

## **ASB SEE YEARBOOK**

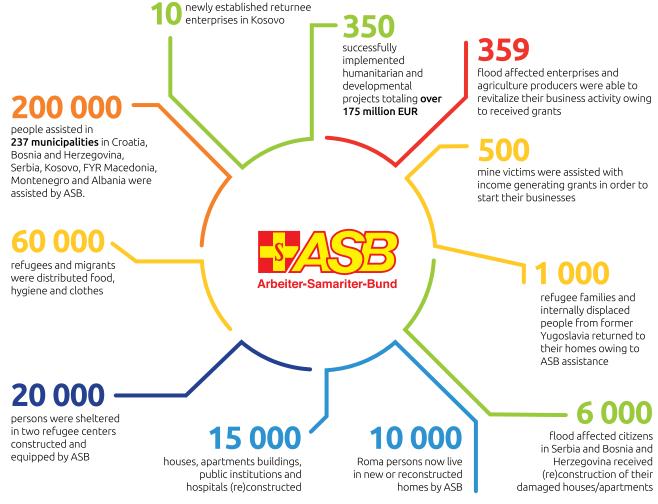
2016 - 2019







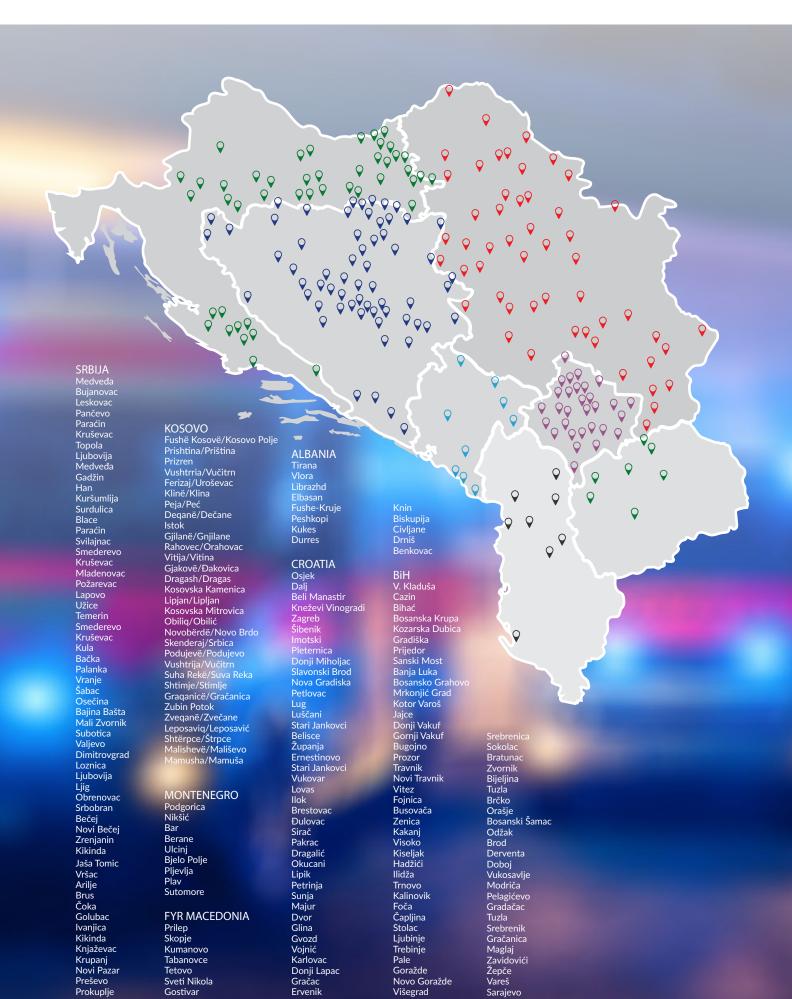






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### **Message from South East Europe**

The reaction to crisis, either man or nature made, is always demanding, dynamic, and is moving the focus from institutional approach to effective and rapid response to the problem in question. We are very thankful in ASB SEE that we had a chance in the last three years to have a break from immediate response and were able to regroup and rethink our strategy and to continue supporting strategic and institutional empowerment of the most vulnerable.

