



Implemented by:

**giz** Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

In cooperation with:



# Fostering social participation of people on the move and the local population in the Western Balkans





## Introduction:

The regional project “Social participation of people on the move and local population in host regions of the Western Balkans” is commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and it is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In North Macedonia the project cooperates with its overarching regional partners, the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS) and the Migration, Asylum, Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI).

The project works on enhancing the professional and life skills of both people on the move and local populations in the project region. Through tailored trainings and activities, it addresses the specific needs of these groups, fostering personal and professional growth. Additionally, the project strengthens the social interaction between people on the move and the local population through cultural, dialogue, and sports related activities. It also fosters coordination mechanisms on a local level and disseminates good practices through the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS). By collaborating with local self-government structures and migration management stakeholders, the project ensures coordination and synergy, offering trainings on conflict sensitivity, and gender-transformative approaches to enhance understanding and inclusivity.

In response to the increasing influx of people on the move in the Western Balkans, promoting social participation and integration becomes crucial. Both newcomers and local communities face linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic challenges. By fostering understanding and bridging divides, the aim is to create spaces where everyone feels valued and included.

## Activities Overview:

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Step into the diverse world of our project's initiatives, where we unveil a spectrum of engaging activities aimed at fostering community cohesion and social integration in the project region. In the following pages, you'll encounter diverse activities including sports, cultural expressions, language learning, and dialogue initiatives that define our commitment to inclusivity and understanding. From the lively companionship found on football fields to the expressive realms of drawing and participatory video filmmaking, each activity serves as a catalyst for connection, bridging divides and nurturing bonds across diverse groups. Explore with us the myriad experiences that bind our communities together, shaping a future of harmony and unity.

## Sport activities

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*Sports activities unite communities, promote teamwork, and nurture individual well-being. They help to break down barriers, fostering inclusion and friendships across diverse backgrounds.*

### Football

In a remarkable initiative aimed at fostering social cohesion and understanding between diverse groups, four football matches were organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The matches brought together individuals residing at the Temporary Reception Centre "Lipa" and local youth from Bihać. These activities transcended their recreational purpose, serving as bridges between communities despite significant language and cultural barriers. At the core of the project's mission is the commitment to create opportunities for people on the



move and local community members to interact positively and constructively, fostering empathy and understanding.

The enthusiasm and engagement witnessed in these matches demonstrate the potential for building stronger bonds among communities. As this activity continues to be held, it serves as a testament to the collective effort towards a more inclusive and harmonious society.

“ Enriching the everyday lives of people on the move is of huge importance, not only for them but for the locals as well, in order to meet and accept people of different cultures. We tend to forget that happiness lies in the little things. Football tournaments were so important for people on the move as evidenced by their ongoing excitement and impatience for new activities. (Male person from local population, BiH) ”



## Bowling

An exciting bowling event was organized in Bihać, aiming to enhance social integration and community bonding in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event, held at the Bingo City Center, saw active participation from both people on the move from the Temporary Reception Centre “Lipa” and local youth, creating an inclusive and vibrant atmosphere.

Amidst the laughter and cheers, everyone had fun and interacted well, regardless of their backgrounds. This lively bowling competition demonstrated the potential for harmonious integration through such events.

“ Although this is not my first-time meeting people on the move, it is most definitely different from all the previous ones. Through bowling, where I experienced more interaction, I realized that despite the language barrier that separates us, what connects us the most is shared humanity. We understood each other without words, and I hope we showed everyone who was with us that they are not even people on the move but simply - people. (Female person from local population, BiH) ”



## Table tennis

An inclusive table tennis tournament was held at the Šid Sports Hall in Serbia. In collaboration between the local table tennis club “Partizan” and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), this event brought together youth from Syria and local youth from Šid.

The tournament showcased the talents of four local boys alongside twelve boys from Syria, all under the guardianship of the Šid Center for Social Work. Residents of Šid, DRC team members, and parents of local children came together to support the event, embodying the spirit of community cohesion.

Recognizing the importance of inclusivity, the “Partizan” coach awarded the best player from Syria, symbolizing a commitment to diversity and unity.



## Cultural activities

*Cultural activities enrich our communities with positivity, celebrating diversity and nurturing understanding. They serve as unifying forces, bridging gaps and fostering connections that transcend borders.*

### Art classes and creative workshops

Youth from Bihać and individuals from the Temporary Reception Centre “Lipa” joined together for drawing classes and creative workshops in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These sessions aimed to foster connection and understanding through art, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers.

Guided by skilled instructors, participants explored the world of drawing, sharing techniques and the stories behind their creations. Through each stroke of the pencil, bonds were formed, stereotypes challenged, and friendships cultivated.



