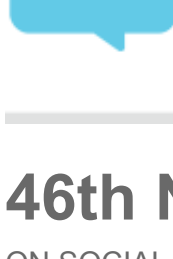


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SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION UNIT



46th NEWSLETTER

ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development goals: Serbia's historic development opportunity



Written by: Prof. Slavica Đukić Dejanović, PhD, Minister without Portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policy and Head of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on the Implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

Mid-July, I was in New York as a representative of the Government of the Republic of Serbia at the fifth High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, convening under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council. It was an honor to speak at the United Nations on behalf of our country, which played an active role in formulating the sustainable development goals and which—as the only one from the SEE region—look part in determining their funding model.

Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World, unfortunately still represents an ongoing issue in our country, too. Among 168 countries and territories, Serbia is ranked 66th in the world according to the Human Development Index. At the same time, we continue to document high numbers of people living in absolute poverty, suffering the highest relative poverty rate in Europe.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia is contemplating to resolve the challenges of combating poverty within the broader goal of promoting social development and social inclusion, placing special focus on reducing poverty among children.

As a minister responsible for demography and population policy, I must say that one of this Government's priorities is the prevention of negative demographic trends. At the same time, we do recognize that the population policy measures leading to the set goal are in correlation with the implementation of sustainable development goals. Many of the 169 indicators for the 17 sustainable development goals considerably coincide with the goals and measures contemplated by the current Birth Rate Strategy.

Of course, ahead of us is a review of the indeed solid document, which should provide the strategic framework necessary for achieving success in this area.

The revised Strategy will keep its best solutions, while supplementing it with modern ones that are in line with the challenges of a developing society.

A project for testing population policy measures in 15 municipalities in Serbia is underway, supported by the Government with a grant of 130 million dinars. At the same time, work and parenting, conducted on a sample that included 126,000 employees and 330 employers, has shown us viewpoints that we will use as guidelines for improving the situation in this area.

In the next year, our plan is to determine—through practice and other research—which measures that need to be modified in order to amend the normative framework with the most effective legislation would yield results in the future.

I believe that success can be achieved by committing to the implementation of population policy measures, as well as by implementing the Agenda 2030 goals. I would like to note that it is important to involve all stakeholders in these processes—state institutions, experts, the civil sector, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the media, and local governments.

I see the implementation of sustainable development goals and the execution of population policy measures as two related processes. That is why we will be revising the Birth Rate Strategy in parallel with prioritizing the defined goals and developing a national program for the implementation of Agenda 2030.

I look at the UN Agenda 2030 as a historic development chance and opportunity to eradicate extreme poverty, make a crucial contribution to the social development of our country, and attain our long-lasting dream of Serbia becoming part of the developed world.

NEWS

Economic Development and Employment

- ▶ Another EUR 48 million for the Western Balkans
- ▶ Entrepreneurship of young people strengthens the economy
- ▶ A start-up center in Niš to create new jobs
- ▶ Young people without parental care meet with potential employers from Niš
- ▶ Internships for Strong Youth: A month-long program for young people without parental care

Social Welfare and Healthcare

- ▶ Increased efforts in fighting violence against women
- ▶ Improving the living conditions of migrants in Serbia
- ▶ Help at Home marks first anniversary in the Kolubara district
- ▶ Better conditions for the Center for Protection of Infants, Children and Youth
- ▶ Analysis of the position of young people at risk and recommendations for improving their social and economic inclusion

Education

- ▶ An innovative approach in the diagnosis and therapy of hearing and speech or language disorders
- ▶ The success of young mathematicians encourages further investment in education
- ▶ Workshop: Including refugee/migrant children in formal education
- ▶ Second MONS platform issue dedicated to inequalities and education in Serbia
- ▶ European competition of the best student companies

Vulnerable Groups and Human Rights

- ▶ Continuous Work on the Improvement of the Status of National Minorities
- ▶ Continuation of the Institutional Fight against Discrimination
- ▶ A Meeting Held with the Representatives of the EC on the Subject of Social Inclusion of the Roma Community in Serbia
- ▶ Improvement of the Quality of Urban Planning through Inclusion
- ▶ Self-Advocacy Guide for Citizens
- ▶ "Together, we are Serbia" – Promotion of Wealth of Diversity Campaign

