



Centar
lokalne
demokratije
LDA

Activity Report

2013

Preface

The Local Democracy Agencies (LDA) have been established in the Western Balkans by the Congress of the Council of Europe since 1992, as a support program to strengthen local democracy, foster respect for human rights and further sustainable development. Today there are 15 active Local Democracy Agencies based in Western Balkans, South Caucasus and North Africa coordinated by ALDA, on top of 3 LDAs - Operational partners, based in Croatia.

All LDAs function as self-sustaining, locally registered NGOs, but they are different from other local NGOs because of the international framework they operate in. Indeed, the LDAs develop partnerships with local authorities and NGOs from all over Europe giving to the whole network direct access to an international framework through the support of ALDA, the Council of Europe and the European Union.



Local Democracy Centre

LDA Central and Southern Serbia

Local Democracy Centre LDA Central and Southern Serbia (LDA CSS) was established in 2001 under the auspices of the Council of Europe and officially registered as Serbian NGO in 2003.

LDA CSS aims to contribute to democratic, social, economic and cultural development of local communities in Eastern, Southern and Central Serbia thru capacity building programs based on the principles of active citizenship and establishment of concrete mechanisms for citizens' participation in democratic, social, economic and cultural development of their communities.

In line with this, LDA CSS implements: 1) Activities at the local level; 2) Activities at the international level, through the European Association for Local Democracy ALDA and Balkan Network for Local Democracy BNLD.

Activities in 2013

"ZADRUGARICE ", ESTABLISHING WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE

Establishing a women's cooperative in Niš is a joint initiative of the Heinrich Böll Foundation for Southeastern Europe (GER) and LDACSS. This initiative is the continuation of the programme for empowerment of women that LDACSS implements through various projects and with different partners and donors since 2004.

The first activity of this particular project, after assembling a group of women with business ideas, was a training "Economic Empowerment of Women," that took place in LDACSS office in November 2013. Legal experts spoke about the national legislation framework of cooperative and founders of Mattera Mesto, Novi Sad (SRB) and Design Incubator Nova Iskra, Belgrade (SRB) presented their experiences and practices. During the following months our group of women, with the support from LDACSS and Heinrich Böll Foundation, worked on defining the concept of the cooperative and operational teams. Establishing the women's cooperative is still ongoing process and is currently in a phase of partner search to further support involved women and development of their cooperative as an open space for alternative art, cultural and educational programs.

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"LOCAL COALITIONS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT"

LDACSS is a part of this multiannual project that is being implemented by the Association of Local Democracy Agencies ALDA in partnership with LDA Niksic (MN), PALGO Centre (SRB) and LDA Subotica (SRB). Project is financed by the European Union thru IPA 2011 Civil Society Facility Montenegro Programme.

It aims to promote good practices in cooperation between local authorities and civil society organizations, as well as to foster their active involvement in the process of EU integration of Montenegro. Activities, that include capacity building trainings and a sub granting program, are being implemented in several Montenegrin municipalities: Kotor, Niksic, Bijelo Polje, Rozaje,

Danilovgrad and Ulcinj. LDACSS, as one of two partner LDAs from Serbia, is involved in coordination of sub granting scheme. During 2013, after the completion of the call for project proposals for CSOs from aforementioned municipalities, a comprehensive evaluation process has been undertaken and the best eight project proposals have been selected. The implementation of the granted projects is expected to start in 2014 and LDACSS will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation processes.

”WHAT’S UP EUROPE? BREAKING THE WALL AGAIN!”, A YOUTH EXCHANGE AND ARTISTIC PROJECT

Conseil Municipal de la Jeunesse d’Epinay-sur-Seine (FR) was a partner to LDACSS for the project of intercultural exchange that brought together 16 French and Serbian youngsters with fewer opportunities in Niš for 10 days during the month of August 2013. Project was financed by the European Union thru Youth in Action programme and Municipality Epina-sur-Seine (FR) and supported by the City of Niš (SRB), Nisville Jazz Festival, French Cultural Institute Niš and French Embassy in Belgrade.

The main theme of the project was the question of tolerance and prejudices in Europe today but approached through various artistic public activities (theatre, pictures, dance, etc.) that engaged not only the participants of the exchange but also the citizens of Niš. Besides this, activities included exchanges and debates about common stereotypes, beliefs, points of view on Europe and different conceptions of European citizenship. Art direction for the project has been done, voluntarily, by international artists Nicolas Jargić and Héléna Bertaud.

”INITIATIVE FOR MONITORING SOCIAL POLICY”

Project “Initiative for monitoring social policy” is jointly implemented by the Coalition of Civil Society Focal Points (KOCD), coordinated by the Civic Initiatives, Belgrade (SRB) and supported by the Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade.

