



ASB in South East Europe

2014-2015

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Writing and editing

ASB SEE PR Department: Tijana Laban

Design

Marko Zakovski

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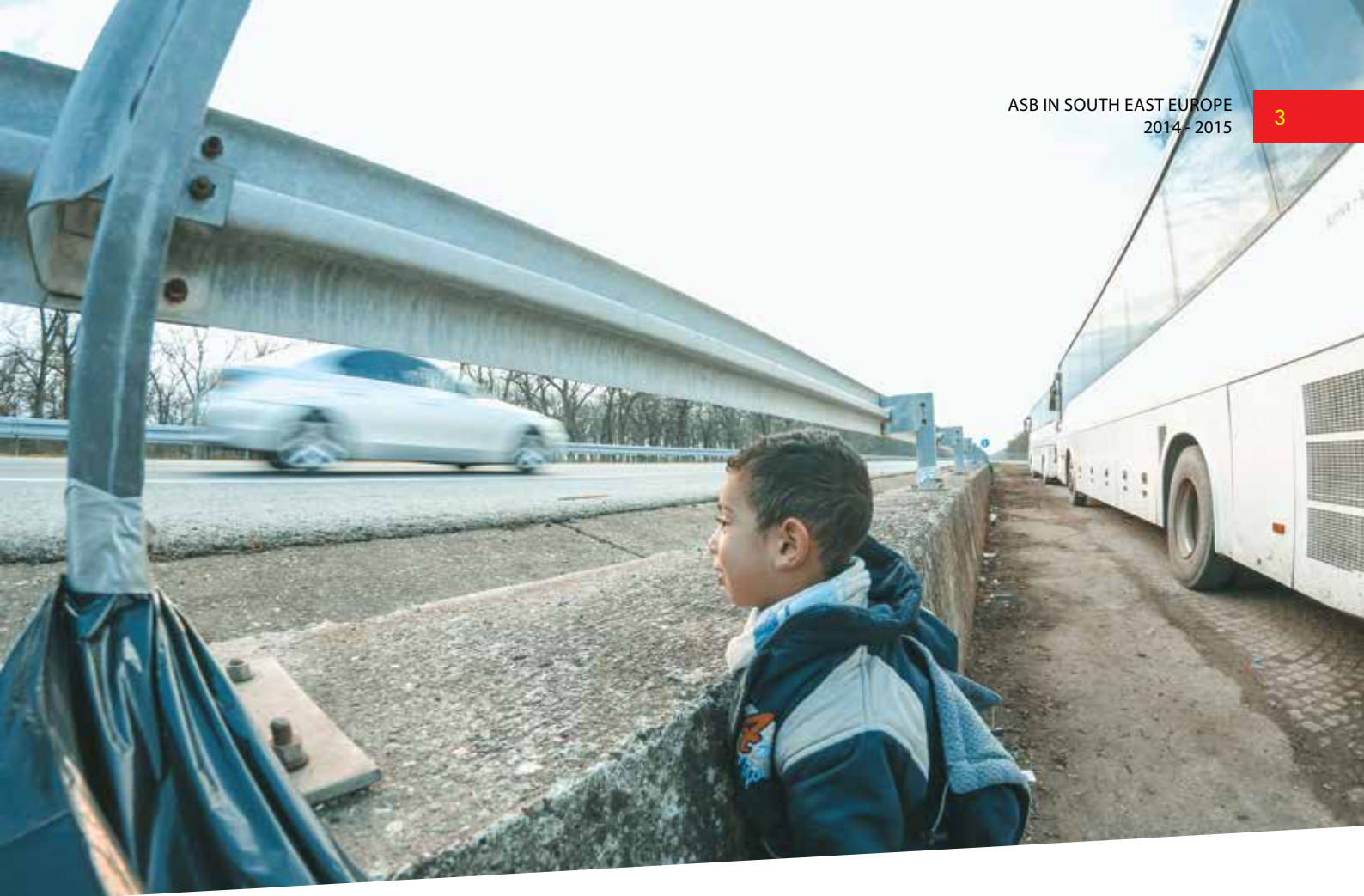
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*I sincerely thank all our staff, our partners, local authorities and particularly our donors that make the ASB story worth telling. **WE HELP HERE AND NOW***

ASB SOUTH EAST EUROPE THE TIME OF CHALLENGES

The past two years in the whole region of the South East Europe, have seriously challenged our organisation to additionally prove its capacities, motivation and professionalism gained during over the last 20 years of hard and highly effective work in the wider Balkan area. Namely, severe and repetitive floods in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014 followed by unprecedented refugee crisis that developed through the Balkan refugee route towards European Union countries, demanded rapid and effective response in assisting vulnerable flood victims and refugees.

