation, have been further refined, and compiled into a practical publication titled ‘New practices in land development and management in Albania’, particularly intended for urban planning professionals, developers, and decision-makers.

During the activity, which was organized on April 19, 2013 at Polis University, a substantial, well-researched ambitious publication particularly aimed at policy-influencing was presented: ‘Policyfollowers or Policymakers! II’. This publication is the second in line, as part of Co-PLAN’s commitment to contribute to the articulation of an alternative in terms of good governance, and to continuously offer alternatives on urban development, territorial and environmental management. Through this publication, Co-PLAN intends to further the discussion on such matters, hoping that a good part of the ideas proposed through the articles of this book, will become part of a professional and political discussion, to be further adopted into development policies.

Part of the celebration became also the 90 graduates who received their postgraduate diplomas in spatial planning, as part of the professional master program, organized by Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, in collaboration with IHS/Erasmus University and Polis University. The participants were greeted by the newly established Dutch Alumni Association, a very well received enterprise.



Social Accountability Practices - Regional Workshop (19 - 20 March, 2013)



Co-PLAN in partnership with the Institute for International Urban Development (I2UD), together with the World Bank Institute, organized a Regional Workshop for the dissemination of the Social Accountability Audit project, in Skopje, Macedonia. The 2-day regional workshop brought together representatives from the five regional cities where the project was implemented, namely: Durrës (AL), Prishtina (KS), Skopje (MK), Sarajevo and Banjaluka (BiH), as well as from other Balkan cities, which have managed to implement and to consolidate successful social accountability practices on a local or regional level, such as Pula in Croatia, and Indjija in Serbia, etc.

The workshop focused on the Social Accountability framework developed by the project work group, comprising of three main pillars: participation, transparency, and monitoring and feedback. Three different types of interest groups participated in the discussion: local government authorities, citizens and intermediaries, such as: Civil Society Organizations, who are seen as key actors in the development and implementation of concrete practices for increased accountability.

Participants in the workshop were enthusiastic about making Social Accountability Discourse part of their city agenda, and came to the conclusion that social accountability initiatives and practices are to be integrated in the city development plans, so that they do not remain isolated cases.

Co-PLAN participated in the second international municipal fair NEXPO, held in Croatia in September 2013, which brought together local government authorities, associations of the local government authorities, development agencies, representatives from civil society organizations, and businesses from South-east Europe. The main theme for NEXPO for 2013 was integration into the European Union, and to issues of public finances, municipal self-assessment, etc.

The fair created opportunities for the local authorities to meet with private sector representatives so to attract possible investors for their projects in renewable energy and energy efficiency. Many of the Albanian Local Government Units attended NEXPO 2013, which constitutes the biggest fair of LGUs in the region, with over 4000 participants.



PAVING
THE ROAD
TOWARDS



INTEGRATION

The International Municipal Fair: NEXPO (September 25-27, 2013)

City for Citizens



Public spaces in Albanian cities over the past 20 years, have been transformed into parking lots, cafeterias & bars, or piles of uncollected waste. More often than not, they are also transformed into additions to existing buildings, or multistory buildings. Along with the public space, gone are the chances for people to stay in them and socialize, play, or simply watch the world go by. Today, children and the elderly make for two of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to lack of public space.

In order to showcase that community willingness is enough when coupled with commitment, creativity and recyclable materials, Co-PLAN, POLIS University and the Slovak Governance Institute, under the City for Citizen project financed by the EU, decided to build a playground for children and a modest recreational area for the elderly.

POLIS University students, architects, urban planners and engineers, supported by the Municipal Unit no. 11, Tirana, worked over the course of three weeks for the implementation of colourful, and multi-functional playground for children. The project built on children's wishes, and suggestions from the residents of the area, which were then transformed into practical games produced by the students and specialists. The project relied on the use of recyclable materials, such as tyres and wooden pallets, all of which are very easy to find. Through this project, Co-PLAN and POLIS University want to encourage similar incentives, where communities can engage in the improvement of the public scape in their residential areas, using easily accessible materials such as recycled goods, etc.



R

egional Workshop RDP



In line with the process of reviewing and monitoring of the strategic plans for the qarks of Shkodra and Lezha, a first regional workshop was held (of four planned) on “Strategic Planning and Monitoring” on December 17 and 18, in the city of Durres. This workshop, which was organized as part of the Regional Development Program in Northern Albania, brought together representatives from the Local Government units, various interest groups on a qark level, such as universities, civil society organizations, etc. Existing strategic plans for regional development were discussed during the workshop, particularly focusing on the used methodology, the content of the strategic document, and the priority measures.

This workshop builds on the work conducted by the program experts in close cooperation with the two qarks and other important regional actors, for the drafting of an Action Plan and a Monitoring Strategy based on the document of Regional Development Concept (expected to be finalized within 2014).

