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# 50+ Inspirations

How CSOs Change the Society



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# 50+ Inspirations -How CSOs Change the Society

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# 50+ Inspirations

How CSOs Change the Society

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# Introduction

This publication was created as part of the programme *CSOs in Montenegro – From Basic Services to Policy Shaping* – M'BASE, implemented by the Centre for Civic Education (CCE), in partnership with the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), the NGO Centre for Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro (CZIP), and the NGO Politikon Network, and with the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of European Affairs of the Government of Montenegro as associates. The project is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Ministry of Public Administration.

The publication provides insight into joint efforts aimed at empowering civil society organizations (CSOs) in Montenegro. Through the M'BASE programme, 91 projects across the country have been supported, creating a platform for enhancing organizational capacities, strengthening local communities, and stimulating social change in critical areas such as democratization and Europeanization, youth development, gender equality, environmental protection, other aspects of human rights, education, anti-corruption, and more.

*"50+ Inspirations: How CSOs Transform Society"* presents a selection of over 50 project stories that reflect the successes and impact of CSOs on the quality of life of Montenegro's citizens. These stories testify to the dedication, innovative approaches, and vision of organizations that have driven change at both local and national levels. While many other projects are equally worthy of attention, the selected examples demonstrate how concrete initiatives, regardless of their scope, can improve society and become models of good practice.

This publication is not only a showcase of successful initiatives but also a reminder of the power of collective action and solidarity in addressing diverse societal challenges. Through these stories, we aim to highlight the efforts of all organizations, individuals, and communities that have contributed and inspired others to actively engage in driving necessary changes.

This is also a call to institutions and decision-makers to further invest in the development of civil society as a key partner in the democratization and Europeanization of Montenegro. It is essential to make their work more visible, recognizable, and effective. Each story in this publication is evidence that it is possible to build a more inclusive, just, and sustainable society, and it is our collective responsibility to enable even more such stories in the future.

# Collaboration for Improving the Position of PwD in Tuzi

**Project implemented by:** NGO Children of Montenegro

**Project partner:** Municipality of Tuzi

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Persons with disabilities (PwD) and children with developmental difficulties in educational, cultural, and social activities in Tuzi lack necessary support, and there are no conditions for their inclusion. Local institutions and NGOs lack sufficient capacity to monitor human rights and implement relevant laws. There is a need for stronger collaboration between sectors and greater visibility of PwD rights in the public sphere. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project was to improve the position of PwD in the municipality of Tuzi by enhancing intersectoral cooperation, strengthening the capacities of institutions, non-governmental organizations, teaching staff, and parents, as well as promoting the rights of PwD.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Improvement of Intersectoral Cooperation:

- trained 14 members of the working group for monitoring the Local Action Plan (LAP);
- organized 4 meetings of the working group for LAP monitoring.

### Raising Awareness and Knowledge:

- the “Overcoming Barriers” campaign included media releases (14 media reports and billboards), along with online activities that reached over 25,000 views.

### Strengthening Teaching Staff:

- trained 40 teachers from primary and secondary schools to prepare Individual Development Education Plans (IDEP) and Individual Transition Plans (ITP).

### Support for Parents and Children:

- conducted 10 workshops for parents and 10 workshops for children, aimed at empowering families and children with developmental disabilities.

### Advocacy for Change:

- submitted an initiative to adapt the local park for persons with disabilities.

## PROJECT IMPACT

This project strengthened the capacities of local institutions and CSOs to provide support to PwD, while also improving the inclusion of children with developmental disabilities in the education system and social activities. Additionally, it enhanced the awareness of citizens of Municipality of Tuzi about the rights and needs of PwDs, as well as intersectoral cooperation, which will ensure the sustainability of the project’s results. Furthermore, the project served as a model for the further development of similar activities and initiatives in the Tuzi municipality and beyond.

# Civil Society Organizations as Effective Actors in the Decision-Making Process

Project implemented by: NGO Eco – Team (ET)

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** CSOs, media, and citizens lack sufficient capacity and knowledge regarding processes related to the implementation of wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) projects and their importance from ecological, sustainability, and EU perspectives. Public awareness of the significance of environmental protection is exceptionally low. Taking this into account, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to enhance the role of CSOs as professional and effective actors in the decision-making process, with a focus on the implementation of WWTPs in the Central and Northern regions of Montenegro, as well as to raise public awareness about the importance of environmental protection and EU integration.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthening the Capacities of CSOs and Media:

- strengthened capacities of 11 CSOs through trainings in Bijelo Polje and Pljevlja for participation in decision-making processes and public advocacy;
- 10 representatives improved their knowledge about the issues and importance of WWTPs through training in Podgorica.

### Raising Public Awareness:

- a public campaign informed over 413,000 people about the importance of WWTPs;

- produced and distributed 4 animations and brochures explaining the significance of WWTPs to CSOs and citizens.

### Analysis and Recommendations:

- an analysis of the status of WWTPs in the central and northern regions was developed and made available on the NGO Eco-Team website;
- recommendations for improving the state of WWTPs were developed and presented at a roundtable with decision-makers.

### Advocacy for Improving the State of WWTPs:

- a roundtable was organized, bringing together 30 participants from the public sector, CSOs, media, and experts to advocate for solutions to WWTP issues.

## PROJECT IMPACT

Empowered CSOs now play a more active role in decision-making processes and in monitoring WWTP projects, while media outlets provide more substantive reporting on environmental protection issues and WWTPs, contributing to better-informed citizens. Additionally, the socio-political climate for the further implementation of WWTP projects has improved. The project has also strengthened participatory democracy and raised awareness of the right to a healthy environment, positioning Eco-Team as one of the leaders in the WWTP field in Montenegro.



# Empowering Civil Society in the Fight Against Land Degradation and Protected Area Destruction

**Project implemented by:** Center for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro (CIN-CG)  
**Project partner:** Expeditio

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Boka Kotorska, as a UNESCO protected area, is facing inadequate spatial planning, excessive urbanization, and inefficient legislation. Institutional irresponsibility and weaknesses in law enforcement further threatens the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the area. Taking this into account, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to contribute to the preservation of nature and the protection of cultural heritage on the Montenegrin coast, particularly in Boka Kotorska, through research, spatial plan analysis, and increasing the involvement of experts, citizens, and the media in decision-making processes related to spatial planning. The project also supports Montenegro's European integration process, with a focus on Chapters 27 (Environment), 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights), and 24 (Justice, Freedom, and Security).

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Raising Awareness and Research Work:

- 6 research articles published on threats to protected areas, with a total reach of over 200,000 views across various platforms;
- produced a documentary film titled Boka Kotorska and UNESCO Status: Endangered Heritage was produced, screened at a conference and on TV Vijesti, available also online.

### Strengthening the Capacities of Journalists and CSOs:

- organized a training session for 12 journalists on spatial planning and heritage protection, which participants rated highly;
- published an analysis of key issues and a case study on the threats to Boka Bay, available in both print and electronic versions.

### Advocacy and Networking:

- organized a final conference, gathering 47 participants, including experts, Government representatives, and media, where results and recommendations for improving legislation and practices were presented;
- the study and recommendations shared with relevant institutions and published in electronic format.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project improved the efficiency and transparency of the spatial planning system on the Montenegrin coast. It also opened a dialogue between decision-makers, the media, and CSOs, raising public awareness and enhancing capacities for the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. Journalists and experts, whose capacities were strengthened, continue to monitor and investigate challenges in the areas of spatial planning and environmental protection.

# HEP START!

Project implemented by: NGO Hepatitis Montenegro – HEP MNE

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Montenegro faces challenges in preventing, testing for, and treating viral hepatitis, including insufficient public awareness, weaknesses in the legislative framework, and limited capacities within the healthcare system. A stronger focus is needed on coordination among civil society organizations (CSOs), healthcare institutions, and local governments to provide a more effective response to this public health threat. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project was to contribute to the elimination of viral hepatitis in Montenegro by 2030 through strengthening CSO capacities, improving the legislative framework, and raising public awareness of prevention, testing, and treatment.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthening the legislative and policy framework:

- conducted an analysis of Montenegro's alignment with EU practices and World Health Organization recommendations;
- organized the panel discussion "Elimination of Viral Hepatitis by 2030," which brought together 23 participants.

### Improving cross-sector cooperation:

- held 11 thematic meetings with local govern-

ments and relevant institutions;

- established cooperation with the Capital City of Podgorica and the Municipality of Tivat.

### Building CSO capacities:

- conducted two training sessions for CSOs, attended by 19 participants, on patient support models and effective communication with the media.

### Awareness-raising campaign:

- reached over 216,000 individuals with informative content through online and field activities;
- distributed educational materials for patients and healthcare professionals.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project has strengthened the capacity of CSOs to support hepatitis patients while enhancing intersectoral cooperation and the visibility of efforts to eliminate viral hepatitis. By raising citizens' awareness of the importance of prevention and treatment, it contributes to meeting global targets by 2030. Furthermore, the project has laid the groundwork for continued capacity building, collaboration, and additional initiatives in this field.

# Know Your Rights – Citizens and the Police!

**Project implemented by:** NGO Human Rights Action (HRA)

**Project associates:** Police Directorate and the Ministry of the Interior

## **Brief overview of the situation and objective**

**of the action:** The level of citizens' awareness regarding their rights and obligations in relation to the police is low, and public trust in police work needs significant improvement. Inadequate communication and insufficient transparency further hinder citizens from actively monitoring and evaluating police performance. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project was to increase the awareness of Montenegrin citizens about their rights and obligations concerning the police, strengthen trust between citizens and the police, and encourage more active public participation in overseeing police work.

## **Improving trust and cooperation with the police:**

- organized educational workshops in schools for young people in cooperation with police officers.
- held meetings and established collaborative arrangements with the Ministry of the Interior and the Police Directorate.

## **Providing legal support to citizens:**

- offered free legal advice to over 50 citizens through various communication channels.

## **RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Increasing citizens' awareness:**

- published a manual on citizens' rights and obligations, with 20,000 copies distributed through print media and local police departments.
- developed a youth-oriented comic-strip guide on peer violence, drug abuse, and driving without a license, available in both Montenegrin and Albanian.
- produced animated video materials containing key information for citizens.

## **PROJECT IMPACT**

Citizens' awareness of their rights and obligations regarding the police has increased by more than 50%, as confirmed by public opinion surveys and quizzes. Trust in police work has grown by 20%, fostered by greater transparency and direct engagement. Approximately 40,000 citizens were directly involved in project activities, contributing to long-term democratization and the strengthening of the rule of law. This project has also laid the groundwork for further cooperation among citizens, CSOs, and institutions to enhance transparency and protect human rights.

