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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND
POVERTY REDUCTION
UNIT

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LOCAL INITIATIVES TOWARDS INCREASING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Goal

The Local Initiative Programme (LIP)

The Local Initiative Programme (LIP) aimed to help improve social inclusion in Serbia by supporting the development and implementation of effective social inclusion policies at the national and local level.

The Programme was specifically designed to efficiently achieve Outcome 2 (Local-level policy framework is aligned with the principles of social inclusion) of the project Support to Improve Social Inclusion in Serbia, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in the period 2013–2017 and implemented by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of Serbia.

Programme purpose and objectives:

The purpose of LIP was to support the partnership between civil society organizations and local governments with a view to designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policy and legislative frameworks in the areas relevant to social inclusion and poverty reduction and to facilitate cooperation with other relevant stakeholders in the public, private and civil sectors, at the local and regional level.

The Local Initiative Programme also aimed to enhance:

- communication mechanisms between public, private and civil sectors at the local level;
- local legislative framework that facilitates effective usage of local budgets for improving the position of vulnerable groups;
- efficient prioritization of measures, programs and activities in the LIP policy areas;
- local stakeholder capacity strengthening, aimed at successful absorption of EU funds, in particular the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and the European Social Fund.

Programme overview:

The Local Initiative Programme consisted of 11 local-level initiatives in five policy areas, covering the territory of 21 local governments in three regions of Serbia: Southern and Eastern Serbia, Šumadija and Western Serbia and the region of Vojvodina.

Programme implementation period: July 2015 – October 2016

LIP in a nutshell:

€ 122,188

Total programme budget

5

Policy areas

11

Local-level initiatives

21

Local self-governments

25

Local institutions participated in LIP



Main results:

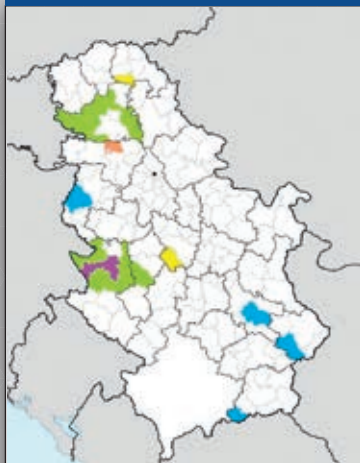
- 6 local governments have increased their budget allocations for social inclusion and poverty reduction measures and policies
- 8 local-level policy and action documents adopted
- 12 lists of priority measures and activities agreed
- 15 new local institutional arrangements established (working groups, bodies and inter-sectoral networks)
- 17 project proposals developed in line with the EU methodology
- 39 municipalities and towns participated in peer review events
- More than 170 participants trained in project development and project cycle management

Specific LIP outcomes include:

- 3 entrepreneurial initiatives launched
- 12 youth from vulnerable groups employed
- An innovative method established for informing citizens about available subsidies in the field of rural development (SMS info service)
- Awareness raised through specialized radio and TV programs in the fields of education, social housing and rural development
- The number of interested citizens, as well as of submitted subsidy applications, increased by 30% compared to the previous year
- Senior citizens' needs for social protection services identified through consultations

External evaluation of LIP and SIPRU's role:

"The effects of the Programme are reflected in higher awareness of rights and measures, decreased distrust in local structures and passivity, as well as more visible vulnerable groups and the challenges they are facing (...). The Local Initiative Programme is a good mechanism for ensuring SIPRU's presence at the local level, in particular to stimulate, develop and monitor social inclusion and poverty reduction policies. The SIPRU also provides great potential for disseminating and generating the knowledge on the implementation of policies and measures at the local level, and contributes to designing interventions aimed at enhancing national level policies and mechanisms."



Policy area

- Education
- Employment
- Social Protection
- Social Housing
- Rural Development

Local-level initiatives:

| Policy area | Project title | Lead project partner | Local government |
|-------------------|--|---|--|
| Education | Our Children | "Vrdničak" Centre for Children, Youth and Family | Irig |
| Employment | The Strength of Local-Level Initiatives for New Jobs | Business Development Centre Kragujevac | Knić |
| | Our Children's Future Depends on Us | "Duga" Association of Citizens | Ada |
| Social Protection | High-Quality Social Protection in the Local Community | PROTECTA Centre for Civil Society Development | Panteleji - Niš |
| | Social Inclusion Initiative | "Iskra" Citizens' Association | Loznica |
| | Elderly People in Remote Villages | "Lužničke rukotvorine – ŽEC" Civil Society Association | Babušnica |
| | Programme Development and Capacity Strengthening of the Preševo Local Government for Social Protection Development and Sustainable Financing | Association of the Parents of Children and Youth with Special Needs | Preševo |
| Social Housing | Sustainable Development of Social Housing in Užice | Užice Centre for Human Rights and Democracy | Užice |
| Rural Development | RuralNET | Association for the Rural Development of Arilje – ARDA | Arilje, Bajina Bašta, Cajetina i Lučani |
| | Rural Action Požega – My Voice Should Be Heard, Too | Forum of Civil Action FORCA Požega | Požega |
| | Local-Level Initiatives for Rural Development of Bačka | European Movement Novi sad | Bač, Bačka Palanka, Bački Petrovac, Beočin, Titel, Žabalj, Srbobran, Vrbas |