



Partners – Albania, Center for
Change and Conflict Management

ADVOCACY CAPACITIES OF THE ALBANIAN NPO SECTOR

ASSESSMENT REPORT

January 2005

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I. INTRODUCTION

Partners-Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management, in the framework of the Democracy and Governance in Albania (DGA) Program, has administrated the assessment of Albanian NPO Sector Advocacy Capacities. The DGA Program funded by USAID and implemented by three partner organizations: National Democratic Institute (NDI), Partners-Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management and the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), aims to promote good governance, active participation of citizens in political and election processes and in the fight against corruption in Albania.

The aim of this assessment is to analyze the institutional capacities of NPOs engaged in the area of advocacy in regard to the mobilization of members and supporters as part of economic and political decision-making processes; the organizational and financial capacity in supporting issues of common interest in the social, political and economic environment where they work; the attitude of governmental institutions and their support to the NPO sector, as well as the access and relations of NPOs with media.

The conclusions of the assessment and respective recommendations will serve as point of reference for designing appropriate programs of P-A training and assistance for the Albanian local NPOs, in the framework of DGA Program. Furthermore the information gathered during the assessment will be used to produce an updated version of Directory of Albanian NPOs, which is part of Partners-Albania work as a resource and information center for the NPO sector.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PARTNERS-ALBANIA

Partners-Albania, Center for Change and Conflict Management, is an Albanian independent NPO with a mission to advance the civil society and a culture of change and conflict management in Albania.

Partners-Albania (P-A) is a member of Partners for Democratic Change International, a network of 15 independent centers, established in the beginning of '90 in Central and Southeastern Europe, Latin America and in the Middle East. Since January 2006 the network is registered in Belgium as a membership association, with an operating office in Brussels.

Thematic working areas of Partners for Democratic Change International are:

Good governance, Civil society, Local government, Sustainable development.

Partners-Albania, as part of this network, has designed and is currently implementing a number of programs in support of its mission. Such programs consist in:

- Strengthening of NPO sector. Partners-Albania has designed and is currently implementing training and technical assistance programs for NPOs in various areas, such as organizational development, change management, advocacy, establishment of coalitions, participatory governance and cooperative planning.
- Designing and implementing participatory processes regarding large thematic campaigns such as political elections in the country, initiatives aiming to reducing and preventing corruption, development of legal framework for various interest groups.
- Improvement of legal framework for the NPO sector aiming at completing and improving the existing regulatory framework, with special focus in the financial and fiscal issues.
- Strengthening of local government capacities and promotion of citizen's participation in decision-making through the improvement of leading and managing capacities of local actors, the creation of collaborative models to increase citizens' participation in decision-making and promotion of the best practices of governance at national and regional level.

- Strengthening of youth and women leading role by supporting their active participation in economic and political life.

Due to their experience and expertise in the NPO sector, Partners –Albania have managed to be part of other national and international partnerships and networks in implementing different programs in Albania and abroad. In this framework, Partners -Albania is actually part of the Democracy and Governance in Albania (DGA) Consortium and the Network for Open Society in Albania (NOSA).

P-A has a broad network of partners and donors, including: USAID, World Bank and the World Bank Institute, European Commission, Canadian International Development Agency, Open Society Foundation in Albania, UNDP, Medicos Del Mundo, Handicap International, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Olof Palme, World Learning, IREX and other local and international organizations.

III. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF NPO SECTOR IN ALBANIA

The civil society¹ and various set-ups within it play an important role in economic, political and social development of the country through the establishment of public consensus, promotion of public participation in designing and implementing public reforms, building thus the feeling of ownership, offering a wide range of services, improvement of transparency and accountability in the public sector.

Beginning from 1990, when the right of assembly expressed in the establishment of first NPOs started to be exercised freely, the Albanian civil society has progressed considerably in offering services for the wide public and groups in need; in proposing and lobbying for laws and policies at national and local level, such as the Constitution of Albania, National Strategy for Social and Economic Development, Strategy for Decentralization and Local Autonomy, etc.; in the area of research and documentation; in the area of monitoring and protection of human rights, including free vote; and in recent years the fight against trafficking and corruption.

The new NPO law approved in 2001 is considered an advanced one, laying the basis for further development of the civil society in Albania.

A considerable increase of the number of nonprofit organizations, accompanied by a diversity of sectorial spreading has been noticed in recent years.

The presence of civil society in protection of public matters has become more and more evident. The pressure by the sector is considered a positive step in promoting public opinion awareness and participation of citizens in decision-making processes. The citizens perceive it as a possibility to express their concerns and problems, participating for the first time in public protests of nonpolitical nature. Such a presence has been noticed also in the fight against corruption, where different NPOs or coalitions have been part of campaigns in protection of citizens' interests affected by such a phenomenon.

¹ Civil society is defined as sphere of society outside the family, state or market and excludes profit businesses, though professional societies may be part of it. Such organizations, which include trade unions, community-based organizations, religious institutions, humanitarian organizations, foundations, students' organizations, social movements, professional associations and many others, are referred to as organizations of the civil society. Legal and Regulatory Environment for Civil Society and Civic Commitment in Albania, May 2004, World Bank, Washington

Compared to previous years, NPOs collaborate more with each-other and with governmental structures, media and in some cases with businesses. However, there are still difficulties in building stable partnerships and in sharing evenly responsibilities between stakeholders, in establishing advocacy structures and sometimes in dissemination of information. Frequently these difficulties are caused by the lack of sufficient capacities to translate different issues of interest in common goals. In this context difficulties are present even within the NPO sector. Apart from some joint efforts to support common issues, not many NPOs share information with each-other, even when they are part of common networks or coalitions. Mistrust among NPOs is still evident.

The NPOs in general and those out of Tirana in particular, lack long-term strategies and systems to develop programs contributing in the achievement of such strategies. The almost full dependency of NPO sector from foreign financial aid makes it institutionally unstable and limits capacities of the sector to meet the needs of their groups of interest. This represents one of the greatest challenges for the sustainable future of NPO sector in Albania.

IV. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

In carrying out this study, Partners - Albania have focused initially on the identification of organizations carrying out activities in the area of advocacy. Partners - Albania existing database developed and updated in years, as well as directories and different publications of donor institutions, umbrella organizations and other institutions served as information source.

The country lacks reliable statistics on the number and geographic distribution of nonprofit sector in Albania. The number of NPOs in the country, according to different reports, varies from 800 to 1000. However, Partners - Albania work in the field for carrying out two polls (2001 and 2004) revealed that only a small group of NPOs, about 200 of them, are present in the community with their activities. Therefore, Partners - Albania believes that this Sample of 131 NPOs enables a real analysis and founded conclusions on the situation of NPOs and their capacities to be engaged in advocacy initiatives.

Aiming to achieve an objective and comprehensive result, the selection of the Sample and its distribution was based on some criteria, such as: NPOs mission, geographic distribution, form of organization, age (length of organizational life), as well as area of activity.

The Sample distribution based on such criteria is presented as follows:

Mission of NPOs. Out of the identified organizations there was selected a number of 167 NPOs, which carry out advocacy activities as part of their mission. Because of the difficulties on the field, there were interviewed only 131 NPOs.

Geographical distribution of NPOs. The Sample was divided according to four following geographical areas², the same that were used in the assessment of 2001.

Tirana	38 %	South	34 %
Center	13 %	North	15 %

¹ See Annex 1 for a complete list of towns included in each of the four geographical areas.

Age of NPOs. For this assessment there were interviewed organizations of different age in order to see what impact has this fact in the capacity of organizations engaged in the area of advocacy.

15 - 10 years	16 %
9 - 5 years	59 %
NPOs registered after 2001³	25 %

Form of organization of NPOs. Classification of the Sample according to the form of organization was based on self-declarations of the interviewed NPOs⁴.

Associations	69 %
Foundations	16 %
Centers	15 %

Activity areas of NPOs. Organizations included in the assessment have identified 12 areas of activity and each NPO has chosen more than one area, which is reflected in the following percentages:

Human rights	60 %	Economic growth	29 %
Youth	58 %	Education	25 %
Democracy	55 %	Health	25 %
Social Services	48 %	Children	12 %
Women	46 %	Agriculture	9 %
Environment	32 %	Infrastructure	6 %

Data Collection

To collect the necessary information from the Sample, in the assessment there was used the technique of interviews based on a questionnaire prepared beforehand. The questionnaire contained mainly closed questions and was divided in five sections of questions listed as follows:

- Organizational identity
- Organizational capacity

³ In May 2001 the new Law on the organization of Non Profit Organizations (NPO) became effective. This study represents an effort to see how this new legal framework has effected the organization and functioning of Albanian NPOs.

⁴ A considerable part of interviewed NPOs, which according to the Law of 2001 should be registered as Centers, have preserved the old form of organization as Foundations. Therefore the number of Foundations is almost equal to that of Centers, but it doesn't mean that they provide grants.

- Financial capacity
- Advocacy capacity
- Public image

Questionnaire Testing

Prior to applying methodology, P-A tested clarity of the questionnaire content as well as the time needed for its accomplishment, with a group of representatives from the NPO sector. Based on the ideas collected, the questionnaire has been revised.

Selection of interviewees

Interviews have taken place individually, mainly with the Executive Director or Chairperson of the Board and in their absence with members of the staff or members of the Board of Directors of the organization.

Duration of interview

The period of interviews continued for eight weeks, from November to December 2004. Each interview took in average one hour.

Geographical distribution

Administration of questionnaires was carried out in six towns, which served as centers for regional interviews at national level. Selection was made based on two main factors: (1) well-suited geographical position, which enabled the participation of organizations from neighboring areas, and (2) infrastructure facilities enabling the process. The six towns which served as focal points were:

Tirana	(also covering Durrës and Elbasan)
Shkodra	(also covering Has, Burrel, Puka, Kukës, Peshkopi)
Fieri	(also covering Lushnja, Berati, Kuçova)
Vlora	(also covering Himara)
Korça	(also covering Pogradec and Librazhd)
Gjirokastra	(also covering Saranda and Përmet).

Meantime, P-A created a database to manage and process the collected information. Findings presented in this report are based only on these data.

