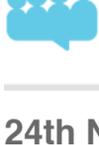


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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION UNIT



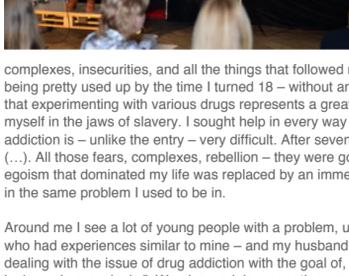
24th NEWSLETTER

ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

INTRODUCTION

MONIKA ŽUGIĆ: Drug Addiction Can Be Cured

From the 29th Belgrade Ignite "Get Involved 2" speech (21 October 2014, Mixer House, Belgrade)



My story can begin right this moment, as of this night. Today, you see me in good spirit, smiling, and most of all – alive. Today I am a wife, a mother to a cute three-year-old son, with another bun in the oven. Many of you would say: "So what, what's the big deal? That's completely normal for a woman of your age." However, the life I'd led up to about eight years ago led me to fall into a huge addiction problem, so in my case, all of this is not normal at all, it is a miracle (...).

The road that led me to the addiction problems, at first, seemed quite naive. Rebellion, various complexes, insecurities, and all the things that followed me through my teenage years, led up to my life being pretty used up by the time I turned 18 – without any goals or ambition for the future. Although I knew that experimenting with various drugs represents a great evil, I went down that road and very soon found myself in the jaws of slavery. I sought help in every way possible, but getting out of the problem of addiction is – unlike the entry – very difficult. After seven years spent in darkness, I went to get treated (...). All those fears, complexes, rebellion – they were gone. My view of the world changed, and the egoism that dominated my life was replaced by an immense desire to help all those who find themselves in the same problem I used to be in.

Around me I see a lot of young people with a problem, unable to find an exit. With a few of my friends – who had experiences similar to mine – and my husband, I have founded the "Izlazak" (*Exit*) organization dealing with the issue of drug addiction with the goal of, primarily, busting the prejudice that says "once a junky – always a junky". We also work in prevention, organize public discussions, visit schools and various institutions, and respond to the invitations of all those who want to hear useful first-hand experiences. From day one we wish to motivate addicts to seek treatment and to send them the message that drug addiction is treatable and that one can escape addiction despite what society may say. In addition to prevention and motivation, one of the key aspects of our work is resocialization.

They said that we would amount to nothing and that we chose our own disease. However, with a positive example and way of life today we wish to show that we can turn into people who are useful for this town. We have a vision, a desire, a bit of experience, and we call on all of you, as citizens and part of this society, to be our support, to give us that second chance, to make our town and country brighter.

NEWS

Economic Development and Employment

► Support to 15 Young Farmers to Start or Implement their own Business

► Call for Participants in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Programme

► Social Impact Award (SIA) Promotes Social Entrepreneurship among Students

► EBRD and Intesa Supporting Women's Entrepreneurship in Serbia with EUR 5 million

► Call for Education of Social Managers for Establishing/Developing Social Enterprises (Deadline: 16/03/2015)

Social Welfare and Healthcare

► Construction of New Social Housing Apartments in Ovča Planned

► Progress Achieved in Child Protection in Serbia

► Report to the Working Meeting on the Amendments to the Law on Social Protection

► Better Organization of Healthcare Financing Needed

► TV Series "Sofa/Access to Justice" Premiers on RTV Vojvodina

Education

► Largest Online Teacher Training in the Region Begins

► Call for Good Practice Examples in Inclusive Education Completed

► Conference on Credit Mobility: Exchange of Students and Teachers Will Double

► "Same-Sex Orientation in Teaching and Counselling" – Training for Secondary School Employees

Vulnerable Groups and Human Rights

► State Committed to Combatting Violence against Women

► National Youth Strategy 2025 Adopted

► "Women's Platform for the Development of Serbia" Conference Held

► Important Role of Mobile Teams in Roma Inclusion

► Session of the Council of the Government of RS for the Improvement of the Status of Roma and Implementing the Decade of Roma Inclusion Held