EU Integration

- ▶ The Ministry of European Integration established
- ▶ Municipalities and Cities are the Main Drivers of Change in the European Integration Process
- ▶ Serbia making progress in using pre-accession funds
- ▶ Reforms Necessary for the EU Accession Supported by 66% of Serbian Citizens
- ▶ Collection of Student Papers on the European Union Published

EU News

- ▶ Employment and social developments in Europe 2017 review
- ▶ SEE and the EESC call for an EU Social Economy Action Plan
- ▶ Successful and inspiring projects financed by EaSI – VI Commission report
- ▶ Social security goes digital: Quicker and easier exchange of social security information throughout the EU and beyond
- ▶ European Health Insurance Card: 40% of insured Europeans have one

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION UNIT

13th Edition of the Review of Potential Domestic and Foreign Funding Opportunities in Serbia Published

We invite you to review the 13th edition of the Review of Potential Domestic and Foreign Funding Opportunities now as the online database you will want to visit repeatedly.

After eleven printed and one electronic edition of the Review, the new, improved version is equipped with new features such as: overview of current calls for applications, with information and practical instructions about the terms for applying; access to the database of international and domestic funding sources with basic information about the types of support they provide, supported areas, potential beneficiaries, geographic coverage and the like; quick and simple search of donors and calls for applications; availability of updated information. The Review is intended for civil society organisations, local governments, institutions, small and medium-sized enterprises, individuals and other stakeholders.

The Review has been developed by: TACSO by Civic Initiatives, the Resource Centre for all civil society organisations in Serbia, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Serbian Government and the Serbian European Integration Office.

Regional Meetings on the Role of Local Self-government Units in Achieving Employment Policy Goals Held

From May until July 2017, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Regional and Social Affairs (MLEVSA) and the National Employment Service (NES) organised four regional meetings attended by 166 representatives of 70 local self-government units (LSGU), branches and NES Head offices, other institutions and social partners. The meetings were organised in order to exchange experiences between LSGUs and local employment councils (LEC) on the process of realization of local employment action plans (LEAP), as well as to receive information about potential issues and obstacles faced by the LSGUs which could be overcome with the preparation of the National Employment Action Plan for 2018.

At the meetings, the representatives of LSGUs and LECs presented the current situation and challenges encountered on the local labour market, as well as examples of good practices within the realisation of LEAPs. The results of the "Assessment of the field, scope and effects of LEAP in the period 2010 – 2016" were also presented, as well as activities from projects "Youth Employment Promotion" implemented by GIZ and "Support for the Implementation of Employment and Social Policy Reform Programme in the Republic of Serbia with a Focus on Employment Policy and Increasing Youth Employability" implemented by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) within the "From Education to Employability" programme.

The meetings were organised with the financial and expert support of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU), Technical Assistance Project within the IPA 2012 programme cycle (IPA 2012 TA) and Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH through the German Development Cooperation.

Summer School on Social Inclusion Organised in Vrnjačka Banja

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia organised the Summer School on Social Inclusion from 10 until 13 July 2017 in Vrnjačka Banja. The Summer School was attended by the representatives of local self-government units, centres for social work, and civil society organisations from Petrovac na Mlavi, Mali Crnić, Kučevo, Mali Zvornik, Zabari, Zagubica and Dimitrovgrad.

The training was conducted in order to provide support to selected local self-government units with regard to the process of preparation of strategic documents essential for social inclusion. The exchange of information was focused on the following topics: database usage, participative approach to the process of preparation of strategic documents, the importance of networking and examples of good practice on the local and national level, the development of the intersectoral cooperation with regard to gender equality and youth employment initiative, programme budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of strategic documents, innovative and/or sustainable solutions for providing information on available sources of support, collaboration with the media in order to create a positive image of the municipality.

Living Library Organised in the Shelter for Children and Youth Living and/or Working on the Street

On 28 July 2017, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in cooperation with the Centre for Interactive Pedagogy and the Centre for Youth Integration organised a Living Library in the Shelter for Children and Youth living and/or working on the street.

The Living Library represents an innovative method in the fight against racism and xenophobia used for promoting human rights and equality. Within the "Friends of Inclusive Education Network" project, the Centre for Interactive Pedagogy created the Living Library where "books" are actually young Roma boys and girls who share experiences from their school days. Book titles refer to early development, school and what "books" remember from the time they went to school. The Living Library provides the opportunity for readers to talk to the "books" after they have heard their story, and to ask them questions about the story they had the opportunity to hear.

