

If all the people...

Reports from NGO Days 2012



If all the people...

Reports from NGO Days 2012

Publisher: **Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations – TACSO Croatia Office
Amruševa 10/I, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
www.tacso.org**

Authors of reports: **Nikša Alfirević, Igor Bajok, Gordana Forčić, Zvijezdana Schulz-Vugrin**

Translation: **Sarah Gojković**

Proofreading: **Aida Bagić and Natalija Gojković**

Evaluation analysis: **Aida Bagić**

Graphic design: **Dobbin d.o.o. Graphic design includes visual identity elements
as designed by ACT Printlab d.o.o. for NGO Days 2012**

Photography: **Siniša Sunara, Boris Cvjetanović, Association for Psycho-Social Needs “Amadea”,
Association By Education against Breast Cancer of Zagrebacka County,
Association for Therapeutic Riding “Pegaz”, Association for Promotion of Quality
of Life and Maintaining Mental Health “POZITIVA”**

Circulation: **500**

Issue: **October 2012**

CIP record No. 822565 available in the digital catalogue of the National and University Library in Zagreb

ISBN: 978-953-57391-0-4

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Opening of NGO Days 2012 and Plenary Meeting on Strategic Priorities for Civil Society Development in the Republic of Croatia	8
Roundtable I: “Participation of Youth in Formulation of Public Policies on the Local Level – Are Institutional Mechanisms Efficient?”	18
Roundtable II: “Models for Efficient Advocacy and Lobbying for Positive Social Change”	22
Roundtable III: “New Financial Opportunities for CSOs in the Republic of Croatia”	26
Roundtable IV: “Social Cohesion of Citizens and Youth in Fighting Poverty and Delinquency of Minors”	32
Roundtable V: “Criteria for Allocation of State and City Owned Office/Work Spaces to CSOs”	36
Roundtable VI: “The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Development of Social Entrepreneurship in Croatia”	40
Roundtable VII: “Networking for Change”	44
NGO Open Door Day	48
Evaluation Report on NGO Days 2012	52
Overall evaluation	53
Evaluation of organisational aspects	53
Evaluation of the Plenary	53
Evaluation of the Roundtables	54
Evaluation of NGO Open Door Day	54
Recommendations for Future Events	54

Introduction

NGO Days – traditional annual civil society event in Croatia – took place in Zagreb from 14th to 16th June 2012. It was organized jointly by the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, National Foundation for Civil Society Development and TACSO Croatia Office, with active logistical assistance from several CSOs.

This year's NGO Days started with a panel discussion on strategic priorities for the support of the civil society development in the Republic of Croatia, within context of adoption of the new National Strategy for Creation

of Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development.

During the second day a number of parallel roundtable discussions took place covering themes related to creation of enabling environment for civil society development, such as participation of youth in

“ I believe that this format for NGO Days is very good: opening of NGO Days on the first day with plenary discussion and then a number of roundtables covering different themes and taking place at different locations. On the other hand, it might be useful to consider gathering all participants from all roundtables once again for a closing plenary with short presentations on roundtables results and for an informal get-together after the closing ceremony.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

creation of public policies on the local level, the role of CSOs in development of social entrepreneurship or a very hot topic concerning criteria for awarding of state and city office spaces to CSOs.

This year, for the first time, NGO Days also included NGO Open Door Day as an accompanying event. Its main objective was to provide citizens and general public with a close look into common good programmes and projects implemented by CSOs in Croatia. CSOs that registered for participation opened their doors on 16 June between 10:00 and 13:00 to all interested citizens, in order to inform them about the activities of their CSOs, services that they provide and possibilities for joining in. NGO Open Door Day included 120 NGOs from the City of Zagreb and 16 counties in the Republic of Croatia.

In this publication we provide a full set of reports from NGO Days 2012, in order to ensure full disclosure and information on the course and conclusions of each event that took place within NGO Days 2012.

We take this opportunity to thank all who supported, assisted and participated in NGO Days 2012, for without their contributions NGO Days would not have been possible. We give special thanks to Association Green Action, Human Rights House, Association GONG, Croatian Youth Network, Association Slap and NESsT Croatia for their assistance in organisation of roundtables. We also wish to express special gratitude and thanks to all CSOs that responded to our invitation and opened their doors – your enthusiasm represents the basis for the future of civil society in Croatia.

“ It would be very good if basic information from NGO Days (key information from each roundtable) could be shared with all NGO Days participants. I say this because, unfortunately, it was impossible to participate in all roundtables, and it is possible that something really important for us might have been said or shared in those we were unable to attend.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant

”

With cordial regards until the next NGO Days,

NGO Days 2012 Organisation Committee

Date and time:

14 June 2012,
15:30 – 20:00

Venue:

National and
University Library,
Ul. Hrvatske bratske
zajednice 4, Zagreb

Host organisations:

Government Office
for Cooperation
with NGOs, National
Foundation for Civil
Society Development,
TACSO Croatia Office

Moderator:

Sladana Novota,
SMART

Panelists:

Igor Vidačak,
GofCNGOs; Cvjetana
Plavša-Matić, NFCSD;
Domagoj Novokmet,
HRT; Marina
Škrabalo, GONG;
Lejla Šehić-Relić,
National Committee
for Development of
Volunteerism; Aida
Bagić, TACSO Croatia

Report by:

Sladana Novota,
SMART

Opening of NGO Days 2012 and Plenary Meeting on Strategic Priorities for Civil Society Development in the Republic of Croatia

NGO Days 2012 opened on June 14, 2012 before almost 150 representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the National and University Library in Zagreb. The event was organized by the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs (GofCNGOs), the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and TACSO – Technical Assistance to Civil Society Organisations, Croatia Office. “NGO Days is a traditional annual manifestation dedicated to increasing civil society visibility and finding solutions for enhancement of the framework for civil society development”, pointed out Ms. Vesna Lendić Kasalo, Manager of the Strategic Planning, Programming and Information Department of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, who moderated introductory part of the Plenary.

During the first presentation, Ms. Sladana Novota, President of the Council for Civil Society Development emphasized the significance of achieved results of this Government advisory body in the processes of strengthening cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and CSOs; and the implementation of the National Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for the Development of Civil Society; as well as planning of priorities within national programs for distribution of financial support for civil society projects and programs from State budget funds or EU pre-accession funds. The relationship between the civil and public sector is of utter importance for functioning of CSOs. And even though this relationship has had its ups and downs over the past decade, CSOs have greatly contributed to an overall development of the society. Hereby it is particularly important to emphasise significant contribution to the rule of the law and fight against corruption, non-discrimination, return of displaced and exiled persons, processing of war crimes and ensuring proper compensation for its victims. Moreover, CSOs have also greatly contributed to the reform of electoral legislature and realization of voting rights, in providing social services in education, healthcare and social welfare, as well as providing guidance in the development of social economics and examples of best practices for social entrepreneurship. Over the years, CSOs have actively and systematically advocated for the institutionalization of education on democratic citizenship into the formal education system, they promoted volunteering as an important social value and a way of achieving social change. Despite contributions and results that CSOs achieved in various areas of activities, part of the public is still suspicious towards them and their work and considers them a burden to the society in recession, as evidenced by the frequent attacks made against



CSOs, especially as regards their financing, whereby disregarding their importance for the overall development of the society in the Republic of Croatia.

Mr. Paolo Berizzi, Head of the Political, Economic, Trade and Press & Information Section of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Croatia, emphasized his personal positive experience in working with CSOs, especially as concerns Croatia's accession process to the European Union. CSOs are main proponents and promoters of the good governance system on all levels and represent main actors in the processes of democratic decision-making. For these reasons, CSOs must be given the opportunity to participate in the processes of preparation and adoption of public policies and legislation, as well as in monitoring and assessment of their implementation. However, the right to participation is closely connected with the responsibility of CSOs for representation of different opinions and attitudes, which only increases their credibility in society. On the other hand, the role of public administration bodies is also important in building such legal framework that will enable informed and critical participation of CSOs in decision-making processes and with that in creation of partnership between these two sectors. In this endeavour both CSOs and the Croatian government will enjoy full support of the European Union.

Ms. Višnja Fortuna, representative of the Mayor of the City of Zagreb and Head of the City Office for Social

Protection and Disabled Persons, iterated that the City of Zagreb pays great attention to organisations working within the City area and that the civil sector is recognized and valued as such. The City of Zagreb is aware that no local authority, no matter how successful and good it may be, could work alone on improving the quality of life of the citizens, but that it must do so in partnership with CSOs. One way to present the results of this collaboration, as well as the results of the work done by CSOs in the City of Zagreb, is having the NGO Week - a manifestation that is held at the same time as this year's NGO Days. Recognition of the volunteer work and the work for the common social good is especially important to the City of Zagreb, so it is crucial to always consider how to further improve the framework for such actions by the citizens and CSOs.

Ms. Zrinka Vrabec-Mojzeš, representative of the President of the Republic of Croatia, brought with her messages of respect and support from the President, Mr. Ivo Josipović, for all those whose work contributes to the wellbeing



of the entire community, especially in the times of economic crisis, which has hit the most vulnerable groups of the Croatian society the hardest. Adoption of the new Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development should further improve the existing legal, financial and institutional system of support for the work done by CSOs. President Josipović expressed the hope that the new Strategy will also help in establishing criteria that will enable a more equitable financing of CSOs, especially those that care for the disabled, the children, children with special needs, women exposed to violence, the elderly, the youth and other groups at risk, as well as providing models for a more efficient use of European funds. President Josipović recognizes the key role played by CSOs in the democratization of Croatian society and he endeavours to provide continuous support to their work,

while emphasizing the importance of partnership between state and the non-governmental sector. Through their activities, CSOs cover the areas less and less covered by the social state and they help in reaching important national goals and interests. CSOs also play a big and important role in development of participatory democracy, in which the citizens need to participate as subjects of both political and social processes. The citizens of the Republic of Croatia still do not fully understand their rights or the weight of their own civil obligation towards the community. They still lack sufficiently developed awareness of the importance of activism and personal involvement in the system of political decision-making. This refers especially to the younger members of our society, which is why President Josipović strongly supports the implementation of civil education within the formal education system. Finally, it is important to encourage actions for the common good, as an activity that has a value to both the doer and those for whom it is being done. It is crucial to persuade our citizens of all generations that it is good to do good, that it is good to be involved in social processes and to contribute to the wellbeing of the local community and society as a whole.

At the conclusion of the introductory part, Ms. Milanka Opačić, Vice-President of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Minister for Social Policies and Youth, opened NGO Days 2012 by pointing out the fact that over the past twenty years Croatian society has matured and has developed a culture of dialogue and tolerance, even though, admittedly, there is still much room for improvement within the system for provision of assistance and support to the citizens, especially in those areas in which the State does not do it or does not do it sufficiently. It is in these areas specifically that the work of CSOs is crucial in solving problems and the fulfilment of citizen's needs through a partnership between the state and CSOs. A long-term sustainable partnership requires duly transparent and efficient system of funding of CSOs activities, as well as responsible behaviour of the State in provision of financial support to CSOs, which has not always been the case, as evidenced also by the pre-existing situation found in the Ministry for Social Policies and Youth. Financing of CSO projects and programs represents an investment into development of social partnership and stimulation of social involvement, as well as provision of assistance and support to the most vulnerable groups in the Croatian society. Moreover, it is also necessary to consider a more efficient system for monitoring of financing and implementation of CSO projects, for a more responsible and efficient spending of state budget funds, but also of European funds, as well as local administration funds.

In her closing, Ms. Opačić particularly iterated the importance of adoption of the new National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development, as well as the announced amendments to the Law on NGOs, which should facilitate creation of even more organized system for functioning of CSOs.

After the opening ceremony, NGO Days continued with the plenary discussion on strategic priorities for the support of the development of civil society in the Republic of Croatia. The moderator was Ms. Sladana Novota and the first introductory presentation was made by Mr. Igor Vidačak, Acting Head of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs. Mr. Vidačak recalled the last years' NGO Days held in Pula, where the discussion on the new National Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development was started in which almost 200

participants from all over Croatia discussed about what civil society should look like in 2016. One year later and after numerous discussions, consultations and focus groups work, a draft document is created, which should reflect the opinions of the majority of interested public, namely CSOs. The Strategy focuses on four main strategic areas, comprising 25 measures and 87 implementation activities over the next 5 years. These four strategic areas refer to the further advancement of institutional framework for the support of civil society development, contributions of CSOs to the development of a democratic and civic culture, strengthening of the role of CSOs in socio-economic development, as well as activities and further development of civil society within international context. At the end of his presentation Mr. Vidačak commented on achieved results and “lessons learned” during implementation of the previous Strategy, with special emphasis on consultations with interested public in the decision-making process, establishment of a more transparent system for allocation of funds for CSO activities and increasing of CSO capacities for absorption of EU funding. Finally, a significant change is expected in monitoring of implementation of the new Strategy, given that the last one lacked sufficiently well established performance indicators concerning realization of individual measures, which made implementation of monitoring process very difficult.