# Active Citizens for Better Media

**Project implemented by:** Media Centre

**Project partner:** Foundation Assistance – Action for the North of Montenegro

## **Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:**

A lack of active citizen participation in monitoring the media, low levels of media literacy, and underdeveloped mechanisms for filing complaints against electronic media highlight the need for initiatives that foster professionalization and improve the quality of media reporting. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project was to increase the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and citizens in monitoring and improving the quality of work of media outlets and media institutions in Montenegro. The specific objective was to empower citizens and NGOs to undertake their own initiatives aimed at the media.

## **RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Strengthened media literacy among citizens and NGOs:**

- conducted 14 one-day training sessions in 14 municipalities for a total of 167 participants;
- produced and broadcast a TV spot on the importance of media literacy, aired on several electronic media outlets;
- awarded a prize for civic activism.

### **Established a support service for filing complaints:**

- prepared a “Guide to Filing Complaints on Electronic Media Content”;
- provided 64 instances of advice to citizens for filing complaints;
- broadcasted a TV spot promoting the support service for citizens.

### **Fact-based monitoring of regulations:**

- produced an annual report on the implementation of the Law on Electronic Media;
- organized a conference with over 50 participants from institutions and NGOs;
- formed the Civil Society Network for Advancing Media Pluralism, gathering 76 members.

## **PROJECT IMPACT**

The project contributed to increasing citizens’ awareness of their role in media professionalization, improving cooperation with institutions, and initiating changes in the regulations and practices of electronic media. The Civil Society Network continued its work beyond the project’s conclusion, ensuring the long-term impact of its results.

# Empowering and Supporting Women with Experiences of Violence

**Project implemented by:** SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence Bijelo Polje  
**Project associates:** Police Directorate, Basic Court, Basic State Prosecutor's Office, Center for Social Work, Health Center, and Municipality of Bijelo Polje

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Violence against women in Montenegro is widespread, particularly in the northern region. Victims often have limited access to legal and psychological assistance, while institutional support and intersectoral cooperation remain insufficiently developed. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project was to empower and support women who have experienced violence by providing accessible services, raising awareness, offering individualized support, and improving inter-institutional cooperation for more effective protection of women victims of violence.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Ensured SOS hotline service:

- available 24/7, receiving 179 calls during the project's duration;
- documented 51 reported cases of violence, providing accompanying legal support and mediation.

### Established a self-support system:

- formed a group of 10 women;
- held 32 workshops focused on empowerment, education, and confidence building.

### Provided individual support:

- offered psychological assistance to 17 women (both telephone and in-person support);
- provided legal support to 53 women, including drafting lawsuits, appeals, and requests;
- a confidential representative supported 18 beneficiaries during court proceedings.

### Improved cooperation with institutions:

- organized a roundtable with representatives of key institutions (police, courts, social work);
- defined joint activities and enhanced intersectoral collaboration.

### Increased awareness through media promotion:

- published articles, broadcasts, and brochures with information on available services.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project directly supported 114 women through various services, increased the visibility of the issue of violence, and improved institutional responses. The establishment of self-help groups and strengthened institutional cooperation contributed to the sustainability of the project's outcomes. Additionally, the community is now better informed about the rights of violence victims.

# EU Information Corner in Northern Montenegro

**Project implemented by:** NGO Multimedial Montenegro

**Project partner:** NGO Northern Land

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The Northern region of Montenegro faces insufficient awareness among citizens about European integration, low youth participation, and underdeveloped capacities of CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) for active involvement in social processes. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to increase citizens' awareness about the European integration process and EU values, with a focus on youth and CSOs in northern Montenegro.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Establishment of the EU Info Corner:

- a functional EU info corner was set up in Bijelo Polje, and mobile info points were organized in Berane, Kolašin, Mojkovac, and Rožaje;
- organized more than 60 activities, with the direct participation of 1,130 beneficiaries.

### Increased knowledge and visibility:

- conducted educational sessions for representatives of CSOs, media, and youth;

- organized public events, exhibitions, concerts, and film nights dedicated to EU topics;
- the news portal and social media campaigns reached over 900,000 views.

### Improved cooperation and networking:

- 20 CSOs from Northern Montenegro were networked into the "Team for Europe";
- meetings between CSOs and local authorities were held to strengthen cooperation and improve the regulatory framework.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project has significantly contributed to increasing the visibility of the European integration process in northern Montenegro, strengthening CSOs and youth, and promoting better cooperation with local authorities. The continuation of the EU info corner activities ensures the sustainability of the achieved results and further dissemination of information about EU processes in this region of Montenegro.

# E-Accessibility for Citizen Activism of Persons with Disabilities

**Project implemented by:** Union of the Blind of Montenegro

**Project partners:** Organization of Visually Impaired for Nikšić, Šavnik and Plužine; Organization of Visually Impaired for Pljevlja and Žabljak; Organization of Visually Impaired for Bar and Ulcinj

**Project associates:** Organization of Visually Impaired for Podgorica, Danilovgrad, and Kolašin; Organization of Visually Impaired for Cetinje; Organization of Visually Impaired for Bijelo Polje and Mojkovac; Organization of Visually Impaired for Berane, Andrijevica, Plav, and Rožaje; Organization of Visually Impaired for Kotor, Herceg Novi, Budva, and Tivat.

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Research has shown that no local government website in Montenegro is fully accessible to persons with visual impairments. Deficiencies in e-accessibility prevent persons with disabilities from having equal access to information and participating in decision-making at the local level. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to improve e-accessibility conditions at the local level for persons with disabilities (PWD) in order to enable their equal participation in social processes, increase their civic activism, and promote inclusion within local communities.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### E-Accessibility Monitoring:

- conducted on 26 local government websites and the Union of Municipalities' website;
- produced a report with recommendations for improving e-accessibility;
- presented results at a media conference and roundtable discussions.

### Collaboration with the Union of Municipalities:

- signed a Cooperation Agreement to enhance

e-accessibility and inclusion of PWD.

### Organized Roundtable Discussions:

- Seven roundtable discussions with 64 participants, including 31 representatives of local governments;
- Discussions focused on improving e-accessibility and the inclusion of PWD.

### Visibility of the Issue:

- produced and broadcasted 6 video spots;
- numerous appearances on TV and radio stations.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project has promoted the inclusion of PWD by raising awareness about the need for e-accessibility in local communities. Some municipalities, such as Podgorica, Budva, and Herceg Novi, have implemented elements of e-accessibility on their websites. While significant progress has been made, continuous efforts are needed to improve and sustain such initiatives.

# To the North on Two Wheels

**Project implemented by:** NGO Biciklo.me

**Project partners:** NGO New Beginning and NGO White Lily

**Project associate:** Coalition for Sustainable Development

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** In northern Montenegro, cycling as a mode of transport and recreation has not been developed, despite the existing potential. The lack of cycling infrastructure, citizen unawareness, and the limited capacity of local communities and institutions hindered the wider use of bicycles. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to promote sustainable urban mobility and improve conditions for cycling traffic in the municipalities of Kolašin, Rožaje, and Žabljak, alongside activities focused on raising citizens' awareness, strengthening local communities' capacities, and developing infrastructure solutions.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Research and Strategies:

- conducted a study on travel habits, involving 1,137 citizens from the three municipalities (Kolašin, Rožaje, and Žabljak);
- created cycling development strategies for all three municipalities (2022–2026).

### Strengthening Local Communities:

- held workshops with cycling communities (31

participants) and municipal councilors (29 councilors);

- organized a regional meeting for local government officials in Kolašin.

### Infrastructure Development and Promotion:

- installed 12 bike parking racks at key locations;
- organized promotional cycling tours with over 90 participants;
- held a reward competition for primary school students with valuable prizes.

## PROJECT IMPACT

This project has raised awareness of sustainable mobility and cycling as an alternative to traditional transport. The established infrastructure and developed strategies have contributed to the long-term sustainability of the results, and local communities have been empowered for further development and promotion of cycling. The project activities significantly improved ecological awareness and supported local tourism through the promotion of cycle tourism.



# Local Government at Your Fingertips

**Project implemented by:** NGO ALFA Center

**Project partners:** Media Team, SOS Helpline Nikšić, Ecological Movement Ozon, Association for Assistance to Persons with Developmental Disabilities, and Business Center

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** In Nikšić, there is a low level of transparency in the work of local government and insufficient citizen involvement in the decision-making process. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have limited capacities to monitor and control the work of public institutions. **The OBJECTIVE** of this project was to increase the transparency of local government operations and strengthen the capacities of CSOs and citizens of Nikšić through the development of a digital platform and mobile application to monitor the work of local authorities.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthening CSO Capacities:

- held training sessions for 6 CSOs from Nikšić on local government monitoring;
- developed an evaluation report on the work of local government in 6 key areas and publicly presented.

### Development of a Digital Platform and Mobile Application:

- created the “Local Government at Your Fingertips” platform, allowing citizens direct communication with local officials;

- developed a mobile application for Android devices.

### Public Awareness:

- organized a media conference to present the results and the platform;
- intensive promotion of the results through social media, media outlets, and local events.

### Citizen Participation:

- organized focus group discussions with representatives of local communities to adapt the platform to users’ needs.

## PROJECT IMPACT

This project has enhanced the transparency of local government operations in Nikšić and increased the level of civic activism. The developed tools have ensured the long-term sustainability of the results, while CSOs have been empowered for more active participation in decision-making processes and public institution oversight. At the same time, digital innovations have provided citizens with greater insight into the work of the authorities and facilitated communication.

# Digital Compass for Employment

Project implemented by: NGO Interlingua

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Youth in Montenegro face an inadequate educational system, weak preparation for the labor market, and limited opportunities for non-formal education that could enhance their skills and employability. **The OBJECTIVE** of this project is to improve the quality of educational policies by strengthening the capacities of youth, encouraging their active participation in decision-making, and promoting non-formal education as a supplement to formal education.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Empowering Youth through Education:

- organized workshops and seminars focused on key life skills and active citizenship;
- over 150 young people from various regions participated.

### Development of Educational Tools:

- created an online platform for exchanging resources and materials for non-formal education;

- developed and published a handbook for youth on their rights in the educational process.

### Improvement of Educational Policies:

- organized roundtables and conferences with decision-makers, CSOs, and youth;
- submitted recommendations for education reforms to the Ministry of Education.

### Raising Awareness:

- conducted a media campaign on social media to highlight the importance of non-formal education.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project has contributed to raising youth awareness of their rights and role in decision-making, empowered opportunities for their involvement in educational reform processes, and provided important foundations for further development of education policies tailored to labor market needs. The developed tools and capacities have ensured the long-term sustainability of the project's results.

