



## A STORY ABOUT OLD FRIENDS AND NEW PARTNERS

*Being together is the Beginning, Learning together is a Progress, Working Together is a Success.*

### Chapter I: The beginning.

In October 1997, I participated as representative of Partners Romania Foundation for Local Development to "Etica '97", the Fair of non-profit organizations, held in Gorizia, Italy.

There I had the opportunity to meet various and interesting persons and organizations, but at that time, I did not imagine that one of them would be our future friend and partner!

The nice and young lady, with whom we have had a very polite conversation, told us her name - Antonella Valmorbida - and explained us about her activity and organization - Local Democracy Agency in Sisak, Croatia.

At that time our contacts and network were spread only in 6 countries, and our Regional Program "Working Together" and its Regional Support Center for CEE Countries, with programs in English language, were not yet reality. We shared with her our vision, we spoke about the effectiveness of participatory and interactive training process for adult people, about the idea of building a network of trainers and training organizations from Central and East Europe in order to learn together and exchange experience, about the importance of capacity building in local governance and leadership.

She looked interested and we invited her to participate to the 1<sup>st</sup> Steering Committee of the Regional Program "Working Together" that we planned to organize in Roma-

nia, and we were very happy when she accepted.

### Chapter II: The progress.

The LDA in Sisak participated actively in many of the Training of Trainers Programs we succeeded to organize under the Regional Program "Working Together". The

representative of the LDA network identified the ways to disseminate the information and to replicate the training programs for the whole organization. In 1999, there was the big success to build a network, the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies having the vision to offer them the opportunity to work and learn together.

### Chapter III: The success and the future

We succeeded to initiate together a series of partnership programs having successful results for both organizations:

- The Regional Program "Working Together" impact is bigger because we gained a network member able to multiply and disseminate the knowledge and skills through a small network of specific organizations
- The small network of LDAs is increasing their capacity, taking advantage from the new knowledge, skills, and experiences received through the support offered by the Regional Program "Working Together"

Ana Vasilache, Director FPDL - Romania Steering Committee of Working Together (January 2001)



Ana Vasilache  
Director FPDL

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Association Betton Monténégro

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# PARTNER CITIES' CONFERENCE IN SUBOTICA

On the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> September, the Day of Subotica, Subotica local government was the host to the delegations of partner cities from neighbouring countries Hungary and Romania as well as from Great Britain, Finland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Present were the mayors and representatives of local councils from Budapest, Szeged, Kiskunhalas, Bacsalmás, Sekelyudvarhely, Wolverhampton, Turku, Olomouc, Isola, Dunajska Streda and Ulm.

Perspectives for further co-operation, joint initiatives in various fields of common interests, particularly in the development of local self-government responsive and efficient performances have been the main topic of discussion during the Conference held in the Town Hall of Subotica municipality. Most of the participants in the discussion expressed their willingness for further enhancement of co-operation with Subotica in order to support the democratic transition in the country and to establish various, concrete forms of exchange programs that would include educational, cultural programs, as well as business contacts among local industries and entrepreneurs. Examples of good practice exist already and their importance reiterated in the discussion. Firstly, the Szeged process, initiated four years ago and supported by the Council of Europe, helped establish links among the European towns with municipalities in Yugoslavia during the time of economic isolation of the country. Local governments of Szeged and Subotica took active part in this process which enabled a number of Yugoslav municipalities to receive necessary humanitarian aid or economic assistance. Another good example was the inception town-twinning process which brought forward numerous initiatives including the local municipalities in Serbia, whereas in Subotica the formation of the Embassy of Local Democracy in 1993, was conceived as a link to European cities and contribution to the development of local civil society in a multicultural and multiethnic environment. In addition, this helped the entire process break through the walls of isolation of the former authoritarian regime in the country. The Association of Independent Municipalities of Serbia (today the Standing Conference of Municipalities) in which Subotica municipality was taking active part also gave an important incentive to concrete town-to-town co-operation. The entire process was initiated and fully supported by the Council of Europe (the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities) which has been included in all its stages for several years. Immediately after the democratic changes Yugoslavia submitted its candidacy for the full membership and recently established Mission of the European Council in Belgrade is monitoring the process of harmonization of constitutional/legal regulations with the Euro-

pean standards. Nadia Cuk Skenderovic, the delegate of LDA and the newly appointed senior consultant to the Mission was also present at the Conference and informed on the current activities related with adoption of the new laws on local self-government and ethnic minorities in Yugoslavia.