Similar to any other process, the assessment faced a number of difficulties identified both prior and during the collection of information on the field, such as:

- Lack of an accurate and reliable source regarding information on the number, geographical distribution and activity areas of Albanian local NPOs;
- Lack of communication means with a number of selected organizations, those outside Tirana in particular;
- Impossibility to identify in field some organizations which offer their services to the community;
- Interviewing some persons who lacked full information on activity of the organization because of their management position in NPO.

Due to these reasons the sample of 167 NPOs selected initially decreased to 131.

V. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

V. a. Participation of NPOs in advocacy activities

It is important to underline that the outcome of this assessment is based only on the data collected from the Sample of 131 Albanian NPOs.

The data of the survey show that out of all organizations of the Sample, those operating in the areas of Democracy and Human Rights have been mostly engaged in advocacy initiatives and activities, such as efforts to influence government policies and mobilize the community for protection of different issues affecting community. Regardless of the focus of their work and undertaking of other activities, the Albanian NPOs in essence continue to remain organizations that offer social services to the community.

Most of interviewed organizations operating in areas of democracy, youth, human rights, social services and women's rights, evaluate the mobilization of community as their principal activity. This shows that the participation of the community in advocacy campaigns is considered as important by the Albanian organizations.

The Democracy and Governance in Albania Program is focused towards strengthening of the civil society in election campaigns, as well as reduction of corruption in the country. Therefore, a particular attention in the survey was paid to those two activities.

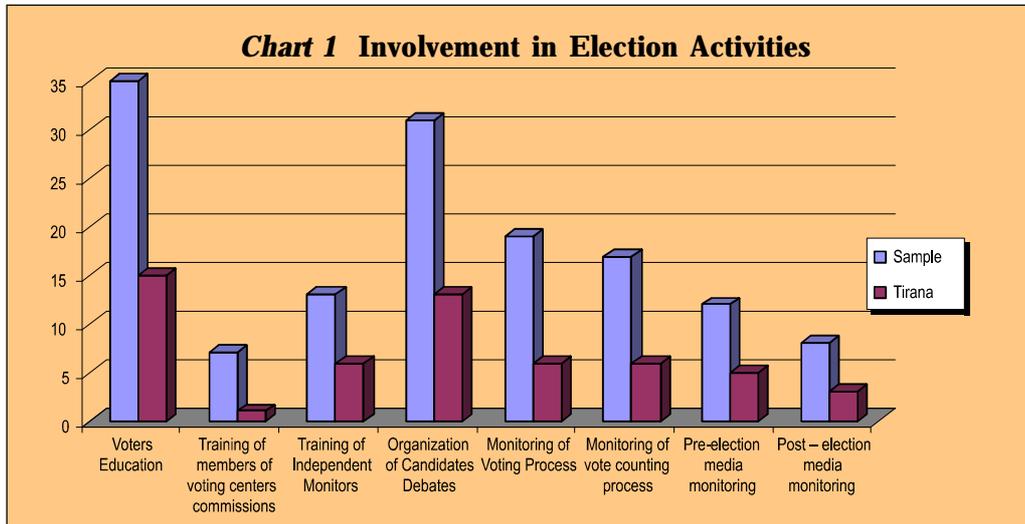
V. a. 1. Participation in the election process

The Democracy and Governance in Albania Program considers the participation of NPO sector in local and parliamentary elections as an important contribution for a free and fair election process.

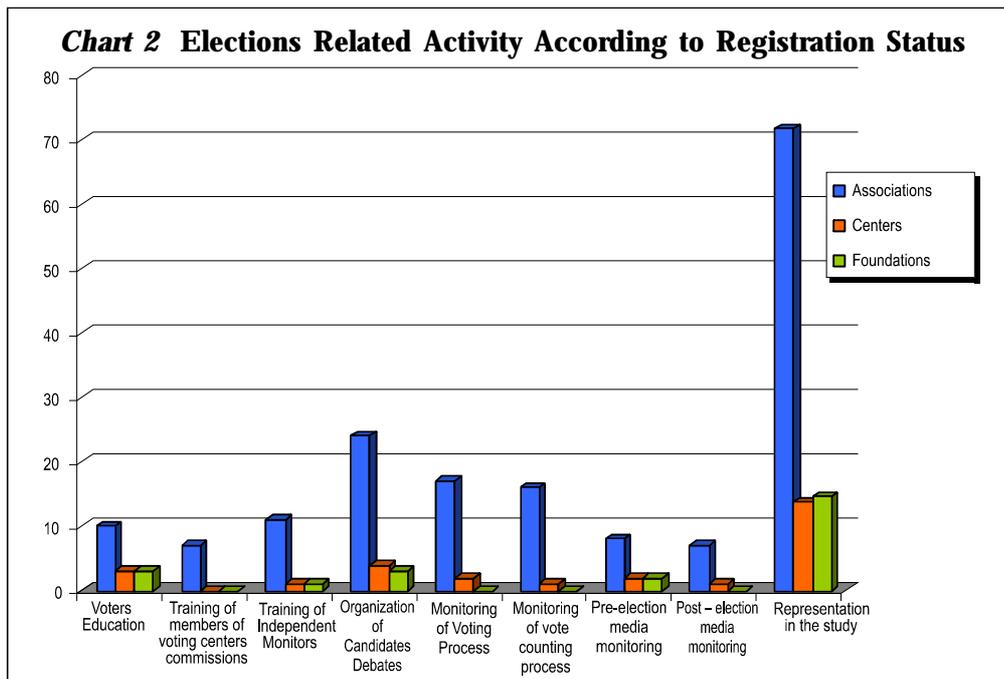
There is actually an experience of participation of NPOs in election processes, which is shown also in the data of the questionnaire: it results that 35% of interviewed organizations have been involved in election processes.

Alongside with obvious results presented in the Chart 1 in relation to the participation in the main election activities, it is noticed that organizations are mostly involved in activities before the election day, such as voters education or organization of debates with candidates, as compared to activities during and after the election day, up to the annunciation of the results. The same occurrence may be observed regarding media monitoring, as it is shown in the chart.

The poll shows that there is not a uniform involvement of the NPO sector in election processes, based on their geographical position. Out of all organizations involved, 46% are based in Tirana. Such a fact, as it is shown in Chart 1, has a considerable impact on the data coming from the Sample selected throughout the territory of Albania.



The survey shows a misbalanced participation of NPOs in activities related to election process depending on the form of organization. As it is shown in the Chart 2, Associations are much more involved in election activities than Centers and Foundations. There are even activities carried out exclusively by associations, such as training of commissioners of election stations.



V. a. 2. Participation in anticorruption initiatives

The larger participation of the NPO sector in initiatives designed to reduce corruptive practices and in processes monitoring the implementation of laws in the country is one of the main ways through which the DGA Program intends to assist the NPO sector.

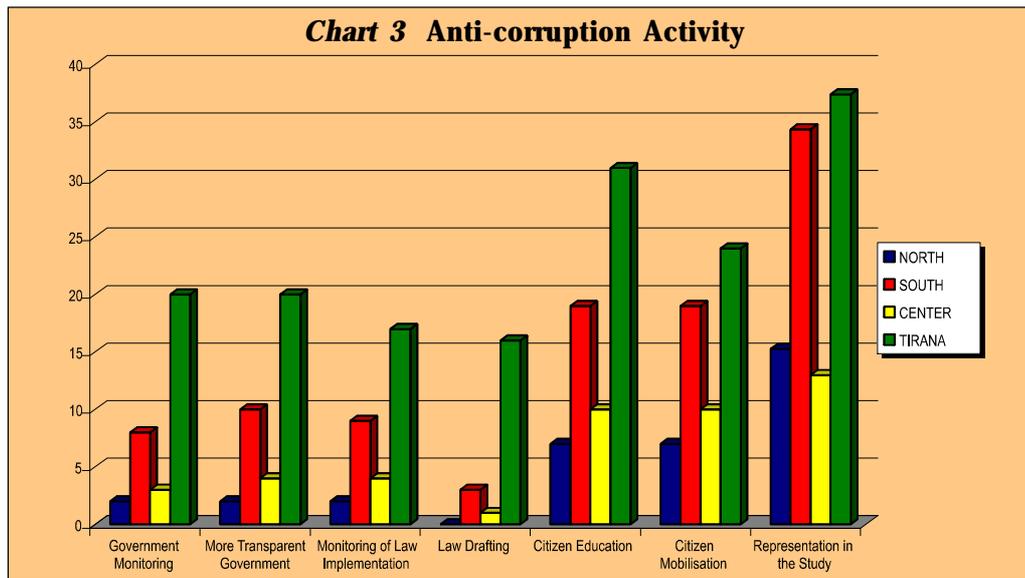
In recent years it is noticed an increase of NPOs efforts to be involved in anticorruption initiatives. In spite of the fact that in some cases such efforts have resulted in successful campaigns in raising public awareness on corruption issues, the role of NPOs in the fight against corruption remains still at low levels. One of the indicators of such situation is the level of knowledge of the sector regarding government structures and platforms in the fight against corruption.

The assessment shows that 66.4%⁵ of NPOs are informed about the existence of the anticorruption governmental structure in Albania, but only 38% of them know its plan of action. The organizations asserting to have this information are those which assert the other fact linked with their direct participation in anticorruption initiatives. Thus, out of 67.1% organizations interviewed and claiming to have been involved in anticorruption activities, 83% of them are informed about the anticorruption governmental structure in Albania. This is connected with the necessity of inter-sector collaboration to assure positive results in various initiatives aiming at reduction of corruption in Albania.