# I See the Artist!

# I Sense a Better Society

**Project implemented by:** Association of Fine Artists of Montenegro

**Project associates:** Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Montenegro, Public Institution Center for Cultural Activities of Bijelo Polje, and Public Institution Museum and Gallery of Tivat

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Young artists in Montenegro face limited opportunities for promotion and support, while cultural institutions and the education system do not provide adequate resources for the development of the independent art scene. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to promote young artists, strengthen the capacity of the independent cultural scene, and raise awareness about the importance of art in societal development.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Promotion of Young Artists:

- organized a competition with the participation of 35 young artists;
- 10 artists were selected to present their works in public spaces;
- produced 10 artworks and accompanying video statements and published on the YouTube channel.

### Capacity Building and Visibility:

- organized an exhibition of 35 young artists at

the Art Pavilion of the ULUCG (Association of Fine Artists of Montenegro);

- held an expert conference titled "Independent Culture, Here and Now", gathering 40 participants, including artists, institution representatives, and CSOs;
- produced a digital brochure and promotional materials.

### Collaboration and Sustainability:

- established collaboration with educational institutions and local cultural centres;
- created a platform for the long-term promotion of the works and young artists.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project has strengthened the role of young artists in Montenegro's cultural life, increased their visibility, and improved cooperation between artistic and educational institutions. The tools created and mechanisms established ensure a long-term contribution to the development of the independent cultural scene.

# Scientific Caravan to the EU – Enhancing Scientific Literacy of Youth in Montenegro

**Project implemented by:** Foundation for the Promotion of Science – PRONA

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Scientific literacy in Montenegro is characterized by a low level of STEM-based education and limited awareness among youth regarding the prospects of scientific careers. There is a need to improve infrastructure, provide continuous training for teaching staff, and encourage youth participation in scientific research through innovative programs and events. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project was to promote science and enhance scientific literacy among young people in Montenegro in line with European standards.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### The Traveling Science Caravan:

- Organized in 10 municipalities (Herceg Novi, Kotor, Bar, Nikšić, Danilovgrad, Kolašin, Rožaje, Andrijevica, Žabljak, and Plužine), with a total of 1,072 students participating;
- created and distributed 500 educational brochures to students and teachers, promoting the practical application of STEM;
- engaged 10 demonstrators to present experiments in the fields of physics, chemistry, biology, and electronics.

### Workshops for Teachers:

- held 3 two-day training sessions for teachers from three regions of Montenegro, gathering 28 teachers;
- developed a workshop programme focusing on the integration of STEM in regular teaching and the application of the Inquiry-Based Science Education (IBSE) methodology.

### Analysis and Promotion of Science Policies:

- prepared a comprehensive Analysis of the Implementation of National Programmes in the field of science and innovation;
- organized a symposium and a national conference, with 76 participants from the scientific community, institutions, and CSOs.

### Youth Information Center:

- established a STEM Corner as an information center to support youth in choosing STEM careers, with hybrid meetings held for 16 young people;
- prepared information about scholarships, exchange programmes, and educational opportunities in STEM fields.

### Project Promotion:

- designed and regularly updated project website with news and interesting science facts;
- created 5 animations to promote science, festival results, and the findings of the analysis;
- A media campaign was conducted, reaching 38,201 users via social media.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project has significantly contributed to the improvement of scientific literacy among youth, increased interest in STEM education, and empowered teaching staff to apply modern methods in teaching. The established Info Center and the Traveling Science Caravan ensure the long-term promotion of science and the sustainable development of young talent in Montenegro.

# Music for Everyone! – Strengthening the Capacities of CSOs in the Field of Copyright and Related Rights Protection in Montenegro

## Project implemented by:

NGO Organization for the Protection of Music Authors' Rights of Montenegro – PAM MNE

Project partner: NGO STIVI MUSIC

Project associate: KIC "Budo Tomović"

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Copyright protection in Montenegro is insufficiently developed, with weak implementation of legal solutions and limited knowledge among authors and users on this topic. There is a need for better cooperation between CSOs, state institutions, and copyright users, which is why the project's **OBJECTIVE** is to strengthen the capacities of CSOs in the field of copyright protection in Montenegro, increase awareness about the importance of intellectual property, and promote cultural and creative industries.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Increased awareness and education of target groups:

- held an educational workshop for young authors and musicians, with over 30 participants;
- organized a seminar for users of musical works, including representatives of institutions and the private sector.

### Strengthening the capacities of CSOs and institutional cooperation:

- held a conference on the protection of intellec-

tual property, with participation of key stakeholders from Montenegro and the region;

- developed a cooperation with state institutions and initiated a dialogue on legal solutions.

### Promotion of cultural and creative industries:

- organized a concert at KIC "Budo Tomović" with more than 300 visitors, attracting media attention and the music community;
- launched a media campaign on the importance of copyright, reaching a wide audience via social networks and the media.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project increased awareness and knowledge about copyright protection, encouraged greater CSO participation in decision-making processes, and improved cooperation with state institutions. Additionally, the cultural and music scene was strengthened by promoting local talent and reinforcing the network of authors and users of copyrighted works. The successful implementation of the project laid the foundation for new initiatives in this field.

# Active Youth for European Values

**Project implemented by:** NGO Sociological Center of Montenegro (SOCEN)

**Project partner:** NGO Interaction

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Young people in Montenegro face insufficient participation in decision-making, limited knowledge of public policies, and weak mechanisms for involvement in societal processes. Youth organizations have limited capacity for effective action. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to empower young people in Montenegro by strengthening their social activism, participation in decision-making, and creation of youth policies, with a focus on promoting European values.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Strengthening the capacities of young people and youth organizations:**

- organized 6 meetings with youth organizations in three Montenegrin regions;
- conducted 3 workshops on drafting practical public policies, with mentorship by experts.

### **Publication and promotion of analyses:**

- 3 policy briefs published: "Psychological Support in High Schools," "Working While Studying," and "Student Standards";

- results presented at a national conference attended by 60 participants.

### **Improving knowledge of European values:**

- organized 3 interactive workshops on youth activism and European values;
- held a two-day school, "Youth as Creators of Youth Policies".

### **Raising awareness and promoting results:**

- conducted a media campaign with 21 social media posts, 4 TV appearances, and 10 media articles;
- organized a round table on anti-fascism and European values.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project strengthened the capacities of youth organizations and empowered young people to participate in policymaking, while promoting European values in Montenegrin society. The results, including documents that contributed to public policies, enabled young people to actively advocate for change among decision-makers, creating a framework for future projects and enhancing civic activism.

# Together for a Clearer and Cleaner River Vezišnica

**Project implemented by:** NGO Better Life for a Countryside

**Project partner:** NGO Legalis

**Project associates:** Secretariat for Housing and Municipal Affairs, Transport and Water of the Municipality of Pljeverlja; NGO Information center Pljeverlja; and Sports Fishing Club "Lipljen"

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The Vezišnica River in the Municipality of Pljeverlja is recognized as one of the most polluted watercourses in the region, with significant issues of illegal wastewater discharges and a lack of public awareness about environmental protection. Therefore, the project's **OBJECTIVE** is to raise awareness and improve the management of municipal wastewater in the Vezišnica River based in Pljeverlja through the creation of a register of illegal discharges, educating citizens, and promoting sustainable practices.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Creation of a register of illegal discharges:

- identified 85 illegal municipal wastewater discharges along a 12 km stretch;
- submitted the register to the competent municipal secretariats in Pljeverlja, which initiated measures to address the problem.

### Education and raising awareness:

- produced and distributed 200 educational brochures and 1000 leaflets on the wastewater issue;
- surveyed 100 households to gather information and educate residents.

### Media and promotional activities:

- produced and broadcast the documentary film "Vezišnica – River or Collector!?" on YouTube and local media;
- organized an environmental cleanup at the Perova Luka picnic area, involving 35 participants, including elementary school students and volunteers.

### Lectures and public discussions:

- held a round table with representatives of local authorities, inspections, and the NGO sector, where project results and future plans were presented.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project significantly improved awareness among local residents and relevant institutions about the issue of municipal wastewater management in Pljeverlja. The submitted register served as a basis for multiple initiatives, such as obtaining 85 bio-purifiers for households, ensuring the continuation of activities and the long-term sustainability of results. The Vezišnica River has become a symbol of responsible environmental stewardship.

# Media for a Responsible Society

**Project implemented by:** NGO Media Association of Southeast Europe

**Project partners:** Institute for Media of Montenegro (IMCG) and the Society of Professional Journalists of Montenegro (DPNCG)

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The Montenegrin media space often features content containing hate speech, discrimination, and disinformation. Journalists and media workers face attacks and insufficient institutional protection, while young people lose trust in traditional media due to a lack of quality content. Therefore, the project's **OBJECTIVE** is to improve media reporting and raise awareness about hate speech and discrimination, while enhancing the capacities of journalists and media workers in Montenegro.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Analyses and training:

- produced an analysis entitled “Ethical Dilemmas in Reporting”, focusing on hate speech against women, LGBTQ people, and Roma communities;
- organized 3 trainings for 73 journalists in the Central, Southern and Northern regions of Montenegro.

### Support for journalists:

- provided 40 psychological sessions for 20 journalists, as well as 3 psychodrama sessions;
- An analysis of institutional response to attacks on journalists was developed.

### Campaigns and education:

- conducted a media campaign on hate speech via social networks and traditional media.
- 4 educational advertisements were produced and disseminated on social media, reaching over 100,000 views.

### Research on media content for youth:

- conducted 2 opinion polls and 4 focus groups on young people's preferences in seeking information;
- organized 2 trainings for the media on creating innovative content for youth, supported by mentors.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project improved the capacity of journalists and media outlets to recognize and reduce hate speech, offered support to journalists facing professional challenges, and positively influenced the quality of media content for young audiences. The campaigns significantly contributed to raising awareness about discrimination, and the tools and research developed laid the groundwork for further work in this area.



# For Integrity in Public Sector Employment

Project implemented by: NGO Institute Alternative

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Public sector employment in Montenegro is characterized by corrupt practices, political influence, and a lack of transparency. Poor regulations and weak law enforcement hinder efforts to combat these issues, while public awareness of citizens' rights remains low. This project's **OBJECTIVE** is to contribute to the fight against corruption and political clientelism in public sector employment through the creation of an interactive risk map, the promotion of anti-corruption mechanisms, and strengthening civic activism.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Risk mapping and analysis:

- created an interactive risk map of corruption in public employment and made available at [ma-pa-rizika.me](http://ma-pa-rizika.me);
- produced the analysis "Neither Client nor Master!", offering 23 recommendations for improving employment practices.

