

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2021

# ANRD NEWSLETTER

Europe in Rural Albania



## CONTENT

- "2021 IN A FEW WORDS"
- The "Pro Rural Women" event is being organized for the third year in a row
- Key highlights – 3rd edition of Pro Rural Women
- Contribute to the "You Are Not Forgotten" fundraising campaign!
- "Agricultural Merits" for the best
- The first National Meeting of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and potential LAGs has been organized
- The Roadmap for Green Economy in the Western Balkans is presented
- Youth in Rural Development
- Future Activities
- Get to know our people – Roland Bardhi
- Etc.



# ANRD

ALBANIAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
RRJETI SHQIPTAR PËR ZHVILLIMIN RURAL

Dear friends,

We have left behind a dynamic year and embarked on the path to new goals in our shared mission for sustainable and livable local communities. Change of the years brings the right moment for reflection on the needs and priorities of rural communities, public policies and instruments, reform processes, opportunities and challenges in the framework of European integration, the role and contribution of the Network and member organizations in these processes, etc. It is a self-reflection that helps us to evaluate the achievements, to recognize the weaknesses, the obstacles in achieving a greater and more concrete impact of our work, to evaluate the opportunities etc. But above all and most importantly, this time of the year makes us feel grateful for the supporters, contributors and enthusiasts of our work.

Often, we use to take for granted the support and cooperation with partners and collaborators, at a time when this synergy is a major factor for the success of our work and is gained through open communication, exchange and most importantly through mutual trust and joint hard work on sustainable development common issues. It is therefore the time to express our thanks and gratitude to all the contributors and supporters of the Network without whose help the efforts undertaken by ANRD throughout the year would not have been successful. First, a thank you to ANRD member organizations that through their activity effectively

introduced the concerns and represented the interests and aspirations of rural communities across the whole country. We are grateful to each of them, for their persistent work with the local communities. We are also grateful for the attention of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to the initiatives of ANRD considering the Network as an important partner in the development of the sector, with special focus on the implementation of the LEADER approach. Thank you to all our partners, mentioning some of them like the Agricultural University of Tirana, Epoka University, University of Durrës, University of Korça, Scan television and many other partners who have supported and promoted the Network's initiatives throughout 2021. We are grateful for their help and aware that our achievements are dedicated to the cooperation we have established.

Also, a thank you goes to the European Union for the permanent support it has provided from the establishment of the Network and continuously, throughout the consolidation of the largest rural development advocacy platform such as the Rural Parliament, especially for the support and flexibility shown in the realization of Parliament in a hybrid format in March 2021. We are also very grateful to the German Organization for International Cooperation - GIZ, for assisting us with the implementation of the two Rural Parliament events. Our thanks are extended to all local and international organizations, municipalities, private enterprises and other public and non-public structures that have followed us and contributed to our initiatives throughout 2021.

It's really appropriate to showcase the progress and achievements of 2021, in order to create the necessary enthusiasm in launching the new working year 2022. Let us briefly introduce some of them:

- The second Albanian Rural Parliament (March, 2021) ensured the inclusiveness under pandemic conditions and was followed by 600 participants with physical and remote presence.
- The joint Declaration of the Parliament unified the priorities of all participants in terms of sustainable rural development.
- The title Honorary Knight of the "Agricultural Merit" Order awarded by the French Government to Mrs. Liljana Isakaj, staff of Adad Malore is an inspiration not only to us in the Network but also to all the actors dedicated to the development of agriculture and agricultural cooperation.
- 2021 marked the implementation of a consortium of organizations' project, including several ANRD partner organizations, led by RTM with a focus on youth empowerment in rural areas.
- Expansion of ANRD membership with two new organizations (Help - Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe office in Albania and the Ishmi Association) by expanding the thematic and geography of ANRD's work.
- The successful organization of the second Albanian Rural Parliament, implemented in coordination with the Agricultural University of Tirana and Epoka University promoted signing of the Cooperation Agreement with Epoka University with the aim of strengthening the cooperation launched and the organization of future joint initiatives.
- The second edition of Pro Rural Women and the launch of the fundraising campaign "You Are Not Alone! Support today livelihoods for the women living in the rural communities and they will provide for themselves, their family and community for the entire life" to support the most part vulnerable rural women.

As we recognize many top accomplishments of our member organizations which we cannot mention all, it is worth focusing on some of them such as the first graduates as Local Development Agents, the creation and operation of the platform misfruit.al, the campaign Blue buckets for helping the elderly in difficult economic conditions as well as a wide range of programs, initiatives, and actions implemented by ANRD member organizations, reinforcing the important role civil society organizations in the development processes.