During those chaotic times, unfortunately still lasting, ASB personnel from South East Europe Offices in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo and its reliable local partners from Balkan countries of FYROM, Greece, Albania, Monte Negro, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, have been investing enormous organisational and personal efforts to cope with dire situation related to nature and man-made disasters. ASB was the first international organisation that reacted to the flood crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia delivering food and water just 24 hours after the disaster occurred in these countries. With funds of the EU and German Foreign Ministry, ASB is still (re)constructing flood destroyed and damaged homes in the region and provides assistance to state structures in managing the post-crisis recovery. In addition, the yet developing refugee crisis, swiftly spreading to the Balkan area, demanded multi-sector emergency assistance. It has widely ranged from delivery of food and non-food

items, construction and organisation of refugee reception centres, provision of technical expertise, financial and infrastructural support to state and local authorities to organisation of mobile medical and food delivery services aiding refugees on move.

In figures, over € 7 million for floods and close to € 4 million for refugees are spent through a significant number of projects mainly funded by the European Union and German Foreign Ministry. Further to the challenging response to the sudden crisis, ASB has been dealing with € 4.5 million value projects targeting grass root civil society organisations that directly deals with social service delivery through the ASB-established IRIS Network and actively participated in provision of social housing for vulnerable Roma citizens within the Roma Decade 2005-2015.

With main goal to help those in ultimate need to which the help usually comes late or never, while being faced with such a challenging scope of intervention in the South East Europe, ASB SEE had to maximize the use of its experience and knowledge, quickly adjust and strengthen its human resources and regional structure and motivate all involved to work with passion and love for humanity. We are of the opinion, and visible results and impact are in support to it, that ASB manages those challenges extraordinarily. Due to the fact, I sincerely thank all our staff, our partners, local authorities and particularly our donors that make the ASB story worth telling. **WE HELP HERE AND NOW**



Elmir Bojadžić,
Regional Director of ASB South East Europe





Assisting refugees at all stages of their journey

In 2015, over one million refugees and migrants have travelled the Western Balkans route passing through FYROM and Serbia on their way to the EU. More than 3,700 people died or went missing in the same period while making the journey across the Mediterranean. Since the outburst of the refugee crisis, following its mission, ASB joined international humanitarian action to provide immediate assistance to the refugees and migrants in need of help. ASB, through the financial support of the European Union, the German Federal Foreign Office and the Aktion Deutschland Hilft, succeeded to ensure more than 1.700.000 Euros, in support of direct assistance to the refugees and respective authorities dealing with the crisis.



EU ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES IN SERBIA
POMOĆ EVROPSKE UNIJE ZA
MIGRANTE I IZBEGLICE U SRBIJI





Subotica Reception Centre

Owing to the support provided by German Federal Foreign Office, ASB was able to successfully conclude the adaptation of the Refugee Camp in Subotica for which € 150.000 was allocated. Reconstruction works started in mid September 2015. and after less than two months, fully adapted Centre of 580m² and capacity of 150 beds was handed over to the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration. ASB reconstructed old dormitory building, management and medical building, constructed new facility with kitchen, dining room and two sanitary blocks and concluded all infrastructure works on installation of sewage and water supply network as well as on heating system. Subotica Centre has, since opening, hosted more than 2000 refugees. Additionally, under the project financed by the GFM in the total value of € 465,541.46, ASB installed sanitary containers at 5 locations with 24 rented mobile toilets and 2 extern systems of taps and showers (Number of beneficiaries per day was approximately 750 - 3,000).

Donation of Fire brigade vehicle

Firemen's truck has been donated to the Municipality of Kanjiza (Serbia), having in mind that one of the refugee/migrant camps was based in that municipality. The camp was situated on the market place and it was made up of tents and sanitary containers. The vehicle has been used for the purposes of the camp. The vehicle was providing water and fire protection during October and November 2015 to the camp which hosted from 2,000 - 3,000 refugees/migrants each day.



Food, water and hygiene distribution

ASB project partner PREDA plus provided more than 18,700 parcels of food, water and hygiene for refugee's passing through FYROM. Packages were distributed to the beneficiaries on two locations: at the border with Greece – Đevđelija and at border with Serbia – Tabanovce. With the project funded by German Federal Foreign Office 300 food, water and hygiene parcels were distributed daily. In Serbia, project partner IDC distributed 6000 relief parcels.

Volunteer Team

Under the project funded by the German Federal Foreign Ministry and implemented by ASB, volunteer service consisted of mobile teams of doctors, nurses, interpreters and volunteers was established. Partner organization Initiative for Development and Cooperation took over organization of the network which now counts around 25 volunteers working on the field. IDC distributes food, water, clothes, shoes and blankets to refugees in Adaševci near Serbian-Croatian borderline. IDC also established medical team, accredited by Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia, which provides necessary medical assistance to refugees passing through Šid. Medical assistance team was available 24/7 and covered night shifts from 00:00 – 08:00 am. From September until the end of 2015 IDC team assisted 3000 refugees and migrants.