Still, exactly the crisis has:

- taught us all the weaknesses of the social protection systems and the scale of the need for investments:
- showed us the true strength of the local grass-root and civil society organizations and the force of the local partnerships between the authorities and NGOs (especially if supported by national authorities and international donors):
- Revealed the true and honest partnership of the EU towards the WB region, often invisible to ordinary citizens due to heavy bureaucratic language. The efficient financial and logistic EU support to the WB countries substantially alleviated the burden of the crisis, but also helped the EU to understand that apart in process, the concrete investments in the social sector are needed as well, and are often much more visible to the people on the local level.

With this in mind, ASB SEE launched Social Dimension initiative by the end of 2017. Under the Initiative, ASB mainstreamed all of its WB's projects with the clear goals: to support the people through direct interventions in the field of provisions of social services; to support the social welfare systems in the WB countries to develop long-term sustainable services for its most vulnerable citizens.

We are working on these goals with the clear support from the EU, social welfare Ministries in the WB, and our friends from the local civic organizations. As a result - we would like to see that the national Governments in the WB, jointly with the EU, are planning and programming IPA funds with much more sensibility for the social issues.

The bases have been already set – in November 2018 ASB SEE organized a ministerial conference and hosted social Ministers from all 6 Western Balkan countries. In the presence of high officials from the EU Parliament, and with the support of the Commissioner Hahn, the Ministers signed the Social Dimension Declaration, the document highlighting the need for stronger investments in the social sector.

ASB took the process even further – in cooperation with the local partners and communities, we prepared 195 ready-to-be-funded projects, originating from 65 municipalities from WB.

Apart from working on institutional improvements, ASB continued to support the most vulnerable. We invested 1.2 mil EUR in economic empowerment programs in Kosovo; more than 2.5 mil EUR in housing, economic, social and humanitarian support in Serbia; more than 3 mil EUR in disaster-recovery and economic support programs in B&H.

We continue to support people with disabilities, migrants, refugees, and returnees, mine victims, Roma, women and the most vulnerable. And alongside our new initiatives and strategies the main ASB motto remains our inspiration – **WE HELP HERE AND NOW.** 

Sincerely Yours,

Soface Ely

Elmir Bojadžić

Regional Director for South East Europe



### SUPPORT TO THE SYSTEM

### Support to CSOs and organisations dealing with provision of social services to the most vulnerable

The recent problems Western Balkan countries encountered in past few years such as floods, migrant crisis, earthquakes, etc. exposed all the challenges before the public social service delivery systems, particularly visible in the lack of coherence among all stakeholders and cooperation between public and private sector.

Civil sector proved to be a valuable partner during the time of crisis, with a great potential for more ambitious involvement in institutional social service delivery as opposed to the current model of random and a very limited participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in provision of social services. ASB recognized the importance of civic involvement in the social sector and initiated a series of capacity building projects aiming at networking, mentoring and knowledge-sharing.

Such programs are of outmost importance due to the lack of investments in the social welfare sector which is resulting in extreme levels of unemployment (reaching up to 40%), social exclusion and poverty (10% of WB population living below the poverty line). Currently, a significant proportion of low-income citizens have poor access to social safety nets and required social services. Services for elderly and disabled, support to marginalized women and migrants or services for vulnerable youth are random and mostly concentrated in the urban areas, while the quality of services is unequal and superficially monitored by the authorities. The process of EU integration is one of predominant driving forces behind the much needed reforms for improvement of the everyday reality of people in WB countries. ASB sees this as an opportunity to enhance the dialog between the civil sector, citizens and political elites both in the EU and WB on the necessity of the social dimension of the EU integrations for WB countries.

In the past few years, ASB conducted several projects addressed on advocating for greater involvement of CSOs in the decision making process, raising their capacity and enhancing dialog between public and private sector. Among other thigs, ASB established the biggest network of providers of social services in the Southeast Europe (SEE) (bringing together more than 220 CSOs) and launched regional Social Dimension Initiative for gathering together all key decision makers in the social sector.

ASB invested more than 4.2 million euro in the last years in projects focused on the positive changes in the social systems in the Western Balkan countries, focused both on the civil sector and official social welfare institutions. Our key donor in this field remains the EU.