As part of this project LDACSS, as the local partner organization, did the analysis of local legal framework relevant for foster care and intersectoral services for children in Niš. Through the pilot survey LDACSS also collected basic information on the current state of implementation of these services in practice. The results and recommendations arising from the aforementioned analysis and the survey were integrated into the final national report that was presented to the members of the National Assembly of Serbia. A public hearing on the topic of one year of implementation of the Law on social protection, as the final event of the project, took place at the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia in January 2013.

”FUTURE FIT FOR CHILDREN”, ADVOCATING ESTABLISHMENT OF A FUND FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION OF CHILDREN FROM VULNERABLE SOCIAL GROUPS

“Future Fit for Children” is a project led by CSO Open Club(SRB) and supported through programme “Civil Society Forward” by Institute for Civil Society – ISC and USAID.

Throughout 2013 LDACSS, as the partner organization to Open Club, provided support for the implementation of all project activities that took place in Niš. LDACSS organized a focus group with parents of children from socially vulnerable groups, presentation of a theater play ‘Žrtvić Family’ created by a group of youngsters from Niš within the project and a public panel with main local stakeholders to publicly present the initiative for establishing Fund for social inclusion of children.

“NIŠ IN MY HEART”, STRENGTHENING VOLUNTARY NIS GREETER SERVICE

During 2013 the City of Niš has decided to support further development of LDACSS’s volunteer service, Niš Greeters, established during previous year with the support of Serbian Ministry of Youth and Sport and in partnership with Tourist Organization of Niš.

With the aim to strengthen this service further so that it becomes sustainable in a long run, project activities included forming and training a new, second, group of volunteers, developing and exercising some new tourist tours through the city and surrounding area to offer to the visitors of Niš and further promoting the service. As additional, voluntary activity, a part of LDACSS office has been redecorated for the purposes of Greeter service. In the meantime Niš Greeter service has officially become the 55th member of the Global Greeter Network and successfully started functioning independently.

YES TO EVS!

Throughout 2013 LDACSS has implemented five EVS projects as sending or hosting organization with partners from Portugal - Associação Mais Cidadania, Slovakia - YMCA na Slovensku, Slovenia - Mladinski Center BIT and RIC Bela krajina and Spain - Casa Eslava. All these projects have been supported by the European Union through Youth in Action programme.

Our EVS volunteers have worked on a variety of activities, from organizing a short movies projection and human rights discussion sessions, giving some French language support through French conversation classes, supporting children with fewer opportunities throughout different workshops to running a series of theater workshops and performing a street play.

EVS program is a great opportunity for every youngster to live a new intercultural experience. With the aim to offer that opportunity to as many young people as possible, led by Jana from Slovakia and Marion from France, LDACSS has organized “Open Tuesdays” where all those interested in doing EVS could come, get all information and hear first hand experiences on the EVS program. Besides explaining more in details what is EVS, Jana and Marion gave advices about motivation letter and CV redaction. As another source of information and support to those interested in EVS, our volunteers ran an EVS blog on our website (www.ldacss.tumblr.com/tagged/EVS_blog).

“FIGHTING UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGH NETWORKING FOR YOUTH - FUNNY”

During 2013 LDACSS took part in the joint initiative of 20 associations from 17 countries in the enlarged Europe and its neighborhood to tackle common problem of unemployment of young people. The hosting organization of the international networking event was Azerbaijani NGO Alliance for Municipality Development (BINA), while Association of Local Democracy Agencies was in charge of the overall coordination. Project was financed by the European Union through Youth in Action programme.

Main activities took place during a 5-day meeting in Baku and included information sessions on work opportunities for youth for almost 40 youth workers, meetings with relevant stakeholders in the job market field and partnership building activities with development of future joint initiatives.

“WORDS TOO STRONG”, AWARENESS OF EVERYDAY DISCRIMINATION

For the third year in a row Center for Development of Civil Resources (SRB) and LDACSS organized open contest and a photo exhibition "Words Too Strong". Activity is supported by the National Endowment for Democracy NED.

The aim of this contest and accompanying exhibition is to awake the public understanding and awareness on human rights, discrimination and different forms of hate speech, which are, unfortunately, often present in everyday life in Serbia. Theme of this year's contest, where more than twenty artists from Southeastern Serbia participated, was the hate speech present on the streets of our towns. Exhibition was curated and opened by the renowned photographer Goran Švabić.

"HABLA ESPANOL?", SUPPORTING YOUTH INITIATIVES

During 2013 LDACSS continued to support initiatives of young people. One of those was the initiative from Andrijana, recently graduated Professor of Spanish language, to start a programme to promote Spanish language and culture in the city of Niš. LDA supported Andrijana to define components of the programme, spread the word about it and with all the necessary logistics. Programme was successfully launched and sprung a great interest in the public. Today it continues its life as independent cultural and educational program promoting Hispanic culture.

LDA Central and Southern Serbia

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