

NEWSLETTER

Tirana

Discovering the spirit of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans

How do partner organizations see the regional cooperation? What are the personal experiences of the participants in the projects supported by WBF? These are only some of the questions that we had related to 18 projects supported by our Fund in the framework of the First Call. We interviewed Albanian participants on two regional projects to learn more related to the implementation process and we are glad to share these moments with you.

Read our special interviews on pages 5,6,7,8



Sarajevo

CookUp Hub won the 2nd round of Regional LEADER Project

Within the RECONNECT2018 event, the second round of the first LEADER Regional Business Pitching Competition took place in Sarajevo. This Leader panel was made possible thanks to the financial support provided by the Western Balkans Fund.

Read and reach the activity links on page 2

Bajina Basta

History teachers meeting initiative

History may bring together or divide the people. One of the regional projects supported by WBF, aims to bring specialists of history together in a friendly and positive exchanging atmosphere. In the framework of this project a three-day seminar was organized in Bajina Basta, Serbia for the participants coming from Kosovo*, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Read and reach the video link on page 4

Kupresko/Ravanjsko

Second “Birds Without Borders” camp in Bosnia & Herzegovina

Second cross-border ornithological camp was organized between 30th August until 3rd September. It was organized by the Bosnian Ornithological society “Nase ptice” in cooperation with Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) and Macedonian Ecological Society (MES).

Read and reach the activity links on page 3



A new documentary of environmental protection the WB

Small-scale hydropower continues to stir controversy in Western Balkans. The WBF funded “Green Patrol in Action!”, the third movie in a series investigating the dismal effects of mini-hydro power plants looks into legislative aspects of licensing and financing mini-hydro power plants in Serbia.

Read and reach the video link on page 4



In the process of implementing WBF Projects

In this section we will bring to you some news, activities and photos related to the main project activities, as they are taking place in our region during August 2018 period.



For more information, please visit these links:

- <http://www.restart.ba/2018/08/10/cook-up-hub-wont-the-second-round-of-regional-leader-project/>
- <http://www.restart.ba/2018/08/10/cook-up-hub-pobjednik-drugog-kruga-regionalnog-leader-takmicenja/?lang=bs>

CookUp Hub won the second round of Regional LEADER Project

Sarajevo / Within the RECONNECT2018 event, the second round of the first LEADER Regional Business Pitching Competition took place as one of the three parallel panels. This Leader panel is made possible thanks to the financial support provided by the Western Balkans Fund. The representatives of Restart's partner organizations in the Regional Business Pitching Competition, i.e. CANSEE Belgrade and Macedonia2025 Skopje joined throughout the programme.

As part of the Leader Regional Business Pitching Competition, eight winners of the LEADER project from Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina presented their business ideas in front of a three-member BiH jury.

The first place won a team comprised of Valentina Čolić, Vladimir Jovanović and Milan Stojanović who presented Cookup hub, a unique solution for food entrepreneurs. Cookup hub allows entrepreneurs to work together, motivate each other, learn from each other, exchange valuable contacts, and get the advisory support they need.

Valentina Čolić said she applied for the LEADER project because she recently became an entrepreneur in the food industry. "I needed leadership and business management skills that I did not have the opportunity to acquire during my work experience," she said, adding that during the two-week course she had the opportunity to learn everything needed for running a successful business.

Olga Rajchikj was the participant who won the second place for the idea „EcoGrower“ – 100% natural and organic fertilizer, and EminaZahiragic-Pintaric won the third place for the idea "First Private-Public Interest Law Firm".

The event has been attended by a number of representatives of the relevant Bosnian institutions in charge of economic diplomacy, foreign trade, foreign investment promotion, local and regional development, taxation.

Second “Birds Without Borders” camp held in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Second cross-border ornithological camp “Birds Without Borders” was organized between 30th August until 3rd September on Kupresko and Ravanjsko polje in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The camp was organized by the Ornithological society “Nase ptice” from Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with Center for Protection and Research of birds, Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) and Macedonian Ecological Society (MES).

The camp was organized within the project “Birds Without Borders” which is supported by the Western Balkans Fund, established with the aim of improving the cooperation of the Western Balkans countries and accelerating integration into European Union.

On the camp participated 15 participants from the four partner project organization from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia and also from Croatia.

The results of the camp surpassed the expectations of the organizers. More than 350 individual of nine protected raptor species was registered, while one kestrel individual was ringed.

During the monitoring of Kupresko polje, 21 cases of electrocuted birds were registered on only two kilometers length of the medium voltage transmission lines. 12 raptors were found electrocuted and also one Black stork, very rare and protected species in the region.