In the opening of her presentation, Ms. Cvjetana Plavša-Matić, Director of the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, briefly recapped the results of the research “Assessment of Civil Society Development in Croatia”, comparing them with main results of a similar research done in 2009. The encouraging thing is that despite the current financial crisis, which has had an effect on the productivity of CSOs, there are no significant deviations in the results of the two surveys. In other words, even though the recession affected the CSOs, the effect was still lesser than might have been expected and did not stop CSOs activities. This find indicates that CSOs have the required expertise and flexibility to adjust their work to a changing environment. Furthermore, certain security measures were put in place regarding financing of CSOs on various levels, which softened the blow of the recession.



However, there is still a need for improvements and capacity building of CSOs and their work on a local level through a stronger connectivity with the citizens and the local government. This will allow for a synergy necessary for achievement of social and economic change in local communities, in which these organisations work. This is also the direction of the new National Foundation strategy: namely, aiming to keep the balance in providing support to CSOs activities on a local level, on one hand, and supporting their work in a new environment to emerge with Croatian accession and membership in the EU, on the other. In other words, it is especially important to stimulate active

citizenship and participation of citizens in the development of local communities, further increase in CSO capacities for full social development, strengthening of the cross-sectoral and intra-sectoral cooperation, increase in impact and visibility, as well as achieved results of CSOs and provision of support for the implementation of social innovation and employment in the non-profit sector.

Ms. Aida Bagić, TACSO Croatia Resident Advisor, highlighted key priorities of TACSO project: working on CSO visibility and influence, building of CSO capacities with special emphasis on capacities concerning absorption of EU funds and stimulating cooperation between CSOs and the state, including provision of support in preparation of strategic documents, such as National Strategy for Creation of Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development. TACSO also pays special attention to stimulation and strengthening of cooperation between CSOs in the region, i.e. IPA countries. Ms. Bagić also presented preliminary findings of the research on visibility and public perception of CSOs in Croatia, carried out by the “Ivo Pilar Institute”, noting that methodologically and content-wise this research followed the research done in 2007 (“Public Perception of Non-Governmental Organisations”) so that possible changes over a longer period of time may be identified. Out of 7 key findings, 5 indicate positive trends in civil society development; one is neutral and one relatively negative. The positive trends refer to an increase in the number of interviewees who are familiar with and understand the term “association”, increase in the number of interviewees who personally know active





members of CSOs and an increase in the number of people who expressed that they have felt a benefit from the work done by CSOs, as well as an increase in those who think that through CSOs they can influence decisions being made in their local community. There were no changes in the percentage of interviewees who generally have a positive attitude towards CSOs, whilst relatively negative trend has been recorded concerning the ability of CSOs to influence decisions being made on a national level. Namely, there is an increase in the number of interviewees who think that CSOs are unable to influence decisions made on this level.

In continuing the debate, Mr. Domagoj Novokmet, Croatian National Television journalist, presented his views on the role of the public television and other media, in ensuring visibility of CSOs in the public. Here he took the relatively low level of CSO visibility as his bottom-line, pointing out at the same time periodic negative campaigns against Croatian CSOs in some media. This is not necessarily due to a general negative attitude of the Croatian public towards CSOs, but simply the result of a lack of information and lack of sensitivity of certain journalists, who are libel to create devastating damage for civil society as a whole from an isolated incident of malpractice in one organisation. Therefore, and in order to secure higher visibility of CSOs, it is necessary to ensure the existence of standards of quality of action in civil society and promptly respond to malicious or untruthful campaigns in the media. Moreover, it is important to sensitize the public to specific areas of action of civil society, such as social entrepreneurship, which the uninformed public is prone to misinterpret in a negative way. The themes within areas of CSO activities should be directed at as wide as possible spectrum of potential media, instead of “aiming” for narrowly specialized media, in order to avoid the problem of media “ghettoisation” of the themes from the area of civil society. In this context, Croatian National Radio-Television should play a special role as a public institution, which should open its media space for CSOs and themes related to civil society.

The presentation by Ms. Marina Škrabalo, member of the Council of GONG, as a representative of the ad-hoc advocacy network Platform 112, focused on questions of civil participation and participatory democracy. Platform 112, which currently includes around 60 CSOs, may be viewed as an attempt to “de-ghettoize” media’s positions and increase the influence of CSOs in the processes of formulation of public policies in Croatia. This influence is already recognized in Croatia through the slow acceptance of the rules of the democratic processes by the political elite, as well as cultivation of sensibility for creation of the common good. Huge progress is visible in Croatian society, at least normatively speaking, in setting up new rules based on principles of civil participation, which was influenced also by individuals outside civil society, as well as by opening of the internet as a new public space. Still, Ms. Škrabalo sees the consolidation of existing rules and them actually being put into action, as a task that is still open. Moreover, civil society also acts as a catalyst of the practice of consulting with the interested public, which is still insufficiently applied. However, activating the citizens for participation in the life of their local communities and exercising influence over local governance still remains an open-ended issue and a challenge. Hereby, it will be especially important to find a way to encourage local “grass-roots” civic initiatives and actions, as well as creation of informal ad-hoc partnerships.

During the last introductory presentation, Ms. Lejla Šehić Relić, president of the National Committee for the Development of Volunteerism, remarked on the level of volunteerism development in Croatia, placing special emphasis on commemorating 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering as part of this process, but also pointing out the significant contribution made by the National Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2006 – 2011. Within framework of the new Strategy, as well as the implementation of other activities connected with development of volunteerism, it is necessary to keep in mind that currently there is no systematic approach to volunteerism within the formal education system. For this reason it is important to affirm the issues of civil education and training, especially education on volunteering. The possibility to volunteer should be opened within the formal education system, and volunteering should be evaluated within all segments of education, including higher education. At the same time, special attention should be paid to volunteering within the system of social services, in order to humanize the process of their provision and increase the transparency of the work done by social institutions. Concerning activities expected in the future, which should increase support to volunteering, Ms. Šehić Relić singled out reconsideration of the legal framework, further strengthening of volunteer centres as the primary carriers of the volunteering infrastructure, measuring and quantification of the effects of volunteer work (in accordance with similar trends in the EU), as well as creation of a national program for the development of volunteerism, which is expected to provide better formulation and monitoring of volunteer programs.

The debate that continued after the introductory presentations branched out in several directions. The key themes discussed were volunteering and its current status in Croatia, problems of CSO visibility and ways in which the media treats CSOs in Croatia, citizens’ trust in civil society and civic activism, and international cooperation and exchange of good practices within the region.

Within the discussion on volunteering and its current status in Croatia it was emphasized that the broader public is unsure about the very concept of volunteer work, which may be ascribed to an insufficient understanding and presentation of the Law on Stimulation of Employment. Due to media coverage of this Law, the public started having misconceptions about volunteer work as “work for free”, i.e. the work of unpaid work force, thereby mixing the ideas of volunteering and working on a job as a trainee on the way to a permanent position. Therefore, volunteering should be clearly differentiated from employment enhancements, based on training without employment contract. Otherwise, it will be very difficult to affirm volunteer work as a socially valuable enterprise in Croatia.

On the issue of visibility and the way media treats CSOs in Croatia, the stance on the “ghettoisation” of civil society in mass media was upheld, but an emphasis was also placed on the sensationalist approach the media takes towards civil society issues. This is why it is important to insist, within the framework of the entire media policies, on education of journalists about civil society issues and values of the common good. Furthermore, it was established that the issues of financing and sustainability of non-profit media have been particularly emphasized, whereby National Foundation for Civil Society Development has been recognized as the only available formal source of financial support. Although the National Foundation played a pioneering role in the development of non-profit media, its work still is not and cannot represent permanent source of support for their activities. It was thus proposed that, along those lines, a creation of an institution that would systematically finance and professionally support non-profit media should be considered. The Fund for Promotion of Pluralism and Diversity of Electronic Media should also find its role as a source of support for the non-profit media, considering that it is itself financed from citizens’ TV subscriptions. It was also emphasized that this issue will also be handled by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of Republic of Croatia, which actively works on development of a model for financing non-profit media and coordinates activities of the relevant governmental bodies.

During the discussion it was also pointed out that in Croatia there are already examples of good practice in sectoral cooperation, as well as cooperation between CSOs and the Government of Croatia, which should also be applied in the area of non-profit media. For instance, an Action plan for education on sustainable development was adopted, and activities of local action groups in creation of sustainable local and rural development, as well as the work of local partnerships in employment may be taken as examples of successful collaboration.

During the discussion, the issue of citizens’ trust in CSOs and civic activism was tied to recognition of the results of CSO work and to the financing of such organisations. Namely, it has been pointed out that during a recession a scapegoat is often needed, and thus CSOs are subject to various manipulations, mostly done by certain part of the media. Besides, a large number of citizens are not even aware of the scope and the levels of work done by CSOs, because they only truly encounter CSOs when they require certain services or other types of assistance. Certain solutions to these problems were also recognized, and they should be based on a systematic communication of results of CSO activities to the wider public, which particularly refers to organisations financed from public funds. Concrete

examples of these measures, such as CSO Open Door Day and preparation of database of the results of CSO projects financed from public funds, were singled out within this context. It was equally emphasized that the adoption of the new Law on CSOs will result in a more transparent treatment and financing of CSOs, which refers especially to the public good organisations.

International cooperation and exchange of good practices in the region has also been confirmed within NGO Days through active participation of representatives of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Secretariat-General of the Government of Montenegro and the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The discussion established that, within the framework of civil society in Croatia, knowledge and experience have been developed, which may be used as examples of good practice in the wider region. Cooperation on a regional level is already being stimulated through a large number of study visits, whereas opportunities for further cooperation will increase with the accession of the Republic of Croatia in to the European Union.



Date and time:

15 June 2012,
09:30 – 12:00

Venue:

Tribine Grada
Zagreba, Kaptol 27,
Zagreb

Host organisations:

GONG and Croatian
Youth Network (CYN)

Moderator:

Igor Bajok, SMART

Panelists:

Vanja Škorić, GONG;
Nikola Buković, CYN

Report by:

Igor Bajok, SMART

Roundtable I: “Participation of Youth in Formulation of Public Policies on the Local Level – Are Institutional Mechanisms Efficient?”

Objective of the roundtable was to discuss criteria and practice in participation of youth in formulation of policies on the local level, based upon results of survey carried out by GONG and CYN, within context of preparation of the new National Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development, and to offer guidelines for its implementation. Introductory presentations were given by Ms. Vanja Škorić, legal advisor in GONG and Mr. Nikola Buković, Programme Coordinator for national and local youth policies in CYN. Roundtable moderator was Mr. Igor Bajok, Association for Civil Society Development SMART. In this roundtable participated approximately 20 representatives of CSOs, government bodies and youth councils.

The roundtable opened with presentation by Ms. Vanja Škorić, who provided brief overview of partial results of the research in openness and transparency of local self-government units in the Republic of Croatia (LOTUS 2011), with an emphasis on their openness towards CSOs, civil initiatives and youth councils. Ms. Škorić pointed out that inclusion and participation of citizens in all key phases of the cycle of adoption and implementation of public policies is of great importance. This includes defining of priorities, preparation of drafts, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation or change of public policies. However, the practice demonstrates two key problems in preparation and implementation of public policies. The first problem refers to the fact that citizens are very rarely included in any of the above-mentioned phases, on the national and on the local level, whereas the second problem refers to neglecting the importance of individual cycle phases, which eventually brings into question the efficiency of public policies. Likewise, the draft National Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development recognizes at least two key challenges concerning participation of citizens in decision-making processes. These challenges refer, on one hand, to still insufficiently stimulating legal framework and on the other, to unsatisfactory level of implementation of legal framework in practice (for example, Code of Practice on Consultation with the Interested Public in Procedures of Adopting Laws, Other Regulations and Acts, especially on the local level). If citizens are not included in the first two phases of the cycle of preparation of public policies, or if they are included only to a limited extent, or just to satisfy the form during the phase of drafting and decision-making, then the very meaning of citizen participation is being missed.

Through the above-mentioned research, or one of its dimensions (collaboration with civil society) GONG attempted to estimate the openness of local and regional self-administration units towards CSOs and youth councils; in other words, to measure the readiness of local administrations to include CSOs and youth in the decision-making processes. Full results of the research are available on web pages

of association GONG (www.gong.hr), whereas Ms. Škorić particularly covered the part of the research concerning youth councils. It was determined that in the sample comprised of 509 out of the total number of 576 local and regional self-government units in Croatia (121 out of the total of 127 cities, 368 out of the total of 429 municipalities and 20 out of 21 counties) youth councils were active (constituted pursuant to the Law on Youth Councils and had at least one session within the last one year period) in 90% of counties, 70% of cities and 29% of municipalities. Within this number only slightly more than half (57%) of youth councils had some form of communication with a representative body of the local and regional self-government, and only 27% of representative bodies requested youth councils to comment on the issues within their purview (most often it concerned discussion/adoption of plan of activities for the youth council in the previous or the upcoming year). Ms. Škorić concluded that – considering that establishment of youth councils represents a legal obligation - the low percentage of active councils indicates deficient implementation of the Law, whereas disinterestedness of the youth in participating in this body indicates lack of sufficient information on instruments through which they might realize larger influence on decision-making processes within their communities. Likewise, even in those local and regional self-government units that had an established cooperation with their youth councils there is a space for widening of issues that are at least discussed with youth councils, even if they are not included in the decision-making.

