

HUMANITY IN
ACTION
B o s n i a a n d **H** e r z e g o v i n a

ANNUAL
REPORT
2014

INTRODUCTION

Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina, officially established in 2011, develops educational programs that engage university students and young professionals in dialogue about the challenges that communities face as they become more diverse.

Since 2005 Humanity in Action has been building a multi-ethnic network of young Bosnian leaders committed to breaking down barriers and strengthening civil society in their communities. To date, Humanity in Action invited 57 outstanding Bosnian students (representing all of Bosnia's ethnic communities) to participate in its international fellowship programs. Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to developing on-the-ground initiatives that promote reconciliation and contribute to building civil society, promoting reconciliation and rebuilding social trust within the country, a nation deeply polarized by ethnic and religious divisions despite nearly two decades of post-war peace. The breakdown of Bosnia's multicultural society that began with ethnic cleansing and armed conflict among the Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims has been perpetuated and, in some ways worsened by self-segregation, political dysfunction and the erosion of trust at the local level. Therefore, Humanity in Action BiH focuses on three main thematic areas, which are clearly reflected in its running activities:

1. Dealing with the past, mostly through history telling in Western Balkans (Model International Criminal Court Western Balkans and HIP – Historija, istorija, povijest)
2. Education of youth about democracy and human rights (Encouraging Democratic Values and Active Citizenship among Youth in BiH)
3. Holocaust in BiH (Center for Holocaust Research in BiH)

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

In 2014, Humanity in Action BiH underwent two institutional changes. The address changed from Dobojska 4 to Skenderija 33. Furthermore, the composition of the Governing Board changed as agreed by the Board chair and all other Board members. The Board currently consists of the following Board members:

Lamija Tanović, Chair Selma Zahirović, Member Armina Mujanović, Member

Elijas Tauber, Member Dajana Džindo, Member Davorin Pavelić, Member

Jovan Divjak, Member Enes Tuna, Member Harun Gadžo, Member

ACTIVITIES

“Encouraging Democratic Values and Active Citizenship among Youth in BiH”

October 2013- July 2014

The program “Encouraging Democratic Values and Active Citizenship among Youth” was tailored to attract first and second year university students who had no or little experience in non-formal education, volunteer work or NGO engagement. These students were targeted with a belief that they are at a critical point in their lives, with great potential to start being active proponents of social trends. Humanity in Action BiH succeeded in selecting 15 participants from different ethnic, religious, social and educational backgrounds. Moreover, the participants came from 12 different rural and urban areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Prijedor, Tuzla, Mostar, Livno, Bihać, Zenica, Bosanski Petrovac, Novi Grad, Brčko, Donji Vakuf). From the very beginning, this diversity helped create an atmosphere where participants could learn, not just from their lecturers and trainers, but also from each other by sharing their experiences and different views on sensitive issues that are aggravating everyday life in BiH.

Different program phases allowed achieving specific project aims.



For the majority of participants, the **8-day educational module**, which included lectures, discussions, simulation games and workshops on a variety of topics, presented their first encounter with critical thinking and re-thinking of fundamental democratic principles, values and cultural characteristics, but also the first opportunity to attend trainings aimed at developing the skills they need to actively participate in (changing) the society. In this phase, in addition to the educational objectives, Humanity in Action BiH created a platform for participants to establish direct contacts with lecturers, trainers, activists with which they had an opportunity to create and preserve professional connections after the end of this phase.

As the feedback sessions showed, the participants did indeed use this pool of contacts in some instances to acquire information, advice or to spearhead small-scaled activities, usually at the faculty level. Additional contact with the lecturers was especially beneficial during the group project implementation phase, but also motivated some participants for further actions. One of the specific objectives of the program was to develop the ability of recognition, analysis and critical thinking about the needs and problems of (young) people among program participants.

The results of the **completed individual research** also motivated three participants to take immediate action (the research conducted by Đorđe Ostić, Arnela Zečević, Matea Jevrić, Mahir Sijamija and Sanel Tufekčić formed the basis of all the three group projects implemented in the following stage of the project). Besides the efforts to develop critical thinking among program participants through individual research, HIA BiH paid great attention to the development of participants' academic writing skills.

In the **third program phase**, the participants were provided with the skills and basic knowledge in project and financial management in order to enable them to plan, implement and report about their group projects properly, but also to enable them to have a solid foundation for any future initiatives and project implementation. As a result, 14 participants, most of whom have never even participated in a project, were in charge of implementing a project in a team during a three-month period. They were fully responsible for all the project components including: internal and external communication, promotion and financial management.

