

# Manual for social inclusion and Structural dialogue in youth work

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# Introduction

Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia share a vast amount of the history together and there will always be connection (value of brotherhood) between us. Project enabled partners to transfer their good practices to make youth of former Yugoslavia strong again. As said before, Slovenia needed to learn and implement social inclusion, while Bosnia and Serbia political development and active participation of young people to achieve future support for the youth.

There were two topics addressed in our project. One is social inclusion and the other active participation of young people. Both topics reached the same audience. Participating organisations introduced totally new concepts of work to the regular activity and were able to develop new content to reach wider audience and to benefit in the future. Slovenian organisation introduced the social inclusion, a project that targets peer-to-peer social youth work and is totally new concept in Slovenia. Youth centres so far work on all sorts of topics such as employment, sport, culture, but there is no compact programme for social inclusion developed in Slovenia. Bosnian and Serbian partner don't have any sort of youth policy that works and that reaches decision makers to take youth work seriously, therefore this project brought the huge impact on the youth policy making and future youth work development in both countries. Partner organisations were therefore the first in their countries to introduce new concepts and will be ambassadors in the line of youth work.

# Partners

## Daj mi ruku

### Serbia

Daj mi ruku is a civil association founded in 2009 in Belgrade, in order to achieve the objectives in the field of socio-humanitarian work. The founders of the association are graduated social workers and psychologists who work in order to provide psychosocial support to children and youth. Thanks to the cooperation with a number of kindergardens, schools, universities, municipalities, diplomatic missions and companies in Serbia and organizations from Balkan and other parts of Europe organization successfully implements projects in order to improve the quality of life of children and youth and to empower them to develop their potential.

Association provides training in the following areas: Volunteer management, Fundraising in social work, Teamwork and non-violent conflict resolution, Assertiveness, Basics workshop activities, Forum Theatre and Business correspondence. In addition to working on projects Association organizes numerous humanitarian actions to help children and young people. The Association is the creator of three programs that are focused on working with pre-school, school children and youth and working with students: Older brother, older sister, Rastiliste and Professional Practice which are implemented through projects. Since 2015 the association has become a teaching base of University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political

Sciences, and from 2016 one of the organizers of the international conference "Inclusion in Practice", which aims to bring together experts, researchers and activists who, from the perspective of different disciplines, deal with the education and rehabilitation of people with disabilities.

## **Foundation New Hope**

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Foundation "New Hope" is a non-partisan, non-profit, humanitarian and non-governmental organization established to achieve humane, humanitarian and charitable objectives in the field of social work and social policy, particularly the fight against poverty, pathologies, human trafficking, domestic violence, employment of social categories, care for victims of trafficking, victims of domestic violence, as well as the development of social entrepreneurship. Their vision: Bosnia and Herzegovina is a society of equal, free citizens, free of poverty and homelessness, built on the values of solidarity, philanthropy and humanity. New Hope is focused on building a society characterized by equality and respect for human rights through the development and promotion of awareness of professionals and other citizens, encouraging interaction among stakeholders in the field of social protection and social policy, encouraging and training people for self-help in the fight against poverty and homelessness while protecting and promotion of human, women's and children's rights, and the development of social entrepreneurship, as well as support various social actors in the application and development of effective and efficient public policy, professional and social practices. New Hope is a foundation founded by experienced professionals, who have recognized a common interest in promoting and developing the Bosnian society.

# Youth Network MaMa

## Slovenia

The MaMa Youth Network is an inclusive national networking organization for 50 youth actors in Slovenia and takes care of and advocates the interests and needs of youth centres throughout Slovenia. It is a learning organization that, with a professional approach to work and social responsibility and proactive content-oriented activities, contributes to the development of the whole community, especially for the young person.

The MaMa network implements activities to strengthen the network organization of youth centres with the aim of further financial, staffing and content strengthening of network members, carry out education activities and advice to members and their employees, lobbying and communicating with local and national stakeholders.





# Older brother – older sister

Program “Older brother-older sister” is a program of individual support to children in need. The main principle of work is to establish a lasting relationship and interaction between one volunteer and one child for more than a year. The idea of a project is to create an educated person who will have a positive role to a child with disabilities, a role that is crucial to the successful emotional, educational and overall development of a child. The main goal of the program is to support the social inclusion of children and youth with disabilities and other socially vulnerable children.

# My big brother – My big sister

## Serbia

This program exists in Serbia since 1998, and it was organized by the association "Let's cherish the children" and the Faculty of Political Science, Professor Ivan Vidanovic. The project was implemented in partnership with homes for children without parental care in Belgrade, Sombor and Užice and was a program of individual external support to children in the institution.

Since 2011, association "DAJ MI RUKU" takes over the project management, modify the program and become the creator of program "My big brother, my big sister" refers primarily to a cooperation with regular schools and schools for education of children with disabilities. Associations "Sociativa" and Union of students of social work became associates on this program, with financial support of the Swiss Embassy<sup>1</sup> in Belgrade and other entities in the local communities in which the program is implemented. Participants in the program are socially vulnerable children and young people (with developmental disorders, behavioural problems, learning problems, Roma, etc.) ages 9 to 15 and students of social sciences (future social workers, psychologists, pedagogues, dialectologists, teachers). The specificity of this program is using the service "Help to helpers". This service is type of support service for professionals' helpers, which significantly contributed to better program results.

In addition to direct work with children and young people, the program also refers to working with parents, teachers and professional associates with the active involvement of the local community. In this regard, the program is adapted to the needs of users. During these years, over 1700 direct and indirect users have had the

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<sup>1</sup> The Swiss Embassy in the Republic of Serbia does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Swiss Embassy cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

opportunity to use the services of this program. The program is recognized as a practice for students of the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Belgrade and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Niš, and it is part of the manifestation "I Know, I Can" which is organized within the International Conference "Inclusion in Practice".

## **Older brother – Older sister**

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The project "Older brother, Older sister" or "Education of youth without parental care for independent living in the local community" has been held in Banja Luka since 2003. The project was initiated by the students of social work running the Union of Students of Social Work of the Banja Luka University (later founders of Foundation "New Hope"), financially supported by the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs (IBHI Bosnia and Herzegovina), within the wider project "Reform of the System and Structures of the Central and Local Social Policy Regime in BiH", and the City Banja Luka.