Discussion that ensued focused on the issue of wide disproportion in the number of active youth councils in counties compared to municipalities.

The three main or most frequent reasons for this disproportionality are: misunderstanding of the purpose and work of youth councils in municipalities; lack of capacities, especially in small municipalities, for implementation of the Law (but also for creation of an enabling environment for civil society development and provision of financial support to CSOs, as regularly confirmed by reports on provided financial support to CSO projects and programs prepared by the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs; as well as disinterestedness of youth in participation in youth councils). Still, it was concluded that there is a need to implement a deeper study that would assist in full understanding of this issue. The discussion widened to the issues concerning financing of CSOs on the local level and implementation of the Code of Positive Practice, Standards and Criteria for Realization of Financial Support for CSO Programs and Projects. Additionally, the possibility was pointed out for promotion and stimulation of collaboration between municipalities, which might serve as a model to improve the system of financial support provision to CSOs in smaller municipalities, and the system of participation of youth in formulation of public policies on the local level. Finally, one of roundtable participants shared his experiences of participation in the current procedure for selection of youth council members for the City of Zagreb, which also served as an introduction to presentation by Mr. Nikola Buković.

“ An excellent roundtable! I am very happy that we covered the topic of youth councils, because I am very interested in this theme. I heard a lot of very useful information and promo materials were very useful too. I would be very happy if a magic formula could be found for inclusion of youth. If the roundtable lasted even longer, it would not have been bad at all.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

In introductory part of his presentation, Mr. Buković reminded participants that youth councils are advisory bodies of representative bodies of local and regional self-government units, which are selected through public calls for a mandate of two years. Subsequently, in parallel to implementation of LOTUS 2011 survey, GONG and CYN wished to explore, by means of comparison of results of the two surveys, what is the support that local and regional self-government units provide to youth councils, what is the influence of youth councils to decision making processes and whether there is a difference in assessments by youth council members and employees of local and regional self-government units concerning daily collaboration between youth councils and these units. As it were, it was important for the survey that the questionnaires for youth councils complete the council members themselves, and this request was clearly indicated in the questionnaire. However, during analysis of submitted materials and through comments submitted within questionnaires GONG and CYN found that large majority of questionnaires were not filled in by youth council members, but by representatives of cities and municipalities. As Mr. Buković pointed out, this finding provided the answer to the question why questionnaire was completed by only 28 local self-government units (27 cities and just one municipality, out of the total 121 cities and 368 municipalities that comprised survey sample): it seems that as a rule the questionnaire never even made it to youth council members.

“ The moderator and the panellists were very good, everyone had the chance to speak their mind and give suggestions, without straying from the main subject. The roundtable ended with very good recommendations.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant

Still, Mr. Buković offered three possible explanations for such results: either representatives of cities and municipalities, who received the materials, failed to get into contact with youth council members or they failed to motivate youth council members

to complete questionnaires, or they concluded that it is acceptable that they fill in questionnaires instead of youth council members. Irrespective of which explanation or even a combination of explanations one might select, the conclusions indicate possible inadequate collaboration between councils and municipalities/cities, (actual) non-activity of youth councils and possible basic disrespect of the autonomy of council's work by local and regional self-government units.

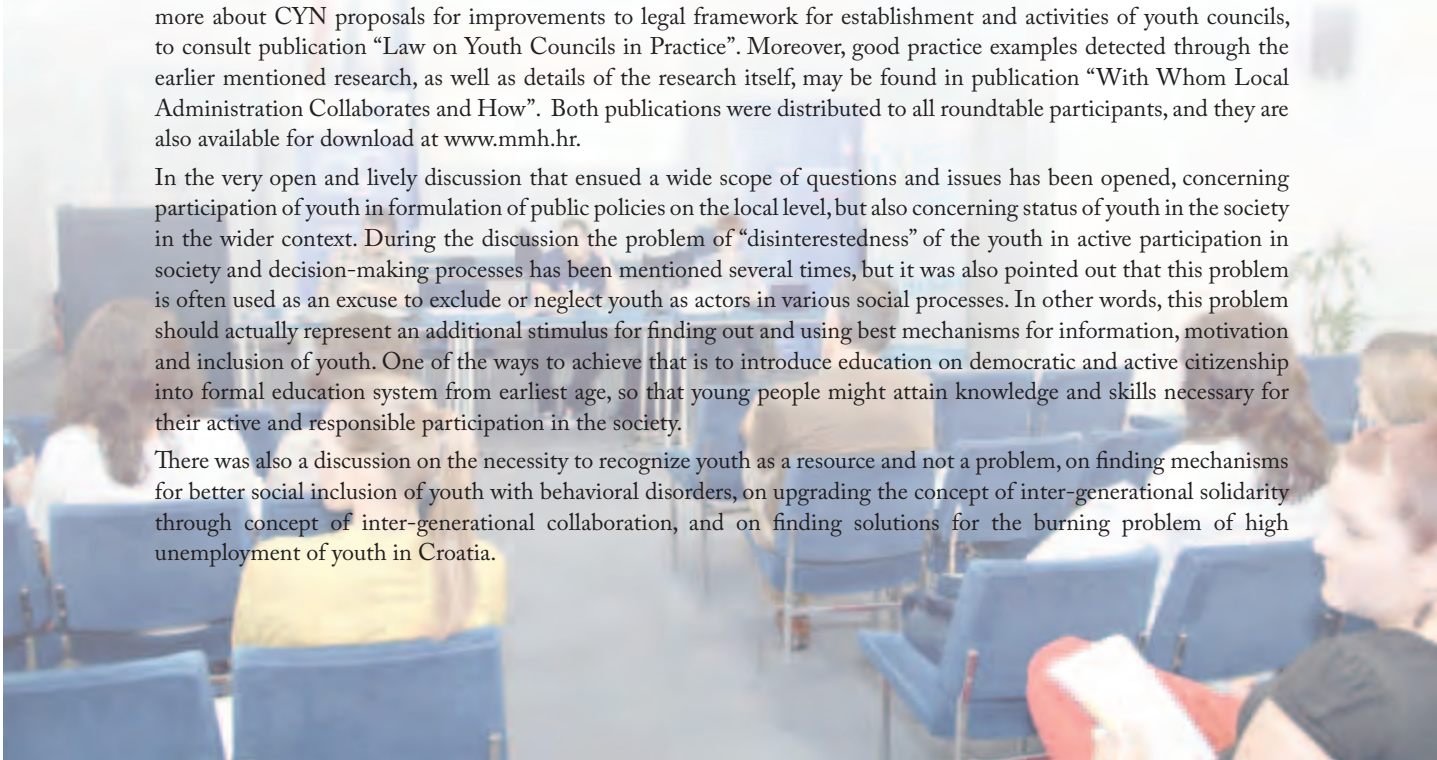
Continuing with his presentation, Mr. Buković emphasized the importance of using the rights and possibilities of youth councils to participate in decision-making processes as one of their basic functions. This refers in particular to communication between youth council members and representatives of cities or municipalities through their separate meetings or through participation of local and regional self-government representatives in sessions of the youth councils. Also, a particularly important issue refers to whether and to what extent do youth council members actually use their right and possibility to participate in sessions of representative bodies of local and regional self-government units and, even more importantly, their right to influence agendas for these sessions. Only 12 youth councils (or 42.9%) proposed items in agendas for sessions of representative bodies within the last one-year period, whereas 16 youth councils (57.1%) never used this possibility. Even though proposed agenda items most often concerned the work of the council itself (adoption of work program and discussion on its implementation), there were also other proposals that referred to other relevant issues, such as regulation of city traffic, increase in scholarship amounts and issues of accommodation for the

youth. Finally, one of the positive findings of this survey indicates relatively frequent participation of youth council members in other advisory and working bodies of local and regional self-government bodies, but also a problematic fact that only one case had been recorded when a member of youth council participated in the work of a body in charge of preparation of city program for youth.

In conclusion of his presentation Mr. Buković commented on the Law on Youth Councils. It was pointed out that this institutional mechanism should be given a real chance to prove whether it is, and to what extent it might be efficient, irrespective of many critical comments received and proposals that CYN had and provided in reference to the text of the Law and its implementation in practice. Examples of good practice of the work of youth councils, though rare, still exist and indicate that it is possible to act well, especially when there is an enabling environment and right people in right places. CYN especially insists on responsibility of the central state administration for successful implementation of this model of youth participation in formulation of public policies on the local level, through provision of additional (technical, administrative and also financial) support for their functioning. The system for selection of youth council members still represents particular challenge, as there is a wide scope of different practices that are implemented. Therefore, CYN proposes that key stakeholders (Ministry of Social Policies and Youth, Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, local and regional self-government units and CYN) work together, so that these practices might be harmonized by preparing guidelines on how public calls should look like, how elections for youth council members on the local level should be implemented. In closing, Mr. Buković invited all participants wishing to learn more about CYN proposals for improvements to legal framework for establishment and activities of youth councils, to consult publication “Law on Youth Councils in Practice”. Moreover, good practice examples detected through the earlier mentioned research, as well as details of the research itself, may be found in publication “With Whom Local Administration Collaborates and How”. Both publications were distributed to all roundtable participants, and they are also available for download at www.mmh.hr.

In the very open and lively discussion that ensued a wide scope of questions and issues has been opened, concerning participation of youth in formulation of public policies on the local level, but also concerning status of youth in the society in the wider context. During the discussion the problem of “disinterestedness” of the youth in active participation in society and decision-making processes has been mentioned several times, but it was also pointed out that this problem is often used as an excuse to exclude or neglect youth as actors in various social processes. In other words, this problem should actually represent an additional stimulus for finding out and using best mechanisms for information, motivation and inclusion of youth. One of the ways to achieve that is to introduce education on democratic and active citizenship into formal education system from earliest age, so that young people might attain knowledge and skills necessary for their active and responsible participation in the society.

There was also a discussion on the necessity to recognize youth as a resource and not a problem, on finding mechanisms for better social inclusion of youth with behavioral disorders, on upgrading the concept of inter-generational solidarity through concept of inter-generational collaboration, and on finding solutions for the burning problem of high unemployment of youth in Croatia.



Date and time:

15 June 2012,
09:30 – 12:00

Venue:

Selska cesta 112c,
Zagreb

Host organisation:

Human Rights House

Moderator:

Nikša Alfirević,
Innovation Institute

Panelists:

Ljubo Manojlović, SDF;
Milana Romić, Human
Rights House; Sanja
Sarnavka, B.a.B.e.

Report by:

Nikša Alfirević,
Innovation Institute

Roundtable II: “Models for efficient advocacy and lobbying for positive social change”

At the start of the roundtable discussion, representatives of the Platform 112 – For Croatia of the Rule of Law, Mr. Ljubo Manojlović (Serbian Democratic Forum), Ms. Milana Romić (Human Rights House Zagreb) and Ms. Sanja Sarnavka (B.a.B.e.), made a short presentation on the history and work of this CSO network and provided examples of good practices and lobbying experiences. The panelists described the process by which 19 CSOs formed the network Platform 112, and presented program areas, within which the network implements its public advocacy activities (quality of democracy, the fight against corruption and for public interest, equality and human dignity, the heritage of the war, facing the past and rebuilding of peace and building of stable and democratic government institutions that provides equal access to justice for everyone). It was also pointed out that Platform 112 provided an impetus for the Government of the Republic of Croatia to make several steps forward in the area of the network's activity, by preparing and presenting reports on the readiness of the Republic of Croatia to close Chapter 23 in negotiating accession to the EU. Amendments have been made to the laws and bylaws on free legal help, the controversial Law on Golf Courses, concerning compensation for damaged property of returnees and public announcements of positions and reports on the negotiations with the EU.

The panelists also presented their activities aimed at various target groups – the Government of the Republic of Croatia, National Committee for Monitoring the Accession Negotiations of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, as well as political parties, EU institutions and the Croatian media.

The following factors have been pointed out as success factors in the public advocacy process:

- External factors, which include the importance of advocacy issues for the political elite, as well as the openness of EU institutions for the opinions of CSOs, and
- Internal factors, which relate to the reputation and credibility of organisations – network members (within the civil sector, as well as within political and wider public), trust and co-operation within the network, good understanding of relevant issues, ability to quickly and collaboratively gather and analyze information to create reports and public statements, well developed contacts with citizens, but also experience and good contacts with representatives of Croatian media.