## IRIS networking - CSOs for protection sensitive migration management

#### The biggest network of social service providers in the Balkans

The Western Balkan network of non-profit providers of social services – IRIS Network, was established by Arbeiter Samariter Bund and its partners back in 2012 with the financial support from the EU Civil Society Facility Programme (CSF). The goal of IRIS Network is to strengthen the role of civil society organizations as social service providers throughout the Western Balkans and to ensure that these organizations are recognized as equal partners by the public sector.

Furthermore, it aims to enable a dynamic civil society actively participating in public debate on democracy, human rights, social inclusion and the rule of law with sufficient capacity to influence policy and decision-making processes. The Network focuses on achieving greater commitment and capacity of CSO networks to give citizens a voice and influence in public sector reform processes through analysis, monitoring and advocacy, and to strengthen the CSO Networks dealing with social service delivery SSD in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia in order to improve overall Service delivery to the citizens.

Currently the Network gathers 203 member organizations which provide various types of social services for people with disabilities, children, youth at risk and women who are victims of violence, Roma, migrants and asylum seekers and other members of vulnerable social groups. It is the only regional network that brings together CSOs social service providers in South East Europe and consists of 6 national networks gathering organizations that provide different types of social services to different vulnerable groups. At the beginning of 2018, IRIS Network commenced a new regional initiative developed by the IDC and its partners from ASB, SOS Podgorica, LIR CD, La Strada and Initiative ARSIS. The initiative aims to significantly contribute to the improvement of service delivery and policy framework related to the migration in the region of Western Balkans. In the process, CSOs social service providers will increase the quality of migrant related services they provide, as well as internal human resources.

#### IRIS Networking million euro value of the project national networks created member organisations in WB 10,000+ daily beneficiaries provided with social services 60+ grass root project supported 30 organisations initiated licensing process 10 organizations received ISO 9001:2015 certificate 250 participants attended seminars, trainings, academies, caravans 50+ conferences and advocacy events Influenced on over 300+ decision makers and stakeholders from private and public sector 61 organizations network members supported with the small grants facility





## Regional Social Academy of IRIS network

Under the framework of IRIS network, Regional Social Academy is organized annually in different WB countries where IRIS Network has its members.

The Academy offers participants a unique opportunity to benefit from a diversified training package which covers variety of topics such as legal framework, practical models of innovative social solutions, social enterprises in the region, new instruments for active social inclusion and for social services delivery etc.

Participants usually attend 4-day tailor-made training consisting of different learning methodologies including lectures, workshops, discussions and field visits. The Academy program enables further improvements and optimization to the needs, interests and constraints of the target groups and their institutional and organizational environments.

Successful participants obtain certificates and enter Academy Alumni. Outstanding results at the Academy are seen as an advantage when applying for EU based traineeships organized by IRIS Network. After the Academy, participants have the opportunity to receive the scholarship for traineeship in relevant organizations located in the EU.























20 journalists from 5 countries spent 6 days on the caravan visiting 7 migrant camps and 10 CSOs working with migrants along the WB route in Serbia, BIH and North Macedonia. The Balkan Media Caravan was held from 3rd – 8th of November 2019. The aim of the caravan was to enhance human, sensitive and objective reporting on migrations in the region by increasing the level of knowledge and information among journalists. The event gathered young journalists from reputable national and local radio stations, television, newspapers and digital media.





The Media Caravan included trainings, workshops, lectures from human rights defenders and journalists from the region and field visits to refugee camps, with the possibility to conduct interviews with migrants. Participants came from media organizations covering more than 10 million people in the Western Balkans countries. Over 20 reports were produced and broadcasted regarding Balkan Media Caravan and migrants crisis on Balkan route thus enabling the news to potentially reach over 7,5 million people.

Balkan Media Caravan was organized in the framework of the project "IRIS networking CSOs for protection sensitive migration management", implemented by IDC in cooperation with ASB, LIR CD, SOS Podgorica, La Strada North Macedonia and ARSIS Albania, and funded by the European Commission.









# Voice of IRIS in Brussels



On the annual basis, IRIS network is organizing an event in Brussels where topics of social inclusion and reform efforts from the Western Balkans are presented to the European Parliament members and other important stakeholders. The last round table in Brussels was held on 20th November 2019 in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. IRIS Network presented its Regional Shadow report on the social reforms and migration in WB. Members of IRIS, small grass-root organizations, also got an opportunity to take part in the event. The event brought together representatives of the EU Commission, MEPs, experts, trade unions, and civil society to discuss how a reinforced social dimension in the EU enlargement policy can be brought to life.