The overall objective of the Regional Development Program in Northern Albania is to significantly contribute to an equitable social and economic development of both regions and beyond to support the Albanian government’s efforts in line with the national strategy for development and integration.

Improvement of Energy Efficiency, particularly in the Residential Sector in Albania, was at the focus of Co-PLAN's activity during 2013, comprising of a number of studies, on site measurements, and round-tables. During December 2013, Co-PLAN and POLIS University in cooperation with three environmental organizations, namely Ekolëvizja, MilieuKontakt Albania and EDEN Center, organized a national roundtable focusing on matters of energy efficiency in the residential sector, fulfilling the following objectives:

(1) Provide an analysis of the institutional and legislative progress to date, in the energy efficiency sector in condominiums; (2) Present recommendations to improve the current legislative and institutional framework for increasing energy efficiency in condominiums in Albania; (3) Raise awareness among citizens, civil society organizations, and institutions on the necessity for progress in this field and, (4) Strengthen the role of civil society in improving legal framework on energy efficiency and facilitating its implementation;

The findings from this round-table were shared in the form of a policy document with concrete recommendations for the improvement of the situation, the institutions on a central government level and of the interest groups in the field of energy efficiency. This document is particularly helpful at a time when the attention of our institutions is more focused on the reduction of losses in energy transmission and distribution, whilst there are no official guidelines as to how to increase energy efficiency in the residential sector, taking into account that it consumes app. 23% of the energy in the country.

Furthermore, the current legislative framework (the Law on Energy Efficiency and the Code of Residences) has yet to be updated in line with the respective EU Directives, whilst the monitoring and promotional instruments are yet to be put in place.

The workshop was organized in frame of the EU funded "Development of the ENV.net in West Balkan and Turkey: giving citizens a voice to influence the environmental process reforms for closer EU integration" project through the Partnership Programs for Civil Society Organisations.



National round-table on “Improving Energy Efficiency in the Residential Sector in Albania” (December 12, 2013)





ACT NOW

Champions (31 January, 2013)





The American Embassy in Tirana declared Co-PLAN, in cooperation with POLIS University and the Commune of Kashar as the Champions of ACT NOW for the month of January 2013, as a first initiative within the ACT NOW initiative. The prize appraised the first structure of plastic bottles in Albania made by Co-PLAN in collaboration with POLIS University, and the Municipality of Kashar during TAW (Tirana Architecture Weeks) September- October 2012.

The Bus Station with plastic bottles in Kashar in Tirana, offers a very good example of the creative design and the recycle for clean environment. For this station have been used approximately 10 000 plastic bottles recycled in five months and a team of architects, urban planners art & design experts and students.

The original design of this project had difficulties in the local acceptance, even though the support and the work done by the Municipality of Kashar for the periodic reconstruction. But Co-PLAN and POLIS University are faithful on going on with same experiments in the local level in order to offer better opportunities for the environment we live in.



Knowledge-making for proactive city-making (18 November, 2013)



Knowledge-making and the importance of qualitative professional literature were the focus of the promotional activity organised by Co-PLAN and POLIS University in November 2013.

The activity, which was greeted by the Deputy Ambassador of the United States in Tirana, Mr. Henry V. Jardine, promoted a number of newly published titles and initiatives such as “Design with Nature” by Ian McHarg, “Public Finances in Developing and countries in transition – Essays in honour of Richard Bird” by Wallave E. Oates, and “Strategic Environmental Assessment in transport planning and land use” by Thomas B. Fischer.

These publications were brought to the body of professional Albanian readers (but not only) by Co-PLAN, POLIS University and the Embassy of the United States in Tirana, as part of the Book Translation Program. In addition to the translated titles, a number of original publications developed by Co-PLAN and POLIS University were also introduced, such as the comics book “Bold City”, etc.

The future of the environment where we live, is closely related to our future. In conditions of rapid urban development where environmental impact is becoming more visible, environmental protection has become a necessity. In order to stimulate an environmentally aware culture, the first edition of the Environmental Film Festival in Albania, was held between 22-25 May. The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration in Albania, supported by the Delegation of the European GlZ chose film, workshops and an exhibition to convey the message to the audience in the capital and in the cities of Vlora, Pogradec, Shkodra, etc. Co-PLAN airtime brought two short films, as well as an exhibition 'retrospective' to highlight how consumer behavior has changed Albanians in years, with corresponding impact on the environment.

Also, during the fair, which took place on the 'Murat Toptani' pedestrian street in the capital, on Saturday, May 25th, Co-PLAN in collaboration with POLIS shared a number of publications in the field of environment, particularly in relation to earth sciences.



