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PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS IN THE LOCAL-LEVEL DECISION-MAKING

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Participation of citizens in decision-making on social problems is a key to democracy. Democracy does not only include citizens deciding who to vote for at the elections, but also implies their right to be informed on all things of public importance so as to be able to take part in public debates, launch initiatives and offer solutions to problems that are of direct or indirect concern for them.

An example: Each year the London borough of Islington spends some 200 million pounds for the work of utility services. As part of preparations for drafting the 2007 budget plan the borough invited citizens to give proposals as to most rational spending of this money. The questionnaire was sent to all inhabitants of this municipality, with regular newspapers that come to each address in this borough. The questionnaire required people to mark the services on the list of various services given (garbage disposal, improving street lighting, parking places, children playgrounds, crèches and kindergartens, sports halls, libraries, social services, administration, recycling equipment, counter services, electronic bill collection, health services, etc.) they had been using most in the course of the year, select three they consider top priority in the next year, give their opinion whether the quality of these services should remain the same, be improved or lowered. Finally, they had to state what additional resources should be allocated for: landscaping of parks and improving sports halls/playgrounds, reducing traffic pollution, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, arranging cycling paths, better street cleaning, etc. or give some other proposal.

During last ten to fifteen years a significant number of organisations have been established in Serbia rallying citizens aware of numerous social problems, ready to participate in their resolution. Some of these problems can be resolved with good organisation and goodwill of the citizens. However, resolution of many others requires cooperation with the local authorities and utility services and institutions. This relationship between the governmental and non-governmental sector is still insufficiently developed here and the objective of this project is to investigate to which extent does such cooperation exist and what it includes.

Legal basis for such cooperation have been primarily laid in the *Law on Local Self-Government* (2002). In addition to their role in the election of local authorities, this Law also envisages other forms of citizens' participation in decision-making: participation in *civil initiatives* (by giving proposals to local authorities regarding ways for resolving specific social problems, improving the status of the local community or launching initiatives for calling a referendum on some issues important for the community life), establishment of a *citizens' forums* (at which the mentioned initiatives are discussed) and *referendum* (at which all citizens express their opinion on launched changes).

Under the Law on Local Self-Government, the Municipal Assembly may establish standing and occasional working bodies, including **The Inter-Ethnic Relations Council** (*mandatory* in nationally mixed municipalities), **Council for the Development and Protection of Local Self-Government** (establishment *optional*), or **civil defender** (ombudsman), who protects individual and collective rights and interests of citizens by exercising control over the work of

the administration and public services. Standing working bodies are established so that they could review individual issues from within the Assembly's purview and are elected from among the members, whereas the Assembly establishes occasional bodies for specific questions or task or work to be done.

In addition to the Law on Local Self-Government, some other laws are also important for the equitable participation of citizens, such as: *The Law Preventing the Conflict of Interests in Discharging Public Office*, that can be applied in cases when there are doubts that some public officials are guided by their personal interests in making decisions, then the *Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance*, which prescribes conditions for providing information and duties of public authorities , as well as a number of other laws which regulate individual spheres of public life (*Law on Social Care, Labour Law, Law on Environmental Protection, Law on the Basis of the Education and Upbringing Systems, Law on the Protection on Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities*).

However, not even the best of laws can change the state of affairs if there are no mechanisms for their application. Application of any law, especially our legislation of new legal regulations such as the Law on the Local Self-Government or the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, and even the Law on the Protection on Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, requires experience in the establishment of relations between local authorities and citizens, i.e. citizens' associations and organisations. This is a more lasting process of developing such relations, because the authorities have no experience with sharing their powers and responsibilities, nor citizens in assuming them. Only thanks to positive experiences with cooperation between local governmental and non-governmental

sectors can all possibilities offered by these legal frameworks be tapped.

There is no doubt that every community has potentials to find better solutions for problems it is facing. The basic essence of self-organisation is changing/ developing/ promoting relations in the community, open-mindedness and ability to change, to activate citizens and raise the *responsibility level of all* for the life of the community. This process is at its beginnings in Serbia (although the Law was adopted some four years ago), but there are nevertheless examples of such initiatives, actions and projects. They should be collected to see what makes them successful and then offer them to other non-governmental, non-profit organisations, associations or informal groups of citizens, but also to local authorities as an incentive, inspiration for some new solutions. It is useful to learn from the experience of others. In this case the role of the Center for Peace and Democracy Development included gathering similar information and processing them in a way that will clearly show what are the examples of cooperation of citizens and local authorities in resolving problems of local communities, how was it established and what results it produced.

We sent the questionnaire to all local organisations, associations or informal groups of citizens we knew had launched some actions at the local level (altogether 806 addresses). The purpose of this questionnaire was to register a *detailed description of a project (or projects, if more) implemented through some form of cooperation with the local authorities, public services or institutions.*

However, it turned out that we received significantly smaller number of responses than expected. First of all, organisations, associations or informal groups, which most probably *did* not have any

experience in cooperation with local authorities, did not respond to this invitation. We also had understanding for the fact that the questionnaires had to be filled at times which were extremely hard for non-governmental organisations, because that was the period in which they applied for resources of different donors¹, as well as that many we have addressed do not have classified documentation on implemented actions, which was, we assumed, the reason why they were reluctant to send incomplete information or simply did not bother to answer our invitation².

Despite directly addressing potential initiators of local actions we had to use other sources of information on local actions because of a very poor turnout. Namely, thanks to the kindness of the Balkans Local Initiatives Fund (BCIF) we have obtained adequate data on projects it financed, which fit into our field of interest. In its documentation BCIF³ has all the data on projects implemented in some European countries that went through or are still undergoing similar social changes and were faced with similar problems, so that we also included these data whenever appropriate. Whenever fitting we also completed our basic data fund with information from BCIF publication *Let's Move the Communities!* (Volumes 1-2, 2005; Volumes 3-4,

¹ In 2004 each organisation submitted 5.2 proposals on average. According to the data of the Civil Initiatives, on average some 2.5 were accepted and 2.0 projects rejected. (*NGO Study*, Belgrade: Civil Initiatives, 2006).

² Authors of the mentioned study stated that "after cross linking and updating the mentioned data bases they have arrived at a basic group of some 997 non-governmental organisations that exist and were active in December 2004, when the study was carried out. During this study some 14.9 percent of NGOs were dropped from the sample because they were no longer active. An extremely small number of organisations that have filed their annual accounts to competent authorities gives reason for concern. This shows that NGOs do not know the basic things about their obligations, such as that organisations which have no registered turnover on their accounts also have to file the annual financial statement with turnover 0 (zero)."

³ See: *Let's Move the Communities!* Belgrade: BCIF, Volumes 1 and 2 (author Tanja Ignjatovic, 2005), Volume 3 (authors Vladimir Radojčić and Ivana Rašković) and Volume 4 (authors Aleksandra Vesić and Snežana Stojanović, 2006).

2006)⁴, so that altogether we have data on the following 46 civil organisations, associations or informal groups:

1. Novi Sad School of Journalism NNSŽ, Novi Sad
2. Ecological Movement of the City of Novi Sad
3. Epicentre, Novi Sad
4. Osmeh (Smile), Vrbas
5. PAAD, Centre for Socio-Cultural Excellence, Novi Bečej,
6. Regional Centre for Civil Actions „Lingva“, Kraljevo
7. Association of Citizens „KVART“, Kraljevo
8. Non-Smoking Educational Centre, Dragobraca–Kragujevac
9. Roma Information Centre (RIC), Kragujevac
10. NGO „Millennium“, Kragujevac
11. Association of Roma Solidarity, Kragujevac
12. Human Rights Committee, Valjevo
13. Sretenje Association of Citizens, Požega
14. K-TOWN GROUP, Kosjerić
15. Svetionik (Lighthouse) Association of Citizens, Loznica
16. Užice Centre for Child Rights
17. Užice Centre for Human Rights and Democracy
18. Citizens Association – Humanitarian Group Aurora, Bor
19. Good Tree, Zaječar
20. Human Rights Centre Priboj
21. Centre for Research in Politics, Argument, Prijepolje
22. Environmental Protection Civil Movement, Novi Pazar
23. NGO „Prijatelji Brodareva“ (Friends of Brodarevo)
24. Film Publik Art, Niš

⁴ Ibid.

- 25.** Forum for Roma Initiative, Leskovac
- 26.** Human-Urban Network and Psycho-Social Counselling Service, HUM, Belgrade
- 27.** SOS Phone Line for Women and Children Victims of Violence
- 28.** SOS Phone Line for Women and Children Victims of Violence-Grocka
- 29.** Women's Club "Hera", Bačka Topola
- 30.** Women's Forum, Mali Idoš
- 31.** New Culture, Novi Sad
- 32.** Association of the Roma Solidarity, ARS, Kragujevac
- 33.** Tree, Kragujevac
- 34.** Ecological Movement "Bela breza", Kruševac
- 35.** Eco Club "Zeleni putokazi" (Green Signposts), Raška
- 36.** Informal Citizens Group "Iskrica", Loznica
- 37.** Association of the Paraplegics of the Mačva District, Šabac
- 38.** Society of the Roma Youth, Valjevo
- 39.** Gurgusovac Educational Association, GEA, Knjaževac
- 40.** The Power of Village, Knjaževac
- 41.** Civil Association, DESTINIKON, Sjenica
- 42.** Impulse, Tutin
- 43.** Group for Psycho-Social Support, Niš
- 44.** Scouts' Unit „Josif Pančić“, Niš
- 45.** Dunavski venac, Beograd
- 46.** Roma Centre, Obrenovac

Modes of establishing cooperation

According to study results organised by the Civil Initiatives in the course of 2005,⁵ one tenth of NGOs had *no* cooperation with state institution *at all*, and one half established some kind of cooperation at the local level. At the level of the Republic cooperation was carried out by organisations established before 2000, mostly those from Belgrade that managed to win certain reputation and better position due to their years of experience. Data on the ways in which they established this cooperation and projects they cooperated on are lacking.

The information we have gathered shows that the majority of 46 non-governmental organisations, associations or informal citizens groups had some kind of cooperation with the local authorities (which is only natural assuming that the answers were supplied mostly by those which had some kind of cooperation) or one of the local institutions. Some kind of partnership linked to specific projects was much more easily implemented with local institutions or services.

Civil organizations and associations from the neighbouring countries (Croatia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria)⁶ also had difficulties in establishing cooperation with the local authorities although it was required for a long-term solution of complex problems and changing policy and procedures for the cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental sectors. In these countries too representatives of local authorities did not always have understanding for the changes implied by the active citizens' participation. Different tactics, patience and persistence brought about the desired changes. Cooperation with the local

⁵ According to the respective study of the Civil Initiatives, pp.39

⁶ Tanja Ignjatović, *Let's Move the Communities*, pp. 25.

authorities or institutions was particularly fruitful when civil organizations addressed local authorities with long-term plans for the community development and revitalisation, endeavouring to introduce some constructive changes in the living culture and contribute to the speedier inclusion of the community into regional and European trends.