During year 2005 project was disseminated to capital of B&H, Sarajevo. In next few years, this project was implemented in over 10 different cities and local communities all over Bosnia. Today, this project is still running and even have its own umbrella organisation "Older brother, Older sister B&H" with headquarter in Sarajevo. Programme is 100% volunteer based.

The launch of the project led to the insight that many children exhibit various psychosocial problems in their homes which make them harder to adapt, succeed in

education, vocational training, and establish appropriate social relationships as a preparation for independent living. This is especially important because after leaving the institution, the biggest problem for children is the inadequate readiness for living in the local community. That is why the circle of unadopted behaviour often continues and social problems are being reproduced. It is for these reasons, in addition to the standard content and methodology of helping children, why it is necessary to introduce forms of work that will provide appropriate results, especially in finding ways to better social integration of children in the local community. This program is based on ecological models (continuous human contact and dynamic interaction between children and adult volunteers), without the tendency to suppress "pathological" behaviour, and it offers a focus on health, development, future and friendship.

"Older brother-older sister" (SBSS) has shown that new forms of work have given great results during the first months, especially in finding ways to better socialize children in the local community. This approach opens a whole new world view to children, enables them to start to look at life more realistically, to a large extent builds or increases the sense of responsibility towards themselves and others, points them to the problems that awaits them after leaving the home and empowers them to overcome these problems. The SBSS program has shown that there are very successful opportunities for working with children, based on ecological models.

The program runs three interrelated phases. The **first phase** involves solving basic organizational issues by educating volunteers, implementing a project through the identification of children who have problems and difficulties in social contacts within the institution or in the environment, and the selection and training of volunteers which are to be included in the program. At this stage, it is also envisaged to define:

global development and prevention programs within specific projects such as the formation of pairs of children and volunteers by a special program (dual choice); the basic rules of mutual relations and long-term goals of society, the social environment and the opportunities it provides in each environment for better social functioning of children.

In the **second phase**, to get a better insight into the overall methodology, the realization of program contents is divided into two parts. The first part includes theoretical learning and exercising of social skills by organizing workshops on topics: social communication, expression and recognition of emotions, reaction to frustration, non-violent conflict resolution, leisure time, me and my health, personal identity, adults amongst themselves, and so on. The second part involves the direct application of acquired knowledge to children from home through continuous contact with adult volunteers through various community activities. Specific contents are realized through social, cultural, entertaining and recreational, educational, sports and humanitarian activities. In this part of the project, special attention of the volunteer is directed towards the primary family of the child or existing relatives (where possible) to restore broken or empower weakened relationships with parents or relatives, to create better relationships so that children after leaving their home had a solid support and someone close to them. The **third phase** involves a phase-out evaluation, after each stage of implementation, with the presentation of appropriate professional results both in relation to children's problems and in relation to volunteers.

The execution of the mentioned contents enables us to improve the emotional climate in the home conditions by establishing more intimate relations of children with volunteers who became their role model for future social life, improving and

maintaining good school success and improved social communication, reducing tensions with the overcoming of conflicts that are a constant companion of young people's lives in homes, reducing the tension in the local community and school, which are objectively between home and other children, connecting with the wider community and neighbourhood children, sensitizing the local community to children without parental care, removing labels and prejudices that are commonly associated with children from the institution, connecting with a primary family or close relatives, and restoring broken or strengthening weakened relationships. In this way, children were given the opportunity to leave the closed circle of home communication. Children can see within themselves to recognize and choose for a new approach to their life in the changing and most often socially acceptable goals and ideals. Relationships in couple's volunteers-kids are the best exercises of the ability to accept change, paving the way for their better social adaptation after leaving home.

Institutions such as residential homes for children use only standard content and methodology to help users. For at least partial deinstitutionalization and humanization of work with children without parental care, it is necessary to introduce new forms of work. The program is the first of its kind in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and it is based on ecological models, i.e. continuous human contact and dynamic interaction of children and adult volunteers. Our program focuses on the health, development and future of children without parental care, and the most important advantage of this approach is education understood in a new way. Also, the project seeks to involve children in the local community in a new, innovative way, and the problem of breaking prejudices and stigmatization, as well as the sensitization of the local community, looks from a new perspective and terminates them at the lowest level of their creation - the age of the elementary.

This program can serve as an example to all non-governmental organizations and institutions dealing with social issues and social protection, how it can be accessed in a different way to users and show that content in institutions can be adapted to the wider social needs of users and provide concrete and usable solutions to overcome the current situations. The project has shown that the level of services, not only in children's homes, but also in other institutions, can and must be increased by including volunteers and accepting new and alternative approaches to people. Also, the project has shown that individuals, parents and children, as well as the local community, can be involved in successful social work in the community. SBSS offers a new approach to social work in the community and addressing social problems at the very beginning of their genesis. In addition to the primary goals, this project can also serve as a basic motivation for opening minds of professionals according to new models and methodology of working with clients.

The program gives us an insight into the specific needs of children without parental care, opens these young people for new thoughts and new approach to life problems, sensitizes them and strengthens them, thus enabling them easier integration into the local community and society, and helps them become useful members of society. The network of trained volunteers and the results that the project accomplishes enables us to use these built potentials in further work with this and other user populations and map out the results to a much larger number of future potential users, and by utilizing the knowledge that volunteers have acquired to expand and improve the network of volunteers. The project further sensitizes the local community to children in institutions and drastically reduces the stigmatization and prejudices that exist for these children. Also, such a system of work represents a model for the quality practice of all humanistic professions, which in the field of work include working with children without parental care or with asocial behaviour.

A bridge model can be transferred to all NGOs that encourage volunteer work in similar institutions, especially in terms of volunteer training and evaluation. The system of work is extremely adaptable to the new needs of the user because it does not impose a schematic system of work but is based on an ecological approach to the individual. The experiences of others, as well as our SBSS project, have shown an increase in the interest of local communities (volunteers, institutions and users) in expanding activities to the national level and regional networking, which assures us that SBSS will become part of the new social protection system and that many NGOs be the further bearer of his development.