P

articipation in the Environmental Film Festival 2013 (22-25 May, 2013)





03

Projects



1. Applied Policy Research – Making Policies Work
2. Fostering Partnerships for Equitable Cities
3. Planning and Local Governance Project in Albania
4. Regional Development Program in Northern Albania
5. Env.net Platform in the Western Balkans
6. Social Sustainability Audit
7. Public Private Partnerships for Municipal Street Lighting
8. Strategic Development Planning and Medium Term Budget Plan
9. Support to LGUs for MTB Plan, Fiscal Package and Financial Planning Tool
10. Monitoring the Implementations of Local Budget in the Municipalities of Fier and Shkoder
11. Inter-LGU cooperation for Solid Waste Management in the Shkodra and Lezha region
12. Better Journalism for Civic Education on Urban Spaces
13. City for Citizens – Citizens for City
14. Book Translation Program
15. Places of Diversity

Applied Policy Research - Making Policies Work

Implementation period: 2010 – 2013

Donor : OSI Budapest (and Co-PLAN own contribution)

Fund: 688,141 USD

Implemented in : Albania

Implemented by : Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Year 2013 marked the third and final year of implementation of this program, phase 2, following the 2007-2010 phase 1. The main aim of the program was to strengthen and consolidate Co-PLAN as a successful and respected “Policy Research Institute” in its field of expertise, contributing to the Albanian society through strengthening policymaking and also to the higher education in Albania. In this regard, the general objectives of the program were: 1) To design and put together sharpened policy products; 2) To design and implement efficient advocacy strategies related to the policy products; 3) To improve the institutional and organizational framework of Co-PLAN to fit with Co-PLAN’s approach (technical assistance, potential regional expansion, cooperation with POLIS University, policy influencing) and mission.

During 2013 a number of activities were conducted particularly important for influencing policymaking, the realization of policy products and improvement of the institutional and organizational framework of Co-PLAN, with the highlight being the ‘Platform of Policies for Territorial Governance’, which was widely circulated and shared with the political forces in the country prior to the parliamentary elections of June 23, 2013; as well as the organization and participation in the Tirana Design Weeks and the publication of a series of manuals and multimedia productions in the field of inclusive planning. The program was supported by the ‘Think Tank Fund’ of OSI, Budapest, for a period of 3 years (2011-2013).

The achievements of 2013, for each of the objectives are expressed in the form of results in the drafting and publishing of policy products, as well as effective advocacy strategies.

- A “Policy Platform for Territorial Governance” was drafted and shared with the political forces (but not only), prior to the parliamentary elections of June 23, 2013.
- Contribution to the design of the “Territorial Planning” Component of the Government of Albania Program.

Co-PLAN GAZETTE

Reforma Territoriale

LOGIN



TIRANA
ARCHITECTURE
WEEK



- Participation in the working group on the review of the decentralization strategy, following the election of the new government (after the June 23 elections).
- Active participation in the development of concrete proposals for regionalization, particularly focused on the second level of governance framework of the process of the Administrative-Territorial Reform undertaken by the government of Albania.
- Contribution to the preparation of the terms of reference for the initiation of the General Territorial Plan of Albania, which was approved by the National Council of Territory within the month of October. This contribution was provided under the framework of the project PLGP.
- A number of national and regional roundtables were held on issues of energy efficiency, social accountability, territorial reform, etc..
- Training curricula were developed on the topic of medium-term budgeting program and several trainings were held of at least 15 municipalities.
- Support to the NTPA in training and supporting LGUs for the implementation of Law no. 10119 "On Territorial Planning", as well as the preparation of Local General Plans.

Fostering Partnerships for Equitable Cities

Implementation period: 2010 – 2013

Donor : Dutch Government (through MATRA Programm)

Fund: 174,652 EUR

Implemented in : Fier, Durrës, Shkodër, Tiranë

Implemented by : Co-PLAN, IHS - Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies

“Fostering Partnerships for equitable cities – Capacity building for participatory spatial planning” was a project supported by the Dutch Government through MATRA project for Albania, and was implemented in collaboration with HIS, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, POLIS University, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (cooperation with the National Territorial Planning Agency), local governments` associations and with Durrës, Shkodër and Fier Municipality.

The goal of the project was: (1). Promoting participatory neighbourhood planning in the municipalities of Fier, Durrës and Shkodër, harmonizing public and private interests for spatial development; (2) Developing a capacity building platform and provide knowledge dissemination in sustainable and equitable spatial development aimed at government officials and professionals; (3) To set up coalitions of the public sector and civil society to formulate policy recommendations and develop implementation instruments for equitable and Sustainable spatial development.