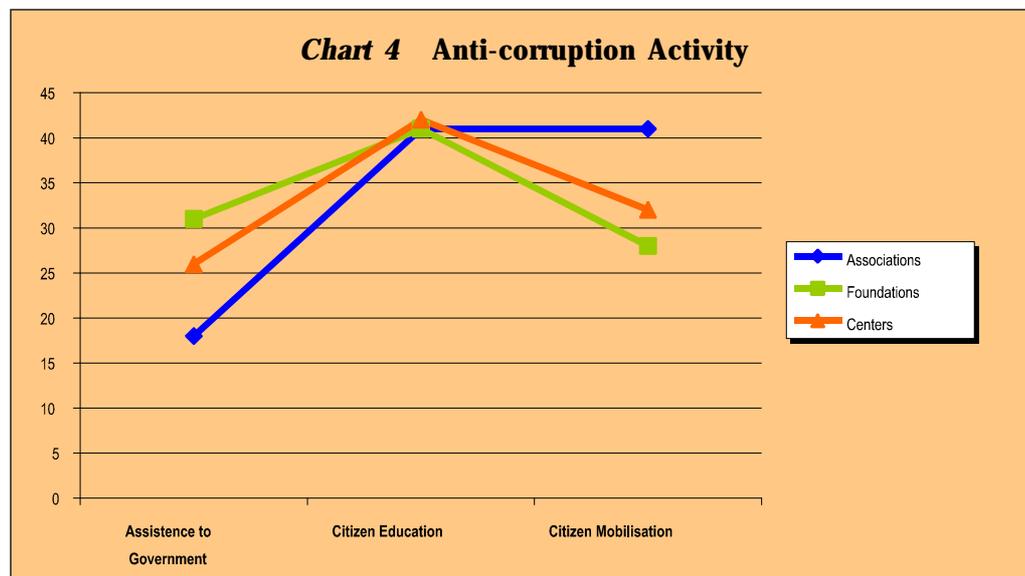
The main areas of activity in the anticorruption processes result to be education and mobilization of citizens for issues related to corruption and fight against it, regardless of their geographic division or form of organization.

The data of the survey regarding participation of the NPO sector in anticorruption initiatives in different districts of Albania prove once more that organizations operating in Tirana are more active, particularly in the law design process, which is explained by the better access they have in law-making structures. The organizations from the North are much less participating (5%) in anticorruption initiatives, especially in activities related to the monitoring of governmental institutions (Chart 3).

⁵At the time assessment was accomplished, there was a governmental structure called the Governmental Commission of Fight against Corruption, at Prime Minister's Office. The Anticorruption Platform refers to the platform of the Government during 2001-2004.



Besides the geographic aspect, the participation in anticorruption activities is related to the NPO' form of organization as well (Chart 4). Based on this criterion the survey shows that the form of organization has an impact on percentages of participation in various activities. Thus, except the almost equal percentages for activities related to education and mobilization of citizens, as it is shown in the chart below, Foundations are more involved with the assistance offered to the government in the fight against corruption compared to Centers and Associations.



V. b. Organizational Capacity

One of the main objectives of this survey is the assessment of organizational capacities of NPO sector engaged in advocacy activities, as an important factor affecting the level of participation and success of advocacy campaigns.

The analysis of organizational capacities includes the following elements:

- Organizational systems and procedures
- Human resources
- Technical capacities

A similar assessment was also undertaken by P-A in 2001, when for the first time was accomplished a full analysis of Albanian NPO sector capacities. Comparing the data of the two surveys one can generally notice positive changes in some directions of NPO organizational capacities.

V. b. 1. *Organizational systems and procedures*

According to the findings, the number of Albanian organizations operating on the basis of organizational systems and procedures has increased.

Referring to the drafting of **Strategic Plan** as an indicator of organizational capacity, according to the assessment of 2001 less than 50% of the Sample of 130 NPOs claimed to have it, while in this assessment the number of NPOs asserting to have such a plan has increased to 75%. The strategic plan is obviously a useful document within the organization, since 94% of the Sample claiming to have such a plan assert that they use it within the organization decision-making process. Decisions for which the interviewed NPOs declare to use the Strategic Plan are related to development of future programs and projects (98% of the Sample), fundraising strategies (70.5% of the Sample) and mobilization of sources (69% of the Sample).

Another very important element of the work of organizations is the drafting of **Annual Work Plans**. Answering in regard to this element, 89% of interviewed organizations affirm that they exercise their activity according to work plans and only 6% assert that duration of their plans is one year. However, most of organizations exercise their activity based on short term plans, from one to six-month plans or according to plans of individual projects. In general they lack long term plans.

As for **Monitoring Systems**, 73 % of interviewed organizations assert that when they talk about monitoring systems they refer to simple techniques adjusted to the requirements and reporting to different donors. In this direction the sector is still far from establishment of real monitoring and evaluation systems, as tools of bringing out the achievements of their work, of reporting outcomes and of adopting future interventions in the community.

V. b. 2. Human resources

Sustainability and successful performance of every organization and consequently their participation in advocacy activities is closely related to the development of organization's human resources. This is the reason why the analysis of human resources of NPO sector operating in the area of advocacy occupies a particular place in this survey.

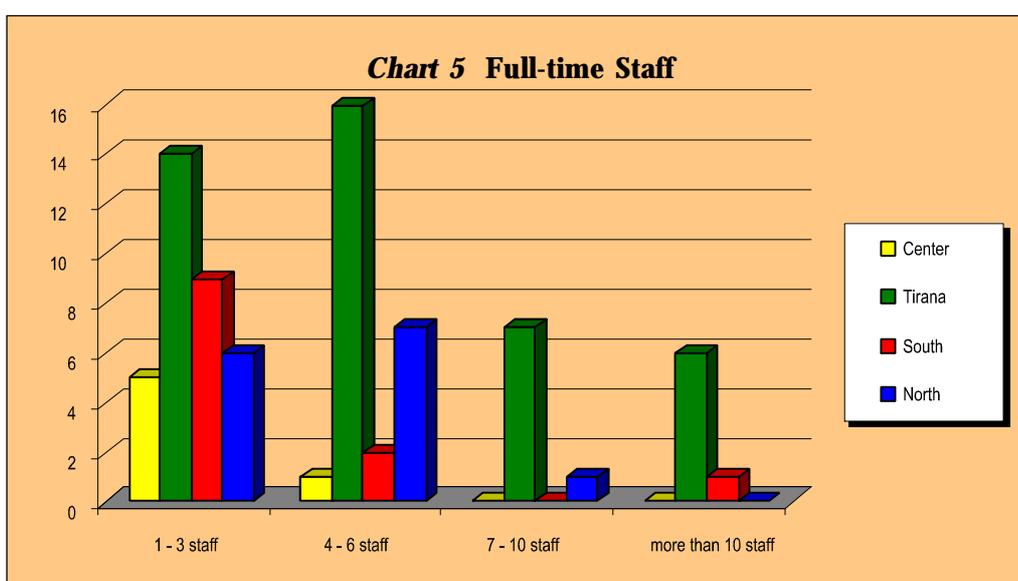
This survey analyses the human resources within an organization divided in three categories:

- Full - time staff;
- Part time staff;
- Volunteers.

Let's see further what is the situation regarding these categories.

Full - time staff. According to the survey findings, the number of full - time staff employed in Albanian organizations varies from 0-92, with an average of four full - time persons. It is worth emphasizing that 40% of interviewed organizations affirm that they have no full - time employees, which is an indicator of low human resources in such organizations.

Low capacities, at least regarding numbers, are noticed especially in organizations carrying out activities outside Tirana (Chart 5). Such an occurrence is a fact mainly in associations of the Center and North. Often in such organizations we find but one person employed playing different roles within the organization: Executive Director, Project Manager, Administrator, etc. This is one of the reasons restraining their participation in advocacy activities.

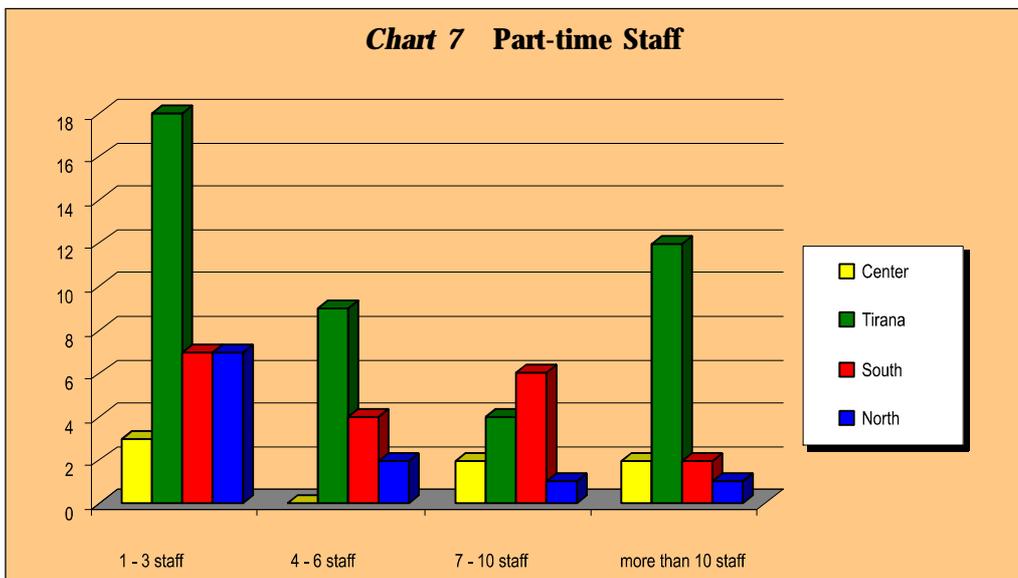


Differences in this direction are also noticed in the division after the organizational form of NPOs (Chart 6). As it is shown in the following chart almost half of Associations and Foundations have 1 to 3 full - time staff. A different situation is noticed in Centers where the range is 4 to 6 full - time staff, which means that in regard to human capacities, Centers are more favored to participate in advocacy activities.



Part time staff. A high percentage of the Samples (60%) do not have part-time staff. While the other part of the Sample: 33% have 1 to 2 part-time staff and 7% varies from 3 – 66 part time staff.

The survey shows that part - time staff has increased compared to full - time staff, especially in cases of 7 to 10 and more than 10 staff members. This is quite obvious in organizations operating outside Tirana.



The survey shows the same situation regarding part - time staff when it is analyzed according to NPO organization type (Chart 8). Again, Foundations and Associations have more part-time staff in the range 1 to 3. However there is an obvious increase in the number of staff within this range in the Centers. Whereas the Associations have more part - time staff within the ranges 7 to 10 and more than 10.