Unfortunately, during 2021 we lost the pioneer of Albanian rural development, the beloved Pier Paolo Ambrosi, one of the early contributors to the Network's creation and consolidation. This premature departure is a great loss for his family and friends, VIS Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo, ANRD and for all Albania and Albanians, to whom he dedicated with commitment and passion the last 30 years of his life. The legacy of his work, contribution and model are an inspiring example for all the contributors of the sustainable development in Albania.

Finally, there are many models, success stories, examples and good practices inside and outside the Network that we can rely on and be inspired by to better serve the groups we represent, to contribute sustainably to all levels of development processes and to be a leader in initiatives that advance the interests and priorities of rural communities throughout 2022. Let this mission guide us in every step of our work in bringing more optimism, development and prosperity in the rural areas of our country.

Happy joyful new year and thanks for bringing our network such value and continuous success!

Cordially,  
ANRD Staff

## The “Pro Rural Women” event is being organized for the third year in a row

On the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women, on October 15, 2021, the Albanian Network for Rural Development organized the Third Edition of the event ‘Pro-Rural Women’ at the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. This edition was organized under the auspices of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms. Frida Krifca, in close cooperation with Albanian Network for Rural Development and its member organizations as well as with the participation of women’s groups from different rural areas of Albania. About 75 participants, of whom 55 were women and girls from different rural communities of the country, gathered to discuss the needs, challenges, and aspirations of women and girls in a rural area, to share inspiring models in the socio-economic empowerment of rural women as well as to jointly identify practical solutions to key challenges. The third edition of Pro Rural Women was supported by We Effect and the Balkan Rural Development Network.

### Read more:

<https://anrd.al/news/pro-rural-women-event-was-organized-for-the-third-year-in-a-row/>

## Key highlights – 3rd edition of Pro Rural Women

*‘An opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable role and contribution of women in agriculture and rural development as well as to renew our collective commitment to improving their well-being’*

Since 2019, ‘Pro Rural Women’ is held every year in Albania on the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women, on October 15. This annual gathering marks a moment of reflection and commitment to finding instruments aimed at improving the well-being of rural women and girls. Rural women and girls need the right treatment to fulfill their aspirations. This edition reinforces the 2020 Edition Statement on Fair Treatment for Rural Women to enable them to be not only compassionate mothers but also successful entrepreneurs and active members of their community.

### Read more in Albanian:

<https://anrd.al/lajme/mesazhet-kryesore-edicioni-2021-i-pro-grave-rurale/>



# Contribute to the "You Are Not Forgotten" fundraising campaign!

*Support rural women with working means today and she will feed herself, her family, and the community for a lifetime.*

To donate for the benefit of the fundraising campaign of the Albanian Rural Development Network "You Are Not Forgotten"! "Supporting women in rural areas with working means today and she will feed herself, her family and the community for a lifetime" is a concrete step to help the most vulnerable part of rural women who are off the radar of public support, donor support, and other institutions due to vulnerable family status, being victims of domestic violence, lack of land ownership, limited financial opportunities, low access to information and insufficient knowledge.

#### Read more:

<https://anrd.al/news/support-livelihoods-for-the-women-living-in-the-rural-communities-today-and-they-will-provide-for-themselves-their-family-and-community-for-the-entire-life/>

## "You Are Not Forgotten!"

**'SUPPORT LIVELIHOODS FOR THE WOMEN LIVING IN THE RURAL COMMUNITIES TODAY, AND THEY WILL PROVIDE FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY FOR THE ENTIRE LIFE'**



# "Agricultural Merits" for the best

*Tirana, October 20*

At the Residence of the French Embassy in Tirana, under the auspices of the Ambassador, Mrs. Elisabeth Barsacq, Mrs. Liljana Isakaj was honored with the medal "Merit Agricole". The title awarded by the French Government to the Honorary Knight under the session "Agricultural Merits" is an honor for Mrs. Isakaj and the organization that she represents, Adad Malore. This title is an evaluation of the dedicated work to the development of agriculture and Franco-Albanian agricultural cooperation.

Liljana Isakaj has been working for many years for ADAD Malore, which is a member organization of ANRD and has a consolidated profile with 25 years of experience in agricultural and rural development issues in mountainous regions such as Dibra, Korca, Kukes, Malësia e Madhe, Shkodra, etc. Liljana has led many initiatives and projects that have supported farmers in mountainous areas in terms of production, processing, promotion, diversification, and evaluation.

**Read more:** <https://www.facebook.com/1713287332285409/posts/3045843012363161/?sfnsn=mo>

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## The first National Meeting of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and potential LAGs has been organized

On September 23, 2021, the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) organized the National Gathering of Local Action Groups (LAGs) and potential LAGs. The LEADER approach in Albania: How can we turn IPARD III support into the key instrument for the successful nationwide implementation of the Leader approach? This activity was organized in the framework of the project "Support to BRDN in institutional development to revitalize rural communities in the Western Balkans", financially supported by We Effect.