The year 2013 marked the completion of the project, with results as follows:

1. Local coalitions were formed (public sector and civil society) who developed and agreed on the implementation of plans with participation, on sustainable development of neighborhoods in the cities of Fier, Durres and Shkoder.
2. Guidelines for the use of a number of innovative instruments for the land management and control of spatial development were developed and published;
3. A training program of post-graduate level was drafted and was implemented mainly to authorities / government officials and professionals from civil society.
4. Recommendations and guidance in policy-making level for sustainable spatial development, were prepared and shared with the central government authorities.



Planning and Local Governance Project (PLGP)

Implementation Period: 2012 – 2017

Donor: USAID

Fund: 984,599 USD

Implemented in: Albania

Implemented by: Tetratech ARD & Co-PLAN

Co-PLAN in cooperation with TetraTechARD worked to implement the USAID Project on Planning and Local Government (PLGP) during 2013. This project is focused on the work at central and local levels to facilitate the acceptance of the principles of decentralized governance and to institute practical and effective methods and techniques for running the municipalities. The project focuses on four areas:

- (1) Support for the Albanian government to implement effective policies and legislation decentralization;
- (2) Improvement of local government;
- (3) Improving the management of local services;
- (4) Support for the Albanian Government and local governments for planning and management of urban and regional growth. Contribution of Co-PLAN in the project implementation focuses on components 1 and 4.

Throughout 2013, the results achieved in the framework of the work on components 1 and 4 are:

- The National Territorial Planning Agency (NTPA) was supported in the reviewing and consideration of the territorial plan of Municipality of Kukes.
- Some local units were supported in reviewing their existing regulatory plans and adapting them into local General Plans (SLS) in compliance with the new law on territorial planning.
- Local Units were assisted in the implementation of their PPV-s reviewed, which were officially approved.
- Support to the LGUs of Lushnja, Berat and Vlora in drafting their Local Detailed Plans.
- Support to the Municipality of Berat in processing the Regulation of the Development of Territory Control (RRKZHT).
- A number of trainings were organized, covering aspects such as: processing of detailed local plans, procedures and provisions regarding the issuance of building permits and GIS applications and the National Planning Register.
- Six training sessions were held for members of the City Council respectively in GIS applications, the PDV-s issues, and building permits.
- The National Territorial Council (NTC) was assisted in their decision-making processes. This year the support was focused on researching and evaluating the necessary criteria to be followed by the NTC for issuing the building permits, for interventions that need the approval of the NTC according to the provisions of the Law of Territorial Planning.



Regional Development Program in Northern Albania

Implementation period: January 2011 - December 2014

Donor: Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (SDC)

Fund: 386.300 Euros

Implemented in: Region of Shkodra, Lezha

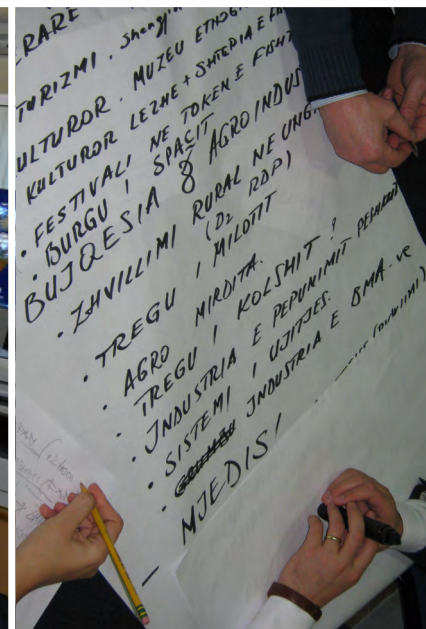
Implemented by: OAR, Intercooperation and Co-PLAN

The “Program for Regional Development in Northern Albania” comes as an effort to actively support regional development in the regions Shkodra-Lezha, where disparities between urban-rural populations are even bigger. This program is supported by donor agencies in Switzerland, Austria and has a value of over 4 million EUR, to be implemented in a period of 4 years. The overall objective of the program is to clearly contribute to an equitable social and economic development of both regions and, in addition, to support the Albanian’s Government efforts in accordance with the National Strategy for Development and Integration.

In line with Albania’s ambition to become a future member of the European Union, the program aims to converge national development practices and regulations with those of the European Union. The program has four expected results (RP): (1). An effective institutional framework for decentralization, which aims at just development results, is supported; (2). The capacities of regional councils for regional development planning and delegated functions are strengthened; (3). The comprehensive process of planning and budgeting of regional development in the regions of Shkodra and Lezha is developed and institutionalized; (4). Regional development is accelerated through initiatives for projects and effective implementation.

Although the main partners are the two district councils, namely that of Shkodra and Lezha, RDP has supported national level (mainly ER 1), local governments (mainly ER 4) and other stakeholders local and regional. RDP will support legal and institutional framework (ER 1 and ER 2), regional participatory planning, mid-term budgeting, (RP 3) and the implementation of projects and initiatives (RP 4) with a clear focus on capacity development of partners. Management and the ability to absorb future EU funds will ultimately depend on the capacity of regional councils and local government units to design and manage projects, which is the essence of RDP’s. The Regional Council of Shkodra and Lezha are the direct beneficiaries of the project.