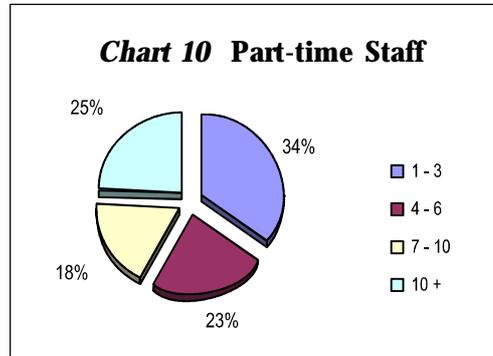
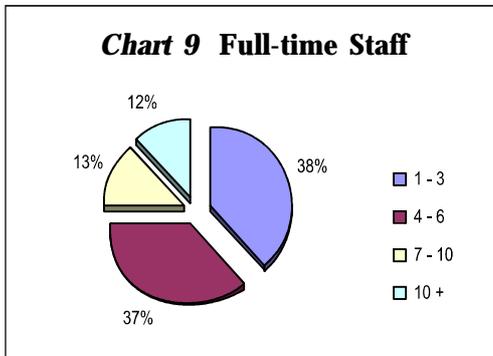


Employment contract. The employment contract is another important element determining human capacities within an organization. Duration of the staff employment contract is linked directly with the nature of work of Albanian NPOs. According to the survey results, the duration of employment contract is mainly related to the project's duration.

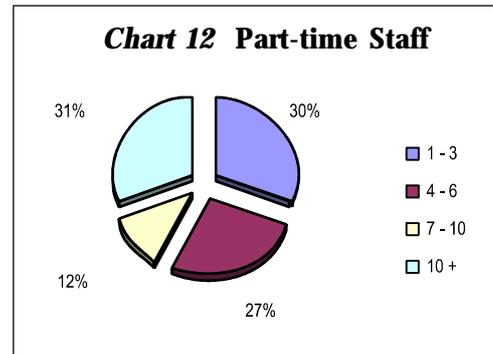
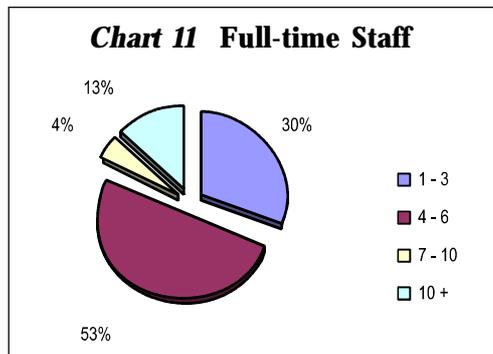
The most common employment contract applied by the Sample for full - time staff (54%) is a one-year contract. The other part of organizations applies undetermined duration employment contracts (30%), six-month contracts (13%) and three-month contracts (2.5%).

The situation is different for the part-time staff. In the first place among alternatives selected from the interviewees is the undetermined duration contract (45%), followed by one-year contract (27%). Others apply six-month and three-month contracts.

Since in our assessment we are interested in particular in capacities of organizations participating in campaigns or anticorruption activities, as well as in election processes, let us see the situation of full-time and part - time staff in such organizations (Chart 9 and 10).



In Charts 9 and 10, which reflect the situation of staff in organizations carrying out anticorruption activities (67% of NPOs), we notice differences regarding the number of full - time and part - time employees. The organizations participating in anticorruption campaigns prefer to employ more part - time staff and the number of part - time staff in 25% of them is more than ten. The same phenomenon is noticed in organizations participating in election campaigns, as it is shown in Charts 11 and 12. This is likely linked with low financial resources of organizations, but also with the nature of part - time workers, who in most of the cases may be experts of various fields, hired by the organizations only in any particular stage of anticorruption campaign or election process.



Volunteers: Volunteer work is a well-known practice of organizations throughout the world and in particular of those dealing with advocacy, where human capacities are very important. Albanian organizations have adopted this practice, which is proved by findings of the survey, where about 80% of interviewed organizations include volunteers in their activities and the number of volunteers varies from 1-1500. These data are valid also for organizations participating in election processes.

At the first glance these data give the impression of a positive development regarding participation of volunteers in advocacy campaigns, however the fact that 30% of them affirm to have only 10-20 volunteers, leaves much to be desired.

The analysis of volunteer contribution volume in the organization annual budget shows that only 34% of the Sample evaluates it more than 10% of the budget. It indicates that the majority part of the Sample has no capacities to plan contribution/work of volunteers in financial terms. Meanwhile it is a well-known fact that volunteers perform many duties within the organization and their role is important in determining the success of advocacy campaigns.

Staff Training. Another important factor in the success of organizations operating in the area of advocacy is the investment of the organization in the staff capacity building, in order to meet needs and requirements of the advocacy work.

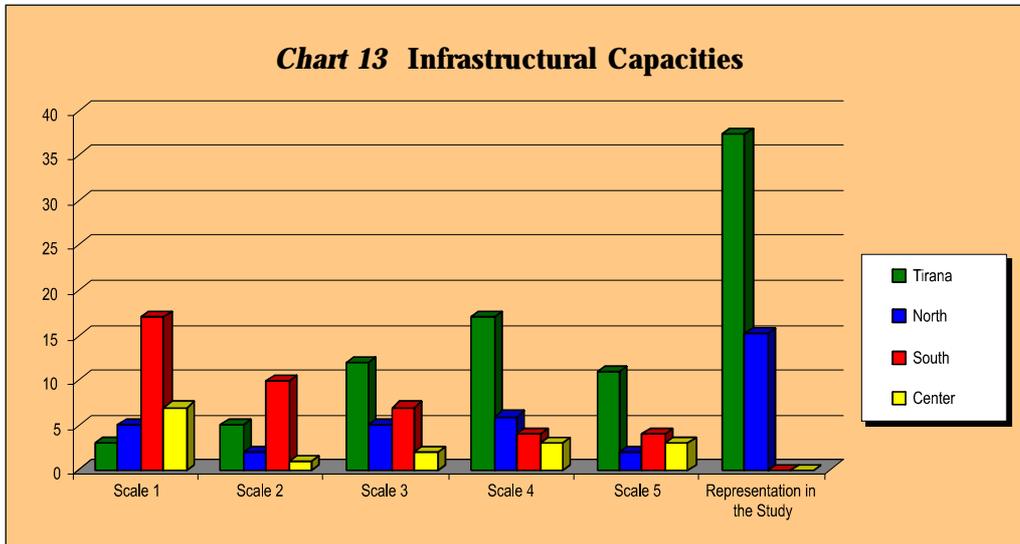
Most of interviewed organizations claim to have participated in training for issues such as: strategic planning, financial management, communication skills, and conflict management. Whereas regarding issues related to drafting and implementing advocacy campaigns, the number of positive answers is smaller, less than half of interviewees. Although the interviewed organizations operate in the area of advocacy, the findings show that a considerable part of them lack theory and practice in the matter. This reality is related to two main reasons:

1. Orientation of the NPO sector towards advocacy has occurred only in recent years;
2. Lack of planning to invest in the strengthening of staff capacities to participate in election campaigns.

V. b. 3. Infrastructural Capacities

Infrastructure capacities of Albanian organizations are in low levels, as it is asserted also by organizations participating in the survey. Majority of them, 59.5%, consider infrastructure capacities below average level, in an evaluation scale from 1-5, where 1 is “Very modest” and 5 is “Up-to-date”⁵. Furthermore, 30% of NPOs mostly from outside Tirana consider their infrastructural capacities as “Very modest”.

The difference between infrastructural capacities of organizations from Tirana and those from other districts is clearly shown in Chart 13. Such differences reinforce once more the advantage of Tirana organizations to participate in advocacy related activities.



V. c. Financial Sustainability

Apart from human resources, organizations operating in the area of advocacy, like all the other organizations of the sector, need financial resources to successfully implement campaigns in protection of public issues. While financial resources influence the success of advocacy campaigns, they have turned into a refraining factor for NPOs engaged in such campaigns, because of the lack of funds and proper managing capacities. Let us further see how the real situation of the Sample involved in advocacy activities is reflected in regard to financial capacities.

V. c. 1. Financial Systems and managing capacities

Out of 131 interviewed organizations, 70% of them affirm to have adopted financial management systems consisting mainly in summaries of the financial report according to sources, financial rules, annual financial report and annual budget of the organization. It should be underlined that this percentage shows increase of the sector capacities regarding financial management. Based on the NPO Needs Assessment in 2001, statistics show that the number of organizations with established financial systems, which draft annual financial report, has increased now in 50 %.

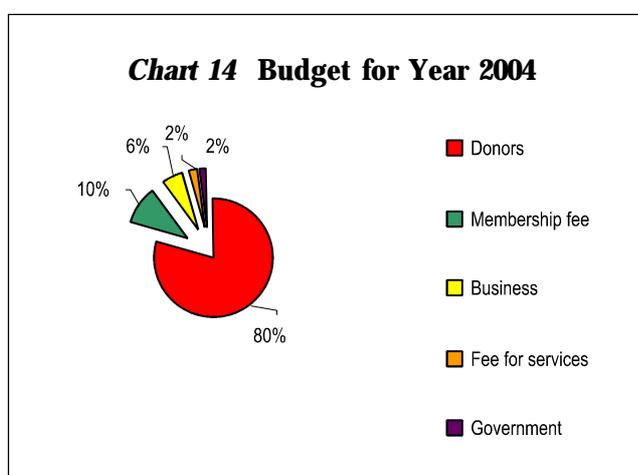
Meanwhile, 30 % of these organizations publish their financial report.

The data analysis shows that the publication of the financial report, as an important indicator of capacity and transparency, is progressively developing especially after the year 2002,

when the number of organizations publishing their financial report has doubled. Most of organizations belonging to this group are those created within the range of time 1996-2000. It may be explained by the consolidation of Albanian NPO capacities, increased accountability from the donor's community in conditions of increased competition and reduction of financial resources.

V. c. 2. Financial resources for the year 2004

The main funding sources for Albanian NPOs remain donors and this is shown in the following graph, where is quite obvious the great difference between the percentage of income coming from donors and that coming from other sources.



Regardless the low percentage, it is quite encouraging the fact that the presence of business sector as both contributor and beneficiary of services offered by organizations is growing.

A legal framework which would provide greater financial facilities to the business sector in the case of financing NPOs, would ensure a bigger and sustainable support for the NPOs sector.

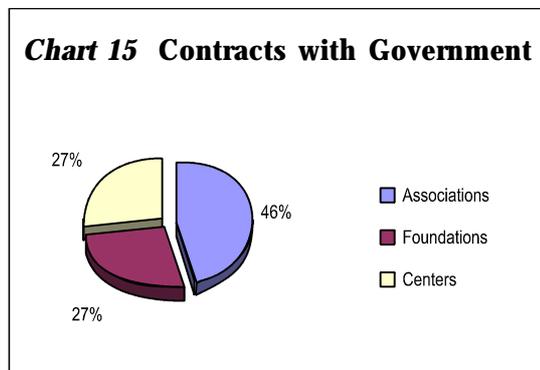
In the NPO sector, associations are the only set-ups with membership that in principle should rely on their membership fees. Nevertheless, this part of the sector continues to suffer because of weak links with membership, which is reflected in the low percentage of fees collected from members. Out of 90 interviewed organizations only 76% of them affirm that they manage to collect membership fees from 10%-100%, and only 34% of them collect membership fees at 90%-100%.