EU Integration

► Funds Awarded for 15 Projects by CSOs and Local Self-Governments through Citizen Participation Fund

► Third Call for Submission of Project Proposals for the Cross-Border Programme Croatia-Serbia 2007-2013 (Deadline: 01/06/2015)

► EU Info Centre Starting a Media Club

► Step Forward in EU Negotiations Transparency

EU News

► Euro Area Unemployment Rate at 11.2%, EU28 at 9.8%

► Commission Has Committed €3.8 Billion to Fight Poverty and Help the Most Vulnerable in Europe

► Juncker Commission Makes 1 Billion Euro Available For The Young Unemployed

► Slovenia Legalizes Gay Marriage

► Call for Projects under KA2 – Capacity Building in the Field of Youth (Deadline: 03/04/2015)

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION UNIT

"New Technologies in Education" Conference Held

The two-day conference "New Technologies in Education" was held on 27 and 28 February 2015 in Belgrade. The event was dedicated to the use of information-communication technologies (ICT) in the education system.

The conference was dedicated to the strategic, as well as the daily use of ICT in schools and faculties, teacher training for the use of new technologies in teaching, digital textbooks, online learning and other important issues. The emphasis was on practical solutions, therefore an opportunity for presenting their daily use of new technologies in schools was given to teachers and university professors from across Serbia, the countries in the region and the United Kingdom. A special segment of the programme was dedicated to inclusive education supported by new technologies. The conference was also accompanied by a fair, wherein practical solutions in the field of ICT in education were presented by over 40 companies from Serbia, the region and the United Kingdom.

The conference was organized by the British Council, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Belgrade, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and other partners.

More on the conference can be found [here](#).

Roundtable "Support of the Women's Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality at the Local Level"

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence and the Women's Parliamentary Network of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, organized a roundtable titled "Support of the Women's Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality at the Local Level", thereafter holding a seminar dedicated to social inclusion and poverty reduction. Both events were held in Kraljevo, on 27 and 28 February 2015.

The participants of the roundtable emphasized the importance of the political participation of women at all levels of authority, the importance and their empowerment at the local level, as well as the necessity for exchanging experiences, cooperation and building partnerships of all relevant stakeholders in the process of improving the status of women. The roundtable was followed by a seminar by the Women's Parliamentary Network on social inclusion and poverty reduction, including three organized debates.

Award for Best Media Report on Youth Entrepreneurship Awarded

The main prize at the competition for the best media report on youth entrepreneurship in 2014, organized by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Smart Kolektiv and Erste Bank, was won by the journalist of Ekonometar, Marko Andrejić, for his text "Youth Entrepreneurship in Serbia: Obstacles and Advantages".

Other than Marko Andrejić from Ekonometar, who will be awarded a working-study visit to Brussels, the journalist of TV Forum from Prijepolje, Mirela Veljović, was also awarded for her report on the entrepreneurial road of Emina Srna, the owner of the ophthalmologist store "Visus". She will receive a cash prize of RSD 15 thousand.

The winning report was published in Ekonometar 114. During his stay in Brussels, Ekonometar journalist Marko Andrejić will have the opportunity to meet officials from the European Commission and the European Parliament, and use the materials gathered in his work.

Seminar "Innovation – Partnership of Universities and Small and Medium Enterprises" Held

As part of the cycle of events "Education for Employment", the seminar "Innovation – Partnership of Universities and Small and Medium Enterprises" was successfully organized on 3 March at the Palace of Serbia.

The seminar participants could learn more about the infrastructure, institutions and organizations supporting cooperation and innovation in the United Kingdom, as well as good practices existing in cooperation between companies and universities in Serbia. Examples and various models of cooperation between the academic and business community were shown at the seminar, aiming to develop business innovations in small and medium enterprises, as well as to develop the private sector.