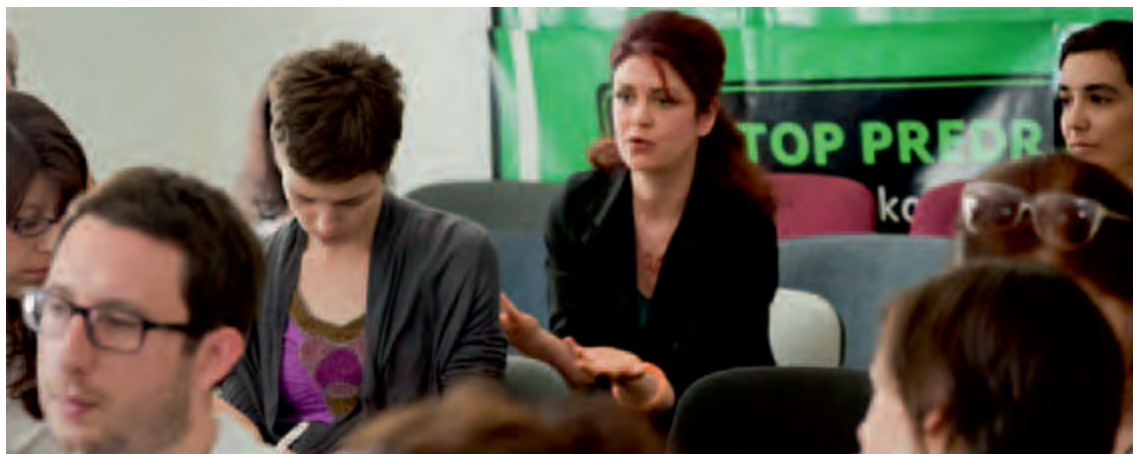
The panelists specifically highlighted Platform 112 engagement in ensuring free legal help, as one of

the key elements of securing a rule of law in the Republic of Croatia and they expressed their belief that the current legal and implementation solutions in the area of free legal help are still inadequate for most citizens, who truly need it. Likewise, the panelists also feel that the work of organisations and CSO networks in the area of public advocacy still represents one of the key factors in protection of human rights in the Republic of Croatia. At the same time, the overarching attitude is that all the necessary reforms have still not been done and that there is a string of areas in which the state still isn't truly effective in protecting rights guaranteed through relevant laws, which are not being properly enforced as it is.

Specific problem areas pointed out by the panelists relate to media coverage and the sustainability of advocacy initiatives in Croatian civil society. At the same time, as far as presenting the work of advocacy CSOs and their networks in the media is concerned, a general lack of interest and a sensationalistic approach of "profit" media was noted, as well as, in certain cases, problems related to manipulative reporting. Thus, the problem of visibility of such CSOs arises, even though the work done by Platform 112 as CSO network has shown a high level of maturity of the involved CSOs. This is also visible in the constant rise in the number of member organisations, as well as organisations supporting this network.

The problem of long-term sustainability, on the other hand, relates to the lack of formal sources of funding for the work of the CSO networks, which is why financing is done "ad hoc", most often from project funds of bigger network CSO members. Besides, unsystematic funding creates also the problem of regional representation of CSOs, considering that organisations outside of Zagreb mostly lack funds to participate in the meetings with representatives of state institutions, or take part in cooperation with larger organisations stationed in the capital.

After the panelists' presentations, a moderated discussion ensued, within which several key problems and problem



areas were identified. Representatives of CSOs pointed out the passivity of the citizens and the low level of social activism or involvement in the work done by civil society. Some of the reasons for this state might be a low sensitivity of citizens towards these issues, but also a predominant belief that positive social changes cannot be initiated in Croatia. This can partly be ascribed to the way media report on the social and political issues, especially as concerns civil society. Also, representatives of organisations dealing with psychological and other forms of counseling pointed to numerous personal problems citizens deal with, the widespread issue of depression and addiction, as well as other factors that make an active participation in political and other issues difficult. Thus, the question is raised on how to mobilize citizens for activities and themes handled by CSOs in the future. Representatives of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs emphasized the readiness of state institutions to resolve these issues, mainly through education of civil servants and implementation of civil studies into education system.

Considering the problem of civil education, representatives of CSOs present at the roundtable are convinced that its introduction into formal education system will not automatically solve the aforementioned problems, which can be supported with bad experiences of some other EU member states, where this subject was inadequately implemented. Representatives of the Homeland War Veterans organisations present at the Roundtable showed particular interest in realization of this program, as they already have considerable experience in this area. Within discussion, the Action Plan for the Education on Sustainable Development was highlighted as an example of good practice in this area, even though it was not fully implemented.

Thus, in terms of visibility as much as sustainability, the key issue remains realization of partnership between CSOs and political parties, as well as activities of informal education, which should help in changing the attitudes and perceptions of the public. However, it has been established that there are forms of short-term support for the increase of visibility and representation in media - not just for CSOs working in public advocacy area, but for the civil society as a whole. This can be achieved by stimulating non-profit media, as formulated in conclusions of the Roundtable.

Further discussion, in which representatives of CSOs and TACSO Croatia Office took part, emphasized the positive role of Platform 112 in Croatian civil society and its successful work. As a recommendation for a better transfer of



knowledge and experiences to other CSOs in the region, further strategic consideration of the work done by this network, its regional and local expansion and mobilization of citizens were pointed out. To facilitate easier inclusion of new organisations into the network, it would be useful to publish in a very visible way the “minimal” program elements with which an organisation needs to comply in order to become a member of the Platform.

The participants agreed on the following conclusions of the Roundtable:

- It is necessary to establish a fund for financial assistance to ad-hoc CSO initiatives, irrespective of whether they cover public advocacy or some other activity, considering that that the project/program form of financing is not appropriate for the aforementioned purpose. Namely, social needs to which CSOs respond with their ad-hoc initiatives develop in a very dynamic way and cannot be easily predicted within the framework of “classic” project and program planning.
- It would be necessary to also secure institutional support for individual organisations and CSO networks working in the area of public advocacy.
- Representatives of organisations providing services of personal and family counseling expressed a need to recognize the final result of the counseling process (in the sense of increased wellbeing of the client) as a relevant criterion in calls for grants from public sources.
- A need was also listed for increased visibility of calls for grants to CSOs from public sources, which would entail systematic publishing of relevant information in various media, including Croatian Radio Television as a public service. This also refers to publishing of other forms of information relevant for successful functioning of CSOs.
- To ensure the highest possible visibility of advocacy CSOs and their networks, as well as civil society as a whole, the participants emphasised the need to open up a string of financing sources for non-profit media, whereby it was particularly emphasised that financing of non-profit media should become a strategic priority of the Electronic Media Diversity and Pluralism Incentive Fund.
- The participants singled out the importance of openness of the process and inclusion of as many stakeholders as possible in the development and implementation of the program of civil education. It is further thought that, no matter how this issue may be “covered” within the framework of formal education, it is still necessary to recognize and encourage non-formal programs of civil education. Participants recognized as a special problem the incomplete or late execution of appropriate educational themes and activities, as is currently the case with the Action Plan for Education on Sustainable Development.
- An appeal is made for amendments to the Law on Free Legal Assistance, which would secure a simple, complete and transparent implementation of free legal assistance, as a part of crucial human right – the access to justice.

Date and time:

15 June 2012,
09:30 – 12:00

Venue:

Museum Mimara,
Rooseveltovo trg 5,
Zagreb

Host organisations:

National Foundation
for Civil Society Deve-
lopment, Government
Office for Cooperation
with NGOs

Moderators:

Gordana Forčić,
SMART; Zvijezdana
Schulz-Vugrin, SMART

Panelists:

Ana Krvarić, Mi-
nistry of Regional
Development and EU
Funds; Luka Rajčić,
Ministry of Labour and
Pension System; Mir-
jana Radovan, Ministry
of Social Policy and
Youth; Mirna Štajdu-
har, Ministry of Edu-
cation, Science and
Sports; Stela Fišer
Marković, Government
Office for Cooperation
with NGOs; Zrinka
Kelava, Croatian Bank
for Reconstruction
and Development;
Jasna Marić Krajačić,
Croatian Postal Bank

Report by:

Gordana Forčić,
SMART

Roundtable III: “New Financial Opportunities for CSOs in the Republic of Croatia”

This roundtable brought together 120 participants: 100 representatives of CSOs, 16 representatives of various state administration bodies and local self-administration bodies, one representative of a public institution and two representatives of private organisations.

Main objective of the Roundtable was to discuss financial opportunities for CSOs through presentations of new models of financing of CSO activities and development of active citizenship and philanthropy during the first part of the Roundtable, and to introduce the proposal by the state administration bodies in charge of utilization of Structural Funds in period 2014 – 2020, during the second part of the Roundtable.

One of important pre-conditions for sustainable functioning and implementation of CSO programs and projects is continuous financing. CSOs are constantly in search of new possibilities that will contribute to their financial sustainability. Also, funds available through EU Structural Funds represent significant opportunity that might contribute to financial sustainability of CSOs. The importance of securing EU funding is also visible in the fact that within draft National Strategy for Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2012 – 2016, within strategic area IV. Activities and further development of civil society within international context, a measure has been defined entitled “Actively involve CSO representatives in programming and preparation for absorption of EU structural instruments”.

The first part of the Roundtable focused on introduction of a new CSO financing opportunity via internet portal www.zadobrobit.hr.

Wishing to emphasize the need for actions for the benefit of individuals within community, the society as a whole and the planet on which we live, National Foundation for Civil Society Development prompted initiation and development of internet portal www.zadobrobit.hr, as a place and starting point for all considerations and especially actions in the Republic of Croatia that have public, i.e. common good and civil society development as their basis. This is a contribution to development of new models offering a shift from the present dominant focus on realization of profit towards acting for the wellbeing and public, common good.

The portal www.zadobrobit.hr also offers philanthropic package GIVENGAIN with globally proven internet donating service provider GivenGain Foundation, and to non-profit organisations a possibility to access and act in virtual environment. Thus, what was up to recently just an idea – to enable

willing individuals to simply and safely donate and support various organisations and their goals through intuitive internet platform – now became reality that simultaneously offers networking of individuals through donations, but also activism of engaged individuals. It is enough for a non-profit organisation to register at www.zadobrobit.hr via GIVENGAIN menu and through it to make a step forward using creative resources at its disposal and entirely new tools for enhancement of self-financing and self-sustainability. This opportunity offers to every CSO – beneficiary of institutional support of the National Foundation – to register and then present itself, using Givengain platform, in order to publish information on its projects to the entire virtual community, to activate and animate like-minded persons in order to promote and enhance its goals. As proven by GivenGain platform for over 10 years and across the globe, with little own engagement and lot of creative thinking CSOs can achieve extraordinary results and realize support for their ideas and development through inclusion of wider number of users. So that CSOs may master this transition into the new self-financing area as successfully as possible, the National Foundation created a program of financial support for CSOs that were evaluated and subsequently qualified, whereby National Foundation covers the costs of monthly fees for specific subscription models and the costs of subscription fees for Givengain platform. Possibility to use Givengain platform will open for all CSOs in 2013, after the initial pilot period, during which it was open just for CSO beneficiaries of National Foundation institutional support. Through its activities of forecast and preparation for social changes, National Foundation provides with this initiative

new, unlimited possibilities of self-financing for CSOs, as well as possibilities for networking between people acting for the benefit of individuals and communities through activities for common, public good.

Presentation of new financing possibilities for CSOs through the use of internet portal www.zadobrobit.hr created much interest amongst participants. During the discussion participants repeatedly pointed out that they see presented portal as potentially new source of financing that could contribute to financial sustainability of organisations. Through discussion participants received answers to questions related to the profile of organisations that may use this internet portal, terms and conditions of use, methods for the use of the portal, functioning of the system for check up of organisations using the portal, fundraising methods and policies concerning amounts raised, mechanisms and approaches for organisations to become involved in management of campaigns, key success factors that organisations need to keep in mind in order to achieve best results from this type of fundraising, transparency of donor profile and the amount of raised funds, methods and processes for reporting and monitoring concerning use of raised funds, the role of National Foundation for Civil Society Development.

“ Themes were just right and very hot – financial opportunities. But, we have also heard information on many limitations, which may act as a demotivator, e.g. the possibility to raise funds globally through this new collaboration between National Foundation and the Swiss organisations includes monthly payment for system services use.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

Second part of the Roundtable focused on presentations by state administration bodies on the use of structural funds during period 2014 - 2020.

Introductory presentations were given by:

Ms. Ana Krvarić, Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds stipulated European Social Fund (ESF), Rural Development Fund and Cohesion Fund as potentially interesting for CSOs. Ms. Krvarić also provided brief review of activities related to European Social Fund, whereby she emphasized the start of programming in April this year in collaboration with all Ministries. The Ministry expects that priorities for ESF will be defined beginning of 2013. Operational implementation program related to ESF should be finalized at the start of 2014. It has been emphasized that CSOs have been included into the process through coordination by Government Office for Cooperation with

NGOs. Ms. Krvarić also mentioned that the forms, as well as procedures for application and granting of projects would remain similar to those currently in use. Forms for the financing period are currently being drafted, final procedures are expected beginning of 2013 and will be published on Internet pages of the

“ Excellently prepared, new insights into possibilities for CSO financing.