The findings show that the percentage of income from services is inconsiderable in the general budget for the year 2004, although it should be noticed that a number of organizations operating in advocacy area, because of their mission (watchdog, election monitoring), will remain for a longer time and for a greater part of the budget dependent on donors' financing.

Under the circumstances when the NPO sector continues to depend almost completely on donors financing, two of the elements that would contribute in the financial sustainability are: (1) ensure income by offering paid services to public and to the government, and (2) diversity of donors.

As it is clearly shown by the survey, the NPO sector continues to show weaknesses regarding strategically planning the provision of fee based services. Although the diversity of services offered by the sector has grown, it still needs to build internal capacities that would enable it to offer quality services for the public. It happens quite frequently that the services offered are not in conformity with the mission of organization or with its non-for-profit status. Such services vary from photocopy or fax services, computer courses, foreign language courses, etc. Exceptions from this phenomenon make organizations offering services for business, where there is a consistency between their mission and services they offer.

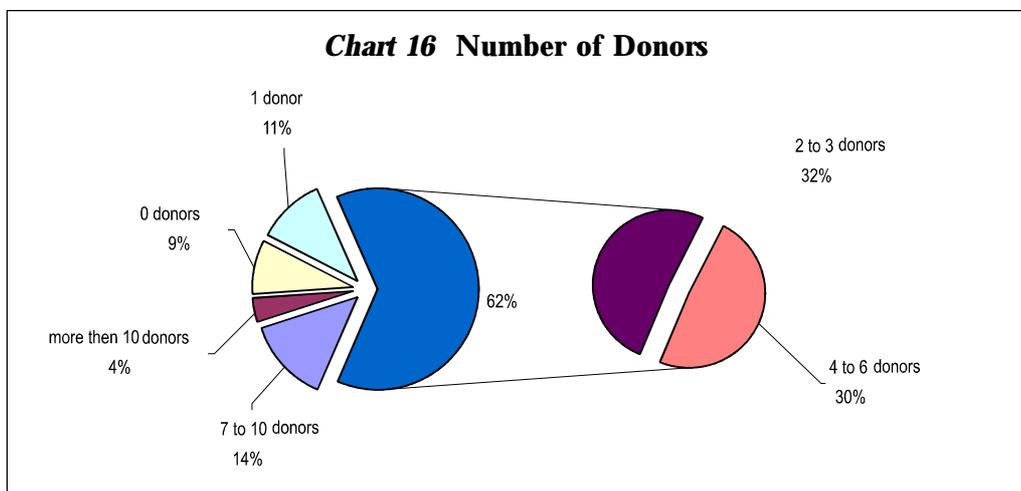
In the framework of cooperation of the NPO sector with the government, Centers and Foundations have profited the largest number of contracts: about 27 % of them have profited at least one contract with the state for the year 2004. The main services offered in the framework of these contracts relate to the drafting of national and regional strategies and social services for groups in need. The budget of these contracts varies from 60\$ - 25.000 \$.



Diversity of funding by different donors is a key factor for sustainability for it expresses credibility and capacity of an organization. This factor contributes directly to the independence of the organization to accomplish its mission, beyond the narrow interests of donors.

In this aspect there is noticed an improvement of NPO capacities and of their independence from donors, for it results that 80% of NPOs have benefited financing from more than one donor for the period 2001-2004.

This percentage becomes more meaningful because 62% of interviewed NPOs assert to have been sponsored by 2-6 donors during the period 2001-2004, as it is shown in the Chart 16.



V. c. 3. Obstacles in fundraising

Donors' policy is identified by 64% of the Sample, as one of the main obstacles in fundraising. This is related with the new orientation of donors support to advocacy and lobbying area, after 2001. Under the circumstances when a good part of Albanian NPOs has been social services oriented, with a high degree of specialization, this change caught the sector unprepared and part of it "unlawful" for the sake of the mission, to benefit from donors financial support.

In conditions of reduction of donor's funding for the NPOs sector, the need emerged for clear indicators of sustainability and transparency reflected in stronger financing criteria. Facing such a pressure, on one hand, and in conditions of poor institutional capacities, on the other hand, the sector started looking at these changes in donor's policies as an obstacle in securing funds.

Almost half of the interviewed NPOs (43% of them) consider the reduction of funds as another important obstacle in their work.

Other obstacles listed according to their importance are the lack of expertise in fundraising (16% of NPOs) and laws and regulations (16% of NPOs).

V. d. Advocacy Capacities

Advocacy is a process designed to persuade decision - makers to vote in favor of an issue with the aim of establishing and implementing laws and policies that would create a just and equal society. In order to fulfill this mission, NPOs engaged in advocacy campaigns which are part of this Sample should necessarily develop some capacities that make them

successful in these campaigns. Some of these capacities, to be further analyzed in this report, are:

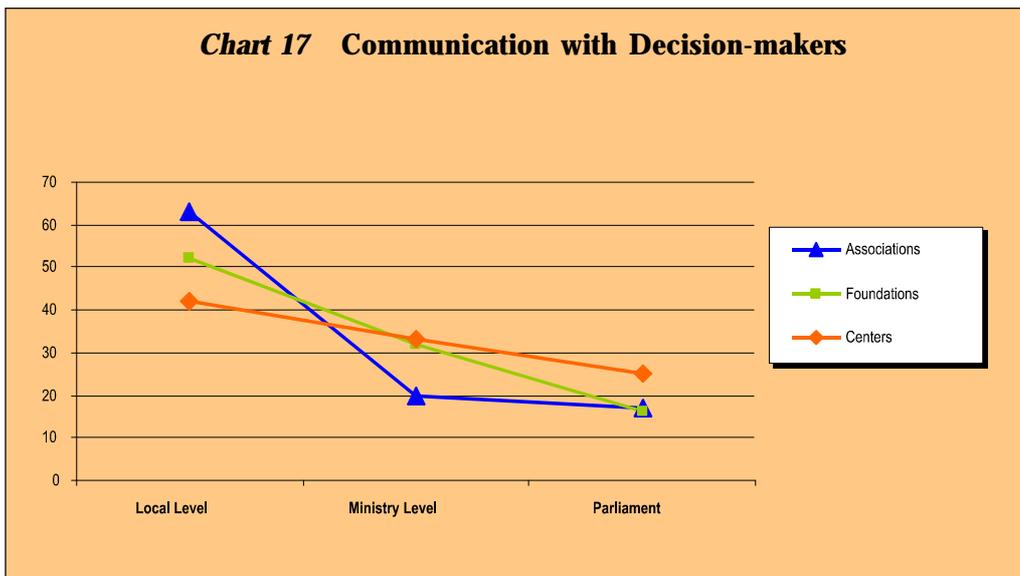
- Communication with decision - makers
- Building networks and coalitions with other organizations
- Mobilization and wide support of citizens
- Lobbying

V. d. 1. Communication with decision - makers

One of the elements determining participation and success of the civil society in the promotion of a legal framework which serves public interests is its access in decision-making at central and local level.

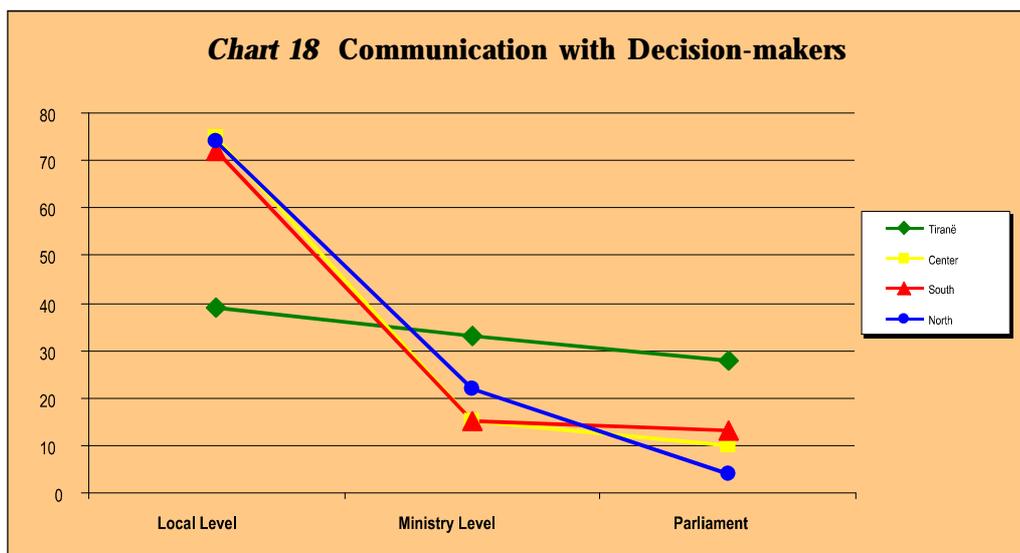
Firstly, this has to do with a functional legal framework enabling public participation, which according to the Sample is considered favorable. The findings of the survey show that 68.5% of interviewed NPOs consider unnecessary to introduce changes in the legislation to ensure participation, inclusion or provision of their ideas in decision-making levels.

Secondly, it relates to channels of communication with decision - makers in central and local level. According to the survey the majority of organizations (85%) affirm that such lines exist. These lines function better in the level of local governance (79%) and less in central level (ministries) and parliament, regardless of the status of NPOs.