In his introductory speech, Mr. Istvan Ispanovic, the mayor of Subotica, expressed his deep respect and gratitude to the guests for their persistent support and contribution to Subotica municipality and for various forms of humanitarian aid and assistance to the citizens in need. Despite the fact that Subotica has always been the political opposition-parties ruled local self-government, it shared the destiny of other citizens of Yugoslavia under authoritarian and oppressive regime. However, the democratic change in October 2000, brought forward new opportunities that will enable the citizens to exercise basic human rights to free movement, to establish civil society, democratic institutions, the rule of law. Specially important for this region are cross-border contacts and utilization of geographic position near the border with neighboring countries which had for a long time been considered as disadvantage. The town of Subotica is now entitled to the position of a gateway to Europe which will ensure the development and economic prosperity to the benefit of all its citizens.

Initial steps forward have already been made in the field of small and joint small and medium size enterprises, cultural and educational exchange programs. Furthermore, in this period in Subotica the Consulates of Croatia and Hungary have been opened in order to promote good neighborly co-operation and facilitate cultural and economic contacts between countries in this region.

During the Conference the participants visited a number of local companies, had talks with entrepreneurs and media representatives.

The program of the two day festivities in the Town Hall included awarding of the prize PRO URBE to the individuals and institutions for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the development of Subotica. This year's winners are: Local Radio Station Subotica, Gyula Mester (volleyball player), Resistance Movement (local NGO Otpor ) and Duzijanica Subotica (Cultural Association).

Mr. Gabor Demsky, the Mayor of Budapest addressed the audience and on behalf of the Budapest local self-government expressed readiness to continue traditional fruitful co-operation with Subotica municipality.

*Stanka Parac*  
LDA Subotica, project manager

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY SISAK



# ALWAYS IN FOCUS - WOMEN, MINORITIES, YOUTH AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Always in focus a big challenge of involving women, youth, minorities and local authorities to come together and participate can briefly describe the intention of LDA Sisak during autumn 2001.

The September went on coloured with the end of project «Development of Civil society : Implementation of Women's rights» that was organized through last training on advocacy and international conference «Women against violence». Conference turned to be the resource for future activities instead of closing point since participants proposed and drafted three new projects as very needed initiatives all over Sisak-Moslavina County.

The autumn continued through trainings for minorities under the project «School of civil society : instruments, rights and duties of minorities», supported by Council of Europe – Confidence Building Measures Program.

This program is dedicated to the minorities present in the area of Sisak-Moslavina County (Serbs, Bosnian Croats, Bosnians, Checks, Roma). Aims of the program are to develop the capacity of organisation of the minority group, to improve the knowledge of their rights in the Croatian legislation and in the international context and to improve the knowledge on their duties in the society where they live.

The activities are divided through series of 18 workshops dealing with issues important to minorities, such as: tolerance, discrimination, prejudice...

Up to now we realised one seminar on issue «Rights and duties of minorities» in June 2001 (in order to give the necessary information and tools to follow the workshops) and two workshops on «Tolerance between minority and majority» and «Discrimination in our society» in July and

September 2001.

TRAINING PROGRAM «THE COUNSELLOR AND SKILLS: Elected leadership and communication skills» is supported by Association of LDAs and financed by Local Government Initiative from Budapest.

The program will be realised in cooperation with City of Sisak, one of the LDA Sisak partners and directed to the counsellors of Sisak City council.

Goals of the training are to improve councillor's efficiency in the mutual communication and in the communication with citizens.