Working in couples provides the opportunity for users to understand the role and way of using local community resources, which, with the existence of a positive behavioural model, results in their healthy life orientation and participation in society. Also, we work with children from residential homes (orphanage, no parents) and children from the local community to make a "capital for the future" because the positive experiences that these children will bring with them from the project will affect the quality of their lives and all those who in the future will have contact with them.





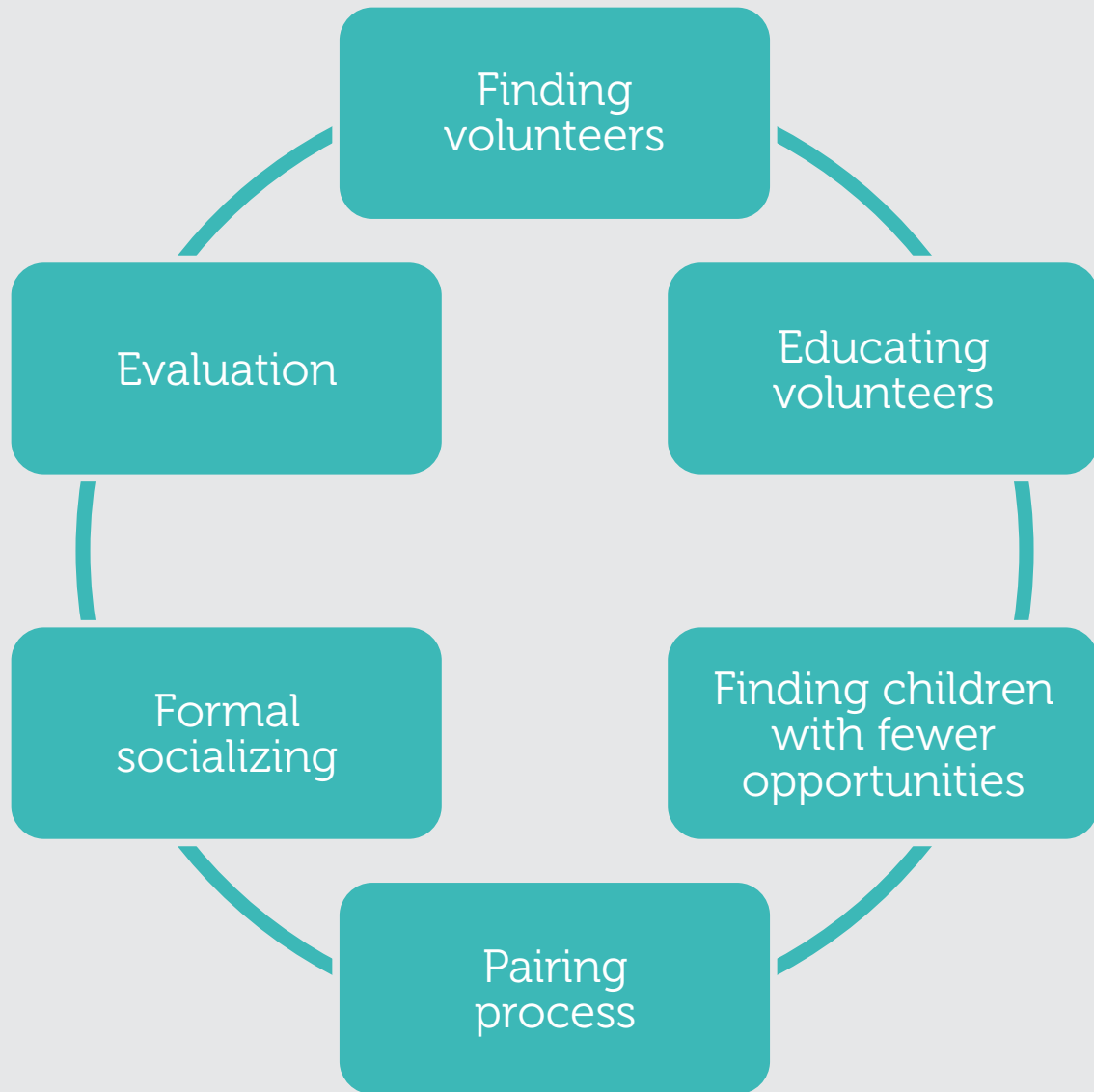
# Social inclusion in practice

## Criteria for the volunteers

- Minimum age 20 (maximum 50);
- Current residence in the city where the child is from;
- Possibility to devote to the program for a period of at least one year;
- Successful and positive relationships with family members, grown-up friends and partners;
- Positive experiences from childhood, or mature overcoming of negative experiences;
- Readiness to pass all preparatory activities and training;
- they agree to work on the basics provided by the Manual;
- They have appropriate attitudes and behaviours towards sexuality, tolerance and the like.
- There is no criminal record;

It is desirable that the volunteer has the following characteristics:

- Properly motivated to work
- Normal tolerance and flexibility
- Interests and ability to work with children
- Sufficient mental and emotional stability
- Healthy regulation of socialization in youth and childhood.



# Training of the volunteers

The goal of the program in the training phase is to provide adequate theoretical knowledge and practical skills to volunteers. The training phase helps evaluate the characteristics and skills of volunteers and thus improves the quality of formed couples. Training represents the final phase of the preparatory phase with volunteers and afterwards it is decided to form pairs, considering all information collected about volunteers and children.

Training takes place in small groups (8-16 volunteers). The training program includes:

- Training from the application of modern methods that will be applied during the project: interview, questionnaire, case study, assessment scale, genogram, eco-map, with special emphasis on empathy development;
- Development of communication and other skills of volunteers;
- Education through workshop work on topics of social communication, expression of personality, recognition of emotions, reactions to frustration and empathic skills;
- Educational seminar on the developmental problems of children in institutional accommodation, training in the application of RET therapy.
- The program includes children aged 3-16 years with the socio-adaptive difficulties and difficulties in integrating with peers or the local community. They also include children with learning disabilities and the need for additional psychosocial support (such as children without parental care). Most of the younger brothers and sisters are children from institutions for children without parental care.