The main objective of this event was to give a new impetus to the implementation of the Leader approach after long awaiting for a national undertaking toward Leader approach implementation in the rural communities across Albania. The gathering brought together 35 participants who took place in the event, representatives of active LAGs and potential LAGs, civil society organizations, national and local authorities, and donor communities that support integrated rural development, including FAO, UN Women, GIZ, etc.

**Read more:** <https://anrd.al/news/the-first-national-meeting-of-local-action-groups-lags-and-potential-lags-has-been-organised/>

## The Roadmap for Green Economy in the Western Balkans is presented

In the framework of the implementation of the NAGE project - Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy, the Albanian Network for Rural Development presented the "Roadmap for Green Economy in the Western Balkans - discussions on the proposed steps and actions" as the most important part of the project advocacy NAGE. This activity also marked the successful completion of this project. The guide followed the work of renowned ANRD experts with the research community, rural, environmental, and farmer associations and CSOs as well as local and national policymakers who contributed to drafting the national segment of this document.

The organization of the Forum realized the presence of this segment that provides knowledge on the perception at the national level of opportunities and challenges for mitigating the risks that the country may go through during the approximation process and sharing experience with other countries represented by the project, as tools to prepare them for the future of the approximation process. It marks the beginning of a long and comprehensive process for creating an enabling framework for the development of the green economy in Albania.

**Read more in Albanian:** <https://anrd.al/evente-anrd/prezantohet-udherrefyes-per-ekonomine-e-gjelber-ne-ballkanin-perendimor-ne-kuader-te-projektit-nage/>

## The tradition continues Puka Agro-Fest

*"Whoever values the highlands, values Albania" (Prof. Enver Isufi)*

For the nineteenth year, on September 25, the main square of Puka welcomed hundreds of visitors who came to taste and buy typical products of northern Albania. Fruits, vegetables, jams, dairy products, handicrafts, and much more have added to the beauty of Puka Square throughout the morning.

As every year, the originality of the products and the richness of local traditions were the real stars of the day, characterized by a great festive atmosphere for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Agro Puka, organizer of the event.

**Read more:**

<https://www.shijaeveriut.al/sq/index.php/2021/10/01/feste-te-malesise/>



# Youth in Rural Development

In the framework of the RURAL-YOU project, funded by the European Union, ANRD members, Volontari nel Mondo RTM, AgroPuka, ADAD Malore, and Pfd are implementing a training cycle for rural development with a focus on "Youth in Rural Development" aimed at young people (18 up to 35 years old), local organizations and public administrations from rural areas of Shkodra region (Vau Dejës, Malësi e Madhe, Puka, and Fushë Arrëz), Kukës (Kukës, Has, Tropojë) and Dibër (Dibër, Bulqizë, Klos, Mat).

The training aims to support young participants to make an effective contribution to the political, social, and economic life of the rural communities to which they belong. At the same time, the young participants have improved their skills to access the opportunities offered by European Union programs, Albanian institutions, and other donors.

Training in Shkodra and Puka has been provided and the training cycle will continue with activities in Dibra and Kukes along November. Afterward, a series of measures will be introduced aiming to provide financial support to local organizations and youth initiatives in the project areas.

**Read more:** <https://www.facebook.com/111188427817653/posts/203470631922765/?sfnsn=mo>



# Rural Youth Hub's Second Anniversary

Since December 2019, ANRD is making efforts to consolidate the ANRD Rural Youth Hub to enable young people, especially those in rural areas, to exercise their 'voice' and influence agricultural and rural policy-making, to make these processes oriented and closely related to the concerns, interests and priorities of young people. On the occasion of the second anniversary of establishment of the Rural Youth Center, ANRD organized a peer to peer visit on December 21-22 in Gjiri i Lalëzit. The purpose of this activity 'Rural Youth: Exchange of experiences and knowledge between Rural Youth Hub members about their opportunities, challenges and needs for Rural Youth Hub consolidation' was the exchange of experiences and knowledge between members involved in youth organizations.

**Read more in Albanian:** <https://anrd.al/lajme/pervjetori-i-qendres-rinore-rurale-rural-youth-hub/>



## BLOG - Europe in rural Albania, green light for implementation of the European policy instrument of rural development in Albania

At the end of November 2021, the Albanian government adopted the law that facilitates the implementation of one of the European instruments for rural development, otherwise known as the Leader approach. From November 30 to December 04, rural networks and Local Action Groups (LAGs) from various rural communities in Europe gathered in Sweden to celebrate the achievements and successes of integrated rural development under the Leader approach philosophy. Taking into account these developments, the National Coordinator for the Albanian Network for Rural Development published the blog "Europe in rural Albania, a green light for the implementation of the European rural development policy instrument in Albania".