Please visit the links for more information on this project:

- <https://www.tomislavcity.com/na-kupreskom-i-ravanjskom-polju-odrzan-kamp-za-monitoring-grabljivica>
- <http://nasatv.ba/en/kupreskom-ravanjskom-polju-odrzan-kamp-monitoring-grabljivica/>



The next “Birds Without Borders” camp will be held in Montenegro, on Mareza in Podgorica from 10th until 14th September.





History teachers come together and call for common sense in the Western Balkans region

History may bring together or divide the people. One of the regional projects supported by WBF, aims to bring the teachers of history together in a friendly and positive exchanging atmosphere. In the framework of this project a three-day seminar (28 August - 01 September 2018) was organized in Bajina Basta, Serbia, for the participants coming from Kosovo*, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the seminar, the teachers expressed their ideas, how to highlight mostly the common values and to see the field of history from a collaborative perspective.

For more information, please visit the documentary:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L11OgSvqKoU>



A new documentary of environmental protection the Western Balkans published

Small-scale hydropower continues to stir controversy in Western Balkans. The WBF funded “Green Patrol in Action!”, the third movie in a series investigating the dismal effects of mini-hydro power plants looks into legislative aspects of licensing and financing mini-hydro power plants in Serbia.

For more information, please visit the documentary:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge6D4GvMAVY>



Tirana/Podgorica – Trainings of girls in the field of photography in the framework of Balkan Girl Power project

During August 2018, two training sessions of girls were organized in Tirana and Podgorica, in the framework of Balkan Girl Power project. The topic of the training was: "Power of the photography nowadays". This project is implemented by a consortium of organizations from the Western Balkans region and it is financially supported by the Western Balkans Fund. Professional photographers and lecturers of this field shared with the young girls the techniques of the photography.



Poland/ “Reconciliation and Remembrance” international seminar organized

WBF participated to the seminar “Reconciliation and Remembrance” organized in Poland. The event was organized by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Warsaw, the Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe, and in cooperation with the Regional Representation of the European Commission. Through different lectures, workshops, city tours and museums visits, on the topic of the German-Polish reconciliation model, a group of young citizens from Western Balkans, Germany and Poland, were the beneficiaries of an intensive learning process.





“When we have so much in common!”

Their names and country name (Albania) was called! They were invited on the stage. Warm applause and cheering of thousands of participants welcomed them at the beautiful Serbian city of Nis! Enxhi Mahmuti and Tea Alika, share their experience of participation at Come to Amphitheatre regional street festival. A great organization, bringing together the young people from all around Western Balkans. Also few words from Armando Bala, project manager at Dolori Association, partner on this project organized by KOM018 and powered by the Western Balkans Fund.

Q1: You participated at the event “Dodji na Amfi” (Come to Amphitheatre) in Nis , Serbia. Would you share with more how did you feel being part of this regional experience?

- ✓ **Armando Bala:** We participated as partners in “Dodji na Amfi” festival. Our participation was also represented by 4 talented young people who were part of workshops in four creative methods and represented Albania in the festival with their art. It is very interesting to see how similar in mentality and culture we as youngsters are in the region. Most of them share similar experiences and we were glad to hear from our participants that they felt the enthusiasm of the public while performing their art.
- ✓ **Enxhi Mahmuti:** I found this experience very interesting, fun and full of energy. There were people from Balkans ready to offer their friendship, share ideas and mostly their talent in arts. Many youngsters were gathered there to enjoy a street art festival, which happen to be a real success. I really enjoyed this festival, met new people and I liked very much the organization of those 2 days of festival.
- ✓ **Tea Alika:** Yes, I was one of the participants of “DodjinaAmfi”. I was part of the graffiti group which was an amazing experience for me. I got to meet so many people with different cultural backgrounds cultures but still I managed to see how much we have in common. The whole experience was great, I visited a new place, met new people, been a part of something new and beautiful.

Q2: What did you find new in this event?

- ✓ **Armando Bala:** It is the first time that Dolori participates in a street urban art festival; we found very interesting the organization of the festival to promote young artists. For us it was amazing to see how youngsters had the opportunity to talk about similarities, and shared experiences contributing to the improvement of the social inclusion and intercultural dialogue.
- ✓ **Enxhi Mahmuti:** What impressed me the most was the structure of this festival. There were people singing, dancing and painting at the same time, all representing street art in different forms. The weight of talent coming from youngsters was huge; that was the best way to promote it in front of many people who were watching.
- ✓ **Tea Alika:** For the first time I have participated in something like this. The organization of the event was new to me to see youngsters coming from all four countries in one beautiful festival, was simply amazing. I visited and met a lot of very talented people who knew how to cooperate with each other.

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Q3: How was your performance received by the audience?

