

Promoting community-based initiatives for social inclusion in the Western Balkans

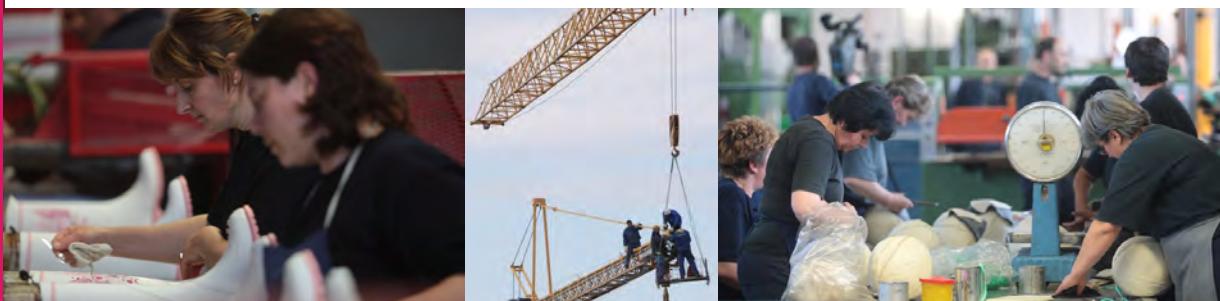


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SOLIDAR is a European network of 56 NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide.

SOLIDAR lobbies the EU and international institutions in three primary areas: social affairs, international cooperation and education.

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FOREWORD

The European Commission defines social inclusion as “a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life, and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live”.

On the basis of this European definition, the following briefing paper advocates for increased **investment in the civil society facility under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) for community-based initiatives and community-based activities to counteract the exclusion from economic life, social services, and social networks and civic participation** that can affect all members of society, not just those who are already disadvantaged and marginalised.

In the recent past, social welfare reforms in the Western Balkans have tended to be a series of short-term, crisis-oriented solutions rarely forming a coherent strategy for the whole policy field. This ‘lack of coherence’ shows that a new institutional framework is needed to create an enabling environment that coordinates the supply of services and entitlements at local and regional levels, adjusting them to local needs and involving socially excluded people (and the public at large) in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the system and its outcomes. In this way, the barriers to participation and access of resources and opportunities can be removed, and attitudes can be changed.

Since 1948, SOLIDAR’s members have been contributing to a social Europe through their daily work as civil society organisations and social service providers. These organisations work together on both European and international level to answer the current challenge: how to reconcile the move towards economically competitive societies in a globalised world whilst also providing adequate social protection for citizens.

Currently, **Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund South East Europe** in cooperation with local NGOs like **CLARD Kosovo, IDC Serbia, EDC Serbia, DELFIN Montenegro, LIR Bosnia and Herzegovina and SMART Croatia** are showing the value of undertaking tangible community-based initiatives against the exclusion of vulnerable people from economic life, social services, and social networks and civic participation. Furthermore the cases included in this paper highlight the need to improve the capacity of community-based initiatives and organisations to meet local needs and build positive links between the economic, social and civic aspects of local development.

The civil society facility under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) could increase its support for building social and human capital on the local level in the Western Balkans, to strengthen the local ownership of integration, which is a critical factor for creating the necessary conditions for social inclusion to truly take root and to promote local ownership for the European integration process.

Together, we can be a force for change!



Josef Weidenholzer
SOLIDAR President



Conny Reuter
SOLIDAR Secretary General

RECOMMENDATIONS

Social exclusion can affect all members of society, not just those who are already disadvantaged and marginalised. Three dimensions of social exclusion can be identified: exclusion from economic life, exclusion from social services and exclusion from social networks and civic participation.

In order to promote economic, social and civic development, which is needed to meet the requirements of the EU *Social Acquis*, the following recommendations need to be taken into consideration:

1. **Link all social welfare system stakeholders** together at the local and regional level and strengthen their participation in the decision-making process with a view to developing cooperation between public, private and NGO sectors.
2. **Strengthen the capacity of community-based initiatives and organisations** to better identify and meet local needs and build effective positive links between the economic, social and civic aspects of local development
3. **Develop an institutional and legal framework for social economy organisations**, which is needed to better coordinate the supply of services and entitlements, planning and adjusting it to local needs and involving potential and actual beneficiaries (and the public at large) in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the system and its outcomes, preferably in close cooperation with and support of local authorities in charge for the delivery of social services.
4. **Improve the quality of social services** building on existing skills and providing opportunities for people to learn through experience as well as increasing people's awareness and confidence to enable them to participate more fully in the society.
5. **Extend the range of available social welfare services** and focus on specific barriers to social inclusion, such as unemployment, lack of or limited education and barriers to participation and access to resources and opportunities.
6. **Strengthen the capacity of local municipalities** to develop a planned approach to meeting needs and ensuring a more appropriate balance between community-based and institutional forms of care.
7. **Ensure the participation of citizens in local decision making processes** allowing decisions to be taken by people who know the areas the decisions will affect.

In order to succeed in effectively combating social exclusion and achieving the above-mentioned recommendations, it is crucial to increase support of the civil society facility under the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) for community-based initiatives and community-based organisations. These organisations are carrying out small but tangible initiatives at the local level but face chronic problems in raising funding.

Part I: Social Inclusion – Focus On Social Services In The Western Balkans

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CIVIC EXCLUSION

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) publication “Beyond transition – towards inclusive societies”¹ (May 2011), **human development** is about people’s well-being beyond income and people’s ability to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals which they have reason to value; and to engage in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. **Social exclusion** goes beyond a poverty concept mainly taking into account economic and material aspects, but is extended to include social rights, such as the right to work, housing, and access to health and education. It thus includes aspects of citizenship and social justice. A feeling of inferiority and alienation is also often associated. Social exclusion means a lack of opportunities and an inability to participate in all aspects of social life. Further, the **social inclusion approach** acknowledges the need to offer those outside mainstream society a greater say as a means to achieve well-being that is considered normal. Thus, social inclusion is about the ‘redistribution of social opportunities’ among all segments of the population.²

Social exclusion in turn can affect any member of society, not just those who are disadvantaged and marginalised. Social exclusion is broken into three different categories: exclusion from economic life, exclusion from social services and exclusion from social networks and civic participation.

Economic exclusion marginalises individuals in the distribution of economic resources, this hinders the development of people’s opportunities, skills and competences that help to answer a person’s needs and exercise their rights, enabling them to make choices to attain the living standards and quality of life that they value. Economic exclusion limits people’s access to the labour, financial and housing markets, as well as to goods and services. This leads not only to income poverty, but also to reduced access to services such as education, health care and social insurance, and often results in

social exclusion and a degradation or loss of skills and competences. However, participation in economic life does not always lead directly to economic inclusion. Therefore one of the most important conditions of inclusion is access to decent work because it can lead to improvements in other areas of life.

Social services offer a wide range of opportunities which are critical for human and personal development. Like employment, education and health care services are as important for social inclusion as social protection, access to housing and basic infrastructure. Exclusion from social services refers not only to whether such services are available and at what level of quality, but also to accessibility and affordability by different population groups. For instance, social protection systems, including social assistance, social insurance benefits, social services, social work and counselling services, can be crucial sources of last-resort support. Thus, social services can help deal with the consequences of exclusion and can also work against some of the drivers of exclusion, such as extreme poverty and exclusion from the labour market or poor working conditions.³

Exclusion from civic and social life and networks refers to the denied participation in different aspects of political, cultural and civic activity such as engagement in the electoral process, freedom of expression and association and access to justice and information.

Social exclusion in the Western Balkans is relatively high compared to the EU, but in Kosovo it is a majority condition, experienced by a wide range of people across many dimensions of life. Exclusion – from economic life, social services or civic engagement – is a critical development challenge for Kosovo that considerably erodes the full contribution of its people as economically active, healthy and educated citizens.