Project was financed by the European Commission in the total amount of over 330,000 euro.















institutions in North Rhine-Westphalia region with regard to their target sector.





### Help on the route

## Fostering protection of human rights of migrants passing through North Macedonia and Serbia

Fostering protection of human rights of migrants passing through North Macedonia and Serbia

In 2015, Serbia saw a dramatic increase in the numbers of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries seeking to transit through the country on their way to Western Europe. Over one million people passed through Serbia on their way to Western Europe using so called "Balkan route".



















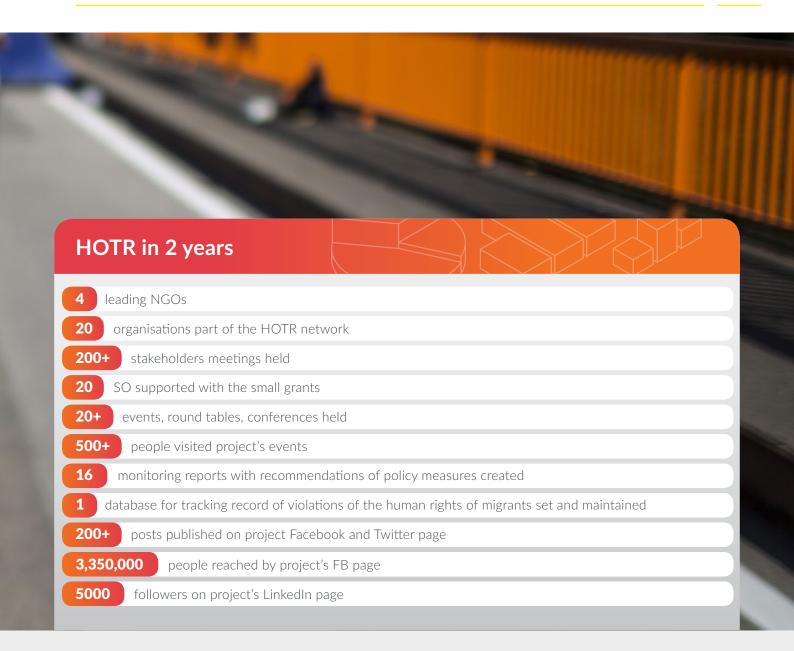
In the peak of this problems, ASB joined forces with the Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation, Macedonian Helsinki Committee and Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre and started with implementation of the project "HELP ON THE ROUTE- Fostering protection of human rights of migrants passing through Macedonia and Serbia" with aim to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights of migrants, including asylum seekers and asylum seekers in the third countries, passing through North Macedonia and Serbia.

The Action lasted for two years (2016-2018) and was implemented on the territory of North Macedonia and Serbia, and was supported by the European Union with 693,000 euro.















# ASB campaign for children rights

In 2019, Arbeiter Samariter Bund Offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, started with new project addressed to children: "Promote and protect vulnerable children rights". This project is funded by the European Union with total amount of 192,500 euro and implemented together with CSO LIR CD.

The overall objective of the project is to support democracy and address human rights through promoting, protecting and fulfilling children rights in support of civil society and governmental organisations.









Project will improve competences of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) defending the rights of children and IRIS BIH network members for implementation of evidence based advocacy campaign.







Political commitment to the European Union (EU) accession process for the Western Balkans region accelerated political and economic reforms. For two decades, Western Balkan countries benefit from substantial EU assistance. Still, the region is facing social risks associated with poverty, income inequality, unemployment and other forms of social exclusion.

Social Dimension Initiative (SDI) has started in August 2018 with the aim to point out the necessity for better social and employment policies in the enlargement process, beyond the framework of the EU social acquis. This regional initiative is the outcome of ASB's 25 year's long humanitarian work in the region and the identification of plenty of common potentials and obstacles for social prosperity and wellbeing of the citizens of these countries on their path to European Union membership.

Within the SDI around 200 ready-to-be-funded social project ideas are developed from six WB countries. Projects are prepared through expert mentorship to 520 local actors from 65 underdeveloped local communities nominated by the national social welfare ministries. In each of the WB countries high level consultations were organized with relevant national stakeholders where the country specific topics were discussed with the aim of setting the main priorities is social sphere related to national strategies, accession negotiations and IPA programming. The National Conferences were organized in Tirana, Pristina, Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skopje and Belgrade from April to September 2019 with participation of more than 500 most prominent representatives of public, civil and business sector.