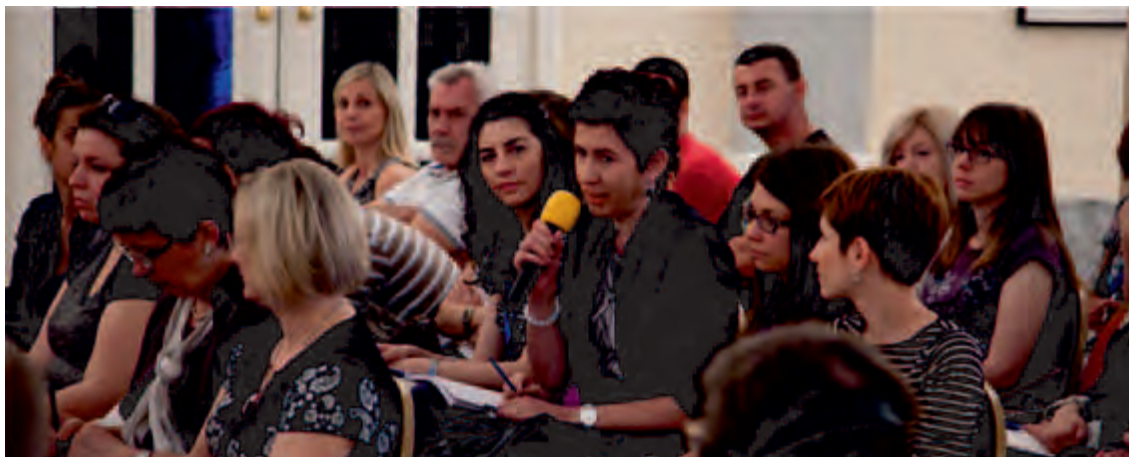
A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds.

Mr. Luka Rajčić, Ministry of Labour and Pension System presented strategic documents for structural funds and emphasized that strategies for next period are being completed. No big differences are expected in comparison to current IPA funds. The key change concerns extension of beneficiary groups and activities. The focus within ESF will be on support to employment, social inclusion and education.

Ms. Mirjana Radovan, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth emphasized that during the current programming process the Ministry continues taking into account issues related to various socially excluded groups, such as disabled persons and beneficiaries of social support. Calls for proposals within IPA were focused on mentioned socially excluded groups and to widening of the network of social services. Through the practice thus far they started with provision of support to social entrepreneurial initiatives/activities. Within ESF they expect calls for proposals that will be focused on social entrepreneurship and youth. In their work they collaborate closely with Croatian Employment Service. They are very open towards CSOs, high percentage of which are applicants in calls for proposals published by the MSPY. Ms. Radovan invited participants in the roundtable to give their suggestions and proposals concerning issues and priorities, which, in their opinion, should be represented through calls for proposals within ESF.

Ms. Mirna Štajduhar, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports pointed out that CSOs are frequent applicants in calls for proposals related to their Ministry, and that in the area of social inclusion there were seven awarded projects, whereby project leaders in three of them were CSOs. Within the upcoming period the Ministry plans calls for pro-



posals related to the Croatian Qualification Framework. The Ministry also expects that there will be a similar call published through IPA. Ms. Štajduhar believes that with development of Croatian Qualification Framework the role of CSOs will also grow. Moreover, it is expected that ESF funds will be seven times larger and that they will cover areas of social inclusion, education and life-long learning. It has also been emphasized that since the Ministry views CSOs as organisations with large experience, they often direct schools to develop collaboration and partnerships with CSOs.

Ms. Stela Fišer Marković, Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs presented current activities of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs concerning programming for Structural Funds. The Office for Cooperation with NGOs is currently involved in implementation of IPA 1 component, but for CSOs there are also lot of opportunities in IPA Component 4 and ESF is also viewed as a new possibility for absorption of funds by CSOs in future. Office for Cooperation with NGOs will issue calls for proposals for CSOs, and it is encouraging that in its documents the EU particularly emphasized the role and importance of CSOs in Croatia. Within the Office they have already identified specific priorities, and they hope that these will be harmonized with EU priorities. In the course of priority planning they take care of currently existing shortcomings, the needs of smaller organisations and the needs for support in the area of social services provision. Furthermore, they also consider the possibility to issue a call for the area of social innovation. Moreover, they plan to secure specific funds through Structural funds, which would be directed, through regular calls for proposals, in part to the capacity building of CSOs providing social services.

Ms. Zrinka Kelava, Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development presented activities concerning IPA-related loans, she emphasized that they expanded their activities to all beneficiaries and that CSOs may also use loans in relation to implementation of IPA-funded projects. The loans are issued with repayment period of 15 years, grace

period of 3 years and interest of 3% (up to recently the interest was 4%). The lowest loan amount is 80,000.00 HRK, without the upper limit. Loan requests are submitted through business banks and there are 30 banks, which responded to their invite for collaboration.

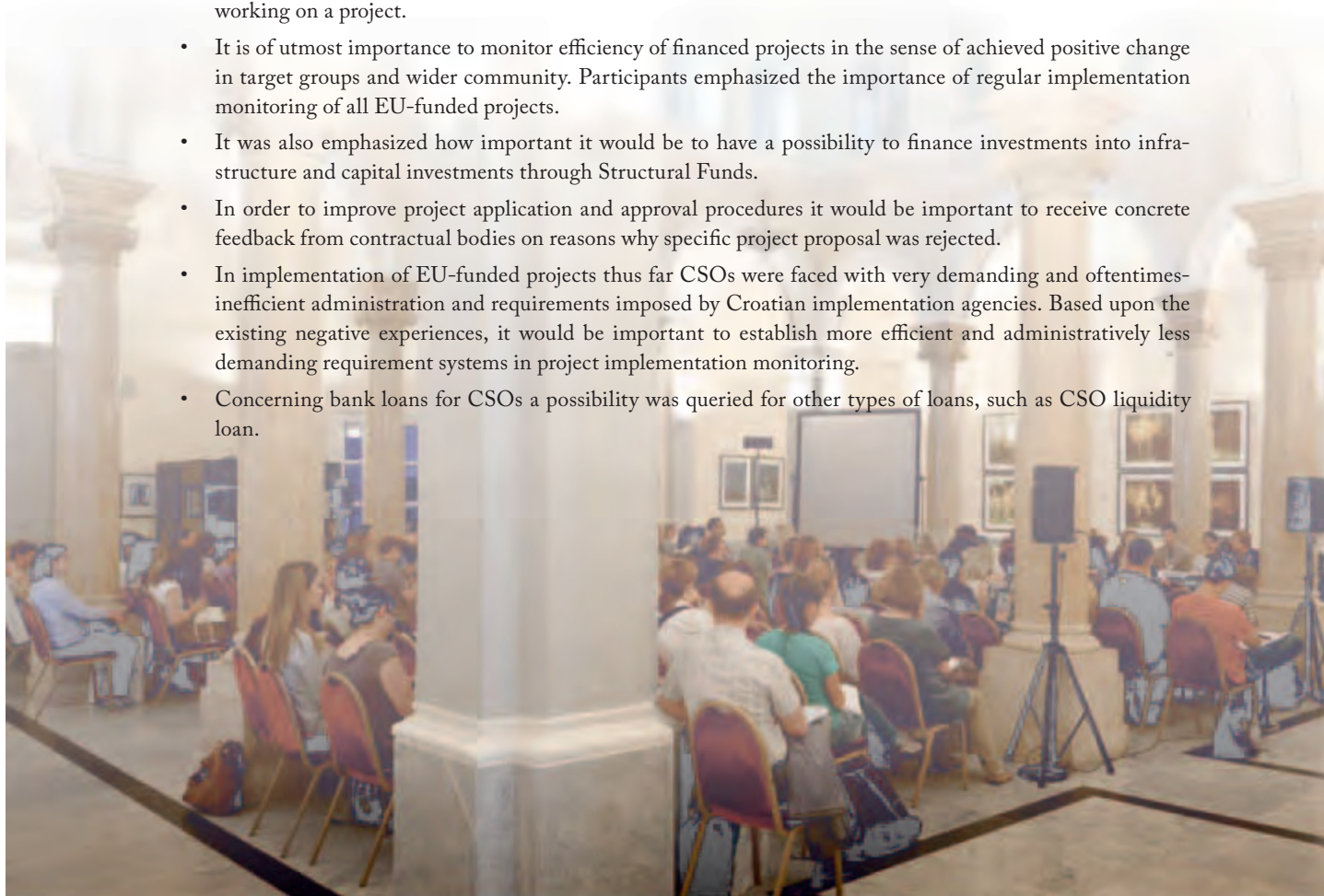
Ms. Jasna Marić Krajačić, Croatian Postal Bank presented their experiences and problems with functioning of EU Desk. Ms. Marić Krajačić believes that EU Desk also holds an educational function and that it provides information on EU funds and follows clients who apply to calls for proposals. They support cooperation between all three sectors. They work on projects since last four to six years, and two years ago they established a committee of six EU desks from different business banks in Croatia, which represents joint body aiming to explain to bank management the importance and possibilities that EU projects offer to banks. CPB is interested in profitable projects. Ms. Marić Krajačić emphasized the importance of timely submission of loan request, so that the funds may be approved in time. CSOs are welcome clients for CPB and in their experience CSOs are loyal clients with secure payment operations. Key challenge in granting a loan to CSO is the possibility of strong security instrument. CPB has an excellent collaboration with Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

All representatives from Ministries and Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs announced that new calls for proposals might be expected beginning of 2013.



Participants in the roundtable gave the following proposals for quality programming of Structural Funds that will ensure their maximum efficiency:

- Considering the importance to ensure continuous organisational capacities of CSOs (at the level of CSO professional competence and organisational development) it has been proposed to provide funds directed at CSO capacity building.
- It was emphasized how important it is to regularly inform CSOs on the financing possibilities from Structural Funds, as well as to continue with the practice of information and training workshops for potential applicants.
- Within the upcoming period for absorption of funding from Structural Funds it is important to consider higher flexibility in implementation concerning work hours and payments of employees of public institutions working on a project.
- It is of utmost importance to monitor efficiency of financed projects in the sense of achieved positive change in target groups and wider community. Participants emphasized the importance of regular implementation monitoring of all EU-funded projects.
- It was also emphasized how important it would be to have a possibility to finance investments into infrastructure and capital investments through Structural Funds.
- In order to improve project application and approval procedures it would be important to receive concrete feedback from contractual bodies on reasons why specific project proposal was rejected.
- In implementation of EU-funded projects thus far CSOs were faced with very demanding and oftentimes-inefficient administration and requirements imposed by Croatian implementation agencies. Based upon the existing negative experiences, it would be important to establish more efficient and administratively less demanding requirement systems in project implementation monitoring.
- Concerning bank loans for CSOs a possibility was queried for other types of loans, such as CSO liquidity loan.



Date and time:

15 June 2012,
14:30 – 17:00

Venue:

Selska cesta 112c,
Zagreb

Host organisation:

Human Rights House

Moderator:

Nikša Alfirević,
Innovation Institute

Panelists:

Đordana Barbarić,
MoST; Dado Lelas,
MoST; Lada Šefer, O
La La

Report by:

Nikša Alfirević,
Innovation Institute

Roundtable IV: “Social Cohesion of Citizens and Youth in Fighting Poverty and Delinquency of Minors”

The Roundtable started with presentation of good practices by Split association “MoST”, which for the past 13 years, through its activities, supports building of social cohesion and solidarity in the local community. The speaker presented main groups of activities of this association concerning social services to homeless in the local community; promotion and organisation of volunteering activities of young people, as well as work with young persons with risk behaviour. The panellists emphasized that the issues related to poverty, and especially homelessness, have been a neglected area in social policies in Croatia for a long time, so that homelessness has not even been accepted as an actual social problem. This is also confirmed by the fact that certain social rights of persons without permanent residence have only been regulated in 2012, through amendments to the Law on Residence, whereby the existence of homeless people had finally been recognized, as well as realization of their social rights as provided by the Law on Social Care. It has also been revealed that realistic estimates of the current state in Croatia speak of the existence of more than 1000 homeless, who are currently being cared for by 11 shelters that have the capacity to care for approximately 300 beneficiaries. Majority of shelters have been established by and are actively managed by CSOs, amongst which Association MoST is the source of best practice, so that their experiences acquired through social work in their community, are being replicated in other communities in Croatia.

The panellists expressed that they see stimulation of activism and volunteering amongst local community members and especially the youth, as one of responses to the complex social situation in local communities in Croatia, as well as in the entire country. Within this context, they particularly pointed out the examples of activities of Association MoST and grass-roots civic initiatives that established good collaboration with the Association. Examples of good practices with potential for replication in other local communities include the action „A di si ti?“ (Where are you?) for collection of food and other products, as well as money for their purchase, mostly within schools, but also during public events – such as flea-market of donated articles. Beneficiaries of this action are 250 extremely socially endangered families within local community. Establishment of social supermarket represents continuation of this action. With assistance from a wide scope of donors from all sectors in the local community the supermarket continually provides new products for an extended group of beneficiaries. Moreover, the emergence of independent civic initiatives has also been pointed out. These initiatives handle local “burning issues” of which institutions in charge of social care are not even sufficiently aware. Initiative O La La has been exemplified as best practice, as it used the opportunities of

communication via social networks (Facebook) and in collaboration with Association MoST, as organizer of social services and volunteer work, it prompted citizens to help the homeless – beneficiaries of MoST shelter – through daily delivery of meals in 2012. Another example of organisation of volunteer activities focused on stimulation of solidarity and social cohesion - and outside of the area of volunteering of youth – concerns volunteer engagement of certain number of dentists in Split, who provide free dental care services to beneficiaries of MoST. The panellists also pointed out examples of self-organisation of citizens during snowstorm in Split, whereby it was proven that citizens functioned better than completely blocked local institutions, by using own resources for provision of mutual assistance; and mobile telephones and social networks for communication.