The training will be held in November 2001 during three days with focus on the counsellor's roles as communicator, as decision maker, as facilitator and negotiator.

The preparation of project «Participation of youth in local administration» continued with the organization of round table which will gather local authorities, youth boards, NGOs and other relevant actors to review and discuss about youth participation in decision making process. Further steps will be directly connected with needs and responses gathered from both sides, youth and local authorities.

Annual partners' meeting, planned to be held on 18th of November in Sisak, brought in focus several important issues such as the LDA strategy, common activities, the role and involvement of the whole network. One of the points to be discussed is how to involve youth in political life. So, partners will try to make a common approach and to draft their proposal in order to increase the youth participation in politics.

*Tatjana Puskaric*  
LDA Project Manager



# "PEACE IS YOUNG"

*LDA Zavidovici organized five-day seminar for youth from Zavidovici, Zepce, Prijedor and Jajce on topics of communication, identity, differences, prejudices, violence/nonviolence and conflict understanding*

Under sponsorship of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, in organization of Local Democracy Agency of Zavidovici in co-operation with Center for Nonviolent Action Sarajevo it has been organized five-day seminar under the name "PEACE IS YOUNG". The residential seminar took place in Hotel "Zlaca" in the period from 15-24 August 2001 with participation of 15 youth persons from Zavidovici, Zepce, Prijedor and Jajce.

Objectives of this seminar were strengthening of youth participation in public life, improving of the cooperation between youth leaders, building of capacities on issues as communication skills, peaceful solution of conflicts, joint solution of problems on a local scale. Also, objective was building of confidence and friendship between youth creating new links among youth organizations for common work in future.

This seminar worked on issues such as communication, nonviolent communication, conflict understanding, power, prejudices, differences, identity, violence / nonviolence. Trainers who guided the seminar were: Iva Zenzerovic and Nedžad Horozovic (CNA Sarajevo), Sandra Ljubinkovic (Astra/Azin Beograd) and guest trainer Jasmina Todorovska (Skopje).

Most of participants were youth that for a first time participate to such kind of seminar that broaden their knowledge and experience. Their expectations were to learn something new about these topics, to get to know others and oneself, stay together and find new friends. According to the evaluation on the end of seminar their expectations fulfilled completely. During the



seminar there has been talked a lot about community problems and the way on which we as members of different organizations can help to solve them.

As result of this seminar we will invite local authorities for a public meeting that will take place in Zavidovici Youth Center, on that occasion we will discuss on topics and re-

sults of the seminar.

During the meeting video on realized work will be presented to the public, as well as overall experience and activities of the Youth Center.

We hope that such seminars will be more in the future that will contribute to activism of youth and take them from passivity in which we are sinking for a long time.

*Slajan Ilic*

Zavidovici LDA

Citizens' committee

# ECO CAMP IN ZAVIDOVICI

*It continues ecological campaign in Zavidovici Municipality by organizing of Eco-camp with participation of youth that with own example want to contribute to the protection and saving of healthy environment*

In the period from 13-19 of August 2001, in organization of Local Democracy Agency of Zavidovici, the Eco camp took place in Kamenica - popular picnic place 16 kilometers from Zavidovici. The camp has been placed on the location "Luke" where Tourism Community of Zavidovici started with creating of recreational center with sport playgrounds for basketball, volleyball, and football. This place offers fantastic possibilities for camping because of vicinity of drinkable water spring, placed grills, banks and Gostovici river for swimming and refreshment in summer heats.

The Eco-camp is realized in the frame of the project "Ecological campaign in Zavidovici area" financed by "Swiss Agency for development and co-operation". With this project we want to raise awareness of citizens in the field of ecology and improve the ecological situation of the area by implementing of concrete actions. Up to now it has been realized several cleaning actions, tree plantation, mine field survey, producing of eco booklet, organized international seminar and we expect a few another actions until the end of the project.