### Education and dialogue:

- conducted 3 focus groups with 24 participants from NGOs, the media, and trade unions;
- organized a workshop for 20 journalists and activists on corrupt practices, receiving an average quality rating of 4.92;

- A two-day forum in Budva brought together 58 participants from various societal sectors.

### Campaign and visibility:

- The "Neither Client nor Master!" campaign was carried out with 63 posts and 75 visuals on social media, reaching an average of 19,088 users per post;
- produced 10 video animations on corruption risks.

### Initiatives:

- Five initiatives for inspection oversight of employment practices were submitted, and four responses were received from the competent institutions.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project improved the transparency of public sector employment, strengthened civic activism, and fostered dialogue between institutions and civil society. The developed tools and recommendations ensure the sustainability of results, while the interactive risk map remains a key resource for monitoring and preventing corruption in this area. The Declaration on Combating Political Clientelism is gathering support, contributing to the strengthening of the rule of law in Montenegro.

# Towards Socially Responsible Local Budgeting

**Project implemented by:** NGO Forum for the Development of Democracy

**Project partner:** NGO Udica

**Project associate:** D.O.O. Pljevlja News

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Local governments in Montenegro face challenges regarding transparency in the budgeting process, insufficient citizen involvement, and limited capacities for effective monitoring and control of public finances. Therefore, this project's **OBJECTIVE** is to improve the transparency and quality of the budgetary process at the local level in the municipalities of Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja, and Berane, empower citizens to participate in the budgeting process, and promote civic oversight.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Research and analyses:

- conducted a study on the quality of the budgeting process in three Northern municipalities over the last five years;
- produced a publication "Through the Labyrinths of Local Budgets", presenting key findings, including analyses of budgeting planning and implementation practices.

### Citizen guides:

- created budget guides for the citizens of Bijelo

Polje and Berane, focusing on key information to help them better understand local budgets.

### Education and information:

- held a training session on public finances for NGO sector representatives;
- produced and broadcasted a video spot was, highlighting the importance of the budget calendar and citizen participation;
- held 3 public forums in the targeted municipalities to present research findings to citizens.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project raised citizens' awareness of the importance of the budgeting process and their role in monitoring local government work. The publications produced and the trainings held strengthened the capacities of local communities for civic oversight and influenced increased transparency of local governments. Citizen and NGO sector participation in matters of public interest was also enhanced, contributing to the project's long-term sustainability and the democratization of local budgetary practices.

# FOR A HEALTHIER HEALTHCARE SYSTEM!

**Project implemented by:** NGO Center for Monitoring and Research (CeMI)

**Project partner:** NGO Bonum

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The healthcare system in Montenegro faces challenges such as corruption, low patient awareness of their rights, inefficiencies in healthcare institutions, and inadequate responses to patient needs. This project's **OBJECTIVE** is to improve the healthcare system in Montenegro through analyzing healthcare institutions, empowering patient rights, reducing corruption in healthcare, and raising citizens' awareness of their rights.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Analysis and proposals for improvement:

- conducted An analysis of 26 healthcare institutions, including a detailed review of 30 legal documents;
- prepared a study with 22 specific recommendations for improving the healthcare system.

### Empowering citizens and promoting patient rights:

- organized 5 focus groups with patients and 10 interviews with healthcare workers;
- produced 50 promotional posters and distributed to healthcare institutions;
- a media campaign reached more than 450,000

citizens, including TV appearances and social media coverage.

### Mobile app for reporting corruption:

- a mobile app for anonymous reporting of corruption was developed and improved, available for Android, iOS, and web users;
- reported 39 cases of corruption, and 11 were forwarded to the competent institutions.

### Advocacy and collaboration:

- held a round table with 54 participants, including decision-makers and representatives of healthcare institutions;
- organized 10 formal meetings with key stakeholders in healthcare.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project contributed to a better understanding of challenges in the healthcare system and encouraged dialogue on necessary reforms. Citizens were empowered to use mechanisms for reporting corruption, while healthcare institutions were motivated to work more transparently. The recommendations from the study continue to serve as a guide for improving policies and procedures in Montenegro's healthcare sector.

# STOP sexism in Montenegro

Project implemented by: NGO Institute for Legal Studies (IPLS)

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Sexism in Montenegro is often not recognized as a societal or legislative issue. Existing legal measures are insufficient to criminalize sexist hate speech, while awareness of this issue remains low among public institutions and the broader society. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of the project is to raise awareness and improve the legislative framework to effectively eliminate sexism and gender-based hate speech in Montenegro. The project combined research activities and public advocacy to amend the legislative framework and strengthen the capacities of relevant institutions.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Legal Analysis and Recommendations:

- conducted an analysis of the legislative framework with proposed amendments for the criminalization of sexist hate speech;
- proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, the Anti-Discrimination Law, and media laws in accordance with the recommendations of the Council of Europe.

### Guidelines for the Institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms:

- developed and adopted guidelines for the elimination of sexism in the work of the Om-

budsman's institution;

- laid the groundwork for the future application of similar guidelines in other state institutions.

### Raising Awareness:

- organized a final conference with more than 20 participants, including representatives of institutions, NGOs, and the media;
- conducted a media campaign and published several articles to increase public awareness.

### Strengthening Cooperation with Institutions:

- established a working group with representatives from the Ombudsman's office and legal experts;
- held meetings with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Human Rights, and the Ombudsman's institution to initiate legislative reforms.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project led to the institutionalization of the fight against sexism through the adoption of guidelines and increased the willingness of institutions to amend legislation. Awareness of the problem of sexism in society has been strengthened, while the proposed legislative amendments provide direction for long-term reforms. Visibility of this issue has also been increased in the media and among key stakeholders in society.

# Šejla – A Story of a Tragic Fate That Could Have Been Prevented

**Project implemented by:** NGO Arlekin

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Gender-based violence and domestic violence are serious issues in Montenegrin society. Ineffective prevention mechanisms and a lack of public awareness highlight the need for education and empowerment of both institutions and citizens in this area. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to raise awareness about the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence in Montenegro through the production of a documentary film and an educational campaign aimed at mobilizing the public, particularly youth.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Production of the Documentary Film:

- produced a short documentary film about Šejla, a victim of violence, featuring testimonies from her family, friends, the media, and NGOs active in violence prevention;
- the film is supported by an original musical score and high-quality post-production standards.

### Awareness-Raising Campaign:

- a pre-premiere screening of the film was held

at the European House in Podgorica, accompanied by a panel discussion with key stakeholders, including representatives from institutions, NGOs, and the media.

- a media and social media campaign reached over 40,000 views, generating significant public interest.

### Youth Education:

- launched an initiative to screen the film in high schools and distribute it more widely through regional and international festivals.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project had a significant impact on public awareness and decision-makers regarding the importance of timely violence prevention. The film, as an engaging medium, is effective for education and fostering empathy, contributing to the long-term goal of improving institutional mechanisms and social responsibility in combating violence. The project also encouraged youth to actively advocate for non-violence and to strengthen social solidarity.

# Trust in the Social System – The Power of Citizens

**Project implemented by:** NGO Montenegrin Foundation for HIV and Viral Hepatitis

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** People living with HIV face discrimination, stigma, and violations of their right to privacy. Insufficient education among healthcare workers and the general public perpetuates prejudices, while the legal framework requires further improvements to protect patients' rights. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to enhance the human rights of people living with HIV by strengthening the capacities of NGOs, educating healthcare workers, and promoting destigmatization in Montenegro.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Training for Healthcare Workers and NGO Representatives:

- conducted training sessions for 40 patient rights advocates and NGO representatives, focusing on destigmatization and capacity building. Evaluation results indicate a significant increase in knowledge.

### Analysis and Recommendations:

- developed an analysis of protocols for safeguarding the confidential data of people living with HIV, with concrete recommendations for system improvements;
- presented the analysis and recommendations

through a roundtable and expert debates with key stakeholders.

### Awareness-Raising Campaign:

- the “U=U” campaign (Undetectable = Untransmittable) was conducted via social media, billboards, and murals, reaching over 480,000 views on digital platforms;
- distributed 60,000 messages via Viber and created a mural in Podgorica featuring a prevention message.

### Strengthening Cooperation and Networking:

- signed memorandums of cooperation with healthcare institutions and NGOs;
- intensified contact with local authorities to address administrative barriers.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project improved public awareness of the rights of people living with HIV, empowered healthcare workers and NGOs to provide better services, and reduced societal stigma. The recommendations for improving the legal framework and educational materials contribute to the sustainability of these results. The “U=U” campaign significantly increased visibility and understanding of HIV in Montenegrin society.

# #LetTheVoicesOfYoungRoma- AndEgyptiansBeHeard!

Project implemented by: NGO Center for Affirmation of the RE Population – CAREP

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Young people from the Roma and Egyptian (RE) community face numerous challenges, including marginalization, lack of social inclusion, and limited access to education and employment. These factors contribute to their poor integration and restricted opportunities for active participation in society. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to empower young Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro through education, activism, and social inclusion, with a focus on reducing ethnic distance and increasing mutual solidarity.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Education and Empowerment of Youth:

- organized 2 two-day training sessions on activism and volunteerism for 21 young participants from Nikšić and Bar;
- conducted an “Activism School” featuring 3 one-day workshops and a two-day seminar, engaging 26 youth from both the RE and majority populations.

### Volunteer Actions:

- implemented tree-planting volunteer actions in Nikšić and Bar, involving 21 young participants,

contributing to environmental awareness and fostering cooperation between youth from different communities.

### Forum Theatre:

- Held 2 forum theatre events addressing the everyday challenges faced by RE youth, with the participation of over 120 individuals, including youth and representatives of local institutions.

### Public Campaign:

- launched the “Barriers (Don’t) Exist” campaign aimed at reducing ethnic distance, which included the distribution of informational materials, performances, and collaboration with local authorities.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project contributed to raising awareness about the rights and needs of the RE population, empowered youth for active participation in social processes, and provided models for long-term social inclusion. The activities strengthened the capacities of young people from the RE community and reduced social distance between different communities. The project also highlighted the need for continuous support in coastal municipalities, where participation of RE youth was lower.

# EVORRA – European Integration for Sustainable Rural Development

Project implemented by: NGO Network for Rural Development of Montenegro

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Rural development in Montenegro faces challenges such as limited capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to participate in policy-making and implementation, insufficient support from local communities, and a lack of networking among rural development stakeholders. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Montenegro for the creation and implementation of rural development policies.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Establishment of the First CSO Office for Rural Development:

- opened the Rural Hub in Nikšić as a co-working space and support center for CSOs;
- organized the first Montenegrin Rural Parliament with 300 participants, including representatives of institutions, local communities, and international organizations.