In the area of work with youth, MoST relies on peer-to-peer volunteering

assistance concept, which may be considered as an important form of social innovation in prevention of behavioural disorders in youth. In this way the shortcomings of the program for prevention of violence and social services to the youth within formal education systems and social care are compensated. In this segment of Association MoST activities the emphasis is put on autonomy of youth in preparing social activities and actions, whereby MoST tries to position itself as a centre for education and promotion of volunteering and innovation (within actions such as „Sajam ideja“/“Ideas Fair” for youth, „Udarac“/“Hit”, etc.).

Moderated discussion followed after panellists’ presentations, identifying factors that contribute to engagement of citizens, especially youth, within local communities in Croatia. Amongst them the following factors were particularly emphasized:

- Authenticity and continuity of CSO activities,
- Visibility of activities and results within local community,
- “Open door” policy towards all media, and
- Collaboration with local institutions that is carried out through information and sort of “tutoring” of the local administration and self-administration officials and other relevant institutions, to which solutions to social problems in the local community need to be offered.

Discussion participants pointed out the need for visibility in the media through emphasis on activities concerning beneficiaries instead of focusing on funds that CSOs require for their activities and issues related to financing of CSOs. In this view it has also been established that state and local institutions of all types (administration, social welfare...) completely lack understanding of the issues of poverty, and especially homelessness, and that there exists the need for activism, volunteerism and social innovation by citizens.

“ Presenters were splendid; they shared many great ideas, experiences and good practices.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

The discussion also covered the issues concerning lack of solidarity in the society as a whole, which also creates the reasons for emergence of homelessness as relatively new, but also very complex and rather frequent social problem. Based upon presented examples of work with beneficiaries - the homeless - by the participants and the panellists alike, it has been found that there is a need for synergy in actions of “official institutions” and CSOs in order to be able to solve at all the multiple problems which homeless persons face simultaneously: the health, psychological issues, social issues, issues related to reintegration, etc.

Moreover, there was also the discussion on issues concerning stimulation of activism and volunteerism in local communities, especially amongst youth, with the purpose to ensure solidarity and social cohesion. It has been established that cynicism and other barriers to volunteering may be overcome by including volunteers in all phases of social services provision – from its planning to delivery. It has been pointed out that, in that way, two groups of positive effects may be accomplished. By including potential beneficiaries and volunteers that will provide social services into the process of planning, not only are the principles of participation respected, but it also ensures that maximally efficient services/activities/projects are conceived that are adjusted to the needs of the local community. Moreover, full inclusion of volunteers into the use of donated funds for service provision, i.e. delivery of donated products and services to beneficiaries, increases the visibility and citizens’ trust in CSOs and encourages them to continuous engagement and volunteer work.

Participants agreed on the following conclusions of the Roundtable:

- It has been pointed out that it is necessary to recognize inclusion of volunteers and local communities into all aspects of CSOs activities, as an important factor for recognition of successfulness of their work and criteria in tenders for grants from public sources. Likewise, it is emphasised that there is a need to recognize, monitor and evaluate social innovation resulting from CSO activities within this context.
- Since there is a general trend towards “bureaucratisation” of evaluation processes in the civil society and lack of authentic communication with donors, participants noted the importance of evaluation of CSOs activities based on site visits to organisation and beneficiaries, as well as systematic monitoring of achieved results.
- Collaboration between CSOs and all levels of education institutions has particularly been emphasized, and special support was given to introduction of educational themes directed at acquisition of knowledge, stances and values focused on volunteering. Hereby it is established that it is necessary to systematically promote networking and two-way communication between education institutions and CSOs, especially in the area of information on volunteering programs and possibilities for volunteering.



Date and time:

15 June 2012,
14:30 – 17:00

Venue:

Tribine Grada Zagreba

Host organisation:

Government Office
for Cooperation with
NGOs

Moderators:

Igor Vidačak,
GofCNGOs; Gordana
Forčić, SMART

Panelists:

Danijel Škugor, State
Property Management
Agency; Toni Vidan,
Green Action; Mirjana
Rimanić, Pogon

Report by:

Gordana Forčić,
SMART

Roundtable V: “Criteria for Allocation of State and City Owned Office/Work Spaces to CSOs”

There were 64 persons participating at this roundtable: 50 representatives of CSOs and 17 representatives of various state and local administration bodies (the Office of the City of Zagreb, the City of Rijeka, as well as the State Property Management Agency and the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs).

The aim of the roundtable was to discuss the criteria for the allocation of state and city owned office/work spaces to CSOs for the execution of their programs and projects for common good, as well as to initiate dialogue with the interested public about this question, which has tremendous influence on the sustainability of the work done by NGOs and other CSOs in the Republic of Croatia.

Office space is one of the main factors in CSO sustainability. According to the results of the study “Assessment of CSO development status in the Republic of Croatia” done by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in the second half of 2011 on a sample of 651 CSOs (253 being from Zagreb) it is clear that a half of the sample carries out their activities from a donated office space, which was given to them rent-free, while slightly less than a third of them rents the office space. About 14,8% of CSOs do not have an office space in which they could perform their activities, whereas 7,6% owns their own office space. CSOs from Zagreb and its surrounding area rent their office space more often than CSOs from other regions and it is less often that they receive donated office space than CSOs in other regions. The importance of securing office/work space for CSO activities is also apparent from the fact that within the draft National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development from 2012 to 2016, within Strategic Area 1: Institutional Framework for the Support of Civil Society Development a measure was defined “Establish a transparent procedure for the allocation of state-owned office/work spaces for CSO perusal for the purpose of carrying out programs and projects in the interest of the common good”.

During the introductory part of the roundtable, presentations were given by Mr. Igor Vidačak, Director of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Mr. Danijel Škugor, Secretary of the State Property Management Agency. Moreover, the roundtable also featured examples of good practice of successful public-civil partnerships in using city and state-owned office/work spaces: Mr. Toni Vidan, manager of the project “Solar Academy for South Eastern Europe – Šolta” by Zelena akcija and Ms. Mirjana Rimanić, program coordinator of “Pogon - Zagreb Centre for Independent Culture and Youth”.

In his introductory presentation Mr. Igor Vidačak pointed out two main approaches for allocation of public property office space for CSO activities, as well as their advantages and shortcomings:

- Expression of interest by CSOs to the relevant bodies – preparation of a list based on the established criteria.
- Open call – office space is assigned to CSOs based on the established list of available property planned to be assigned and clear criteria.

Mr. Danijel Škugor, secretary of the State Property Management Agency presented the current status as concerns allocation of office/work spaces to CSOs. Currently there are over 120 office spaces owned by the Republic of Croatia, which are being used by CSOs for their activities. Mr. Škugor pointed out several key challenges related to allocation of office spaces to CSOs: lack of clearly defined criteria for allocation of office space, lack of a clear list of the existing office spaces owned by the Republic of Croatia, which might be assigned to CSOs, non-existence of a register of office spaces that are used by CSOs and which are the property of the Republic of Croatia, and illegal use of office spaces by CSOs, which either inherited the space from previous owners (e.g. the City of Zagreb) or entered into it by force. At the same time, a large number of state-owned spaces are in poor condition and require large investments to make them functional as office/work spaces. Mr. Škugor announced that state-level criteria concerning allocation of office spaces should be adopted by September 2012.

Mr. Toni Vidan, manager of the project “Solar Academy for South Eastern Europe – Šolta” by Zelena akcija, briefly presented the Solar Academy Project. This project represents a unique example of how an abandoned and devastated military facility can, through volunteer work, be transformed into an internationally recognized educational centre for environmental issues, becoming an attractive spot for young people who

“ I believe that it was necessary to organize a roundtable such as this one; it was very useful and interesting. It is also crucial to include us, as CSO representatives, into these processes. I hope that the City will take this discussion seriously and that it will take the problems that we pointed out into consideration. Also, respect to state institutions for including CSOs into this – I hope they will really listen to what we have said.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant

want to learn more about environment protection and green technologies. The facility in which Solar Academy is implemented is the property of the Republic of Croatia and has been assigned to Zelena akcija for the duration of 10 years. The ten-year period expires this year and they plan to request an extension of the contract for the use of the facility.

Ms. Mirjana Rimanić, presented Pogon – Zagreb Centre for Independent Culture and Youth, which is a hybrid cultural institution, founded on a new model of civil-public partnership. The founders of Pogon are CSO Alliance Operation Zagreb and the City of Zagreb. The mission of Pogon is to establish an open local centre for the development of independent contemporary culture and art and the active involvement of youth in cultural and social life. The main challenges in managing the assigned space concern the lack of financial resources for further equipping and decorating of the space, so that it might become fully functional. Furthermore, during program implementation it became obvious



that the need for space of CSOs working in the area of independent cultural scene has still not been fully met, referring primarily to the lack of office space for these organisations.

The discussion resulted in the following suggestions/conclusions:

- It is crucial that the Government office for Cooperation with NGOs and State Property Management Agency closely and continuously cooperate in the interest of the most effective and transparent process of adoption of criteria for allocation of office/work spaces. It is also necessary to organize public consultations on the prepared proposal for the criteria.
- It is important to take into consideration the pros and cons of both approaches, which were presented at the roundtable, when making the decision on the most appropriate method for allocation of office spaces to CSOs.
- When defining criteria for allocation of office spaces, it would be important to consider the following aspects and features of CSO activities: the profile of the beneficiaries with which CSO is working, references and organisational capacity of CSO, number of CSO members, joint perusal of space by several CSOs, openness for the use of space for different target groups, etc.
- It is important to establish a practice of signing partnership contracts when implementing programs of the strategic interest, in cases when the state is not able to offer that specific type of service, and such programs should have a priority in allocation of state or local administration owned space.
- It would be necessary to consider establishing a separate fund at the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, which would have open calls on annual basis for renovation and fitting of devastated spaces used by more than one CSO in implementation of common good activities.
- A list should be prepared of all non-commercial spaces that were or currently are available to CSOs, and this list should be agreed on through the process of consultation with the public. Moreover, a revision of the existing perusal of spaces by CSOs should be carried out.
- In order to establish continuous process of revision of the system of space usage by CSOs, a system of “fast”

evaluation should be in place, through which a revision of the efficiency and quality of space usage would be carried out annually.

- Cost of utilities for the space owned by CSOs should not be the same as the amount payable by entrepreneurs.
- The contract on allocation of space should have a clear clause concerning a deadline by which the allocated space should be renovated/fitted, or by which a plan for renovation/fitting of the space should be submitted. With such deadlines in place the revision and monitoring of quality of the usage of space by CSOs should be made easier.
- In order to increase transparency of activities by the Committee for the Allocation of Office/Work Spaces to CSOs, it would be necessary to also include independent experts into the Committee's work, as well as CSO representatives, wherever possible, keeping in mind to avoid a conflict of interest of the CSO representatives, as well as the members of the Committee.
- It is recommended to extend the standard duration of leases to CSOs, keeping in mind that the CSO already using an office space should have a priority concerning re-allocation/ extension of contract. It would also be necessary to provide for short-term, medium-term and long-term leasing.
- Use as much as possible the advantages of the internet to increase transparency of the process of allocation of office/work space and definition of the criteria for the allocation of space.
- Invite all those interested in these issues to submit their comments and suggestions concerning criteria for allocation of state-owned office/work spaces to CSOs working in the area of common-good projects and programs.
- Organize a public debate on the subject of allocation of office/work spaces to CSOs by the City of Zagreb and make the existing criteria for allocation of office/work spaces to CSOs on the territory of the City of Zagreb more transparent.



Date and time:

June 2012,
14:30 – 17:00

Venue:

VERN, Importanne
Galerija, Iblerov trg 10,
Zagreb

Host organisations:

Association Slap and
NESsT Croatia

Moderator:

Igor Bajok, SMART

Panelists:

Sonja Vuković,
Association Slap;
Andreja Rosandić,
NESsT Croatia;
Zdenka Kovač,
Vocational Council
of Slovenian
Forum for Social
Entrepreneurship;
Vesna Lendić Kasalo,
GOfCNGOs; Ranko
Milić, Association
Healthy City

Report by:

Igor Bajok, SMART

Roundtable VI: “The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Development of Social Entrepreneurship in Croatia”

Objectives of this Roundtable were to discuss possible forms of support to CSOs active in social entrepreneurship development and encourage public dialogue on difficulties faced by CSOs in tax, legal and accounting system in regard to (non) available financial instruments and to review what kind of support would be needed. More than sixty representatives of CSOs, government bodies and other organisations took part in this Roundtable.