# Forming pairs

In selecting children who need support from the Program, the following criteria that indicate the need for empowerment can be taken into consideration, and which may help in deciding on the involvement of the child. The assessment is done in cooperation with the institution where the children are staying. That are:

- Developmental and intellectual potentials and possibilities of the child;
- History of previous behaviour;
- Interests of the child;
- Ability to build constructive interpersonal and social relations;
- Relation to work and achievements;
- Possibilities of identification;
- Ability to take responsibility for success / failures (at an older age);
- Relation to social failure and problems;
- Attitude towards authority (at an older age);
- Difficulties in using experience;
- Self-assessment in terms of ability;
- Knowledge of the local community;
- Ability to live independently;
- The existence or lack of more intimate and emotionally friendly relationships with other people;
- Frustration of the child;
- Special needs of the child;

After extensive preparation, a selection of suitable children and volunteers is carried out. Criteria for selection include:

- Respecting the needs and opportunities of children;
- Possession of appropriate motivation, skills and experience of volunteers
- Expectations of children and volunteers;
- Matching personal interests and eventual similarities;
- No obstacles in the personality or past of volunteers, which can lead to any risk to the child.

Formation of couples is a central event in the implementation of the Program. That is why the event has been specially prepared and is the result of all the past stages of the Program. The event is carefully monitored and directed so that children believe that they really get the desired volunteers. The choice is made in such a way that the child can choose a volunteer for himself. The very act of pairing takes place at the end of an all-day gathering of volunteers and children. This is necessary for children and volunteers to get to know each other and get a picture of each other. During the all-day gathering, most of the children are "stuck" for one of the volunteer, to choose them at the end of the day for their "older brother or sister".

Each formed couple receives his own dossier, which includes data from the child and volunteer files, as well as complete results of pair supervision. Volunteers get to know their supervisors, and children get in first contact with their older siblings. After the formation of couples, communion begins.

The completion of the project is a natural ending of a one-year cycle of meeting a child and a volunteer. This is the expected moment when companionship, if results are shown and mutual will, continues at the beginning of the next cycle. The program

seeks to nurture established emotional relationships and it often happens that they continue after completing formal socializing. For new and all volunteers and children who want to continue socializing through the Program "Older brother-older sister", it is renewed every year.

After the end of a one-year association with a child, a decision is made to continue or to finish attending.

They influence the decision:

- Evaluation of the annual relationship of the couple, ie the achieved progress of the child;
- The child's opinion of the student himself (standardized questionnaires);
- Volunteers for the treatment of a child with a child (standardized questionnaires);
- The will of the child and volunteers to continue with the relationship;
- Supervisor estimates the need for continuation.

If the decision on the sequel is positive, it closes the dossier of the current year, and opens a new one, starting with the last general report of the supervisory team. If the decision on the sequel is negative, the couple files are completely closed, and the decision to continue the project for a child or volunteer is made separately.

The way of cessation of the relationship between volunteers and children is organized in such a way that children even before getting to know their "older sister" or "older brother" are preparing for separation. Both children and volunteers explain before the beginning of socializing how their socializing in the project is limited to a maximum of two years, but also that it is possible to end it even earlier due to unforeseen circumstances. If a volunteer, for whatever reason, wants to end up having

a meeting with a child, he is obliged to announce it to the project team and the child at least a month earlier in order to complete the meeting as natural and painless for a child with supervision from one of the members of the project team. If a child wants for any reason he wants to stop having a relationship with his student, he can choose a new "older brother" or "older sister" as soon as possible, but also has the obligation to talk with his volunteer about the reasons why he does not want to hang out with him or her anymore.

It is encouraged to stay with the child in the local community and the content related to it:

- Going into the city (in terms of acquainting space, training for free and safe movement in the outer environment);
- Important institutions, institutions, schools, town areas, city transport, main train and bus station;
- Cinema and theatre performances;
- Sport events;
- Exhibitions;
- Going shopping, learning about the value of money as well as learning which needs can be met in the local environment.


The local community in which the Institution is located is, for a limited time, the immediate environment in which the child lives, according to the Save The Children UK 2002 survey and the most commonly used environment in which independent living is continued. It is therefore important that the child learns how to manage the local community and the proper use of its capacities.



Activities that are normally done:

- Play games with children and volunteers
- Putting a dragon on
- Playing social games
- Listening to music loved by a child and by whom he likes volunteer
- Joint conversations and exits
- Shopping of food or cooking
- Finding information in the newspaper and on the Internet
- Homework Assistance (occasional)
- Joint snack or lunch
- Going on a cultural event
- Playing social games with children
- Going to the library
- Common sports activities
- Making decorations, origami ...
- Joint reading of books / stories
- Conversation about the first job
- Inclusion in a local project
- Visiting a business or a friend volunteer
- Writing a shared story
- Walking around the park
- Drawing a joint drawing
- Mini golf, zoo or fun park
- Going to a picnic or in nature
- Talking about the future





# Structured dialogue

Structured dialogue is an instrument whereby young people get the opportunity to participate directly in the dialogue with those responsible for youth policy through participatory participation in civil society and through participation in the system of representative democracy, and thus the possibility of real development of youth local and national politics, which promotes active citizenship and strengthens the mutual understanding of young people from different parts of Slovenia. A structured dialogue is the process of youth participation in shaping youth policy measures at local, regional, national and European levels.

The core of a structured dialogue in the youth field is its emphasized vertical dimension. We want to enable young people to become more involved in decision-making processes and the opportunity to express their opinions, thus formulating measures in support of political decisions that help young people to identify later and adopt them as legitimate. At the same time, through consultations with young people, we recognize the real needs of young people in different settings. Through a structured approach to creating solutions to youth issues, we strengthen constructive communication between young people and the public, especially with decision makers. Structured dialogue is an initiative of the European Union, which stems from the EU Councils' resolutions on the implementation of a structured dialogue in the youth field. At European level, the process is structured in time, i.e. cycles (each cycle lasts 18 months and is divided into six-month phases) and thematically (each cycle deals with the central theme from which three sub-themes originate). The main topic is chosen every year and a half by the Presiding Trio of the Council of the EU.