In the **fourth phase of the program**, starting on March 24, the participants were given three months to finalize their group action projects. This phase allowed program participants to apply the newly acquired skills and network that was built up during the previous phases of the program. Humanity in Action staff provided ongoing support and mentorship.

Implemented group projects:

Group 1: "A Campaign for a More Cultured Krajina" had the aim of raising awareness about the importance of culture, primarily among young people, but also among other citizens of Krajina (North-Western region of BiH).

The first phase of this project was to be implemented in the two BiH entities (Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH) and had the aim of connecting people through culture – by promoting cultural institutions and cultural events in Banja Luka (Republika Srpska) and Bihać (Federation of BiH) through street art. The group members held a number of meetings with the representatives of the relevant cultural institutions and events that were to be promoted (e.g. the representatives of the National Theater of Republika Srpska and the Museum of Republika Srpska, both in Banja Luka). The representatives of these institutions welcomed the idea wholeheartedly. However, due to massive floods that swept Banja Luka in the exact same period of time when this part of the project was to be implemented, the promotional activities in Banja Luka did not take place. The promotional activities still took place in Bihać for the cultural institutions in this city (it is worth noting that Bihać was unaffected by the floods). In the second phase of the project, the team launched a website dedicated to gathering all the cultural events and descriptions of what Bihać, Banja Luka, and other cities in the Krajina region, have to offer in terms of culture. The website is the first of its kind, since it encompasses cultural events and institutions in two BiH entities, as well as different cities in the Krajina region. The idea was to try to connect people through culture in the region, rather than create divisions based on ethnicity and entity affiliations. The website was also promoted through street art, posters and stickers around the cities involved.

Group 2: “I Want Things to be Different in BiH” was implemented in 3 BiH cities (Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla) and had the aim of raising awareness that being different is not a bad thing and to shed light on the student standard in the country by printing brochures with stories of individuals (students) who overcame obstacles despite being labeled as ‘different’ by the society they live in. The group members (Lana Bečiragić, Aldin Vrškić, Berina Verlašević, Arnes Žabić, Jasmina Karahasanović) worked on the project in two phases:

In the first phase, the team used their networking skills to find 5 individuals – all BiH students – who would be willing to anonymously share their stories of fighting adversities and the stigma of being ‘different’ in BiH. They chose to publish 150 copies of brochures consisting of the stories of the following individuals: a mature student, a member of the LGBTQI community, a member of a minority ethnic group, a Roma person, and a student who is also employed and supports his family. The second phase consisted of publishing a free-for-all open call for submitting photos on the topic of “Show me how you see things better in BiH and/or how you feel that we are all essentially the same”. The call attracted a number of young amateur photographers whose photos were printed out and presented to the public. Both the brochure (consisting of 5 students’ stories) and the photo exhibition (of the photos submitted to the open call) were presented at events in the following BiH cities:

Zenica (Museum of the City of Zenica), Tuzla (Sagittarius) and Sarajevo (Art Cinema Kriterion) and attracted a considerable number of visitors. At the Zenica event, a representative of the Open Society Foundation from Hungary offered a scholarship to the Roma student who published their story in the brochure – based solely on the inspirational story itself.

Group 3: “Say NO to Prejudice” had the aim of decreasing prejudice and stereotypes of young people based on (among others) name, nationality, language, and to connect young people from different environments by organizing 2 anti-prejudice workshops led by experts in the field. The project engaged youth from Sarajevo and Mostar.

The project team (Matea Jevrić, Mahir Sijamija, Nina Došenović, Sanel Tufekčić) held the first anti-prejudice workshop at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo, where they managed to engage 14 young people – students from different fields and from different areas from BiH and abroad. The second anti-prejudice workshop took place at the United World College premises in Mostar and engaged 15 young people studying in Mostar. At both workshops, which were promoted through online media and through posters at faculties in Sarajevo and Mostar, the group members held a part of the workshops or were active facilitators, thus transforming themselves from EDVACAY project participants with little or no experience in non-formal education to peer-to-peer educators who are actively conveying knowledge to others. The workshops were also partly held by a professor from the Faculty of Political Science in Sarajevo.

Group 2 (“I Want Things to Be Different in BiH”) wrote the following about the lessons learned from this EDVACAY phase in their group project report:

“... through this HIA project, we managed to obtain the skills that no other organization has offered us before. The moment the project started and we were expected to implement it, we were thrown ‘in the deep end’. For the first time, we would be accountable if something is not done right and we would not be able to shift the blame to somebody else. It is through this feeling that we have managed to become more independent and learned to actually be responsible.”