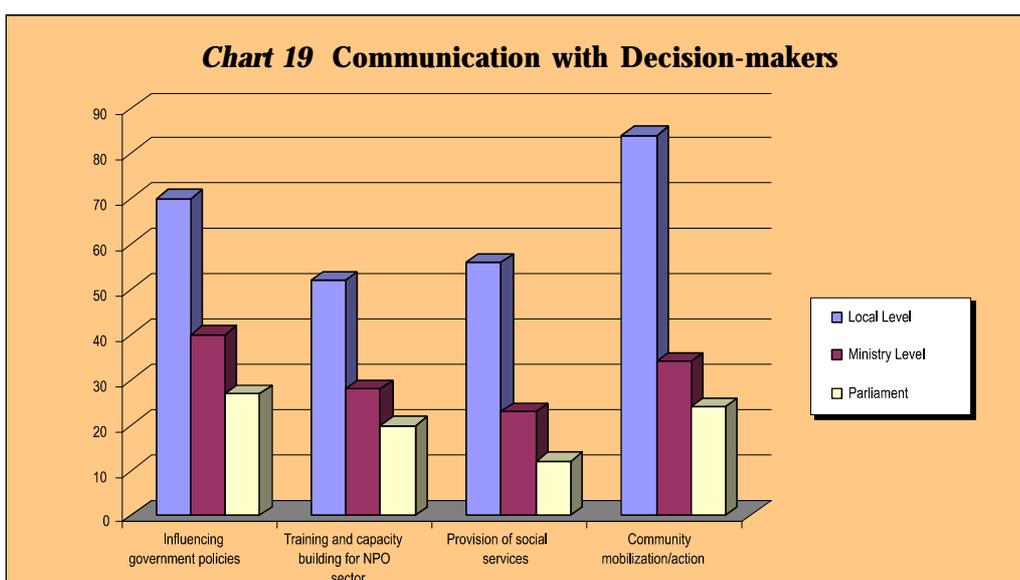


Naturally the work of NPOs, as a set-up whose primary mission is to serve the community, is closely linked with local government decision-making as the main provider of public services at the community level.

The above mentioned findings are valid even for communication of organizations according to geographical distribution. The difference that is obvious in this aspect is a better communication of Tirana organizations with the central level (ministries and Parliament), comparing to organizations from districts.



Referring to activities that NPOs carry out in the framework of their advocacy work, it is obvious that they concentrate their efforts in mobilizing the community to support initiatives of advocacy nature, followed by changes in government policies. To realize such changes it is necessary, as interested NPOs emphasize also, to have a higher level of communication with the central governance (Chart 19).



Lines of communications used by NPOs with decision - makers vary from informal meetings, based often on personal acquaintances of organizations leaders with particular policymakers, a phenomenon that occurs mostly with organizations operating outside Tirana, up to collaboration for joint projects, assistance and recommendations in drafting policies, strategies or laws and even communications of lobbying nature for particular issues. The most preferred and most frequent form used by NPOs among all those is meeting, mentioned by 92% of interviewed organizations.

The success with policymakers has not to do only with the quantity or various lines of communication, but with evaluation of their importance by NPOs as well. The communication is evaluated positively by the majority of organizations that have established communication with policymakers, for 65% of them evaluate it at a satisfactory level, in an evaluation scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “Not at all satisfied” and 5 means “Very satisfied”. 37% of interviewed organizations consider communication with decision - makers relatively satisfactory.

Although results in the area of communication look encouraging, still the Sample remains critical regarding relations and communication with decision - makers at national and local level. Some of the requests of NPOs to the government in order to make more efficient their efforts in the area of advocacy are:

- A more transparent and more open government;
- Improvement of relations of NPO sector with all levels of decision - making;
- More responsibility by the government;
- More active and more open governance for cooperation and partnership with NPO sector;
- A better recognition and estimation of the NPO’ work by decision - makers.

V. d. 2. Members’ involvement in advocacy campaigns

Another very important element in advocacy campaigns is the participation of members and supporters of the organization in activities carried out in the framework of these campaigns. Successful advocacy campaigns are featured by massive public activities, such as meetings, manifestations, peaceful protests requiring mobilization of citizens.

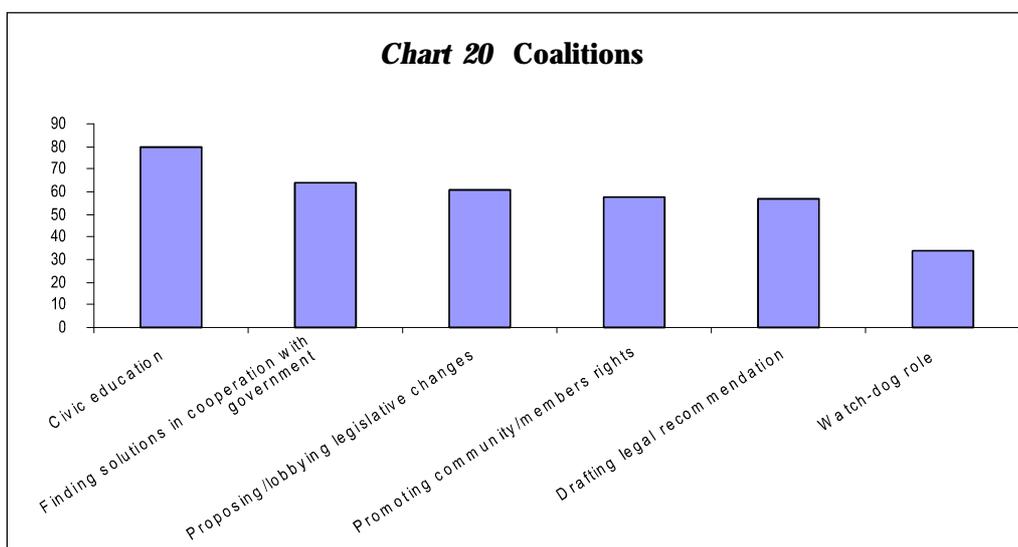
Most of the interviewed NPOs (78.5%), affirm to include members and their supporters in advocacy activities and it seems a positive indicator. The answers regarding the ways NPOs involve members show an incorrect perception by interviewed organizations about public participation in advocacy campaigns. The ways of inclusion mentioned by the interviewed NPOs are the following:

- Participation in activities, training, seminars, various conferences;
- Participation in the implementation of projects and working plans of the organization;
- Participation in the community needs assessment etc.

V. d. 3. Establishment of coalitions for promoting common interests

Contemporary practices in the area of advocacy more and more emphasize the need for a participatory advocacy, which means cooperation, partnership, coordination with other organizations and stakeholders of common interest. In this direction a positive development within the NPO sector is noticed. Thus, 90% of interviewed NPOs are included in coalitions to promote an issue of common interest.

Civic education is listed the first among issues that brought organizations together in coalitions. This achievement may be considered expected if we recall that most NPOs (75%) involved in the election process have been performing activities related to voters' education. Another consistency observed from the answers of the Sample is the fact that almost the same organizations involved in coalitions for drafting legal recommendations are also participating in proposal/lobbying for legal changes. This proves that the work of NPOs is not limited at the level of drafting, but their efforts advance further with requirements for the approval of draft-laws by policymakers, as it is shown in the Chart 20.



Albanian NPOs evaluate the activity of coalitions relatively successful. Out of all interviewed NPOs, 46.5% of them, having previous experiences of work in coalitions, evaluate such experiences as effective, in an evaluation scale from 1 to 5, meaning by 1 “Not at all effective” and by 5 “Very effective”. Only 13.5% of organizations claim to have perceived a negative experience by participating in coalitions for promotion of common issues, thus considering them not efficient.

In spite of such an evaluation by interviewed organizations, the request for efficient coalitions among NPOs remains one of the best choices of interviewed NPOs (66%), when asked how to make efficient their advocacy efforts. Indirectly this fact shows that coalitions where NPOs participate have not achieved yet the expected outcomes in advocacy campaigns or the need for efficient coalitions in this area is still high.

V. d. 4. Lobbying

The lobbying process is one of main elements of advocacy campaign affecting its success or failure. Referring to the findings of the survey we notice that 87% of Albanian organizations are familiar with the concept of lobbying and feel comfortable participating in such a process.

However, while such a high percentage of the Sample claim to be familiar with the concept of lobbying, very few organizations feel able to be involved in such a process, for they lack necessary capacities and previous successful experiences in protection of issues or implementation of law in service of the community.

The lack of capacities is proved also by the fact that training in lobbying process remain a need for most of interviewed NPOs, in order to make efficient their efforts in the area of advocacy. Out of 62% of all interviewed NPOs that have identified training as a need for the efficiency of their efforts in advocacy, almost all of them have specified the areas of advocacy and lobbying as the mostly required training topics.

V. e. Public Image

The image of NPOs in public is another very important aspect affecting the work of Albanian organizations for successful campaigns in advocacy. Albanian NPOs quite often have suffered from the lack of a consolidated image as the third sector in service of community.

The Code of Ethics, the government attitude towards the NPO sector and relations with media are three factors closely linked which determine the image NPOs would have in the eyes of wide public. All this will be further analyzed in the study.

V. e. 1. Code of Ethics

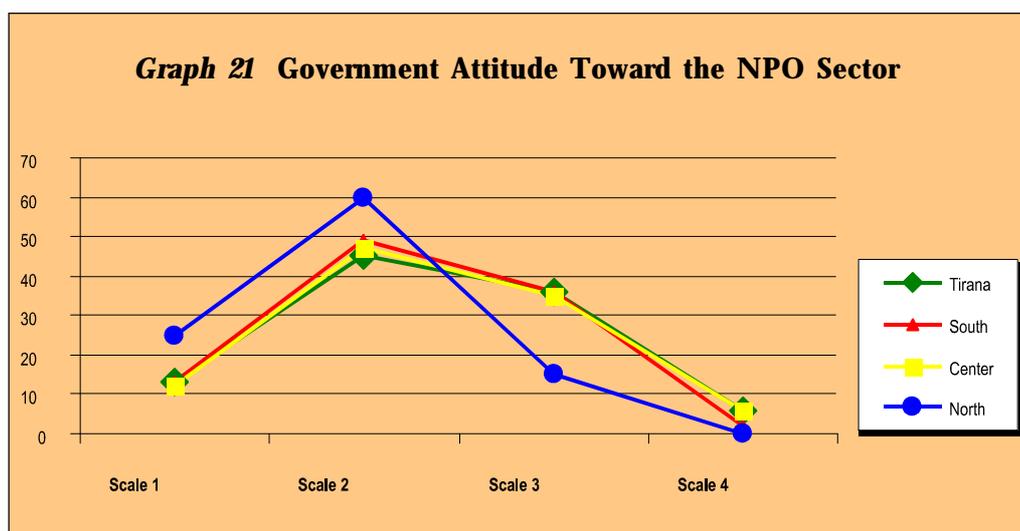
Almost all interviewed organizations (98%) consider the Code of Ethics very important for the NPO sector. Such a Code, as it is also underlined by interviewed organizations in the survey, will serve the sector to improve its performance, increase transparency and accountability, but also increase credibility of NPO sector in public.