Over the past year (September 2013- September 2014) experts of the Regional Development Programme in Northern Albania in close cooperation with the two districts and other key local and regional actors, have worked on the action plan and monitoring of the setup of the Strategy on the concept documents on Regional Development of both districts. This document is expected to be finalized and published within 2014.



ENV.net Platform in the Western Balkans

Implementation period: 2012-2014

Donor: EU (co-funded by Co-PLAN)

Fund: 79,614.42 EUR

Implemented in: Albania, Western Balkans and Turkey

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, and Punto Sud, Tema ATRC, EEB, EASD in the Western Balkans and Turkey

Throughout 2013 Co-PLAN continued with the implementation of the project “Development of the (ENV.net) Platform in the Western Balkans and Turkey: to give voice to the citizens to influence the process of environmental reforms for EU integration”. This project, which comes as a co-financing from the EU, and implemented in partnership in four Western Balkan countries and Turkey, aims to promote the integration of partner countries in the EU, affecting the process of the approximation of environmental legislation with the EU acquis, promoting democratic values and structures, human rights and social inclusion in a civil society as active and dynamic.

The project objective is a commitment and greater capacity of the ENV.net platform to give a voice to citizens to influence in public reform process in the environmental field through analysis, monitoring and advocacy. During the project implementation period 2012-2014, it is planned to develop activities in three main lines: (a) Activities of awareness and information about the environmental legislation of the EU acquis and the environmental policies of the EU; (b) Organize regular consultations with the main stakeholders at national and regional level; production and distribution of informational materials; (c) Training and administrative capacity building for ENV.net partners and stakeholders at the national level; analysis for organizational development and governance by Civil Society Organizations.

During 2013, several activities were undertaken:

- A national roundtable was organized on the discussion of issues related to energy efficiency in the residential sector. Findings and recommendations were shared with the central authorities in the form of a policy document.
- The legal basis was studied for the integrated management of water resources in Albania, the findings of which were articulated in a policy document.
- Several expeditions were undertaken to the Shkumbin River basin for the study of the quality of the river water.



Social Sustainability Audit

Implementation period: 2012-2013

Donor: World Bank Institute

Fund: 109,890 \$

Implemented in: Durrës (AL), Prishtina (KS), Skopje (MK), Sarajevo and Banja Luka (BiH)

Implemented by: Institute for International Urban Development, Co-PLAN

“Social Sustainability Audit”, funded by the World Bank and implemented in partnership by Co-PLAN and the Institute for International Urban Development had in focus the challenge of sustainable urban development, and social exclusion. The project, which was carried out simultaneously in five cities in the region, Durres (Albania), Pristina (Kosovo), Skopje (Macedonia), Banja Luka and Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), aimed to increase knowledge and awareness on issues of social accountability between interest groups, as well as strengthen the integrity of public services in five pilot cities in eastern Europe, namely in Durres, Pristina, Skopje, Banja Luka and Sarajevo.

Co-PLAN and I2UD were assisted by local organizations in each city, to implement the auditing its three stages: Archis Intervention Prishtina (Kosovo), Coalition for Sustainable Development (Macedonia), and US Alumni Association (Bosnia and Herzegovina). An important aspect of the audit was to assess the current mechanisms of social accountability in the selected municipalities, and their limitations, to develop new approaches and instruments of Information and Communication Technology to improve participatory governance at the city level.

Throughout 2012-2013 implementation period, the project had some activities mainly in the form of research, focus groups and workshops.

- Analytical profiles were developed for each city on issues of governance, accountability, public service delivery and marginalized groups in the city.
- There were held an average of 12 focus groups in each city with representatives of marginalized groups and 31 interviews with stakeholders, the findings of which were synthesized in a detailed report.
- Five seminars were organized with broad civic and stakeholders participation, where a number of scenarios were developed to improve current accountability mechanisms in each city.
- Five final reports were prepared and published with findings and recommendations from participatory processes.
- There was organized a regional workshop in Skopje, Macedonia, with representatives from five cities participating in the project to become familiar with the good practices of social accountability at the local level.



Strategic Development Planning and Medium Term Budget Plan

Implementation Period: January – March 2013

Fund: 6925 Euro

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation through dldp-II Program

Implemented in: Shkodra and Lezha LGUs

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

During 2013 (January – March), Co-PLAN continued to work under the Dldp-II Program in “Strategic Planning and Medium Term Budget Plan” component in both Shkodra and Lezha LGUs in order to meet the main goal, namely: “capacity strengthening in the region of Shkodra and Lezha, contributing to the regional development in northern Albania and to the reform of decentralization on a national level”.

