

**HUMANITY** IN  
**ACTION**

**BOSNA I  
HERCEGOVINA**

**Encouraging Democratic Values and  
Active Citizenship among Youth 2021/22**

**Final Narrative Report**

**This project is generously supported by the National Endowment for Democracy and the  
University of Sarajevo School of Economics and Business.**

## >> PROGRAM DESCRIPTION >>

The year-long program seeks to train 15 aspiring young people, introducing them to democracy and human rights matters, encouraging them to employ critical thinking when considering sensitive topics, and building their communication, presentation, and research skills. The program includes several educational modules: a nine-day-long learning and skills development training and a three day-long debate workshop; individual research policy-briefs on democracy-related issues with assigned mentors; a three-day-long project-building and project-management training; a group project resulting in four civic campaigns; two months for the promotion of the results of the implemented civic campaigns; and finally, a closing ceremony with a final debate tournament.

## >> ACTIVITIES >>

This report covers all program phases (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022), which includes the promotion and preparation for the implementation of the program, first educational module, the second phase dedicated to individual research conducted by the participants with the supervision and support of assigned research mentors (December 21, 2021 – February 28, 2022), project and financial management training held in May in Neum, where the participants had the opportunity to develop ideas for the civic campaigns, the implementation of four EDVACAY group civic campaigns, their promotion in the media under the guidance of assigned mentors, and the closing ceremony of the program. A section of the report is also dedicated to the Humanity in Action Fellowship program which NED supported with funding for Action projects, and 2 additional EDVACAY Alumni Civic Campaigns, also financially supported by NED.

### >> Preparatory Activities

The tenth cycle of the EDVACAY program was prepared and organized amid the Covid-19 global pandemic, which implied many details and decisions that needed to be carefully considered and planned with keeping in mind the well-being of the new cohort and the team members as the top priority. The experiences from the ninth cycle were very useful, and help the project team to navigate the challenges.

The Call for Applications was open from October 11 until November 11, 2021. The online application form consisted of two questions in the form of two short essays (250 words each) and uploading a current CV. The applicants were asked to describe a democracy-related issue they perceive in society or their local community and explain how they would invest 5.000 BAM (approximately 3.000 USD) in resolving the identified problem or improving the life in their own local community. Besides the daily promotion of the Call for Applications campaign<sup>1</sup>, especially designed to celebrate the 10th jubilee of the program, on the [Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina website](#) and social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), the news about the Call for Applications was directly sent to all universities in BiH and published on several student NGOs and associations, info web portals and on official university websites, inter alia: [Mladibl.com Youth info portal in Banja Luka](#), [Lonac. pro – online community for activism and entrepreneurship](#), [Hocu.ba](#), [STUDOMAT](#), [Mreža Mira](#), [Youth Center “Nukles Teslić”](#), [Snagalokalnog.ba](#), [University of Sarajevo Faculty of Law](#), [University of Sarajevo Faculty of Political Sciences](#), [University of Sarajevo Faculty of Transport and Communications](#), [University of](#)

Sarajevo Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo Academy of Arts, University of Banja Luka Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Banja Luka, University in Banja Luka Faculty of Philosophy, University of Mostar Faculty of Philosophy, University “Džemal Bijedić” in Mostar Faculty of Law, University “Džemal Bijedić” in Mostar Faculty of Information Technologies, University of Tuzla, University of Bihać Faculty of Pedagogy, University of Vitez, and the University of Bijeljina “SInergija”. The program was extensively promoted at the 11th University of Sarajevo Scholarship Fair, held virtually on October 21, 2021. The program was also actively promoted through Humanity in Action Senior Fellow Network and EDVACAY Alumni Network channels and many of the Alumni members shared the Call on their social media accounts.

## >> Participants

After careful review of applications received, our selection committee interviewed the shortlisted candidates, and finally invited 15 students to participate in this year’s program. The participants come from 9 cities and all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and are studying at 11 different faculties/departments, enrolled in 5 public and in 1 private university in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Ali Musić**, Sarajevo, International Burch University, International Relations and European Studies

**Asiya Mahmutćehajić**, Stolac, University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Political Sciences, International Relations and Diplomacy

**Davor Džakula**, Novi Sad, ERMA – European Regional Master’s Program in Democracy and Human Rights in South East Europe, University of Sarajevo

**Ivana Janko**, Žepče, University of Mostar, Faculty of Law, Criminalistics and Safety Management

**Neven Rokvić**, Sarajevo, International Burch University, International Relations and European Studies

**Jelena Dubravac**, Čelinac, University of Banja Luka Faculty of Law

**Ines Dedić**, Bugojno, The University of Vitez, Faculty of Law

**Altijana Đulančić**, Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Law

**Šejla Halilbegović**, Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo, School of Economics and Business, Department for Management

**Almedina Mehić**, Banovići, University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Political Sciences, International Relations and Diplomacy

**Anastasija Čorović**, Banja Luka, University of East Sarajevo, Faculty of Medicine, Department for Developmental Disorders

**Ajna Mujagić**, Bugojno, University of Vitez, Faculty of Informational Technology, Department for Software Engineering

**Jelena Kerezović**, Banja Luka, University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Psychology

**Haris Šehović**, Sarajevo, International Burch University, International Relations and European Studies

**Ismihana Čizmeđić**, Travnik, The University of Sarajevo, School of Economics and Business, Department for Management

## >> **Nine-day Education and Skills Development Training Concept**

The educational module, held from December 11-19, 2021, hosted 25 lecturers and 1 debate trainer and had an additional component - 'Defending Euro-Atlantic Values' NATO supported Advocacy Event<sup>3</sup> with guests from Slovakia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro, and two interactive games sessions. Over the course of nine days, speakers explored topics related to human rights and democracy, identities, nationalism, dialogue, activism, and helped participants develop their communication and research skills. The program agenda was created as a balance between lectures and workshops, putting particular emphasis on practical assignments that the participants successfully completed.

## >> **Short Description of Lectures in the First Program Phase**

*Life in an 'inclusive' BiH society* - Dervo Sejdić, President of the Roma Information Center Association "KALI SARA" and Jakob Finci, President of the Jewish Community of BiH

We kicked off the program discussing the topic of human rights with a special focus on the rights of minorities in BiH. We were joined by Mr. Dervo Sejdić and Mr. Jakob Finci, the first persons in court practice to sue their country before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, whose verdict has the BiH's Constitution and the election law officially declared discriminatory in the case of Sejdić-Finci vs. BiH. They talked about what life in an "inclusive" BiH's society means today from their perspectives and have shared the story of how they fought against the discrimination and how they ultimately decided to demand their rights through the Court of Human Rights. The exceptional presentations of Mr. Sejdić and Mr. Finci made a very strong impression on our Fellows.

*Verdicts of the Court of Human Rights and their Implications for BiH* - Nedim Kulenović, PhD, OSCE Office in Sarajevo

We continued further discussion on the topic of human rights, learning about the verdicts of the Court of Human Rights and their implications on BiH with Dr Nedim Kulenović. Our Fellows had the opportunity to learn about domestic and international human rights protection mechanisms, and about some of the most important cases brought before the Strasbourg Court of Human Rights and the International Court of Justice in Geneva from BiH, of which Sejdić-Finci is certainly the most famous case. Some other notable cases, about which Dr. Kulenović spoke, were Đokić and Mago, Hadžimejlić and others, and verdicts that had positive implications for changes in the law in BiH, such as Hadžić and Suljić, Ališić, etc.