Our sample is not representative and it is impossible to compare data on cooperation with the local authorities with those obtained, e.g. in the study of Civil Initiatives obtained on a much larger sample of non-governmental organizations. However, it is possible to conclude reliably that the **very attempt** at establishing cooperation between citizens and local authorities is **one-way street**, as a rule. Citizens are those who through their organisations, associations or informal groups initiate some issues that are of importance for them trying to convince the local authorities of the need and mutual benefit of this cooperation. Local authorities still do not see them as a useful and interested collaborator in problem resolution. If we bear in mind the fact that citizens join forces and organise themselves in order to resolve problems that affect them either directly or indirectly, that by the nature of things they can spot them more quickly than those they had elected to resolve them, it is quite understandable why **citizens are those who launch initiatives for the establishment of such relations**. Aware that problems of societies in transition are accumulated more quickly than they are resolved and that they are most frequently unable to solve them on their own without the cooperation of the local authorities, non-governmental organisations take the initiative and strive to establish this much need relationship in all possible ways:

- ❖ *We exchanged letters, scheduled meetings, talked personally with decision-makers (particularly women), invited them to trainings, used every possible opportunity... **“Lighthouse” Citizens Association, Loznica***
- ❖ *We maintained contacts mostly at the initiative of our members. **Užice Centre for Human Rights and Democracy***
- ❖ *Cooperation was reduced to our informing the municipal authorities of the capacities and activities implemented so far by the NGO sector in Valjevo, on the need and ways of establishing more active inter-sectoral cooperation and stimulating civil activism in the function of developing the local community and raising the quality of life of citizens of Valjevo. **Human Rights Committee, Valjevo***
- ❖ *With the assistance of NGOs with which we had contacts⁷; this helped us greatly in the implementation of this project. **Sretenje, Požega***

In some cases **previous successful work of an organisation is recognised** and opens up the door to cooperation with the local authorities. Aware of the need to make their work visible in the community in which they work, most (85% of organizations) non-governmental organisations advertise their work extensively in the local media – most frequently through interviews with the

⁷ According to the respective study of the Civil Initiatives, 98% of organisations maintained contacts with other NGOs so far, either as assistance in projects activities and equipment or cooperation within the network or joint project implementation (in 64% of cases).

organisation's representatives, via Internet or in some other informal way.

A decision was brought as a result of previous activities, as well as the nature of our new project⁸... K-Town Group, Kosjerić

- ❖ *At a later project implementation stage, through practical implementation of domestic valid legal regulations and the "Cooperation Protocol between Local Self-Government and Valjevo NGOs"⁹ the Valjevo Human Rights Committee was consulted by the municipal authorities regarding the drafting of the Rules of Procedure for securing financial resources from the municipal budget for local NGO projects. **Human Rights Committee, Valjevo***

In some instances a solid **financial backing of foreign donors¹⁰** is a recommendation convincing enough for the local authorities to agree to cooperate.

⁸ K-Town Group from Kosjerić has been active in the local community for years. Its years-long work included the implementation of numerous and very prominent projects in the municipality (and broader). Namely: *EKOsjerić, Bajka na zidu (Fairytale on the Wall), Zajedno na reci(Together on the River), Kosjerić otvorenih vrata(Open Doors Kosjerić), Budućnost mladih u Kosjeriću(Future of the Young in Kosjerić), Eurocitizens, Jačanje građanskog aktivizma(Encouraging Civic Activism)*, as well as five *International Art Camps* that are already considered local tourist attraction.

⁹ Sample of the Cooperation Protocol signed in the Municipality of Valjevo back in 2002 (as part of the project "Dialogue 5 –Cooperation of NGOs and local Self-Government in five Municipalities of West Serbia", prepared in partnership with the Centre for the Development of Non-Profit Sector of West Serbia and other NGOs, was drafted only in Valjevo during implementation stage and only thanks to the Human Rights Committee of Valjevo. This Protocol was only the beginning of all that colleagues from the Valjevo Human Rights Committee continued to do.

¹⁰ The mentioned study shows that „the situation in NGO sector“ gives reason for much concern. Data demonstrate that the very survival of this sector is seriously endangered because as many as 63 percent of organisations did not manage to secure funds for 2005. The study itself investigated in detail all different reasons for such a situation, but we need to primarily emphasise the reduction of resources and change in the structure of foreign financing that will be impossible to replace with domestic financing sources for a long time. Indications of a soon arrival of donors from this region require urgent and comprehensive joint strategy for the preservation of this sector to the extent that it remains capable of

- ❖ *Cooperation between the local authorities and us (as well as other organisations) was initiated by foreign donors. Namely, in our municipality ground was being laid for over 2 years for initiating such cooperation and over 200 thousand pounds invested by the DFID. Unfortunately, there were no indications that representatives of the local authorities had any intention of doing this. In other words, someone else (in this case the foreign donor and civil sector to a great extent) had to "chew the food" for the local self-government so that it would finally swallow it.*

Association of Citizens KVART, Kraljevo

Even when bound by the law to do it, local authorities do not show enough understanding for citizens' participation, cooperation, their ideas and initiatives. Operations of the local authorities are, as a rule, non-transparent. The idea of a civil initiative, especially of the non-governmental organisations is markedly negative in the society at large. On the other hand, citizens themselves do not know their own rights and obligations and what they can take part in: they are uninformed and, consequently, uninterested, without initiative, joining in only when they are personally interested. It seems that every feeling of being a part of a community has vanished.

From the point of view of non-governmental organisations,¹¹ the political climate in the country is still unfavourable for the development

satisfying at least the basic needs of the society without bringing the democratisation process into question." *Ibid*, pp. 4.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

of non-governmental sector, which is why their influence on the resolution of social problems is negligible.

Duration of Cooperation

Even the cooperation that has been established with great difficulties in most cases lasts as long as the project itself. And there again comes the process of proving, convincing or waiting for the ruling team to change and for the new ones to come who would be more responsive to civil initiatives.

- ❖ *It was officially decided at the session that we should get a space to use. However, the political turmoil is very important for every community, which is why the changes in the local authorities mean that the NGO sector has to hold new meetings, meet the local authorities, inform them once again of the importance of the NGO sector, which in my opinion creates additional difficulties for the NGO having to constantly prove and explain who is doing what, for what reason and how. **Aurora, Bor***

- ❖ *Currently the support depends on the extent to which initiatives are in line with Municipal development plans and programmes, as well nature of relations with the people in power in the Municipality. **Good Tree, Zaječar***

- ❖ *The municipal authorities never made the official decision on cooperation, but delegated their representatives ad hoc or reacted in an unorganised manner to invitations to cooperate, although they were prepared and informed, as well as invited to cooperate in a very specific way.*

❖ *Previous cooperation was of poor quality, so that there are no conditions for its further development. We still need to work at overcoming basic problems and developing trust between NGO and the authorities.* **Užice Centre for Child Rights**

❖ *It also depends who is in power, whether they have prejudices against the NGOs (as a rule, they have), how democratic and interested in citizens' opinion are the authorities (and not arrogant, as it happens)... Much of it depends on the personal "broad-mindedness" of decision-makers, whether they are able to recognise common interest... All this is hard to achieve, although we should not complain because we still have some kind of cooperation. I would personally like for this cooperation not to depend on personal contacts and to become a matter of principle. I also wish that we would not have to start all over again with every change of power... Best effect on cooperation is achieved by projects which are beneficial for the local self-government too. For example, CRDA programme of USAID (in which we actively participated) or the current MEGA project in our Municipality... But, just as we make them understand the benefits of cooperation, we have new elections and have to start all over again...* **Lighthouse, Loznica**

❖ *The present local authorities do not wish to assist NGO sector at all. In order to get their help you have to be a member of one of the coalition parties (SDPO, DSS, SNS,*

SD, SPS) which are in power here locally. NGO sector in Kragujevac was never in a worse financial position (not even during Slobodan Milošević's rule).

If some other political options (DS, GSS, LDP) come to power we might perhaps have some cooperation. The local authorities do not take into consideration skills and professional dedication of non-governmental organisations. They only want to get good ideas and win over the public opinion (appearing on TV).

*I think that Kragujevac NGOs which do not want to side with any party have a grim future ahead. However, I think that if they want to survive they will have to use all possible means to secure their objectives and do not give up. Once when the expert skills of NGOs become valued the local authorities which are against fully cooperating with them will have to do it. **Non-Smoking Educational Centre, Kragujevac***

- ❖ *Also, its is bad that we have been promised expansion of cooperation, while in reality this cooperation is weakening. We can only hope for some modest financial aid (only 20% of the municipal budget has been allocated for social problems and transparently distributed through an open competition, whereas 80% was given in a way we find highly suspicious because there is no public insight into the manner of distributing these resources, or control of their spending)*

*We do not think that the cooperation so far will acquire a more lasting character, although it is such on paper. After so many failed attempts by major organisations and donors, we do not believe that this is possible to achieve with such local government. **KVART, Kraljevo***

Initiatives of non-governmental organisations can get the support of local authorities only if local authorities change their attitude to NGOs, citizens and donors, but also to their own duties. This, in the first place requires **communication between authorities and the citizens**, as a precondition for mutual understanding and education of both citizens, as well as representatives of local self-government, the media and non-governmental organisations on possibilities for active participation of citizens in decision-making. In some examples of well established cooperation with the local authorities that we are quoting here, this precondition has been met.

- ❖ *Without active cooperation with the local self-government it would be impossible to achieve the planned objectives and tasks, which is the reason why from the very first to final project activities we maintained continuous cooperation with municipal authorities. This cooperation involved acquainting the municipal authorities of the Valjevo NGO sector capacities and activities implemented so far, and informing them of the needs and ways for establishing more active inter-sectoral cooperation and encouraging civic activism of citizens that would contribute to the development of the local community and raising the quality of life of citizens of Valjevo. At later stages of*

*project implementation, through practical application of national valid legal regulations and the "Cooperation Protocol between Local Self-Government and Non-Governmental Organisations of Valjevo" the Human Rights Committee of Valjevo was consulted by municipal authorities regarding the drafting of rules and procedures for securing financial resources from the municipal budget for projects of local NGOs. **Human Rights Committee, Valjevo***

- ❖ *This decision was brought as a result of our project, with joint activities of all mentioned bodies and institutions. The decision on cooperation primarily depended on the financial situation of the local budget, as well as understanding that the project would be of general benefit and the need to include citizens and non-governmental organisations in the resolution of daily problems, in addition to official authorities.*

*We think that the project "School Worthy of Children" was a good example of cooperation between local authorities and our association. We consider that after we have successfully implemented this project, the local authorities have recognised us as a partner in the resolution of daily problems, which is why we hope for good future cooperation. **K-Town Group, Kosjerić***

- ❖ *We have maintained cooperation before, both personally as well as through the organisation. This cooperation was immediately accepted. **Centre for Research in Politics, Argument, Prijepolje***

The support certainly depends on the NGO's credibility, but not only that, although it is certainly a decisive factor (recognising right programmes, youth programmes). **Osmeħ, Vrbas**

President of the Municipality personally made a decision after talking to our representatives and also signed personally a Memorandum after the meeting.
PAAD – Centre for Socio-Cultural Excellence, Novi Bečej

- ❖ *We are just at the beginning of developing cooperation with the network of local NGOs and, with their assistance intend to sign a cooperation agreement (we have already announced this and presented the draft agreement) which will regulate participation of NGOs in bodies and processes.*

Open Prospects, Subotica

In cooperation with the local authorities we have secured participation of their representatives in TV contact shows treating corruption in local administration authorities, ensured invitations to "Lingva" representatives to attend sessions of the Municipal Anti-Corruption Commission. Local authorities have recognised RCGA "Lingva" as a representative of the civil sector in the struggle against corruption. **Regional Centre for Civic Action (RCGA) „Lingva“, Kraljevo**

- ❖ *Cooperation on the project of promoting architectural accessibility of town with the construction of a 7 meters long corridor with slanted kerb stone in vital parts of the town, which is of importance for daily needs of disabled persons included the joint planning of architectural remodelling, securing permits, etc. This decision was brought by the official Municipal body after our project was presented. **Good Tree, Zaječar***

- ❖ *We held a meeting with the Chairman of Municipal Commission for Ecology, Director of the Public Utility Services, representatives of hunting and fishing associations and media representatives. **Eco Club, Raška***

- ❖ *From the very start local authorities wanted to cooperate on the project, while the Mayor accepted all our proposals at the very first meeting we had. Their support included active participation in the local team, delegation of powers to persons representing the town of Kragujevac. At the session of the Town Assembly adequate strategy was adopted, public promotion in the Town Assembly organised (logistic support in inviting secondary and elementary school Principals and other protagonists). The Major and Vice-President of the Town Assembly in charge of education actively participated in the public and media promotion. **Roma Information Centre (RIC), Kragujevac***

As the example of "Open Prospects" from Subotica and many others show, **networking with other civil associations and organisations** contribute not only to the strengthening of non-governmental sector, but also increase possibilities of cooperation with the local authorities and institutions. This is more so if the cooperation within the sector is implemented outside the framework of only local community.