Meanwhile, recent efforts are made in Albania to draft a new Code of Ethics for NPOs, on the basis of which all organizations will function.

V. e. 2. Government attitude towards the NPO sector

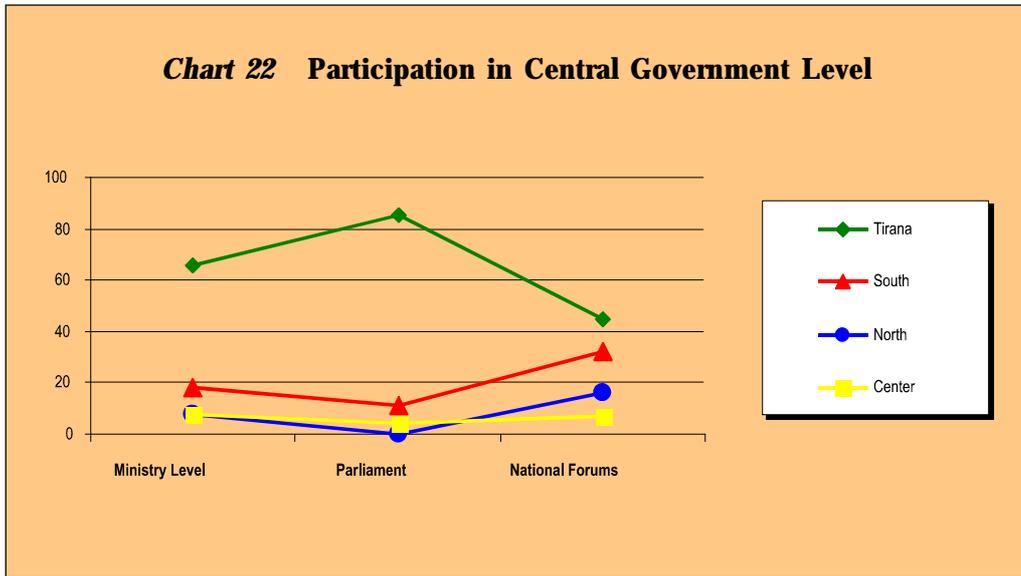
Government attitude towards the NPO sector engaged in the area of advocacy is considered by the Sample as a facilitating or obstructing factor regarding the success of the campaign. Within an evaluation scale from 1 to 5, where 1 evaluates such relations as “Conflictual” and 5 as “Supporting”, the government attitude is evaluated as non-supportive and even tending to be conflictual. Most of organizations evaluate the government attitude as not positive (48%) and not supportive (32%). It is worth mentioning that no interviewed organization has evaluated the government attitude towards NPOs as supportive.

The survey data referring to geographical distribution of NPOs indicate that organizations evaluating the government attitude more negatively are in high percentage those from the North of Albania. This situation explains in a way the low level of engagement in advocacy campaigns of organizations from North. The organizations from Tirana, Center and South, as it is shown in the Chart 21, make almost the same evaluation for the government attitude towards the NPO sector.

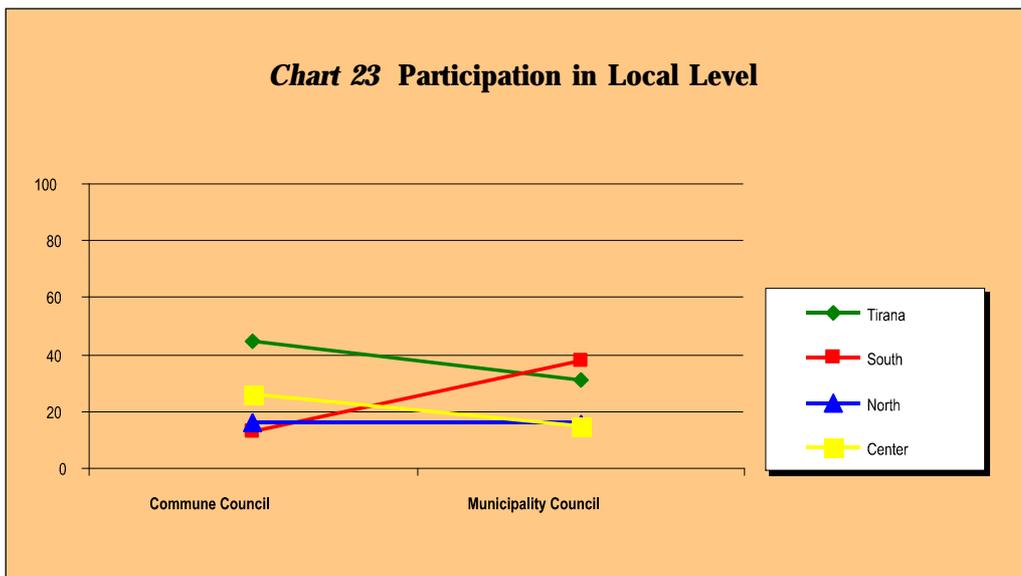


Regardless the non-positive consideration made by the Sample to the government’ attitude towards NPO sector, the survey’ data indicate that the interviewed NPO-s are active in their participation in the central and local decision-making.

The greatest participation in the public decision - making results at local level which appears with the participation in the meetings of Municipal Council (Chart 23).



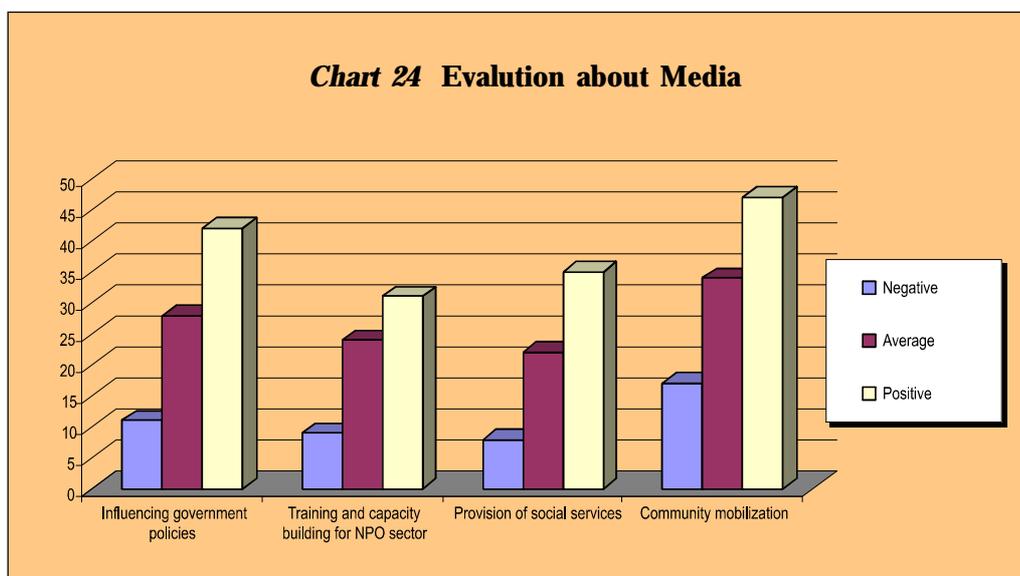
As regards the participation level according to the geographical division of the interviewed organizations, as reflected in Charts 22 and 23, there is a difference shown among those from Tirana and the others. Organizations from Tirana are basically involved in the central forums at parliamentary or ministry level, or in national forums, whereas organizations in southern Albania participate more in the local decision - making by taking part in the meetings of Municipal Council. Surprisingly, organizations from Tirana are involved more in the meetings of the Communal Councils rather than Municipal Council.



Participation is not always equally effective and this has been proven by the answers to the question regarding the effectiveness of their participation in these forums in influencing public policies, where more than half of the organizations (58%) consider their participation as not effective, in an evaluation scale from 1 to 5, in which 1 imply “Not at all effective” and 5 “Very effective. This is a fact related with the non positive consideration of the interviewed NPOs concerning the Albanian government attitude towards the NPO sector, as analyzed above.

V. e. 3. Relations with Media

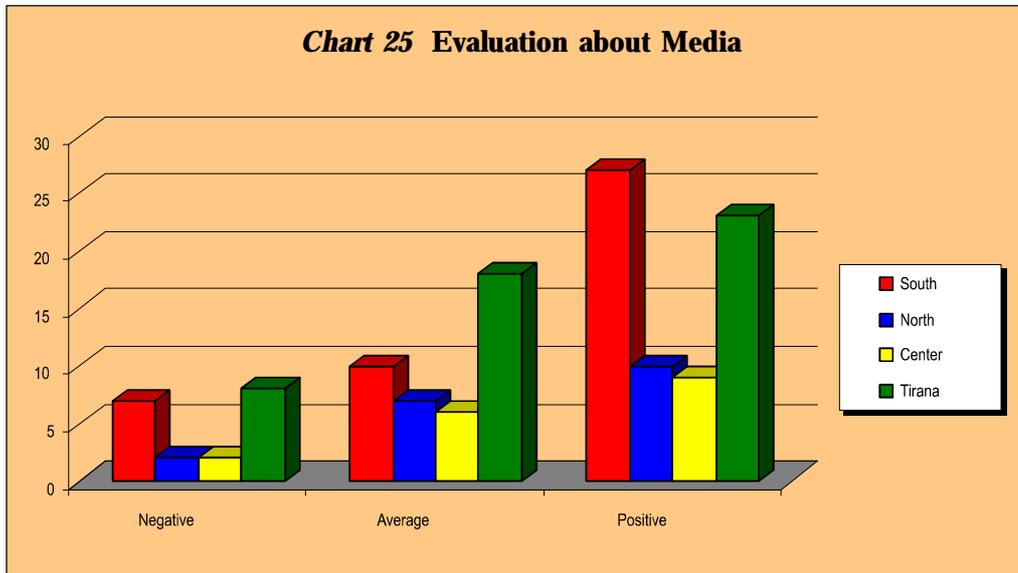
Media is an important tool in establishing the image of the NPO sector to the public at large. Based upon their experiences with media, the most part of the interviewed organizations consider as positive their relations with media. According to an evaluation scale from 1 to 5, where 1 imply “Not at all accessible” and 5 “Very accessible”, 82.5% of the Sample consider media relatively accessible.