*Active citizenship and Media in BiH* - Leila Bičakčić, Director of Center for Investigative Reporting (CIN)

Ms Bičakčić lead the participant into her lecture by screening several short documentaries showing the finds her team of journalists has discovered by conducting investigations regarding the revenues and movable and immovable property of more than 120 officials and politicians of the ruling and opposition parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ms Bičakčić explained that the Center for Investigative Reporting has the most complete database with information on education,

professional and political careers, as well as information on savings, loans and shares in companies, including stocks. Information on lawsuits and court rulings against politicians and officials are also available. By using these examples Ms Bičakčić engaged participants into conversation about the ways general public can become more aware of the conduct of the ruling figures in BH society and how they can use such information to act in a more participatory manner in society.

*“Make it to the Holiday” Interactive game* - Veronika Kusyova & HIA BiH team

Participants were engaged in this highly interactive game of role-playing which was not only fun but it contains several layers of meaning and learning opportunities. During the game they were divided in groups randomly, given cards of different colors and tasks to do. Each activity included doing repetitive actions which were “rewarded” with “money” by the “employers”. The goal was to gather enough money to buy the ticket for the holiday. Very soon in the game participants noticed that some of them were being discriminated based on the color of the cards they were given. The objective of the game is to see what will the players do after they establish that there is clear discrimination. Wrap up session after the game was very interesting because each participant was overwhelmed by their own reactions or by the fact that they did not react at all.

*Current Challenges of Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina* - Prof. dr. Midhat Izmirlija,  
University of Sarajevo Faculty of Law

During his lecture about the challenges the democratic system faces in today's society, Dr. Izmirlija discussed the very definition of democracy with the participants, philosophical concepts which form the basis of democracy, as well as the human rights protection mechanisms expressed in constitutions and laws. Finally, he defined the four main elements of consociational democracy (coalitions, veto power, proportional and parity representation, and group autonomy) through their materialization in the BiH constitution, and discussed the pros and cons of this system.

*Communication with public administration bodies in BiH* - Aiša Telalović, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project

After Ms Telalović shared several stories from her work experience, she engaged in discussion with the fellows about how democratic values and human rights are incorporated into different legislative texts, focusing especially on the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the applicable international legal instruments. Ms Telalović described the mechanisms that are at the citizens' disposal when it comes to reporting human rights violations in the country, as well as the jurisdiction of the Joint Committee for Human Rights at the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The lecture ended with advice on communicating with public administration as means of civic activism.

*BiH and the protection of human rights in the context of the international affairs* - Dijana Tabori Dorović, senior counselor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH

Lecture on human rights protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a wider and international context

held by Ms Dijana Tabori Dorović has been very interesting to the fellows and has inspired a valuable debate among them. Ms Dorović devoted her time and energy to inform the fellows on the matters of human rights protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as with the international and regional systems of protection and their role in the overall system. The fellows' debate primarily focused on human rights protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the actions that are being undertaken considering this manner in Geneva and New York. The interactive part of the lecture was consisted of an exercise through which fellows had a chance to realize the ways these systems function in Czech Republic and Montenegro.

*BiH economy and International Economic Flows* - Samira Sulejmanović, Head of the Bilateral Department of Trade Relations, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH

A very dynamic and interactive lecture on economy and international economic flows in Bosnia and Herzegovina was held by Mrs Samira Sulejmanović. Mrs Sulejmanović started the session by explaining the basics of the economic system in BiH, new economic trends and the monetary system of BiH, as well as several other issues such as unemployment (especially among youth), inflation, taxes and potential economic reforms in the country. She also shared her vast experience concerning these matters and she encouraged fellows to discuss the elements and goals of the foreign trade in Bosnia and Herzegovina that they consider to be most important. She also talked about the network of the international agreements concerning the foreign trade and has answered many questions on import and export from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*Organizing Youth Rights in Local Communities in BiH* - Jasmina Banjalučkić, Institute for Youth Development KULT

During her lecture Ms Banjalučkić spoke about various examples of youth organizations in BiH and their struggles to implement initiatives related to their education and other rights each young person is entitled to. Ms Banjalučkić gave concrete steps and instructions to our participants which are coming from her long term involvement in the field of youth rights how they can engage more and become active citizens.

*Student activism – experiences and practice* - Armela Ramić, Attorney-at-Law

Ms Ramić shared her experiences acquired during her BA studies at the University of Sarajevo Faculty of Law, where she was one of the founders of a student association, and how it made an impact on her current career. Based on some of her experiences she shared with participants, Ms Ramić explained and encouraged participants to step out of their comfort zones and ask for what they need from those in position in order to help the community and themselves build their careers. To put that in practice Ms Ramić gave participants a task to write a formal a letter requesting a meeting with a person they identified as a key contact in organization of their choosing.

*Fighting for the rights of "invisible" groups in BiH society* - Ajna Jusić, President of Association "Forgotten Children of War"

Ajna Jusić talked about the important work of the Association of Forgotten Children of War, and their impact on shaping the narratives of post-conflict BiH. Dozens of thousands of women and girls were raped during the 1992-95 Bosnian war, according to some estimates, and it is believed that a number of children who were born as a result of that crime goes up to 4,000. They call themselves forgotten children of the war. Ajna Jusić is one of them. Ajna's mother was a victim of a rape during the Bosnian war. Ms Jusić lives in Sarajevo today and is a founder and an activist for the Forgotten Children of War association. According to her, the association has 15 active members but there are up to 60 inactive members across the country.

*Women and elections: representation of women in BiH politics* - Maja Gasal Vražalica, director of the Academy for Women

Maja Gasal – Vražalica, a former MP at the BiH Parliament, talked about and from her personal experience about gender inequality in BiH politics, low percentages of women on electoral lists, as well as the general position of women in BiH society. She emphasized the fact that women are underrepresented in almost all aspect of the politics and she tried to explain the ways through which this practice can be changed.

*The role and development of the media in BiH and the role in political life* - Prof. dr. Vuk Vučetić, Faculty of Philosophy University of East Sarajevo

Dr. Vučetić talked about the term “media literacy” and what fields and skills it encompasses. He spoke about the importance of media literacy as a fight against spreading misinformation and fake news, a fight against pseudo-sciences and conspiracy theories and especially as a fight against radicalization. Participants learned a right way to interpret news and were encouraged to use their critical thinking in some news articles given to them as examples of media manipulation.

*#gamEscape - board games play session*

During this session we welcomed the United Nations Population Fund UNFPA in BiH's Team and played educative games that were created as a part of a gamEscape project, which HIA BiH implemented with the support from the UNFPA and the British Embassy in BiH. Out fellows enjoyed playing the games since they had a chance to learn about different and important topics in innovative ways. The board games fellows played are called "Behind the Wall", "4 Phases of Conflict (4FK)" and "Reporters of Truth", each of which educates players in different ways on the themes of the legacy of war, peacebuilding, reconciliation, war narratives, etc.

*BiH media: legal framework, pressures and funding* - Prof. dr. Belma Buljubasic, University of Sarajevo Faculty of Political Science

During her session with the fellows, professor Buljubašić, talked about the media legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and different political, economic and socio-economic pressures on the media and journalists, attacks on journalists, hate speech and cyber bullying, and the international community's support for media development.

*Media literacy in BiH* - Dr. Anida Sokol, researcher and project coordinator, Mediacentar Sarajevo

After a discussion about the perception of the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ms Sokol talked about several important concepts, such as the relationship between journalists and politicians from both perspectives, buying space for advertising on different media platforms, media performance, and the possible influence that can be achieved through blogs and social networks. Dr. Sokol also spoke about the rules of interviews and importance of “giving a voice” to the minority groups in society because of their lack or very minor presence in the media.

*Political representation and political participation of national minorities in BiH* - Prof. dr. Maja Savić Bojanić, Sarajevo School of Science and Technology

Professor Savić-Bojanić, discussed with the fellows the political representation of the minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by representing different ways in which minorities face discrimination in an why citizens of a particular country participate in politics even though discrimination in the form of restrictions on participation is institutionalized, and what are all the channels through which national minorities can get involved in politics.