The main project outputs were: (a) Capacities of LGUs on strategic planning and financial management (incl. MTBP) were improved and the selected Local Government Units applied strategic planning instruments and methods, linked to annual and to Mid Term Budget Program and (b) Capacities of the Local Government Units on financial and fiscal management, including the midterm budgeting process were strengthened.

Some of the main outputs delivered by Co-PLAN were as follow:

- Elaboration of two short versions of Mid Term Budget Program, in English and Albanian (for the Communes of Bushat and Dajë Bregu Bunës) and of 5 Training modules on Medium Term Budget Program linked to Strategic Development Plan were reviewed and published.
- Analysis of Financial Trends for LGUs (6 LGUs) in English and Albanian was developed.

Support to LGUs for MTB Plan, Fiscal Package and Financial Planning Tool

Implementation Period: May – November 2013

Fund: 19'500 Euro

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation through dldp-II Program

Implemented in: Shkodra and Lezha Local Government Units

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

This project focused on “Supporting LGUs in Shkodra and Lezha Region in the elaboration of Fiscal Package and Financial Planning Tool Instrument as well as the Medium Term Budget Plan” from May – November, 2013 in order to link the fiscal framework with the medium term budget plan. The projects aimed at the increasing on Local Government Units capacities through a combination of on the job training techniques, coaching and theoretical knowledge transfer as well as increasing the community involvement in decision making by encouraging the community participation in drafting the fiscal package and medium term budget plan through open meetings and debates. Keeping in mind the main goal, Co-PLAN worked closely with the Local Government Units staff in the municipalities of Vau Dejës & Puka, and also in the communes of Bushat and Dajç Bregu Bunës in delivering the following outputs:

- Desk research on fiscal performance and local fiscal framework in force for 4 Local Government Units.
- Action Plan on how to improve Tax Collection (Fiscal Performance) for 4 Local Government Units.
- Elaboration of Fiscal Packages linked with Medium Term Budget Plan for 4 Local Government Units.
- Elaboration of Medium Term Budget Program linked to Strategic Development Plan for 1 LGU (Bushat commune).
- Coaching sessions and on the job assistance for 4 Local Government Units staff in using the Financial Planning Tool Instrument.
- Public Hearings by broad participation process in drafting the Fiscal Package and Medium Term Budget Plan for 4 Local Government Units.

Public Private Partnership for Municipal Street Lighting

Implementation Period: April, 2013 - 2014

Donor: Assist Impact, USAID

Implemented in: Municipality of Fier

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Fund: 3,581,000 ALL

Based on these previous experiences and in the context of PPP Sector development in Albania, Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, in line with the USAID Program Objective - Strengthened rule of law and improved governance – and with the support provided by Assist Impact, undertook a project that aimed to assist the Municipality of Fier to establish a public private partnership for the purposes of improving the Public Lighting System while reducing energy consumption and the financial burden of this service on the municipal budget. In implementing this project Co-PLAN has been guided by the principle that “PPPs are intended not only to provide the government with a service, but to do so in a way that improves the long-term sustainability of the service through enhanced efficiency, stronger human and institutional capacity, greater accountability, and/or improved technology”.

The main goal of the project is to establish a best practice of design, tendering and contracting of a small scale PPPs by an Albanian LGUs based on international best practices and theories. By achieving this main objective, the Municipality of Fier, assisted by Co-PLAN is able to improve the quality and efficiency of public lighting, one of the most important municipal services.

The implementation of the proposed intervention is expected to improve the quality of service provided by the municipality and to increase the cost efficiency due to PPP tool and by applying innovative technologies like LED lighting technology. The main deliverable for year 2013 was a feasibility study and pilot lighting project approved by the Municipal Council of Fier.



Monitoring the implementation of Local Budgets in the Municipalities of Fier and Shkodër

Implementation period: 2013 - 2014

Donor: Open Society Foundation for Albania

Fund: 23,960 \$

Implemented in: Shkoder, Fier

Implemented by: Co-PLAN

One of the new projects started in 2013 is "Monitoring the Implementation of Local Budgets in the Municipalities of Fier and Shkodër". The overall goal of the project is to provide data that taxpayers can use to exercise their right to require feedback on planning and the use of public funds. In more specific terms, the objectives of the project are:

- (1) Developing a methodology for the monitoring of local budgets and testing it in two mid-level municipalities (Shkodra and Fier) in a period of 3-4 years focused on the current of governing mandate;
- (2) Breakdown of the financial data on the implementation of the budgets during these years, in concrete terms of services and benefits for citizens.
- (3) Presentation of these data in community meetings with citizens in Shkodra and Fier (at least two meetings in each city).
4. Visualization and enabling the use of the financial data in long-term via the online platform that is being set up by OSFA.