During introductory part of her presentation Sonja Vuković pointed out that for the discussion at the roundtable dedicated to the role of CSOs in development of social entrepreneurship it is important to immediately emphasise the fact that social entrepreneurship, i.e. eco-social economy represents a wide concept, and that social entrepreneurship is not something that just CSOs do or just CSOs should do. As it were, it is important to discuss whether CSOs should be in social entrepreneurship at all, and to what extent in comparison to other activities that they carry out for realization of their social purpose or mission for which they have been established. The answer, of course, is positive. Another question is: who would be doing social entrepreneurship and who would promote its concept in Croatia, if it were not for CSOs that have been doing it up to now. On the other hand, it is important to consider the issue of motivation for involvement in social entrepreneurship. And, to discuss about whether social entrepreneurship is a tool for achieving CSO sustainability or, possibly, something more than that: a new approach to economy, a new way of functioning, a new way for opening of jobs, new ways to manage and decide, new way of development, which altogether, basically, makes up the essence of social economy.

In Croatia there are several examples of good practice in social entrepreneurship, but it is important to emphasize that today they all, almost without exception, have problems due to framework, which is not sufficiently enabling and supportive for development of social entrepreneurship. Therefore it is important to think about and find solutions for three critical areas. The first one relates to legal, tax and accounting framework for economic activities of CSOs, i.e. for activities of social enterprises; the second one refers to the system of financial incentives and subsidies for social entrepreneurship; and third – the support system for social entrepreneurship projects. Ms. Vuković concluded that social economy is currently on the margins and now it is important to make progress, so that it may enter into the centre of development attention, which will certainly require both understanding and support from the highest management levels in the state about what possibilities and potential lie in social economy.

Andreja Rosandić presented NESsT – international non-profit organisation developing sustainable



social enterprises that solve critical social problems in countries with emerging markets. Since 1997 NESsT initiated and invested in over 100 social enterprises across the globe, using specific methodology aiming to provide support to development of strong and influential social enterprises from idea to adaptation, i.e. from testing organisational readiness for initiation of social entrepreneurship projects and assistance in preparation of feasibility studies and business plans to implementation and development of social enterprises. Ms. Rosandić also offered a definition of social enterprise used by NESsT: Social enterprise is such an enterprise, the business activities of which have been created to support and assist a social purpose in a financially sustainable way. Social enterprises should, in a narrow sense, ensure access to basic, financially acceptable services, fair employment, different markets, dignified living and, in a wider sense, access to products focused on society and environmental protection, and general human rights. Continuing her presentation, Ms. Rosandić emphasized the significance of differentiating between CSO self-financing activities and social entrepreneurship initiatives and projects. Self-financing represents just one of possible strategies that CSOs use to realize own income and increase effects of their mission, and – eventually – own (primarily) financial sustainability. On the other hand, social entrepreneurship implies deliberately planned entrepreneurship activity, created to find out innovative and sustainable solutions for social problems. In closing, Ms. Rosandić introduced four Croatian examples of good practice, that is, organisations to which NESsT provided assistance in developing social entrepreneurship activities. These are Association “Parents in Action – RODA”, PRONI Training Centre, The Little Green Ones and “Sunce” (Sunshine).

Ms. Zdenka Kovač, President of Vocational Council of Slovenian Forum for Social Entrepreneurship gave special

“ I have extraordinary impressions from this roundtable. The choice of panelists was excellent, the moderator was also very well chosen, and the discussion that ensued opened many themes and provided answers to some very significant issues. A very interesting and informative gathering.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

contribution to the Roundtable. In introductory part of her presentation Ms. Kovač commented on the significance of preparation and adoption of the Law on Social Entrepreneurship. The very process of preparation of the Law alone facilitated open and relevant public discussion on the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship that ensured deeper understanding and acceptance of this concept. Additionally, the importance of this Law lies in the fact that it clearly defines the term of social entrepreneurship, but also the two main types of social enterprises. Type A is focused on activities for common good, i.e. the wider social benefits, and type B is focused on stimulation of social involvement, employment and development of competences required for employment of socially excluded individuals and groups. Special Register of Social Enterprises has also been introduced and Government of Slovenia is expected to further harmonize other relevant regulations and legislation with the Law, and to adopt the necessary by-laws. An important role in this process is assigned to the Forum for Social Entrepreneurship, established in 2011 with more than 150 members. The main role of the Forum is to further stimulate and support development of social entrepreneurship in Slovenia. In closing, Ms. Kovač pointed out democratic governance and decision-making in social enterprises and developed collaboration between private profit, private non-profit and public sector as areas that need special attention in development of social entrepreneurship.

“ This roundtable was excellently organized. It was inspirational and very important for future od CSO development.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

Responding to numerous questions of Roundtable participants, Ms. Kovač explained individual aspects in development of social entrepreneurship in Slovenia, but she also pointed out

some of its main features. It is important to understand that there is a clear distinction between the so-called civil sector and the sector of social enterprises, even though it may be argued that organisations from both sectors work towards and contribute to the common good. Social enterprises represent the new and specific form of business activities based upon values, collaboration and democratic management, i.e. democratic and inclusive methods in decision-making, whereby results achieved by the social enterprise are depicted not only in financial indicators but also in indicators related to social effects attained by the enterprise. Another important area that should be considered is the method of profit distribution, whereby one should be open towards the possibility that part of the profit may be distributed to the owners or members of the social enterprise. Speaking of the competition between social enterprises and “classic” companies in the market Ms. Kovač mentioned that the emphasis should be put on collaboration between these two types of companies, and that the number of good practice examples for such collaboration continually increases, such as examples when “classic” companies assist social enterprises in their development and work. Finally, another important issue concerns monitoring of social enterprises’ activities, i.e. acquiring and losing the status of social enterprise, which is linked exactly to social enterprises’ reporting on realization of social objectives, the so-called social accounting and auditing.

In the second part of the Roundtable, Ms. Vesna Lendić Kasalo, Manager of the Department for Strategic Planning,

Programming and Information with Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, reflected on the fact that social entrepreneurship has had its place in the first National Strategy for Creation of Enabling Environment and her Office still wants and endeavours to have it represented in the new National Strategy, even though the process of preparation of the Strategy for Development of Social Entrepreneurship has already started. This is most of all because CSOs used to play an important part, as they still do, in promotion of social entrepreneurship in Croatia. Amendments to the Law on Associations and adoption of the Law on Accounting of Non-Profit Organisations should serve the purpose of creation of even better legal framework for CSOs' work and for further development of social entrepreneurship in Croatia, concluded Ms. Lendic Kasalo.

In addition to the Social Entrepreneurship Form (SEFOR) as an informal advocacy network of social entrepreneurs, and representatives of various organisations, institutions and bodies, Mr. Ranko Milić, before Association Healthy City (Split) introduced two more networks aiming to provide support for development of social entrepreneurship in Croatia and the region. Through several regional centres the Cluster for Eco-Social Development (CEDRA) should provide continuous support to establishment and activities of social enterprises in Croatia, through provision of consulting services, education and other forms of support (feasibility studies, investment studies, business plans, etc.). At the same time, the Eco-Social Economy Network for South and East Europe is being built on the international level, to carry out similar activities and services, including stimulation of networking, partnership and knowledge and best practices transfer.

This Roundtable offered a wide scope of answers to questions on importance for development of social entrepreneurship in Croatia, but it also opened numerous other interesting and important questions. Therefore, instead of conclusion here is one of these questions for further consideration of social entrepreneurship in some future discussions: Does social entrepreneurship represent a concept aiming to radically re-define economic (as well as political, social, etc.) relationships in the world or is it an attempt to correct as many as possible of the shortcomings of the existing and prevailing neo-liberal market system?



Date and time:

15 June 2012,
14:30 – 17:00

Venue:

Frankopanska 1,
Zagreb

Host organisation:

Green Action

Moderator:

Zvijezdana Schulz-
Vugrin, SMART

Panelists:

Mr. Bernard Ivčić,
Green Action; Željka
Leljak Gracin, Green
Action; Dražen Šimle-
ša, Association ZMAG

Report by:

Zvijezdana Schulz-
Vugrin, SMART

Roundtable VII: “Networking for Change”

24 people participated at this Roundtable: 17 representatives of CSOs, two representatives of the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs and Croatian Government, one representative of TACSO project, three panelists and moderator.

Objectives of the roundtable were to present successful networks and coalitions; and to emphasize the advantages and challenges of networking on a local, national, regional and European level.

The participants were also informed that preparation of the National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for the Civil Society Development from 2012 to 2016 is in its final stages of completion and that they could refer to proposals in the draft version during the discussion, as well as suggest amendments to the draft regarding the theme of the roundtable.

In order to stimulate the discussion, presentations were prepared and the first presentations were by Mr. Bernard Ivčić and Ms. Željka Leljak Gracin from Zelena akcija association and Mr. Dražen Šimleša from association ZMAG.

Mr. Bernard Ivčić presented different types of networks using the following examples:

- Zeleni forum, an informal network of about forty organisations
- Forum za prostor - an informal network dealing in protection of environment (cooperation among all sectors)
- Srđ je naš – a coalition of NGOs in Dubrovnik (in addition to Zelena akcija and Pravo na grad)
- Platform 112 – an informal network with 63 advocacy NGO members
- SEENET – thematic Western Balkan regional network formed as a result of an IPA project
- Friends of Earth – the biggest environmental protection network in the world (76 organisations)

Ms. Željka Leljak Gracin presented the environmental network “Justice and Environment” – a specific European network of environmental lawyers, whereby member organisations are associations that deal with environmental law as one aspect of their work. The network started out as an informal network but was registered in 2004. Today it features 13 member organisations all over Europe. The aim of this network is improving legislation concerning environmental rights and their implementation. The network uses different legal tools, which are exchanged between the member organisations.

Mr. Dražen Šimleša presented an example of networking through different forms based on the example





of the Balkan Network of Eco-villages, emphasizing that the point of networking is the need for cooperation and not wanting to stand alone. Balkan Network of Eco-villages started out as an informal network and the motive was creating an environmental education centre. The network was registered in 2005, and member organisations come from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. The network is also a member of the Global Ecovillages Network.

After the aforementioned presentations a discussion followed during which the following main challenges were identified:

- Sustaining of the network (financially and program wise),
- The problem of expenses related to attending meetings (especially when participating in European and international networks),
- An active participation of all member organisations and the understanding of the work of the umbrella organisations (if the network is registered formally),
- The problem when networks are created for financing (noting that it would be interesting to track the results of such networks),
- Advantages and disadvantages of formal and informal networks (informal networks are easier to form and are more flexible in their work, it is easier for formal networks to secure financing for their work),
- The issue of knowing other organisations for the purpose of establishing new partnerships.

Main conclusions of the round table are as follows:

- Networking is supported because of the importance of its potential for cooperation. The main advantage of networks (especially the international ones) is exchange of experiences, and the greatest drawback is physical distance and the problem of coordinating its members.
- Networking should have a range of common values.
- Donors in the Republic of Croatia lack the awareness for such networks, and it is necessary to create an enabling environment for CSO networking (within the civil sector but also with representatives from other sectors) because a group of diverse members attains better results.
- Financial stability of long-term networks should be secured through grant schemes for networking or sustaining the existing networks and/or provide for possibility to cover expenses related to participation in network activities through the existing projects.
- Funds should be secured for ad hoc coalitions.
- Long-term networks should strive towards a professional leadership (a coordinator) because it has been proven that then they are more successful in their work (as well as in securing financial support for projects).

NGO Open Door Day

This year NGO Days for the first time included NGO Open Door Day. CSOs that registered for participation opened their doors on 16 June 2012, from 10:00 to 13:00, to all interested citizens in order to inform them on their activities and services, and on possibilities for joining in.

Objectives of this event were to provide the citizens and the general public with a close-up look into common good programmes and projects of CSOs in Croatia, and to increase visibility of CSOs in the media. One hundred and twenty CSOs from the City of Zagreb and 15 counties registered for participation in NGO Open Door Day.

Twenty seven CSOs submitted reports on NGO Open Door Day in their organisations and NGO Days organizers selected five most successful among them. These five CSOs received special awards for their efforts and achieved results. During evaluation special attention was paid to the way a CSO envisioned NGO Open Door Day, how it brought interested citizens from its local community together, the content that was made available, number of visitors and local media coverage.

The first prize was awarded to two associations: Association for Promotion of Quality of Life and Sustaining of Mental Health “Pozitiva” from Nova Gradiška and Association of Children with Developmental Difficulties, Disabled Persons and their Families “Srce” from Sv. Ivan Zelina. These CSOs received vouchers in the amount of 900 kuna for design of promotion materials at ACT Printlab LLC.

The second prize was awarded to three associations: Association Amadea from Đakovo, Association Education against Breast Cancer of the Zagreb County from Velika Gorica and Association for Therapeutic Horseback Riding “Pegasus” from Rijeka. Each of these three associations received a voucher in the amount of 400 kuna for purchase of stationary at Limes plus LLC.

Moreover, all CSOs that participated in NGO Open Door Day received a certificate and 27 CSOs that submitted reports on the event received a package of books by NGO Days organizers.