*The importance of ethnicity in post-conflict BiH* - Prof. dr. Adis Maksić, International Burch University

At his session with the fellows, professor Maksić, talked about the importance of ethnicity in postconflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. Professor Maksić gave a historical overview of events that led to changes in the ethnic composition and geographical representation of the three dominant ethnic groups in BiH, and together with Fellows referred to the current situation in BiH where political elites emphasize the narrative of the conflict from the early 1990s. Fellows were very interested in the topic because of current political events in the country, and so professor Maksić started a debate among the fellows, in order to help them better understand the methods through which political elites use narratives on war to create the atmosphere of intolerance between the ethnicities.

*Collective memory and memorialization in post-Dayton BiH* - Velma Šarić, President of Post Conflict Research Center (PCRC)

Ms. Šarić, founder and executive director of PCRC, held a lecture on collective memory and dealing with the past by presenting the scope of work of her organization which has since its founding become one of the leading peacebuilding organizations in the Western Balkans. The fellows also had the opportunity to watch a short film “Obični heroji” (Regular Heroes) which tells the real story of two men of different ethnic backgrounds who became life-long friends after the Serb man saved the life of a Bosniak man, produced by the Post – Conflict Research Center.

*Dialogue and Tolerance* - Prof. dr. Dino Abazović, Professor at University of Sarajevo Faculty of Political Science

Professor Abazović started the lecture by discussing the concept and definition of mentality as a pattern of established thoughts, beliefs and behavior, and its relationship with traditionalism. He talked about anti-intellectualism, and described the concepts of collective identity and mass



ideologies. Professor Abazović emphasized the importance of eliminating prejudice in ethnically and religiously diverse communities, and the necessity of tolerance in these communities as a tool of breaking misconceptions.

*EU and BiH: membership – how and why?* - Prof. dr. Nedžma Džananović, University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Political Sciences

Dr. Džananović dedicated her lecture to one of the burning issues of BiH – membership in European Union. After the introductory and mostly known facts by the local citizens, participants learned in detail about the lesser known facts of what the membership in EU implies and what it means for the BiH society and lives of every citizen in BiH. After the lecture there was an interactive segment where each participant was given a chance to ask questions about the information they learned about thus opening new subjects and discussions.

*Gender issues and international conventions on the protection of women's rights* - Adnan Kadribašić, OSCE, lawyer, feminist and gender equality expert

During the highly interactive session, Mr. Kadribašić talked about the gender norms and gender roles in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the discrimination that is often shown towards women in our society. By showcasing many examples, Mr. Kadribašić urged the fellows to question the gender roles that exist in BiH. He also discussed the fundamental meaning of the term discrimination, and the international conventions on the protection of women's rights.

*Inclusive activism and fight for equality* - Dajana Bakić and Liam Isić, Sarajevo Open Center SOC

Dajana Bakić and Liam Isić, held a valuable lesson on inclusive activism and the ongoing fight for the rights of the LGBTIQ community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They shared their valuable experience in this field, alongside their personal experience as being a lesbian and transgender man in BiH and fighting the different stereotypes that them and other community members face with on a daily basis. This testimony started an interesting and fruitful debate among the participants and has helped them deepen their perspective on this subject.

*Inklusive Society: Opportunities and Challenges* - Alma Mujanović Founder of “Znak za riječ”

After an interactive workshop on understanding disability, Ms Adilagić's lecture focused on the concept of “special needs” vs. disabilities, particularly focusing on the use of appropriate language. She explained how disabilities are created by environment, at the moment when you face an obstacle. The main part of her lecture was focused on exploring the concepts of inclusion and integration, and equality and equity. After the lecture, participants learned the alphabet in sign language and learned to spell out their names individually. At the end, participants made a short [video](#) with a motivational message in sign language.

*‘Defending Euro-Atlantic Values’ Project Final Event*

On December 17, 2021 we welcomed the participants and many esteemed guests to the final event of our NATO PPD supported project "Defending Euro-Atlantic Values: Capacity Building and

Resilience Enhancement through Strengthening Research and Debating Capacities of Young Professionals in BiH". This event was the culmination of the four months of intensive work within a project that aims to increase the educational and policy capacity of young people, primarily through the improvement of their research skills and enrichment of knowledge through conversations with experts in this field. The participants have worked intensively on drafting policy papers to analyze current developments in BiH or the region, with a particular focus on identifying weaknesses in foreign pressure, hybrid warfare, disinformation campaigns and factors fueling ethnic violence and conflict.

The event kicked off with a panel on the topic of Hybrid threats in the Western Balkans and How to cope with them. Panelists were professor Oliver Andonov, PhD, Academy of the Armed Forces of North Macedonia and Filip Đuranović, hybrid threats expert from Montenegro. The conversation was moderated by Ján Cingel, Founder and CEO, Strategic Analysis SK, Slovakia.

The following panel within the final event, featured Fatima Jevrić and Rešid Dževdetbegović, the project participants, who have presented their group's policy paper on the topic "Building friendship among communities in BiH". The panel was moderated by their mentor Ivan Iliev, Research Fellow, from Strategic Analysis SK. This policy paper examines strategies for strengthening and maintaining peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, establishing that this can be achieved most effectively through enhancing the functionality of the state and its relationship with relevant partners.

The third panel was on the topic of the Role of Women in security of BiH. The project participants Olja Beader, Kerim Hodžić and Adna Softić presented their research and findings during the panel and answered many questions by the audience who was particularly interested in their recommendations regarding the mechanisms of protection of women who suffered gender based violence during the Bosnian War, which proves as not keeping a strong track record. The panel moderator was their group mentor Ivana Godulová, Chairperson, Education for Equality and Ecology – Edeqec.

During the final and fourth panel, the participants Nikolina Sladojević, Nejla Nanić, Kerim Mašović and Lejla Mašić presented their policy paper on topic named 'Winning the Brains back: How can Bosnia and Herzegovina be more Attractive in the Race for its own Talent?' The discussion was particularly lively because of the audience being mainly made up of young people. The findings claim that despite of its political popularity, the issue of brain drain in Bosnia and Herzegovina represents a dead-end street when it comes to very much needed political action.

*Psychodrama Workshop: Post-conflict Identities - Zvezdana Jakić, Association for Integrative Psychotherapy "Psychodrama"*

Ms Jakić led a series of group exercises focused on learning about the types of identities a person can have during their lifetime, what defines an identity and whether they can change. They also emphasized the importance of being aware of one's identities, their role and defining the one we are most comfortable with, as well as ones that we have issues with. Focus of this session was on post-conflict identities most participants carry with them since their birth. Our guest therapist helped participants speak out about what they think an identity of a young person raised in a postconflict society is and what it should be.

### *Debate Workshop with Ivana Kešić, Program Manager at CIVITAS BiH*

Through a highly interactive three-day debate workshop, Ms Kešić introduced the participants to the historical development and forms of debate. Participants were then introduced to the Robert Popper debate form which they continued to use in individual and team work to develop their critical thinking skills in building a case while also practicing their oratory skills through presentation. Workshop continued with sessions focused on explaining the basics of the British Parliamentary debate format, followed by debates, as well as several exercises focused on recognizing logical fallacies, improving the speaking style, and developing argumentation. Over the three days of the highly intensive workshop, students participated in four full debates, exploring topics related to human rights and democracy which were analyzed over the first six days of the program, and learning how to approach these topics from different standpoints.

*Introduction into the Methodology of Research – Online - Prof. dr. Jasmin Hasić, HIA BiH  
Executive Director*

The online workshop started with a detailed explanation of the policy brief format for the individual research assignments, which the participants will work on during the second phase of the program with the support of assigned research mentors. Dr Hasić has then introduced a new format in which Fellows are required to present their research – the infographics. After presenting several examples of conducted research from the previous years of implementation, dr Hasić worked with all participants individually on their suggestions for research topics, which they further developed in cooperation with their mentors.