- ✓ **Armando Bala:** Our participants were welcomed by the public at the festival. The public liked their performances and it was enthusiastic to hear all positive comments after the performance.
- ✓ **Enxhi Mahmuti:** There were many people who joined us as audience and enjoyed performances and I can say that the audience was very warming and supportive.
- ✓ **Tea Alika:** It was the first time that I have done graffiti in front of so many people and at first I was very anxious about how the audience will react. But everything went good they liked my work and started to congratulate me about the work I did. It felt very good to be supported from the people there.

Q4: What is your message to the young people in the Western Balkans?

- ✓ **Armando Bala:** Open your mind and hearts to one another. It's better to invest our energy together in positive actions.
- ✓ **Enxhi Mahmuti:** The youth nowadays has a lot of talent and possibilities to promote it as much as we can through these organizations are one of the best ways to gather people from other regions, exchange cultures, make new friends and promote the talent that gives a positive message.
- ✓ **Tea Alika:** We should be open as the youngsters are in Europe, to know and to cooperate with people from different cultures because even though we are from different cultures we have so many things in common.

Please visit the link below for the final video of the “DodjinaAmfi” Street Festival:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3tjfUFLxMk>

Please visit the link below for all information, photos and videos if “DodjinaAmfi” Street Festival:

- <http://kom018.org.rs/en/>





We are together to protect our common nature

Experts from all around Western Balkans joined for a camp organized successfully in PopovaShapka, Macedonia, in monitoring the birds, a project supported by the Western Balkans Fund. Experts representing Albania, Endora Çelohoxhaj, İlçeKostofski and Klea Duro shared with us their experience during this camp.

Q1: You participated to the “Birds without borders” camp in Macedonia. May we have your feelings about this regional environmental experience?

- **Endora Çelohoxhaj:** When you ask an environmental biologist about nature, the answer it will be always “amazing”. I haven’t been in Macedonia before and I found there such a beautiful nature, with a lot of biodiversity. I was there for studying birds and I found a lot of species that I haven’t seen yet in my country. It was such a friendly nature when everything was in peace. That’s why I wanted to stay there for more days and I hope I will have the opportunity to go again. I am very glad to say that when it comes for the nature you want to know more, not just for birds but also other fields. A few months ago, I was searching in Sharri Mountains in Kosovo’s part for one of the most dangerous snake in Europe and I couldn’t find it. And this time, in PopovaShapka, finally we found “*Viperaursini*”. It seems ridiculous because the most of the people are scared, but for a biologist this is wonderful. We stayed for camping two days in Leshnica, and with a lot of joy I can say that it was like a dream where you can watch forest, trees, river, waterfall, beautiful mountains and the most important a wild biodiversity.
- **İlçeKostofski:** It was a first time for me to go camping out of Albania and it was a very good experience. It was a long way to the camp but I think it was worth it. The natural beauty of this place was amazing with clean air and it was very calm and quiet.
- **Klea Duro:** It was my first experience of this kind and it was pretty impressive. During this summer camp I had the opportunity to meet new and interesting people, to go hiking, to camp for the first time in the wild and of course to do birdwatching. During our field work, I had the opportunity to see some birds that I haven’t seen before, such as: Nutcracker (*Nucifragacaryocatactes*), Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), Alpine Chough (*Phyrrocoraxgraculus*), etc. and the most interesting thing was that, since in these fieldtrips we were together with people of different biology disciplines, we had the opportunity to see and learn about some other exciting species like snakes (some kind of vipers which are very venomous). I really enjoyed my time there.

Q2: What did you find new in this camp? What is the experience that it brings?

- **Endora Çelohoxhaj:** When I first saw the camp, I didn’t know it how they worked and I was very exciting for that. And step by step i started to know new people from different countries in Balkans, people from Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Albania. I saw different people, but with the same goal “Studying nature and protecting her”. Maybe they didn’t know each other before, but there I saw a nice collaboration between them for reaching that goal. And this was amazing. They helped each other for collecting dates in the field and they worked together for analyzing them. And this type of collaboration I want to see in our students in Albania.
- **İlçeKostofski:** We camped out in the woods. The view was amazing and I saw a lot of new birds that I haven’t seen in Albania before.
- **Klea Duro:** I think that what was interesting and I guess new in this camp, is the collaboration among people of different nationalities and backgrounds. It was quite epic experience to have some ornithologists, botanists, herpetologists together in the same place. We not only enjoyed our time together, but we also learned from each other.

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Q3: How was your collaboration with the colleagues from the region?