A step further towards establishing the cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental sectors is successfully established **cooperation with corresponding local institutions and services**, which undoubtedly includes the following:

❖ *Our organisation has established cooperation with a number of institutions and organisations that helped project implementation. The Centre of Social Work made available relevant data on socially endangered families to the organisation based on which we have selected children to be included in the project.*

The Women's Forum implemented cooperation with a pre-school institution " Petar Pan" whose teachers participated in the conceptualisation and implementation of children's play-rooms. Representatives of the cultural-artistic society(KUD) "Marcipan" helped implement the activities by conceptualising and implementing these play-rooms for children where they learned folklore. By making their premises available to us, Pensioners' Association and KUD " Petefi Šandor" helped us secure the space for exhibitions and performances. Local enterprises provided

refreshments for participants in the play-rooms and educational workshops, thus helping implement project activities. **Women's Forum, Mali Idjoš**

- ❖ We maintain cooperation with organisations in Kragujevac, such as NGO «Millennium», NGO «Hope», NGO «RIC». This cooperation mostly consists of participation in joint drives or rendering support in campaigns, gatherings or events.

As regards organisations outside Kragujevac area we would like to single out our cooperation with NGO «CRNPS» that ever since its founding has been helping us with providing information, informing and inviting participants to round tables, trainings, as well as a information service about our work. We also want to point to cooperation with the «Civil Initiatives», which is rendering a similar kind of assistance. Thanks to it we are a member of the Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations of Serbia (FENS) since the foundation. We also have good cooperation with the NGO «Eco Forum» from Belgrade in the exchange of information on environmental protection. We had occasional contacts with the NGO «Let's ...» from Belgrade, participation in the training on «Informal education in SCG – A Step Towards Recognition», as well as with the «Centre for the Development of Serbia» from Belgrade with which we participated in the seminar organised by that centre. **Non-Smoking Educational Centre, Kragujevac**

Just like with the example of the Citizens' Association – Humanitarian Group Aurora from Bor, we have cases of members, who

work for town governmental institutions, being involved in project implementation (in Bor these were employees of the Centre for Social Work, Health Centre, Municipality). This **dual engagement** in both sectors facilitates the establishment of a specific form of cooperation. In case of Aurora, this enabled the formation of a Daily Activity Centre for Disabled, because the Municipality provided space and rent resources and the Department for Economic and Social Activities enabled comparison and organisation of data bases on disabled persons. An administrative clerk of that Department was engaged in the Centre so that "the project covered all relevant institutions that are of importance for this project".

It is evident that some of the above examples express the conviction of these organisations that they have laid foundations for a more lasting cooperation, which doesn't mean that all requisite preconditions have been secured and that this cooperation will proceed without problem. The observed differences in the level and character of this cooperation with local authorities are also a result of differences in the **fields of activity**, and consequently in the **type of target groups** to which projects are directed, in brief, in the **nature of projects** for which the organisation proposes cooperation to local authorities. However, the **number of active members** (even the greatest enthusiasts lose the will to work for common good if others do not join in) should not be disregarded.

Reasons for weak links between the governmental and non-governmental sector can be also found in **economic and socio-cultural regional differences** (priorities differ between one-national and multi-national and multi-confessional municipalities; between those in which everything before the transition period was based on

the so called gigantic enterprises that disintegrated and those which had the so called medium-size enterprises and had a tradition of entrepreneurial spirit; not to mention difference between municipalities and towns and even municipalities from the same region).

Forms of cooperation

A question that cannot be avoided is what did the cooperation implemented between civil organisations, associations or informal groups and local authorities or public institutions and services consist of. Judging from experience we had the chance to see the intensity and duration of this implemented cooperation can be ranked along an imaginary ladder of various cooperation forms. At the one end of this ladder are forms of **institutionalised cooperation** of the governmental and non-governmental sectors, backed by signed cooperation protocols or agreements, and on the other is the **ad hoc cooperation** that was achieved during the implementation of some specific project.

Institutionalised cooperation

Institutionalised cooperation appears in two forms: as cooperation agreement signed between governmental and non-governmental sectors¹², under which local authorities commit themselves to provide resources in their budget for the work of non-governmental

¹² In the course of summer 2005 Civil Initiatives from Belgrade and the Federation of Non-Governmental Organisations of Serbia (FENS) launched an initiative for the establishment of cooperation with local self-governments with a view to securing funds from municipal i.e. city budgets. The idea was to take advantage of legal deadlines and possibilities in the process of planing and drafting 2006 budgets of Serbia's local self-governments.

organisations, which can then apply with their projects at the (regular) competition where selection is made under the pre-determined criteria, as can be seen in the example of Valjevo.

For example, main argument in the negotiations with the Valjevo municipal officials was that this would represent a continuation of a process of promoting inter-sectoral cooperation in Valjevo, which was officially formalised in 2002 with the signing of the "Cooperation Protocol between Local Self-Government and Non-Governmental Organisations of Valjevo". In addition, municipal leadership was informed of the results achieved in the inter-sectoral cooperation so far when it was pointed out that satisfaction of identified needs of the local population was always in the focus of implemented inter-sectoral projects and activities. After first couple of meetings it became clear that resources shall be set aside in the 2006 budget for financing project activities of the citizens' associations, so that the only thing that remained to be done was to determine the total amount of resources and their allocation¹³.

During March 2006 the Municipality of Valjevo advertised a competition for the allocation of resources for financing projects of civil society organisations from the territory of the Municipality of Valjevo. Valjevo NGOs had the obligation to provide the Municipal Commission with proof on the registration of their association, brief description of the organisation with

¹³ Just as a reminder, in 2003 the Municipality of Valjevo allocated 600,000 dinars from its budget for financing the project activities of citizens' associations. This fact has greatly facilitated further negotiations. The final result of activities undertaken was that under Draft Decision on the 2006 Budget of the Municipality of Valjevo 1,000,000 dinars have been earmarked for financing individual project activities of citizens' associations.

information on all previously implemented projects, the project that this NGO is submitting for funding, project budget and references. In view of the pre-defined criteria (project value, project sustainability, cooperation with the local community, financial participation of the project owner and size of the target group), the Municipal Commission decided to support projects of 8 non-governmental organisations of Valjevo.

The other mode of institutionalised cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sectors are cases in which the local authorities accept civil initiative and adopt a strategy for the resolution of a specific social problem which requires longer term cooperation of several stakeholders.

As an example we can mention the Memorandum on Cooperation between the Council for Sex Equality of the Municipality of Tutin and NGO Impulse from Tutin, under which both sides recognise joint interest in taking part in activities that will contribute to the "development of civil society by creating models of good practice, which will produce both long-term and short-term results in encouraging equality of sexes at the local level". In line with this agreement, the Council undertook to support women's initiative, and for NGO Impulse to serve as a support to the Council with its knowledge and experience in the implementation of the plan and programme of support to formal and informal

women's groups in both professional and technical sense.¹⁴

A similar example is the drafting of the **local strategy for the education of the Roma**, in cooperation of the Roma Information Centre (RIC), from Kragujevac, Municipal Assembly of the town of Kragujevac, National Employment Services, which placed at the work team's disposal this institution's office, Centre for Social Work, School Administration of Kragujevac, school principals, pedagogues and psychologists, professors and teachers of elementary and secondary schools in Kragujevac and children's institution »Nada Naumović«.

Also, a Scouts Unit »Josif Pančić« from Niš, which was established with the purpose of contributing to the education of the young, together with the Municipality Medijana of the town of Niš and representatives of 15 youth non-governmental organisations, succeeded in signing a *Memorandum on Understanding with Basic Youth Policy Elements for the Territory of Medijana Municipality*. The Memorandum defined "constant open dialogue" between youth organisations and the Municipality of Medijana.

Ad hoc cooperation

This form of cooperation is linked to the implementation of specific projects. It includes extending certain financial aid or provision of space – with either paid or unpaid rent.

Examples of partnership established in the implementation of some specific project fall within the zone of ad hoc cooperation. Here local authorities are

¹⁴ Copy of the text of this Memorandum can be found in: Aleksandra Vesić and Snežana Stojanović, *Let's Move the Communities!* Volume 4, Belgrade: BCIF, 2006, pp. 97.

engaged, at least partly or fully, in the project conceptualisation stage.

"Good Tree" from Zaječar reports that the local authorities participated in the planning, financing and winning support of other institutions, as well as media promotion of the project. Organisation "The Danube Wreath" from the Belgrade municipality Borča managed to persuade municipal and city authorities to change the purpose of certain space and allocate it to the disabled persons living on the left Danube bank. Organisation "Iskrice" (Sparkles) from Loznica had similar cooperation with representatives of the Municipal Assembly of Loznica not only by getting the press hall, but also by having the town planning action expanded at the initiative of the President of the Municipality. The Culture Centre organised the awarding of prizes and made available a space for holding a seminar, whereas local schools also proved good partner with active participation of their students and teachers in the action.

Cooperation with local institutions and services

The cooperation established with local institutions and services, which requires principal approval of the local authorities, falls somewhere in between these two. Cooperation with local institutions proved mutually beneficial because on the one hand it helps non-governmental organisations to define their target groups better, improve skills in the implementation of project activities, secure institutional support and ensure better and greater visibility, and on

the other hand helps institutions and service reach some of the neglected population categories with their activities, innovate the usual working methods, secure additional funding for their work, use assistance of volunteers, etc.

COOPERATION FORMS	ORGANISATION	PLACE
(Institutionalised) cooperation established	Human Rights Committee PAAD – Centre for Socio-Cultural Excellence	Valjevo Novi Bečej
Strategy for the resolution of a specific social problem agreed	Lingva The Roma Initiative Forum Society of the Roma Youth Impulse Scouts Unit „Josif Pančić“ The Power of Village Stablo	Kraljevo Leskovac Valjevo Tutin Niš Knjaževac Kragujevac
Partnership established in the implementation of a specific project	Roma Information Centre Lighthouse Sretenje K-Town Group Child Rights Centre Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Destinikon Eco Club Novi Sad School of Journalism Film Publik Art SOS phone line Good Tree GEA	Kragujevac Loznica Požega Kosjerić Užice Užice Sjenica Raška Novi Sad Niš Grocka Zaječar Knjaževac
Cooperation with local institutions and services	Non-Smoking Educational Centre Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Women’s Forum Hera HUM Roma Centre Oasis Eco-Centre Bela Breza	Kragujevac Užice Mali Idoš Bačka Topola Belgrade Obrenovac Beograd Kruševac
Purpose specific financial	K-Town Group	Kosjerić

assistance	KVART Environmental Protection Movement Association of Paraplegics of the Mačva District	Kraljevo Novi Pazar Šabac
Providing space	Smile Open Prospects Argument Aurora Friends of Brodarevo The Danube Wreath New Culture	Vrbas Subotica Prijepolje Bor Brodarevo Borča Novi Sad
No response/no cooperation	SOS phone line Millennium	Belgrade Kragujevac

This analysis cannot offer replies to all questions raised. The number of organisations that responded is too small for us to divide them into bigger and smaller organisations, i.e. those economically weaker and more developed regions, ethnically or religiously homogenous and heterogeneous environments, etc. Therefore, we shall stick to the survey of fields of activities in which civil activists have established cooperation with the local authorities, supplementing the offered examples with data on the ways they implemented their projects, problems encountered in their implementation and methods for resolving them, public response, results achieved.