### **>> ASSESSMENT / EVALUATION >>**

The participants were asked to share their impressions in the form of comments. Some of the observations provided by the participants in the evaluation forms are as follows:

*“I'd just like to show my gratitude for being a part of such quality project. After the first module I am fully aware of what an honor it is to be a part of this.”*

*“In just 9 days I believe I've gained a great amount of knowledge on various topics and I also believe I will learn a lot more in the following months”*

*“The debate workshop and its facilitator Ivana Kešić were one of the best parts of the program. Her positive and uplifting attitude made working so much easier!”*

*“The entire first module surpassed my expectations. Everyone involved – speakers and staff – were inspiring and encouraging.”*

*“The debate workshop was the best portion of the module, facilitator was well prepared, very concise, responsive, and she worked with us on team building and team spirit.”*

*“Lecturer speaking about student activism from her own experience was filled with great examples and it has encouraged us to think more seriously about the student initiatives we can kick-start ourselves.”*

## **>> Second Phase of the Program: Individual Research Assignments**

The participants were assigned three research mentors: Humanity in Action Senior Fellows Nikolina Sladojević (Joh Lewis Fellowship 2019), Nikola Lero (Sarajevo Fellowship 2017) and Samir Beharić (Copenhagen Fellowship 2015). They worked with groups of five participants.

The analyzed topics in the policy briefs are as follows:

### **Assigned Research Mentor: Nikolina Sladojević**

Šejla Halilebgović - “Mental Health of Young People During the Covid-19 Pandemic - Solving the Problem” - INFOGRAPHIC

Ajna Mujagić - “Are You Safe? - Increasing Women’s Safety in the Public Space” - INFOGRAPHIC

Asiya Mahmutčehajić - “Introduction of Obligatory Sex Education in BiH” - INFOGRAPHIC

Neven Rokvić - “Introduction of the Electronic Public Administration System in BiH” – POLICY BRIEF

Ismihana Čizmedžić - “Cyberbullying – Increasing the Safety of Children and Young People Online” – INFOGRAPHIC

### **Assigned Research Mentor: Samir Beharić**

Haris Šehović - “How Much Does it Cost to be a Woman in BiH” - INFOGRAPHIC

Altijana Đulančić - “Strategy to Increase the Safety of Children in Traffic” - INFOGRAPHIC

Jelena Dubravac - “Who Drives Safer – Women or Men?” - INFOGRAPHIC

Almedina Mehić - “Tax Reduction on Menstrual Supplies” – POLICY BRIEF

Ali Musić - “Is Your Child Addicted to Their Phone?” - INFOGRAPHIC

### **Assigned Research Mentor: Nikola Lero**

Ivana Janko - “Improving the Position of Young Doctors of Science in the BiH Education System” - POLICY BRIEF

Ines Dedić - “Are Stray Dogs an Issue?” - INFOGRAPHIC

Anastasija Ćorović - “An Alternative to Small Hydropower Stations” - INFOGRAPHIC

Jelena Kerezović - “Stress Causes in Students of the University in Banja Luka” - INFOGRAPHIC

Davor Džakula - “Silent Killers in Sarajevo Canton – Negative Impact of Air Pollution on the Environment and Young People” - INFOGRAPHIC

As in the previous years, the completed policy briefs and info-graphics were thoroughly examined by EDVACAY Project Coordinator, and sent to the relevant institutions for further evaluation and feedback. Project team has also places several printed info-graphics at bulletin boards in several institutions, for example, the [Youth Center](#) of Novo Sarajevo municipality, the [“Obala” High-school](#) and the University of Sarajevo [Faculty of Philosophy](#).

**Policy Impact:** We are happy to report that we were contacted by Mrs. Sanja Škuletić-Malagić, Head of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister of the Sarajevo Canton, who has praised the content of the policy brief and an info-graphic dedicated to raising awareness of the necessity to decrease the taxes and/or introduce free menstrual products for girls and women in BiH authored by Almedina Mehić and Haris Šehović. Mrs. Škuletić-Malagić stated that the data from the policy paper and the info-graphic will be very helpful in the context of measures initiated by the Government of Sarajevo Canton in order to combat menstrual poverty, ie. the introduction of free sanitary pads in schools. She promised that the submitted material will be shared with the line ministries and the persons involved in the coordination of activities related to this topic. She has also asked for permission to use the submitted materials at a meeting with UNFPA (The United Nations Population Fund) after which the initiated measures are to be implemented to which the young authors have gladly agreed upon.

The info-graphic on the topic of introducing the mandatory sexual education into schools in BiH, authored by Asiya Mahmutčehajić, was also well received by both Ministry of Education of Sarajevo Canton and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska entity. Representatives of both Ministries have recommended submitting a more detailed research to support the info-graphic if the author decides to pursue further the introduction of sexual education in schools. The representative of the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Education proposed sending the research to the Minister directly and to possibly request a formation of a working group with representatives of several Cantons who would work on introducing the topic of sexual education into syllabuses. This form of encouraging communication with the relevant institutions who demonstrated their interest in the work of these young people has greatly empowered our participants to maintain pro-active communication with public institutions in their local communities as well as at the state level.

### **>> On-line EDVACAY Alumni project presentations**

Our Project coordinator Zarja Marković facilitated the first online meeting with our participants on March 27, 2022. During the 2 hours long session all participants presented the results of the research they conducted throughout the second module with their assigned mentors. The session developed into a highly productive discussion, where participants had the opportunity to share their discoveries and reflect on the process they have gone through, especially emphasizing how happy they were to be allowed to be creative and to make the info-graphics, which was for almost all of them a first time experience.

The following 7 online meetings were dedicated to the presentation of 10 different projects facilitated by 15 EDVACAY Alumni from different generations and one HIA Senior Fellow with the goal of preparing the current 10<sup>th</sup> generation of Fellows for their own project implementation journey. The following projects were presented:

1. "Escape the Bureaucracy" by Alumni Anes Hodžić and Emina Obradović (EDAVACAY 2019/20);

2. "Just Another Day" by Alumni Emir Velić, Hana Sarajlić and Vanna Ćurin (EDAVACAY 2019/20);
3. "Pričaj mi" (Talk to Me) by Nejra Lilić (EDAVACAY 2018/19);
4. "BiH u pokretu" Hata Kujraković, Ajla Keško and Tajra Hadžić (EDVACAY 2018/19);
5. "Pokaži mi priču" by Hata Kujraković, Ajla Keško and Tajra Hadžić (EDVACAY 2018/19);
6. "Mask Out" by Lamija Čelik (EDVACAY 2019/20) and Kerim Hodžić (HIA Senior Fellow)
7. Alumni project "Cat's Eyes" by Lamija Čelik (EDVACAY 2019/20);
8. "Break the Cage" by Hana Halilbegović (EDVACAY 2020/21) and Kerim Hodžić;
9. "Ekotok" by Tarik Čardaković and Faris Mrako (EDVACAY 2020/21)
10. "Pozitivnije" by Aiša Avdić and Aleksandra Đukić (EDVACAY 2020/21).

Based on the feedback received during the meetings, the Alumni presentations were a success and fellows were very inspired by the variety of initiatives implemented so far by Fellows from previous generations and the reach they have achieved. Our Alumni have shared their personal experiences from the period they were working on project implementation, the challenges they overcame and the joy and pride they felt after the projects were completed and promoted in the media. The Alumni have also shared much advice on how to approach different aspects of project implementation and have wholeheartedly offered to help the current fellows in any way they could. The project team has also very much enjoyed these online meetings with the Alumni and fondly revisited some of the most successful projects implemented so far.