- **Endora Çelohoxhaj:** In first days people from Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina could speak more easily with each other because of the same language, and we found ourselves more distant. But for the next days they were very friendly with us and we had a nice collaboration in the field for studying nature, especially birds where I was more involved. This was great because we shared our experiences and I learned a lot from all the people there. When you learn from the other's experiences, this can bring to you that motivation that you can do something like them in your country.
- **Ilçe Kostofski:** Most of the people there were from Macedonia and it was easy for me because I can speak Macedonian language. We sat around the camp fire and told stories and jokes. It was very interesting for me and I made a lot of new friends there.
- **Klea Duro:** I met there some fascinating people and it was a pleasure for me to find out about their experiences, to see how they worked in the field and to learn from them. At the same time, it was a pleasure to also share my experience (even though modest) with them and to help identify birds during our field work. So I must say, it was a pleasant collaboration.

Q4: What is your message to the environmentalists and general people in the Western Balkans?

- **Endora Çelohoxhaj:** I just finished my master degree on "Environmental Biology" and I am trying to be very involved in everything related to the environment. And every day that I am more close with the nature I can understand everything better. We have such a beautiful nature with a lot of species that need protection. We have to do something together for that. In Albania we use a phrase "Unity is strength" which means if we are together on that for protecting our natural resources we will make it to have an entire peaceful ecosystem where everything can live without fear and better protected. Camps like that bring people from different countries and this is very useful for working together and sharing ideas, so everyone can learn more and can bring knowledge from the neighboring countries.
- **Ilçe Kostofski:** We have to protect our natural environment because it is priceless. It is our responsibility to protect the rivers, plants, birds and all natural ecosystems and we can do this if we work together.
- **Klea Duro:** The problems in the Western Balkans are similar and the solution for them is COLLABORATION. If we work together and learn from each other experiences, our approach to environmental problems will be more effective.



Projections of activities for the upcoming period

- 6-7/09 – WBF Council of Senior Officials meeting in Tirana
- 10-12/09 – WBF Executive Director attending the Parliamentary Seminar on the Western Balkans, UK Parliament, London
- 10-14/09- Bird ringing camp in Montenegro, Mareza (Podgorica), Montenegro (implemented by CZIP)
- 12-14/09-“Regional Workshop on the Importance of the protected Areas for Economic Development”, Ulcinj, Montenegro(implemented by NGO Green Step)

NOTE: In our web page at the Calendar section you may find the latest information regarding the timing of the concrete activities of WBF projects, as they are updated accordingly.

Visit us for more information:

- www.westernbalkansfund.org

Follow WBF at social media channels:

- <https://www.facebook.com/WesternBalkansFund/>
- https://twitter.com/balkans_fund
- <https://www.instagram.com/westernbalkansfund/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/westernbalkansfund/>

Some articles and publications related to WBF in English, Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Montenegrin and Serbian:

- <https://www.i-platform.ch/en/news/latest-news/reconnect-event-networking-between-business-diaspora-and-suppliers-bosnia-and>
- <http://pancevo.mojkraj.rs/vesti/drustvo/item/8128-kako-je-biti-devojka-na-balkanu-pokazi-kroz-fotografiju>
- <https://www.pancevo.city/nvo/rodna-ravnopravnost-kroz-objektiv-radionice-fotografije/>
- <http://ptice.ba/bs/kamp-ptice-bez-granica-monitoring-grabljivica-na-kupreskom-polju-30-august-3-septembar-2018/>
- <http://ptice.ba/en/kamp-birds-without-borders-camp-raptor-monitoring-in-kupresko-polje-30-august-3-september-2018/>
- <https://www.mreza-mira.net/vijesti/razno/euroclio-hip-bih-seminar/>
- <https://studenti.mk/6th-global-ecpd-youth-forum-youth-power-for-our-common-future-27-28-october-2018-belgrade-city-hall/>
- <https://femix.info/femix-news/p/494/>
- <http://poslovenovine.ba/2018/08/09/reconnect-skup-za-umrezavanje-poslovne-dijasore-s-bh-dobavljacima/>
- <https://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?p=151238717>
- <http://normala.ba/2018/08/10/otvoren-reconnect-skup-za-umrezavanje-poslovne-dijasore-sa-bh-dobavljacima/>
- <https://rtvbk.ba/reconnect-skup-za-umrezavanje-poslovne-dijasore-s-bh-dobavljacima/>
- <http://www.sarajevotimes.com/reconnect-meeting-of-bh-diaspora-and-suppliers-officially-opened/>
- <http://www.restart.ba/2018/08/10/cookup-hub-wont-the-second-round-of-regional-leader-project/>
- <https://dalicom.eu/ekoloska-katastrofa-u-crnoj-gori/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDzj1Kb5BKk&feature=youtu.be>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge6D4GvMAVY>



WBF Newsletter is prepared with the financial support of our partner **International Visegrad Fund**

www.visegradfund.org

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