### Capacity Building for CSOs:

- conducted 5 training sessions on public advocacy, LEADER and LAG approaches, research and analysis, project cycle management, and financial reporting;

- a total of 22 CSOs improved their capacities in these areas.

### Establishment of Local Action Groups (LAGs):

- created four LAG initiatives: Boka, Župa in the Heart, Sinjajevina, and Mountain Fairy;
- developed four local development strategies with expert support.

### Communication and Visibility:

- established communication channels (Facebook, Instagram, website).
- Implemented campaigns and promotional activities that increased visibility and engaged the wider community.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project contributed to strengthening CSOs for more active participation in rural development policies, connecting local stakeholders, and promoting rural communities. The established Rural Hub and the formed LAG initiatives ensure the sustainability of achieved results and further improvement of rural areas in line with European standards.



# Identification and Analysis: “The Ulcinj Olive Grove and Valdanos Bay – Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage-Landscape”

**Project implemented by:** Association Dr. Martin Schneider Jacoby – MSJA

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The Ulcinj Olive Grove and Valdanos Bay face serious threats to their natural and cultural heritage. The project focuses on strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders to establish and manage protected areas. Activities include education, the development of strategic documents, and raising awareness of the importance of preserving this landscape. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of the project is to strengthen the capacities of CSOs and local government for the protection of natural and cultural landscapes, increase awareness of the importance of preserving the olive grove, and promote European standards in nature and cultural heritage protection.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Strengthened Capacities of CSOs and Local Authorities for Establishing and Managing Protected Areas:**

- conducted training sessions for representatives

of local government and CSOs;

- developed a handbook for area protection;
- completed a Cultural Landscape Study of the Ulcinj Olive Grove and Valdanos Bay.

### **Increased Public Awareness of the Importance of Preserving the Olive Grove as an Ecological, Cultural, and Tourist Asset:**

- organized an international conference;
- carried out continuous promotional activities;
- distributed printed and digital materials.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project activities significantly improved public awareness and strengthened cooperation between local institutions, CSOs, and relevant stakeholders. A foundation has been established for the future management and protection of these areas, contributing to the ecological and cultural sustainability of the region.

# CSOs for a More Inclusive, Transparent, and “Greener” Programme of Economic Reform

**Project implemented by:** Institute for Strategic Studies and Projections (ISSP)

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** There is a low level of awareness regarding the importance of the Programme of Economic Reform (PER), and civil society organizations are insufficiently involved in the process of creating and monitoring reforms. Local governments lack adequate information about the PER and the lack of cooperation with the civil sector further complicates the implementation of reforms. There is a clear need for more intensive public dialogue and capacity building among all relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to empower CSOs to become active participants in the creation, implementation, oversight, and “greening” of the PER, supporting Montenegro’s European integration process.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Education and Empowerment of CSOs:

- conducted 6 two-day training sessions for CSO representatives from 13 municipalities, with a total of 47 participants;
- developed two publications:
  - *“The Role of CSOs in the Programme of Economic Reform”*,
  - *“Best Practices – Programme of Economic Reform”*.

### Public Debates and Consultations:

- held 6 consultative meetings and 6 public debates in 6 municipalities, engaging representatives of local governments, CSOs, and citizens;
- encouraged dialogue between the civil sector and local authorities, contributing to better understanding and inclusion in PER processes.

### Promotional Activities and Digital Platform:

- created 10 infographics, 3 podcast episodes, and 2 promotional videos, actively distributed via social media and websites;
- established a dedicated section on the ISSP website to promote activities and inform the public about the PER.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project strengthened awareness of the PER among CSOs, local authorities, and citizens, thereby increasing their role in reform processes. Public dialogue initiatives and the promotion of the PER facilitated a better understanding of the program’s benefits for Montenegro’s citizens. The established platforms ensured sustainability for ongoing interaction between the civil sector and decision-makers.

# Partnership for Local Democracy

Project implemented by: NGO Active Zone

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The state of local democracy in Montenegro is characterized by low levels of citizen participation in decision-making processes. Insufficient transparency and limited use of existing mechanisms hinder cooperation between local authorities and the civil sector. There is a need to improve the capacities of local NGOs and civic initiatives to achieve better outcomes in participatory democracy. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to contribute to the development of local democracy by enhancing citizen and CSO participation in the work and oversight of local governments.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Improved Mechanisms for Citizen Participation in Decision-Making:

- developed and published 12 recommendations for enhancing citizen participation;
- created an Index of Openness and Transparency of Local Governments.

### Increased Use of Participation Mechanisms and Strengthened Relationships Between CSOs and Local Authorities:

- organized a three-day Local Democracy Festival with over 90 participants, including representatives of CSOs, local authorities, and international organizations.

### Strengthened Capacity of Local CSOs:

- conducted two three-day training modules for 17 representatives of local CSOs in less-developed municipalities (Berane and Cetinje).

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project contributed to raising awareness about the importance of local democracy and transparency. The introduction of innovative models, such as the Local Democracy Festival, facilitated networking and the exchange of experiences between CSOs and local authorities. Through training and research, the project significantly enhanced the capacity of CSOs to engage in local processes and promote citizens' rights.

# SCREENING

**Project implemented by:** Organization KOD

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Low levels of transparency and accountability in institutional operations hinder efforts to combat corruption and strengthen the rule of law. Political and institutional instability further delay reform processes and increase public distrust in institutions. There is a critical need to improve access to information and the openness of institutions toward the public to reinforce democracy and the rule of law. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to enhance oversight of institutional operations by increasing transparency and accountability and raising public awareness about the rule of law and the fight against corruption.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### **Access to Information and Analysis of Institutional Operations:**

- collected documentation through 15 free access to information requests;
- conducted a detailed analysis of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, focusing on illegalities and corrupt practices.

### **Education and Public Awareness:**

- produced a six-episode documentary series, viewed by over half a million users on social media;
- prepared and distributed a brochure with key research findings to relevant institutions and organizations.

### **Promotion of Transparency and Accountability:**

- promoted issues of transparency, accountability, and the fight against corruption through broadcasts and social media, contributing to better-informed citizens.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project significantly increased public awareness of institutional deficiencies and the importance of combating corruption, enhancing transparency, and promoting accountability. Broadcasting the series and distributing brochures led to better-informed citizens and encouraged dialogue on democratic reforms. Despite challenges in gaining visibility on national television, the project reached a wide audience through online platforms and local media.

# LGBTIQ+ Rights – From Strategic Solutions to Practical Implementation of Laws

Project implemented by: NGO Montenegrin LGBTIQ Association Queer Montenegro

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The rights of LGBTIQ+ persons in Montenegro are characterized by low levels of social acceptance and visibility, alongside persistent discrimination and violence. The implementation of strategic and legal solutions, such as the *Law on Life Partnership*, faces delays and limitations in practice. There is a significant need to enhance institutional support and strengthen civic activism to ensure equality and the respect of human rights. Therefore, the **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to contribute to improving the quality of life of LGBTIQ+ persons in Montenegro by promoting human rights and ensuring the effective implementation of legal and strategic frameworks.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Analysis and Monitoring of Strategic and Legal Frameworks:

- monitoring the Strategy for Improving the Quality of Life of LGBTI Persons 2019–2023;
- analysis of the implementation of the Law on Life Partnership of Same-Sex Persons.

### Dialogue and Cooperation with Institutions and Political Stakeholders:

- organized a national conference on the status of LGBTIQ+ persons in Montenegro;
- held a roundtable with representatives of politi-

cal parties on advancing LGBTIQ+ rights.

### Visibility and Activism:

- organized Montenegro Pride 2023 and Pride Week;
- conducted three visibility actions for young LGBTIQ+ persons, including the creation of an informational guide and online stickers.

### Legal Assistance for the LGBTIQ+ Community:

- established and provided free legal aid for LGBTIQ+ persons.

### Education and Empowerment of Youth for Activism:

- over 20 young people trained in advocacy for LGBTIQ+ rights.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project significantly contributed to raising awareness of LGBTIQ+ rights and strengthening the community's capacity for advocacy. Key activities, such as monitoring and making recommendations, improved the legal framework and increased institutional understanding of the needs of the LGBTIQ+ community. Events like *Montenegro Pride* and *Pride Week* enhanced the community's visibility and garnered greater public support.

# Civic and Volunteer Engagement – Gender-Active for Ulcinj!

**Project implemented by:** NGO Punta Institute

**Project partners:** NGO Dulcinea, Municipality of Ulcinj

## **Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:**

The local communities in Ulcinj are characterized by low functionality and passivity, with insufficient participation of citizens, especially women, in decision-making processes. Gender policies have been sporadically implemented, with a notable gap between strategies, laws, and their practical application. Strengthening civic activism, volunteerism, and gender equality is necessary through better engagement of local communities and women in local decision-making processes. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to enhance civic activism and gender equality by strengthening the role of local communities and promoting volunteerism in the Municipality of Ulcinj.

## **PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Increased Transparency in Local Communities:**

- signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Municipality of Ulcinj;
- published two reports: an analysis of the work of local communities and an analysis of gender policy implementation.

### **Empowering Women for Activism:**

- conducted 2 lectures on gender equality for over 80 women;
- organized 2 trainings for 40 women from local

communities and 18 women from political parties;

- formed an informal network of women from public life and local communities.

### **Promotion of Local Communities and Gender Equality:**

- launched a promotional campaign, producing 400 flyers, 50 posters, 2 TV spots, and 10 video clips;
- held 3 Info Days and 2 roundtables focusing on local communities and gender equality;
- organized the event “An Evening of Women’s Activism” with 69 participants, featuring panels, exhibitions, and discussions.

## **PROJECT IMPACT**

The project significantly improved awareness of the importance of local communities and the principles of gender equality in practice. Women have been empowered to actively participate in shaping local policies, while local communities have become more visible and effective actors at the local level. The Memorandum of Cooperation with the Municipality of Ulcinj established a foundation for continuing activities in the areas of civic activism and gender policies.

# MY RIGHT – THE RIGHT TO INDEPENDENT CHOICE

**Project implemented by:** Association of Paraplegics of Cetinje

**Project partner:** NGO FLUX

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** People with disabilities (PWD) in Cetinje face high levels of discrimination and limited access to education, employment, and health-care. Women with disabilities encounter additional challenges, particularly regarding the right to parenthood and making autonomous choices. A lack of societal support and sensitivity from local institutions further hampers their integration and the realization of their rights. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to improve the rights of persons with disabilities (PWD) in Cetinje, with a focus on the rights of women with disabilities, including the right to parenthood, reducing discrimination, and promoting their autonomy.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Raising Awareness and Education:

- organized 2 workshops for high school students on embracing diversity and inclusion, involving 40 participants;
- conducted a survey on the level of discrimination faced by PWD, particularly women, in education, employment, parenting, and social inclusion.