### **>> Project and Financial Management Training >>**

The third program module took place on May 26-29, 2022, in Neum. Upon arrival, the participants spent the rest of the first day at an interactive session, facilitated by HIA BiH project staff during which Fellows were asked to share if they had any previous project implementation experience and if they were a part of community projects before. They were also asked to reflect on the personal reasons that are driving them to become activists and to contribute actively to their communities. The session was particularly significant because we heard some very inspiring thoughts on the previously mentioned question prompt.

On the second day of the training, before starting to work on their own project proposals, HIA staff members held two sessions on the topic of project cycle and project budgeting. The participants learned how to identify project goals and objectives based on the identified issue, target groups, how to plan project activities, how to maintain project sustainability, evaluate and plan the project budget. After the sessions, participants were engaged in creative brainstorming sessions where they discussed different ideas and approaches to their projects. After pitching their campaign ideas to their colleagues and HIA staff, groups that would implement them in the next phase of the program were formed. Each group selected a Team Leader, Financial Officer, PR Manager and Reporting Officer.

After the groups were formed, the project team provided detailed instructions to the fellows on the structure and contents of a project proposal. The participants spent the rest of the day writing about the background information about their campaigns, the justification for their implementation, and developing the project objectives, the project activities in the form of a detailed timetable plan,

as well as creating an evaluation plan. They also created basic plans for the media promotion of their campaigns, which they will later work on in greater detail with the assigned media mentor.

The third day of the training was dedicated to working on the development of the project budgets and polishing the projects. Finally, our team shared relevant information on the reporting requirements and deadlines. In order to ensure the efficient implementation of the civic campaigns, the staff also set the deadlines for check-ins by the groups' Team Leaders.

### >> EDVACAY CIVIC CAMPAIGNS >>

This year's EDVACAY participants successfully implemented four group civic campaigns, from beginning of June to mid-August 2022. They were very diverse in their nature, spanning from creating a unique visual design to mark the 30 years of established diplomatic relations between independent BiH and other countries, a peace-building "scavenger hunt" for young people, a calendar featuring 12 outstanding young people from across BiH on their way to success, and a choreography video created to celebrate the International Friendship Day idea proclaimed with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.

**Group A:** Ali Musić, Altijana Đulančić, Haris Šehović, Neven Rokvić - ["Diplomacy of Lights - 30 years of BiH's relations with democratic countries and organizations"](#)

This project aims to celebrate and to raise awareness about the past 30 years of diplomatic and bilateral relations of BiH with various democratic countries and organizations. The project team identified important dates in BiH's diplomatic history since its independence gained in 1992, created a unique visual design in a form of an interchangeable logo which depicts flag colors of each country we have established diplomatic relations 30 years ago, and reached out to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH with a request for their design to be beamed/light projected on the building of the Ministry.

The representatives of the MoFA BiH were delighted with the idea and the design, and proposed to the team to promote it at the formal reception they are organizing in October to commemorate the big anniversary. Apart from this official promotional event in October, the team promoted the project at a public event in September. After their event the idea was endorsed by the Chief of Protocol of the MoFA BiH and the team was invited to demonstrate their idea at a formal reception held in the House of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina on October 4, 2022, where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Sarajevo marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Slovenia. At the reception, team members had the opportunity to meet the Ambassador of the European Delegation to BiH, the Ambassador of Slovenia in BiH, cultural ambassador of Slovenia, the Ambassador of Sweden, and the Ambassador of Palestine, among others. They managed to establish the initial contacts, and will proceed with promoting their design.

**Group B:** Almedina Mehić, Anastasija Ćorović, Jelena Dubravac, Jelena Kerezović - [Mirotraganje](#)  
(In Pursuit of Peace)

Group members organized a “scavenger hunt” events on July 13 and 14 with maps, puzzles and hints for young participants in two local communities, Banja Luka and Brčko, with the goal to provide the participants with knowledge, interesting historical facts and “signs of reconciliation” in their cities. By creating these interactive activities small groups of young participants in two communities had the opportunity to learn about the history of the local community they are live in, and through the interactive process compete against each other and engage with the bystanders who helped them solve puzzles in order to advance in the game. The main goal of this project is to promote peace-building among young people in BiH and motivate them to individually take part in the peace-building process. The final product of the project initiative is a promotional video of the scavenger hunt that includes video footage of the hunt and videos made by the participants themselves and their perspectives during the competition.

Taking into account the evaluation and impressions of the participants who, for the first time, walked through their cities as tourists-researchers while simultaneously learning information that cannot be found in history books and that show the value of tolerance, love of coexistence through interaction with the local population, the Fellows concluded that the project was successful and that the goals were achieved. Not only were the participants positively surprised by such form of the search, but they were also taken aback by the amount of information they did not know about their local communities. Although the project was successfully implemented, the Fellows reported facing a few difficulties such as finding adequate locations, the lack of literature and adequate information about local communities (especially Brčko), etc. The major obstacle they have encountered is the disinterest of young people and people in general in projects of this kind. The low response to the call for participation forced them to adapt to the situation and find a solution on the go.

The project was supported by the PRONI youth club in Brčko and Youth House in Banja Luka that provided the team premises without any compensation, as well as the Association of Civil War Victims "Light" Sarajevo, which provided them with space to organize the media promotion of the project. In addition to these clubs and organizations, the representatives in the assembly of the Canton of Sarajevo and the president of the Youth Council of the Canton of Sarajevo offered their support if Fellows decide to organize a search in Sarajevo, as well as contacts of people who could help organize a search hunt in Sarajevo.

**Group C:** Asiya Mahmutćehajić, Davor Džakula, Ismihana Čimedžić, Šejla Halilbegović –  
[“Kalendar uspjeha”](#) (eng. The Success Calendar)

This project aimed to promote 12 “outstanding young people” from across BiH who are not necessarily famous and who have not yet made great achievements, but who are outstanding in their motivations and perseverance in their respective fields, and who have achieved extraordinary things despite the different kinds of “obstacles” they are facing with in their lives.



Group members selected and contacted 12 motivating young persons from BiH to be a part of the “success calendar”. They planned to travel and visit all 12 young people in their local communities for an interview, that was to be included in the calendar along with a photo of each individual identified young person. Ultimately, the team traveled to Konjic, Stolac and Sarajevo and conducted other interviews online via Zoom. Young people in the calendar come from Mostar, Banja Luka, Travnik, Konjic, Tuzla, Visoko, Stolac, Goražde and Sarajevo, and they are active in candle making, software and AI development, graphic design, peace-building activism theater, they are award-winning published author, state champion in karate, team leader of the winning team at the International Robotics Olympics etc.

Their project goal to promote young people who are firmly focused on their path to success and to motivate other young people to take action and follow their own path to success was showcased on the promotional event on August 28, 2022 in one of the busiest cafe where a large number of youth gathered, had the chance to talk to some of the young people featured in the calendar, and shared their motivational messages on board. The final product of this project is now available for free download on the project’s website with a number of printed version distributed at the public event.

**Group D:** Ajna Mujagić, Ines Dedić, Ivana Janko - “[Dan prijateljstva](#)” (eng. Friendship Day)

The UN General Assembly, with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities proclaimed the International Day of Friendship in 2011. The resolution places emphasis on involving young people, as future leaders, in community activities that include different cultures and promote international understanding and respect for diversity. Since the fellows from this group have developed great friendships since the first time they met in December 2021, their goal was to celebrate the International Friendship Day by creating flash mob choreography and involving as much diverse groups of people to help them celebrate together.

The group organized a social event on July 20<sup>th</sup> for 15 young people, aged 18 to 25, in the Municipality of Bugojno (central part of BiH) during which they shared the goals of their project, to everyone’s delight, talked about the importance of friendship, got to know each other, made friendship bracelets friendship, and participated in making a friendship choreography video.