EU Assistance to Migrants and Refugees in Serbia

Within the Programme „EU Assistance to Migrants and Refugees in Serbia“, ASB is strengthening capacities of Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and Ministry of Interior and supporting their efforts to provide necessary services to refugees and asylum seekers. Total value of the project is € 1 million and this assistance comes through provision of salaries, accommodation and meals for workers and personnel in reception camps. Represented in number of employed workers, these funds are covering up to 90 workers per month.

Significant involvement of ASB in dealing with migrant crisis in Serbia comes through construction of Reception and Accommodation Centre in Dimitrovgrad, which will be able to accommodate up to 70 people. Preparatory works for the construction of this camp will be funded throughout the project financed by the German Federal Foreign Office and the Aktion Deutschland Hilft.



“Maradona” from Ghana finds his luck in Serbia

Out of many people who found themselves in reception centres in Serbia during past year due to different and unfortunate set of circumstances, some decided to stay in Serbia. One of them is 19 years old Ibrahim Ishan, who left Ghana in 2015. and, after long journey, came to Serbia. After a while he started working for Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration and applied for Asylum in Serbia. He adores his job, colleagues and new friends he met.

“I am amazed by big-hearted people surrounding me here. This is the first place I was treated like a human and equal. It is really amazing how this country is treating refugees. I found good friends here, I got a job so I don't plan on leaving”

Ibrahim now even plays for Youth Football Club Belgrade which earned him a very famous nickname – Maradona.





Flood relief programmes

During May 2014 Serbia and Bosnia - Herzegovina have been struck by the worst floods registered in the region over the past 120 years. A rough estimation is that over 1 million people in the region have been affected by this natural disaster and the damage, in Serbia and BiH, has been around 3.7 billion EUR. At least 81 people have died in the region, and tens of thousands of others have fled their homes, packing into buses, boats, and helicopters - many of them farmers leaving their livestock behind. ASB in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia was active on the field from the first day of the flooding, at first distributing food and hygiene parcels to the most affected municipalities, cleaning the flooded homes and later (re)constructing houses and providing assistance to flooded businesses.

EU Assistance for flood relief in Serbia

“Provision and continuous support in housing reconstruction and economic revitalization to most vulnerable flood-affected families in Serbia” as a part of the programme “EU Assistance for flood relief in Serbia”, is a jointly developed project implemented by the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) together with three non-governmental organizations: Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC), Housing Centre and Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation.

Total value of the project is € 3.300.000 and the action is developed in order to support the normalisation of housing conditions and the economic revitalisation for most vulnerable flood-affected families in north-western Serbia: Obrenovac, Valjevo, Loznica, Mali Zvornik, Ljubovija, Osecina, Bajina Basta, Sid, Sabac and Ljig.

The scope of the project is to help the families to return to a normal life and to their homes upon performing reconstruction works, provision of new houses and providing elementary furniture and appliances. The project is as well supporting micro economic activities which have lost their income through the loss of equipment for agriculture and equipment/accessories for their micro and small businesses, re-activating in the shortest period of time their economic capacities in order for them to be able to generate income and prevent them from tumbling into poverty. The main focus is on crafts workshops, small businesses and agriculture-orientated family households. Next to the economic strengthening through provision of equipment, the project envisages minor shelter repair for economic facilities including amongst others shops, stables, etc.



By now the project has assisted:

- 164 families that received reconstruction of their homes which have been more severely damaged;
- 40 families that received new prefabricated/brick housing units for completely destroyed houses;
- 349 families that received furniture and appliances for their homes;
- 34 families that receive minor reconstruction for their damaged shops/stables;
- 172 small businesses that receive economic grants for the revitalization of their damaged businesses due to floods (equipment for agriculture: greenhouses/machines and equipment for bee-hives, certified plants/seedlings, fish/ Fish nutrition; equipment/accessories for micro and small enterprises in tourism, trade, services and craft sectors).

In 2016 ASB will continue to support most vulnerable flood-affected families in Serbia helping them to return as soon as possible to a decent life.





New furniture and home appliances for flooded families in Obrenovac

During August 2014, ASB distributed basic home appliances and furniture for 40 flooded households in town of Obrenovac, Serbia. With the funds provided by Volkshilfe Österreich around 200 flood affected citizens of Obrenovac received tailor-made packages of cooking devices, basic furniture, etc, according to SPHERE standards, in the total value of EUR 60,000.

After the floods in Serbia, town of Obrenovac was mostly affected by the floods with the estimated of 90% of the city flooded. After the disaster, it was crucial to assist the families to enable safe return to their homes. Providing assistance to mainly elderly, single-parent households and persons with disabilities was ASB biggest priority. At first, beneficiaries' watched ASB team in disbelief, because so many people came to them, promising help, and at the end not fulfilling that promise. When trucks carrying home equipment came to their doorsteps, and they saw new beds, tables, chairs and appliances the look of relief finally crossed their faces.