Fields of achieved cooperation

Every classification of social activities has its shortcomings due to the overlapping of criteria according to which individual examples are grouped. Thus, for example, a project dealing with the integration of the Roma children into the school system can be classified as work on the improvement of educational system or resolution of problems of marginalised social groups. Aware of these difficulties, but also the

need for better visibility, we shall attempt to group all examples of projects from our documentation in the following way (the mentioned sequence is random and does not indicate the importance of individual fields):

- 1. Life quality/conditions of endangered population categories** (disabled, elderly, victims of family violence). In the table survey we shall mark this category as "endangered"
- 2. Ecological problems** (raising the ecological awareness, resolution of specific pollution problems, etc.) Marked as "ecology" in tables
- 3. Economic problems of the transition society** (poverty, unemployment, corruption, etc.) Frequently, the basic objective of this kind of project is to enable personnel training/ re-orientation of individual population categories. Marked as "transition" in the table
- 4. Improving working conditions in schools and kindergartens.** Marked as "schooling" in the table
- 5. Status of marginalised social groups.** Marked in the table as "minorities "
- 6. Education for multi-ethnicity, tolerance.** Marked as "tolerance" in the table
- 7. Encouraging civil society and democracy development** (development of local self-government, transparency of the work of local authorities, right to information, etc.) Marked as "democracy" in the table
- 8. Youth problems** Marked as "youth" in the table
- 9. Cultural programmes.** Marked as "culture" in the table

Fields in which cooperation has been established

COOPERATION FORMS	ORGANISATION	COOPERATION FIELD
(Institutionalised) cooperation established	Human Rights Committee, Valjevo PAAD – Centre for Socio-Cultural Excellence, Novi Bečej	Democracy Democracy, culture
Strategy for the resolution of a specific social problem agreed	Lingva, Kraljevo Forum for Roma Initiative, Leskovac Society of the Roma Youth, Valjevo Impulse, Tutin Scouts' unit „Josif Pančić“, Niš The Power of Village, Knjaževac Tree, Kragujevac	Democracy Minorities Minorities Endangered Youth Youth, economy Minorities
Partnership established in the implementation of a specific project	Roma Information Centre, Kragujevac Lighthouse, Loznica Sretenje, Požega K-Town Group, Kosjerić Užice Centre for Child Rights Human Rights Centre, Užice Destinikon, Sjenica Eco Club, Raška NNŠ, Novi Sad Film-publik art, Niš SOS phone line Grocka Good Tree, Zaječar GEA, Knjaževac	Minorities Endangered, ecology, Economy Democracy, Endangered, democracy Youth, culture, Schooling Youth, schooling Endangered, ecology, Economy Endangered Youth Youth, democracy Ecology, culture Endangered Endangered Youth
Cooperation with local institutions and	Non-Smoking Educational Centre,	Ecology

services	Kragujevac Užice Centre for Human Rights and Democracy Women's Forum, Mali Iđoš Hera, Bačka topola HUM, Beograd Ecological Movement Bela breza, Kruševac Oasis, Belgrade Roma Centre, Obrenovac	Endangered, ecology, economy Minorities, endangered Endangered Endangered Ecology Minorities Minorities
Purpose specific financial assistance	K-Town Group, Kosjerić KVART, Kraljevo Environmental Protection Civil Movement, Novi Pazar Association of the Paraplegics of the Mačva District, Šabac	Schooling Tolerance, youth Ecology Endangered
Providing space	Smile, Vrbas Argument, Prijepolje Aurora, Bor Iskrice, Loznica Friends of Brodarevo Danube Wreath, Borča Culture Nova, Novi Sad Open Prospects, Subotica	Youth Democracy Endangered Youth Culture Endangered Youth Democracy, economy,
No response/no support/cooperation	SOS phone line, Beograd Millennium Kragujevac	Endangered No response

The only regularity that can be observed from these tables is that all projects of organisations that managed to establish institutionalised cooperation with the local authorities fall within the

field of **strengthening the civil society and developing democracy:** projects focusing on the development of local self-government, directed to securing transparency of the work of local authorities, exercise of the citizens' right to information of public interest. (The table designates these projects as "democracy".)

In cases when organisations succeeded in striking an **agreement on the strategy for resolving some specific social problem** with the local authorities we have projects which insist on the principled resolution of social problems which, as a rule, are problems of those population categories which suffer most from the consequences of all problems of transition societies: young, minorities, women, disabled persons.

There is no regularity as to which project activity field projects belong when it comes to cases of cooperation established on some specific project – either as partnership or ad hoc assistance of local authorities (financial project assistance, provision of space or public recognition with one of officials attending the final ceremonies). These are predominantly projects in which the municipality recognised its importance for the local community, but nevertheless did not opt to cooperate with the civil organisations, associations or informal citizens' groups in principle. If it did, then such a relationship is frequently established with local institutions and services, which in many cases has a character of a more lasting cooperation of such institutions and services and local civil organisations. There are cases that after the completion of some specific project and cooperation implemented with local institutions project activities are continued within these institutions.

Naturally, success of civil initiatives does not only depend on the readiness or lack of it on the part of local authorities to cooperate with

civil organisations. This success greatly depends on the organisation itself – knowledge, skills and experience invested in project conceptualisation, motivation of its members, previously achieved results and its visibility within the community. But the success of this interaction between the citizens and local authorities greatly depends on the context – on the support that the organisation or its initiative enjoy among citizens, and particularly among the more prominent ones, as well as on the general social and political climate in the broader environment.

The following text shall show in more detail projects of all organizations included in this inquiry, with emphasis on problems they encountered implementing them and ways in which they overcame them, as well as on achieved results and response they met with in the local community.

Survey of Projects by Cooperation Forms¹⁵

Organisations that succeeded in **institutionalising cooperation** (jointly sign a Memorandum on Cooperation) **with local self-governments** achieved this through the following projects:

Human Rights Committee Valjevo in cooperation with the Resource Centre from Valjevo (its branch that became independent in the meantime) carried out the project *Securing Funds from the Valjevo Municipality Budget for Financing Projects of Local Non-Governmental Organisations*.

¹⁵ This supplement shall not list projects that have already been described in detail in BCIF publication *Let's Move the Communities!* 1-4 that can be taken at the site www.bcif.org

The aim of this project – asserting, encouraging and formalising cooperation between local self-government and non-governmental organisations – has already been a part of the Strategic Plan of the Human Rights Committee of Valjevo for the 1999 – 2004 period. This objective was achieved in the planned period and in 2002 the Municipal Assembly of Valjevo adopted a text of the "Cooperation Protocol between Local Self-Government and Non-Governmental Organisations of Valjevo" prepared by a team for the development of civil society of the Valjevo Human Rights Committee, when the President of the Municipality was authorised by the Municipal Assembly of Valjevo to sign this document. This document represents a first formal document which defines ways and terms of cooperation between local self-government and NGOs in Serbia. The Valjevo Human Rights Committee implemented the mentioned activities with the professional support of the Centre for the Development of Non-Profit Sector of West Serbia (CRNPSZS). After this, in 2003 the first competition of the Municipal Assembly of Valjevo for the financing of local NGOs was carried out.

In the 2004 – 2005 period implementing the project of the "Resource Centre of Valjevo" the Human Rights Committee of Valjevo made an analysis of the state in the non-governmental sector in the territory of the Kolubara District. Taking into account this research, "Cooperation Protocol between Local Self-Government and Non-Governmental Organisations of Valjevo", as well as examples of good practice in the field of civil society development in transition societies, while appreciating the potentials and possibilities of the local community, we have decided that it was necessary to continue activities that shall promote inter-sectoral cooperation: *"Respecting one of the basic principles and rights of each democratically organised*

society for every citizens to be entitled to actively take part in the development of the local community, and bearing in mind the fact that the non-governmental sector is one of the mechanisms for citizens to exercise their democratic right of theirs, it was our assessment that by implementing this project we shall enable the encouragement of civic activism and additionally strengthen the non-governmental sector with local financial resources."

The overall project was implemented with human, technical and financial resources of the Human Rights Committee of Valjevo and the Resource Centre of Valjevo. Other non-governmental organisations from Valjevo, local self-government and the media, which fully covered and supported this project, also played a very active role in the implementation of this project. One of the very important achievements of this project was the fact that even after it was carried out the local media started to increasingly cover activities of the Valjevo NGOs. In addition, the following results were also achieved:

- ❖ *During March 2006 Municipality of Valjevo advertised a competition for the allocation of funds for the financing of projects of civil society organizations from the territory of the Valjevo Municipality.*
- ❖ *A total of 23 non-governmental organizations and associations of citizens applied for the municipal funds (Valjevo NGOs were under the obligation to supply the Municipal Commission with proof on the association's registration, brief description of the organization with information on previously implemented projects, project with which the NGO was applying for funds, project budget and references). Practical application of the "Cooperation Protocol between Local Self-Government and Non-Governmental Organisations of Valjevo".*

- ❖ *About USD 1 million was secured for the financing of project activities of Valjevo NGOs.*
- ❖ *Local self-government supported eight projects of Valjevo NGOs.*
- ❖ *All approved and supported projects are implemented in the local community and local experts and technical resources are also part of project implementation.*
- ❖ *Citizens of Valjevo are directly participating (through project activity implementation) in the implementation of approved and supported projects.*
- ❖ *Citizens of Valjevo are indirectly participating (as tax payers) in the strengthening of the non-governmental sector.*
- ❖ *There is a favourable atmosphere in the local community for more active participation of citizens of Valjevo in the process of improving life quality at the local level.*

Centre for Socio-Cultural Excellence – PAAD from Novi Bečej organised a round table on the subject "Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in the Development of Civil Society in the Local Community", in which all non-governmental organisations from Novi Bečej, local community and local self-government took part. The objective was to have representatives of the local self-government and NGO sector sit together and talk about possibilities of joint action at resolving problems in the local community. Results were exceptional, and covered by all the media houses:

A Memorandum on Cooperation (between non-governmental organisations and local self-government) signed and agreement reached to employ one person

(in the Municipality) by the end of the year to coordinate the NGO sector.¹⁶



Seven organisations, together with the local self-government and institutions agreed a **strategy for the resolution of a specific social problem.** They achieved this through the following projects:

Regional Centre for Civil Action „Lingva“, from Kraljevo, has carried out a campaign entitled *Enough with Corruption* as part of the project *Reducing Poverty through Fighting Corruption*, on the territory of Kraljevo and Vrnjačka Banja Municipalities.

Out of all organisations in the District of Kraljevo, only “Lingva” deals with the subject of corruption continually as of 1999. With this project they wanted to “draw a line” and through a strong media campaign “point to the essential problem of our society”. Implementing this project it wanted to “assist their fellow citizens to overcome the fear and actively join in the fight against corruption in our environment”.