Living Libraries will also be organised in primary schools and civil society organisations in a number of municipalities in Belgrade. This way, children will be empowered to report every form of discrimination, activists will be encouraged to continue motivating children and developing their personal capacities, while the teachers will build awareness regarding the experience of Roma children with regard to their school life and they will recognise the importance of their treatment of all students, especially those coming from vulnerable groups.

OPEN CALLS

- ▶ The First International Course on the Subject of "Human Rights as a Universal Ideal: Global Threats and Challenges" (Deadline: 15/8/2017)
- ▶ The Support to Civil Society and the Media in the Field of European Integration Programme (Deadline: 20/8/2017)
- ▶ ASTRA: Training for Volunteering on the SOS Hotline for Victims of Human Trafficking (Deadline: 19/9/2017)
- ▶ Competition for the Annual Media Award for Tolerance Published (Deadline: 5/9/2017)
- ▶ Public Call for Awarding Grants to Married Couples on the AP Vojvodina Territory for Buying Rural Houses and Land (Deadline: 30/9/2017)

You may follow the news on open calls regularly at: socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/tenders

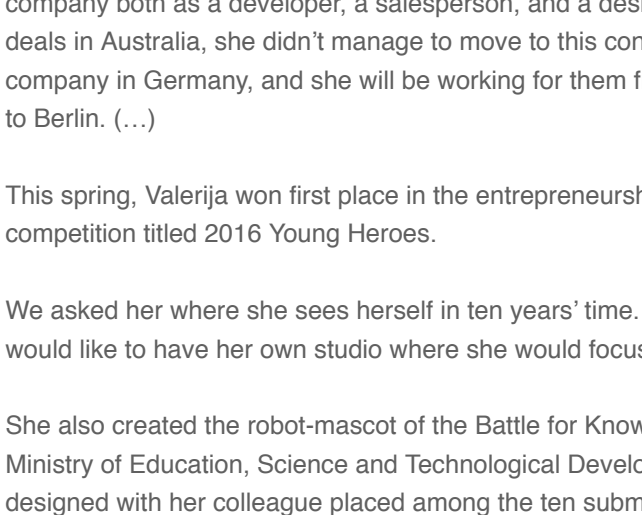
READ MORE...

- ▶ The Government of the Republic of Serbia Established the Council for the Professional Training of Local Self-government Employees
- ▶ Enhanced Participation of Youth in Social Life is Necessary
- ▶ Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) Started Working
- ▶ e-Learning Platform for European Union Sectoral Policies
- ▶ The Online Training Series "How to Work with USAID"
- ▶ The Ambassadors of Australia and the United States of America Visited the "Bagel Bejgi" Social Enterprise
- ▶ iHo – It is Important that We Help Each Other Because First and Foremost We are Human

You may follow the news on social inclusion and poverty reduction regularly at: socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/

SOCIAL INCLUSION BLOG

BORBE VASILJEVIĆ: Poems and interpersonal relations



(...) As much as the people of everyday Serbia think that by staying on this side of the wall they are above those who violate social and legal standards, the truth is that the parallel Serbia is merely a slightly more roughly distorted reflection of the former. Depending on the places where its closed communities are located, we encounter various forms of division or oppression.

At Zabela, the dominant "our people" often push around members of the Vlach national minority. At Mitrovica, Hungarians are cast as the resident Vlachs, and at Niš, Pazarians draw the short straw at least once a year. When it comes to smaller-scale institutions, they keep up with the trend at the larger ones—albeit with some deviating from the norm—and to make matters even worse, the majority and the victimized minorities here have another caste to belong them—the Roma people.

Now, the Roma are many in the parallel Serbia's institutions for various reasons: from the excess of poor living conditions to the lack of elementary education, which under no circumstances means that they are less worthy as human beings. In spite of disagreement from my friends from the ranks of "our people," I've often spent time with minorities and asked in our conversations why don't they join forces with the Roma—that would make the ratio situation fifty-fifty and no one would have the majority, rendering the mandate to rule over others impossible. To my surprise, the answer was devastating. In general—proud exemptions notwithstanding—they all find relief in knowing that there is someone who's getting it worse than them.