The regional UNDP report concludes that **economic growth has not always translated into increased job opportunities, improved social services or greater opportunities for**

¹ <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/BCBE0C20-F203-1EE9-B455A13AB9956F84>

² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) publication “Beyond transition – towards inclusive societies” (May 2011)

³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) publication “Beyond transition – towards inclusive societies” (May 2011)

civic participation in the Western Balkans.⁴

In fact, large parts of the population have not been able to adapt to the new demands of the labour market while exclusion is strongly influenced by prejudices. In addition, discouraged workers (particularly women and middle aged persons) have been forced into jobs in the informal sector, which in turn hinders an effective and responsive public administration – a prerequisite for inclusive societies. Current policies rarely address the multiple causes of social exclusion, thus formulating a mix of social inclusion interventions constitutes a major challenge for the region, especially at the lowest level of government administration.

Furthermore, economic, social and civic development is unequally spread over the countries in the Western Balkans. To give an example, regional disparities in Serbia are among the highest in Europe, where the situation in southern parts of the country is less favourable in comparison to the north and in rural areas in comparison with urban ones. The ratio of the most developed local government units to the least developed ones in terms of economic development levels was 10:1 in 2008.

CASE STUDY 1: ECO - SOCIAL ENTERPRISE eko BaG

By Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC) Serbia

Project Goals

To lower unemployment through the creation of a social enterprise (cooperative) producing innovative products with an emphasis on environmental preservation, recycling and reuse. The targets are long-term unemployed women over 45 years of age.

Results

The cooperative was established in April 2010 by 9 women and IDC. After 18 months, there are 5 additional women hired in this self-sustaining enterprise. The emphasis is put on cooperation with big/small corporative clients and different events/exhibitions, including Mercedes, Erste bank, EXIT festival, B92, SIEPA, PILS, Beo Izlog, Mixer, Moda za poneti, Reciklašar.

- Achieved complete knowledge of textile manufacturing process and improved

employability.

- Achieved specific knowledge in innovative techniques of disposal material management (mostly from printed PVC canvas and various advertising materials) for manufacturing goods of high ecological value.
- Achieved additional knowledge about entrepreneurial skills and selling.

Effects of actions

- Environment protection
- Social effect – improving social picture of participants
- Founding of first Serbian eco-social enterprise and promotion of social entrepreneurship in Serbia
- Cooperation with socially-responsible enterprises and public institutions in Belgrade in raising awareness of citizens about ecology, environmental protection and reuse.
- Production of fashionable products, like bags, folders, wallets, made of reused PVC foil from advertisement campaigns.

⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) publication "Beyond transition – towards inclusive societies" (May 2011)

REFORMING SOCIAL SERVICES FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

A study about a new welfare mix for the most vulnerable⁵ highlights that social service reforms in countries in transition are driven by three broad principles (sometimes described as the “3Ds”):

1. **Deinstitutionalisation:** the move away from an over-reliance on long-term care in residential institutions towards more humane and cost effective community-based services
2. **Diversification:** the promotion of a renewed welfare mix of state and non-state providers including NGOs and the private sector
3. **Decentralisation:** the transfer of rights, duties and responsibilities as close as possible to local populations

Countries in the Western Balkans, apart from Albania, inherited and have maintained a system of social services dominated by statutory Centres for Social Work and institutional care facilities.⁶ It can be said that social welfare reforms have tended to be single issue focused, chronically failing to connect the state and local levels, with a series of short-term, project and crisis-oriented solutions rarely forming a coherent whole. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation systems of social protection and social inclusion strategies remain weak. Moreover, **local and regional planning involving local stakeholders that map needs, resources, set plans for solutions, and review results is not well developed.** Similarly, a welfare mix that includes non-state providers has not really taken shape while the funding of local NGOs remains sporadic and not long-term oriented.⁷

⁵ Towards a New Welfare Mix for the Most Vulnerable: Reforming Social Services in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia (Bošnjak & Stubbs, 2007) Published in: Social Policy and Regional Development: proceedings.

⁶ European Commission “Social protection and social inclusion in the Western Balkans”. Summary of the synthesis report. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (January 2009)

⁷ Towards a New Welfare Mix for the Most Vulnerable: Reforming Social Services in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia (Bošnjak & Stubbs, 2007) Published in: Social Policy and Regional Development: proceedings.

CASE STUDY 2: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

By Education Centre (EDC) Serbia

Overall Objective: To support the reform of the social security system in Serbia.

Immediate Objectives:

- Support the implementation of projects in South Eastern Serbia supported by the social innovation fund
- Produce beneficiary assessments and analyse achievements and cost effectiveness of the local services provided by project implementers (community-based organisations)
- Support the provision of social services that have regional character
- Facilitate the exchange of experience in sector clusters of social services providers

Achievements:

- Successfully implemented 59 projects by social innovation fund beneficiaries
- Developed a regional center for the provision of social services in Vlasotince
- 40 projects prepared and 26 supported for further development.

For instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, social welfare reforms have been very gradual with a large number of externally funded short-term “pilot projects” seeking to introduce a variety of innovations, usually at the level of individual municipalities. External grants have also promoted a somewhat artificial growth in NGOs as service providers but, again, this has been short-term and somewhat parallel to the existing system. Crucially, service users have not been encouraged to participate in reforms, outside of small-scale initiatives while numerous ad-hoc multi-stakeholder groups formed around certain projects rarely have a wider impact.

In Croatia, there has been limited progress in reducing numbers in institutional care. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare does provide funding to a number of NGO initiatives in the field of community-based care and, in particular, supported housing. In addition, one of the priorities of the National Foundation for Civil Society, administering state grants to NGOs as well EU CARDS⁸ funding, is the promotion of

⁸ The CARDS programme is intended to provide Community

community-based social services although these tend to be short-term and geographically uneven. Local social planning remains limited by the lack of decentralisation of functions and by the sheer number of local authorities but also the lack of capacity to steer social welfare reforms.

In 2003 the Government of Serbia established a Social Innovation Fund as a transitory mechanism providing competitive funding and management support to reform-oriented social services projects at the local level. This has stimulated the main body representing local authorities to take a keener interest in social welfare reform. In addition, Serbia has a number of experts working on reforms in ad hoc groups. NGOs tend to be more project focused and as elsewhere, service users are relatively absent from reform debates.

Thus, a new institutional framework is needed which coordinates the supply of services and entitlements at local and regional levels, planning and adjusting it to local priorities and involving potential and actual beneficiaries and the public at large in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the system and its outcomes. On the other hand, the existing regional structures, or groups of municipalities, large enough to ensure a match of supply and demand, need to deliver a planned approach to meeting needs and ensure a more appropriate balance between community-based and institutional forms of care.⁹

The 2009 UNDP report for Montenegro formulated recommendations to decrease the risk of social exclusion including: extending the range of available social welfare services and focusing on specific barriers to social inclusion, such as unemployment and lack of or limited education; linking all social welfare system stakeholders at the local level and strengthening their participation in the decision-making process. Municipalities should rely on the knowledge, expertise, and experience of local people and develop and implement better targeted and more cost-effective and efficient programmes and services in collaboration with NGOs and private businesses. Also for Kosovo, the UNDP recommended in 2010 to establish

assistance to the countries of South-Eastern Europe with a view to their participation in the stabilisation and association process with the European Union.

⁹ Towards a New Welfare Mix for the Most Vulnerable: Reforming Social Services in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia (Bošnjak & Stubbs, 2007) Published in: Social Policy and Regional Development: proceedings.

local consultation mechanisms to target social assistance more effectively and activate people experiencing social exclusion.

CASE STUDY 3: STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF LOCAL INITIATIVES

By Local Development Initiative (LIR) Bosnia & Herzegovina

Overall objective: The development of an integrated „return programme“ for the sustainable return of minority families through the rehabilitation of housing, technical infrastructure, local capacity building activities and increased involvement of local authorities in Teslić, Kotor Varos and Gradiska Municipality.

Role of LIR: LIR provides consultancy services in the sector of the sustainable return of minority returnees through job creation, capacity building of local organisations and technical support to local authorities regarding the rules and regulations of project implementation and minority rights.