### Publications and Documentary Film:

- produced a publication and info brochures summarizing the research findings (200 copies);

- created a documentary film titled “*We Didn’t Give Up, Neither Should You*”, highlighting the stories of three women with disabilities who have achieved success despite challenges.

### Advocacy and Partnerships:

- held a roundtable discussion on the right of women with disabilities to parenthood, attended by 30 participants, including decision-makers and local government representatives;
- presented conclusions and recommendations from the roundtable to local institutions.

### Promotion of Inclusion:

- hosted a final conference featuring the film screening and the presentation of the publication, attended by citizens, association members, and institutional representatives.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project raised awareness about the rights and challenges faced by PWDs, reduced stigma through educational and promotional activities, and provided a platform for advocating policies that support inclusion and equality. The project activities strengthened the capacities of local CSOs and initiated changes at the institutional level.

# Rights UP, Rise UP!

**Project implemented by:** NGO Alliance for Children and Youth – NGO HOUSE

**Project partner:** NGO Association of Sociologists of Montenegro

**Project associates:** Union of Administration and Judiciary of Montenegro, Career Center of the University of Montenegro, Youth Section of the Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Young people in Montenegro lack adequate knowledge about their fundamental labor rights, and key stakeholders often neglect their enforcement. Discrimination and unstable working conditions further worsen the position of youth in the labor market. To address this, it is necessary to improve awareness, strengthen capacities, and enhance protection through inclusive policies and more active engagement from institutions and civil society organizations. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to improve the quality of youth labor rights through education, promotion, public advocacy, and raising awareness of employment relations.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Research and Analysis:

- conducted a study on the position of young workers in Montenegro, surveying 179 respondents and 20 employers;
- published the study *“Youth and Decent Work – From Unawareness to Neglect”*, with conclusions and recommendations for improving labor rights.

### Youth Education on Labor Rights:

- Trained 10 peer educators, with 4 of them con-

ducting additional outreach activities after the training;

- Printed and distributed 500 copies of the info-educational brochure *“Rights UP, Rise UP”*.

### Public Campaign and Advocacy:

- organized a conference on youth labor rights with 30 participants, resulting in the adoption of 5 key conclusions;
- conducted a social media campaign with over 100 posts reaching a wide audience;
- produced educational video materials and published articles on labor rights topics.

### Legal Counseling:

- Established an online legal advisory service, answering 42 inquiries over 6 months.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project improved the awareness and understanding of labor rights among young people, laying the groundwork for future initiatives aimed at enhancing their position in the labor market. Positive dialogue was established between youth, employers, and relevant institutions. The key project outcomes position Montenegro as a model for promoting decent work for young people.



# Dijalozi.me – A Citizen-Centred Service

**Project implemented by:** Medical Doctors Trade Union Association of Montenegro (SDMCG)

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The healthcare system in Montenegro is characterized by low levels of transparency and accountability, alongside inadequate implementation of reforms. Political and institutional challenges hinder improvements in healthcare quality and the fight against corruption. Building public trust requires systemic changes and more inclusive policies. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to increase citizen participation, involve civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders in healthcare policy-making, improve healthcare quality, and ensure system transparency.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Development of the Platform and Expansion of Stakeholder Network:

- redesigned and expanded the Dijalozi.me platform, adding new features to facilitate easier interaction and monitoring of healthcare policies;
- Increased the number of registered platform users to over 80, with 291 new pieces of content added;
- Created a doctor recommendation map based on 250 patient feedback responses, helping inform the public about healthcare service quality.

### Monitoring and Research:

- Published two key reports: *“Monitoring of Decision-Makers’ Promises (2021–2023)”* analyzing the fulfillment of health ministers’ promises, and *“Transparency in Appointing Directors of Healthcare Institutions (2021–2023)”* examin-

ing the process of appointing healthcare institution leaders.

### Public Campaign and Awareness-Raising:

- produced 3 investigative journalistic articles that prompted significant public and institutional reactions, leading to investigations and resignations;
- recorded 6 podcast interviews with influential figures in healthcare and public policy, aired on RTCG and YouTube, garnering tens of thousands of views.

### Education and Public Events:

- organized debate days covering topics such as abortion rights, state capture, and economic strategies for 2024, bringing together experts and citizens;
- held a workshop titled *“Criminal-Legal Aspects of Medical Practice”* for healthcare workers and activists, focusing on legal challenges in the medical profession.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project improved to the great extent transparency within Montenegro’s healthcare system, enabling citizens and healthcare professionals to voice their opinions and highlight issues. It enhanced dialogue between various stakeholders and identified concrete shortcomings in the healthcare system. These project outcomes have spurred public and institutional reactions and laid the groundwork for further initiatives and reforms in healthcare.

# Empowered Towards Zero Tolerance for Gender-Based Violence

**Project implemented by:** SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence Berane

**Project partner:** SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence Plav

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Gender-based violence (GBV) in northern Montenegro is marked by insufficient availability and quality of support services for women victims of violence, as well as limited cooperation among local institutions. Women with experiences of violence face obstacles in exercising their rights due to inefficiencies in the protection system and limited resources. Continuous education, capacity-building, and multisectoral cooperation are needed to support victims effectively and prevent violence. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to reduce gender-based violence through the empowerment of women, strengthening the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs), and improving collaboration with local institutions.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthened Capacities of Women's CSOs:

- conducted project proposal writing training for 12 members from 4 women's NGOs;
- completed 5 projects, 2 of which were approved by relevant institutions.

### Improved Availability of Services for Women Experiencing Violence:

- trained 15 new volunteers for SOS hotlines;

- provided support by licensing counseling services for women victims of violence.

### Enhanced Cooperation with Local Institutions:

- held multiple multisectoral meetings and roundtables with local institutions in Berane and Plav;
- developed recommendations for improving local policies related to gender-based violence.

### Monitoring of Public Policies:

- monitored local action plans for gender equality and protection from violence in Berane and Plav.
- produced a practical policy proposal with clear recommendations for improving existing systems.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project strongly empowered women and their organizations, improved access to essential services for women experiencing violence, and established foundations for long-term collaboration between CSOs and local institutions. Monitoring activities led to increased transparency and accountability of institutions. The project contributed to creating sustainable models for addressing gender-based violence within communities.

# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS – LOVING IS HEALTHY

**Project implemented by:** NGO Prima

**Project partner:** NGO Youth Information Center

**Project associate:** Ministry of Sports and Youth of Montenegro

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Gender-based violence (GBV) among youth is marked by low awareness levels and insufficient institutional and youth service capacities for prevention and support. Young people often lack access to adequate education on gender roles and violence in intimate relationships. Better coordination among stakeholders and the promotion of a culture of non-violence through educational and preventive programs are needed. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to prevent and combat gender-based violence by strengthening the capacities of youth services, youth clubs, and peer educators.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Educational Materials and Trainings:

- produced a handbook on gender-based violence available in Montenegrin and Albanian, serving as a resource for youth and youth services;
- conducted training for 25 peer educators and 11 administrators of youth services and clubs on gender-based violence.

### Workshops and Cross-Sector Dialogue:

- held 17 workshops in youth services and clubs across Montenegro, engaging a total of 237 young participants;
- organized 3 roundtables with 41 local stakehold-

ers, including representatives from institutions, civil society, and youth services, to enhance cross-sector collaboration.

### Psychological Support:

- provided free psychological support and therapy to 23 young people, resulting in 122 therapy sessions;
- reported 5 cases of violence to the police, with one successful judicial outcome.

### Promotion and Visibility:

- produced educational video materials and launched a TikTok campaign that reached over 276,000 young people;
- distributed promotional materials throughout Montenegro.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project seriously increased youth awareness of gender-based violence, promoting the values of healthy relationships and a culture of non-violence. Educational activities and media campaigns laid the groundwork for long-term changes in perceptions of gender roles among youth. Additionally, the project improved cooperation between youth services, local authorities, and civil society, strengthening a sustainable framework for preventing gender-based violence in Montenegro.

# Milovan Đilas Academy

**Project implemented by:** Society of Montenegrin Publishers

**Project associate:** Faculty of Montenegrin Language and Literature (FCJK)

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** Freedom of expression and copyright protection in Montenegro are burdened by low awareness among authors, publishers, and decision-makers. Insufficient institutional support and the slow implementation of European standards hinder progress in these areas. There is a significant need to affirm freedom of speech and strengthen the capacities of authors and publishers through education and networking. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to promote freedom of expression, tolerance, and critical thinking through educational and cultural activities.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Launch of the Milovan Đilas Academy:

- organized a regional conference with 29 speakers and 62 participants from various fields
- conducted 4 thematic panels covering key social topics such as freedom of speech, self-censorship, and challenges in public expression.

### Publication and Promotion of the Book "The New Class":

- printed the first Montenegrin edition of Milovan Đilas's book with a print run of 500 copies;
- held 4 book promotions in different cities across Montenegro (Podgorica, Nikšić, Berane, Cetinje), attended by over 150 participants.

### Awards for Contributions to Freedom of Speech:

- presented awards to prominent individuals for their contributions to promoting freedom of speech.

### Education and Networking for Authors:

- conducted workshops and roundtables on copyright protection and the promotion of domestic authors;
- established a platform to promote freedom of expression and literary creation, serving as a hub for authors to exchange ideas.

### Visibility and Promotion:

- carried out a media campaign that reached over 10,000 views on online platforms;
- created educational and promotional content in collaboration with media outlets, distributed via social media.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project significantly increased awareness of the importance of freedom of speech, tolerance, and critical thinking in Montenegro, fostering continuous dialogue on key social issues and affirming democratic values. It strengthened the role of domestic authors and facilitated their networking, promoting a culture of open expression and literary engagement.

# Empowered – Visible

**Project implemented by:** NGO Mozaik

**Project partner:** Organization of Visually Impaired Nikšić, Plužine, and Šavnik

**Project associate:** Public Institution Day Center for Children with Developmental Disabilities and Persons with Disabilities Nikšić, Municipality of Nikšić

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The inclusion of persons with disabilities in Nikšić is hindered by low social awareness of their rights and potential. Women with disabilities face discrimination, limited access to cultural and social activities, and insufficient support for empowerment and visibility. Greater efforts are needed to empower women with disabilities through education, creative activities, and public advocacy to improve their societal status. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to strengthen the confidence, visibility, and active participation of women with disabilities in society.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Creative Expression and Promotion of Inclusion:

- Created a mural depicting successful women with disabilities (Frida Kahlo and Judith Heumann), displayed in a high-traffic area in Nikšić to highlight their contributions and inspirational stories;
- Organized a fashion show at Freedom Square, featuring over 20 clothing items designed by women with disabilities, promoting inclusive fashion and showcasing the participants' creative talents.