The National Coordinating and Steering Body in the field of structured dialogue at national level is the National Working Group (NDS). According to the instructions from the Resolution of the Council of the European Union, the national working groups consist of representatives of ministries responsible for youth, the National Youth Council and local youth councils, youth organizations, active youth workers and experts in the field of youth issues research.

The role of the National Working Group on Structured Dialogue (SD) includes:

- Regular monitoring of structured dialogue at European level,
- Preparing the vision and plan of the process of a structured dialogue at national level,

- Supporting and follow-up on the implementation of national consultations for each phase specifically,
- Setting the content guidelines for each European Youth Conference,
- Proposing young people to participate in the European Youth Conference,
- Reviewing the implementation of the SD recommendations and actions (at European and national level) at national level;

The task of each NDS is to develop an action plan for the process of a structured dialogue process during the period of the presidency of each trio of EU Member States, in which all members of the group take on different tasks, responsibility.

For each phase of a structured dialogue, young people are invited to prepare their views on the issues raised by young people. The youth council of Slovenia acquires the views of young people through online questionnaires, consultations with young people and other activities that it implements in the field of structured dialogue. possibility All young people, national youth organizations and other organizations experts from the field of youth can participate in the process and contribute their opinions. Based on the collected answers, the leading partner prepares a national report. All EU Member States will forward their national report to the European Structured Dialogue Steering Committee, which summarizes the proposals of young people from European countries and prepares a baseline for discussion among young people and decision makers at European level. The debate takes place within the framework of the European Youth Conference organized by each Member State holding the Presidency, involving representatives of young people and representatives from line ministries from all EU countries.

In addition to online questionnaires, youth attitudes are obtained through various consultations with young people in local communities across Slovenia, national consultations with young people and decision makers. To this end, the Youth Council of Slovenia, in cooperation with the Youth Network Mama and other organizations, conducts structured dialogue projects.

The third option to integrate into the SD is to obtain data from SD projects taking place under the KA3 of the adopted projects under the Erasmus + Program: Youth in Action. The Youth Council receives information from the National Agency and directly from organizations that carry out projects at local, regional or national level.

It is a bottom-up approach - young people from local communities across all EU countries through their national actions contribute opinions and views on the topic of the cycle. At the European Youth Conference, young people and decision-makers together make key recommendations for improving the situation of young people, which is being implemented at European level in various ways. In such a way, we enable young people to participate in decision-making processes. At the same time, through consultations with young people, we recognize the real needs of young people in different settings. Through a structured approach to creating solutions to youth issues, we strengthen constructive communication between young people and the public, especially with decision makers.

Desired effects of cooperation:

- promote and support the process of structured dialogue at local, national and European level,

- monitor the course and support the implementation of national projects of structured dialogue, which are organized independently or in partnership by the Youth Council of Slovenia,
- review the national consultation reports and act towards the realization of youth proposals,
- to raise awareness and sensitize those responsible for youth policy on the importance of social inclusion and participation of young people and their (co) activity in society,
- strengthen support for youth work and youth organizations and youth organizations at local and national level, who, through their programs and the way of work, strive to integrate young people into society.

Deriving from the description of the process, which states that a structured dialogue in the field of youth is an instrument by which young people, youth organizations, youth organizations, youth councils and other actors from the field of youth actively engage in dialogue with those responsible for youth policy. Then it is necessary to provide a process that will take place continuously and establish a structure that will enable young people to participate actively daily in the formulation of youth policy measures at local, regional, national and European level.

The structured dialogue process is carried out with informal methods of work, active participation of participants and learning through work, which influences participants' learning experience. Participants involved in the process gain interpersonal and social competences and strengthen self-initiative and creativity, which affects individual personal development, to strengthen active role in society and to develop work experience and increase employability.

The participants with their own experience learn about the individual processes of the project, which includes the stage of preparation, planning, execution and evaluation. With active work they get to know the different profiles of people and thus expand their social network. Structured debates at local and national level among young people, involved organizations and decision makers encourage the participation of young people in society and the willingness to act and co-create the environment in which they live. The process is strongly oriented towards the personal development of the participants and thus the organizations and the environments where the young people are working.

In addition to the learning dimension, a structured dimension is taking place within the structured dialogue process. Through a structured approach to creating solutions to youth issues, on the one hand, constructive communication is promoted between young people and the public, especially with decision makers, and on the other hand, within the process of the process, concrete proposals are addressed to decision makers give their opinion. It is important that the whole process takes place and that the result of the process is a realized, implemented measure. Proposals suggested by young people often require long-term preparation, coordination and implementation processes, which in turn means slower feedback on the proposed measure. The actors working in the field of structured dialogue have different mechanisms and structures through which they can address recommendations to the decision-makers formed in the process of structured dialogue. However, it is important that all activities consider and take place both the political and learning dimension of the process. With political, it is necessary to identify the right structures and ways to ensure that the process will take place in its entirety. From the preparation of the measure, to the feedback and the implementation of the measure.



The learning dimension of the process needs to be strengthened; therefore, it is essential to empower young people and put structured dialogue into the political decision-making environment, with which we influence political decisions or youth policy (structured dialogue as a tool for empowering young people). In this way, we will ensure the sustainability of the process and retain the motivation of young people, which is especially important because the participation of young people is the essence of the process.



# Structured dialogue in practice

## **Communication campaign**

It is important to promote your project from the beginning to the end. By beginning we mean to promote the project on some platforms or some other events to give and to show the project's guidelines (incentives for job creation and the active role of young people in the new society) and call on youth centres, youth clubs, schools or other youth organisations to encourage young people to follow and participate in conversations on social networks and thus contribute their ideas, and constructive criticism.

## **Introductory activities**

Next step is to conduct a communication event for youth workers, teachers and members of the local youth organization, where they prepare the following content:

- Skills for implementing a structured dialogue (communication, youth management)
- Fundamentals of structured dialogue (guidance for carrying out activities, understanding of the policy and the process of adopting changes)
- Introduction to local youth research.