Following is the list of organisations that participated in NGO Open Door Day, listed in alphabetical order by county, city and organisation name:

Brodsko-Posavska County

Association for Promotion of Quality of Life and Maintaining Mental Health "POZITIVA", Nova Gradiška

City of Zagreb County

Animal Friends Croatia, Zagreb
 Association "All for her!", Zagreb
 Association "Children first", Zagreb
 Association "Franak", Zagreb
 Association "Restart", Zagreb
 Association "Susret", Zagreb
 Association BLANK, Zagreb
 Association for Autism, Zagreb
 Association for Creative Social Work, Zagreb
 Association for Helping Persons with Mental Retardation of Zagreb City, Zagreb
 Association for Prevention of Osteoporosis by Vibroexercise and Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles among Women, Zagreb
 Association for Promotion of Inclusion, Zagreb
 Association Mobbing, Zagreb
 Association for Animal Protection "Kanellos", Zagreb
 Association of Biology Students - BIUS, Zagreb
 Association of Croatian Patients, Zagreb
 Association of Volunteers and Veterans of the Homeland War, Branch Office City of Zagreb, Zagreb
 Association of Roma of the City of Zagreb and Zagreb County, Zagreb
 Association of Unemployed Persons of Croatia, Zagreb

Association "PET Plus", Zagreb
 Association "Phenomena", Zagreb
 Association "Plavi Telefon", Zagreb
 Association Slobodni maseri, Zagreb
 Association "YOU ARE OK!", Zagreb
 Center for Civil Initiatives, Zagreb
 Center for Education and Counseling "Sunce", Zagreb
 Center for Spiritual Help, Zagreb
 Center for Women War Victims ROSA, Zagreb
 Center for Women's Studies, Zagreb
 Coalition of NGOs in Healthcare, Zagreb
 Croatian Association for the Fight against HIV and Viral Hepatitis, Zagreb
 Croatian Association for the Promotion and Development of Tiflotech-nique, Zagreb
 Croatian Association of Cardiac Patients SRCE (HEART), Zagreb
 Croatian Association of Hospice Friends, Zagreb
 Croatian Biospeleological Society (CBSS), Zagreb
 Croatian Guide Dog and Mobility Association, Zagreb
 Croatian Network for Rural Development, Zagreb
 Croatian Pan-European Union, Zagreb
 Croatian small business union, Zagreb
 Croatian Society for Coeliac Disease, Zagreb
 DON KIHOT - Therapeutic Horseback Riding, Zagreb
 Fridays at 5, Zagreb
 Humanitarian Association for Assistance to Homeless and Socially Endangered Families "Street Com-

panion", Zagreb
 Hungarian Cultural Society "Ady Endre", Zagreb
 Hungarian Scout Squad Zrini Miklos, Zagreb
 Muscular Dystrophy Society Zagreb, Zagreb
 ODRAZ - Association for Sustainable Development of Community, Zagreb
 Open Media Group, Zagreb
 Parents in Action - RODA, Zagreb
 Serbian Democratic Forum (SDF), Zagreb
 Sirius - Center for Psychological Counselling, Education and Research, Zagreb
 Society for Promotion of Quality Education for Young People with Disabilities ZAMISLI, Zagreb
 Society for Psychological Assistance, Zagreb
 Society of Hungarian Scientists and Artists in Croatia, Zagreb
 The Association for Research and dissemination of flora "Populus", Zagreb
 The Space of Gender and Media Culture "K-Zone", Zagreb
 Women's Room - Center for Sexual Rights, Zagreb
 Zagreb Association of Miastenics, Zagreb
 Zagreb Society for Diabetes, Zagreb

Dubrovačko-Neretvanska County

Association of chronically ill child "Zajedno do zdravlja", Dubrovnik
 DEŠA - Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik
 European House Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik
 Multiple Sclerosis Association of

Dubrovačko-Neretvanska County,
Dubrovnik
Association of Persons with Disabilities "PRIJATELJ", Metković
Association for Persons with Mental Retardation Radost, Ploče

Istarska County

Association for Autism Istria, Pula
Pula Film Factory, Pula
Udruga Institute, Pula

Karlovačka County

Ecological Association "Kako je zelena moja dolina", Plaški

Koprivničko-Križevačka County

Association of Disabled People of Križevci, Križevci
Womens' Association HERA, Križevci

Krapinsko-Zagorska County

Association of Volunteers and Veterans of the Homeland War, Branch Office Krapinsko-Zagorska County, Krapina

Ličko-Senjska County

Womens Group Donji Lapac, Donji Lapac
Womens' Association NIT Korenica, Korenica

Međimurska County

Autonomous Centre - ACT, Čakovec
Association "Međimurske roke" (Hands of Međimurje), Lopatinec

Osječko-Baranjska County

Association "Civil Democratic Initiative Project", Beli Manastir
Peace Group "Oasis", Beli Manastir
Association for Help to Persons with Mental Retardation Đakovo, Đakovo
Association for Psycho-Social Needs

"Amadea", Đakovo
Center for Entrepreneurship and Local Initiative, Našice
Association "Legal Advice", Osijek
Association By Optimal Weight to the Health "VAGA", Osijek
Association "Traditions for Future", Petlovac

Primorsko-Goranska County

Centre for Healthy Growing Up "IDEM ja", Mali Lošinj
Society "Our children" Opatija, Opatija
Association Helping Drug or Substance Dependent Persons "Vida", Rijeka
Association for Therapeutic Riding "Pegaz", Rijeka
Association Hepatos, Rijeka
Drugo more, Rijeka
Professional Association for the Promotion of Children's Welfare "Portić", Rijeka

Šibensko-Kninska County

Association ZvoniMir, Knin
Association for Promotion of Inclusion, Šibenik
Consumers Club Vodice, Vodice

Sisačko-Moslavačka County

Association "Assistance to the elderly", Petrinja
Association IKS, Petrinja

Splitsko-Dalmatinska County

Center for Sustainable Development, Imotski
Association Trokut of Youth from Kaštela, Kaštel Kambelovac
Association of Persons with Disabilities "AGAPE", Omiš
Association for Nature, Environment and Sustainable Development "Sunce", Split

Association MI, Split
Association of Persons with Cerebral Palsy "Heart", Split
Association of Persons with Disabilities Split, Split
Association VIDEO, Split
Center "Golden Age", Split
Humanitarian Organisation "Community Susret", Split
Multiple Sclerosis Association of Split, Split
Photo Club "Fotoakademija Split", Split
Association of the Physically Disabled Persons "TOMS", Trogir

Varaždinska County

Independent Youth Association, Lepoglava

Vukovarsko-Srijemska County

Society "Our Children" Vinkovci, Vinkovci
European House Vukovar, Vukovar
Youth Peace Group "Danube", Vukovar

Zagrebačka County

Persons with Diabetes Club "Za bolji život", Ivanić-Grad
Innovative Internet Association of Winemakers "e-Winemaking", Novoselac
Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing of the Zagrebacka County, Samobor
SRCE - Association of Children with Developmental Challenges, Persons with Disabilities and their Families, Sveti Ivan Zelina
Association By Education against Breast Cancer of Zagrebacka County, Velika Gorica
Green Network of Activist Groups ZMAG, Vukomerić
Association Z.O.V., Zaprešić

Evaluation report on NGO Days 2012

This report depicts assessment of organisational and content related aspects of NGO Days 2012 from the perspective of participants. The purpose of the report is to provide the organizers with an insight into participants' evaluation, including proposals and suggestions on organisation of future events of the similar scope and purpose.

Evaluation results are based upon data collected via online survey by TACSO Croatia Office. There were 401 participants in NGO Days 2012. The link to online survey was sent to 351 persons, who registered their e-mail address during NGO Days 2012 registration process. Responses were received from 105 persons, i.e. return rate was 30%.

Responses to demographic queries were provided by 92 participants. Majority of them were women (82%) and slightly more than half were from Zagreb (55%). Majority of participants (80%) were representatives of associations, whereas national CSO networks, foundations and government institutions were represented in smaller numbers.



Overall evaluation

Majority of participants gave to NGO Days 2012 an overall grade of “very good“, so that the average rating is 3,7. Only one person gave the lowest rating, nine persons decided that “It was acceptable“, 32% considered that it was “Good“, 47% rated it with “Very good“ and 13% gave the rating of “Excellent”.

Survey participants who gave higher grading particularly pointed out the NGO Open Door Day, diversity of themes and quality of presentations at roundtables, as well as good organisation. Most frequent objections concerned relatively low media coverage, insufficient inclusion of general public, i.e. citizens who are not directly included in CSO work.

“ The themes proposed for NGO Days were very interesting and current. There is never too much “first hand” information! Therefore, we decided to take up the invitation and to find funds for travel costs and accommodation in Zagreb despite the hard times. It is very stimulating to find so many representatives from so many civil society organisations in one place. Exchange of experiences, ideas and proposals is always very welcome! As it were, sometimes we get lazy and believe that we do everything the best, as it should be done and that we could not do any better.

This is the first time I participate in this event and I am pleasantly surprised by good organisation, number of participants and complexity of the event.

Roundtable themes were current and extremely interesting. Roundtables were expertly moderated, yet they retained relaxed atmosphere and resulted in very concrete and proper conclusions and recommendations.

Quotes by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

Evaluation of organisational aspects

Average rating for three key organisational aspects were as follows: prior information on NGO Days – 3,97; venue – 4,05 and information and promotion materials – 4,2. Opinions on adequacy of venue were divided: some participants were very happy that the plenary took place at National University Library and that roundtables took place at offices of various CSOs, but some thought that NUL was not suitable for discussion and longer presentations due to problems with acoustics and some participants from places outside of Zagreb, as well as disabled persons, found it trying to travel between locations of roundtables.

“ Previous information on NGO Days were available at web pages of organizers well ahead of time, but this was not followed up with more proactive distribution of information or stimulating CSOs to participate. This particularly applies to CSOs outside of Zagreb. Choice of Zagreb as a venue is logistically OK and justifiable. Information and promotion materials were very good (useful information that could be helpful in further work or as a basis for some activities) both content-wise and design-wise.

Organisation was very good – quality information on events and roundtables were available well ahead of time.

The venue was excellent, as we got a chance to enter office spaces of different organisations, which was perfectly in spirit of the event itself. Superb! So much better than some conference rooms or isolated spaces.

Quotes by NGO Days 2012 participants ”

Evaluation of the Plenary

Ratings for the plenary discussion – overall and for individual segments – vary between 3,2 and 4,8.

“ I think that introductory presentations were very good, of appropriate duration and that they brought to bear or opened issues for further consideration and discussion, along with overviews of current achievements, trends, changes, etc. Considering the number of welcome speeches and introductory presentations, as well as the number of participants in the event, I believe that it was understandable that more in-depth discussion was out of the question, which – in my opinion – should not be viewed as a flaw.

A quote by NGO Days 2012 participant ”

Evaluation of the Roundtables

Evaluation item	Roundtable	I ¹	II ²	III ³	IV ⁴	V ⁵	VI ⁶	VII ⁷
Number of participants		20	31	121	15	67	60	24
Number of completed evaluations		12	11	44	8	22	29	10
Total average rating		4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.5	3.9
Facilitation		4.2	3.5	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.6	3.2
Introductory presentations		4.7	4.2	4.3	3.8	4.1	4.6	4.1
Possibilities for sharing of ideas and giving inputs		4.8	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.5

1 Roundtable “Participation of Youth in Formulation of Public Policies on the Local Level – Are Institutional Mechanisms Efficient?”

2 Roundtable “Models for Efficient Advocacy and Lobbying for Positive Social Change”

3 Roundtable “New Financial Opportunities for CSOs in the Republic of Croatia”

4 Roundtable “Social Cohesion of Citizens and Youth in Fighting Poverty and Delinquency of Minors”

5 Roundtable “Criteria for Allocation of State and City Owned Office/Work Spaces to CSOs”

6 Roundtable “The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Development of Social Entrepreneurship in Croatia”

7 Roundtable “Networking for Change”

Evaluation of NGO Open Door Day

Evaluation of NGO Open Door Day was completed by 96 persons, 44 of which had their CSOs participate in the event and 42 provided data on the number of their members and volunteers engaged in NGO Open Door Day, the number of visitors and media coverage. Further to this collected information, at least 277 CSO members and volunteers participated in NGO Open Door Day; 853 visitors were recorded and there were 62 media articles published.

The question: “Have you visited any of CSOs during NGO Open Door Day” was answered by 95 persons, but only 16 answered confirmatively. Satisfaction with presentation of CSO work received the total rating of 4.1, establishment of useful contacts was rated 4.2 and probability of return visit to this CSO was rated 4.0.

Recommendations for future events

Recommendations from participants refer to three key areas: increase in media visibility and higher awareness of the general public concerning CSO work; easier access for organisations from smaller communities to the event and increased interactivity and information during the event.

“ We firmly believe that such events should spread to cities throughout Croatia. Zagreb is much too far for many of us, even though the topics of roundtables were very interesting. What is needed is a local coordination and events the content of which would be available to local communities as well. All in all, we welcome the efforts to recognize and value the work of CSOs, especially concerning volunteerism and humanitarian work.

Widen the possibilities for informal networking between CSOs, because through such informal contacts much work gets done concerning partnerships, future joint projects, etc.

I think that better advertising would be needed for NGO Open Door Day, so that this information may also reach people who do not usually follow non-governmental scene and that they may get acquainted with the work that CSOs carry out.

Quotes by NGO Days 2012 participants ”