The main goal of this project was to raise awareness on the importance of friendship, breaking prejudices and to promote essential values, all which the project team finds to have successfully achieved based on the participants’ feedback who were delighted with the idea, who brought their friends and gladly participated. The project and video were promoted at a public event in Bugojno and was also promoted on social media, media outlets and on project’s YouTube channel and website.

## **>> PROMOTION OF PROJECTS IN THE MEDIA >>**

Four civic campaigns, three NED Action projects and one Alumni project were extensively promoted in the media throughout September and October. All groups collaborated with assigned

mentors for media promotion, Minela Jašar Opardija, a journalist at CNN's N1 news channel, and Slađan Tomić, Mediacentar Sarajevo journalist.

All projects were featured at top ranking online media in the country and in the region of the Western Balkans (e.g., VOA BiH, BH national TV and Radio, N1 CNN regional TV, etc.). The eight projects have generated a total of 80 appearances in the media, including the news portals and other websites, as well as appearances on television and radio stations.

### **>> THE CLOSING CEREMONY >>**

The Humanity in Action BiH team organized a closing event of the program in Sarajevo on September 18, 2022. During the closing ceremony all four groups gave short presentations on the achieved results and successes of their projects, and were awarded certificates of successful completion of the nine-month long program, with a description of all program components. They became members of the EDVACAY alumni network, committed to continue actively working on promoting democratic values and sharing what they have learned throughout the program with their peers.

Apart from this segment of the ceremony, HIA BiH team celebrated the end of another program cycle by presenting a short documentary film made to mark and celebrate the 10 years of the EDVACAY program. In the film, former and current project coordinators, Fellows and HIA present and former staff speak about the program's impact and they reflected on the successes and challenges they encountered over the ten program cycles. They also spoke about the civil society in BiH and the place that the EDVACAY program now has in the sphere of non-formal education, youth empowerment and skill building programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **>> EVALUATION / ASSESSMENT >>**

Some of the impressions regarding the most useful skills acquired during the implementation of the civic campaigns were:

*“During the implementation stage the most progress was in my cooperation skills, and I have managed to shed my fear of public speaking.”*

*“My communication has improved generally. I am now much more approachable in working with others, and much more flexible and tolerant.”*

*“I believe that the selection of the topics is the best skill I acquired, through which we can change certain things in communities.”*

*“Patience and risk management. It was really necessary to develop these two skills in order to successfully complete the other steps.”*

The most useful skills acquired during the promotion of the civic campaigns in the media, as listed in the evaluation forms, were:

*“Formation of precise and sound titles, and general publication writing.”*

*“Knowledge of how to present the project in a format suitable for all media (TV, portals, radio...)”*

*“Communication with media representatives, the way to get media space.”*

*“I learned how to write a press release that contains relevant information on the project.”*

*“The skill I built the most was social media management.”*

*“Presentation skills.”*

*“Being relaxed during the media appearance and improved public performance.”*

Some of the impressions from the question whether participants acquired useful skills during previous modules which were useful to implement their project:

*“I believe that these modules were crucial in our further work. They were excellent preparation for what awaited us.”*

*“Yes, the skill that I think will be most useful to me is writing a project, from the idea and its design to the final version.”*

*“Absolutely yes, because going through those modules made it possible to work on our projects outside of this program, already knowing the topic and the steps in the whole process.”*

*“I am especially grateful for the project management training which I enjoyed the most.”*

*“Absolutely! I found especially useful the first module where we heard from excellent speakers who have taught us and helped us develop the skills which were later on useful during the group project implementation.”*

The end of the tenth program cycle marks the addition of 15 new members into the EDVACAY alumni network.

## >> 2022 HIA SARAJEVO FELLOWSHIP - NED ACTION PROJECTS >>

### >> Selection and Participation of 2 EDVACAY Alumni at the 2022 Humanity in Action Virtual Sarajevo Summer Fellowship >>

The Call for Applications for candidates from Bosnia and Herzegovina in this year's HIA Summer Fellowship programs in Europe were open from December 10, 2022 until February 13, 2022. The HIA staff launched an extensive promotional campaign, consisting of advertising the call on different web portals and HIA BiH social media channels, within the HIA Senior Fellow and EDVACAY Alumni Networks, as well as through contacting public and private universities in the country.

The application form consisted of a personal statement, essay questions about relevant human rights challenges, as well as submitting a short video lasting up to one minute which illustrates the candidates' views on human rights, and a CV and a letter of reference. After carefully reviewing the received applications with an assembly of local HIA Senior Fellows, the HIA staff conducted online interviews with the candidates who had passed to the second round. A total of 7 Fellows from Bosnia and Herzegovina were selected to participate in the HIA virtual programs "Mapping Inequities" and Sarajevo Fellowship, and an in-person program in Copenhagen.

A three-week long national and international Fellowship programs started on June 06, gathering a total of 92 fellows and is consisting of three days of international programming covering topics related to global issues such as colonialism and imperialism, WW2 and Shoah, civic engagement, intersectionality, war and trauma etc. and three weeks of national programs, each with a different focus deriving from the country's context. The Sarajevo Fellowship started on June 13, gathering a total of 14 university students: 3 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 5 from the US, and 2 from Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland. The two selected EDVACAY alumni that will continue their involvement with Humanity in Action through participation in the HIA Summer Fellowship in Sarajevo are Aiša Avdić and Aleksandra Đukić (EDVACAY 2020/21).

### >> NED Civic Campaigns at the 2022 HIA Summer Fellowship >>

#### **Women on the Move - Radio Drama**

A large number of migrants have passed through Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last years, and among them is also a considerable number of women who were, despite their joint path through the country, placed "on the sidelines" by almost the entire media discourse in BiH which was devoted to migrant men. Guided by the idea that they can shift and influence the current opinion of people in BiH, which is often negatively oriented towards migrants and often focused on male migrants, HIA Fellows **Aiša Avdić** and **Aleksandra Đukić** (2022 Sarajevo Fellowship) placed their focus on the numerous problems faced by migrant women, who are neglected and about who the BiH society is not sufficiently informed.

Through a series of activities that included designing a radio play, writing a script, finding suitable voice actors, recording, sound processing, and editing, Aiša and Aleksandra wanted to achieve that listeners throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina “enter” for a brief moment the world of migrant women and the problems that they encounter every day.

*“We expect that with this project we will raise awareness among citizens and the media about the problems and difficulties faced by migrant women in order to motivate them to pay more attention to women when reporting on migrants, and to persons who could do something to reduce the many problems of migrant women. For example, some of the problems they face are related to menstrual poverty and the inability to buy hygiene products that are needed by girls and women every month, inability to perform gynecological examinations and mandatory pregnancy tests, a large number of unwanted pregnancies and forced marriages, violence against them, and lactating women who don’t have quality nutrition and women who don’t have the means to buy the things they need for newborn baby. We are aware of the risk that it is difficult to reach women and their personal stories, but we will try to we bring this topic as close to people as possible.”*

Aiša and Aleksandra have joined forces with two young actors from Sarajevo Academy of Performing Arts – Dina Mušanović and Benjamin Bajramović, and were additionally supported by the national public broadcaster Radio-Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina by providing the Fellows cost-free recording studio and post-production of the radio drama.

Radio drama “Lejlin put” (Lejla’s Path) was promoted at a public event on September 29, 2022 which was attended by a large number of people and also journalists from VOA (Voice of America) and BH1 media outlets representatives.

### **Ostavi T(r)ag - Leave a Tag**

Historically, young Bosnian voters have voted at significantly lower rates than older adults. While young voter turnout in Bosnia and Herzegovina has increased over the past couple of years (as reported by Institut za razvoj mladih KULT), the stigma around un-engaged young voters remains largely unchanged. The nation is also dealing with an unprecedented “brain drain”—a massive exodus of young, highly skilled workers and students. This complicates the issue of active political participation on the national level, especially as many young Bosnians aspire to leave the country. It is therefore of utmost importance to broaden and encourage youth voting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to both strengthen the nation’s democracy and ensure that diverse voices are heard.

