



WATER AWARENESS AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania

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About the Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania

The Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania (SHUKALB), which was established in 2000, is a professional, not-for-profit Association of water supply and sewerage professionals, who wish to improve the management of the Water Supply and Sewerage Sector in Albania, making it efficient, sustainable and effective in accordance with the current laws and regulations in Albania. The Association is legally registered in the Court of Tirana.

Water Awareness and Outreach Programs

In line with its mission, SHUKALB has a serious commitment to awareness building and investment in the future of the water sector. Because of this, SHUKALB dedicates a significant amount of its resources in bringing the water issues to the lives of as many people as possible. Each of the programs is focused on increasing awareness, at multiple levels of society, in the protection and use of water resources.

SHUKALB has a long experience in developing and conducting awareness and outreach programs. The following graph shows the development of these programs in chronological order.



Each of these programs is organized on an annual basis, and they are being organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, together with the support of water supply and sewerage companies, and are funded by local Albanian companies as well as foreign donor agencies.

"University Student Internship" Program

The University Student Internship Program is the oldest program developed and organized by SHUKALB. Besides the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, the main partner in organizing the program is the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Polytechnic University of Tirana. Other important partners of this program are the water supply and sewerage companies as well as private companies and other water sector institutions at the central level, who host the students for their internship program.

The program was created and offered for the first time in 2005, with the purpose to offer the environmental engineering and hydrotechnical engineering students an opportunity to put their knowledge in practice and gain experience, right before they enter the job market. As of today, more than 600 students have participated

in the program, and in many cases, students were then hired by the companies where they did their internship.

"Friends of Water"

The Friends of Water is the most popular and genuine program of SHUKALB, created and offered for the first time in 2007. The Program aims to raise awareness among 3rd grade students of elementary schools in Albania. In 2008 it was recognized as the "Best Educational Program for Schools" by the International Water Association (IWA), in an international competition. From its start, till today, the program has reached over 35,000 children from all over Albania.

The program is usually conducted over a period of 9 months. Students acquire basic knowledge about water using the booklets and materials prepared by SHUKALB.

In the end they express what they have learned in the form of a drawing with strong messages on the importance of water, water resources protection and conservation.

The drawings are used by the schools to hold local exhibitions from which emerge the three-best drawings. SHUKALB collects these drawings and presents them in the national exhibition "Water Through the Eyes of children". The drawings are further evaluated by an independent jury who select the 12 best ones. SHUKALB prepares a calendar with the 12 winning drawings from the program, which is then distributed throughout Albania to further raise the awareness of the general public.

"EarthEcho Water Challenge"

The EarthEcho Water Challenge (formerly World Water Monitoring Challenge) is an international program that runs annually from March 22 (the United Nations World Water Day) through December and equips anyone to protect the water resources we depend on every day. The EarthEcho Water Challenge builds public awareness and involvement in protecting water resources around the world by engaging citizens to conduct basic monitoring of their local waterbodies. SHUKALB conducts this program since 2012, and it engages 8th grade students. Since its start till today, the program has engaged more than 6,000 students all over Albania.

After receiving the necessary instructions from their teachers and the monitoring toolkits of the program from SHUKALB, students conduct monitoring of different water bodies in their area, measuring the four main parameters of water:

- Dissolved Oxygen
- Turbidity
- Temperature
- pH

After each field monitoring of water resources, the students upload the results online on the official website of the program "EarthEcho Water Challenge" www.worldwatermonitoringday.org

High School "Science Fair"

High School Science Fair Program was created by SHUKALB together with the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), USA,

in 2013. The main purpose of the Program is to encourage analytic thinking and experimental working between high school students at the 11th grade.

After receiving all the necessary instructions from their teachers, the students work in groups and carry out research work on a topic which has at its center "water".

The students present their research projects at the local "Science Fair", a fair organized by the school, from which emerge the two best projects. The winning projects of each school become part of the national "Science Fair", organized by SHUKALB. An independent evaluation commission, composed of university professors, teachers and water experts selects the 3 best projects.

"World Water Day"

World Water Day is a United Nations Program, celebrated every year on March 22nd. SHUKALB provides awareness building materials to the water supply and sewerage companies and supports them in conducting public awareness campaigns to recognize the World Water Day, and to bring awareness to the general public on the importance of water in our lives.

Celebrating this day has become a tradition for SHUKALB and its member water supply and sewerage companies, since the year 2007.

"National Water Week"

By decision of the Council of Ministers date 10.09.2008, no. 1248, the first week of November has been declared "National Water Week" of Albania.

SHUKALB recognizes this week by organizing different activities that aim to raise awareness of the general public on water, as well as bring in focus particular issues that concern the water sector in Albania.

Some of these activities include:

- The national exhibition of Friends of Water Program, "Water Through the Eyes of Children"
- Balkans Joint Conference and Exhibition
- Awareness campaigns organized by water utilities all over Albania
- Thematic workshops on water sector topics