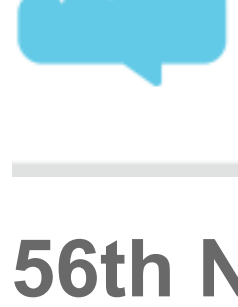


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TIM ZA SOCIJALNO UKLJUČIVANJE I SMANJENJE SIROMAŠTVA SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION UNIT



56th NEWSLETTER

ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Europe Day



Written by: **Aleksandar Bogdanović**, European Affairs and International Cooperation Coordinator, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia

During early May all European Union institutions open their doors to interested citizens. The atmosphere of decision-making, followed by a plethora of information on the processes that shapes their lives, can be felt on location in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg. This is just one of the activities celebrating 9 May, Europe Day. The symbolism of this act is to show the connection between citizens and institutions. A specific element of this year's celebration of Europe Day are the coming elections for the European Parliament that are an additional opportunity to feel the pulse of Europe and satisfaction with the work of the institutions.

The challenges faced by Europe, such as climate change, changes to the international order, the crisis of capitalism, Brexit, the fourth industrial revolution and **changing nature of work** have resulted, *inter alia*, in strengthening the social

aspect of European integration. The economic segment of integration may have been emphasized since the very beginning, i.e. the nineteen-fifties, but the global economic crisis in 2008 clearly showed that further integration is impossible without an appropriate social, as well as cultural basis. The statement made in 2014 by Jean-Claude Juncker, the departing Chairman of the European Commission, should be interpreted in this sense, that the goal of his European Commission is a more just European Union with a **AAA social ranking**, referencing the most desirable status in financial rankings.

Five years later, at the dawn of elections for the European Parliament, certain results are visible. **The European Pillar of Social Rights**, as a sort of compass for European Union institutions, member states, and social partners, is the key legacy of the current composition of the European Commission in this field. This mechanism provides for the creation of better living and working conditions in Europe under new circumstances, as legislative initiatives and coordination solidify, complement or expand existing social rights in the European Union acquis.

Furthermore, investments into human capital, particularly through the processes of education, training and re-qualification, recognize the importance of the segment of poverty reduction and increasing social inclusion. In addition to the mechanism of **Youth Guarantees** receiving additional funds, it is worth noting the **New Skills Agenda for Europe** providing the cooperation framework towards strengthening human capital, employability and competitiveness, to harmonize the labour market supply and demand.

The process of Serbia's accession to the European Union unfolds under different circumstances compared to the period of accession of Eastern and Central European countries. Global turbulence and European turmoil are also felt in Serbia, a country not left out of the trend of uncertainty and growing inequality. As stated in the **Third National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia 2014-2017**, the Gini coefficient for measuring inequality is significantly higher than the EU 28 average, although the latest data from **Eurostat** for Serbia show a decrease in inequalities during the last two years that data is available for.

One wall of the offices of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia features Churchill's message that an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty. In this regard, the situation described should be seen as an incentive for all stakeholders and competent institutions to invest further efforts into Serbia's accession towards the EU. The Government of the Republic of Serbia has just published a report on the implementation of the **Employment and Social Reform Programme (ESRP)** to review the strategic progress, and to note the challenges and identify the lessons learned by Serbia in this process. Furthermore, efforts were made to comply with the measure, i.e. draft an Action Plan for Chapter 19, so that it would be opened soon. A lot has already been done, but many tasks remain for decision makers, institutions, social partners, local communities and other stakeholders.

Europe Day is an opportunity to note the achievements, but also open questions about the future of the European project. Peace, democracy and social welfare, despite their imperfections, represent the legacy of previous generations that have been building the European Union. The challenge for current generations is to preserve them, and for future ones to improve this unique concept of social organization to the benefit of all citizens living within the territory of Europe. The outcome of the elections for the European Parliament will trace the rhythm of changes for the next five years. Serbia has a role in this process, and thus it is important that all its resources are aimed in this direction.