Through their Action Project, Fellows **David Blagojević** (2022 Sarajevo Fellowship) and **Nejra Kravić** (2022 Mapping Inequities Fellowship) wanted to encourage active participation in the BiH society through voting—a fundamental act of civic engagement. The specific emphasis of their one-day event (Graffiti Jam) was be on the general elections held on October 2, 2022.

The Fellows have set up a graffiti jam where young people came and met each other, learned more about voting in the upcoming elections and created graffiti to raise awareness among youth about the necessity to take advantage of their right to vote and choose their political representatives on all levels of government. Each participant worked on their own graffiti while the

fellows were available to help. The project was recognized by DKC Incel and was included in their BLART Art & Music Festival held in Banja Luka.

## Totems of our Heritage

Individuals and society are significantly impacted by global trends and developments. The family, usually seen as the most fundamental unit of society, is also impacted by trends and changes on a worldwide scale. Traditionally, family dynamics were structured in a way to allow the older family members to share their wisdom and experiences with the younger generations, while also setting the family's standards and values. Family structures, on the other hand, have evolved from single units to more complicated and engaged ties as a result of social and economic developments. Nowadays family is also seen as the group of people we chose to be our family, regardless of the traditional understanding of family as the people connected through the same bloodline. Also, younger generations are sharing their experiences and knowledge, especially on new technologies and new social dynamics with other family members.

Since many problems caused by the generation gap are the result of the lack of communication, and proper interactions with the addition of the different ways, tools, and communication technologies that every individual generation use, Fellows **Maida Zagorac** and **Hana Halilbegović** (2022 Copenhagen Fellowship) believe that the project can address those issues and present them in a way that is encouraging different generations to take a step forward to bring a positive change in bridging the generation gap. Through a visual representation of the different inter-generational relationships, and inter-generational differences, as well as the things that "connect us" and their importance to the BiH society they will reflect on important challenges that the country is facing.

The main goal of the project is to strengthen the cultural and historical bond between generations, raising awareness of the effects of alienation and non-understanding among different generations by putting the focus on the importance and value of bringing the generations together in the first place.

Fellows collected many different personal stories and presented them in the form of an open museum with the help of specifically designed banners and totems to commemorate the importance of family and inter-generational connections. The stories were collected through a widely promoted online survey, but also the interviews and conversations with the different generations of their family members, friends, and their family members.

The open museum was presented on one of the busiest squares in Sarajevo on October 11, where people, especially the youth, visited and reflected on the inter-generational connections they are nurturing with their loved ones. The open museum event was interactive and everyone who visited had the opportunity to share their own story in a safe place and to discuss their experiences and challenges with the museum curators.

## >> NED ALUMNI CIVIC CAMPAIGNS 2020-2021 >>

### **EDVACAY Alumni Podcast - Daniel Lazarević and Mahir Sijamija**

The idea behind this Alumni project is to present five of the most prominent and most successful participants from the previous nine generations of the EDVACAY program through a trending format of podcast. Through five episodes of podcasts, EDVACAY Alumni Daniel Lazarević (2014/15) and Mahir Sijamija (2013/14) showcased to the wider audience how participants benefitted from this program, how they used it in their formal and non-formal education and how they led by their example and encouraged others to be socially responsible and active in their local community. At their podcast, Daniel and Mahir hosted Alumni Fellows Hata Kujraković (EDVACAY 2018/19), Ana Jovanović (EDVACAY 2014/15), Nikola Xaviereff (EDVACAY 2015/16), Anes Hodžić (EDVACAY 2019/20) and Iva Ivanković (EDVACAY 2017/18).

By making these podcast episodes and talking to some of the most successful participants, Daniel and Mahir achieved their project's goals which are additional promotion of the EDVACAY program and encouraging the youth in BiH to apply to the new programming cycle, and to raise awareness about what it means to be an active citizen by using examples of implemented projects from previous years. All recorded episodes in video format were broadcasted through the Humanity in Action BiH social networks and web platforms which served as an additional promotion of the program, its participants and will enable potential new applicants to see what impact the program has on youth activism in BiH.

### **Cat's Eyes - Lamija Čelik**

Bosnia and Herzegovina has seen a drastic increase in the number of migrants entering the country in the past few years. Competent institutions face daily challenges in terms of human and financial resources. One of the arising issues on migrants' route through the country is their low visibility on the road during the night when they are actively on the move. Drivers' recklessness, high speeds and poor lighting can cause accidents and endanger human life. The most vulnerable group on the road are the pedestrians, as they are at a greater risk than the drivers. The problem of pedestrian visibility in road traffic is an occurring issue in the autumn and winter time of year when, due to smog, fog or snow, visibility on the roads is often reduced. EDVACAY Alumna Lamija Čelik (2019/20) had the idea to make clothing - hats, caps, scarves and pendants - with the key component of adding cat's eyes (luminous plastic used for better perception and visibility in traffic) or reflective strips that glow in the dark. With winter and colder weather coming, Lamija believes that this project would bring benefits such as protecting the user from the cold, but also helping them be better spotted on the road. Lamija joined forces with a local association of girls and women called Association of War Victims Foča 92-95 – Workshop "Brave and Proud" who were engaged in knitting hats / scarves / pendants, which also serves as a promotion and support of their work. Lamija believes that this project has the potential for growth in a sense that the focus groups do not have to be exclusively migrants and migrant children, but also other pedestrians in traffic, such as first-graders, whose schools are located near busy roads. The hardworking women from the Association of War Victims Foča 92-95 helped in the implementation of this project, and as a small token of attention, they prepared a gift for each child – a plushy heart as a symbol of their love and support. All of the woven toys, pendants, hats and scarves were gifted to the

migrant children residing at the Reception Center TRC Ušivak, where Lamija was welcomed and introduced to the children and their parents by the IOM representatives working at the Center.

### **Flowering Marathon - Lejla Mašić**

In recent years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been facing exceptionally high levels of pollution, increased deforestation and very polluted air. To put it simply, BiH is facing a large number of environmental issues, which are mostly neglected due to ignorance, misunderstanding or simply a lack of interest. The Brčko District has also been facing these issues. And as if all the mentioned challenges are not enough, the Coronavirus pandemic has made it even more difficult, so in the Brčko District the issue of polluted air and deforestation are absolutely neglected. The most devastating fact is that the educational system in the District pays little or no attention to raising awareness of environmental issues in students. This eco-friendly community-building project initiative was developed by EDVACAY Alumna Lejla Mašić (2019/20). Lejla has been actively involved in her community for several years now and has so far initiated more than a few actions of planting trees in this town and has seen the benefits that these actions bring.

With the arrival of spring, this eco-friendly community-building project initiative officially kicked off. EDVACAY Alumna Lejla Mašić (2019/20) has set in motion her Alumni project initiative by gathering a group of children on two instances. The first part of the "flowering marathon" project was the planting of thuja and paulownia plants in the vicinity of the "Sixth Primary School" in Brezovo Polje in Brčko district with seventh grade students and the school director Vesna Panić, who was very happy to support the initiative. In addition to having great fun, the little gardeners took the task given to them by Lejla very seriously and promised that each of them would take care of the plant they planted, and expressed great interest in continuing to plant flowers and trees in the future.

The next part of the 'flowering marathon' was organized in cooperation with young volunteers from a local eco NGO "Let's do it" from Tuzla and it gathered young students of two elementary schools in Tuzla - "Jala" and "Centar". After an educational introduction into the activity, Lejla and the volunteers distributed among the students many jars filled with various kinds of flower seeds and sent them on the task to sprinkle seeds over the neglected areas near their schools in small groups. Students were filming themselves "pollinating" the grass areas as little eco-vigilantes and had a lot of fun in the process. After the two successful events with many participants, Lejla notes from the experience that by giving young people the opportunity to directly influence their immediate environment, they get strongly encouraged to be the initiators of environmental change. This Alumni eco project has ultimately resulted in increasing adolescents' awareness about their existing environment in three communities in BiH - Brčko, Brezovo Polje and Tuzla, and it showed these young people the care that the environment requires from each citizen in the community.