"Dear ASB team, we got our package, and our family is crying from happiness and gratitude. We wish you all the luck in the world. Thank you so much. Family Jovanovic"

"My children, after months of sleeping on the mattresses, now finally have warm and safe beds. You brought us joy after so many days of misfortune. Thank you. Mrs Slobodanka"

"We wish you as much happiness as your organization brought us today. Everything is perfect. Mr Dragan"

These were just few messages ASB received from grateful families from Obrenovac after the successful distributions.

Emergency Aid to flood victims

With the funds provided by the German Federal Foreign Office ASB succeeded to support 550 flood affected families in municipalities Krupanj, Valjevo and Obrenovac. Total value of the project was €110.000 which enabled:

- Provision of food parcels for 550 families that were distributed in the flood affected areas;
- Provision of 550 hygiene parcels for families in the flood affected areas;
- Environment cleaning kits for 500 families;
- Three cleaning crews who successfully supported flood affected families in the cleaning of their houses;

Vasić family

Straža village, Loznica

An unemployed single mother Ljiljana Vasić (42) lives with her five children in her family house in village Straža near Loznica. Her greatest backup is her family which wholeheartedly supports her. Their home has suffered huge damage in the floods that stroke Loznica in May 2014, and when water started to penetrate into their house in the middle of the night, they were completely shocked.

"We moved over to our cousins', and our neighbor was bringing us flour. I baked bread so that the children would have something to eat. Floods used to happen here, but it had never been like in that May. I hate to remember it. I was petrified, but I had to be strong because of the children", says Ljiljana.

Through the European Union Assistance for Flood Relief in Serbia Programme, ASB constructed nine new houses in Loznica for the families whose homes were destroyed in the floods. Additionally 20 homes were reconstructed and assisted 8 small business and 8 agriculture households.





Milošević family

Jamena village, Šid

The house in which Milivoje Milošević's (40) family of four live in the Srem village of Jamena suffered great damages when torrential floods filled up their entire home. Milivoje, together with the other people of Jamena, helped rescue and evacuate people. The loss of their home was difficult for the children and they could not wait to return home. In addition to the house, the Milošević family lost a plum orchard and garden, which supplied them with food. After the water withdrew leaving a wasteland behind, the Milošević family were living at their neighbor's who let them use his house.

The works, among other things, included repairs to the façade, inside walls and floors, putting new tiles, replacing doors, windows and installations, and the construction of a new septic tank. The house was then equipped with household appliances and furniture.

"Everything we had was lost in a second. We were lucky to receive the European Union assistance. We are living on social welfare and child cash benefits, so we could not have the house reconstructed on our own. I am very grateful for this," Milivoje tells us.

The Milosevic family is one of the 27 families in the village Jamena that now have a new roof over their heads owing to the assistance of the European Union and dedicated work of project team.

EU Assistance for flood relief in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund in Bosnia and Herzegovina has reconstructed 21 homes in Orasje, Domaljevac and Samac municipalities affected by May 2014 floods with its own funds in the amount € 206,000. Owing to ASB assistance, 70 people in these municipalities now have decent living conditions. In cooperation and close coordination with EU/UNDP Flood Recovery Program and respective municipal authorities, ASB has focused on housing units that were not rehabilitated under the EU/UNDP Program due to higher level of damage.





EU Floods Recovery Programme

ASB has been awarded by EU/UNDP and has implemented three consecutive Contracts for Professional Services for selection and verification of 965 flood-affected families and provision of 965 technical specifications for respective housing units hit by May 2014 floods in the Posavina region, in the total amount of € 340,000.

The Project was jointly developed with UNDP and it is divided into two main activities. ASB has provide services related to the selection of beneficiaries and preparation of technical specification for the reconstruction and UNDP has provided housing measures and construction work.

When added to saving lives in Samac municipality by providing ASB Water Treatment Plant in the immediate aftermath of the May 2014 floods, immediate provision of food and hygiene items for flood victims and building operational capacities of Civil Protection Units in ten Posavina and Central Bosnia municipalities jointly with German Government, the overall ASB flood-related operations has positioned ASB in BiH as one of the most reliable and fast-responding emergency and post-disaster recovery agencies in the Country. In the years to come, ASB BiH will continue to efficiently respond to eventual natural disasters and refugee crisis and deliver professionals services in fields related to the vast when to take for best results ASB's expertise and experience.







Roma Action programme

Based on the field research on needs of Roma population in the area of housing, employment, health and education carried out by the MHRR between 2008 and 2010, it is estimated that there are around 40.000 Roma citizens in BiH although the initial number presented by the civil sector amounts to 80.000. The research indicates that around 17.000 Roma (4.500 families) are in need for immediate assistance. Even though state efforts to address Roma needs were put in action, there is a significant lack of funds from budgetary sources, particularly in the field of housing which remains the biggest priority for addressing Roma needs. According to HWA survey made for MHRR, there are 1.391 Roma families (or 5.968 persons) in BiH in need for social housing.



