

KNOWLEDGE CARRIED FORWARD:

FINAL PROJECT BROCHURE

Results, scalable products and recommendations of the GIZ regional project “Social participation of people on the move and local population in host regions of the Western Balkans-PeMo”

Duration and SDGs:

11/2022 – 05/2025 (30 months)

Contributing to SDG: 5 & 16



LEAVE
NO ONE
BEHIND



Commissioned by:

The German Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development (BMZ)

Objective: The socio-cultural participation of people on the move and parts of the host communities of the Western Balkans is improved

THE CONTEXT

- The Western Balkan traditionally is a transit region for people on the move seeking entry into the EU.
- Migration flows in the region are highly dynamic and subject to frequent shifts.
- Regardless of the duration of stay, many people in reception centers show a strong interest in engaging in various social, educational, cultural and recreational activities.
- Social interaction between host communities and people on the move is still hindered by numerous barriers.
- Many people on the move would consider staying in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Serbia if granted access to the labor market, yet restrictive asylum policies pose obstacles to long-term integration,
- The region is experiencing a rise in smuggling and trafficking of human beings, further exposing vulnerable categories to heightened risks.
- There is a need for Capacity Development on coordination of mixed migration flows at local level.
- Regional cooperation and the exchange of good practices among stakeholders require additional support.

Project interventions:

Improving professional and life skills of people on the move and host community members

Improving social interaction between people on the move and local population

Strengthening national and regional cooperation and exchange among key state and local actors



PROJECT PARTNER STRUCTURE

PROFESSIONAL AND LIFE SKILLS

SOCIAL INTERACTION

COORDINATION MECHANISMS & ECONOMIC POTENTIALS

PARTNER NGOS OUTPUT 1 & 2 (CONCERTED APPROACH)

PARTNER OUTPUT 3

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Center for Sustainable
Development (COR)
Žene sa Une
World Vision (WV)

Serbia:

Danish Refugee Council
(DRC)
Humanitarian Centre for
Integration and Tolerance
(HCIT)

Network of associations of
local authorities of South East
Europe (NALAS)

Migration, Asylum, Refugees
Regional Initiative (MARRI)

OVERARCHING PARTNERS of the NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Ministry of Security – Service for Foreigner's Affairs (SFA), Municipality of Hadžići,
Ilidža and City of Bihać

Serbia:

Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (KIRS), Municipality of Obrenovac, Sid,
Sombor, Sjenica and Tutin

CONCERTED APPROACH

A concerted approach: participation, preparedness and shared spaces

From the outset, this project was shaped by a participatory approach, launched with a two-week **design thinking bootcamp** that brought together local partners and introduced practical tools for structured feedback gathering. Design thinking is a particularly effective methodology for development projects because it fosters empathy, encourages iteration based on real world input, and ensures meaningful participation from those directly affected. This approach enabled the team to deeply understand the needs and aspirations of people on the move, specifically what kind of support they required, which activities interested them, and the conditions under which they would feel safe and motivated to take part.

To ensure the initiative was implemented in a sensitive and inclusive manner, all participating actors, including municipalities, civil society organizations, and local partners, were equipped early on with **training in human rights, anti-discrimination, conflict management, and trauma-informed work**. Based on the insights gathered, a wide range of occupational and recreational activities was **co- created**. A defining feature and a cornerstone of the concerted approach was that many activities took place outside of reception facilities and were open to both people on the move and the local population. By using shared community spaces, municipalities fostered opportunities for connection, mutual understanding, and social cohesion.

Built-in **retrospectives** enabled the project to remain flexible and responsive, allowing continuous adaptation to evolving needs and insights, particularly in response to the high fluctuation of mixed migration movements in the Western Balkans. This dynamic, human-centered approach not only increased participation but also contributed to **building trust and shared ownership** among all involved.

FIGURES RELATED TO PROVISION OF SERVICES

Key activities	Serbia	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Through professional and life skill trainings	3.035 People on the move and local population	5.078 People on the move and local population
Through joint social interaction activities (dialogue, culture, sports)	2.225 People on the move and local population	6.132 People on the move and local population
Through recreational/psycho-social activities (only people on the move or only local population)	1920 People on the move and local population	9.002 People on the move and local population
Through capacity development for improved coordination on local level and conflict transformative approaches	22 Intermediaries from municipal level	22 Intermediaries from municipal level

**Total number of participants that attended different activities/overall attendance count.*

SCALABLE PROJECT PRODUCTS

1. Modular Professional and Life-skill Trainings

Action

Modular trainings were designed to offer flexible, targeted learning opportunities tailored to the diverse needs and durations of stay of People on the Move. Extended modules in English and IT were provided for those staying longer, while shorter modules were made accessible for individuals with limited time. The training programs were aimed at fostering integration, communication, and employment skills.

Outcome

The training courses were well received, helping participants gain essential skills for integration and self-reliance. They fostered confidence and created meaningful interactions between people on the move and the local community, contributing to social cohesion and mutual understanding.

2. Trainer Capacity Building for NGOs

Action

Key individuals from NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia were trained to become trainers in culturally and gender-sensitive programs.

Outcome

Competent trainers who can support others in their organization in creating and implementing diverse courses on cultural sensitivity, facilitation, gender approaches, conflict transformation, trauma support, and legal issues.



