



Europe  
for Citizens



## **RURACT**

**Revaluating rural areas in Europe through the  
development of social farming activities**

**Social farming between environmental  
sustainability and social inclusion -  
Albania**

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# Location



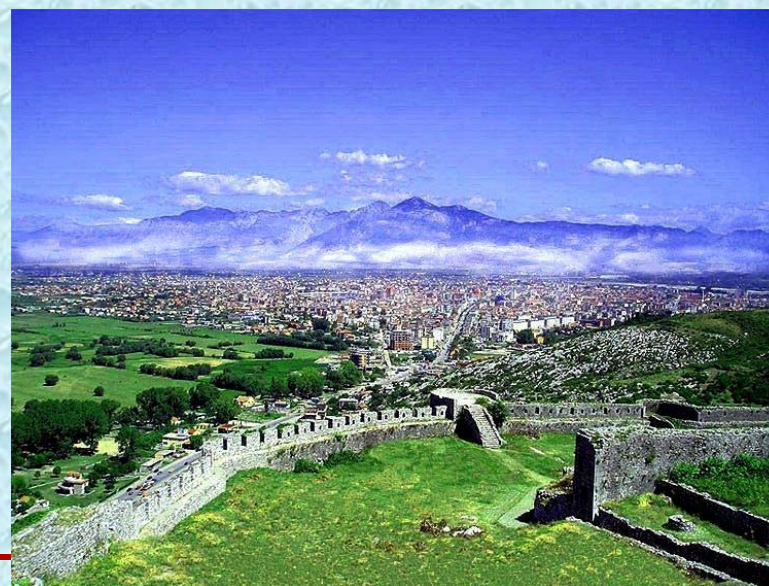
Këshilli i Qarkut Shkodër

## QARKU SHKODËR HAPESIRA TERRITORIALE



Rrethet : SHKODER, PUKË, MALËSI E MADHE

Sipërfaqja: 3562 km<sup>2</sup>  
 Popullsia gjithsej: 336.699 banorë  
 Shkodra: 1302.96 km<sup>2</sup>  
 248.480 banorë  
 Malësia e Madhe: 980.12 km<sup>2</sup>  
 54.522 banorë  
 Puka: 1033.69 km<sup>2</sup>  
 33.697 banorë



## Introduction

The world is faced with challenges in all three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental.

More than 1 billion people are still living in extreme poverty, and income inequality within and among many countries has been rising; at the same time, unsustainable consumption and production patterns have resulted in huge economic and social costs and may endanger life on the planet.

Achieving sustainable development will require global actions to deliver on the legitimate aspiration towards further economic and social progress, requiring growth and employment, and at the same time strengthening environmental protection.

Sustainable development will need to be inclusive and take special care of the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

In the circumstances of the Shkodra Qark (Region) we have adapted the methodology: “Think Globally – Act Locally!”.

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## Introduction

The rural sector is not enough efficient: Under the communist regime it was dominated by big state farms and collective cooperatives, whereas due to later reforms it is now characterized by a multitude of small family farms, with an average size of 1.3 ha, and usually very fragmented.

Farm production increased after new owners of the farms started to work intensively on their farms. The success in improving yields in recent years suggests that public support for farm modernization has produced and will continue to produce useful results.

However, markets and food quality standards are still not developed in Albania and increased production needs to be supported by improved marketing, in order to be sustainable. Therefore, support for farm modernization and market development will be of great importance.

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## The situation of poverty

During the period of transition from centralized to the open market economy, in Albania happen a lot of changes. Some of them have been well oriented and brings the improvement of the main indicators. But, at the same time, some of the phenomenon's have been accompanied by some not so good indicators.

There is still continuing poverty in Albania, especially in rural zones. According to the latest LSMS, 18.5% of all Albanians are poor.

This figure is even higher in rural areas, where 24.2% of the population is poor. There is considerable regional variation in poverty levels.

Poverty is higher in families with plenty of children and low school education, many of which live in rural areas.

As a result, Albania has experienced rapid rural-urban migration, which has led to social disruption and greater vulnerability, in particular amongst fractured urban families and ageing rural populations.

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## The approach

Integrating human needs in planning, along with environmental and economic considerations, is fundamental to foster sustainable development.

In particular, social sustainability, or well-being, of communities is integral to any assessment of sustainability since it reflects, and impacts upon, ecological and economic sustainability.

A systematic approach to the consideration of social issues in planning is vital to both inform the social context for decision-making and provide feedback on policy outcomes.