ASB and HWAI join forces to support vulnerable Roma families in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the partnership with Austrian Hilfswerk and BiH Roma Association Kali Sara, ASB has successfully concluded a 31 months long Roma Action project funded by the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the total value of € 3,03 million out of which over € 500,000 were collected from local authorities.

The project directly provided 152 new or reconstructed homes for vulnerable Roma families through social housing concept and rehabilitation of existing housing units and associated technical infrastructure in 13 BiH municipalities and Brcko District. Over 50 families were assisted with reconstruction and 30 families received grants for income generation. Further to that, sustainability grants were delivered to a number of the most vulnerable Roma families and awareness risen on the necessity to promote Roma rights and obligations concerning housing, employment, health and education sectors.

As the proof of the project success, consortium partners HWA, ASB and KALI SARA were recently awarded another Roma Action Project Phase II by the Delegation of the European Union to BiH in the total amount over € 2,8 million out of which over € 300,000 were contributed by local authorities. The Phase II project has the similar objectives as the Phase I project focusing on provision of additional 140 housing units and accompanied activities in 10 BiH municipalities. The project started on October 1st 2015 and will last for 22 months. By being awarded the additional contract with the EUD BiH, the Consortium has proved its full capacity to manage large, multidimensional and integrated projects focusing on the most vulnerable segments of the society as the whole. This action, in which ASB takes a significant part, additionally promotes the organization's ability to play significant role in effectively assisting those in ultimate need in the Balkan region.









Support to Sustainable Return and Reintegration of IDPs to Kosovo*

Since the end of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Serbia has hosted a high number of refugees and IDPs from the region. Since 1995 a total number of 500,000 refugees from Bosnia and Croatia and 210,000 IDPs from Kosovo were registered in Serbia. Over the past 20 years, the international community, supported by the civil sector and relevant authorities has invested tremendous efforts in order to support the return, reintegration but also integration of these groups within society by tailor-made projects in fields of housing, economic revitalisation, legal and social support.



An EU funded project



FOR A BETTER LIFE

European Union Support for Improving
the Living Conditions of Forced Migrants

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Decent life for more than 200 families living in Kosovo*

Project "Support to Sustainable Return and Reintegration of IDPs to Kosovo*" was funded by the European Union through the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia and implemented by Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB) in cooperation with NGO Sveti Nikola. EU project carried out by the ASB aimed to support the efforts of the Serbian government in resolving the issue of displaced persons in the Republic of Serbia through support for sustainable return to Kosovo*.

Within the project in the total value of 1.152.000 Euros, more than 600 beneficiaries were supported in 22 municipalities in Kosovo. In addition to 110 returnee packages of furniture, home appliances and food, 10 small enterprises were established. Returnee Communities were supported with grants of 50.000 euros and 20.000 Euros, with equipment for the establishment of enterprises in order to improve socio-economic conditions of life. The grants were awarded to Returnee Communities that applied in the group of at least two households for a small grant and a minimum of five households for a large grant.

The founders of the companies, in addition to awarding grants in the form of equipment, were provided assistance in business plans development, business and professional education, as well as continuous monitoring of business development. Mentoring meant support for start-ups in the form of working with experts in the field of agriculture, trade, services, small business development and financial management. Activities of the companies are primary agricultural production (husbandry, farming, fruit growing and food production and, production of wrapping materials, production of bread and pastry etc).

The project is part of the project „Support to Improvement of the Living Conditions of Forced Migrants and the Closure of Collective Centres“ IPA 2012 funded by the European Union through the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia. Implementation of the project started in February 2014 and was implemented in close cooperation with the Office for Kosovo and Metohija of the Republic of Serbia and Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia.





“My prayers have been answered”

Family Djordjevic from Obilic returned to their home in Kosovo after nearly 13 year, in 2012. Jugoslav (41), his spouse Ivana (31), mother Ljubinka (77) and two sons (Luka) and Stefan (8) lived in Kursumlija since 1999, as Jugoslav explains “moving from one home to another always in fear they could get evicted”. Desire for their own home and soil prevailed, so family Djordjevic decided to returned to Kosovo.

First substantial assistance came from the European Union from which funds new house for Djordjevic family was constructed.

“My prayers have been answered. I’ve never hoped that my family would be helped out in such a short term by so many good people” says Jugoslav. “How is life in Kosovo? We’re doing well. I hear that in other villages they have serious problems but not us. We live in a community with Albanians who accepted us without any problems.

Our daughter Anja was born here two and a half years ago. Today we are happy not being forced to think that somebody will evict us” says Jugoslav.

ASB, thanks to the project financed by the EU, in August 2015 provided a returnee package to family Djordjevic worth around 3500 Euros. Family received food and hygiene products as well as furniture and home appliances. Income of this family is minimal and for that reason, as Jugoslav states, this help is invaluable. Jugoslav He used to work for state-owned Electricity Company, and today he is on minimum wage. Although it is tough, he doesn’t give up.