Some of the results achieved and main activities organized during 2013 are:

- A methodology was developed for the monitoring of the local budget and a series of indicators in the interest of the citizen.
- The local budgets of the Municipalities of Fier and Shkodra were monitored.
- Capacities were built (both on a institutional and civil society level) in the monitoring of local budgets and the use of public funds.
- Data has been provided to financatransparente.al platform to enable monitoring of local budgets and public funds at local level.
- Citizens were involved in decision-making based on indicators of local budgets monitoring.



Inter-LGU cooperation for Solid Waste Management in the Shkodra and Lezha region

Period: 25.03.13 – 30.11.13

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation through dldp-II Program

Implemented in: Region of Malesia e Madhe and Puka

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Fund: 30'025 Euro and 304'000 (ALL)

In frame of the 2013' part of dldp program, Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development was contracted by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (HSI Albania) to support LGUs in pre-selected areas of Puka and Malesia e Madhe, through the implementation of the project Inter-LGU co-operation support on waste management in Shkodra and Lezha region. The project was implemented in collaboration with HELVETAS- Swiss Inter-cooperation Albania and in close partnership with the selected Local Governments Units in Shkodra and Lezha. The overall goal of the project was to offer technical assistance to LGUs to identify, assessing and designing inter-municipal cooperation on waste management field, aiming the improvement of waste management services in terms of cost-effectiveness, quality and service coverage, etc. The main objectives of the project included: (a) Conducting and in depth analysis of inter-LGU cooperation models on waste management, options, experiences, potentials and challenges encountered – based on dldp and other experiences in Albania; (b) Selecting and designing models of inter-LGU cooperation to be supported in the frame of dldp in the future; (c) Gaining consensus between local stakeholders and providing support (investments) for new interLGU schemes.

- The technical assistance was organized in three pillars: (1) Rapid assessment of the opportunities for Inter-LGU cooperation; (2) Analysis of the inter-LGUs cooperation potentials/raising awareness and strengthening political willingness; (3) Designing and developing of joint project proposals . During year 2013 the main deliverables were:
 - A short rapid assessment report, summarizing the main findings of the pre-assessment process was conducted.
 - A report on "Evaluation of alternatives for supporting inter-local government units schemes for the areas of Puka and Malesia e Madhe"
 - Preparation of two inter-LGUs concept proposals for the region of Puka and Malesia e Madhe;
 - A paper on inter-municipal collaboration on waste sector- based on the cases studied in region of Puka and Malesia e Madhe.
 - Two Memorandum of Understandings for the establishment of the InterLGU cooperation in area of Puka and Malesia e Madhe
 - Two project proposals for strengthening and carry out of interLGU cooperation in area of Puka and Malesia e Madhe



Better Journalism for Civic education on Urban Spaces

Implementation period: April 2012 – May 2013

Donor: US Embassy in Tirana under Democracy Commission Grants

Fund: 54,970 \$, (co-funding by Co-PLAN)

Implemented in: Albania

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, POLIS University and Albanian Screen Television

Co-PLAN with the support of the American Embassy in Tirana, in collaboration with POLIS University and Albanian Screen Television, worked for the implementation of the project: “Better Journalism for Citizen Education on Urban Spaces “. The project consisted in organizing a series public debates on matters concerning public spaces, such as private property and the right to develop, neighborhood development schemes, the pressure of urban development and protected heritage sites, etc. The public discussions were prepared in collaboration with POLIS University, and Albanian Screen, and were\ broadcasted over a period of five consecutive weeks on prime television time, under the title ‘Dilema Urbane’. The programs were moderated by the well-respected Albanian journalist Mr. Aleksandër Furxhi.

The project aimed at: (1) Improving civic education on the role and responsibilities of each actor in the process of transformation of the city; (2) Provision of contribution in improving journalism, by offering new models of ‘urban journalism’ that go beyond the political aspect and fun; (3) Promoting public awareness and community values about city-making and transformation of public spaces.

During the project implementation the following results were achieved:

- 5 Interesting topics for urban reality were identified: mobility in the Albanian Cities, the choice to be informal; heritage and pressure for urban development; what should we know before buying a house; what should I know for my neighborhood.
- 9 short “ food for thought”, were conceptualized and prepared to raise the public and Media awareness.
- At least at least five television debates were conducted, in most cases between the Mayors of the Local Government Units, experts, and representatives of stakeholders about the above-mentioned topics.



