

Creative Cities Albania



Country / region or city:

**Albania / Shkodra and
Pogradec**

Name of Cooperation Project:

Creative Cities Albania

Partner organization:

**Rozafa Expression (Shkodra)
and Turizmi dhe Mjedis
Tourism and Environment
(Pogradec)**

Coaching-/Monitoring Partners:

**Comedia (London) and
ANTTARC (Tirana)**

Duration of project:

**November 2004 – October
2007**

City development begins with the people recognizing the specific potentials of their city and creatively using these resources. In Shkodra and Pogradec a group of cultural practitioners, artists, municipality representatives and business people have developed a project for turning their city into a creative city. British expert Charles Landry is supporting the two project-engines in realizing a creative city model.

During the former dictatorial regime in Albania, cultural life of each city was rigidly brought into line with the party's demands. In the years after the opening, little was done for the cultural development of cities (besides Tirana which benefited from its charismatic mayor, a former visual artist). Lack of money, unclear institutional responsibilities, a run down infrastructure and above all a complete missing of any kind of development strategy made cities fall into cultural lethargy. This – together with a lack in economic perspectives – led to massive emigration, especially of young people.

Web site under construction,
for updates please go to
www.pro-helvetia.org.al

www.comedia.org.uk

Pro Helvetia Tirana
Rruga Brigada VIII / 2
Sh. 2, Ap. 1
AL-Tirana
mail@scp-al-net
www.scp-al.net

Pro Helvetia
Swiss Cultural Programme
In the Western Balkans
Hirschengraben 22
CH-8024 Zurich
info@prohelvetia.ch
www.prohelvetia.ch

Link:
www.deza.admin.ch
(Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC)

Goal of the SCP cooperation project "Creative Cities" is to develop conditions which allow people in their cities to think, plan and act creatively, based on the specific resources, potentials and needs of their city. Creative thinking fosters a new dynamic that makes the city lively and more attractive and goes beyond the cultural sector only.

In cooperation with the British expert Charles Landry the project is realized in two pilot cities:

- In **Shkodra**, historically the cultural capital of Albania, but today marginalized and run down, situated in the North close to the border with Montenegro, the main focus is put on building up public space: Painting of facades, organizing "creative coffees" as a meeting-point for discussions among artists, intellectuals and the inhabitants of Shkodra, revitalizing the historical tradition of carnival. With these activities, participation and confidence of the city shall be rekindled and Shkodra become a better place to live in.
- In **Pogradec**, a small town situated at the shores of Ohrid lake and close to Macedonia and Greece, the activities focus around existing cultural events, but adding new memento to them: the poetry-festival is upgraded to a regional one, the theatre tradition, especially puppet theatre, revitalized and painted doors shall highlight important points of the town. Locally produced food and wines are being presented at the food and wine days. Pogradec' aim is to join the international "Slow City Movement" and offer authentic local goods, both food and culture, without jeopardizing nature and environment.

The project-engines in the two cities are trained in project-management, community building and strategic planning by the Albanian coaching- and consulting agency ANTTARC.

The Swiss Cultural Programme in the Western Balkans is a joint initiative of the Arts Council of Switzerland PRO HELVETIA and of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC. The SCP encompasses Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo and the Ukraine.

It supports local partners, which emphasize the variety, independence and performance of cultural life. The SCP cooperation projects focus on the capacity building and institutional development processes of cultural organizations. ■