

Example of good practice	Protecting mistreated bears in Kosovo
Categories	Wildlife, education
Organization	VIER PFOTEN Kosova (FOUR PAWS Kosova)
Partners	VIER PFOTEN International (FOUR PAWS International), Municipality of Prishtina, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning
Location	Mramor, Prishtine
Country	Kosovo
Form of protection	Germia protected landscape
Scope of implementation	National
Time	2 years
People	9
Budget	300,000 €
Funding	VIER PFOTEN International
Project info	www.vier-pfoten.org www.facebook.com/PylliiArinjvePrishtina
Contact	Afrim Mahmuti
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saved all 19 bears from captivity in Kosovo (bears were kept in small cages beside restaurants in Kosovo and Albania), • Help in rescuing 34 wild animals kept in captivity in Albania, • 7 local people employed during the first 2 years + 27 others in years after, • Benefit for 7 local farmers form food delivery for bears at the sanctuary, • Awareness activities implemented in areas where bears are still living in the wild (Prizren), <p>Second phase (4 years, 25 employees, 2 million €):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop all the infrastructure with the accompanying facilities in an area of 10 ha for providing rescued bears with a proper care, • Found the Environmental Education Centre “Thesaret e Natyrës” in 2018, • 40,000 visitors in 2018, • Around 8000 pupils/year visiting bear sanctiary and taking part in our education program, • 2 projects (funded by U.S. Embassy) focused on environmental education implemented in cooperation with 4 local primary schools (400 pupils),

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of local artists and manufacturers by selling their products in shop of the sanctuary, • Accreditation by European Voluntary Service for hosting and coordinating projects with volunteers, • 3 international work camps with volunteers implemented in cooperation with Civil Service International, • 1 Short Term EVS implemented (13 international volunteers), • Around 200 local volunteers participated in different activities (clean up actions, protest, promotion activities),
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Problem/opportunity	
Problem	<p>There were bears kept illegally in captivity.</p> <p>The lack of public awareness towards cases where animals were abused.</p>
Opportunity	<p>Enforcement of the legislation.</p> <p>Raise public awareness on bears held in captivity.</p> <p>Education.</p>
Planning	
Pre-requisites for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative bases for confiscating animals kept in captivity; • Experiences related to working with wild animals and building facilities for keeping wild animals; • Active support from responsible authorities; • International and national media support.
Initial idea	<p>Many owners of restaurants have used to keep brown bears in small cages under very inappropriate conditions. Among these cases, there was one bear named Kassandra who was kept in a small cage near a restaurant for 11 years. In 2012 she was still kept there, but different from the years before, at that time she was left there closed in that cage without any kind of care as the owner has closed the restaurant. The way how she was kept there has made many journalists working from international media to write and make stories about her. This is how FOUR PAWS International got informed and in response to this situation, offered an alternative by building a sanctuary for bears that have been kept in captivity and so has created the conditions to remove these bears and to keep them in appropriate conditions.</p>

Strategies	FOUR PAWS' strategy
Partner roles	Municipality of Prishtina for getting the permission to use the land. Ministry of environment for confiscating bears kept in captivity (sometimes police support was needed in the field), and for giving the permission to keep and take care of rescued bears.
Implementation	
Project key stages	<p>First phase of the project (2 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building the facility for keeping bears (a building of 300m2 and 1 ha with 7 adaptation enclosures, • Bring the electricity line, • Ensure water resources, • Hire the staff and provide them with the trainings and instructions to perform the daily tasks, <p>Second phase of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 enclosures with a total area of 5.0 ha with safety fence, monitoring equipment, swimming pools, caves and other facilities needed for managing bears. • Visitors' path (1.3 km) <p>Third phase of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 enclosures with a total area of 4.0 ha with safety fence, monitoring equipment, swimming pools, caves and other facilities needed for managing bears. • Environmental Education Centre "Thesaret e Natyrës" a building of 1,300 m2 equipped with the educational content of the exhibitions such as displays, printed materials, viewing galleries and interpretive signboards that provide information on the life and behaviours of bears other animals as well environmental issues in general that is targeted to both adults and children. <p><u>25 local people were employed during second and third phase (4 years) of the project.</u></p>
Budget per phases	First phase of constructions: 300,000 €

	<p>Second phase of constructions: 460,000 €</p> <p>Third phase of constructions: 1,560,000 €</p>
Stakeholder involvement	Involving relevant authorities in taking decision for important steps in the development process.
Vulnerable groups involvement	<p>In frame of our environmental education projects we involve communities where especially minorities live.</p> <p>Children with special needs have been part of different events arranged in BEAR SANCTUARY Prishtina.</p>
Communication	Social networks, radio, TV stations
Challenges	Technical: building these facilities (enclosures and accompanying elements) for keeping bears is associated with some difficulties and challenges when it comes to find the right materials and equipment.
	Financial: projects for building all the infrastructure around the sanctuary in a way that guarantees the safety for people and for animals are expensive.
	Stakeholders: there was quite a resistance from the owners of the restaurants and this has made the rescue actions more difficult.
Change	
Positive effects on environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 bears saved • In the area nearby around 1000 trees have been planted, • More than 30 clean up actions have been organized during the last years,
Positive economic and social changes	<p>The public sector:</p> <p>S: the municipality of Prishtina supported with 15.6 ha and built the road of 2.7 km,</p>
	<p>The business sector:</p> <p>E: businesses nearby have been positively affected by our project as for many regular services needed at the sanctuary we have been cooperating with them.</p>
	<p>The local community:</p> <p>E: the project has significantly increased the employment opportunity for local people (24 local people employed).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit for 7 local farmers form food delivery for bears at the sanctuary,

	<p>The scientific community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 students from the Faculty of Natural Sciences have been doing their master and bachelor thesis in topics related to bears.
Replication and recommendations	
Recommendations	Find the way to implement the project in steps recommended before.
Sustainability	<p>Law implementation.</p> <p>Contribution to wild animal & environmental protection.</p> <p>Implementing activities that generates incomes (hospitality, education centre) which are used for covering the running costs (approach of self-financing).</p>
Idea application	Replication in Albania and other Balkan countries.
Needed policy improvements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop management plans for wild bear population in Kosovo. 2. Improve law enforcement for protecting wild ranging bears.
Expectations	
From the “Nature for People” site?	Promote the animal welfare work we are doing, Contribution to environmental awareness raising, Exchanging experiences.