The project consisted of five stages of two months each, each stage being dedicated to corruption in one of the mentioned five fields: school system, health, judiciary, police and public services under the jurisdiction of the local self-government. Each stage was implemented through activities that included the following: TV spots, radio jingles, posters, leaflets, public debates, TV shows of prominent experts. At the beginning of project implementation during forceful media campaign, at public panels and in contact TV shows the project met

¹⁶The extent to which data given here are exhaustive depends exclusively on the organisation providing them.

with opposition of officials from institutions that were designated as the most corrupt ones. There was a fear of openly speaking about the problem of crime and corruption in the society. On the other hand, encouraged, citizens welcomed the fact that corruption was finally named as the greatest social evil.

In the implementation of this project "Lingva" cooperated with authorities of the local self-government and Head of the Raška District. At the local level, as its contribution to the fight against corruption, the Municipal Assembly formed its own Anti-Corruption Commission composed of five members – representatives of all political parties (those in power and opposition ones). But the citizens still place the greatest trust in "Lingva" addressing it to report cases of corruption, as they recognise it as anti-corruption centre. The results are the following:

Representatives of the authorities in sectors that have been marked as the most corrupt in the society, took part in contact programmes at the local TV. Cases of corruption are now reported to the Municipal Anti-Corruption Commission; sessions of the Anti-Corruption Commission are now public and attended by representatives of the media, NGO sector. Citizens are reporting a growing number of corruption cases and openly speak of the corruption in the society and bodies of the local self-government. They directly address the Anti-Corruption Commission, report cases of suspected corruption in the competent state authorities and demand that legal measures are undertaken.

Forum for Roma Initiative from Leskovac has carried out a project entitled *Preparation and Drafting of Local Action Plans for Education, Employment, Housing and Health of the Roma within the Roma Decade 2005 -2015*.

In the previous period this organisation was engaged in the following activities: 1) identification of the causes and consequences of poor state in the education of the Roma children and youth by finding ways and methods for resolving this situation; 2) protection of human rights, particularly the rights of minorities and ethnic groups; 3) improving and developing information and publishing activities in the Roma language. The aim of this project was to inform and engage, as well as develop habits and responsibilities of individuals, groups, organisations and institutions with a view to changing the unfavourable position of the Roma and their integration into the social trends (education, employment, health care, winning recognition of the Roma culture). This project was particularly intended to point to the region's multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structure.

The project was implemented on the territory of the Leskovac Municipality and implied cooperation with a number of institutions: Leskovac schools and kindergartens, museums, Culture Centre, local self-government, Health Centre, the media and enterprises. In the beginning they encountered various problems which mostly boil down to the lack of understanding for the essence of raised problems, as well as failure to accept the proposed methodology for resolving them. But members of the Forum for the Roma Initiative resolved these problems through education, information (appeared several times on the local TV and radio stations) and proposing a methodology which

produced positive results in some environments. They achieved the following results:

- ❖ *Positive action of enrolling Roma children in secondary schools and University.*
- ❖ *Expanded approach to Roma children in pre-school upbringing.*
- ❖ *Functional literary campaigns for adult Roma,*
- ❖ *20 houses were built for the poorest Roma families.*
- ❖ *Greater visibility of Roma organisations and associations was secured, particularly for the football club "Veternica" and Cultural-Artistic Society "Ševket Ibraimović".*
- ❖ *Better access to the Roma health care was ensured.*
- ❖ *A TV programme "Roma Circle – Romani Rota" was initiated in the Roma-Serbian language on TV Leskovac, the founder of which is Municipality of Leskovac.*

Roma Information Centre (RIC) from Kragujevac worked on the drafting of the *Education Strategy for the Roma in Kragujevac* in cooperation with the Municipal Assembly of the city of Kragujevac.

During eight years of its work this organisation mostly dealt with education, information and publishing publications for the following target groups – children, young and women. RIC activists took part in the drafting of a strategy for improving the quality of life for the Roma, organised over 50 different types of seminars, over 20 seminars for women, devised and implemented more than 25 programmes for the development of Roma civil sector, organised four conferences, prepared over 40 cycles of workshops (in each cycle 16 workshops at minimum), organised and implemented six campaigns, published over

30 publications and implemented over 20 other programmes (see www.ric.org.yu).

This specific project was initiated based on years of work on the Roma problems, since there was no strategy for Roma education on the local level. The project was prepared with the intention of forming a team/network for the elaboration of a local strategy for the integration of the Roma children and youth into the education system. Project activities included: information of the local population on problems of the Roma community, creating data bases, preparations so as to finally adopt the text of this Strategy. It cooperated with many experts from the following entities: National Employment Service – Kragujevac branch office, Centre for Social Work of Kragujevac, Ministry of Education and Sports – Kragujevac Department, elementary and secondary schools and kindergartens. From the very project start the media carried reports of the team's work: several times during the process of creating the Strategy, team members were guests at local radio and TV stations in programmes dedicated to education where they reported on their work on the Strategy. The press and 3 local TV crews and a number of news agency correspondents covered the presentation of the first Strategy for the Education of the Roma in Kragujevac. Numerous results were achieved:

At the start of the project work, the Major of the town of Kragujevac. Vlatko Rajković, gave his support to this initiative.

The written Strategy was officially adopted at the session of the Assembly of the town of Kragujevac on June 4, 2004.

The Assembly of the town of Kragujevac organised a public promotion of this Strategy. Major Vlatko Rajković and Vice President of in charge of Education, Predrag Cvetković, as well as the Local Strategy drafting team, principals of elementary and secondary schools from Kragujevac, representatives of Kragujevac NGOs, etc. took active part in the presentation of the Strategy. Kragujevac became a positive example of a town which has adopted such a Strategy. Today strategies for the Roma education are being elaborated in Subotica and Valjevo, as well as many other municipalities all over Serbia. Team members have been invited to convey their experience with the drafting of the Kragujevac Strategy to teams from other towns.

The project had influence on the decision-makers in elementary and secondary schools from Kragujevac. Public institutions have been mobilised for the "step by step" resolution of the problems of Roma community, through the media, meetings and personal contacts. The Roma parents were informed on the importance of education.

Over 30 young people won recognition with their participation in the resolution of their own problems through the programme "Young Working for the Young".

The text of Educational Strategy for the Roma was edited as a publication.

Report on the team's work was printed.



Organisations which succeeded in **establishing a partnership with the local self-government during implementation of a specific project** did it through the following projects:

“Svetionik” (Lighthouse) Association of Citizens from Loznica, in cooperation with the Centre for Social Work (CSR), Health Centre, police and schools implemented this project over two years. Namely, *Shelter – SOS phone lines and counselling for victims of violence*. Project target was primarily the direct aid and support to women and children victims of family violence, as well as raising public sensitivity to family violence and engaging all relevant institutions and bodies in problem resolution. “When we established the Lighthouse we were motivated by a desire to make our town and broader community a better place for all its citizens and with our knowledge and activities enable all those interested or in need of some kind of psycho-social support and assistance to get it in an adequate way, in time and primarily – free of charge. We also consider this to be a good way of assuming responsibilities and actively participating in the public life of our community.”

In the course of two years, as part of the project “Shelter – SOS phone lines and counselling for victims of violence” the following was achieved: some 400 calls were made to the SOS phone line, about 200 persons went through the psychological counselling service and some 150 of whom received legal assistance. The accompanying project programme implied organisation of workshops for 400 secondary school students and training of 30 representatives of adequate

institutions. The projects proceeded without any particular problems, especially concerning care for specific persons – victims of violence. It met with the rooted prejudices in the local community regarding this problem which it fought with information, persistence, work and training. Consequently, the public response was improving as time went by. The media publicised the work of the SOS free of charge and broadcast reports on all essential events within the project.

They consider their greatest success the fact that in the end the whole SOS service was institutionalised within the Centre for Social Work with the financial assistance of the Municipality Loznica:

- ❖ *First is the number of persons they helped and all that these people had to say.*
- ❖ *In its annual report OUP Loznica mentioned the existence of the SOS phone line as very important help.*
- ❖ *One man was arrested for attempted incest, and his six children were placed in foster care.*
- ❖ *Awareness on the family violence has changed in many segments of the society.*
- ❖ *The whole SOS service was institutionalised (after two years that it was attached to the "Lighthouse" organisation) in CSR(Centre for Social Work) Loznica.*
- ❖ *Regular funds are allocated from the municipal budget in the amount of 200,000 dinars (which is a rare example of sustainability of such a service and can certainly be considered as an exceptional success).*

Užice Centre for Child Rights carried out a three-year district project (in the territory of Zlatibor District) - *Building Capacities for Quality Pre-School Education* – which included professionals and staff

of all kindergartens in the District of Zlatibor, as well as children parents and representatives of the local authorities.

Based on a preliminary analysis of data collected on the ground – that demonstrated small coverage of children by pre-school education, unavailability of pre-school education to all children, outdated work methods in kindergartens, undeveloped programmes, unsatisfactory conditions for children in kindergartens – project elaboration was initiated in order to respond to these needs.

Project objective was to improve organisational, technical, personnel and programme potentials for the development of pre-school education in kindergartens of Zlatibor Districts and enable access of all children to this education. This objective was achieved through personnel education, development of work programme, equipment and renovation of kindergartens and ensuring funds for innovative programmes. Special attention was devoted to the development of partnership relations between kindergartens and parents and opening of kindergartens as institutions towards the local community.

The first step was formation of teams for developing kindergartens. Teams included kindergarten staff, parents and representatives of local authorities that in next stages developed action plans for the development of kindergartens and implemented these action plans in their communities. In the beginning they met with poor motivation of kindergarten teachers, as well as insufficient interest of the local authorities, but with additional meetings with kindergarten management and representatives of local authorities this was resolved. They met with a very good response of the public. Almost all printed and electronic media on the territory of Zlatibor District very

positively reported on project activities. The media often took part as partners in the project. The achieved results were as follows:

- ❖ *In all kindergartens in 10 Municipalities of the Zlatibor District teams of educators, parents and local community representatives were formed with a view to developing pre-school education.*
- ❖ *Over 18,000 children took part in various programmes and activities they did not have access to earlier.*
- ❖ *Over 250 parents were actively included in the work of kindergartens.*
- ❖ *Over 250 professionals working in kindergartens attended an intensive training for developing their skills and knowledge.*

Užice Centre for Human Rights and Democracy developed cooperation with the local self-government in Užice through a number of projects. One project, *Signpost*, treats the resolution of social problems of the unemployed, two – *Public Ecological Works I and II* are ecological drives and the fourth, *New Knowledge for Third Age*, treated the creation of new and development of existing non-institutional forms of care for and support to old people on the territory of Užice Municipality.

Signpost offered novel models of connecting all partners interested in the resolution of social problems of the unemployed. Project objectives were to strengthen and support the unemployed and partner organisations by creating a network of new services accessible to all stakeholders and founding a resource centre for the unemployed. The indirect target group were families of the unemployed, the local community members on its territory and representatives of the MSP -

between 700 and 1,000 persons. Key activities of the project were: basic informatics course for 100 users, higher course in informatics, photography course, partnership education, number of economic-educational trainings »How to Market One's Knowledge as a Commodity«, public lectures and presentations, producing a web-site, establishing social dialogue. The expected project effects were increased level of self-employment, open social dialogue, network of service desks in the local community offices for unemployed. Some 140 beneficiaries were included in this project implementation.

Public Ecological Works – identification and removal of 175 unregulated waste dump sites was carried out in the territory of the Municipalities of Bajina Bašta and Užice in cooperation with the local self-governments and members of local communities.

