

## **Distance learning on epidemic and pandemic outbreaks in Western Balkans: Albania, 2021**

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**The project aims** to strengthening the abilities of all parties to effectively and timely cope with outbreaks preparedness and response, promoting national and cross-border cooperation, and to identify the capacity of each national public health surveillance system as well as regional communication channels to be activated in times of epidemics and pandemics.

**Objectives :** The overall goal of the project is to improve outbreaks reduction skills and resilience-building practices through a Region-wide harmonized system of learning. Specific objectives:

1. To establish a plan for actions to address Regional challenges to be translated into SMARTEST training opportunities (Specific, Measurable, Realistic, Time bounded, Environmental, Sustainable and Teambuilding) on DRR;
2. To enhance at Regional level the Public Health technical capacity of selected experts;
3. To provide technical assistance for building community resilience practices and skills at local level;
4. 2-month mapping of national surveillance system and diagnostic labs to develop a permanent forum – open source - for intersect oral know-how exchange on the topic;
5. To ensure adequate availability of quality PH training programs in higher educational institutions in the Balkan Region.

**Methodology:** The study aimed to assess the Public Laboratories of Microbiology, the needs in these laboratories in order to fully perform the defined work.

The study also aimed to assess the microbiology diagnostic system in the function of epidemiological surveillance, including the assessment of the level of specialists working in these laboratories.

The study period was 3 months. Specific structured questionnaires were used in the study.

The study included 6 districts out of 36 in total (6 regions out of 12 in total) - such as Tirana, Durres, Gjirokastra, Pogradec, Berat and Kukes.

The inclusion of some districts in the study was also due to the pandemic situation (limited movement).

The questionnaires were completed by the responsible persons of these laboratories supervised by the specialists involved in the project. The laboratories in which the questionnaires were completed were those of the IPH

and the University Hospital of Pulmonology, laboratories of the Local Health Care Units and laboratories of the Primary Health Care institutions at the county level.

**Results:** In order to assess the availability of equipment in microbiological laboratories, the needs for equipment of these laboratories and the improvement of the diagnostic system of microbiological laboratories, their inventory was performed in several districts of Albania such as Tirana, Durrës, Gjirokastra, Pogradec, Berat and Kukes.

### **Biography**

Elida is Epidemiologist and Head of Environmental Epidemiology Sector at the Institute of Public Health, in the department of Evaluation and Treatment of Public Health Risks. She has worked in applied research at national and international level on public health issues and publications of relevant articles. And she has Coordinate Public Health and Environmental Health Training Programs at national and international level. Design training and university programs in public health, health statistics, and epidemiology and health management through innovative methodologies, and also she lead and coordinates the implementation of EU supported projects.