”It’s least important that there is no job. If a man wants to work, something always comes by. We have a small garden and thanks to the package that we received for some time I do not have to worry whether I’ll be able to feed my family”, Jugoslav explains.

Opportunity for a better life

Milikovic family, together with four other families from Srbobran (Municipality Istok), have returned to Kosovo in 2006. Vesna (40) has returned alone, while her husband Slavisa (40) came three years later, in 2009. "I've missed Kosovo, Srbobran, my house and land. I couldn't stay longer in Mrcajevci and face the fact that my home has been intruded" Slavisa said. In Mrcajevci, Slavisa, Vesna, daughter Jovana (25) and son Filip (24) have been living as subtenants. There were no job opportunities, so the family was constantly struggling for survival.

Milikovic family has moved into new house in 2007. Since the return, they are engaged in agriculture, and today they are developing joint business with four more families owing to the EU support. Slavisa is member of returnee community Osojane's group, which received the grant of 50.000 Euros in order to found their own business. As their main activity is agriculture, the group was supported with agricultural machines and tools: two tractors, seed drills, disc harrows, and wheat and corn harvest machines. Machines were delivered in August, 2015. but before that, families went through 6 months long training. All along, mentoring support was provided to them which proved to be crucial assistance, especially during the enterprise's registration and first phase of business founding.

"When I say this was an enormous help which has changed our lives, I'm saying that in the name of all five families, not just in mine name. We couldn't believe that we would actually receive the donation, because many organizations before came, promising a lot, but after that, nothing ever happened. This time, our trust wasn't betrayed. We intend to invest profit from wheat and corn sales in purchasing more equipment and additional business development" Slavisa says.









Help for refugees and internally displaced persons in Serbia

The breakout of armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia led to influx of more than half a million refugees to Serbia. Since 1995 a total number of 500,000 refugees from Bosnia and Croatia and 210,000 IDPs from Kosovo were registered in Serbia. Over the past 20 years, the international community, supported by the civil sector and relevant authorities has invested tremendous efforts in order to support the return, reintegration but also integration of these groups within society by tailor-made projects in fields of housing, economic revitalisation, legal and social support.

The project "Supporting the closure of Collective Centers in Serbia through the provision of durable housing solutions for IDPs, refugees and returnees" was implemented by Arbeiter Samariter Bund and funded by the EU in the total value of 1.044,000 million Euros. The action has directly contributed to the resolution of IDPs and Refugee problems in three municipalities: Vranje, Smederevo and Gadzin Han.

Durable housing solutions were provided for the total of 177 beneficiaries: 138 beneficiaries in Smederevo, 28 in Vranje and 11 in Gadzin Han. Under the project 64 new pre-fabricated houses were constructed and equipped with new furniture and home appliances.





Closure of biggest Collective Center in South East Europe

Collective Center "Ora Sartid" Radinac, was opened in 1995, after the arm conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. During the period 1999-2000, with around 1300 internally displaced persons and refugees, it was the biggest collective centre, not only in Serbia, but also in the Balkan region and ex SFRY.

In the City of Smederevo, ASB constructed 42 houses on two locations provided by the local authorities, one in "Mala Krsna" settlement, with 28 houses and other in "Kovačicevo" settlement, with 14 houses. Additionally, three prefabricated houses were constructed on private building plots. This project was successfully concluded on May 1st, 2015 and with the implementation of the project biggest Collective Center in South Eastern Europe "ORA Sartid" was finally closed due the fact that all the CC residents were provided with the housing solutions.



New home for Živković family after 16 years spent in Collective Center

Kosara Živković had been living, with six other members of her family, in small barrack in the CC ORA Sartid for 16 years before moving in the new house in May 2015. Her 3 daughters, one son (16) and two grand children (both 6 years old) are living with her.

Family Živković came to the CC during 1999 Kosovo war. Even before the conflict, family was very poor, living solely of the state social welfare. Kosara struggled through life not only from poverty but also due to her illnesses that condemned her to a wheelchair and necessary daily medical assistance.

“Tragic events followed me through life. After my unsuccessful cancer operation and when I found out my eldest daughter have the same kind of cancer

I finally gave up. Not being able to provide my children and grandchildren decent and safe home was the hardest part” says Kosara.

Under the EU funded project, they were granted a new prefabricated house of around 100 square meters, equipped with the ramp for disabled persons and all necessary furniture and home appliances.

“Now we are finally, after 16 years of living in dirty and small barrack, in our own home. We have 4 rooms, kitchen, all necessary things and we still can't believe that our wishes came true” Kosara explains.







Socio-economic inclusion

ASB was able to assist 33 vulnerable families with over 200 family members in target municipalities through capacity building in start-up or development of micro businesses, provision of grant-based economic packages for job creation and promotion of public/private partnership for the benefit of socially disadvantaged families with regards to employment opportunities.





