LOCAL ENGAGEMENT AND ASSET DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The Local Engagement and Asset Development Activity is a four-year, $1.7 million project implemented by the National Coalition for Decentralization (NCD), a local network of 16 civil society organizations (CSOs) based in the south of Serbia. The project supports community development by mobilizing existing local resources and increasing civic engagement throughout Serbia. NCD helps to develop collaboration and strong ties between citizens, local civil society organizations, the private sector, and government.

ACTIVITIES

- Improve public perception of civic engagement and activism and raise awareness about the potential of community resource mobilization through the national public outreach campaign “Respect for Activism.”
- Introduce innovative models promoting citizen engagement through mentoring, capacity building, and financial support to local initiatives.

RESULTS

- Supported 127 local initiatives around a variety of issues including labor rights, emigration, air pollution and environmental protection, land preservation, waste management, culture, marginalized groups, and arts, that fundraised over $983,634 in additional non-donor resources.
- Identified and mapped more than 962 citizen-led initiatives throughout Serbia that show that Serbian communities are actively engaged in advocating for positive changes in their communities. Provided follow-up technical assistance to 665 of these initiatives.
- Graduated three groups of young leaders through the ORCA Academy, a training program for young professionals from Serbia and the Western Balkans to help increase their knowledge in animal welfare and nature conservation. Sixty-three participants received
training in leadership and communication skills, advocacy techniques, and project management. Participants also received mentorship for writing projects and the nine best project proposals received grant funding for implementation.

- Reached more than 1.5 million people in Serbia through two public campaigns to promote activism and citizen engagement.
- Some of the most notable results supported include:
  - The Renewables and Environmental Regulatory Institute (RERI) located in Belgrade, formed a resource center to help local organizations and individuals participate more effectively in local decision-making processes. So far, 168 groups and individuals have requested support in the field of environmental protection. RERI is currently looking into eleven inquiries and reports of violations of regulations.
  - The "Frame of Life" organization from Mionica established the first local seed bank in Serbia and then helped establish eight additional seed banks.
  - The project helped to reconstruct the reception station for animals in Zoo Planet in the village of Kamenica near Nis. This newly equipped space enables Zoo Planet to provide better care for injured animals.
  - The organization ProTok21 from Smederevo raised awareness on and mobilized citizens in the fight against air pollution. To help raise awareness about air pollution, it set up a public pollution measurement digital sign in the downtown of Smederevo.
  - The initiative “Safe in Traffic” from Nis built an application that helps people with disabilities remain safe when crossing the street by identifying potholes and other places that are difficult for their accessibility. In addition, they conducted public awareness campaigns for the public and made six policy recommendations for improving safety of people with disabilities.
  - The Ecological Society of Sokobanja established a solid waste management system in Resnik village to be replicated in all Sokobanja villages. The municipality agreed to institute participatory waste management planning.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PROJECT FUNDING
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Serbia)

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION
National Coalition for Decentralization (NCD), Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), Organization for Respect and Care of Animals (ORCA), Jelena Šantić Foundation, Media - Reform Center Niš

WHERE WE WORK
Nationwide

PROJECT DURATION
June 2018 – June 2022