Specific objectives

- Reconstruction of 110 war-damaged houses in Teslić, Kotor Varos and Gradiska
- Repair of essential technical infrastructure in the municipalities which will create preconditions for further return movements and support the sustainability of the return
- Promotion of the sustainability of economic development by creating employment opportunities for returnees and the resident population
- Building and strengthening the capacity and efficiency of local organisations to create a climate of re-integration, co-existence and reconciliation to the residents
- Strengthening the capacities of local government at the municipal level to effectively coordinate, strategically plan, and efficiently manage the process of return and reintegration

BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND EMPOWERING SOCIETIES

The European Commission sees social inclusion¹⁰ as a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. Social inclusion also ensures that vulnerable groups and persons have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and that they can access their fundamental rights.¹¹

On the other side, **social exclusion implies the lack or denial of certain resources, rights, infrastructure, goods or services, as well as the incapacity to take part into the normal relations and activities** at hand to most people within the society, no matter if these belong to the economic, social, cultural or political domain. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNDP calculates for instance that in 2010 the poorest people - representing 20% of the population - received only 17% of social welfare resources.¹² Exclusion affects both people's quality of life, and the society's equity and cohesion as a whole. Societies with higher levels of social exclusion are not only less vibrant and cohesive, but also less safe, productive and dynamic.

Following this logic, achieving social inclusion involves at least two steps. One is removing barriers in a large sense i.e. barriers to participation and access to resources and opportunities. The second one is about promoting a change in attitudes. The previous two chapters argue that this can be achieved by implementing the new framework which coordinates the supply of services and entitlements at local and regional levels, engaging the people concerned in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the system and its outcomes.

The European Commission (EC) anticipates on the previous findings in this paper by acknowledging that the economic crisis has had a negative impact on social welfare in the (pre-)

¹⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=166&langId=en>

¹¹ European Commission publication "The European social fund and social inclusion" (2010)

¹² Progress toward the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in BiH 2010, UNDP BiH and Ministry of Finance and Treasury BiH (2010)

candidate countries. Vulnerable groups, including minorities, disadvantaged communities and people with disabilities, have been particularly affected. High levels of unemployment, especially youth unemployment, low labour market participation rates and poverty are widespread throughout the region.¹³ Hence, the EC pledged to provide substantial support for vulnerable groups through education and the strengthening of social and employment services with the aim to integrate people with a disadvantage into the labour market. This support will be reinforced, with a view to improving living conditions in the countries most concerned, by helping them to develop a comprehensive approach to problems of social inclusion.¹⁴

One of the aspects ensuring a comprehensive approach is the development of a legal framework enabling social economy organisations, but above all the capacity of community-based initiatives and organisations has to be strengthened to identify and meet local needs and build positive links between the economic, social and civic aspects of local development¹⁵. The Joint Inclusion Memorandum signed between the EU and Croatia also recognised this by concluding that social services are insufficiently developed, there is a need to better tailor them to the various user groups and to expand the social services network. This would involve building on the existing skills, providing opportunities for people to learn through experience and increasing people's awareness and confidence to enable them to participate more fully in society.

In line with this approach, the European Parliament reaffirmed the ability of the social economy to generate stability in the context of eminently cyclical economies, by redistributing and reinvesting profits locally, where appropriate, promoting an entrepreneurial culture, linking economic activities to the local needs, sustaining activities at risk (e.g. crafts) and generating social capital.¹⁶

¹³ European Commission communication "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011" COM(2010) 660 (2010)

¹⁴ European Commission communication "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011" COM(2010) 660 (2010)

¹⁵ OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) "The Social Economy: Building Inclusive Economies" (2007)

¹⁶ European Parliament resolution of 19 February 2009 on Social Economy (2008/2250(INI))

Hence, future endeavours should be focusing on three fields:

- **Actions to build social capital:** building relationships, trust, shared norms and networks. It involves people taking part in community initiatives, groups and organisations, and those groups communicating with the wider population as volunteers, members and participants.
- **Delivering accessible and quality social services:** these can either be autonomous services provided by communities, or specialist services provided by community or voluntary groups, controlled by contracts or service level agreements with public agencies.
- **Interactive decision making:** representing the interests of all local people or of particular groups in influencing decisions that affect the quality of local life.

Unfortunately the impact of the recent withdrawal of international donor support from the region, also induced by the development of the Instrument for Pre-Accession by the European Commission, is that the local civil society organisations (CSO) community can be split into two groups: experienced donor-driven organisations with access to European Commission resources but often insufficient links to local NGOs, and a group of community-focused NGOs doing small but tangible things at the local level and facing problems of raising even small amounts of funding to implement the three endeavours above.

CASE STUDY 4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WAR AND MINE VICTIMS, BiH

By Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) South Eastern Europe

Overall Objective: Socio-economic empowerment of particularly vulnerable groups, such as female war victims and mine victims, under the direct and active participation of local organisations dealing with marginalised groups in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Immediate Objectives

- Increase the overall organisational and managerial capacities of the three local organisations from Prijedor Municipality in the Republic of Srpska and Sarajevo Canton through comprehensive and hands-on capacity building efforts and technical and financial assistance
- Economic empowerment of female war and mine victims and their households through the provision of sustainable economic measures
- Creation of durable housing conditions for the most vulnerable members of the target groups
- Transfer and multiplication of knowledge, best practice and lessons learnt onto other local organisations dealing with the target groups through networking and targeted delivery of workshop sessions with additional focus on increasing public awareness on issues affecting the target groups.

Achievements:

- 15 members of the local organisations trained in organisational management, project cycle management and sustainability, public policy and advocacy
- 3 local organisations received technical and financial assistance thus enhancing their service delivery and outreach work
- 15 members of the local organisations acquired practical skills, expertise and experience in activity implementation, financial and narrative reporting, project monitoring and evaluation through in-house coaching, advisory and monitoring by ASB expert staff
- 180 members and beneficiaries of the 3 local organisations trained in the development of business plans
- 120 beneficiaries and their households received grants for start-up businesses based on their approved and selected business plans
- 8 extremely vulnerable women, victims of the war, witnesses before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Bosnian Courts, and their households provided with socially affordable, durable housing solutions
- 45 members of 15 local organisations dealing with similar issues provided with the knowledge, lessons learned and best practices through 3-day training workshops and 3-day discussion sessions.

PART II: ACTIVELY WORKING TOWARDS SOCIAL INCLUSION –COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

SERBIA

State of play: social inclusion and poverty eradication

As a consequence of the deterioration of the labour market triggered by the effects of the global financial crisis, absolute poverty has kept growing in Serbia since 2009. In April 2011 the unemployment rate reached 22%, with even higher levels in rural areas.¹⁷ In fact, regional disparities in Serbia are among the highest in Europe. The situation in southern parts of the country is less favorable in comparison with the north, and in rural areas in comparison with urban ones. The ratio of the most developed local government units to the least developed ones in terms of economic development levels was 10:1 in 2008.¹⁸

The rural population has little access to key markets (goods, information and finance). Unfavourable educational levels and low levels of additional knowledge and skills have resulted in the low competitiveness of the rural labour force. There is a pronounced rural-urban digital divide in terms of access to information and communication technologies, and rural infrastructure (utility, economic and social) is underdeveloped and imposes restrictions in the development of rural areas.¹⁹ Furthermore, the budget expenditure on health and the accessibility of health services differ considerably across the territory.²⁰ In the past two years, more than 120 local municipalities have developed local social policy plans and participated in strategic planning processes at the local and provincial levels, mainly in the field of deinstitutionalisation and the further development of community-based services.²¹

Judging by all indicators, low-income households face huge housing problems. Approximately one-third of households below the poverty line do not have water supply infrastructure in their house/apartment, and some 50% have neither a toilet nor a bathroom. One-third of these households spend more than one-half of their income on housing.²² The drafting the National Social Housing Strategy is under way and should provide an estimate of the housing needs of different groups, as well as a proposal of adequate programmes and measures in this area.