All the projects were successfully implemented and in the evaluation session assessed as the most important part of the program. This part managed to instill in them a sense of ownership, commitment, responsibility, but also a feeling that their efforts in general are not futile. As a consequence, some participants immediately started planning other small-scale projects or became involved in organizations through which they could implement their ideas. On the other hand, for instance, Aldin Vrškić became a peer-to-peer educator at EESTEC Banja Luka (Electrical Engineering Students' European Association) through the help of Miloš Macura, another EDVACAY participant. Aldin also proved to have a lot of self-initiative, since he spoke positively about the EDVACAY project at an event in Zenica, which led to him being invited to appear at a talk show on a local TV station (Face TV) in Sarajevo. On the show, which was aired live on 21 June 2014, Aldin spoke about his experiences in the project and was accompanied with Aida Salčić, EDVACAY project coordinator, who further promoted the project [the 30-minute footage is not available for archiving].

In addition, Humanity in Action is keeping the participants involved in its current and future activities. So far, the participants were invited to all social events with Humanity in Action Senior Fellows with the aim of facilitating discussions and cooperation among them. For example, Berina Verlašević, a 2013-2014 EDVACAY participant took an active part in Humanity in Action international Peacebuilding Project with HIA Senior Fellows in Prijedor.

Jovana Kljajić, a 2012-2013 EDVACAY participant, is now working for the National Democratic Institute. Jovana herself credits the EDVACAY program for providing her with the skills and the know-how to pursue research and activism as a career. Furthermore, she publicly stated that the research she conducted through EDVACAY was one of the main reasons why she got her first employment as an intern at the Center for Investigative Journalism. The 2012/2013 participants also shared their testimonials and positive impressions of the project on the HIA BiH local-language web site dedicated to the project:
<http://hiabih.wix.com/hiabih#!iskustva-uesnika-20122013/c1lej>

Humanity in Action believes that this program has given solid grounds to the participants for their future civic engagement and the organization shall serve as a platform for constructive project ideas and activities. Finally, based on the overall positive results of the project, Humanity in Action hopes to be able to make this program a regular annual activity.

„Model International Criminal Court Western Balkans MICC WeB”

March 2014 –

MICC WeB is organized as joint endeavor of three non-governmental organizations coming from Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The organizations’ missions and activities are fully complimentary to one another, and MICC WeB project embodies our common goal of advancing awareness and understanding of human rights and responsible and active democratic citizenship among youth in the region of former Yugoslavia. The project design and structure is the result of a genuinely collaborative partnership effort between Open Communication (Serbia), Humanity in Action (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and HERMES (Croatia). These organizations are currently involved in the 23-months long project supported by the German donor SHL, which envisaged the implementation of 6 high school sessions and 3 university sessions of the Model International Criminal Court. Five high school sessions have already taken place (Mostar, Zagreb, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Sarajevo), and one more is planned in January 2015 in Osijek.

Model International Criminal Court Western Balkans



Starting in March 2014, the organizational team has successfully implemented five sessions with students from Maglaj, Lukavac, Jajce, Novi Grad, Tuzla, Arandjelovac, Niš, Bečej, Kraljevo, Jagodina, Labin, Orahovica, Rijeka, Daruvar and Čakovec. The sessions have thus far received highly positive evaluation from the participants, and students’ knowledge and understanding of war crimes, human rights violations and justice after conflict has substantially improved. The participants of the first five sessions are now in the process of developing follow-up projects that will enhance inter-school and inter-community cooperation between the three countries, with the financial support provided through the SHL grant. In spring, we start with sessions targeting university students. The MICC WeB project serves as a safe opening of discussion on difficult subjects, in a non-confrontational way.

By doing so, the participants, trainers, teachers and the media would be sensitized to discussing the subject openly, and the project would serve to raise awareness about the importance of justice after wars, different mechanisms of arriving to it, and the importance of upholding human rights. In an ideal society, all the conflicts would be aired out and diffused by dialogue and discussion, and not by blame and sweeping difficult issues under the carpet.

Even though the WeB stands for „Western Balkans“, there is more to that denomination. Web, in itself, is a well-known word in all of the Balkan languages, thanks to the rise of Facebook generation and adoption of English terms both in colloquial, but also standard use. As a word that describes connection, network, (information) exchange, and an intricate structure, web is a superb one-word description of what MICC WeB is aiming at – establishing personal & close connection between the young adults of a lost Balkan generation, young people who were too young to remember, being born in one country and who grew up with a legacy of the conflict that tore it apart – without being given adequate assistance in understanding the war or its repercussions. WeB is a perfect opportunity for such young adults to discuss their views, make cultural & political connections, use the information exchange to their advantage since they have the possibility of direct contact with their peers from neighboring countries, and utilize all of the IT wealth that the web of all webs, the Internet, has to offer them in course of their pre-preparations for the project, as well as during the seminars as well. Finally, a series of spin-off MICC projects is also one of the goals of the MICC WeB, staying true to the meaning of the word and its spirit of interconnectedness. MICC WeB therefore aspires to reconnect the region, uniting the youth by a set of common ideas about their present and future, and desire to process the past so that it no longer presents a burden and source of conflict.