City for Citizens - Citizens for City

Implementation period : 2013 -2014

Donor : Slovak Institute for Governance under the European Union Program “ City for Citizens”

Fund: 11,000 EUR

Implemented in: Tirana, Albania

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, in collaboration with the municipality , No.11 - Tiranë

The project City for Citizens, Citizens for City encourages active European citizenship, through local level forms of civic engagement. The project, which is funded by the European Union under the Europe for Citizens program (Action 1), is being implemented simultaneously in Albania, Slovakia, Romania, and Czech Republic. The objectives of the project City for citizens, citizens for city are as follows: (1)Promoting volunteering on local level, increasing awareness on volunteering as one of the forms of civic engagement and its benefits for whole society, demonstrate municipalities how to encourage volunteering ; (2) Encouraging active European citizenship and identity; (3) Collecting and promoting the examples of best practice of cooperation between the municipalities, civil society organizations and citizens reflecting European democratic values such as common good, rule of law and openness with a special focus to use of new information and communication technologies as tools for enabling and encouraging civic participation.

Co-PLAN, as the implementing partner in Albania in collaboration with a LGU, worked on the identification, conceptualization and concrete realization of an urban intervention in a Lapraka Neighborhood. Community's reported lack of public space for them and children to socialize and engage in outdoor activities, was materialized into a project which was implemented together with the community, mainly relying on recyclable materials.

The aim of the event was to launch the recreational area and encourage citizens to not only maintain it, but also to use this as a model that could be implemented in other neighborhoods also. The event was organized on site, with the participation of the local authorities, workshop moderator, project coordinator, residents, and children. Residents and the local authorities were very appreciative of the result and of the original approach adopted in preparing the recreational area elements through recyclable materials. The local authorities agreed to maintain the site in collaboration with the students. All local events were designed to include mostly local inhabitants and encourage them to volunteer.



Book Translation Program

Implementation Period: 2012 – 2013

Donor: US Embassy

Fund: 25,000 \$

Implemented in: Albania

Implemented by: Co-PLAN

The engagement of Co-PLAN in research and knowhow has been an inseparable part of the activities at project level and organizational level. This commitment gained a new dimension with the creation of a synergy with POLIS University, International School of Architecture and Urban Development Policy in 2006, together contributing to the creation of a critical mass in the field of urban development and environmental management, through education and awareness activities. Besides this approach, Co-PLAN ensures that the experience, knowledge and practices acquired from various projects gets documented in the form of manuals or guidelines to be sharing with stakeholders to increase capacity and improve working practices in different areas.

In this line, Co-PLAN in cooperation with the American Embassy in Tirana, was involved in the implementation of the “Programme for the Book Translation”, thus enabling the Albanian translation of three very important thematic publications, namely in the field of environment, public finance, and architecture / planning. Three publications, which are expected to be published during 2013, are:

- (1). “Design with Nature” by Ian L. McHarg;
- (2). “Strategic Environmental Assessment in Transport and Land Use” by Thomas B. Fischer; and
- (3). “Public Finance in Developing and Transitional Countries - Essays in Honor of Richard Bird” by Wallace E. Oates.

During 2013 the three translated titles were published, with translation rights approved by the respective publishing houses and close consultation with experts in the field of environment, public finance and urban planning. The promotion of the three books took place in the premises of POLIS University in the presence of the Vice Ambassador of the United States in Albania, Mr. Henry Jardin, the Rector of POLIS University, Prof. Dr. Besnik Aliaj, experts in the field, academic figures, etc.

Places of Diversity

Implementation Period: 2013 – 2014

Donor: Anna Lindh Foundation

Fund: 36,320 EUR

Implemented in: Albania, Jordan, Montenegro

Implemented by: Co-PLAN, Expeditio, Leaders of Tomorrow

In many Mediterranean cities and towns, especially in less developed democratic systems, public spaces are often commercialized - by the private sector. When planning and designing, the focus is mainly on the physical aspect of the design of public spaces, and much less on the participation of citizens in the process of their formation or messages that can be sent within them. With this in mind, the idea of the project “Places of Diversity - Public spaces as a field of intercultural dialogue and the promotion of social values” is to inspire those who want to see, in their communities, the promotion of desirable social values, such as understanding, support, love, multiculturalism, respect for diversity, etc. The pilot activities are being implemented in Albania, Jordan and Montenegro, the principles and ideas of the project can be applied to other cities and towns.

Activities to be implemented within the 11 months of the project include: Informing stakeholders about the activities, objectives and results of the project; Organizing study visits - Amman, Tirana and Kotor - linking , networking and learning from good practices of activism in the public spaces; Organizing creative workshops for young people in order to develop ideas on how to promote desirable social values in public spaces; Realizing creative pilot projects in Jordan, Albania and Montenegro, with the participation of local artists, designers, youth associations, etc. Creating a common web portal: How with small interventions in public spaces we can promote desirable social values ? “Places of Diversity - Public spaces as a field of intercultural dialogue and the promotion of social values” is an Anna Lindh Foundation funded project, implemented by Expeditio (lead partner - Montenegro), Leaders of Tomorrow (Jordan), and Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development (Albania).