NEWS

Economic Development and Employment

- ▶ **Dignified Work Programme 2019-2022 Signed**
- ▶ **Another EUR 2.2 Million from EU and EBRD for Small Enterprises**
- ▶ **Seven Innovative Enterprises in Serbia Receive Support for Aligning their Business with Sustainable Development Goals**
- ▶ **SCTM: Manual for the Development and Implementation of Local Economic Development Programmes Published**

Social Welfare and Healthcare

- ▶ **Consultations Concluded on the Draft Social Welfare Strategy 2019-2025**
- ▶ **Grants Awarded for Co-Financing Population Policy Measures**
- ▶ **Guidelines for Providing Services to Address Gender-Based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for Women and Youth with Disabilities**
- ▶ **Publication on Mental Health of Refugees and Migrants Presented**

Education

- ▶ **Project "State Graduation Exam" Presented**
- ▶ **10,000 Digital Classrooms across Serbia from September**
- ▶ **Guidelines Presented for Appropriate Presentation of National Minorities in Curricula and Textbooks in Serbia**
- ▶ **Main Findings of Study "Evaluation of the Effects of the Subject Civic Education – 10 Years Later" Presented**
- ▶ **Conference "Good Quality Internships in a Digital Age" held in Belgrade**

Vulnerable Groups and Human Rights

- ▶ **Review of Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Exercise of the Rights of National Minorities Presented**
- ▶ **National Forum "Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Mental Impairments" Held**
- ▶ **Results of OSCE Study on Welfare and Safety of Women Presented**
- ▶ **Debate "Institutional Mechanisms for Social Inclusion of Roma" Held**
- ▶ **LGBTI Drop-In Centre Opened in Belgrade**

EU Integration

- ▶ **Action Plan Adopted for Chapter 22 – Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments**
- ▶ **"European Union Support for Active Inclusion of Youth" Project Extended – Over EUR 4 Million for Youth in Serbia**
- ▶ **Erasmus+ Offers New Opportunities**
- ▶ **European PROGRES Wins UNOPS Award for Serbia**

EU News

- ▶ **EC Launches Debate on More Efficient Decision-making in EU Social Policy**
- ▶ **EIGE: Gender Equality Deserves More Than 1%**
- ▶ **Employment in Europe: Record Number of People in Employment, but More Investment in Skills Needed**
- ▶ **New OECD Report Presents Recent Policy Responses to New Forms of Work**

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION UNIT

International Workers' Day

Across the world International Workers' Day is celebrated in memory of the day when workers in Chicago started using strikes and protests to fight for an eight-hour working day and improved working conditions. It is the occasion to recall some of the most successful stories, activities and initiatives in the fields of employment, entrepreneurship and inclusion of vulnerable groups in economic activities. The inspirational examples of our associates: bloggers, representatives of civil society organizations, students, could be heard, supported and/or published on the website of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

As part of the project "Support to Innovative Approaches for Increasing Youth Employment and Employability" in cooperation with local partners and with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, we continued developing models and opportunities for the professional development and inclusion of youth in the world of labour. More on the success stories from this project can be found on the page **E2E: Success Stories**.

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit worked in particular on analysing data in the field of labour and employment through the development of the **Third National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2014-2017**, and through developing the **Social Development Index of Towns and Municipalities**.

Selected blog posts, success stories, Ignite transcripts and a broader selection of publications in the field of labour and employment can be found [here](#).

Gender Review of Curricula and Textbooks for Serbian Language from First to Fourth Grade of Primary School Published

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, conducted a review of the curricula and textbooks for the subject Serbian Language for I to IV grade of primary school, to examine the inclusion of a gender perspective in the teaching materials and documents used to programme classes.

The review was conducted during October 2017 – June 2018, covering the curricula of I to IV grade and textbook sets by three publishers whose textbooks are mainly in use in schools across Serbia (Klett, Eduka and Novi Logos). The subject Serbian Language was chosen because it has the highest number of classes and covers topics related to diverse aspects of social and family life conducive to promoting a discussion on the status of women, gender roles and stereotypes.

As shown by this review, despite the existence of positive examples in textbooks and teaching sheets, such as the use of gender neutral or gender sensitive language, the showing of male-female pairs in non-stereotypical activities, the participation of both boys and girls in housework, and showing girls in sports outfits and with medals around their necks, it is clear that additional efforts are needed to enrich the teaching materials with gender relevant content that would promote discussion and encourage students to take a critical stance towards the structural foundations of gender relations in our society.