An initial step in establishing an institutional framework for the development and implementation of social inclusion policies was the establishment of a Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) in July 2009. The SIPRU is mandated to strengthen the government's capacities to develop and implement social inclusion across all public administration agencies and levels as well as to coordinate, monitor and report about the outcomes. In 2010, a Working Group for Social Inclusion was formed to cooperate and consult with actors dealing with social inclusion issues. This working group should also develop proposals for the active participation of Serbia in the Social Inclusion Process within the framework of the EU integration process, propose measures towards the development and implementation of social inclusion policies and prepare the body of the annual report on social inclusion - until the development of Joint Inclusion Memorandum as well as the body of the Joint Inclusion Memorandum, once Serbia is granted the status of an EU candidate country. In 2010, the SIPRU and the Republic Statistical Office prepared a report on *Monitoring Social Exclusion in Serbia* and issued the *First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction*^{23,24}.

¹⁷ Republic Statistical Office/BILTEN

¹⁸ Government of the Republic of Serbia "First national report on social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Republic of Serbia" (2011)

¹⁹ Government of the Republic of Serbia "First national report on social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Republic of Serbia" (2011)

²⁰ Government of the Republic of Serbia "First national report on social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Republic of Serbia" (2011)

²¹ Government of the Republic of Serbia "First national report on social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Republic of Serbia" (2011)

²² Government of the Republic of Serbia "First national report on social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Republic of Serbia" (2011)

²³ <http://www.odrzivi-razvoj.gov.rs/assets/download/Nacionalna-strategija-odrzivog-razvoja-Republice-Srbije.pdf>

²⁴ Government of the Republic of Serbia "First national report on social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Republic of Serbia" (2011)

CASE STUDY 5: NETWORK OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS (SENS)

By Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC), Serbia

Overall objective

The network of social entrepreneurs in Serbia²⁵ is a network by Group 484²⁶. Its main goal is to promote the activities of social entrepreneurs and their actions in Serbia. The Coalition for the development of social entrepreneurship in Serbia consists of 4 civil society organisations (EPUS, Group 484, Smart collective, IDC) and BCIF foundation.

The mission of the network is to support an inclusive, creative community where the social economy, economic empowerment and social inclusion is encouraged and promoted, thus contributing to the inclusion of vulnerable groups in society and the sustainable economic development of Serbia. Through networking and supporting social enterprises in Serbia, the network is actively working to promote social enterprise as an innovative undertaking in the field of social economy.

More specifically, the network:

- Provides sustainable ways to promote and improve local communities;
- Develops skills and knowledge of local communities;
- Helps excluded groups to integrate back into society and the labour market;
- Promotes and supports active citizenship;
- Provides alternative business models.

The network considers it necessary to develop partnerships between NGOs and social enterprises, and cooperate on regional and national levels for more coordinated action and advocate the recognition of social enterprises in Serbia.

Supporting local actors for inclusion

There are roughly 2,500 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Serbia. However, using the definition based on the new *Law on Associations* which also considers non-formal groups as NGOs, this number increases to about

²⁵ <http://www.sens.rs/>

²⁶

http://www.grupa484.org.rs/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2&Itemid=156&lang=english

40,000 NGOs.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in Serbia are predominantly “linearly” financed out of the state budget, on a yearly basis. Past experience shows that there are neither criteria for this type of financing, nor proper evaluation and reporting schemes. Since 2000, a number of local self-government units started financing programmes prepared by CSOs. The Vojvodina Region and certain state Ministries also published calls for proposals and introduced clear criteria and rules for monitoring and evaluation of financed projects. The adopted *Law on Budget System* (2009) foresees that all budget beneficiaries will be financed through programme financing no later than 2015, and that all state institutions will have to apply clear rules and regulations and establish transparent procedures for the allocation of funds.

With the adoption and implementation of the new law on Social Protection (2011) local authorities have been given certain responsibilities in order to allow the proper provision of services for social welfare in cooperation with civil society organizations, associations and entrepreneurs. Due to the large regional underdevelopment and very little financial capacity of poor municipalities, the sustainability of social services financed from local budgets, especially in poor municipalities, is significantly compromised in times of economic crisis in which the state reduces the already small municipal budget.

CASE STUDY 6: SUPPORT TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

By Education Center (EDC), Serbia

Overall objective: Increase opportunities for rural communities and inhabitants, small households, handicrafts and agricultural producers to receive accurate information about support for local development initiatives; diversify the rural economy to provide more possibilities (from rural development) to improve the living conditions in rural communities; and activate citizens in local rural development planning processes and the implementation of the national policy for rural development.

Immediate objectives:

- Support the creation of regional networking as a tool for the creation of a national rural development network
- Develop a bases for the further development

of local action groups within the local institutional framework to increase possibilities of local recourse utilisation of the rural development fund

Results:

- Strengthened existing, and supported new, potentials for rural development
- Organized efficient and updated collection of information of key relevance for programming and evaluation of rural development measures
- Enhanced horizontal and vertical flow of information
- Identified local actors and supported regional/local initiatives for rural development
- Improved conditions for development, living conditions of rural areas in Serbia and environment

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

State of play: social inclusion and poverty eradication

It was estimated that in 2010, the total number of the population living in or at risk of poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina amounted to half of the population that is socially vulnerable.²⁷ In BiH, a fifth of the population is below the general poverty line. The consequences of the war (dislocation and destruction) together with jobless growth, has led to economic exclusion. Social exclusion in BiH also has a strong gender component and ethnic divisions are one of the root causes of social exclusion. Consequently minority returnees are among the most distinctly excluded groups, evident in their lack of political participation, limited access to social services and often general alienation from social life in their communities. Further groups affected by all 3 dimensions of exclusion are the Roma, the disabled, elderly, rural dwellers and the young.²⁸ UNDP points additionally to the very high level of economic inactivity; approximately 57% of the workforce is inactive, specific labour market activation policies need to be put in place in order to reduce long-term and youth unemployment. Furthermore, education levels are far below European averages and illiteracy is a real problem, in particular for middle aged and elderly women.²⁹

The current social protection system is largely inefficient because of the lack of sensitivity to beneficiary needs, the underdevelopment of a mixed system, and the weak capacity of the Centres for Social Work. In 2010, the poorest people - representing 20% of the population - received only 17% of social welfare resources which falls short of their actual needs.³⁰ Thus, an important aspect of the social welfare system reform is to harmonise standards and financing, and to focus on financial needs rather than the status of the beneficiary. Developing partnerships between social welfare centres, the public and private sectors, as well as with civil society should also lead to improvements.

²⁷ UNDP "Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina" National Human Development Report 2007

²⁸ UNDP "Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina" National Human Development Report 2007

²⁹ UNDP "Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina" National Human Development Report 2007

³⁰ Progress toward the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in BiH 2010, UNDP BiH and Ministry of Finance and Treasury BiH (2010)

The national Social Inclusion Strategy is currently being prepared to facilitate social inclusion, particularly in the light of Bosnia and Herzegovina's unique political, social and economic challenges.³¹ **More than half of the population in BiH is currently not included in its economic, social, political and cultural life**, nor does it have access to standards of living that are considered normal in today's society, of which no less than 22 percent suffer from extreme social exclusion. Gender inequality is increasing in BiH with women facing the highest risk of exclusion from health care, education and economic opportunities.³²

In fact, ethnic division is one of the strongest root causes and manifestations of social exclusion in BiH. This has a threefold dimension. Firstly, it directly works to exclude minorities within majority areas. Secondly, it compromises the institutional framework's ability to tackle exclusion, and thirdly, it has a malevolent and pervasive effect on social processes. Thus, social exclusion is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which is based on structural, political, economic and social systems and institutions that do not provide equal opportunities to all.³³ Therefore, when considering international assistance to improve social services for marginalized and vulnerable groups in BiH, a particular focus should be put on the part of the population who returned to their pre-war homes after the end of the Bosnian conflict, as social care and protection are often non-existent for minority returnees in a majority area. Consequently, community-based initiatives in BiH should consider the following, marginalized and socially vulnerable groups deprived of adequate social care and services aiming at improved and increased social inclusion:

Education Services

- Job training for young, middle age, low-skilled and no-skilled unemployed (for vulnerable groups such as female victims of war, mine victims, war invalids, minority returnees and their children in working age)