Genuine partnership is established with social welfare ministries in the WBs, with 65 municipalities, local civil society organizations and number of international actors who all understand and support the need to translate political commitment to EU integration into tangible improvement of the lives of the people in the region and thus increase understanding of and support for the EU integration in local communities. SDI is implemented by ASB SEE offices in BIH, Serbia and Kosovo with the support of local partner civil society organisations – LIR CD BIH, SOS Montenegro, ARSIS Albania, Preda+ Kosovo, La Strada North Macedonia, IDC Serbia and regional IRIS Network. It is based on close collaboration with EU parliament, national Parliaments and Governments in the WB countries and local NGO sector, as well as other European and international actors.

### Project is fully funded by **ASB Deutschland** with amount of **210,000 euro.**





Launching regional Ministerial conference within SDI "Leaving No One Behind in the Process of Western Balkans' European Integration" was held on November 6th 2018 in Belgrade. For the first time, all seven WB ministers in charge of social policy gathered together with more than 150 participants and representatives of EU and other international institutions and EU member states.

The ministers expressed their readiness to strengthen social and employment policies in both conception and implementation in cooperation with all other stakeholders while also tackling issues in regional cooperation framework. The

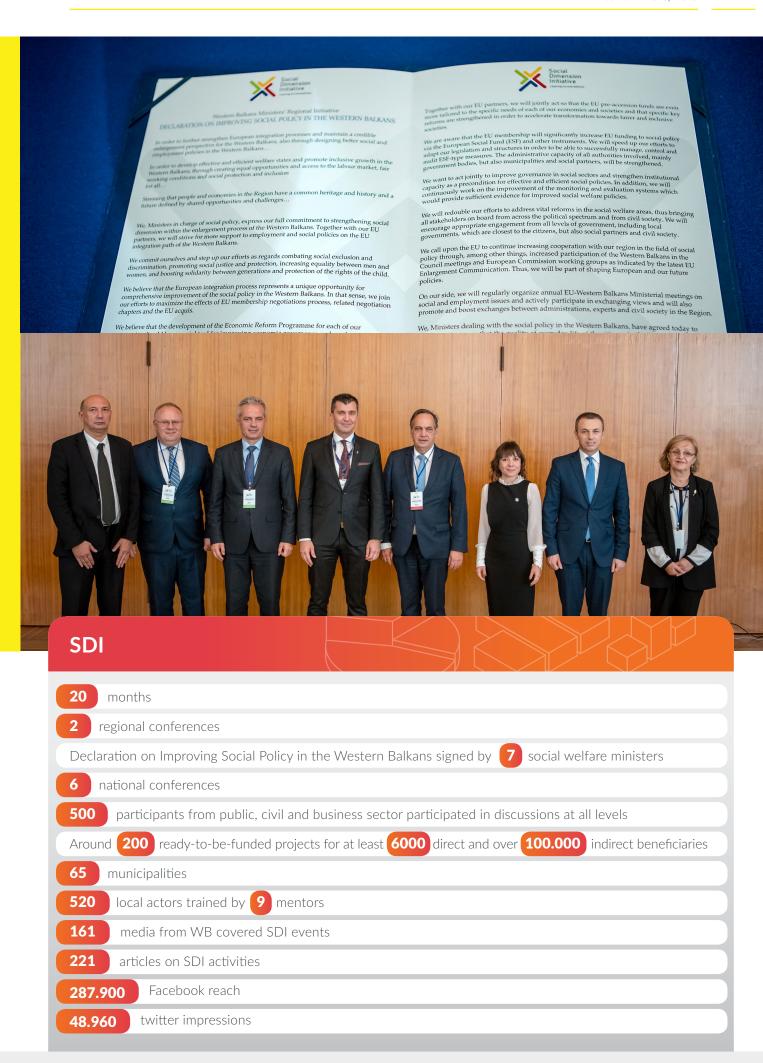
Declaration on Improving Social Policy in the Western Balkans was signed expressing their commitment to step up efforts in "combating social exclusion and discrimination, promoting social justice and protection, increasing equality between men and women, and boosting solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child". They committed "to jointly act to ensure that the quality of everyday life of the citizens in the Western Balkans progressively comes closer to the quality of life of the citizens in the European Union that the growth in the Region is evenly distributed and that no one is left behind."