The seminar was organized by the British Council, the Embassy of the United Kingdom and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy, the National Regional Development Agency and other partners.

Report on Digital Inclusion in the Republic of Serbia for 2011-2014 Prepared

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit has prepared a [Report on Digital Inclusion in the Republic of Serbia for 2011-2014](#). The report focuses particularly on digital inclusion as a strategic commitment and social development policy.

The goal of the report is to map the existing initiatives contributing to the improvement of this area and encompasses: an overview of the strategic and institutional framework in the field of digital inclusion, an analysis of the current situation in relevant areas, an overview of measures and programmes implemented, and recommendations for the coming period.

Digital inclusion represents the potential and technical capacities provided by information-communications technologies that may be used to increase the quality of life, social and political participation, employment capabilities, as well as creating conditions for the greatest possible degree of personal independence.

"Towards a New Strategy for Improving the Status of Roma" Conference Held

The conference "Towards a New Strategy for Improving the Status of Roma" was held on 9 February at the Klub Poslanika in Belgrade, aiming to present the guidelines for providing relevant bases for drafting a new Strategy for Improving the Status of Roma.

The conference presented the Initial Bases for Drafting the Strategy for Roma Inclusion in Serbia, harmonized with the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Report on the Implementation of the Operational Conclusions of the Seminar on the Social Inclusion of Roma in RS, arguments for the second Roma Decade, regional cooperation and coordination of Roma Strategies in South-Eastern Europe, as well as problems of poverty from the perspective of human development, the social and cultural potential of Roma and cultural policy as an instrument for the social inclusion of Roma, and the participants provided their comments during discussions.

The Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in partnership with the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, and supported by "Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma" Open Society Foundations from Budapest and the Open Society Foundation from Belgrade, prepared the "Initial Study for Drafting the New Roma Inclusion Strategy Harmonized with the Europe 2020 Strategy", presenting the reasons and bases for drafting the new strategic document.

More information on the conference can be found [here](#).

READ MORE...

► ["Equal and Empowered – We're Stronger Together" Conference of Women in Parliament of SEE](#)

► [Online Week 2015](#)

► [Progress Including Civil Society in Planning at the Local Level](#)

► [External Evaluation of the National Youth Strategy 2008-2014 Implemented](#)

► [EIB Institute Organizing the Fourth Edition of the Social Innovation Tournament](#)

► [The Commission Renews its Commitment to Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

► [Women Earn 16% Less than Men in the EU](#)

► [25 Candidates Selected for Second Round of the Competition "Ideas for a Better Tomorrow"](#)

► [Fund for Gender Equality Issues Call for Project Proposals \(Deadline: 05/04/2015\)](#)

► [Call by the International Fund for Cultural Diversity \(Deadline: 15/04/2015\)](#)

► [New Deadline for Proposals in March Round of "Active Communities" Programme \(20/03/2015\)](#)

► [Calls for Programmes and Projects of Public Interest in the Field of Youth \(Deadline: 16/03/2015\)](#)

You may follow the news on social inclusion and poverty reduction regularly at:

<http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/>

SOCIAL INCLUSION BLOG

DRAŽEN ZACERO: Children on Social Inclusion

At the request of [Friends of Children of Serbia](#) and with the help of pedagogue Tatjana Matijaš I prepared a short questionnaire, in order to examine the capabilities of student parliaments in the field of social inclusion and poverty reduction. I designed the questionnaire intuitively, keeping most of the question open, to get the most authentic opinions from the children.

- If you gather a dozen children aged 14 to 18 years, there is nothing an expert might suggest, that is not already on their list of proposals for social inclusion of children with reduced abilities. The conclusion was drawn from the fact that the answers to 10 questionnaires contained all known strategies for social inclusion and poverty reduction, expressed through the language of children.

- Children recognize the significance of psychosocial support.