Employment Services (as complementary)

³¹ Nicola Nixon "Assessing social exclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina"

³² UNDP "Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina" National Human Development Report 2007

³³ UNDP "Social Capital in Bosnia and Herzegovina" National Human Development Report 2009

actions to education services and poverty eradication)

- Close cooperation with Social Welfare Centres and Employment Bureaus and the creation of employment through community-based initiatives undertaken by grassroot organisations
- Provision of economic grant packages for self-employment as financially challenging but high-impact support with longer-term sustainability (for vulnerable groups such as female victims of war, mine victims, war invalids, minority returnees and their children in working age)

Health Services

- Provision of mobile home care services for the elderly population in rural and remote areas (elderly minority returnees, not exclusively for the resident elderly population)

The 2009 UNDP Human Development Report documents that BiH has limited levels of civic participation and social solidarity. Policies designed to strengthen 'social capital' are thus particularly needed to reduce fragmentation and provide a basis for greater social inclusion. The report recommends the building of 'inclusive social capital' via support for civil society and civic participation in order to overcome divisions within the social fabric and foster greater levels of trust and facilitate the inclusion of the most vulnerable.³⁴

CASE STUDY 7: "HOUSE OF CONFIDENCE" IN SREBRENICA

By Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) Heimatgarten, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Description: The "house of confidence" was established in 2005 in Srebrenica to provide a wide range of support measures, such as the reintegration of returnees, measures for the normalization of social life, business start-aids and medical emergency relief.

Achievements

- Economic support for the inhabitants of Srebrenica - the House has supported the start-up of 25 local enterprises

- Provision of free medical examinations (internist, psychologist) and free medicine for all who ask for help, especially those who do not have health insurance
- Training for young people who had to interrupt their education due to the war - 57 young people of different nationalities completed the training and received certificates
- Computer courses for young people in the villages of Osat, Sučeska and Skelani and for adults in Skelani and Srebrenica.

Supporting local actors for inclusion

The civil society in BiH is predominantly classified as a *group of organisations that work in the interest of their members* (sports organisations, veterans' associations, professional societies, unions and similar). Almost 72% of the existing associations are classified as above while the remaining 28% can be defined as *public benefit organisations*. Out of the latter, only 1.4% implement projects related to economic development, 0.7% implement projects linked to local development and just over 6 % focus on rural development and agriculture.³⁵

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina are mostly financed by local public funds (i.e. municipal, cantonal, entity or state budgets), foreign donations and membership fees, whereas very small share is provided through charity donations or service provision. Public calls and project proposals usually exist for the sake of form while budget allocation is done without any real intention to select the projects that would actually address the priorities and program goals.

According to local partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the state provides significant financial assistance to the traditional GONGO (Government sponsored Non-Governmental Organisations) that work primarily for the benefit of their members (Mutual Benefit Organisations). The organisations working for the good of the community or common welfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina (public benefit organisations) manage to survive mainly due to international community assistance and support. Only a small segment of the civil sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, working in the capacity of a public

³⁴ UNDP "Social Capital in Bosnia and Herzegovina" "National Human Development Report 2009"

³⁵ UNDP "Social Capital in Bosnia and Herzegovina" "National Human Development Report 2009"

benefit organisation, has managed to ensure partial sustainability by building and providing certain services such as sports organisations, local cultural and folk clubs, local amateur radio operators, scouts, local humanitarian organisations etc. Further to this, lacking technical, operational and managerial capacities on both local government side and NGO sector, make the overall cooperation unable to ensure qualitative changes in the provision of adequate social services for socially excluded groups and individuals. This fact presents a serious obstacle to the structural and legal approach to addressing the issue of social exclusion at a macro level.

CASE STUDY 8: INCLUSION OF LANDMINES VICTIMS

By Local Development Initiative (LIR), Bosnia & Herzegovina

Overall objective: The economic and social reintegration of survived landmines victims in the municipalities Bihać, Cazin, Bužim and Velika Kladuša (LOT 7 area).

Activities

- Preparing and making dynamic plans for training in leading small businesses through making business plans for nine landmines victims.
- Raising awareness of disabled landmine victims and establish cooperation between them and NGOs

Achievements

10 landmines victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina - in the LOT 7 area - learned how to successfully establish a business initiative and prepared business plans, which are the basis for the further development of their activities

CROATIA

State of play: social inclusion and poverty eradication

When signing the Joint Memorandum on social inclusion between Croatia and the European Commission in 2007, it was clear that the unemployment rate and the relatively high levels of economic inactivity were amongst the most important causes of social exclusion. The Memorandum also recognised that social services are insufficiently developed, demonstrating that there is a need to better tailor them to the various user groups and to expand the social services network.

The economic crisis translated into a social crisis with rising pressure on social protection due to increased risk of poverty among pensioners, women, the rural population and young people. Hence, a successful inclusion policy should be based on two pillars: weakening the mechanisms of economic, employment and socio-cultural deprivation, and reducing the risk that the children of the socially excluded will end up being excluded themselves. Economic revitalisation and sustainable growth needs to be encouraged in areas that are characterised by high unemployment and an unfavourable labour force structure. Greater use should be made of active employment measures and more attention should be given to development projects suited to the needs of the local population. Investment is needed in basic and social infrastructure and a series of measures and incentives are required in order to retrain the local population and attract skills that are in short supply in such areas.³⁶

The 2010 progress report (Commission staff working document) reported that the follow-up to the Joint Inclusion Memorandum is largely satisfactory; though progress in the field of administrative and fiscal decentralisation of social services remains limited. Furthermore, the transition from institutional to community-based care has continued at a slow pace and the adoption of the Social Welfare Act has been delayed further, without any clear justification.

To improve the accessibility and quality of social services, a higher degree of decentralisation and deinstitutionalisation are needed. The goal is for users to receive services in their homes and

³⁶ UNDP "Faces of Social Exclusion in Croatia" and „Poverty, Unemployment and Social Exclusion" 2006

local communities (community-based services), thus creating the conditions for integration and rehabilitation within the community itself. In order to further develop social services, the state, the private sector and civil society organisations will have to cooperate and establish partnerships.³⁷

At the end of 2010, the draft *Law on social protection system* (stipulating also its reform) and the *National Plan for deinstitutionalised 2011-2016*, including the transformation of social service providers, were finalised. The adoption of the *Strategy for social housing* has been temporary delayed. Thus, IPA support programs fighting social exclusion and poverty are crucial for pushing forward this process.³⁸

Supporting local actors for inclusion

Croatia presents a specific example of institutionalised CSO - government cooperation by first having established a centralised CSO liaison office and then gradually decentralising cooperation and delegating some of its functions (including funding) to other bodies and levels under the framework of the new model of *Organisational Structure for Civil Society Development*.

Further, the *Program of Cooperation* defines the following areas for cooperation: consultations with NGOs in legal initiatives and their inclusion in working groups; consultation in designing the Government's National Program and evaluation of its strategy and priorities; consultation in evaluation of projects in which public money is invested; evaluation of national policy in all areas; decentralization and cooperation for the durable development of the society; partial or complete financing for programs and services; citizens' participation (public participation) in the process of decision making and meeting the community needs support and enhancement of self-organising and volunteer action for the benefit of their community; development of social enterprise and social capital as an important component for social development and support for socially responsible business sector.

³⁷ Joint memorandum on social inclusion of the Republic of Croatia (2007)

³⁸ Nacionalni provedbeni plan za socijalno uključivanje 2009. – 2010/ projekta „Uspostava podrške u socijalnom uključivanju i zapošljavanju socijalno ugroženih i marginaliziranih skupina“.

CASE STUDY 9: RURAL TOURISM AS A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REVITALISATION

By Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO) Heimatgarten, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Overall objective: To promote economic and social development in the wider Knin area and to foster greater cross-border cooperation with regions in BiH, as well as to enhance the capacity of local stakeholders to manage region development in cooperation with partners across the border.

