

# Regional Newsletter

## HELVETAS Eastern Europe



1<sup>st</sup> edition, October 2015

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### Regional Highlights

The first nine months of 2015 have been marked by many activities that aim at deepening the social impact of our mandates from the Balkans to the South Caucasus region. The news and intervention reports in this newsletter are testimony to the success of our work and dedication of our teams. They are also the result of effective partnerships with individuals and organisations in each country, whom we would like to thank for their trust and cooperation.

A selection of regional highlights and news from the past 9 months:

- From 18 to 22 April a **management retreat** was organised in the beautiful town of Ohrid, Macedonia. It provided a useful platform for exchange and learning between HELVETAS-implemented projects in the region and strengthened the relationships between project managers.
- HELVETAS is at the forefront amongst implementing organisations in Eastern Europe in utilising a systemic approach<sup>1</sup> as guiding strategic framework for development cooperation. Two **trainings** were conducted in Sarajevo (23 – 27 March) and Pristina (7 to 11 September), bringing the approach closer to our teams, partners and donors. Several other workshops and trainings were conducted, in order to foster exchange and learning.
- The Western Balkans were the focus region at this year's **SDC/SECO Conference on Cooperation with Eastern Europe**, looking in particular at transition processes in local governance. We were honoured to be able to present the dldp project in Albania, which has successfully been working with municipalities over the previous years, and is one of three winners of Helvetas' knowledge sharing award 2014.
- 2015 is also marked by our increased **communication efforts**: interesting intervention stories have been written up by our projects and case studies are being conducted by external consultants. A key highlight has been the publication of our first **annual brief**, which provides an insight to our work in the region. In doing so, HELVETAS intends to share important lessons learned with its partners and the wider development community.
- At the head office in Switzerland, we were particularly delighted to welcome our managers, staff and partners from the regional projects. We appreciated **presentations** done by S4RE, DEMOS, MarketMakers and EYE, which brought their work closer to us and demonstrated the importance of our projects. An event on the ICT sector was also organised, bringing together our team's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina with players of the industry and SDC in Switzerland.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on Market System Development: [www.beamexchange.org](http://www.beamexchange.org)

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This year our regional projects have made a great effort to share experiences at public events and to discuss lessons learned in various **blogs, articles and magazines**. Below we present a selection of some of the most interesting publications of the last months!

- √ An informative [reportage](#) about EYE's media intervention in Kosovo presents the Reality TV-Show 'PUNPUN'. It also includes a personal story from a young IT professional who got a job through a Helvetas-supported training programme, plus a short interview with Argjentina Grazhdani, Project Manager at EYE. Another revealing [story](#) about the labour market in Kosovo that we would like to share with you is called "A commitment of Helvetas to fight unemployment", published in the Giornale del Popolo.
- √ For the Youth Economic Opportunities forum HELVETAS wrote three separate blogs on approaches to the Demand, Intermediation and Supply nexus of youth employment projects in the Balkans. The 3 blogs from RisiAlbania, MarketMakers and EYE provide diverse ideas and experiences on how to increase youth employment in [Albania](#), [Bosnia](#) and [Kosovo](#).
- √ Achievement of the Skills for Rural Employment (S4RE) project in Kosovo have been captured in a beautiful and insightful [video](#), showcasing the work and results of S4RE's project partners, trainers and beneficiaries!
- √ The governance project Dldp in Albania supports Local Government Units (LGUs) in influencing the national strategy on Decentralization and Local Governance. Dldp's functional area programme has been recognized by the national government as a key instrument in identifying development potentials of the new LGUs following the territorial reform and this year's local elections. Dldp has shared a wealth of information about the [functional area programme](#) on its knowledge management platform!
- √ DEMOS is a project in Kosovo supporting municipalities to achieve visible and tangible improvements in service delivery, municipal finances and transparency, decentralization and participation of citizens in decision-making. On 22 September 2015 [the annual grants awarding ceremony](#) was held to honor grants to fifteen partner municipalities based on their performance.

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On our [Eastern Europe website](#) you can find more publications from our projects as well as various blogs on Market System Development. In our new section [News and Events](#) we will be sharing updated information about recent events, workshops and key publications.

For more information about our projects have a look at the links below:

- [MarketMakers](#)
  - [DEMOS](#)
  - [EYE](#)
  - [S4RE](#)
  - [DLDP](#)
  - [RisiAlbania](#)
  - [PERFORM](#)
  - [NCP](#)
  - [M4M](#)
  - [MOLI](#)
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