Participants in the camp were youth from Zavidovici, Zenica, Jajce, Banja Luka members of different organizations interested for environment protection that staying together have broaden their knowledge, built peace, confidence and new friendships.

## **- lectures and researching-**

During the camp there have been organized different educative, exploration and recreational activities. Every day we had for guests' professors that gave lectures in the field of ecology and protection of nature. There have been professors from Zavidovici High schools:

prof. Tenza Djelmic, prof. Majda Saciragic, prof. Mersur Sinanovic, prof. Milan Scekcic, eng. Admir Bajraktarevic, speleology instructor, who was commander of the camp. Especially we need to mention lectures of prof. dr. Mustafa Omanovic, president of Ecomovement of BiH professor on a several faculties, who talked about local "Agenda 21", principles and strategy of sustainable development but also about importance of everyday ecology. Besides lectures, in the afternoon we had research actions. Participants were divided in the two groups that had task to make two research works. One was

"Biocenology image of Suha valley" and another "Exploration of surface and subterranean flow of Suha, with regard to the speleological objects". With this researching we wanted to find out something more about influences and circumstances for stirring up of drinkable water from Suha river.

**- let's protect our environment more resolute -**

Besides working part, campers had enough time for recreation and leisure, it is played volleyball, football, swimming in the cold and clear river, visits of caves, staying together near campfire and guitar. We tried to leave something behind us that will be able to use and other citizens as stairs, built by river stones, that takes to the Gostovici riverbank.

Working together towards a common objective, protection of beauties of our environment, we tried to take attention of our citizens on its daily destruction and show with own example that we must protect and save nature more resolute. We hope that we are going to meet again next year in a larger number.

*Sladjan Ilic*



# Training for trainers “Leadership and communication skills”, Novigrad 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2001

Local Government Initiative supported the Training of Trainers for “leadership and communication skills”. Two trainers for each LDA have been invited to attend the TOT in order to organize a training of three days within the end of the year in their own Agency.

The final trainees are local authorities (civil servants and elected officials) of the cities and regions where the LDAs are from.

The TOT and the programme of training are implemented thanks to the co-operation with FPDL Romania. The AADL is member of the Steering Committee of the programme “Working Together” and many staff members of the Agencies have attended TOT in the programme of “Working Together”. The senior trainers of the TOT in Croatia are Mrs. Ana Vasilache, Director of FPDL, and Mrs. Daniela Plugaru, trainer of FPDL. These two programmes benefit from each other by 1) enlarging the experience of training 2) developing the network of training agencies for local authorities.

The programme will increase the capacity of training and relations with local authorities of the staff of the LDAs for the specific following training but also for the other target groups of the activities of the Agencies. The programme involved 9 LDAs (4 countries involved). Thanks to the support of the Council of Europe (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities), the LDA in Montenegro could join the TOT and will implement a training for local authorities.

The Agencies are not only training agencies for local authorities but they develop their activities in the promotion and strengthening of civil society. They are supported by the Council of Europe and other donors of the Stability Pact. They are currently implementing, thanks to the co-ordination of the Association of the LDAs, a programme supported by the Swiss Agency for Development, for the promotion of civil society in the region.

## Participants:

LDA Verteneglio/Brtonigla – HR	Tullio Fernetić, Marianna Jelčić, Cristina Vojčić, Umberto Ademollo
LDA Sisak – HR	Julije Katancević, Vlatka Jurasinović
LDA Osijek – HR	Sasa Jaksic
LDA Zavidovici – BiH	Aleksandra Makrić, Sladjan Ilić
LDA Prijedor – BiH	Sanja Kantar
LDA Tuzla – BiH	Halid Smajić, Ermin Smajić
LDA Subotica – FRY – Serbia	Stanka Parac, Branko Karjniski
LDA Ohrid – FYROM	Mirijana Lozanoska, Stojan Saveski
LDA Nikšić – FRY – Montenegro	Boris Raonić Dragutin Djeković
Association of the Local Democracy Agencies	Antonella Valmorbida
Partners Romania Foundation for Local Development, FPDL	Ana Vasilache, Daniela Plugaru