Integrated socio-economic support to the most vulnerable households in Fushe Kosova and Prizren Municipality

One of the main problems in Kosovo is having wide-spread and multi-dimensional poverty. About 37% of the population lives on less than EUR 1.42 per day, 15% on less than EUR 0.93. The country strains to attract foreign investment and reduce the high unemployment rate, which stands officially at over 40% although some estimates have put it as high as 60%. Unemployment among youth (age group 21-24) is estimated at around 70% and unemployment among the Roma minority may be as high as 90%. For these reasons ASB in Kosovo focuses primarily on the support to these, most vulnerable groups.

During 2014/2015 Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund in Kosovo was contracted by the German Foreign Ministry (GFM) under the auspices of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, for an integrated socio-economic support to the most vulnerable minority and majority households in Prizren and Fushe Kosova/Kosovo Polje Municipalities.

Integrated socio-economic support to the most vulnerable households in in the municipalities of Gorazde and Kotor Varos

From September 2014. to March 2016. ASB has implemented project funded by the German Federal Foreign Office in two municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gorazde and Kotor Varos. With the project of the total value of € 74,000 ASB succeeded to assist 23 vulnerable families with the provision of green houses accompanied with tailor-made trainings in agricultural production in green houses

By addressing the socio-economic vulnerability issue and exclusion of different ethnic groups and promoting their joint participation in the training and job creation process in the target areas, the project directly provided solid grounds for steady community stabilisation and development, thus contributing to overall post-conflict stabilisation in the area. This impact was additionally increased due to the fact that both municipalities proved their true willingness to accept all ethnic groups within the stabilisation and democratisation processes. Finally, the proposed project was fully in line with the EU promotion of Active Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion through which the inclusion, where possible, was provided to actively engage the marginalised into the society and possibly move them from social protection system permanently.

Development of typical gastronomic products of interest for tourism in South Economic Region of Kosovo

Under the EURED Grant Scheme 2012 project, the Office of Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB) in Kosovo have successfully implemented project "Tourism and Taste - Tourtaste " in South Region of Kosovo, from February 2013 until 15th of October 2014. The project in the total value of €389.908 was implemented by ASB in close cooperation with its local partners, the Prizren Municipality and NGO "PREDA Plus" from FYRO Macedonia.

ASB and its partners succeeded to contribute was to the raise in the quality of typical regional gastronomic sector and to develop an integrated model that directly and indirectly raised competitiveness of agricultural, food and tourism sector in the South economic region of Kosovo. It's worth to be mentioned that a cook book with innovated traditional recipes and regional gastronomic route raised excellence of the production area and increased attractiveness.







“To Earn-Not to Get” 280 business grants for mine victims

According to BHMIC Statistics, there are 8035 registered mine victims out of which 1682 are after-war victims. Having in mind that poor Bosnian economy does not provide sufficient jobs and employment opportunities for its citizens in general and that unemployment level is the highest in the region, marginalised society groups, such as mine victims, are particularly affected by slow economic development and consequent lack of jobs. Therefore, mine victims continuously face a problem of self-employment or employment and consequent social development what in turn creates unsecured future from socio-economic and psychosocial point of view.

From 2013 to 2015 ASB has implemented project “Socio-economic empowerment of mine victims and their families through provision of business trainings and employment opportunities in BiH” focused on creation of jobs and employment opportunities. This innovative project of the total value € 1.147.200 has provided 280 business grants for mine victims in 23 Bosnian municipalities / cities and Brcko District and has enabled much needed assistance for over 1000 beneficiaries.

The project has introduced a new approach to support for micro and small businesses for vulnerable population groups through competitive model that secure grants only for those who successfully pass all training and, based on business education provided within training, create feasible and sustainable business plans. This kind of project and its innovative approach are exactly what is needed for vulnerable groups in contemporary Bosnia, thus reducing dependency on humanitarian aid and sense of lethargy and fatalism while creating sense of ownership over the process and positive psycho-social and psychological impact onto mine victims.







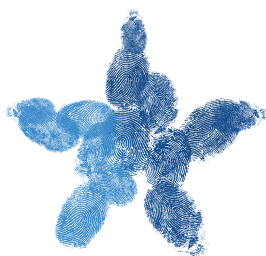
Strengthening of the civil society

Countries of Western Balkans (WB) are characterized with the transitional situation affected by extreme levels of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. The recent crisis has put social protection systems under the unprecedented challenge of addressing ever increasing levels of exclusion with reduced public resources. All of the countries in WB started the process of outsourcing the social services in order to reach higher numbers of beneficiaries and reduce the costs for social protection. Still, a significant proportion of low-income citizens have poor access to social safety nets and to services in question. This is due to the fact that both the public authorities ordering the services and organizations delivering it lack knowledge, capacities and joint dialog on basic standards of the social services. Having that mind ASB with partners jointly developed project in order to strengthen the position of social services providers in WB, to give them a voice and to build their capacities.