There should be more than one communication event throughout your country or region, so that participants can register for any event. We have called these participants promoters.

In the continuation of this activity, it makes sense to make a joint meeting of all promoters, giving them instructions for the next part of the project (Regional Consultation). At this meeting, they agree on appropriate communication at the local level, the choice of the appropriate local partnership, evaluation, monitoring of performance indicators and the implementation of workshops of the works of the regional consultation.

## Active citizenship

Promoters carry out preparatory workshops for active citizenship in accordance with instructions from introductory training in secondary and elementary schools and youth centres. Partners in this stage are: local youth centre, high schools, other local youth organization.



# National Conference

Regional  
meeting

Regional  
meeting

Workshops  
in youth  
centres

School  
workshops

Workshops  
in youth  
centres

School  
workshops

## Regional consultation

The follow-up is a consultation of the partners of the local partnership (young people, youth workers, teachers and local decision makers). This activity involves youth workers and teachers as providers and co-ordinators of the event, pupils and students who took part in workshops for active citizenship, active youth from youth centres and youth from youth organizations, as interlocutors on the one hand, and local decision makers on the other. These consultations should be prepared in all regions in your country. The results of these consultations can be:

- Obtain some proposals to improve the situation of young people, which can be addressed to national decision makers.
- From the group of young people who participated in the workshops, some young people from each region should participate in the national conference.

The proposals for improving the situation of young people should be collected by the leading partner, which should prepare working documents for the following activities based on all the proposals received.

## National consultation

Leading partner then pre-compiles all the proposals of all regional consultations and prepares working material. Then prepare a national working meeting with some delegates and representatives of line ministries or other stakeholders who are addressing the initiatives. Each ministry should cooperate with at least two co-workers who will make proposals with young people so that they are effective, meaningful and supported by appropriate arguments that will convince ministers and government.

## National conference

Prepare a national conference, where young people publicly present measures, and the ministers' responses to the proposed measures are presented. All participating youth should be invited to this conference, but each region should provide at least 40% of young people who participated in the workshops. The results of the project should be at least three concrete systemic measures taken by the government, the initiative of which was prepared by young people. Do not forget to develop measures to monitor the progress of the Ministries.

## Evaluation meeting

After few months, organise evaluation meeting with the delegates and go through the:

- Process
- Impact
- Results
- Monitoring of the promises Ministries have made
- Make a next step.

Summarized after Strategy of the structured dialogue, Youth council of Slovenia, 2016.

# Programme of the project

# What is structured Dialogue

**Brežice, Slovenia**

**November 2017**

The aim of this seminar was to teach participants how to organise a Structured Dialogue (SD) in their local community. Network MaMa has been keeping strategic document (evaluations, recommendations and programmes of previous similar projects and prepared a seminar about it). The programme was done for youth workers and youth from local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH), Republic of Serbia (RS) and Slovenia (SI). partner prepared a programme to disseminate the good practices from the past projects. A part of the programme was also dedicated for participants to prepare execution plan of the SD in their local community and was checked by Slovenian trainers.

Seminar addressed following topics:

- Detecting target groups in the SD
- Analysing needs of the youth in each country
- Proper communication
- Methodology and the time table of the SD
- Communication with public



|           | 8.11.2017   | 9.11.2017  | 10.11.2017                                      | 11.11.2017                              | 12.11.2017                                 |
|-----------|---|--|---|---|--|
| Morning   | Introduction<br>(of participants and organisations) | What is Structured dialogue: presentation of the tool and presentation of our projects (Karmen Mum and Urban Krevl, both SI) | Workshop we do in the schools (Mila Gajić, SRB) | Simulation workshop on social exclusion | Planning the project in BIH, SI and RS.    |
|           |   |  |   |   | Communication with public (Karmen Mum, SI) |
| Afternoon | Presentation of the programme                       | Presentation of the projects timetable   | Analysing needs of the youth in each country    | Simulating structured dialogue          | Evaluation                                 |
|           | Introductory game - Elections                       | Exercise – political structure   |   | Debate and reflection                   |  |

# What is social inclusion

Ajdovščina, Slovenia

February 2018

The aim of this seminar was to teach participants how to implement the idea of Older sister – Older brother in their local community. Bosnian and Serbian partner prepared seminar (4 days) to teach 24 participants how to recognize marginalized groups and to empower them to recognize their exclusion through the following:

- How to make a local network with the important stakeholders (The educational and institutions of social welfare, companies and other NGO)
- How to detect children and youth who are socially excluded
- Implementation of methods and techniques in working with children and youth
- Communication skills and empathy
- Approach to the family, how to minimize the stigma etc.



|           | 6.2.2018   | 7.2.2018   | 8.2.2018  | 9.2.2018  | 10.2.2018   |
|-----------|--|--|---|---|---|
| Morning   | Introduction of participants and working plan        | Inclusion of marginalized groups in the local community, theoretical aspect (Bojan Arula, BIH) | Nonviolent and assertive communication (Jelena Nikolic Krstic, SRB) | Presentation of project "Older brother, older sister" (RS, BIH) | The role of theatre in working with socially excluded groups (Novica Bogdanovic, BIH) |
| Afternoon | Marginalized groups, introduction (Bojan Arula, BIH) | Communication with associates (Olivera Bojovic, SRB)   | Planning and running a workshop (Iva Fila Ivanov, SRB)              | Communication with decision makers (dr. Dejan Verčić, SL)       | Planning the continuation of the project and evaluation                               |



# Interim meeting

**Belgrade, Serbia**

**March, 2018**

This is the international mobility made for participants of the first two seminars to check the implementation of their projects, to evaluate the progress of the project and to make a dissemination plan.