Immediate objectives:

- Develop rural tourism as a tool for economic and social revitalisation of rural areas of the Knin and Bosansko Grahovo municipalities
- Improve the quality of life in rural areas of the Knin and Bosansko Grahovo municipalities
- To decrease the demographic downfall of rural areas within the Knin and Bosansko Grahovo municipalities.

Achievements:

- 50 rural households from Knin and Bosansko Grahovo areas profiled and assessed for the purpose of rural tourism development
- 20 rural households from Knin and Bosansko Grahovo areas received education, training, and technical assistance for adapting their available resources for the purpose of rural tourism development
- 10 unemployed young individuals (men and women equally) received education, training, and technical assistance in starting their own businesses related to traditional handicrafts
- 5 individuals from local associations and institutions and 5 employees from local authorities in Bosansko Grahovo received training and technical assistance
- Associations and institutions from the Knin area transferred their knowledge, lessons learned, and experience to relevant associations and institutions from Bosansko Grahovo
- Concept notes for 2 cross-border projects developed and prepared for future calls for proposals bilingual tourism catalogues and tourist maps prepared and distributed

MONTENEGRO

State of play: social inclusion and poverty eradication

The construction boom, flourishing tourism and profits from capital market transactions, have ensured benefits to entrepreneurial and business-oriented Montenegrin citizens, while those citizens employed by public and state-owned enterprises, or located in the less-developed northern region with less economic activity, have not benefited from the economic growth. Furthermore, due to the lack of programmes targeting poverty, poverty levels have remained steady with strong regional disparities, concludes the 2009 UNDP Human Development Report for Montenegro. Social inclusion research for Montenegro is rather scarce and the 2009 study was the first to give insight into the levels of social exclusion in Montenegro; 9.2% of individuals were socially excluded, while 1.3% of individuals were exposed to severe exclusion. The areas in which individuals face the highest deprivation were income, access to healthcare services and education. Social exclusion has been far lower among women with 5.5% of women categorised as socially excluded, compared with 13% of men.

The 2009 UNDP report formulated recommendations to decrease the risk of social exclusion including: extending the range of available social welfare services and focusing on specific barriers to social inclusion, such as unemployment and lack of or limited education; linking all social welfare system stakeholders at the local level and strengthening their participation in the decision-making process. Thus, municipalities should rely on the knowledge, expertise, and experience of local people and develop and implement better targeted and more cost-effective and efficient programmes and services in collaboration with NGOs and private businesses.³⁹

Among the policy strategies adopted to promote social inclusion, the key document is the *Poverty Alleviation and Social Inclusion Strategy* from 2007 that focuses on health care, education, social protection and employment and includes more than 150 projects.⁴⁰ In 2011, the evaluation

³⁹ UNDP „Montenegro: Society for All“ National Human Development Report 2009

⁴⁰ Other documents include the National Action Plan for the

of the UNDP Country Program 2005 - 2011 on social inclusion and gender equality concluded that the government still has a fairly limited capacity to deliver the related services for particularly vulnerable groups in its population. There is an equally limited pool of civil society organizations upon which to draw and these organizations also often have a limited or weak capacity. It revealed that the general public knows little about social inclusion nor about the needs of socially excluded groups. Supporting public awareness activities on social inclusion, involving the media, NGOs and all stakeholders, would thus be desirable. It also confirmed that the needs of socially excluded individuals are so diverse, that they cannot be met unless an individually-focused approach is adopted. Hence, the government needs to delegate responsibilities to local communities whose fiscal power and capacities should be strengthened to be able to engage in identifying and implementing the priorities.⁴¹

NGOs could play a significant role in tackling such issues as unemployment and poverty, especially when government agencies do not have the sufficient capacity to maintain an effective safety net across the community. As both the beneficiaries and government agency staff acknowledged, the demands on the services provided by the central level that run social welfare centres and employment agencies exceed their capacities, NGOs could be more engaged by the national and local governments. NGOs possess a number of advantages: they are local and able to promote inclusion within the context of local needs and they are flexible in their operations and can respond quickly. In addition, NGOs can acquire donations from donors, businesses and individuals and rely on volunteers in delivering their programmes and services. In particular, the Government may design projects in the field of social inclusion to be delivered jointly, in partnership with Government agencies at local level and NGOs.⁴²

Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 -2015, the national Strategy for Improving Position of RAE Population 2008-2012, the Strategy for Integrating Persons with Disabilities, the Strategy for Development of Social Protection for the Elderly 2008-2012 and the Strategy for Inclusive Education (2008)etc.

⁴¹ Evaluation of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Outcomes within UNDP Montenegro Country Program 2005 – 2011

⁴² Evaluation of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Outcomes within UNDP Montenegro Country Program 2005 – 2011

Supporting local actors for inclusion

In Montenegro there is not a long-standing tradition of civil society organisation (CSO) existence. The first CSOs appeared in conjunction with the creation of the multi-party system only a decade ago. Today, according to the Ministry of Justice's register, there are close to 4,400 registered CSOs, out of which only around 100 function as real non-governmental actors, on which basis one can conclude that only a small number of NGOs function in accordance with the law. A percentage of funding comes from government institutions but this amount is relatively small in comparison with foreign donations. Financial support from municipal authorities has a minor impact on local civil initiatives which further undermines the overall economic sustainability of the CSOs.

Relations between the government and civil society are contentious, but have been improving in recent years. The government now relies on NGOs for preparing laws, co-sponsoring education, campaigns and sharing the burden of social services provision. Several municipalities have signed cooperation agreements with local NGOs. In addition, in 2007 a *Code of Conduct for NGOs* was adopted resulting from a joint effort of 250 NGOs. However, public institutions do not respond positively to criticism from CSOs and sometimes exclude those who tend to be too critical. Equally, opposition parties often refuse to cooperate with CSOs under the pretext that they are too much influenced by the government.

CASE STUDY 10: 'STARAČKI DOM SANA' - HOME FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE AND PEOPLE NEEDING ASSISTANCE

By AWO Subotica Serbia

Project Goals

'Starački Dom Sana' - a home for elderly people and people needing assistance - was founded in 2003 and started functioning in 2004. Its main aim is to help elderly people and people needing assistance to get the help and care that they deserve, and that this care is of the highest standard. 'Starački Dom Sana' was founded as a result of the necessity for such a institution in Una Sana Kanton.

Results

The home works with the concept that the people should feel like they are at home, in their families. It tries to get away from the institutional way of life, where is cold and there are no

standards. The home tries to give them warm and neat surroundings, preparing traditional meals and organising lots of activities so that their clients feel as good as possible.

- Several hundred people have lived or are living in the institution.
- It has established itself as one of the leaders in care of older people in the region.
- It employees 13 people and has 35 beds.
- The employees have been taught by highly qualified people from Arbeiterwohlfahrt.
- It has institutional cooperation with institutions from the EU.

KOSOVO⁴³

State of play: social inclusion and poverty eradication

Social exclusion in Kosovo is a majority condition, experienced by a wide range of people across many dimensions of life. Exclusion – whether from economic life, social services or civic engagement – is a critical development challenge for Kosovo that considerably erodes the full contribution of its people as economically active, healthy and educated citizens.⁴⁴ Social exclusion is widespread in Kosovo and evident in rural/urban divides and socio-cultural discrimination which particularly affects the role of women or the access of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities into the labour market. The groups most affected by social exclusion in Kosovo are the long term unemployed, disadvantaged children, unemployed youth (73%), women living in rural areas who are often excluded from the labour market and a low educational and health status, the RAE minority and people with special needs. “A Kosovo-RAE female child living in a temporary camp in Mitrovicë/Mirtovica is the most excluded individual in Kosovo, and deserves the greatest level of support.”⁴⁵

There are two main causes for these severe levels of exclusion: the legacy of the recent conflict that produced tensions between and within societal groups, and the weak governance capacity that limits the implementation of policies to foster social inclusion. In addition, Kosovo’s effort to coalesce as a society has been complicated in part by large international investment affecting its delicate socio-economic balance. This investment, albeit well-intentioned and important for Kosovo’s future, has limited an essential process of “natural selection” that would normally allow for the gradual emergence of internally sustained and locally-valued social policies, networks and organizations. As a result, Kosovo has a great number of social policies and development agents without any true sense of ownership or any consistent means of distinguishing the genuinely useful and relevant from those whose existence relies entirely on external support.⁴⁶ In order to mobilise their potential to link communities and authorities, NGOs will require national support to move away

from an over-reliance on external funding.