### Education and Empowerment:

- Conducted a creative expression workshop for 10 women with disabilities and a three-day ad-

vocacy training for 17 participants, enhancing their advocacy skills and self-confidence.

### Research:

- Carried out a study on the participation of women with disabilities in cultural life, involving 50 respondents, which provided concrete recommendations to improve inclusion in local cultural activities.

### Awareness-Raising through Art and Media:

- Produced the documentary film *"Tregar"* about successful women with disabilities, which inspired audiences and raised awareness of their challenges and achievements;
- Continuous promotion through social media and media outlets reached over 52,000 users, increasing awareness of the rights of women with disabilities and the importance of their inclusion.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project significantly enhanced the visibility and social recognition of women with disabilities in Nikšić, boosting their confidence and promoting their rights through innovative and creative activities. Initiatives such as the mural, fashion show, and documentary film inspired the local community, emphasized the value of inclusion and empowerment, and paved the way for further initiatives in this field.

# STEM Perspective: Youth Development Towards EU Integration

**Project implemented by:** NGO Montenegrin Association for Technical Culture “Politehnika”

**Project partner:** NGO Montenegro Robotics – Montenegrobotics

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** STEM education in Montenegro suffers from outdated infrastructure and limited resources for practical learning. The low participation of girls in STEM fields and the lack of opportunities for youth from rural areas further hinder balanced development. Continuous investment in modernizing educational capacities, strengthening mentorship, and promoting STEM careers is essential to increase interest and participation among all youth. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to improve STEM education for youth in Montenegro through education, equipment modernization, and the promotion of European standards.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Modernization of Learning Equipment and Spaces:

- procured SMART presentation devices, two notebook computers, and robotics and electronics kits;
- upgraded a STEM classroom with modern technology to support hands-on learning.

### Workshops and Practical Education:

- conducted 8 workshops in 4 cities (Bar, Mojkovac, Bijelo Polje, and Podgorica), with a total of 85 participants;
- hosted a final five-day workshop in Podgorica,

bringing together 20 youth from all regions;

- educational content included robotics, 3D modeling, electronics, and space exploration.

### Promotion of STEM Fields Among Youth:

- launched a targeted social media campaign focusing on youth;
- created and shared video materials and educational content on platforms like Instagram, increasing visibility and interest in STEM.

### Support for Long-Term Development:

- over 50% of participants expressed interest in pursuing further education in STEM fields;
- established a mentorship network for ongoing support in STEM education.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project contributed to modernizing STEM education in Montenegro and inspired youth to pursue further development in these fields. Through practical workshops, classroom modernization, and social media campaigns, awareness of the importance of STEM careers was raised, providing concrete tools for enhancing educational capacities. The project promoted inclusive development and fostered unique experiences and connections among youth from different regions.

# Strong Civil Society for Preserved Forests of Prokletije and Komovi

Project implemented by: NGO Green Home

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** The Prokletije and Komovi regions face inadequate forest management, which threatens sustainable development and biodiversity. Civil society activities are recognized as crucial for addressing these issues. However, limited capacity and collaboration among stakeholders hinder the effective implementation of policies. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to empower civil society organizations (CSOs), activists, and individuals in the Prokletije and Komovi regions by improving forest management, identifying key challenges, and strengthening the role of civil society in decision-making processes. This contributes to better protection of these areas and supports Montenegro's integration into the EU.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthened and Networked CSOs:

- organized two two-day trainings on forest management and civic activism, with 43 participants from organizations and activist groups.

### Policy Monitoring:

- produced a report and analysis on forest management policy implementation, including recommendations for decision-makers;
- presented findings at a conference in Kolašin, attended by 32 participants.

### Public Awareness Raising:

- held a photography exhibition in Podgorica and Plav, with over 80 attendees at the openings;
- created two promotional video materials that received several thousand views on social media.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project strengthened the capacities of organizations and activists for monitoring and advocating for better forest management. It also initiated national-level discussions and increased recognition of forest management issues among decision-makers. The activities raised public awareness about the importance of forest conservation and provided civil society with tools for future advocacy and action in this area.

# Strengthening the Network of Aarhus Centers in Montenegro

Project implemented by: NGO Natura

**Brief overview of the situation and objective of the action:** In Northern Montenegro, environmental initiatives are often limited by a lack of knowledge and resources among NGOs and local authorities. Low public awareness of the impact of air pollution further complicates environmental protection efforts. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to promote the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Montenegro by strengthening the capacities of the NGO sector and local authorities, increasing citizen participation in decision-making, and raising awareness of environmental issues.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthened Capacities for Monitoring the Aarhus Convention:

- conducted training for 17 representatives of Aarhus Centers and NGOs;
- organized a study visit to the Aarhus Center in Nikšić, the most active center in the country.

### Enhanced Partnerships Between the Civil Sector and Local Authorities:

- held a workshop with representatives from

Northern municipalities on air quality management plans;

- established cooperation with the Eco Fund for future initiatives.

### Raising Public Awareness:

- conducted a survey with a sample of 500 citizens from 5 municipalities on the impact of air pollution;
- created a promotional-educational video on the importance of the Aarhus Convention, available online.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project improved to the great extent the knowledge and resources of NGOs and local communities in northern Montenegro. By strengthening the network of Aarhus Centers and raising public awareness, the project contributed to increased environmental activism and collaboration between the civil sector and local authorities. The dissemination of project results, such as the documentary video and research findings, paved the way for future environmental protection initiatives.



# With a Seeing Companion to Independence

**Project implemented by:** Organization of Visually Impaired Nikšić, Šavnik, and Plužine

**Project partners:** Organization of Visually Impaired Nikšić, Šavnik, and Plužine; Organization of Visually Impaired Podgorica, Danilovgrad, Kolašin; Organization of Visually Impaired for Kotor, Herceg Novi, Budva, and Tivat

**Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:** People with visual impairments in Montenegro face numerous challenges, including limited accessibility to public spaces, transportation, and information. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the conditions for independence and integration into societal activities. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to improve the position of people with visual impairments at the local level in Montenegro through the provision of the “Seeing Companion” service and raising awareness in the local community about the rights and needs of people with disabilities.

## PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Provision of the “Seeing Companion” service:

- engaged 3 companions in Nikšić, Herceg Novi, and Podgorica;
- 30 individuals with visual impairments used the service, significantly contributing to their independence;
- Users expressed satisfaction with the service, noting increased mobility and social interactions.

### Creation and distribution of the study:

- created a study on social and child protection

services for persons with disabilities at the local level;

- the study was distributed in print media, in an enlarged format and in Braille, ensuring accessibility for all users.

### Joint discussions:

- A roundtable was organized in Nikšić on the topic of social and child protection, with 30 participants from local governments, NGOs, and persons with disabilities.

### Training through video tutorials:

- created 10 video tutorials on proper assistance to persons with visual impairments;
- published video materials on social media and made available to the wider public.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project has directly contributed to increasing the independence and inclusion of people with visual impairments in society, raised awareness about the importance of social services, and laid the foundation for further development of this type of assistance. Positive feedback from users attests to the quality of the implemented activities.

# Block, Cancel, Unfollow: Violence Against Girls and Women

**Project implemented by:** NGO Safe Women's House (SWH)

## **Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:**

Online violence against women and girls is a serious issue in Montenegro. The legal framework and awareness of this problem are underdeveloped. Young women are particularly affected, often being unable to recognize the forms of online violence or seek help. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to create more effective mechanisms for protecting women and girls from online violence by providing support and assistance, examining the legal framework, and conducting a public awareness campaign.

## **RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Provision of support services:**

- legal counseling for 20 women, providing clear guidelines on legal protection mechanisms;
- psychosocial support covering 52 women, including ongoing sessions focused on emotional empowerment and coping with the effects of violence;
- confidential support services provided for 16 users, especially during court proceedings.

### **Research and study:**

- A detailed analysis of online violence was con-

ducted, including a comparative study of legislation in Montenegro and the region;

- 40 copies of the research were distributed to institutions, and free downloads were made available via online platforms.

### **Public awareness campaign:**

- 10 short video clips featuring public figures were produced and broadcasted;
- A TV spot aired on major national television networks and social media platforms;
- 1,000 leaflets (500 for men and 500 for women) were printed and distributed in 5 cities;
- A digital campaign on social media and Google banners reached over 4.5 million views.

## **PROJECT IMPACT**

The project raised public awareness of online violence and provided support to women and girls who are victims of this phenomenon. Recommendations for improving the legislation were submitted to institutions. The campaign reached a wide audience, sparking discussions on this serious social issue.

# (Mo)mental Health!

Project implemented by: NGO CAZAS

**Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:** Mental health in Montenegro faces numerous challenges, including deficiencies in the legislative framework, limited capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to provide services, and the stigmatization of mental health issues. The pandemic has further exacerbated existing problems. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to strengthen the mental health care system in Montenegro and enhance the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in decision-making processes and providing support to vulnerable groups, with a special focus on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthening CSO capacity:

- organized 2 seminars and 2 training sessions for service providers to vulnerable groups were organized, involving 40 participants from various sectors;
- developed guidelines for providing first interventions in crisis situations.

### Raising public awareness:

- a campaign under the slogan #MoMentalHealth (#MoMentalnoZdravlje) was conducted, in-

cluding educational materials, media posts, and events, reaching over 380,000 people;

- 3 TV shows were aired, uploaded to YouTube, and garnered a significant number of views.

### Advisory support:

- 100 counseling and support services were provided for 60 users.

### Advocacy for policy change:

- recommendations from the project were integrated into the "Health Development Strategy 2023-2027" and the "Youth Strategy 2023-2027."

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project strengthened the capacity of CSOs and increased their involvement in the mental health protection system, reduced the stigmatization of mental health issues, and enabled the provision of concrete support to vulnerable groups. The long-term impact is reflected in better coordination between sectors and the improvement of the legislative framework, based on the recommendations already integrated into strategic documents.

# Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in the Social Life of the Community as a Starting Point for Achieving Their Rights and Potential

**Project implemented by:** Red Cross Organization of the Capital Cetinje

**Project associates:** Public Institution Center for Day Care of Children with Developmental Disabilities and Adults with Disabilities in the Capital

**Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:** Elderly individuals and people with disabilities face long-term marginalization and insufficient social support. The need to strengthen support services and reduce the social isolation of these groups has been identified as a priority. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to actively involve elderly people and people with disabilities in the social life of the Cetinje community, in order to reduce social isolation and enable the realization of their rights and potential.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Psychosocial support:

- 12 workshops were organized and telephone support was provided to a total of 101 users;
- Self-help groups included 22 women (17 elderly people and 5 people with disabilities).