The methodology for this seminar was debate (expressing their thoughts on problems or new ideas, improvements), presentations – video, audio, pictures (to show the progress of the project and impact in the project), experiential exercises (if needed to emphasize the feeling or learning input). There was also presentation of the analysis and the mutual debate and planning on the dissemination plan.

|           |  | 27.3.2018                            | 28.3.2018   | 29.3.2018                        |
|-----------|--|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Morning   |  | Presentation of the local activities | Preparation of the dissemination phase                                    | A tour of Belgrade's underground |
|           |  |                                      | Visiting a primary school for the education of children with disabilities |                                  |
| Afternoon |  | Preparation of the manual            | Activities with children  | Departure                        |

# National conference

Ljubljana, Slovenia

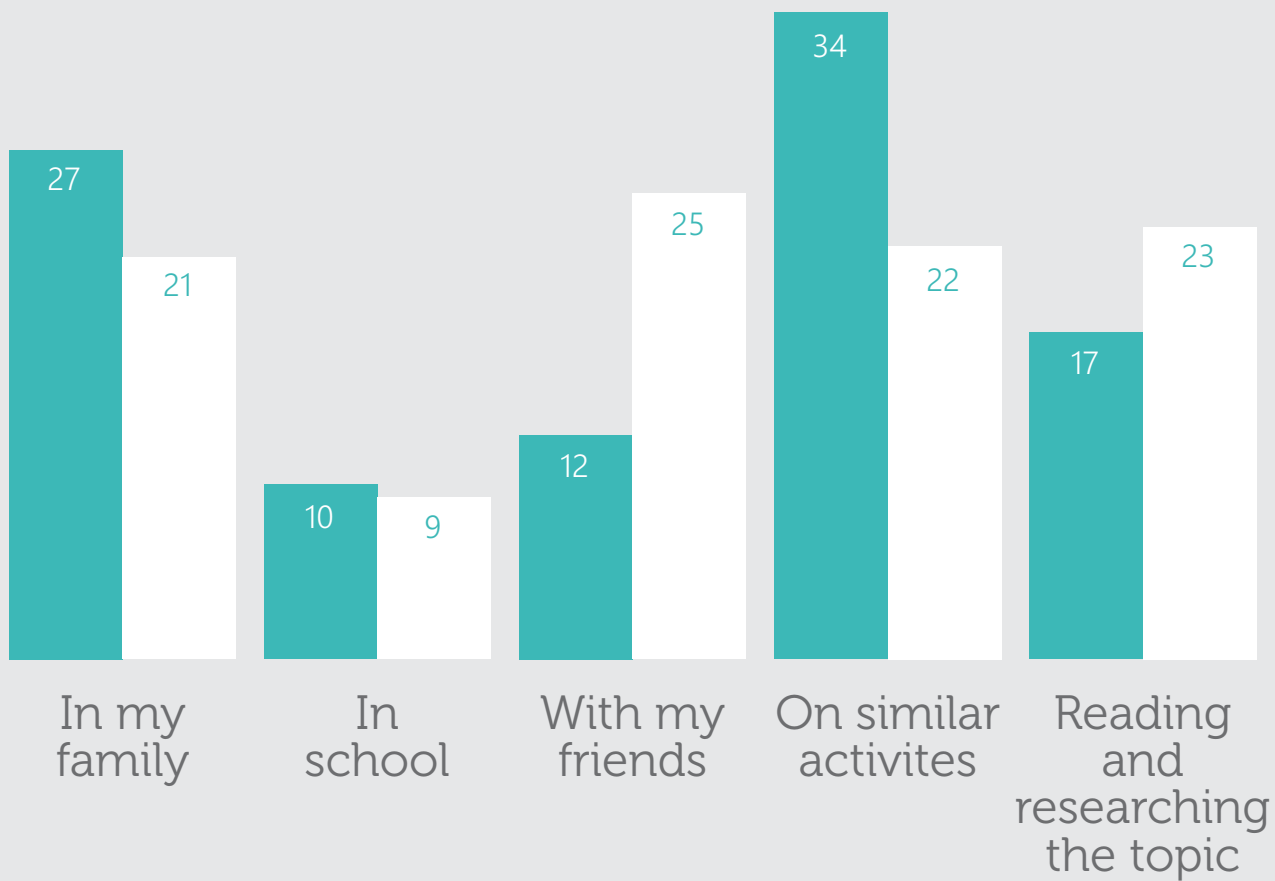
May 2018

This activity connected all participants of the project. In May 2018, we organised the 2-day conference of all participants. We talked about the impact of the project and execution of the project, dissemination success and the future activities.

| 27.3.2018 |           | 28.3.2018   |  |
|-----------|-----------|---|--|
| Morning   | Afternoon | Final conference of the Structured dialogue in Slovenia (debate with the decision makers) |  |
|           |           | Evaluation of the project   | Steps for the future, dissemination plan, sustainability |

■ Socially responsible

■ Tolerant



# Impact of the projects

Project has proven to have deep impact on the participants, may they be directly or indirectly involved in the project. Both activities (social inclusion activity and structured dialogue activity) reached

The ones that were participating in the impact study told us, that they believe they are very tolerant (78 %) and they also believe to somewhat involved in their society (57%). However, both groups also showed that they have discovered some new features about themselves during activities (both 63 %) and that they became more aware of the importance of the politics in their society (67%) and more aware of social exclusion around them (65%). Both groups express their interest in similar activities in the future and they became more aware what youth and youth social work has to offer.

In general, people believe to be tolerant and aware of the political, civic and social environment, but as soon as you set them in the other situation, where they get some personal experience, even if it is just simulated or produced in the form of lecture, then they realized, that their tolerance and awareness are not really what they thought they were. Also, the questionnaire showed, that there was a great believe in their tolerance and civic awareness, but also huge realization that they have not learnt enough.

Participants also became aware, that the reason behind their stagnation in civic growth is also connected with the fact that they don't see enough opportunities in the local communities to be more involved. Regular person, who goes to work or school and spends time with their family afterwards, doesn't seek extra information about the social and civic involvement. They believe they contribute enough to the community by obeying the law and paying taxes. And when such person is confronted with its lack of awareness, one simply doesn't know where to begin to change that. There is enormous number of local organisations that would be happy to include new volunteers or activists, but their message is just not loud enough to reach such regular person. Why? Because to be a volunteer or to be proactive, one needs to learn that.