"We are encouraged by the Social dimension initiative, lunched by ASB, German humanitarian organization, and supported by all Western Balkan's ministries. I would like to thank all ministers involved, and also Knut Fleckenstein in person, for showing determination for improved governance and institutional capacity and for understanding the importance of regional cooperation in social and employment policies"

Mr. Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

Regional SDI Conference Belgrade, November 6th 2019.





### SUPPORT TO THE PEOPLE

In the past four years, the Western Balkan countries have faced major changes that have directly affected the social sector. After the big floods in 2014, a wave of migration opened up new problems and confronted the systems of these countries with new request for both emergency assistance and institutional support. Several million migrants passed so-called Western Balkan route - North Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia, during the pick of the crisis. While the pick is over, the route still exists and the biggest challenges are currently in front of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition to emergency assistance, ASB SEE assisted in integrating these people into the system, making it possible for asylum seekers and their families to live in dignity, either wishing to stay in some of the Balkan countries or just transiting. The ASB offices in Belgrade, Sarajevo and Prizren have joined forces with their national partners and bravely faced a new challenge, which meant that, in parallel with the reform of the institutional and legal set up, all this was to be implemented on the ground.

In addition to the migrant crisis, all countries faced both lack of investment in the social sector and a lack of direct social service providers. With the assistance of the European Union and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ASB SEE supported by its national partners from all WB countries, implemented 13 projects in the last 4 years, in total value of € 13 million of direct assistance to the most vulnerable.





# Direct support to the most vulnerable

For almost 30 years in the Balkans, ASB is supporting the most vulnerable through variety of programs.

More than € 9.4 million, donated by the German Government and the European Union, has been invested in this direct support programs during past three years. Provision of decent living and housing conditions, as well as economic empowerment is a priority when working on integration of the marginalized groups. ASB invested the most in the previous years in the flood recovery programs, primarily in Serbia and BIH, which were hit by heavy floods back in 2014. The actions were financially supported by the EU which invested more than € 6.7 million in flood-recovery programs.

Apart from flood programs, ASB SEE implemented other projects of direct socio-economic assistance to the most vulnerable with the support of the EU and the German Government, worth over € 2.2 million.



### ASB supports socioeconomic development in Kosovo

Sasa Stamenkovic lives with his mother, wife and three children in village Kuzmin in Kosovo. Poor socio-economic situation, motivated Sasa to apply for ASB agricultural grant. ASB awarded Stamenkovic family moto-cultivator with milling machine, followed by the agricultural training program.

Today, joining forces with his family, Sasa is planting and harvesting vegetables on his own land. Moreover, Sasa is earning additional income by renting his machine to neighbors and other farmers what significantly improves his living conditions and brings him and his family new hope:

"My plan is to purchase small van in order to transport the products to bigger markets in Prishtina, since now I am producing more than before I had this grant."



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Living in Kosovo and being a single parent is a challenge. The fact of being a single mother facing severe economic conditions makes it way harder. Therefore, ASB supported single mothers who are in poor economic conditions, by working on identifying their skills and helping them to develop knowledge and experience in fields they are interested in, which would provide them more opportunities for a better life.



#### **Empowering women**

ASB Kosovo supported three certified hairdressers from the municipalities of Obilic and Gracanica who were struggling for a better future. They received full hairdresser saloon packages consisting of all necessary tools and equipment.

"I am very grateful that you have given me the opportunity to make my dream come true and create a better future for me and my family. Now I have the will and hope for a better life. Thank you very much!" one of the beneficiaries expressed her gratitude through tears of joy.







#### Your willingness, our support – A better future perspective

In the framework of the project "Integrated Socio-Economic Support to the most vulnerable Families in Kosovo", ASB supported fourteen beneficiary families from Municipality of Obilic and Maliseva.

"From now on I will be able to feed my children and make profit by selling the rest of the milk and milking products. Thank you very much ASB, thank you Germany."- said one of the beneficiaries. Each family received a cow, milking machine, freezer, food for six months and the cans.