Document: [TOT of NGOs_cultural and gender-sensitive programs_srb](#)

3. Open invitation for participation in project activities

Action

To promote transparency and maximize outreach to local stakeholders, invitations to participate in project activities organized in collaboration with partner NGOs—were prominently featured on municipal websites.

Outcome

This approach resulted in diverse participation from various community groups and stakeholders, strengthening local ownership and inclusivity in project implementation.



Example Invitation: [Zene sa Une](#)

4. Conflict and Gender Transformation Training for Local Government Administrations

Action

Pilot municipalities participated in comprehensive training, initially emphasizing theoretical foundations, followed by practical implementation through mentorship and tailored support.

Outcome

Representatives of municipalities, social services, and local NGOs involved in migration were equipped with practical conflict resolution tools, enabling them to de-escalate tensions in diverse communities. The training also challenged gender-related perceptions and attitudes, leading to more inclusive policies and practices. A human-centered approach to addressing the needs of people on the move was strengthened, while mentorship visits provided hands-on guidance for applying gender-sensitive methods in daily work. Finally, the training fostered open dialogue and trust-building among stakeholders, enhancing cooperation between local actors and migrant communities.



Document: [MANUAL_Gender and Conflict Transformation in person Training for Local Government](#)

5. Participatory Filming

Action

A series of participatory video (PV) activities were implemented, including a five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) on using participatory video methods with participants from North Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Subsequently, Participatory Video Workshops with people on the move and local residents were organized, where participants created short films jointly capturing personal stories and intercultural experiences. Local communities and people on the move then watched and discussed the films in facilitated workshops.

Outcome

The participatory filming approach enhanced life and work skills among participants, strengthened social interaction through cultural expression and dialogue, and fostered a deeper understanding of the migration experience. It amplified diverse voices, reduced xenophobia, and helped transform prejudices into mutual respect and empathy within communities.



- Links:**
- [Stories to Humanity - Documentary Movie](#)
 - [Stories to Humanity - Documentary Trailer](#)
 - [Stories to Humanity - Compilation of short movies](#)

6. Assessing and strengthening local-level coordination to address mixed migration flows was achieved by supporting local governance actors in enhancing cooperation, improving migration-related coordination, and fostering the exchange of good practices and lessons learned through dialogue formats and joint events involving government and civil society actors, supported by NALAS.



Documents and links:

- [GIZ Project_Summary of good practices coordination in partner municipalities_en](#)
- [Parameters_Assessing quality of coordination at local level_en](#)
- [Analysis migration coordination_BiH_Dec 23_en](#)
- [ANNEX_Summary of the RT in Sarajevo_2023.12.07_en](#)
- [International Good Practices_presented at the RT in Sarajevo](#)
- [Analysis migration coordination_Serbia_April 24_en](#)
- [ANNEX_Summary of the RT in Belgrade_2024.03.28_en](#)
- [International Good Practices_presented at the RT in Belgrade](#)
- [Nalas-Draft Recommendations_coordination of migration at local level_en](#)
Few selected and adapted recommendations incorporated in the
- [NALAS Position Paper to promote Social Inclusion and Migration Governance at the local level, adopted on the](#)
- [NALAS 20 th General Assembly held in April in Varazdin](#)
- [Regional Conference Highlights: Enhancing Migration Governance at the Local Level in the Western Balkans](#)
- [Agenda_NALAS Regional Conference_Nov.2024](#)
- [NALAS E-Course on migration governance at the local level E-course brochure](#)
- [E-course webinar Governance_Brochure_en](#) and [E-course_Intro Webinar_PPT_en](#)

7. Assessing the economic potential and initiating policy dialogue to enhance the economic opportunities for People on the Move was carried out through collaborative work between international and national experts resulting in an in-depth analysis focused on the legal and economic context of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, enriched with international perspectives. The outcomes and practical insights were further shared through regional collaboration supported by MARRI.



Documents:

- Analysis on Economic Aspects and Opportunities in Hosting People on the Move in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia
- Analysis on Local Economic Impact of Hosting People on the Move in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia
- Analysis on Legal Framework on Asylum and Labour market access in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia
- Regional Conference: Protection and Economic Prospects: Fostering Labour Participation of Asylum Seekers in the Western Balkans
- Agenda_MARRI Regional Conference_Sept.2024

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Secure participation from beginning

Use design thinking or other participatory methodologies early in project development to build empathy, co-design solutions, and ensure responsiveness to real needs.

Invest in capacity building early

Equip all actors—especially those working directly with affected populations—with training on human rights, anti-discrimination, trauma-informed practices, and conflict sensitivity to ensure inclusive and respectful implementation.

Prioritize shared community spaces

Conduct activities in open, neutral, and accessible local spaces rather than closed or segregated facilities to promote trust, inclusion, and interaction between different community groups. Practical example: signing a Memorandum of Understanding between local authorities and NGOs to facilitate the use of community spaces, or usage of public spaces, for joint activities and inclusive engagement.

Ensure mixed-joint participation

Design programs that are open to both displaced populations and host communities to foster social cohesion and prevent parallel structures or exclusion.

Establish continuous feedback loops

Integrate mechanisms for regular feedback, reflection, and adaptation throughout the project cycle to remain responsive to changing circumstances and participant input.

Promote shared ownership

Involve local governments, civil society, and communities not just as implementers but as co-creators and decision-makers to enhance sustainability and long-term impact.

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Žene sa Une

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