In October 2009, the Assembly of Kosovo released a White Paper entitled *Kosovo’s Social Inclusion Challenges*, a declaration of political commitment by the Assembly of Kosovo to address the issues of social exclusion and promote the social inclusion agenda in Kosovo. This document recognises that **people are often not adequately informed of their rights and of the possibilities on how to access social assistance and social services**. This is largely due to the institutional set-up, which is viewed as complex and not user-friendly. The White Paper also recognises that there are major challenges in the development of social services provision linked to the gradual decentralisation of competencies to municipalities. The municipalities lack capacity and funds to deliver the necessary quality services. In addition, there is a shortage of qualified staff at both central and local level. Unfortunately no policy objective is formulated in this field.

The UNPD 2010 report recommends several concrete measures to build the capacity of municipalities and ensure a more appropriate funding structure: **local consultation mechanisms should be established to target social assistance more effectively and activate people experiencing social exclusion**. Extensive consultations with civil society would not only enhance public sector accountability but also improve governance performance and rebuild trust in the governance process among excluded groups.⁴⁷

CASE STUDY 11: ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT IN RURAL AREAS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

By CLARD Kosovo

Overall objective: Targeting poverty reduction through the enhancement of young people’s access to employment in rural areas, with a special focus on women.

Specific objective: the implementation of vocational trainings on demanded professions in the country, and the preparation of young unemployed people from the rural areas to be trained and prepared to negotiate a working position on the labour market.

⁴³ under UN resolution 1244

⁴⁴ UNDP “human development report for Kosovo” 2010

⁴⁵ UNDP “human development report for Kosovo” 2010

⁴⁶ The Assembly of Republic of Kosovo “White Paper: Kosovo social inclusion challenges” (2009)

⁴⁷ The Assembly of Republic of Kosovo “White Paper: Kosovo social inclusion challenges” (2009)

Achievements:

- Provided 120 vulnerable unemployed persons in Kosovo with vocational trainings in a demanded field and with specific skills to research and apply for a job.
- Provided women and youth from the rural areas with working competences sanctioned by a nationally recognized certificate
- Additional training on labour skills and basic labour rights allowing people to be competitive on the labour market and to be aware about their rights
- Mediation between potential employers and participants
- Improving the access to training and to employment for vulnerable group will have an impact on the social and economical situation of the rural areas

Supporting local actors for inclusion

It is estimated that there are around 500 active NGOs in Kosovo (while more than 4,000 are registered)⁴⁸ operating in different social, economic and political areas. Civil society organisations are mainly made up of smaller organisations which are very often dependent on short-term funding by a single donor, especially those at the municipal level. Community-driven development in Kosovo is in fact largely funded by the World Bank. This casts doubt on the sustainability of current levels of civic engagement and of effective society constituencies.⁴⁹

Only a few NGOs have attempted to continuously shape policy in support of the interests of particular constituencies, be they women, minorities, the disabled, or other marginal groups. The monitoring capacity of NGOs is limited and their participation in the legislation process is poor. Without a strategic approach for their interaction with civil society organisations, Kosovo's authorities have been unable to play a much-needed role to strengthen NGOs and give them an institutionalised place in the policy process. As a result, the vulnerable groups some NGOs represent have only been consulted in an *ad hoc* manner, if at all. The link to the political sphere is inconsistent and ephemeral, and without visible results. Social support for NGOs is also weak – a vicious cycle

fuelled by the perception that they are neither truly effective nor orientated in a reliable way to social needs. According to the UNDP's Kosovo Human Development Report 2008, less than one third of Kosovars think that NGOs are open to public participation. As one of the roles of NGOs is to promote participation, this is a worrying statistic.⁵⁰

For the moment, EU integration offers challenges, but also solid opportunities for the local civil society. The White Paper from 2009 indicates that changes could be on the way by stating that it is important to build and strengthen the capacity of local level NGOs, namely their advocacy, networking and lobbying skills to support the regional economic development of Kosovo.

CASE STUDY 12: SUSTAINABLE RETURN SERVICES

By Arbeiter-Sameriter-Bund (ASB) South Eastern Europe

Overall Objective: Creation of a suitable environment for the sustainable return of minority families to their pre-war homes in Kosovo.

Immediate Objective: Facilitation of sustainable return and reintegration of at least 60 Serbian families to 16 villages in the Zhupa Valley and support the closure of collective centres in Brezovice.

Achievements:

- At least 60 houses reconstructed for 60 returning Serbian minority families and the target families assisted to return. Electricity and water connections installed in at least 60 housing units and small sections of low voltage networks repaired.
- Livelihood measures conducted for beneficiaries in need. Interethnic dialogue and reconciliation between minority and majority community in the project area facilitated. Food and non- food items delivered to the project beneficiaries.
- Local Capacity Building: Provided training and technical and advisory assistance for municipal staff that opened opportunities for close collaboration between local authorities and local NGOs.
- Provided opportunity for closer coordination between local authorities, civil sector and international organisations. Provided findings for further dissemination of best practices and lessons learned.

⁴⁸ The Assembly of Republic of Kosovo "White Paper: Kosovo social inclusion challenges" (2009)

⁴⁹ The Assembly of Republic of Kosovo "White Paper: Kosovo social inclusion challenges" (2009)

⁵⁰ The Assembly of Republic of Kosovo "White Paper: Kosovo social inclusion challenges" (2009)

PART III – ORGANISATIONS

ASB SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

The Office of the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund for South Eastern Europe (ASB SEE) has been present in the Western Balkan region since 1991. As an implementing partner of the European Commission, ASB SEE has been significantly contributing to the return process of refugees and displaced persons, reconstruction and development of the Western Balkan countries such as Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Republic of Macedonia and Albania.

Along with EU-funded projects, ASB SEE has been carrying out various projects throughout the region with financial assistance from individual Member States and other donors, in particular, the German Government. These projects are related to mine-clearance, reconstruction of houses cat. 1-3 and the provision of humanitarian aid which is still needed in the war-affected areas.

Since 1991, ASB SEE has implemented projects valued at over €154 million in South Eastern Europe with funding from the European Union and individual member states, reconstructed more than 7,975 destroyed housing units and carried out numerous projects in the field of public, social and economic infrastructure as well as mine-clearance.

<http://www.asb-see.org/>

INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (IDC), SERBIA

The Initiative for Development and Cooperation Serbia was founded in 2007 as a spin off of the Spanish NGO MPDL (Movement for Peace). It has been implementing a program “Improvement of economical and social capacity, and strengthening of the productive network and insertion to the labour market, especially assisting vulnerable groups” funded by MPDL and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECID).

IDC Serbia actively works with the SOLIDAR decent work and quality jobs project founded by 11 NGOs which work in the area. The main role of SOLIDAR is to connect members, help them to be recognisable, especially in joined activities. IDC Serbia is also a member of a cluster of civil society organisations for implementing the Strategy for Reducing Poverty.

The legal advisers of IDC Serbia have knowledge in various law fields, knowledge about legal systems in neighbouring countries, knowledge about procedures which are in Kosovo (UNMIK administration) and also knowledge in human right issues and labour law. Program managers have experience in social aid programs to vulnerable groups through programs of prequalification, programs for starting up small business, organising seminars and trainings.

In the past 6 years, IDC Serbia staff (previously MPDL staff), have provided free legal aid to more than 10,000 beneficiaries and organised programs for prequalification for more than 400 beneficiaries.

<http://www.idcserbia.org/index.php?lang=english>

EDUCATION CENTER (EDC), SERBIA

Immediately after the September 2000 elections, the most active civic initiatives in Leskovac gathered around the idea of the necessity of forming an association with the mission to change the values system that had been dictated by the previous undemocratic rule.