(Following "Training for trainers "Leadership and communication skills", Novigrad 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2001")

#### Specific objectives of the training :

- To improve participants knowledge and skills in the design and conduct of interactive/participatory training programs focused on improving leadership and communication skills of the local public leaders
- To improve participants knowledge and skills in giving and receiving feedback
- To develop Action Plans for designing, organizing and conducting 3-day training programs in their countries



#### Results :

- Increased training capacities for 19 staff people of the LDAs working with local and regional authorities in SEE
  - Specific training capacities for the training to be implemented in the months for "Elected leadership and communication skills"
  - Strengthening of the network of the LDA and its working together (exchanges experiences, sharing ideas, empowerment of the common actions)
  - Enlarging the effect of the network of "Working Together" lead by FPDL Romania
  - Enlarging the effect of the training manuals of UN Habitat.
- Training in Novigrad, 2<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> of September

## VISIT OF PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

**13.09.2001**

Today, the Parliamentary delegation of the Council of Europe visited Zavidovici and Local Democracy Agency. The delegation was composed by Ms Snjezana Biga-Friganovic, member of Croatian Parliament, Ms Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold, Member of Parliament from Switzerland, Ms Dana Karanjac ^ Secretariat of the Council of Europe. The visit was in the frame of Preparation of the report and recommendation to the Committee of Ministers and member states of the Council of Europe concerning social measures for chil-

dren of war in South-East Europe. Fact finding mission and meetings with members of government, MPs, NGOs and international organisations concerned by social affairs, education and health related to children of war. The debate in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is foreseen for January 2002. The Delegation met Mr Emsudin Starcevic, manager of the social affairs department of Zavidovici Municipality, Mrs Sabahija Becic, director of kindergarten and Mr Sladjan Ilic local coordinator, who presented Playground Vozuca and other projects of LDA that concern children of war.

# ASSOCIATION BETTON MONTENEGRO - France

## Two new missions in Summer 2001

### Partner of the LDA in Montenegro

#### Two new missions in Summer 2001:

- ◆ In July, a delegation with three persons brought to Montenegro 5 computer Pentium, given to the Association by Electricité Gaz de France. These computer, two of them with modem, have been given – following the advice of Mr. Dragan Bogojevic, psychological adviser of French, to professors of French language in Rozaje, in order to make their work easier. The delegation stayed several days in Montenegro and expanded the network of contacts of the Association. On their way back, a meeting was held with Mr. Stanisa Surbatovich, acting Delegate of the LDA in Montenegro, in Niksic.
- ◆ En August, two young ladies from Betton helped the animation of the third “Summer Camp” for learning French, under the co-ordination of Mrs Dusica Scekcic of “Club ami”. This camp was held in Berane with children from different communities (Berane, Rozaje, Bijelo Polje). The financial support of the trip has been given by the Association thanks to the support of the municipality of Betton Montenegro avec with a help from Solidarité Europe Monténégro.

#### Today the Association works in four directions :

- 1) the animation of a week (21/26 of October 2001) with the library of Betton with an exhibition on the literature of the Balkans.
- 2) the visit of the Mayor of Rozaje, Nusret Kalac et the Director of the Cultural Center, Osman Kupejovic who will be hosted by the Association from the 28<sup>th</sup> of October to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2001. The programme foresees : an official reception at the municipality, visit of different public offices (including the waste management plant), several meetings with the representatives of the town dealing with cultural issues and associations, youth and international relations. Meetings with other associations and school for music, library and club for informatics.
- 3) We hope to host for a year at University a professor of French language of Rozaje who is already student in Rennes.
- 4) At the end, the biggest commitment for the Association is the organisation of a cultural week from the 1-4<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 2002, with a group of traditional dances from Rozaje “Vrelo Ibra”, a group composed of students and painters from the Region. 45 people are expected to come, hosted by the Association and its friends.

The President - *Marie-Claude Tèzenas*

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION!		THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY
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