The public positively reacted to the information on both projects. The following results were achieved:

- ❖ *Signpost – raised the capacities of the unemployed and in the course of implementation found employment for 25 persons. Both human and technical capacities of all partners have been enlarged and mutual communication and trust improved.*
- ❖ *Some 157 unregulated waste dump sites were removed, and the target group of persons engaged in these tasks continued further education of their fellow citizens so as to preserve the already achieved.*
- ❖ *Through the project New Knowledge for the Third Age – the local self-government for the first time initiated the creation of novel forms of non-institutional support to the elderly. Some 22 participants were trained to use PCs during project implementation.*

Novi Sad School of Journalism for five years now is awarding annual prize to the best young female/male journalist from Novi Sad, for reporting, radio or TV work in both the majority and minorities languages.

In its ten years of work the Novi Sad School of Journalism (NNSŽ) developed into a leading organisation offering specialist, alternative education of journalists in the territory of Vojvodina as its primary activity. NNSŽ programmes are recognisable and their quality has been acknowledged in the profession. In addition to education, Novi Sad School of Journalism aims at encouraging young journalists and journalistic profession. Objective of this specific project is to stimulate young journalists and improve the quality of journalistic profession in general. The established commission follows and evaluates the work of nominated young journalists from the Novi Sad media and after one-month monitoring selects the best young, creative, professional and responsible journalist who proved exceptional in his/her approach, impartiality, tolerance and manner of expression in daily media practice in information programmes of media houses.

Up till 2004, the project was implemented in cooperation with the Executive Council of the city of Novi Sad, Secretariat for Information and Novi Sad media. With the change of the ruling structure their cooperation ceased, although they tried several times to renew it, but without success. However, with the assistance of Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the tradition was continued. The media are always happy to cover this event – since it directly relates to the

media and the awarding festivity in the City House each December is always public and is an event to be remembered for the whole city.

Project results achieved so far are the following:

- ❖ *Since its introduction till to date this annual award was given to altogether 5 journalists (2001-2006). The award is presented each year, in cycles, to the best journalist from different segments of journalism. One year it is awarded to the best young journalist in the printed media, the other to a radio journalist, and next to a TV journalist.*
- ❖ *Except the encouragement, all winners of the annual NNŠ awards won exceptional recognition of their editorial offices. Although this award is given to individuals, the whole media house also has its role in it.*
- ❖ *Except for directly influencing the award winner and their media houses, this project also has impact on the new generation of journalists in general and the entire media scene of Novi Sad.*

Association of Citizens K- Town Group from Kosjerić this year implemented fifth in a row International Arts Camp in cooperation with the Municipal Assembly of Kosjerić (financial aid, providing space and logistic support) and many institutions all over town – Radio Kosjerić, Culture Centre, Town Library, Tourist Organisation, etc.

Same as in the last four years, this August too a regular international event was held in Kosjerić rallying people from all over the world, mostly the young and with its contents promoting multiculturalism, modern cultural aspirations and promoting the cultural life of the town. It can be said that the Camp is becoming traditional and

is increasingly popular among Camps in Serbia, as well as abroad since this was third, and even fourth time in a row for some of the participants. The importance of this Camp is significant in the first place for the local environment which is relatively slow in accepting cultural changes. *Radio Kosjerić* regularly reported and gave daily reports on the Camp work in its programme. In addition to the local media, the following stations and media also covered the Camp: *Radio Beograd 1, Radio and TV Požega, Radio Užice, Novosti, Ekspres* and *Danas*. The following results were achieved at this fifth Camp alone (which can be multiplied by five if we count all five Camps):

Some 100 participants worked and expressed themselves artistically at the Camp – out of which 26 came from 14 countries all over the world, 24 were domestic participants and 50 children from Kosjerić. Creative work was organised in 5 artistic workshops – art-interact, mural paintings, music, creative writing and children’s workshop.

Art-interact workshop organised two lectures on the subject of «Elements and principles of visual and interactive art» and «Automatic Creative Drawing». It also organised two street performances, the daily one primarily for children and including a masked ball, street drawing, small theatre and juggling school; whereas the evening performance included installations, video works, inter-active art with citizens involvement and experimental theatre. The final programme was presented on August 14 in the Turkish tavern in Kosjerić. There, a presentation of video installations, drawings/graphics, installations was also organised as

well as interactive performance with colours, with the participation of citizens.

As part of this workshop, participants composed 15 music pieces with sound elements from different nations, which they presented to the audience in Kosjerić on August 14 and in Belgrade on August 15. Participants in the mural painting workshop painted a mural on the main street stairs and thus made the town more beautiful.

Creative writing workshop used in its work the multidisciplinary presentation of poetry through sketches, video works, artistic installations and picture post-cards. An evening of poetry was organised, brochures printed with impressions about Kosjerić, which explained the participants' impressions of the town in verse, Kosjerić picture post-cards were printed, as well as collected poetry works that were created in the Camp.

Children Theatre Workshop prepared a puppet show for children «High Society Cats», made 16 puppets and 2 costumes and presented the performance in Kosjerić on August 14.

The main programme of the Camp (films, exhibitions, concerts, performances) was presented on August 14 in the premises of the National Library of Kosjerić, on town stairs and in the Turkish tavern and in the premises of Belgrade City Library on August 15. It is estimated that some 500 visitors saw the main Camp

programme, while during the Camp some 1,000 people visited all programmes.

Film Publik Art from Niš as part of its years long programme "*Living with the Nature*" organised a *Horticulture Festival*.

As part of that same programme Film Publik Art organised a number of gatherings and festivals in Niš, some of which are already traditional (Tea Festival, the International Festival of Waters and the Flower Bazaar). All these festivals are followed by intensive publishing activities in corresponding fields (see www.filmpublikart.net). *Horticulture Festival* was organised so that it could influence the way of thinking, behaving and elementary respect of law and conduct in line with the European standards. This festival, as many other organised by Film Publik Art, also met with exceptional response from the public, citizens and the media. The following was organised as part of the last year's Horticulture Festival:

- ❖ *Some 45 florists and various shops and small-scale flower and seedling-growing and tool-producing businessmen took part in the exhibition*
- ❖ *Publication "Living with the Nature" by Milica Buha, B.Sc. dedicated to decorative plants and green space landscaping was published. It includes three volumes: Blooming and Aromatic Plants in Your Garden, Coniferous Trees, Hedges and Green Sculptures and Aromatic and Medicinal Plants.*

SOS Phone Line for Women and Children Victims of Violence from Grocka as part of a special project "Cooperation with

Institutions”, actively cooperated with the Centre for Social Work, department of the Interior of Grocka (two inspector ladies were in charge of work on the family violence) and Grocka Health Centre (doctors and medical staff were entrusted with documenting the violence) in the problem of resolving family violence in Grocka. As of June 2000 till today they have successfully implemented seven projects and established cooperation with all relevant local institutions. Consequently, the established network is based on regular monthly meetings with representatives of these institutions at which specific cases of violence in the local community are discussed and plans are made for their quickest and most efficient possible resolution. In addition, joint actions and campaign contribute to the overcoming of prejudices with regard to family violence, as well as its prevention. A Cooperation Memorandum has been signed with all local institutions.

The objective of this specific project was to secure quicker and more efficient mechanisms for protecting violence victims and cut short the procedure in the resolution of family violence cases through closely linked and coordinated cooperation of all relevant institutions on the territory of Grocka Municipality.

The local media regularly write about this project that is still active after three years – the municipal paper “*Gročanske novine*” and local radio stations carry reports. Until now this three-year project produced the following results:

- *Out of hundred percent cases we processed at meetings, 65% was efficiently resolved in three-month period.*
- *In the period of three years over 200 cases were processed, which actually means 200 women with children, victims of family violence.*

“Good Tree” Organisation from Zaječar had a partner organisation in the Municipality Zaječar in the implementation of the project “Zaječar- Town of All”, and closely cooperated with direct project beneficiaries – disabled persons who were very active and engaged in implementing project activities.

The mission of this organisation, among other things, states – strengthening citizens and system institutions for the purpose of creating a society with equal conditions for the life of all citizens irrespective of differences (disability, national affiliation, competences, etc.). Based on their work to date and awareness of the needs of this target group – disabled persons, it initiated a project “Zaječar- Town of All”, and addressed the Municipality offering partnership in project implementation.

The aim was to make citizens and municipal authorities aware of the rights of disabled, architecturally resolve the problem of town accessibility by building a 7 kms corridor with slanted curb stones in vital town parts in which disabled persons go for their daily needs.

The results met with the approval of the disabled persons, positive reactions of the foreign partners of the Municipality and Radio & TV Zaječar, local paper Timok and RTS reported on the following:

- ❖ *The hospital, Sports Recreational Centre, Park Forest Kraljevica and city centre became accessible to the disabled persons because they were able to move around town in their wheelchairs.*
- ❖ *This architectural plan is better suited for the movement of old people, parents of children in wheelchairs or temporarily handicapped.*

- ❖ *Implementation of this project established trust and cooperation between the municipality and non-governmental sector;*
- ❖ *Citizens' awareness on problems of the disabled has grown.*
- ❖ *Integration of disabled persons in the daily life of the town has increased.*

“Sretenje” Association of Citizens (UG) from Požega implemented a project „Monitoring the Law on Free Access to Information of General Interest in the Possession of the Public Authorities“. The project was implemented in all five municipalities of Zlatibor District – Požega, Kosjerić, Arilje, Užice and Čajetina with cooperation of local self-governments and support of the local media that followed all project activities.

The Law on Free Access to Information of General Interest in the Possession of the Public Authorities was monitored so as to reform the predominantly closed state institutions into a responsible service of the citizens, the work of which can be and is available for citizens' control, and enable citizens to enjoy the right to information of public importance. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Coalition for Free Access to Information composed of 12 organisations all over Serbia. Project implementation lasted one year and the problems observed during implementation (disrespect for set deadlines, lack of interest by the information seekers and the media for solving problems, disregard of laws) – remain yet to be resolved. Due to the lack of funds very few “started stories” were brought to an end, although it could be considered success that the state of affairs in

fields it treated was established and consequently, mechanisms set that can contribute to solving the observed problems.

Major success was scored with the bodies of local self-government and the media. All local media reported on project activities in all five towns in which they were carried out. As their result activist of "Sretenje" point to the opportunity they have been given during process implementation to "win high credibility of the community, both with public authorities, as well as citizens and the media. Preconditions were created for initiating activities in cooperation with other non-governmental organisations that shall contribute to significant changes with a view to more successful development of the civil society and quicker joining the union of European nations – establishment of standards. "

"Sretenje" Association of Citizens from Požega after that consecutively implemented two very similar projects. Namely they established a *Volunteering Centre Sretenje Požega*, and formed *Youth Volunteering Centres* in three neighbouring municipalities: in Užice, Arilje and in Guča. Over 50 organisations and institutions of the local community and region of West Serbia (Town Garrison Požega, Municipal Administration of Požega, Religious Community of Požega, Požega Administration of Public Revenues, Cultural Centre of Požega, Public Utility Enterprise-JKP "Naš dom" Požega, National Theatre of Užice, Centre for Social Work Užice, Centre for Social Work Arilje, Centre for Children without Parental Care "Petar Radovanović" from Užice, as well as the following NGOs- Užice Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, Centre for Creative Rallying of Arilje, Human Rights Committee Valjevo, Ecological Association of Guča, Child Centre of Užice, CRNPSZS- Užice, etc.) cooperated on these two projects.