The Education Center was thus formed with the main goal to transform a state of lethargy into a state of active and sustainable communities and has become a organization based in the local community whose mission is to support and promote the development of a democratic society in Serbia through:

- Developing the concept of lifelong learning in the community,
- Encouraging communities to develop volunteerism and philanthropy,
- Promoting tolerance and inter-culturalism,
- Supporting poverty reduction and prevention,
- Supporting the UN Millennium Development Goals.

EDC provides capacity-building to NGOs and initiatives and permanent monitoring of their work and progress. The largest number of their activities are directed towards the training and instruction of existing organizations. The support for economic development goes through a process of encouraging the empowerment of citizens in their entrepreneurial endeavours and support to existing SMEs. EDC provides various forms of training for starting a business, business planning, accountancy, marketing etc. In support of youth initiatives EDC is based on inclusion, participation and raises the impact of youth groups in the future development of society.

CLARD, KOSOVO

CLARD is a local NGO founded in 2007 with the purpose of contributing to the promotion and protection of human rights, with a particular view to facilitating vulnerable individuals with better access to justice, to the establishment of rule of law and to foster social and economic inclusion of marginalized segments of the population towards achieving a future feasible achievement of European standards of development and welfare.

CLARD staff present a multi-ethnic profile with a deep understanding of Kosovo's society and its legal and economical framework and has been committed for more than 8 years to the implementation of projects that have been and will continue to be primarily focused on the following activities:

- Providing legal and social assistance and counseling to internally displaced persons, refugees, returnees, minorities and vulnerable groups.
- Permanently following activities and developing legal system especially in stage of implementation of different laws.
- Organizing public campaigns and trainings in purpose of raising the awareness of population especially in the field of law and social issues.
- Preparing strategic documents and operative programs related with rule of law and civil and administrative legal issues.
- Advising and supporting of small and medium enterprises development through productive aid grants, and boost an enabling environment for private sector development.
- Supporting the access to labour market of socio-economic vulnerable groups through vocational training workshops.
- Cooperating with relevant organizations and institutions inside and outside of country, in purpose of implementation of the projects on local and regional level.<http://www.clardkosovo.org/>

SMART, CROATIA

The Association for Civil Society Development, SMART, is a non-profit organisation existing since 1999. Its programs include: educational programs, volunteer program, publishing, community-needs assessment, organisational capacities assessment, sectoral networking and intersectoral cooperation. One of the main activities is to build organisational capacities through educational workshops, consultations and technical assistance. Technical support and consultations are adjusted to specific needs and requests of individual civil society organisations facing particular problems or wishing to develop new knowledge and skills within the organisation. To fully respond to the needs of potential beneficiaries and local communities, SMART regularly conducts needs assessments. In its work SMART engages external experts and volunteers and operates in partnership with other national and international organisations.

<http://www.smart.hr/index.php?lang=en>

DELFIN, MONTENEGRO

Eco-centre "Delfin" is a non-profit organisation that exists since 2000. Its mission is to contribute to the improvement of the environment through the implementation of environmental education and initiatives in an innovative, transparent and efficient manner. The Eco-centre is also a coordinator for cooperation between NGOs and the Ministry of Tourism and has a representative in the coordination team for the Management Plan of the protected area of Kotor in the field of natural resources-UNESCO.

Main projects:

- "LEAP for all Kotor" 2002-Royal Netherlands Embassy (Local Environmental Action Plan of opportunities for development of Kotor as an Ecological Municipality)
- European standards on protecting the environment for the Municipality of Kotor " LEAP 2006.EAR
- The management plan of world natural and cultural heritage of Kotor - 2006 Parliament of Montenegro
- Information and education campaign "Our waste, our concern" - PUC Kotor 2007.
- Watchdog initiative-legislation-Waste-USAID-ORT-MAP 2007.
- Catalog of medicinal and aromatic plants of the Montenegrin coast - the Ministry for Tourism and Environment-2009.
- Waste - how they start and where to go "- Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of 2010
- Sustainable waste management in cross-border area of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, the EU IPA CB 2011/2012

LIR, BOSNIA I HERZEGOVINA

Local Development Initiative (LIR) was founded in 2003. It is a non-governmental, development, consulting and research agency. It is qualified to work on different aspects of economic development, environmental protection and management, energy efficiency and waste management.

The organisation has a long-term extensive experience in the identification, design and implementation of integrated and development projects funded by European Union and other various financiers. LIR's employees and associates have extensive experience in business development, rural and agribusiness development, energy efficiency, waste management and environmental protection.

LIR's mission is to implement and coordinate development projects and to offer consulting services for the purpose of achievement the sustainable development based on a balance between economic and energy efficiency with positive impact to the environment.

http://www.lir.ba/civilno_drustvo_e.html

AWO HEIMATGARTEN, BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

In December 1999, AWO Bremerhaven sets up its Heimatgarten division. Heimatgarten's mission is to provide practical support in life for vulnerable people (elderly, disabled, or traumatised persons) who want to return voluntarily to their native country – Bosnia and Herzegovina, still ravaged by war at that time. Work started in cooperation with the Schlee / Koschnik task force. Heimatgarten helped 533 people with resettlement.

Heimatgarten works all over Germany, and its work is special in its individual approach and in that the re-integration of the returnees is supported and evaluated for up to 24 months after return. During this time, all the necessary practical issues are resolved, so that a really successful social and economic resettlement takes place. Measures to improve the local social infrastructure for everybody to benefit from add to Heimatgarten's approach. This way, the old people's home in Sanski Most, the NADA Integration programme for children and adolescents, as well as the "House of Trust" in Srebrenica were created.

In 2003, Heimatgarten conducts, with Serbian participation, the 1st national conference on drug prevention in Sarajevo. In 2004, the follow-up conference took place in Subotica, Serbia.

<http://www.heimatgarten.de/>

AWO SUBOTICA, SERBIA

In 2003, the first vulnerable people returned to Serbia. Up to now, 429 persons have received help and reintegration support. AWO Subotica assists the returnees with all their practical problems and provides advice to them.

- Counselling and information for returnees
- Individual on-site research
- Support with obtaining documents
- Assistance for starting own business
- Support with restoring residential property
- Job search
- Support with securing medical assistance
- Special support for children and young people

http://www.heimatgarten.de/index.php?article_id=55&clang=1

SOLIDAR

SOLIDAR is a European network of NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. With 56 member organisations based in 25 countries (20 of which are EU countries), member organisations are national NGOs in Europe, as well as some non-EU and EU-wide organisations, working in one or more of our fields of activity.

SOLIDAR has been active for more than 10 years in the Western Balkans, working for equitable and sustainable development in the region.

SOLIDAR is engaged in four main fields:

- building the capacity of trade unions and promoting social dialogue
- protection of human rights and democratisation in the region
- income generation, rural development and health and social services
- humanitarian aid and disaster relief, reconstruction, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) including returnees.

SOLIDAR members, including Olof Palme International Center (Sweden), ASB (Germany), Volkshilfe

(Austria), NPA (Norway), AWO (Germany), Samariterbund (Austria) are working together with over 100 partner organisations including local and national Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), trade unions and employers' unions, and local and national administrations working on social and employment policies.

<http://www.solidar.org/>

VOLKSHILFE, AUSTRIA

Since the end of the socialist regime of the 90s, Volkshilfe is active in aid programs in Eastern Europe. Citizens of many EU neighbourhood countries were confronted with war, extreme poverty, severe unemployment and homelessness. Volkshilfe was supporting civil society projects in eastern and south east Europe to build social infrastructure and services for the sustainable development of a just social system. The countries of the West Balkans have been a focus region for these efforts.

Examples of ongoing projects:

- Agricultural cooperative „HANA Srebrenica“ by the “Women of Srebrenica” to help improve the economic situation in Srebrenica, create jobs and reduce unemployment by producing high quality agricultural goods
- Access to education for Roma children and youths, training 16 tutors in Skopje
- Day Care Center and mobile care for elderly people in Kragujevac, developing local social services and works in accordance with the current social reforms in Serbia
- Support to the women's' shelter Mitrovica.

<http://www.volkshilfe.at/>