

WFWP Albania launched an environmental project: Youth For The Environment

June 18, 2022



In June, WFWP Albania officially launched a new environmental project, called "Youth for the Environment." The project is organized in the framework of "Tirana European Youth Capital 2022" and sponsored by the National Youth Congress and the Municipality of Tirana. The main goal of the project is to spread awareness about the harmful effects of plastic and promote environment-friendly consumer habits, with the focus on the multiple-use shopping bags. This in fact is very much in line with the new law introduced in Albania in June, which significantly limits the use of single-use plastic bags.

Our project started on June 18, with training on plastic-related risks for the environment and human body, organized on the premises of the National Youth Congress. The meeting was moderated by the project coordinator Majlinda Matraku and the main presentation was given by professor Mihallaq Qirjo, a well-known environment expert and director of the Regional Environment Center. Professor Qirjo outlined both the benefits that plastic provides and gave the audience a thorough overview of the consequences of its unrestricted use over the last decades. According to him, at least 14 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean every year, and plastic makes 80% of all sea waste, which can be found from the surface waters until the deep sedimentary levels. As a result, microplastic can now be found in the sea water and marine animals.

The negative effect of plastic on the human body is caused by chemicals used to produce it, which can act as hormone disruptors. This can lead to infertility, as well as cancer or allergies. Recycling plastic is costly and can only lead to the production of thick plastic, used for pipes and furniture. Overall, only 8% of plastic is recycled, so the best solution seems to be a reduction in its use. We all need to be aware of this situation, change our habits and actively look out for new solutions.

Understanding the seriousness of the problem, we were very glad that the presentation attracted an audience of around 70 young people, most of whom learned about the event through social media and

have never had contact with us before.



The next steps of our project will be educational presentations at schools, universities and social centers, and the distribution of multiple-use bags. Some bags will be made of recycled fabric, some made of new ones, and some using cotton gauze, according to the innovative design of Ms. Violeta Bojaxhi. Cotton gauze bags seem to be a very good alternative to plastic, especially for grocery shopping; they can be easily washed, reused, and eventually used even as cleaning rags.

The project will eventually conclude with an "Eco-Fest" - a concert with environmental messages and competition of environmentalist ideas contributed by high school students.