Improving the provision of Social Service Delivery in South Eastern Europe

Project "Improving the provision of Social Service Delivery in South Eastern Europe through the empowerment of national and regional CSO networks" has been implemented by ASB with partners SOLIDAR from Belgium, OGI from Croatia, CLARD from Kosovo, SOS PG from Montenegro, LIR CD from Bosnia and Herzegovina, EDC from Serbia, ARSIS from FYROM and ASYD from Albania from December 2014. Project of the total value of € 1.707.000 is financed by European Union in framework of Partnership Programmes for Civil Society Organisations. During the first phase of the project, the main result was the establishment of the regional IRIS Network that is now covering 7 countries and has so far managed to position itself as the only SEE network gathering CSOs – Social Service Providers.



IRIS Network

What is the IRIS Network?

Founded in 2012, the IRIS Network is a unique regional network that brings together CSOs, social service providers in SEE. The Network is based on vision of equal rights and opportunities for decent living for all. The network has been created to ensure social inclusion by supporting the environment for the provision of high quality services through support to national developmental social policies. Also, an important part of the Networks' mission is to support its national members in 7 countries and respective decision-makers in the creation of developmental policies, lobbying and advocacy focused on ensuring access to quality social services. Since 2014, the IRIS Network has seven national secretariats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, FYROM and Albania.

IRIS in numbers:

7 national networks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, FYROM and Albania dealing with Elderly people, People with Disabilities, Children and Youth at risk, Gender based and domestic violence, Migrants (Roma and refugees, DP and IDPs);

150+ organizations from the SEE region are connected along with having their capacities enriched through provided social services;

10 000 beneficiaries are provided necessary social and health services each day by our member organizations;

500+ decision makers and stakeholders from civil and public sector attended our national events;

36 grass root projects have been supported, focusing on improving social services on the local level.

Support to the IRIS Network member organizations through Small Grants Programme

Out of 34 received project proposals, IRIS Network awarded 13 grants under 2nd CFP Support to projects of CSOs – social service providers in SEE. Total amount of the received grants is 60 000 EUR. Each project deals with important social issues and strives to strengthen civil society organizations role in the creation of social policies and social protection programmes. Overall objective of the SGF is to achieve a more dynamic civil society actively participating in public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law and with capacity to influence policy and decision making processes. We are presenting few of the grantees stories.

Association “Will for Life” for the people with cerebral palsy and polio from Velika Plana (Serbia) is providing 15 beneficiaries with work ability with a job and skills that are valued on the labour market. Under the Project “Equal Chances”, Work Centre was fully equipped and then used for training, during which the beneficiaries learnt how to produce decorative items. Long term benefit to beneficiaries is improved skills, which makes positive influence on their lives and economic status. The project as well strengthens relations between the Association and local authorities and other business stakeholders – this partnership will insure continuous employment of Centre’s beneficiaries in future.

Association “Euro Rom” (B&H) is implementing project “Development of Local action plans for effective social inclusion of Roma”. Aim of the project is to involve the Roma population in 6 municipalities in Tuzla Canton (covering app 20% of total Roma population in B&H) in decision making processes, by overcoming weaknesses of the National Action Plan for Roma, are supported by local authorities and relevant institutions in social and minority protection sector. The authorities and Roma population got involved in meaningful discussion on challenges of Roma community within the inclusion process when preparing strategy and local action plan for inclusion. The policies and practices in the area of social inclusion of Roma in Tuzla Canton are to be improved by the end of 2016 when documents are to be adopted.

The project “Strengthening Citizenship and Advocacy with Persons with Disabilities” implemented by **Partnerë për Fëmijët (Albania)** educated youth with disabilities to advocate their rights and teaching how to institutionalize their participation. Project activities directly engaged 125 beneficiaries who learned how to develop conduct surveys, analyze data and develop priority action plan, lobbying to relevant institutions ensuring adequate social policies and practice. Developed policy brief with comprehensive recommendations were communicated with local and national authorities starting the advocacy process for the inclusion of people with disabilities.





Contact

Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V.

ASB SEE Main Office Sarajevo

Aleja Bosne Srebrene 4
71 000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Telephone: +387 (0)33 468 366
Telefax: +387 (0)33 234 698
E-mail: asb.bosnia@asb-see.org

ASB Serbia

Antifašističke borbe 14/8,
New Belgrade 11070
Republic of Serbia

Telephone: +381 (0)11 311 73 18
Telefax: +381 (0)11 231 06 77
E-mail: asb.serbia@asb-see.org

ASB Kosovo

Josip Relja 1
20 000 Prizren
Kosovo

Telephone: +381 (0)29 23 27 36
E-mail: asb.kosovo@asb-see.org

www.asb-see.org



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