Target group were the young people who were mostly inactive. The only education they receive is through the curricula as stipulated by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The existing system of schools insufficiently activates students, which is why it is not surprising that they see the school as a stereotype institution, which does not give them the requisite knowledge and skills suited to the needs of modern society and life. Associates of "Sretenje" thought that the young have the energy, creativity and desire for change and that they can become active part of the society and contribute to visible changes. In that respect they organised a *Volunteering Centre Sretenje Požega*, aiming to form an unpaid employment stock exchange and mobilise system institutions and potential volunteers to undergo required education for a different human resources management where new jobs would be created according to the model of the Volunteering Centre of Belgrade. Consequently, they have successfully established the second Volunteering Centre in Serbia and the unpaid Employment Stock Exchange, formed data base for institutions/organisations willing to undergo education and hire volunteers, as well as a data base of volunteers that passed education on the method and interests of volunteer work and linked them on the local level. They carried out a number of actions from ecology and humanitarian actions for resolving social problems in the local community.

They encountered various problems: closed system institutions, lack of knowledge on the need for volunteering with respect to recognising the interest which both the system institutions as well as potential volunteers have in the volunteering, leaders in institutions unwilling to accept new ways of functioning, etc. Aware that volunteerism is something quite new in our society, they organised

media campaigns in which they promoted volunteering, lobbied with all mentioned protagonists to join in the project activities, used personal contacts they had in institutions and used the authority of donors active in the region at that time.

In the implementation of this project UG "Sretenje" upgraded its status in the local community and became known for its activities in Zlatibor District and West Serbia. In the course of this project exceptional cooperation was established with local and regional media: TV Požega, Radio Požega and Radio Luna.

Based on the Volunteering Centre established within UG Sretenje Požega and data bases on volunteers and institutions which hired volunteers, is planning to copy the model and experiences acquired in project implementation to the neighbouring municipalities of Užice, Arilje, and Guča. By promoting voluntarism and its importance for the development of the civil society, these Centres mobilise the young to volunteer and thus acquire experiences in communications, team work and recognise functions of institutions and their role in local communities. The project was carried out with the help of secondary schools in the mentioned 4 towns, local non-governmental organisations and institutions in which the young ones started their volunteering work.

Their success with both projects includes:

Workshops on volunteers attended by 650 secondary school students from 15 to 18 years of age.

Implementing this project they managed to mobilise a number of institutions in four Municipalities in launching job-openings for volunteer positions, as well as making a number of institutions/organisations hire volunteers for specific jobs and tasks.

They managed to mobilise a large number of citizens to join in project activities and start resolving some of observed problems regarding environmental protection, social problems and human rights.

Institutions agreed to engage volunteers and thus make their services available to the local community.

Representatives of local authorities accepted to hire volunteers for specific jobs and tasks in the Municipal Assembly of Požega.

Data bases on institutions and volunteers were established, whereas unpaid employment stock exchange has become a part of the life in local communities.



From projects that imply **cooperation with local institutions and services**, we shall mention the following:

Human-Urban Network, HUM, and Psycho-Social Counselling Service HUM from Belgrade cooperated with the following institutions in the implementation of the project entitled *Facing Traumas*– Student Outpatient Clinic, Institute for Mother and Child Care “Dr. Vukan Čupić” and Health Centre Palilula.

The aim of this project was to establish a network of services and institutions that deal with mental health and social policy and to additionally educate their staff according to the Tavistock method of

work with consequences of trauma and stress. Staff of the mentioned services was included in the education, as well as employees of non-governmental organisations that deal with endangered population groups (the young, women, minorities, refugees, disabled).

The project was carried out in the territory of several Belgrade Municipalities – Palilula, Novi Beograd, Zemun, Bežanija and Vračar. Numerous problems were encountered in the course of implementation: first established cooperation with the Municipality of Novi Beograd was severed because of exceeded deadlines and undertaken obligations. Later on it continued to directly cooperate with the mentioned institutions. The project met with excellent public response. The achieved results were the following:

- ❖ *A sound, Serbia-specific training programme devised for psycho-social counselling for reducing trauma and consequences, reducing family violence.*
- ❖ *Psycho-social counselling centre opened.*
- ❖ *The need for psycho-social approach defined and conclusion reached that these are not large, but growing with time.*
- ❖ *A high level of stress and potential trans-generation transmission of stress learned patterns within family, as well as cultural climate determined.*
- ❖ *Presence of true knowledge hunger established, as well as for participation in the «community based approach», but lethargy as a consequence of PTSP still highly inhibiting factor.*
- ❖ *A team of highly professionalized experts formed (specialist in neuropsychology, prevention, psychotherapeutics of different modalities).*

- ❖ *Training was organised for 24 new psycho-social counsellors, as well as for 94 secondary educated psycho-social counsellors.*

Organisation Oasis from Belgrade implemented the project *Partnership for Health* in cooperation with the Health Voždovac. These organisations signed a Memorandum on Partnership in 2004 and developed an extremely high-level cooperation.

The project aimed at the promotion of health protection system for the Roma population on the territory of Voždovac Municipality. In the first project stage, staff of the Health Centre and *Oasis* attended education in the field of human resource management organised by Oxfam – project donor. After this field teams were formed which included doctors, nurse and a representative of organisation Oasis, who started identifying health problems of the Roma population in the local community. In the second project stage field teams worked directly in the field in the Roma settlements. This type of cooperation continued after the project was completed. Members of *Oasis* and staff of the Health Centre, members of the field teams won high reputation of the Roma population. Enviably results were achieved:

- ❖ *A large number of lectures in the field of primary health care was held in the Roma settlements,*
- ❖ *High percentage of women visited a gynaecologist,*
- ❖ *Number of jaundice cases was reduced,*
- ❖ *98% of Roma children vaccinated,*
- ❖ *A large number of mother attended education on the feeding and caring for infants,*
- ❖ *Prevention and protection against AIDS increased,*
- ❖ *A large number of lectures on sex trafficking held.*



Organisations which got **purpose specific financial assistance** for the implementation of specific activities achieved this through the following projects:

Association of Citizens Kwart from Kraljevo, in cooperation with the Centre for Social Work and modest financial aid of the local self-government organised workshops for non-violent communication for 20 young people from different organisations, political parties, the media.

This organisation mostly deals with education and development of the youth in Kraljevo. Unfortunately, it did not have the numbers on the presence of violence and measurable indicators of poor communication at all levels, but these data are hard to obtain anyhow. Nevertheless, dealing with this problem it realised that violence was very present in people's daily lives, so that they became aware of the need to resolve this problem in an organised way. This problem is rarely treated in our community, especially not in this way.

The organisation turned to the Centre for Social Work in Kraljevo for professional assistance in educating five young people – future trainers in the field of non-violent communication. Project objective was to enable groups of 20 young people each to resolve communication problems, as well acquire skills in using the non-violent communication. This project did not aim for quantitatively measurable results.

Environmental Protection Civil Movement from Novi Pazar, with the financial assistance of the Public Utility Enterprise "Čistoća" implemented the project *Youth Ecological Movement*. At the beginning they focused on the cleaning of green areas, and all subsequent activities followed spontaneously. Project itself aimed at encouraging the young to take active part in decision-making regarding the resolution of ecological problems: "Our objective was to have the young ones have their say in decision-making of the competent authorities, to involve them and other local population in the implementation of activities that originated from the Youth Ecological Centre, such as cleaning of the park and green areas, implementation of the water protection campaign."

They achieved this objective through activities that contributed to the exceptional response of the young and other citizens. Forming the Ecological Centre was the first activity of this project. This was followed by media presentation that helped the young turn out and join in the project activities, primarily the water protection ecological campaign, then organisation of the ecological waves on the local radio station. Young people were particularly interested in taking part in seminars. They succeeded in mobilising older citizens to join in the cleaning of green areas. They achieved their objectives just by good will and persistence. That was their mover and strength.

The project directly involved altogether 116 young people in the implementation of more than 3,000 activities. The project met with great support of the local media. The following reported on their activities: TV Jedinstvo, RTV Novi Pazar and Radio Stari grad. As their largest achievement they see the very fact that they succeeded in mobilising the young people to join in the environmental protection

actions, and to raise the elderly citizens with the participation and activities of the young.

NGO Friends of Brodarevo, with the financial assistance of the local self-government organised a *Public Speaking Evening in Brodarevo* in the premises of the local library and in cooperation with the Teacher's College from Užice. The objective of this project was to initiate some cultural activity in a small place that has no cultural events, but great interest of citizens for such gatherings. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Teacher's College from Užice, whose professor of literature Miomir Milinković, Ph.D. held a very successful public speaking evening with his students. The Municipal Assembly of Prijepolje directly helped project implementation with funds and a large number of attendants were delighted by this event.

- The news was reported in the daily papers.
- Several citizens introduced themselves at the Public Speaking Evening – literary authors for whom this participation was an encouragement to continue their work.

Non-Smoking Educational Centre – RP from Kragujevac in cooperation with the Secretariat for Health and Social Policy of the Town Assembly of Kragujevac issued the *Non-Smoking Bulletin, NEC*, and organise a round table on the subject of "Non-Smoking and Serbian Transition".

"Non-Smoking Educational Centre-RP" was founded with the aim of studying, informing, educating and winning recognition for non-

smokers (persons who do not consume tobacco and tobacco products), developing awareness on the harmful effect of smoking on non-smokers and collecting aid for socially endangered non-smokers, institutions and organisations which treat people affected by smoking related diseases. In order to fulfil its mission and objectives "Non-Smoking Educational Centre-RP" studies, gathers and processes scientific and professional literature on the harmful effect of smoking on the health of people; publishes books and other publications on the harmful effect of smoking; organises professional gatherings in this field; collects aid and distributes it to socially endangered non-smokers, institutions and organisations which treat people affected by smoking related diseases and promotes the culture of non-smoking, healthy way of life, sports and recreation. One of the projects which is in line with its mission and contributes to the achievement of their objectives is publication of the *Non-Smoking Bulletin*. The objective was to involve the public and NGOs in the resolution of the problem of smoking in public places, as well engage NGO representatives in these actions. In the implementation of these activities it encountered various problems – from the lack of money to the change in the structure of the authorities in the Municipality. It resolved them the best way it could. Wherever it could do something without the money, it did so or postponed the publishing of the bulletin. When the authorities changed, it informed the new authorities in writing that they needed to complete the project, requested a meeting with the new town expert for social policy, informed him of the final stages of the project and convinced in the necessity for the town to support its completion.

The media devoted their full attention to project coverage. The organisation was the guest of many local media – RTV Kragujevac,

Channel 9 and the weekly "Svetlost". It achieved the following results:

- ❖ *Before the Republican Law Prohibiting Smoking in Public Places was adopted by the Municipal Assembly use of tobacco at meetings and press conferences was prohibited. Now a number of newly formed and unspecialised organisations are also actively engaged in treating the problem of smoking.*



Organisations which cooperated with the local self-government by being given **specific space for use** (difference should be made between space given for longer period and one time use) achieved this through the following projects:

Humanitarian Group Aurora from Bor closely cooperated with many Bor institutions in the implementation of two closely linked projects - *Mosaic Centre for Daily Occupational Activities of Disabled Persons* and *Town Same for All: Municipality* (which was a partner in the project), Centre for Social Work, Health Centre; as well as official associations of disabled persons: Association of Multiple Sclerosis Patients, Association of Deaf and Persons with Impaired Hearing, Association of the Blind, Association of Disabled Children.

A new Centre was formed, which did not previously exist in the town and which rallies persons with all types of disabilities, irrespective of the age structure. A team of experts takes part in the

work of the Centre: neurologist, psychologist, sociologist, social worker, physiotherapist, special education therapist, the Centre host from among the disabled, two teachers, administrative clerk, driver. The Centre was open 11 to 12 hours a day, except on Saturdays when it worked for only four hours and Sundays when it was closed. A data base was created in the Centre and all beneficiaries had a file opened. The Centre had a doctor surgery, a hall for therapeutical activities, a PC room, kitchen and a playroom.