By the end of January 2015, 180 high school students and 39 teachers will have participated in MICC WeB sessions. Based on the written and oral evaluations, the project is characterized as a “life changing experience” by many of the participants. A large number of the participants will organize follow-up projects in their schools and communities, with the financial assistance provided through the MICC WeB project. In this way we will ensure that the project is promoted in a number of local communities throughout the Western Balkans.

Fifth International Annual Humanity in Action Conference in Sønderborg, Denmark June 2014

The Humanity in Action International Conference is the annual gathering of Humanity in Action Fellows, Senior Fellows, Board members, friends and partner organizations. The 2014 International Conference, "Borders: Sources of Conflict and Sites of Peace," was held from Thursday, June 26 through Sunday, June 29 in Sønderborg, Denmark. A three-member delegation from Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina participated at the event.

The conference featured keynotes, workshops and discussions led by experts, activists and Humanity in Action Senior Fellows who provided Danish, German and international perspectives on the theme of borders and minorities in a modern world. Over four days, this year's program had a special focus on how different minorities and majorities in Europe's history have overcome conflict to live in peaceful coexistence. It engaged participants in considering how lessons from history can inform strategies to promote inclusion and resist the marginalization of minorities in Europe today. The conference examined the crisis in Ukraine and the role of supranational institutions such as the European Union, OSCE and NATO in protecting minorities and fostering democratic change. The conference also featured skills workshops, site visits and networking events for Humanity in Action's international community.

Selection of students from Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Humanity in Action Fellowship Programs in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands

Humanity in Action BiH has selected six students to participate in the annual Fellowship programs:

Dženana Preljević, MA student English language and literature, Sarajevo

Minel Abaz, BA student Political sciences, Sarajevo

Miroslav Ilić, BA student Philosophy, Banja Luka

Senad Alibegović, MA student International relations, Visoko

Marko Matović, BA student Journalism, Istočno Sarajevo

Dario Vuković, BA student Psychology, Laktaši

Note: Minel Abaz has participated in the project Encouraging Democratic Values and Active Citizenship among Youth in BiH in 2012/13.

NEW PROJECTS

HISTORIJA, ISTORIJA, POVIJEST – LESSONS FOR TODAY

The overall objectives of the 30th month long project financed by the European Commission through the grant scheme: Reconciliation in the Western Balkans through the analysis of the recent past, reporting on transitional justice and advancement of investigative journalism are:

Expert meetings of history educators; production of innovative lesson plans and history education materials (placed online for greater accessibility); workshops creating Memory Walk videos; regional teacher training seminars; production of exhibition panels as well as local panels; dissemination of materials through a series of workshops/classes in 40 cities; follow up sustainability-focused activities. While the first phase of the project is focused on the creation of educational materials (lesson plans, materials, website, exhibition panels, Memory Walk videos), the second phase is focused on the materials' dissemination through advocacy, networking and actual implementation in regional teacher training seminars and through school-based workshops/classes.

Project leader is the Anne Frank House from the Netherlands and partners are Open Communications Serbia, Hermes Croatia, and Youth Educational Forum (MOF) Macedonia and Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST RESEARCH IN BIH (CRH BIH)

The idea for establishing the Center for Holocaust Research in Bosnia and Herzegovina stemmed from the fact that in BiH there is no such institution that focuses primarily on exploring and raising awareness about Holocaust and that can act as a reference point both for local and foreign researchers.

Thus, Humanity in Action BiH wishes to fill in this gap with a Center which would continually draw attention to Holocaust in Bosnia and Herzegovina and highlight the lessons we may learn from the past in order to prevent future atrocities. This is particularly important for the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina whose recent history has been stained by occurrence of genocide. In spite of this unfortunate fact, there are no systematic and elaborate efforts to raise awareness about genocide atrocities and its prevention measures. The prevention measures include paving a path to tolerance by raising awareness on the topics why and how someone marks us, how we are being dehumanized, how we can help those fighting for human rights, how to stop manipulation of victims based on their division according to the ethnic or religious lines, how to react quickly to stop genocide and how to bring the criminals from denial to confession.