## Art colony

The Arboretum in Obrenovac transformed into a vibrant open-air art colony during the “Obrenovac Summer” festivities, echoing the essence of cultural and international collaboration. A varied group of individuals converged to celebrate art and community, representing the diversity of Obrenovac’s population. Children from local elementary and secondary art schools infused the atmosphere with youthful creativity, while families turned art into a shared experience. Local artists showcased their talents, and representatives from the Youth Office and municipal figures underscored the event’s significance for the community. What





truly distinguished this art colony was its embrace of international solidarity, as individuals from the Obrenovac Asylum Center, coming from Syria, Kyrgyzstan, Burundi, and beyond, shared their unique perspectives, fostering cultural exchange and mutual appreciation.

## Participatory video filmmaking

A series of participatory filmmaking workshops were organized in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Initially, Trainings of Trainers (ToT) with individuals from the local population were held in both countries, followed by collaborative workshops with people on the move. These workshops took place in Belgrade and Sarajevo, drawing together diverse groups from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, North Macedonia and people on the move. Participants delved into the art of storytelling through film, transcending barriers and showcasing their remarkable creativity.



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*The training was really great. I got so many things out of it, not only technical knowledge on how to produce a movie, but also how to pass this knowledge to others. I am really grateful for everything we were able to hear, see and learn. (Female person from local population, Serbia)*

”





The atmosphere buzzed with excitement and mutual exchange as everyone shared their perspectives, experiences, and aspirations, enriching each frame with their personal stories.

During these workshops, short films were prepared, showcasing the collective creativity and unity of the participants. The films portrayed a range of human experiences, from touching stories to inspiring examples of overcoming challenges, capturing the depth of emotions with authenticity. Through the method of participatory filmmaking, the participants discovered a shared language, forming bonds that went beyond cultural and geographical boundaries. These activities not only nurtured artistic skills but also highlighted the beauty of diversity and the powerful impact of storytelling in bringing communities together.



## Dancing classes

Local youth and people on the move from TRC “Lipa” took part in dancing classes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With each step and sway, participants immersed themselves in the lively world of dance, leaving behind their worries and challenges.

This activity represented far more than mere steps and movements. It served to create understanding and connection among the participants, bridging divides and fostering bonds of solidarity.

# Language classes

## English classes

*Language classes unlock doors to new worlds, fostering communication and understanding across diverse cultures. They empower individuals to bridge divides and embrace linguistic diversity.*

In order to promote inclusivity and cultural exchange, English-language classes have been implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These classes serve as bridges between people on the move residing at the Temporary Reception Centre “LIPA” and local residents from Bihać.

“

*I plan to continue my education, and I believe that knowledge of the English language will help me a lot in my further education.*  
(Female person on the move, BiH)

”



The language classes represent more than just linguistic instruction. They symbolize a commitment to building cohesive communities where people on the move and local residents can interact positively and constructively. As participants eagerly immerse themselves in language acquisition, the classes become spaces for cultural exchange and personal growth. As the language classes continue to unfold, they embody the collective aspiration towards a more inclusive and harmonious society, where language becomes a bridge to mutual understanding and shared experiences.



## Dialogue and cultural activities

### Community meetings

*Dialogue activities spark meaningful conversations, cultivating empathy and cooperation among different communities. These activities serve as catalysts for understanding and reconciliation, fostering an atmosphere of respect and solidarity.*

“

*During the conversation with the women, I felt as if I had been a part of the community for a long time.  
(Female person on the move, BiH)*

”

Community meetings serve as invaluable platforms for fostering connections and understanding between people on the move and local populations. These gatherings are instrumental in providing mental health and psychosocial support to the people. The meetings not only facilitate language learning and cultural exchange but also build empathy and solidarity.

During these meetings, individuals from different backgrounds convene to share experiences, aspirations, and traditions. These interactions create a sense of belonging and acceptance, fostering positive relationships and mutual understanding among participants. As individuals come together to connect and support one another, community meetings play a vital role in building inclusive and harmonious societies.

## Our work with institutions

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### Round table

Through the cooperation with NALAS and the *Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (SOGFBiH), a Round table focusing on the “Coordination on migration flows on the local level” was held in Sarajevo in December 2023. The overall objective of the event was to present the results of an analysis on coordination related to mixed migration flows on the local level and to facilitate a dialogue between stakeholders on lessons learned and good practices.

The event brought together representatives of the three pilot municipalities - Hadzici, Ilidza, and Bihac - where the project is being implemented, as well as representatives from the Service for Foreigners Affairs, IOM, and partner organizations.



## Gender and Conflict transformation trainings



Trainings on Conflict and Gender Transformation were held in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. They were primarily targeted at representatives of local governance institutions.

At the core of these trainings was a collective commitment to treat people on the move with dignity and compassion, empowering participants to become advocates for inclusive societies. As they reflect on their roles and responsibilities, these trainings serve as catalysts for personal and societal transformation, paving the way for more empathetic and supportive communities.

“ The training on gender transformation brought me insight into the work of colleagues from other municipalities and their everyday challenges, as well as their methods of dealing with the issues that they face. (Female person from local population, BiH) ”



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On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

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