Whenever the poverty occurs it has both material and non-material dimensions: the material dimension has gained importance and recognition over the non-material aspects.

However, social exclusion is an important and often overlooked dimension of poverty. The exclusion of the poor from participation in and access to opportunities and activities is a major non material dimension of poverty which needs to be recognized and addressed.

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# Environmental sustainability and social inclusion



## Some principles in general

Social inclusion is a multi-dimensional concept, for which is necessary to know it in depth and work for not allowing the exclusion.

People may be excluded from livelihoods, employment, earnings, property, consumption, education, citizenship, personal contact or respect etc. It refers to the exclusion in the economic, social and political spheres. Social exclusion implies a focus on the relations and processes that cause deprivation.

Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.

Human development success depends to a large extent on using the opportunities created by globalization and on minimizing its negative effects. In this context, better management of capital flows and macroeconomic regulations may be necessary and coherence between national development strategies and global decision-making is important.

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## Shkodra region programs

Considering the above mention points and real situation and stage of development, Shkodra regional authorities did all the efforts to improve the situation.

For that purpose, the first step was the assessment of the situation, preparation of studies and reports about, and try to find proper ways for development.

State budget was the first source, but in parallel, authorities works to find alternative sources such as: international donors, partner governments, etc.

Shkodra Qark/Region has already prepared, approve and implementing the strategy for sustainable development and some sector strategies as well.

During last years this region has been involved in the process of preparation and implementation of different projects and programs.

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## Shkodra region situation

In our country farming seems to be a very old profession and “mastery”, but mostly through “clasical” ways of development.

Social farming is a new concept which is gradually introduced to the practice in different parts of the country. In this prospects we have a long journey to reach a proper meaning of social farming: environmental sustainability and social inclusion is gradually getting more space.

Youth are clearly demonstrating their awareness of the challenging context and their motivation and willingness to induce changes.

In Albania and in our region as well, based on the different studies, we divide the range of the farms into three groups: commercial farms, semi commercial farms and surviving farms.

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## Shkodra region programs

If we analyze somehow the above mentioned types: commercial, semi commercial and surviving farms, we have:

Commercial farms, are relatively big ones, specialized in the production and well oriented toward the market. Members of such farms spend all their efforts to the farm and have the farm incomes the first and biggest source of the money.

Semi commercial farms, are mid size firms. These farms produce for their own consumption but more than half of the production is oriented to the market. Generally speaking these are mixed farms.

Surviving farms are the smallest one and most of the production is oriented for home consumption and only a small part of the production may go to the market. The members of such farm families are poor and sometimes are assisted from the state social assistance.

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## Shkodra region programs

In the Shkodra Qark/Region the attention is focused mostly at the third and second group of farms which mainly are located in the difficult condition, remote areas, far from the city centers, and so on.

In the first view they may be consider the cells without ways to be developed in the future, mainly due to limited land size, and the distance from the markets.

Working individually can be considered as another important restriction for the proper development .

The limited number of family farms and especially the low number of working force in these farms have a great indication to the actual status of them.

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## Shkodra region programs

Shkodra Qark/Region in its strategy is trying to transform the difficulties and threats to the opportunities and advantages:

The limited surface of the arable land is “compensated” trying to “increase” it using the forestry products.

The difficulties to reach the market because of the distance of because of the “pik” of production can be “compensated” by using the processing of the agriculture products.

The most crucial point in this process is considered social farming: environmental sustainability and social inclusion for the rural population, and whole society as well.

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## Shkodra region programs

For the social farming: environmental sustainability and social inclusion in the Shkodra Qark have been applied:

- \* Training of the inhabitants and preparing the leaders for the social inclusion and for the sustainable environment.
  - \* Assessment of the situation and SWOT analyze for the situation.
  - \* Preparation of the plans and projects for the sustainable development.
  - \* Build new policies which are in accordance with sustainable development.
  - \* Try effort to raise funds in support of the plans made.
  - \* The concept is: “Land is not just your property – it is a trust from your parents for your children!”
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## Shkodra region programs

Based on the analyzes and experts opinion Shkodra Qark/Region has all possibilities to be in the advance position regarding the social farming: environmental sustainability and social inclusion. For that purpose we are planning to use:

- Best international experiences;
  - Local advantages and opportunities;
  - Lessons learned during last years;
  - The knowledge and energy of the yang generation;
  - The new ideas and IT possibilities;
  - Social inclusion and social farming.
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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION!**