We asked our participants, where do they think they have learnt to be socially responsible and to be tolerant the most? Their answers can be seen above. It is obvious that the primary socialization is still quite strong and if your parents were active in social society it is most likely you will be, too. It is also obvious, that school, which is the biggest institution for education, has not equipped people to be either tolerant or socially responsible. Life after formal education seems to have the most impact on the development of the tolerance and social and civic responsibilities. And this is a huge challenge for all NGO to find the voice to be heard and an approach that will appeal to their future volunteers.

The impact of the activities we have done in this project have been seen mostly on the increased participation of the young people in this project of whom most of them had their first international experience, which only strengthen their willingness to proceed on this path. All of them expressed a huge gratitude for following possibilities that were offered to them:

- To be able to see similar projects



- To be able to meet people with similar values and get the approval of their own value
- To be able to learn new approach to their missing knowledge and experiences (Slovenians to learn social inclusion and Bosnians and Serbians to learn about the civic and political approach)
- To be able to reflect and pass on their knowledge
- To be able to achieve additional results that enabled them to emphasise their regular work like reaching political decision makers and present them their cause and needs
- To be able to build partnerships they could not have been able to exist without this project and
- To be able to personally develop.

Impact also strengthened the partnership of all three organisations, gave us locally recognized reference and another contribution to the quality youth work and dissemination of the good practices.

## Partners evaluation of their activities throughout the years

Each partner also measured their progress in doing what they have been doing in the last years and reflected on their impact in the local community and here is what they have detected.

Associates from **Serbia** are dealing with the topic of social inclusion since the establishment of the association in 2009. Some of the most important results are:

- More than 500 employees from business sector actively participated in activities related to socializing with marginalized

- Over 3000 direct and indirect users have had the opportunity to use the services of social inclusion programs created by association "DAJ MI RUKU".
- The Association is one of the organizers of the international conference "Inclusion in Practice". The aim of this gathering is to bring together experts, researchers and activists who deal with the education and rehabilitation of people with disabilities from the perspective of various disciplines and to promote the practice of inclusive education.
- For the fourth year in a row, Association gathers more than 150 children and young people and about 100 professionals in the field of social inclusion and representatives of the local community, organizing joint activities.
- In cooperation with one of the city municipality in Belgrade, association organize meetings where the participants are socially vulnerable children and young people, their parents and representatives of the local community

During the last 15 years, over 2.500 volunteers and children in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** have been involved in the project. A total of over 5.000 people. However, this number does not end there. If we consider parents, brothers, sisters and friends of volunteers, as well as future families of children who have socialized through this project, the total number of people who have had a positive influence exceed 22.500.

It was unrecorded that one program in this area encompassed so many volunteers, which gave a significant impetus to the development of volunteerism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The volunteers who acquired their knowledge and skills in this program, later started and implemented their own ideas, thus disseminating the knowledge and values we advocated through the project has reached a completely new level. In addition, a large number of institutions responded positively to the project, so they often involved themselves in manifestations that were organized every year as part of

the activity. Many have also drawn up funding to support additional project activities, volunteer training, joint event ...

Structured dialogue in **Slovenia** has been in place for 7 years and has achieved insignificant results both in the European and national contexts.

- The Structured Dialogue - Dialogue of youth Project (2011-2012), on the 25th anniversary of the EU's youth programs, has become one of the top five youth projects of EU programs at European level.
- The outcome of the Youth Dialogue Project is the campaign and financial support of the Youth Guarantee which, in the EU countries with the lowest youth unemployment rate, contributes financially and politically to the regulation of this issue.
- Together with all projects, more than 2,000 young people and at least 100 decision makers actively participated in the process.
- Designed more than 100 local actions and 15 national measures, all of which were presented to decision makers responsible for their implementation during the structured dialogue process.
- Among them was the measure the first challenge that has been implemented and in the EU countries with the lowest unemployment rate of young people financially and politically contribute to the regulation of this issue.
- We have linked and established the foundations for the continuation of the dialogue between young people and decision makers at the local level and pointed out the problems of young people in local environments that were previously out of the question.
- Incorporated so-called unorganized youth in the project
- Throughout the projects, young people realized the importance of active inclusion and based on the learning experience (they are actively involved in the process), they hope that active participation can change things.





# Conclusion

Social inclusion as well as civic activity of the people are not properly developed. One of the reasons for sure is inadequate education and the other for sure bad position of the organisations that offer such activities. These organisations are mostly NGO and their purpose is to execute the guidelines and priorities of the government and law and are established to complement public institutions.

Social exclusion is a topic, that is mostly connected with the marginalized groups such as minorities, women, elderly, people with mental and physical disabilities, prisoners, drug addicts, refugees, different ethnicities or religions, LGBTQ+ and others and it should be addressed more practically in schools and extra curriculum. Although there are some activities to sensitize the topic of tolerance, respect and social inclusion in schools, we have seen that there are not enough and that these activities don't offer proper depth, meaning they don't really succeed to develop empathy and feeling of community.

Civic (pro)activity has the same problem. Young people know that they will have a right to vote when they turn 18, but that is pretty much the only civic proactivity they know of. They are not properly guided to know about the national or EU system, they have no ideas what their rights are or, even worse, what are their responsibilities.

In both cases we are witnessing isolation and alienation. People don't understand that they are a part of the community and society and that their role in it is far more than obeying the law, paying taxes and maybe vote. Their responsibility is to make society stronger, to help each other, to guide the government, to expose injustice and to praise creativity and values.

Organisations such as partners in this project have such task to sensitize and to raise awareness about the injustice, intolerance, exclusion, responsibilities, values and community work. Organisations like this partnership are developing and executing programmes that make silent impact on the people around them, while they are fighting to get financed and to make quality work at the same time. Organisations such as partners in this project are becoming experts in their field of work because they have a good flexibility possibility to adjust to the fast changes and are also very connected to their target groups. They also spend a lot of time reflecting and learning to achieve efficient results.

We believe organisations such as partners in this project should have more possibilities to work on their programme, to try and be more present and visible in schools and outside schools and for people who are not necessarily involved in the topics. Non the less that whole world should act as a complementary partnership.

To all people who have never stepped in the offices of such organisation, we ask you to do so and expand your civic duty and your personal tolerance for more than you have practised it so far. It is worth it.





*Udruženje "DAJ MI RUKU"*