### **Deisolation Hackathon - Hana Sarajlić and Vanna Ćurin**

The follow-up Alumni project on the successful civic campaign "Just Another Day" (2020), has gone through several changes in project activities and the method of implementation. Alumni Hana Sarajlić and Vanna Ćurin decided to keep the same topic in its core, armed with the knowledge they acquired while working on the documentary Just Another Day on the negative effects of social isolation on members of marginalized social groups, such as people with mental



disorders, LGBTQI+ people, and people with development disabilities, and decided to now have a broader social group as a target group of their project – all people who experienced the feeling of isolation, loneliness, and insufficient support as a result of the pandemic.

The online format of deisolation hackathon did not spark an interest in young people to participate and was not held in December 2021. Afterwards, Hana and Vanna were connected to EDVACAY Alumnus Tarik Čardaković (2020/21) and his University colleague Nihad Žunić in order to create a series of podcast episodes on the topic. However, despite agreeing to work jointly on podcasts and starting to draft the episodes, Tarik received a scholarship and traveled abroad for his studies after which Vanna and Hana decided to finalize their Alumni project themselves as it was intended from the beginning. They decided to change their approach and reached out to Aida Hasović, a teacher in the Elementary School “Hrasno” in Sarajevo with an idea to engage young students in writing essays on the topic effects of pandemic isolation. Ms Hasović has approached the school director with the idea and received full support. With the support from Ms Hasović, Hana and Vanna have drafted an official call for submission of essays on the topic "Isolation during the Pandemic: the good and the bad that it has brought me?" and sent it out to all elementary school in Sarajevo Canton. The competition was open to all primary school students in Sarajevo, from sixth to eighth grade. The essays were to be submitted with consent filled out by a parent or a guardian agreeing to publish the paper under a code on the project website, without revealing the identity of the author. Considering the importance of the educational system in promoting and encouraging written word, but also verbalizing and expressing feelings, thoughts and doubts of students in situations of crisis, our Alumni fellows believe that the participation of young students greatly contributed to project's goals and to their personal reflection process. Hana and Vanna have awarded the best three essays and have invited young authors, their teachers and parents for a small award ceremony.

## **>> NED ALUMNI CIVIC CAMPAIGNS 2021-2022 >>**

### **The War on Memory**

Since the start of the full-fledged conflict in Ukraine, the Russian invaders have committed over 400 war crimes against cultural heritage monuments according to the statistics of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy released as of July 22, 2022. As a result of the invaders' actions, 129 cultural heritage sites have been destroyed or damaged. Furthermore, the occupants have destroyed 105 historically significant structures in Ukrainian cities. As Russian aggression is on a path of destruction of all of the cultural heritage of the Ukraine, we are yet to think about the impact of how such destruction of monuments impact the society.

Just as stories of glories from distant historical pasts and injustices from WWII were used to mobilize masses at the start of the 1990s, the war dynamics of 1992-1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina were critical for the consolidation of postwar identities and the establishment of new regimes. These strategies were followed and supported by changes in urban spaces: streets and squares were renamed after heroic figures, new mosques and churches were built – as religion is the main pillar of identity differentiation, even if religious practices have become largely irrelevant

– and in almost every municipality, a monument or memorial plaque dedicated to military and civilian victims of one ethno-national group of the 1992-1995 war was erected. Monuments emphasizing religious and emotional elements have been erected throughout the country, including in school yards, central squares, in front of public institutions, and in places of burial, while memorial plaques can be found on the walls of religious, educational, residential, and government buildings. In cultures with polarized views, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, monuments can exacerbate tensions and even spark new hostilities. In reality, monuments in BiH establish and promote narratives that are incompatible with one another and serve as tools for constructing ethno-national identities.

By engaging in extensive research and interviews with historians, architects and other relevant persons from the civic society, EDVACAY Alumna **Hana Halilbegović** (2020/21), aims to provide to the broader public the insight on the ill-suited monuments that spread hate speech and glorify the perpetrators, in which shape and form can they exist, and how/ did the civil society engage in the process of the removal of such monuments from the public space. With Berlin, Hamburg and Sarajevo being the base points for a short documentary film, parallels were drawn between these societies that sustained mayor war atrocities, which induced the urge of commemoration of the perpetrators in the form of monuments.

Documentary focused on the German perspective by covering the controversial topic of „*Judensau*“ and BiH perspective by focusing on *tribute murals of war criminals*. As both monuments intent is to cause the emotional disturbance towards the victims' film directly covers the stories of those who have felt such discomfort and their coping mechanisms. As a final result of this investigative research the main goal is to create a space for discussion among the society and provide them with perspectives on how to adequately engage in the process of abolishment of these ill-suited monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European region. The documentary film will be premiered in November at public events in Sarajevo and Tuzla, after which an extensive media promotion will follow.

## **ManipuNation**

ManipuNation project is an online campaign implemented by a team of university students, consisting of EDVACAY Alumni **Vanna Ćurin**, EDVACAY 2019/20, previously active in alumni projects and **Lejla Dautbašić**, working with one of the HIA recurring lecturers Dr. Adis Maksić, professor at International Burch University, Department of International Relations and European Studies. Together they attempted to deconstruct the narratives circulating around BiH's politics, shaping an unhealthy political culture and drawing attention away from basic democratic principles and foundations of socio-economic growth and development.

According to all relevant parameters, Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the worst ranked countries in Europe. In the past period, we witnessed a lot of scandals that briefly attracted a lot of public attention, and then slowly faded from memory. In the pre-election period, nationalist fights are common, and few people talk about affairs in which the powerful have shown that they are ready to endanger the bare lives of the citizens they represent for personal gain.

The majority of BiH citizens understand that political parties and leaders are most responsible for the difficult life and mass departure from the country. Members of all nations often call out political elites for crime, indolence and incompetence, realizing that they use nationalism, fear, animosity and other emotions to continue robbing the common man. Despite this, the manipulations continue to produce results, and in the pre-election period, when citizens have the opportunity to punish or reward the powerful, awareness of them seems to disappear. ManipuNation was created in order to recognize false topics and to remind the public that the national and identity topics that are talked about often serve nothing else than to divert attention from the real problems in the country.

ManipuNation brings together individuals from Sarajevo universities who deal with Critical Discourse Analysis, an increasingly popular scientific field that analyzes how rhetoric, stories and subverted themes shape the political consciousness of citizens. The team used their time and knowledge in order to share with citizens the conclusions that stem from deep analytics of BiH's media space that they conducted, starting in August which aligned with the pre-election political discourse present in the media.

After a month of daily analyses, the ManipuNation group made a summary report on the topics that the 15 largest parties debated about during this pre-election campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has been confirmed that the political discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina was abundant in nationalism, as well as the repetition of "empty" political platitudes and "unfulfilled war fantasies", which is more than enough to electrify the political atmosphere with fears, animosities, bitterness and other negative emotions that recycle ethnic divisions and allow the continuation of misrule according to the team. Forward-looking ideas, e.g., how to improve the socioeconomic status of the citizens, were very few and the times that they were discussed were mostly either insufficiently specific or isolated from any debate. The parties confronted each other about past events and ad hominem, and when it came to concrete planning they spoke in parallel, or side by side, but a constructive debate has failed to materialize. All this suggests that any progress towards a better life must involve a change in the topics discussed, as well as the way in which political discussions are conducted.

The campaign received a large media attention and following on its social media channels and website. The team also made numerous media appearances including television and online news portals.