**Read the Blog in Albanian:** <https://anrd.al/publikime/blog-evropa-ne-shqiperine-rurale-drite-jeshile-per-zbatimin-e-instrumentit-te-politikes-evropiane-te-zhvillimit-rural-ne-shqiperi/?fbclid=IwAR0Fg22g3mCziWQLEExr5FrGB6ZzA8bB-VOMtuMQPk7kqCmIlhckpqB7TG4>

# The EU 3-year NAGE project - Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy marks its successful end

On October 8, 2021, representatives of the partners of the EU-funded regional project Networking and Support for Green Economy – NAGE, Albanian Network for Rural Development - ANRD, Rural Development Network of Northern Macedonia, Rural Development Network of Montenegro, the Kosovo Network of Rural Development Organizations, the Rural Development Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Rural Network of Serbia and the Croatian Rural Development Network jointly celebrated their successes and achievements at the final conference of the project.

Participants provided an overview of project activities and results achieved, presented the digital platform and mobile application of the Balkan Rural Development Network, as well as demonstrated good practices and positive examples from each country. ANRD representative Lorena Ttoni presented two of the projects supported in the frame of the NAGE sub granting program, in Albania:

1. Tropoja's shepherd huts network and the green economy model: more sustainable incomes for farmers, implemented by Iliria association.
2. Women in greening the value chain of collection processing and packaging of Roshnik figs implemented by the association WSA - Women in Sustainable Agriculture.

The green economy practices don't end here. The partner organizations are determined to continue with their activities for promoting the concept of green economy as a unique cross-sector entrepreneurial model for development and sustainability.

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## COMING SOON - Future Activities

**Become part of various activities at the national and regional level dedicated to rural development. In this section, you will be introduced to different opportunities. You are welcome to participate, contribute and exhibit your skills and knowledge in these activities.**

### **CALLS FOR GRANTS - RURAL ALBANIAN YOUTH PROJECT**

#### **JANUARY 2022**

The Rural-You project opens grant calls for young people in rural areas who have ideas for the development of their communities. The Rural You fund call is intended to support innovative project ideas in the Agriculture, Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Protection sector.

For more information contact the Grants Officer at the email address [benito.prendi@rtm.ngo](mailto:benito.prendi@rtm.ngo).

# Get to know our people – Roland Bardhi

Roland has over 25 years of experience as an expert and leader in various development projects in rural and mountainous areas of the country, contributing to the development of poor and marginalized areas of the country in various issues related to sustainable rural development in overall. Roland's professional experience is related to the start of the implementation of one of the first foreign projects in Albania and precisely to the project of the World Bank and IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) focused on poverty reduction in the northeastern part of the country (Kukës, Tropoja, Has and Dibra) in 1995, continuing to this day with other development projects in the field of agriculture.

The long experience of ongoing work in the Mountain Areas Development Agency in support of rural development of 21 mountainous districts of the country has created the opportunity to better know the problems and development priorities of each of them, creating successful collaborations and partnerships with various local actors.

His involvement in many projects with foreign donors has created the opportunity to work with different partners and to develop his expertise in issues related to strategic investment planning in agriculture, in drafting many analyzes and studies related to value chains for agricultural and livestock products, in the development of local development plans of communes and municipalities, in designing and implementing of agriculture financial mechanisms (Agricultural Credit Guarantee Schemes), biodiversity conservation associated with the development of quality signs (geographical indications) for some traditional agricultural products, etc.

From all the professional experiences of these years, Roland emphasizes the experience with the French partners (French Development Agency and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier) related to the development of biodiversity and certification of products with geographical indication, as the first experience in Albania and as a model in the development and certification of products related to their



geographical origin (blueberry, chestnut, chestnut honey and Has goat meat products). His academic background in economics and agricultural policy (Master and Doctorate) has helped him to provide inputs in addressing the best interventions in some rural sectors, in priority orientations and balanced investments, in creating synergies and harmonizing investments on sustainable rural development, in strengthening human capacity and local decision-making on territorial development issues, good agricultural and environmental practices.

Roland is one of the experts who joined the initiative to create the Albanian Rural Development Network, being one of the founders of this network. His contribution to the Rural Development Network is well known and appreciated. Despite the different types of engagements, the areas where Roland is currently most passionate and focused are related to the development and certification of the unique traditional products; Community-led Local Development, and LEADER Approach as well as support for small farmers and family farms. The development of Mountain Areas and the challenges of reducing poverty in these areas through policies and support mechanisms are also issues that Roland continues to be concerned about and will continue to discuss in the future.



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