In fact, the system should facilitate an education of those who are guarded, as well as those who guard them. Perhaps, just like with construction permits, the paperwork filled out by formerly prison counsellors and presently prison advisors should be reduced, so that they can dedicate more time to working with people in their groups. Maybe it would be good to hire as many members of national minorities as possible as prison guards, especially from among the Roma people, so as this to become something usual and common. Because what is common is also acceptable. Perhaps there should be contracts to re-commission facilities where prisoners would produce something useful and have a responsibility to actually work in real life, and not only in legislation. That would occupy them during most of the day, which would be a good thing, because idle hands are the devil's playground, and also the competitive spirit would make them do as best as they can in anything they make, because craftsmen get everyone's respect, regardless of their nationality. And finally, above all this, the most important thing is the willingness of all those who operate in this system to have conversations on daily basis by creating mixed groups of prisoners with whom work would be done.

I know, this would be a lengthy process, if not at least an expensive one. Then in this parallel, I know that someday all of this would become a new "old" tradition, and probably only then in this parallel Serbia would we be able to talk openly and without fear about the rights of the smallest minority that suffers for the most part.

The minorities from the LGBT population...

The text in its entirety can be found on the [Social Inclusion Blog](#).

Other texts by our bloggers can be found at: www.socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/blog/

SUCCESS STORY

Valerija "retired" her first company at the age of 24

As a little kid, Belgrader Valerija Spasojević used to read a lot about Tesla, she loved robotics in the Secondary Polytechnic School, she left the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering after the first semester, and at 20 years old she and her three fellow students founded a company that left behind around one hundred websites and a robot after three years of business.

The resume of Valerija Spasojević (24), a Belgrader who will soon become a resident of Berlin, contains—among many other professional achievements—three years of running her company, called HLT studio. When she founded the company in the summer of 2014, she was met with surprised looks from administrators at the Serbian Business Registers Agency and the Tax Administration—how come that someone is registering a company at such a young age—from the IT sector nevertheless.

At the time, the bright-eyed Valerija was twenty years old, she had a savings of 400 euros, support from her parents, and three friends who soon became "employees." She came up with the name as a 16-year-old girl, and she created her first website in the sixth grade of elementary school. (...)

According to her, she entered the world of entrepreneurship spontaneously.

—I've always been interested in different fields. Even my parents and teachers used to tell me that I was good at many things and that I should focus on one or two. But that was not enough for me. Just as I can't do things that I do not like.

That is why she decided to leave the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering after the first semester and four passed exams. She felt that there she could not do or learn what she was interested in.

She spent those days of "leisure" by making, as she says, "little websites" and working as a labeler through a temping agency. Then she received the invitation to be an assistant system administrator at Beogradaska otvorena škola (Belgrade Open School). Her first regular income incited a feeling of satisfaction and independence. At that same time she got invited to teach children about robotics, web design... She decided to take a step further and sent a few applications to different addresses, and finally started to work at a Swiss IT company in Belgrade. However, she stayed there for a year, and using the money she saved up—which was less than the average salary in Serbia—she launched a company with her three friends in a rented apartment.

—It wasn't a difficult time for me. But now when I remember working 13-14 hours or pulling overnights to finish a website, it just seems unbelievable, Valerija sums up her first entrepreneurial experience. In the first year they made 40 websites, and over the company was in business—until June 2017—almost 100. (...)

Her desire to develop professionally motivated her to look for jobs abroad while working at her own company both as a developer, a salesperson, and a designer. Unfortunately, despite two nearly done deals in Australia, she didn't manage to move to this continent. Completely at random, she applied in a company in Germany, and she will be working for them from home this summer. In September she moves to Berlin. (...)

This spring, Valerija won first place in the entrepreneurship category in the Exit Foundation and NIS competition titled 2016 Young Heroes.

We asked her where she sees herself in ten years' time. She says that she doesn't know but that she would like to have her own studio where she would focus on applied robotics.

She also created the robot-mascot of the Battle for Knowledge campaign ran by the B92 Fund and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. Two years ago, an invention she designed with her colleague placed among the ten submission awarded by NASA at an international competition for astronaut suit sensors—this makes it pretty easy to assume that her wish will be fulfilled.

More success stories can be found at socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs

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