The Municipality provided space and secured funds for renting some 160 m² of space. The Department for Economic and Social Activities compared the data base with the one from our Centre and sorted it out. The administrative clerk of that Department was a person working in our Centre.

During the project an open studio was organised on the local TV, two round tables in the Municipality of Bor and two radio programmes on the local radio.

These activists are very pleased with the results achieved, namely:

- ❖ *The Mosaic Centre was opened starting in 2004 and is working to this day with the same purpose.*
- ❖ *All that has been done in the town during project implementation (swing-gates, sound traffic lights) are being maintained.*

Organisation "Smile" from Vrbas: in addition to several projects treating problems of the young, this organisation also implemented the project *Youth Centre as a Line of Cooperation*, in cooperation with the local self-government in Vrbas, which gave the space for the work of the Youth Centre, red Cross and the Centre for Social Work.

Project objective was to empower the young people to take active part in life and creation of the local community. This objective was achieved through a number of activities, such as: education and strengthening the young, preparing them and assisting in the implementation of their own actions, coordination meetings, etc. The project included some 200 secondary school students and about 20 their teachers from Vrbas. This indirectly influenced their parents and peers, as well as broader community of Vrbas. The assumed problems were prevented by the way in which all activities were organised, whereas recognition of future problems influenced the conceptualisation of future activities.

The local media covered their entire work. The results were numerous:

- ❖ *Two secondary school parliaments were established.*
- ❖ *Founding of the civil students' parliament is under preparation.*
- ❖ *Municipal boards for the prevention of drug abuse, population policy and reproduction health have been formed as a consequence of the specific projects that were implemented.*
- ❖ *A coordination body dealing with the increased child protection against abuse and neglect has been established (in cooperation with CSR).*

Open Prospects from Subotica worked at promoting the Poverty Reduction Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (SSS) through the project: *Reducing Poverty through Local Development – role of the local self-government.*

Open Prospects took part in the Advisory Board for Civil Society during the drafting of the Poverty Reduction Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, and later on decided to continue their work at promoting the SSS on the local level. It organised a round table with presentations and discussions for officials of the local self-government, local social institutions, non-governmental organisations and the media. The local press carried two reports on this event and the local TV made two slots about this. But, despite all this the achieved results are not quite satisfactory. Namely, in the period after the presentation and round table there was some interest of the local self-government officials and leaders for this subject and later on they accepted various activities that followed as part of subsequent projects (e.g. marking the World Poverty Day). However, the very awareness of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy was not enough and did not contribute for this document to be accepted as a starting point for various other development documents and programmes.

Centre for research in Politics – Argument Prijepolje cooperated with the local self-government in the organization of the project *Multiethnic Tolerance and Cooperation of Citizens and Local Authorities*. It was given a space for public debate and officials of the local self-government attended as participants. Since Prijepolje is a multiethnic municipality the organisers wanted to demonstrate that the multiethnic character of Prijepolje was something to be treasured and promoted through joint cooperation of citizens and local authorities. They therefore organised a public debate on the subject of *Multiethnic Tolerance and Cooperation of Citizens and Local Authorities*, which was held in the Culture Centre and attended by participants from the local self-government, non-governmental

organizations, political parties and religious communities of Prijepolje. All the local media reported on this event and "Argument" from Prijepolje mentions this as a result which gave citizens an opportunity to cooperate with the local authorities.

Appendix – Contacts with all organisations included in this analysis

VOJVODINA

1. **Novi Sad School of Journalism NNŠ, Novi Sad**, Zmaj Jovina 4; Contact: Elena Popović, website: www.novinarska-skola.org.yu
2. **Epicentre, Novi Sad**, Veljka Petrovica 6; Contact: Đorđe Mojic, e-mail: ink@eunet.yu
3. **Osmeh (Smile), Vrbas**, Maršala Tita 141; Contact: Slavica Matijašević, e-mail: m Slavica@yahoo.com
4. **PAAD, Centre for Socio-Cultural Excellence, Novi Bečej**, Petra Drapsina 19; Contact: Saša Dujin, website: www.paad.org.yu
5. **Hera, Bačka Topola**; Contact: Bačka 1, 24 300 Bačka Topola, Gordana Dozet, Vera Stojanović, 024/714-140, 063/8252-378, hera@tippnet.co.yu
6. **Women's Forum, Mali Idoš**; Contact: Udarnička 28, 24 321 Mali Idoš, Gordana Radulović, Eržebet Zidai, 063/8758-284, 063/8856-226, zsidai@tippnet.co.yu
7. **Open Prospects, Subotica**; Contact: Limska 12, 24000 Subotica, Verona Molnar, 024/551736, 064/2539343, 024/557001, e-mail: verona@eunet.yu
8. **New Culture, Novi Sad**, Preradovićeva 123/231, 21132 Petrovaradin, Novi Sad, City of Novi Sad, Milan Vračar, phone/fax: +38121433171

CENTRAL SERBIA

1. **Regional Centre for Civil Action «Lingva», Kraljevo**, Vuka Karadzica No. 14; Contact: Radovan Milićević, website: www.forumnvo.org.yu, www.zamislisrbiju.org

2. **Association of Citizens KVART, , Kraljevo**, Karađorđeva 73; Contact: Vladimir Petrović, website: www.kvart.org.yu
3. **Non-Smoking Educational Centre, Dragobraca-Kragujevac**, Igumana Pajsija 10; Contact: Milisav Pajević, e-mail necorg@netster.com
4. **Roma Information Centre (RIC), Kragujevac**, Atinska 81/3; Contact: Rozalija Ilić, website: www.ric.org.yu
5. **Millennium, Kragujevac**; Contact: Vlada Paunović, e-mail: ngo@eunet.yu
6. **Association of the Roma Solidarity, Kragujevac**; Contact: Ratka Mitrovića 31, 34 209 Maršic-Kragujevac, Bogoljub Đorđević, Milan Šerifović, 034/381-242, darkora@ptt.yu
7. **Ecological Movement „Bela breza“, Kruševac**, Contact: Kosančićeva 6, 37 000 Kruševac, Viktor Domjan, 037/430-966, belabreza@yahoo.com
8. **Eco Club „Zeleni putokazi“ (Green Signposts), Raška**; Contact: Dušana Dražovića 33, 36 350 Raška, Zoran Simović, Zoran Pokimica, 064/2962-652, 064/2122-826, zoljas@ptt.yu
9. **Tree, Kragujevac**, Svetozara Markovića 10, 34000 Kragujevac, Kragujevac, City of Kragujevac, Milan Petrović, stablokg@ptt.yu

WEST SERBIA

1. **Human Rights Committee, Valjevo**, Karađorđeva 117 (organisation seat) and Dušanova 22 (work office); Contact: Aleksandar Milijašević, website: www.odbor.org.yu
2. **Society of the Roma Youth, Valjevo**
3. **Sretenje Association of Citizens, Požega**, Nemanjina 12; Contact: Zdenka Kovačević, website: www.sretenje.org.yu
4. **K-TOWN GROUP, Kosjerić**, Kneza Alekese Popovića 46; Contact: Predrag Diković, website: www.ktowngroup.org.yu
5. **Svetionik (Lighthouse) Association of Citizens, Loznica**, Alekse Stojnića 25; Contact: Aleksandra Gajić, website: www.nvo-loznica.net
6. **Užice Centre for Child Rights**, Jug Bogdanova 19; Contact: Radovan Cicvarić, e-mail: ciler@eunet.yu
7. **Užice Centre for Human Rights and Democracy**, Vojvode Putnika bb; Contact: Brankica Jeremić, e-mail: uzcentar@infosky.net , uzcentar@cepeline.net
8. **Informal Citizens Group „Iskrice“, Loznica**; Contact: Bulevar Dositeja Obradovića 58, 15 300 Loznica, Nada Đurić, Ivana Vujić, 064/2380-451, 064/2908-720, iskraloz@yahoo.com , www.nvo-loznica.net

- 9. Association of the Paraplegics of the Macva District, Šabac,** V. Brane No.2 , 15000 Šabac, Slaviša Savić, 015/320224, upsabac@ptt.yu

EAST SERBIA

- 1. Citizens Association-Humanitarian Group, Aurora, Bor,** Bobijeva 72; Contact: Radovanovic Suzana, e-mail: suzanar@ptt.yu
- 2. Good Tree, Zaječar,** Vojvode Mišića 25; Kursulina 13-III/5; Contact: Milanović Lidija, e-mail: zivetiza@ptt.yu
- 3. Gurgusovac Educational Association GEA, Knjaževac;** Contact: Branka Radičevića 14/19, 19 300 Knjaževac, Saša Marinković, Tatjana Aleksić, 019/733-571, Brr442704@eunet.yu
- 4. The Power of Village, Knjaževac,** Ćirila i Metodija 13, 19350 Knjaževac, Milutin Milutinović, 019/734 842, litumin77@yahoo.com

SANDŽAK

- 1. Human Rights Centre Priboj,** Veljka Vlahovica 16; Contact: Radojka Colovic, e-mail: r_colovic@yahoo.com
- 2. Centre for Research in Politics, Argument, Prijepolje,** Izeta Čavića br.36; Contact: Slobodan Martinović, website: www.bitovik.org.yu
- 3. Environmental Protection Civil Movement, Novi Pazar,** Hadžet 59; Contact: Kladničanin Fahrudin, e-mail: kladicanin@hotmail.com
- 4. NGO „Prijatelji Brodareva“ (Friends of Brodarevo),** Contact: Esad Kurbegovic, website: www.brodarevo.info
- 5. Civil Association „Destinikon“, Sjenica;** Contact: Nova bb, PO Box 38, 36 310 Sjenica, Milena Pećanin, Salih Saračević, 063/661-331, destinik@verat.net
- 6. Eco Club „Zeleni putokazi“(Green Signpost), Raška,** Dušana Dražovića 33 36 350 Raška, Zoran Simović, zoljas@ptt.yu, 064 2962652
- 7. Impulse, Tutin,** IBARSKA 16, 36 320 TUTIN, DŽENETA AGOVIĆ, IMPULS@VERAT.NET, 063 607 888

SOUTH SERBIA

- 1. Film Publik Art, Niš,** Bul. Dr.Zorana Đinđica 6-8; Contact: Miomir Magdevski, website: www.filmpublikart.net

2. **Forum for the Roma Initiative, Leskovac**, settlement «Slavka Zlatanovića», Devata Str. 2; Contact: Kurtić Tane, e-mail: macad@info-net.co.yu
3. **Scouts' Unit „Josif Pančić“, Niš**, Trg Svetog Save 31b, 18 000 Niš, Goran Ivanović, dragan@pancic.org, 064 166 2399

BELGRADE

1. **Human-Urban Network (HUM) and Psycho-Social Counselling Service HUM**, Omladinskih Brigada 48/3, Novi Beograd; Contact: Evica Busarac, website: <http://humnaourb.tripod.com>
2. **SOS Phone Line for Women and Children Victims of Violence**, Masarikova 5/XII, Contact: Lada Protić, e-mail: ladap@drenik.net
3. **SOS Phone Line for Women and Children Victims of Violence - Grocka**, Bulevar Oslobođenja No.16, Grocka; Contact: Biljana Branković, e-mail: brank038@eunet.yu
4. **Dunavski venac (The Danube Wreath), Borča**, Ivana Milutinovića 10a, 11 211 Borča, Belgrade, Dragan Mladenović, 011 33 22 535, tasagagi@eunet.yu
5. **Roma Centre, Obrenovac**, Vojvode Mišića 189, 11 500 Obrenovac, Belgrade, Dejan Cvetković, 011/87-23-144, cajna@absolutok.net