Click [here](#) to download the study "Gender review of curricula and textbooks for Serbian Language from first to fourth grade of primary school" (.pdf).

Training for Applicants whose Project Proposals passed Round One of Evaluation under the LIP 2 Public Call

In late February 2019 the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia called on local self-government units from **Sumadija and Western Serbia**, and from **Southern and Eastern Serbia**, in partnership with local civil society organizations, to become initiators of social innovation that places people at the centre, improves the everyday life of all citizens and changes social relations, recognizing new methods of cooperation and in a readiness to create new ties that promote intersectoral cooperation, with the aim of responding to key social needs of vulnerable social groups in their local communities.

In this regard, two one-day trainings for applicants were held in Belgrade on 15 and 16 April 2019, as part of the public call "Advancing the Status of Vulnerable Social Groups through the Development of Innovative Models for Social Inclusion at the Local Level", for project proposals that have passed the first round of evaluations. The topic was social innovation and project logframe. The training was attended by nearly 40 representatives of local self-government units and civil society organizations.

The Programme of local initiatives for social inclusion and poverty reduction – Support to the development of innovative models for social inclusion – LIP 2 is being implemented for the second time by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, with support by the Swiss Government through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The programme is being implemented with the aim of improving the status of vulnerable groups in society (women, youth, Roma, migrants, persons with disabilities), particularly those living in rural and extremely impoverished areas, through the improvement of existing and setting up of new/innovative approaches, and/or innovative measures/services/programmes in local communities.

More on the Programme of local initiatives for social inclusion and poverty reduction can be found [here](#).

Training Held for Journalists on Gender Sensitive Reporting and Affirmative Media Representation of Vulnerable Groups

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, has implemented a training for journalists on gender sensitive reporting and affirmative media presentation of vulnerable groups.

The goal of this training was to present examples of good and bad practices in reporting on women, Roma, persons with disabilities and the LGBTI community and learn to recognize discriminatory and stereotypical reporting and in the future to be empowered to present members of vulnerable groups in an affirmative manner.

Except Tamara Skrozica, holding the training, the event was attended by Anđela Čeh from the citizens' association "Egal", Lana Nikolić, journalist and host at Radio Belgrade 202, and Nataša Tasić Knežević, opera singer, sharing with the present journalists their experiences in their relations with media, emphasizing why it is important to report objectively and without discrimination on the LGBTI community, persons with disabilities, or Roma persons. Those present were also addressed by Maša Mileusić from the group "Journalists against Violence against Women", noting the situation regarding reporting on violence against women and presenting the reasons for creating the group, along with plans for the coming period.

Click [here](#) to download the Manual for Reporting on Persons with Disabilities (.pdf), prepared for this training by Lana Nikolić.

Training on Project Planning for Representatives of Civil Society Organizations

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia has implemented a two-day training on 24 and 25 April on project cycle management, intended for representatives of civil society organizations working in areas related to social inclusion.

The goals of this training were to gain basic knowledge on what project planning involves through a logframe matrix, to understand internal project logic, to acquire basic skills for developing all logframe elements and to understand the importance of monitoring and evaluation of the effects of projects.

More information on the calls and available funds by international and domestic donors, as well as state institutions can be found and followed on the website of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, under the heading **Open Calls**, as well as in the Guide to Potential Sources of Funding, available at: [vodic.gradjanske.org](#).

OPEN CALLS

- ▶ **Public Call for Project Proposals: "Combating Discrimination for Gender Equality" (Deadline: 31/5/2019)**
- ▶ **Open Call for Best Student Works on EU (Deadline: 31/5/2019)**
- ▶ **Social Impact Award 2019 – Youth Competition in Social Entrepreneurship (Deadline: 1/6/2019)**
- ▶ **Call for Publishing Papers in the Field of Gender Equality (Deadline: 15/6/2019)**

You may follow the news on open calls regularly at: [socijalnouljucivanje.gov.rs](#)

READ MORE...