### Legal aid:

- 25 thematic and individual workshops were held with 61 users (58 women and 3 men).

### Educational activities:

- 25 workshops on volunteering with a focus on intergenerational cooperation were held, involving 25 elderly users;
- 16 workshops on basic digital skills and the use of e-services were organized for 33 users.

### Networking:

- Organized a final conference with representatives of local institutions and the civil sector, where the project results and a brochure on the position of elderly people and persons with disabilities were presented.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project improved the quality of life for users by increasing social inclusion, education, and empowerment. It enabled the collection of data on the needs of target groups and laid the foundations for the improvement of local policies in favor of elderly people and persons with disabilities.

# Psychological Support for Persons with Disabilities - Preventing Severe Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic!

**Projekat realizovala:** NVO Ekvivalent

**Partner na projektu:** NVO Otkrivanje lične istine Crna Gora (O.L.I.CG)

**Saradnik na projektu:** Institut za javno zdravlje Crne Gore

**Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:** Persons with disabilities face multiple challenges in mental health protection, including a lack of specialized services and trained staff. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing problems, with significant psychological consequences for this group. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to prevent severe consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and improve the mental health of persons with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities through psychological support, strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs), and raising public awareness.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Analysis and recommendations for system improvement:

- Produced a study on the mental health of persons with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on research involving 100 individuals;
- a legislative framework analysis was conducted, with recommendations for improving the healthcare system.

### Provision of psychological support:

- 534 individual psychological sessions were or-

ganized for 23 users;

- group counseling support was provided for 20 parents of children with disabilities.

### Education and strengthening of CSOs:

- conducted specialized training for 16 professionals from CSOs;
- organized workshops for 23 representatives of CSOs from the Northern and Southern parts of Montenegro.

### Public awareness campaign:

- posts on social media and media appearances;
- a final conference with relevant stakeholders;
- distribution of the study in a print run of 200 copies.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project significantly improved the availability and quality of psychological support for persons with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities, strengthened the capacity of CSOs, and encouraged discussions on improving the strategic and legislative framework. The campaign contributed to a better understanding of mental health challenges among target groups and the wider society.

# Gender Equality and Economic Empowerment of Women

Project implemented by: NGO Mare Mare

**Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:** Women from vulnerable groups in Herceg Novi, including women with disabilities, single mothers, unemployed women, and women from rural areas, face multiple challenges. The lack of economic opportunities and support, low employment rates, and discrimination in the community further hinder their integration into society, and the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to improve gender equality and economically empower women from vulnerable groups in Herceg Novi, with a focus on preserving cultural heritage through the technique of gold embroidery and promoting female entrepreneurship.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Education and skills development:

- organized 40 workshops on gold embroidery for 13 women from vulnerable groups, during which they mastered the technique and created 26 shirts and 17 bookmarks;
- conducted a three-day training on female entrepreneurship, focusing on business plan development and basic business principles, empowering participants to start their own initiatives.

### Collaboration and networking:

- signed 3 memoranda of cooperation with the

Cultural and Artistic Society "Sloga," the Red Cross of Herceg Novi, and the Arts Creation Association, establishing support from local stakeholders in promoting female entrepreneurship;

- created a support network that includes partners from the local community, ensuring long-term support for women from vulnerable groups.

### Promotion and public activities:

- organized an exhibition of the participants' work at the SPA Gallery in Igalo, attended by 62 visitors at the opening;
- conducted a media campaign with 5 press releases and a segment on RTCG.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project significantly contributed to strengthening the economic and social capacities of women from vulnerable groups, enabling them to acquire new skills and develop business ideas. The project activities promoted the preservation of cultural heritage and encouraged greater integration of women into socio-economic processes. The established collaboration with local partners and the positive response from the community indicate the potential for the sustainability of results and continuation of activities.

# Legal Support for Migrants

**Project implemented by:** NGO Legal Center

**Project partner:** Caritas Montenegro

## **Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:**

Migrants and asylum seekers in Montenegro face challenges such as limited access to rights, social, and health services. Institutions working with migrants lack specific skills and intercultural competencies to adequately support this group. The **OBJECTIVE** of this program is to improve migration management and the asylum system in Montenegro in line with the highest human rights standards, by providing legal and humanitarian assistance to migrants, as well as strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) and institutions.

## **RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Legal and humanitarian support for migrants:**

- provided free legal aid to 206 users through more than 60 field visits;
- representation of one user before the Asylum Directorate and the Administrative Court of Montenegro;
- distributed 1,500 multilingual informational brochures with key information about rights and procedures for migrants;
- Caritas Montenegro provided 60 humanitarian packages and offered psychosocial support to 63 refugees from Ukraine.

### **Training and capacity building:**

- organized a three-day training on “Acquiring and Developing Multicultural Competence” for 15 officials from state and local institutions;
- conducted a workshop for 29 representatives of CSOs and institutions on the topic of international protection for foreigners;
- developed a manual for intercultural competence for civil servants.

### **Promotion and public activities:**

- organized a final conference in Podgorica gathered 34 participants, including representatives from institutions, CSOs, and international organizations;
- presented key project results, publications, and recommendations for improving legislation and practices in the field of migration.

## **PROJECT IMPACT**

The project improved migrants’ access to rights and services through direct support, information, and advocacy. Strengthening the capacity of institutions and CSOs, along with the development of materials and recommendations, laid the foundation for long-term improvements in migration management in line with international standards, while humanitarian support and services directly impacted the quality of their lives.

# Youth Against Gender Stereotypes

Project implemented by: NGO Interakcija

**Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:** Young people in Montenegro, especially in Ulcinj, Berane, and Nikšić, rarely have the opportunity to engage in interactive workshops discussing gender issues and stereotypes. The lack of awareness and dialogue on this topic hinders the fight against discrimination and the promotion of an inclusive society. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to empower youth to recognize and combat gender stereotypes and gender-based hate speech, as well as to strengthen their capacity for participatory decision-making at the local and national levels.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Youth education:

- organized 3 workshops in Ulcinj, Berane, and Nikšić, focusing on gender equality, stereotypes and hate speech;
- interactive workshops gathered 73 participants (55 girls and 18 boys), which was double the planned number.

### Collaboration with local governments:

- three meetings were held with representatives of local governments, during which young people proposed concrete initiatives to improve gender equality;

- 16 young people and 9 local government representatives participated in the meetings, establishing direct communication between youth and decision-makers.

### Media content production:

- 3 podcasts on the topic of gender equality and hate speech were published on YouTube and social media;
- the podcasts and other content garnered nearly 93,000 views.

### Policy brief and final conference:

- created a policy brief with recommendations for improving gender equality in the education system;
- organized a national final conference, bringing together youth and representatives of institutions, allowing for the exchange of ideas and views.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project raised awareness among young people about gender equality and hate speech, empowering them to recognize and combat these issues. The established collaboration with local authorities, the production of media content, and the policy brief created a platform for continuing activities and promoting a more inclusive society.



# Protected Areas of Montenegro – A Benefit for All of Us

## Project implemented by:

NGO Parks of Dinarides – Network of Protected Areas of the Dinarides

**Project associate:** Agency for the Management of Protected Areas of Podgorica

## Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:

Protected areas in Montenegro face challenges such as underdeveloped management practices and a lack of cooperation between local authorities, public enterprises, and civil society organizations (CSOs). Furthermore, public awareness of the importance of preserving these areas is not sufficiently developed, which complicates the promotion and implementation of nature protection standards. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to be visible and equal actors in decision-making processes regarding nature protection and the improvement of protected areas, with a focus on implementing EU standards in environmental protection.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthening CSO capacity and cooperation with institutions:

- an international conference titled “Protected Areas of Montenegro in the Context of EU Accession” organized, gathering 59 participants, including experts from the region and EU representatives;
- formed a Coordination Body for Improving the Management of Protected Areas, with representatives from CSOs and the public sector.

### Raising public awareness:

- organized an exhibition “Protected Areas of Montenegro – A Benefit for All of Us” at the Goriča hill in Podgorica, featuring 18 panels on national parks and nature parks;
- an educational campaign on social media reached approximately 400,000 users.

### Production of educational content:

- filmed two episodes of “EcoVision”, discussing the importance of nature protection and the need to improve the legal framework;
- a joint document by CSOs with recommendations for managing protected areas was developed and distributed and presented at the conference.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project contributed to better coordination and cooperation between CSOs and institutions, strengthened public awareness of the importance of nature protection, and provided a framework for the long-term application of EU standards in the field of protected areas. The establishment of the Coordination Body and the acceptance of CSO recommendations at the national level are considered key outcomes of the project.

# Strengthening the Resilience of Youth and the Existing Support Network of National and Local Organizations and Institutions for the Adequate Implementation of Drug Prevention Programs

**Project implemented by:** NGO Montenegrin Network for Harm Reduction – LINK

**Brief overview of the situation in the field and the objective of the action:** Youth in Montenegro, especially those from vulnerable communities, face risks of first contact with drugs. At the same time, the capacity of CSOs and institutions to provide appropriate prevention and support programs is limited, making it difficult to systematically address the issue of addiction. The **OBJECTIVE** of this project is to strengthen the capacity of CSOs and institutions to create and implement addiction prevention policies, with a particular focus on young people from vulnerable communities.

## RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Strengthening CSO and institutional capacity:

- organized 2 trainings for 41 participants from CSOs and institutions, focusing on the rights of people who use drugs, prevention methods, and writing, financing, and monitoring projects;
- developed Guidelines for the new National Drug Strategy and presented to the National Drug Office;
- A training programme for social and child protection professionals was accredited.

### Youth education:

- Conducted 10 “Living Library” workshops, focusing on the risks and prevention of drug use, with 225 young people from various municipalities participating;

- Through the workshops, young people engaged in discussions with individuals who have personal experience with drug use.

### Strengthening cooperation between CSOs and institutions:

- signed Memoranda of cooperation were signed between the Montenegrin Network for Harm Reduction Link and local CSOs and institutions;
- created a list of CSOs and institutions working in the field of addiction prevention.

### Promotion of results:

- sponsored and distributed promotional video materials about the project’s achievements;
- regular social media posts reached a wider audience, raising awareness about the importance of addiction prevention.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The project significantly improved the capacity of CSOs and institutions to work with youth on addiction prevention, contributed to strengthening partnerships between CSOs and institutions, and increased youth awareness of the risks of drug use. The accreditation of the training program and the establishment of cooperation between CSOs and institutions ensure the sustainability of the project’s results and contribute to long-term changes in the systemic approach to addiction prevention.