The reasons for such an access listed by the organizations are different and basically related with the activity and work of the organizations drawing the attention of media, especially the local one. Some of the reasons cited by the interviewees are as follows:

- “Activities are duly reflected”;
- “We have had good access in media; in this year only, 260 articles have been published in the written media”;
- “They are participants and invited in many of our programs, their press releases are published on regular basis”;
- “They themselves have been approached to follow the center activities”;
- “It is part of the our NPO work to cooperate continuously with media”

- “We have utilized attracting means to keep closer with media”;
- “Media, especially the local one, has been supportive and present in the activities of the association”.



Only 14 % of the interviewed NPO-s consider media as not accessible. According to them, some of the reasons are as follows:

- Limited financial capacities of NPO-s to cover media fees for services;
- Media priorities do not fit with or are contrary with the organization activity;
- Lack of media credibility for reflecting the information with reliability.

Techniques used by interviewed NPO-s to communicate with media are of a huge variety and include written and electronic media as well. The most utilized techniques are as follows:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| • Interviews to the media | 79% of the Sample |
| • Writing and publication of articles in newspapers and magazines | 76% “ |
| • TV broadcastings | 75.5% “ |
| • Press releases | 74% “ |
| • Organization of radio broadcastings by the organization | 46% “ |
| • Advertisements | 43% “ |
| • Have owned or run a newspaper or magazine; | 28% “ |

Only 25% of interviewed NGO-s affirmed to have their own web page. This fact indicates that utilization of IT by Albanian NPOs remains poor.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

- The civil society in Albania has started to participate in important processes of democratic development in the country, such as electoral processes and anticorruption campaigns, but the massive participation and geographical extent of this presence is still poor.
- The outcomes of advocacy campaigns implemented in these years, are not very positive and can not be considered as successful in achieving their goals;
- Albanian organizations in general, especially those outside Tirana, regardless of the developments in recent years, have not the necessary organizational capacities in the financial, human and infrastructure context to undertake and realize successful advocacy campaigns in protection of public issues;
- Foreign donors still remain the main financial resource for Albanian NPOs ;
- Associations, which are the only membership set-ups, still suffer from weak connections with their membership, that is evidenced by the low percentage of financial contribution' collection, which would have an impact to their financial independence;
- NPOs sector continues to show deficiencies in regards to strategicly planning to offer paid services, that would provide for a stability and independence of the sector;
- A legal framework which would provide greater financial facilities to the business sector in the case of financing NPOs, would ensure a bigger and sustainable support for the NPOs sector;
- Work experiences in coalitions reflect the need of NPOs to establish effective coalitions within NPO sector, in order to make advocacy campaigns more successful;
- The Code of Ethics is considered as one of the key elements, which would influence in the improvement of the NPO sector image not only to the public, but also to other sectors like state and business.

- There is an increase at the level of communication of NPOs with decision-makers and of their participation in the decision-making process particularly at local level, to influence in the drafting and implementation of public policies. Nevertheless, the government attitude towards the civil society sector is not yet considered by NPOs as supportive.
- Trainings remain a continuous demand of the Albanian NPOs for the enhancement of staff capacities and organization's development, particularly in the field of advocacy and lobbying;
- NPOs understand and appreciate the role of media in raising the awareness and sensibility of public opinion by making it participate in their activity. But lacking of sufficient free space in media arranged through the Public Service Announcements, to make public or promote the sector's activity as well as in some occasion the political trend of media, limits somehow this access, especially for the organizations with limited capacities and resources;
- Organizations conducting their activity in Tirana have in all aspects greater capacities compared to those out of Tirana.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- NPO sector should continue the initiative of a group of NPOs, for the development of a Code of Ethics for NPOs, by promoting the involvement of as many NPOs in the process, as well as the increase of awareness of national organizations over the importance of accountability, responsibility and transparency towards the public;
- Taking into account the not sound public image of the sector in one side, and the obligations that sector has towards the state on the other side, it is more than necessary for the sector to develop mechanisms enhancing transparency towards state, public and other beneficiaries of its services. The first step in this respect should be the publication of NPOs activity and financial situation;
- Training and technical assistance programs for NPOs sector operating in the area of democracy (particularly NPOs outside Tirana) should focus on transmitting the knowledge and capacities for the strengthening of their advocacy capacities, particularly on participatory government issues, techniques of influencing government policies and monitoring government services;
- Given that training and assistance in strengthening financial management capacities and generating incomes remains a continuous need for the sector, self-financing and generating incomes should be part of financial management training program, particularly for NPO-s outside Tirana. Trainings in Financial Management should be followed by individual technical onsite assistance on specific elements of financial management.
- Effective monitoring of government performance requires strengthening of co-operation and institutionalization of the relationship NPO – Government by establishing participatory governance structures / forums.
- Establishing and strengthening of relationships NPO - Business requires building credibility between the sectors by increasing the level of information exchange, improving the quality of the services offered by NPO-s and strengthening the capacities of NPO' and Business' relevant staff in organizing activities of common interest.

- Establishment of common forums NPO - Media and strengthening of professional capacities of media representatives shall contribute towards strengthening the relationship between media and the NPO sector. Media representatives may be part of training programs in: Advocacy and Lobbying, Negotiation, Anticorruption, etc.

VIII.1 List of cities included in each of the geographical divisions used in the assessment



North

- Dibër
- Has
- Kukës
- Mat
- Pukë
- Shkodër

Center

- Durrës
- Elbasan
- Librazhd
- Lushnje
- Pogradec

South

- Berat
- Fier
- Gjirokastër
- Skrapar
- Sarandë
- Vlorë
- Korcë
- Kucovë
- Përmet

VIII.2 List of NPOs participating in the Assessment

Active Woman, Gjirokastrë	Association for Vlach Community Culture
Agritra Vision, Peshkopi	Association Jonian Professional Journalists, Sarandë
Agro-Business Council of Albania	Association of Council of Qarques of Albania
Albanian Association of Communes	Association of Local Media
Albanian Center of Assistance and Research on the Local Government Bodies	Association of Orphan Youngsters and Children, Korçë
Albanian Civil Society Foundation	Association of Rural Women "Apollonia", Fier
Albanian Coalition against Corruption, Lushnjë	Association of South Journalists
Albanian Consumers Association	Association of Vlora Journalists
Albanian Law Students Association	Beekeepers Association of Mati
Albanian Social Economic Forum	Berati Woman in Development
Albanian Students Government	BLEKALB Foundation
Albanian Students in Economics & Business Management (ASEB)	Business and Economy Promotion Center, Durrës
Albanian Youth Network for European Integration	BYL - A (Mjaft)
Albanian Youth Shakers	Çamëria, Vlorë
Albarom, Durrës	Carpe Diem, Korçë
All Children Have the Same Human Right, Shkodër	Center for Development and Democratization of Institutions
Art, Culture, Sport, (AKS), Librazhd	Center for Legal Integration Services and Practices
Association for Physical Benefits, Korçë	Center for Parliamentary Studies
Association for Protection of Children Rights and Culture, Kuçovë	

Center for Research and Development	Gjinokastra, Gjirokastrër
Center for Rural Studies and Sustainable Development	Gora, Kukës
Children Alliance	Health Educators of Përmet
Children Human Rights Center of Albania	Help for Children, Elbasan
Citizen's Advocacy Office	Independent Forum of Albanian Women
Civil Engagement for Goodness, Vlorë	Initiatives through Youth Integration
Co-Plan, Institute for Habitat Development	Institute for Contemporary Studies
Council of Associations Offering Social Services in Durrës	Institute for Cooperation and Development
Counseling Center for Women and Girls, Shkodër	Institute for Democracy and Mediation
Ecological Club, Fier	Institute for Development and Research Alternatives
Education for an Open Society	Institute of Applied Gender Policies
Educators of Human Rights	Institute of Social Policies
Environment Protection and Tourism Promotion Association, Gjirokastrër	Integration and Democratic Development
Environmental Club of Pogradeci	Intellectual Women of Pogradec
Every Child	Justice and Peace, Shkodër
Family in Focus	Kabaja, Korçë
Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures, Dibër Qarqë	Korça Woman
For Women and Children, Kombinat Center	Kuçova Women in the Development Focus
Forum of NPOs, Dibër	Lawyers for Human Rights, Kukës
Foundation for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation of Disputes	Local Infrastructure Support Agency, Gjirokastrër
Free Media	Maltëser, Shkodër
Gender Alliance for Development Center	Masmedia and Environment
	Me, the Woman! Pogradec
	Media Center "Obelisk", Gjirokastrër

National Center for Social Studies	Society for Democratic Culture, Pukë
Nefreta, Vlorë	Society for Democratic Culture, Vlorë
North in Development, Kukës	Sustainable Economic Development Agency (Seda)
Parents for Children Education	The Door, Shkodër
Patriotic Association of Korca Women and Girls “Marigo Pozia”	Tourism and Environment, Pogradec
Poetic Oda, Pogradec	Touristic Gjirokastra
Private Public Institute	Union of Albanian Journalists
Protection of Disabled People Rights, Librazhd	Union of Albanian Roma “Amaro Drom”
Psycho-Social Center “The Hearth”, Vlorë	Urban Integration
Regional Center for Development and Monitoring of Infrastructure, Environment and Civil Society, Gjirokastër	Useful to Albanian Women
Regional Development Agency, Berat	Useful to Albanian Women, Elbasan
Regional Development Agency, Elbasan	With You for You Girls!, Fier
Regional Development Agency, Fier	Women Advocacy Center
Regional Development Agency, Gjirokaster	Women Association “Jona”, Sarandë
Regional Development Agency, Tiranë	Women Association, Librazhd
Regional Development Agency, Vlorë	Women Employment Center, Pogradec
Regional Environmental Center	Women for Global Action
Regional Parents Association, Fier	Women in Development, Shkodër
Renewal of Apollonia, Fier	Women Rights, Përmet
Rural Urban Institute	Women to Women, Shkodër
Skrapari Woman in Transition	Young Intellectuals “Hope”, Shkodër
Society for Democratic Culture	Young Women Christian Association of Albania (Ywca)
Society for Democratic Culture, Kuçovë	Youth Center “Trokitja”
	Youth Forum of Dibra
	Youth Group of Human Rights