- ▶ **Government Adopts 3rd Periodic Report on the Implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**
- ▶ **"Improvement of Women's Safety in Serbia" Project to Prevent Domestic Violence by Applying New Methods**
- ▶ **Event Held on Gender-Sensitive Budgeting in Local Self-Governments**
- ▶ **Agreement Signed on the Establishment and Work of the Action Team of the Regional Cooperation Council for Roma Integration 2020**
- ▶ **Continued Cooperation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Roma Education Fund**
- ▶ **"Youth in Serbia 2018/2019" Study Published**
- ▶ **Publication on Good Practice Examples Published as Part of the Project "Supporting Democratic Culture in Schools"**
- ▶ **Study on Charity in Serbia for 2018 Published**
- ▶ **VIRTUS Awards for Philanthropy for 2018 Presented**

You may follow the news on social inclusion and poverty reduction regularly at: [socijalnouljucivanje.gov.rs](#)

SOCIAL INCLUSION BLOG

STEFAN LAZAREVIĆ: What Employment Means for Me



In one of my previous texts I already wrote that because lately I've been thinking about possibly finding a job. The idea worries me a bit, but they told me it is very important for a person to get a job, to have a means of living. You don't go to a job only to work and earn your pay, but also to leave the house, take a walk, talk with your colleagues, etc.

Where did the idea of a job come from? When I graduated high school, I wanted to study journalism. My parents and classmistress believed the faculty would not adapt the materials the way they did in secondary school, and it would all be difficult for me. They started telling me that it would be good if I were to get a job, but I didn't like that at all. However, slowly I matured and realized what employment means. My father told me that many people do not like going to work, but they have to, to earn a salary. (...)

I found out that people look for work for a long time, particularly persons with disabilities. That many of them have to face a committee that assesses their ability to work, to attend internships and trainings to acquire working skills and work experience. (...) I started thinking about jobs that would be ideal for me. I try to make these jobs ones that were related to my profession (I graduated from a school of economics – department of business administration), although I don't really like it much. I am also facing obstacles – I don't speak a foreign language, some jobs require a university diploma, jobs are far from where I live, some require a driver's license, some jobs are unrelated to my profession, etc.

I'm thinking about what I would like to do outside economics, and I believe I could perhaps do some simpler jobs (librarian, courier or archivist). One option would also be to work in a shop, organizing the goods or behind the cash register. However, my mom explained that it would be a bit tricky to work at the cash register if I am not good at handling money. I hope one of these wishes comes true, but I would also prepare myself for having to work in jobs that I do not like. (...)

Mom also explained that employers do not want to hire persons with impairments because it is easier for them to hire someone who can work independently, since they don't need to have anything explained. I think employers should also hire persons with disabilities and help them with their work so that these people could also feel useful and able to earn a living. (...) I worry a bit about how employers and the staff of the company will treat me, whether they would have enough patience towards me.

Help and support at work would mean a lot to me. Employers and other staff should get to know the problem I have, perhaps read my blog posts so that they could understand me better and more easily. I would also prepare myself to not expect too much help, but to make an effort myself to work and concentrate on the tasks. (...)

My former therapist, and now friend, helped me get involved in the activities of the [Organisation of Creative Meetings OKO](#). I mastered many skills there, one of them being how to resolve conflicts in situations where I get upset. I believe this was very important for other participants, to learn how a person with autism thinks and how they can help someone with similar impairments, not only to resolve conflicts, but also to understand the situation. (...)

My friends from OKO sent me a Facebook notice that I can apply for a public speaking workshop at the *Youth Office of Belgrade*. I applied as soon as I saw the application, because I already had some experience with public speaking, so I wanted to improve those skills. I like the fact that in these workshops I was given the tasks of acting as a journalist, anchor or owner of a text where I wrote about prejudice against persons with autism. Also, the journalist who held the workshop helped me a lot by constantly commending me, and it was particularly important for me that I was accepted by my peers at the workshop, telling me that my text helped them understand me better.