- Children recognize the significance of maintaining human dignity while providing assistance and support through the solitary activities they most frequently propose. They emphasize these activities need to be done so that their peer does not feel bad or is not insulted.

- Children recognize the influence of peer groups on a person feeling accepted. In 90% of the cases, children note the method they can help is being friends with the child they recognize as having a problem/challenge in life, financial, or not having parents, or being in a wheelchair, etc. An additional quality is that they emphasize that such children should in no way be separated or made to feel different.

Here are some of their opinions regarding peers who are socially excluded or with reduced abilities, expressed as a response to the question how these children are mentioned in their peer group and in what context:

- They are spoken of as children with certain limitations, primarily bad things are said about them, and I would like them to be given a chance like everyone else for everything
- Unfortunately, they are spoken off less, their suffering is never mentioned and they are always called invalids. But I would rather say they are brave, because after everything that happened to them, they wish to be like others.
- We call them invalids, retards. They should be spoken of just like all other people. With respect and in a way where in no way will we overly emphasize their deficiencies.
- They frequently laugh at them and do not want to enter into any type of contact with them. I would like it if we spoke and treated them like all children.
- I describe them as friends, and would like to have them spoken of exactly in that way.

What made the greatest impression on me is that the children generally see the least number of problems regarding inclusive education and inclusive classrooms. You will never hear a child say that a person in a wheelchair cannot sit with them in class and be part of the class (...). Education is important, but community is important as well. Even if we say that inclusion in education will slow down learning and teaching, even if we say there are no creative solutions for including a person in a wheelchair in physical education classes, I'd say it is important that we are all together, and then the community will compensate for all deficiencies, i.e. I see inclusion simply as teamwork.

The rest of the post can be found [HERE](#). Other posts by our bloggers can be found at: <http://www.socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/blog>

SUCCESS STORY

ZORICA ATIĆ: Challenges of Single Parenthood

Within our social protection system the term single parenthood is not clearly formulated, the term "single-parent family" is much more common. This population is not considered a vulnerable category within the population, and therefore there are no statistical data on it. It is evident that this group is growing quickly, and that more than half of it are children. There are different ways to end up in the situation of single parenthood, and one of the most frequent in the XXI century is divorce, as is the case with me. (...)

I stayed and survived in my marriage as long as it made sense, as long as I hoped that some things would change for the better, believing that it was best and most natural for a child to live with both parents. So I ran around in my circles of justification, understanding, tolerance, forgiveness, but the change for the better never materialized. (...) I gathered courage for months. Still, in the end, I moved away, and after the move there was no time for self-pity and despair. There were a thousand current problems to resolve urgently, with one of the most urgent situations being the enrollment of the child in a kindergarten. I went to the local kindergarten, explained my situation, and asked what I needed to enroll my child. I was told that the call will be issued soon, in a month – soon for them – and that I should submit the required documentation then. The next day I came back with the question of whether in my situation the child has any priority in enrollment. They said they were not sure. There was no time to lose, so I called the competent institution – the Secretariat for Child Protection. You won't believe it, but the answer to my question was very clear and simple: as a working mother in the process of divorce and being the caretaker of my child, I had the right to, immediately and outside the call, enroll my child in the closest kindergarten. This required only four documents, three of which I already had. Within a few days, my child was, indeed, enrolled in that kindergarten and spent over a year there, socializing excellently in the new environment.

I wish to illustrate the extent to which we are uninformed, and how much depends solely on ourselves. (...) There is not a single public administration office window where I wasn't turned away at least once with the famous phrase: "That's not within our competence. We can't solve your problem." However, with each new right I've won, with each new window I'd conquered, my self-confidence grew, and my living situation improved. What I want to tell you is not to give up after the first NO. Get informed, fight for yourself, because the only right no one can deny us is the right to fight for ourselves and our families. No one will, indeed, do this instead of us.

(...)

The rest of the text can be found [HERE](#). More success stories can be found at: <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/category/uspesniprimeri/>

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