



First-ever MA programme in Cultural Resource Management in Tirana University

BACKGROUND

Despite Albania's skilled cultural heritage workforce, very few post-graduate training and educational opportunities exist for practitioners. As a result, Albania's national cultural heritage industry remains stagnant and shows little sign of alignment with international standards. Furthermore, the lack of domestic educational options means that those professionals who can afford it are forced to seek additional education abroad.

PROCESS

The need for the establishment of an MA Programme was identified at the inception phase of the MDG-F Joint Programme (JP). The architects of the future MA Programme anticipated obstacles with respect to accreditation of the programme, based on previous experience. Therefore, the JP team made sure to identify, from the outset, the main stakeholders involved in the management of cultural sites. These main stakeholders included, among others: the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports; the Ministry of Education and Science; other universities public or private which had shown an interest; and other institutions.

A number of meetings were organized at the initial stages which helped the team identify the main issues, take stock of the needs of the cultural sector and the capacities of the educational sector to initiate and sustain this programme. In order to make sure the Joint Programme had 'all the facts' about the main dilemmas surrounding the creation of the MA programme, it was decided that a feasibility study should be conducted. On the basis of the recommendations of a local consultant hired through a competitive process, the JP partners decided to house the MA programme in the University of Tirana, Faculty of History and Philology.

The main issue raised was the lack of the local academic capacities to cover some of the courses in the curriculum. To respond to this need in the short term, visiting professors were invited to lecture.

CRMMA-Program in Tirana University © UNDP Albania



In the long term and with the view to keep the programme aligned with the current relevant discussions and developments, MA premises were provided with the technical equipment for distance learning and lecturing.

One issue raised was gender parity. The designers prioritized ensuring a balance between male and female students, in order to promote gender equality among graduates of the programme, who aim to be the next generation of managers in the Albanian cultural heritage industry.

Outcomes

On October 25, 2010, the Masters programme was launched in the Faculty of History and Philology at the University of Tirana, which possesses a long-standing reputation in the in-service training of cultural heritage specialists. Mainstreaming the programme in the regular State higher education system guaranteed its sustainability while making it accessible to a wider range of interested students and future managers.

The MA programme has managed to mobilize the quality professors from a number of related faculties, thereby reflecting the interdisciplinarity of the MA programme. It has also been able to provide scholarships to Albanian-speaking students from outside the country.

The first year of the first ever MA Programme on Culture Resource Management was concluded with a study tour Tirana – Athens, which enabled the students to experience first hand and discuss on the various aspects related to the cultural and historical sites and institutions visited. This was an enriching practice both for the MA students and the university.

With its formal launch on 25 October 2010, the MA Programme on Culture Resource Management was accredited and it could accommodate only 50% of the applications received during its first year of operation.