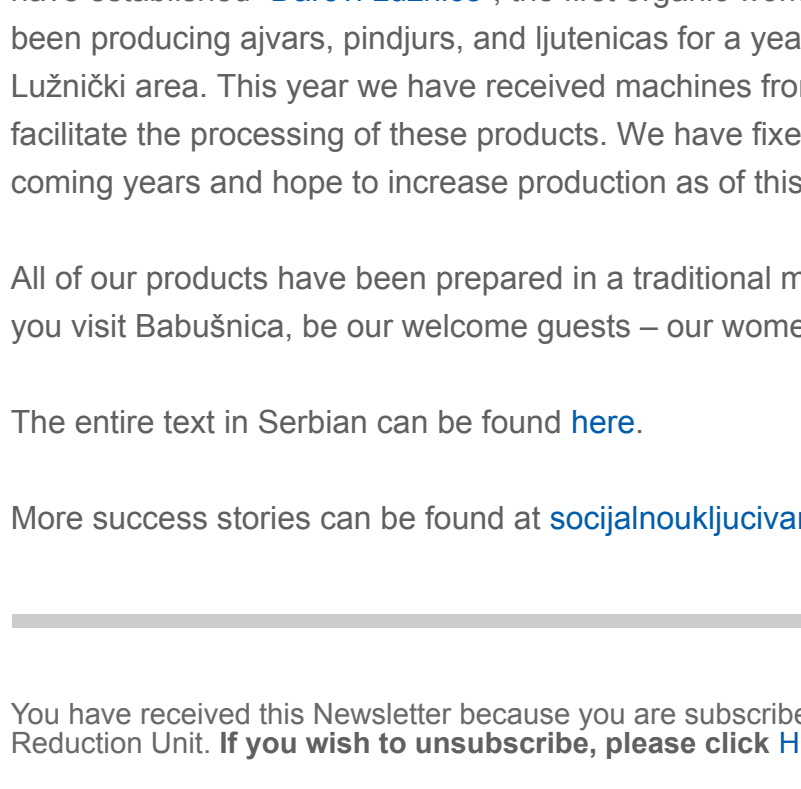
By writing this text I want to make people think about the fact that persons with impairments should also find jobs. I find all of these situations that I have described difficult, and I hope I will overcome them and find a job that suits me.

The entire text in Serbian can be found [here](#).

Other texts by our bloggers can be found at: [www.socijalnouljucivanje.gov.rs/blog/](#)

SUCCESS STORY

Women's Cooperative from the Lužnički Region Growing and Processing Organic Produce and Hiring Women with Disabilities



Transcript of the presentation by **Karolina Stamenković at the 41st Belgrade Ignite event "Get Involved no. 6" (7 November 2018, Impact Hub, Belgrade)**

I come from Babušnica, a municipality located 370 km south of Belgrade. The average age of a population of 12,000, with an average age of 49.

The citizens' association "Lužnica Handicrafts – Women's Economic Centre" was established in 2008, and our only goal was to preserve and nurture old crafts in our municipality. However, when we started going around rural areas searching for motifs for our work, we saw how elderly households lived in our municipality – life is hard, particularly in remote villages – so we decided to help. We wanted to expand the "Home Assistance" service for the elderly. We fought for some six-seven years, and in 2015 we received a license for the "Home Assistance" service. Ever since, our geronto-housekeepers provide licensed services to these elderly households.

But what I came to tell you about is how we expanded organic production in our region.

Babušnica is a municipality with beautiful nature and spring waters, God-given for organic production. We received funds for our first project in 2016 from the European PROGRESS, and handed out five greenhouses to poor families and women with disabilities, thus starting to expand our organic production. Today, after three years of work, we have 17 greenhouses and have included 17 women, some of them with disabilities, some from poor families.

When we grew our first organic produce, we realized it cannot reach Belgrade, because it doesn't last long, only three or four days. That's when we decided to process the products. Fourteen of us women have established "Darovi Lužnice", the first organic women's cooperative in the south of Serbia. We have been producing ajvars, pindjurs, and ljutenicas for a year – and all made from our products from the Lužnički area. This year we have received machines from the Ministry, i.e. a mini production line that will facilitate the processing of these products. We have fixed up the plant where we will be working during the coming years and hope to increase production as of this year.

All of our products have been prepared in a traditional manner, without preservatives or additives. When you visit Babušnica, be our welcome guests – our women are hospitable and excellent hosts!

The entire text in Serbian can be found [here](#).

More success stories can be found at [socijalnouljucivanje.gov.rs](#)

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