"Socio – economic stabilization of ethnic minority and majority communities in Kosovo" is implemented by Arbeiter Samariter Bund, Office in Kosovo, together with PREDA Plus organisation. Project is launched in 2017 and funded by Engagement Global, on behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development – BMZ, in total amount of 1,3 million Euros.

The project aims to create sustainable livelihoods and better socio-economic conditions for ethnic minorities' and majorities' families in Kosovo through provision of income generating, employment and community development opportunities. With the main focus on strengthening the capacities of start-ups, micro and small enterprises, business associations, farmers, agricultural associations, ASB was strongly addressed creation of working places in existing companies and small community development initiatives, in cooperation with host municipalities. During three years of implementation, ASB supported Socio-Project beneficiaries through creation of jobs and income generation opportunities by providing them grant-based economic packages, strengthening capacities of agricultural and business associations and creation of community development opportunities by sub-granting of small community projects and assistance to larger-scale community projects.









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Genc Dragaqina from Lipjan municipality has been granted a green house. Mr. Dragaqina joined forces with his family members in planting and growing vegetables in their green house. Using the profits from their products, only couple of months later they managed to buy additional greenhouse that will help them expand their family business.

#### **Socio - Project results:**

- 11 municipalities within the project
- 55 events held
- **1.674** participants attended on project events
- beneficiary families from small community projects supported
- 144 new jobs started
- 40 new businesses established
- 44 existing businesses supported
- 15 Business Associations supported through capacity building
- 9 Business Associations supported with operational grants
- **15** Agricultural Associations supported with capacity building
- 9 Agricultural Associations supported with operational grants
- **167** business grants awarded
- persons skilled through training
- **1.116** training days held
- days of external consultancy expertise
- days of support on visibility through external consultancy expertise
- 4 national conferences held
- 45 participants on Study Visits
- 42 International Fair participants







# WE HELP HERE AND NOW!

Due to emergency situation caused by the earthquake in Albania, ASB team assisted in helping the most vulnerable. Our Kosovo team was working hard during the earthquake crisis, providing the victims with emergency packages.

Together with local authorities and other NGOs, they supported the emergency shelter - the Innovation and Training Park in Prizren for accommodation of people from Albania, who have lost their homes during this disaster.

With direct support of ASB Deutschland, ASB SEE team provided emergency kits, hygiene packages and baby equipment for earthquake stricken families.











## ASB and GFM joined forces to help most vulnerable in Serbia

In 2019, Arbeiter Samariter Bund Office in Serbia started with implementation of new project "Direct socio-economic assistance to extremely vulnerable families in Serbia". Project is funded by German Foreign Ministry and cofounded by municipalities Ub, Kursevac and ASB.

Project goal is to contribute to the socio-economic inclusion of particularly vulnerable families in Serbia and to create decent living conditions with regards to employment opportunities for at least 48 socially vulnerable families living in rural areas, amongst whom are returnee families in Krusevac and Ub. ASB will implemented this project through provision of agricultural, grant-based economic packages for job creation and promotion of public/private partnership for the benefit of the target group.

In past four years, GFM supported projects that ASB implements in Serbia with more than 2.6 million euro.







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Jelena Petkovic from Ub, one of the project beneficiaries is mother of two children. Living in poor conditions is further complicated by her taking care for her child with special needs.

"It is necessary for me to be at home with him all the time. Can't go to work and if I don't work, we have nothing to eat" explains Jelena, whose son was born with disabilities. ASB donated a greenhouse and startup business training to Petkovic family, giving them the opportunity to grow food for personal consumption or further sale, which increased their income and improved their living conditions.











### Direct socioeconomic assistance to extremely vulnerable families in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina after war period records a high number of its citizens in social need. An increased number of unemployed people gradually falls below the poverty line. Finding employment for this people is a hard task, especially when it comes to habit change and dismantling the social lethargy.

Cooperation with Centers for Social Welfare is a significant form of donor assistance. Such projects result in direct impact on improving the economic status of socially vulnerable families, and indirect impact – the return of the unemployed population into working habits and obligations.

Through the project "Direct socio-economic assistance to extremely vulnerable families in Bosnia and Herzegovina" implemented in period 2017-2019, with total value of € 275,000, over 160 greenhouses to socially vulnerable categories were donated and concrete material assistance was provided with which, by their own working engagement, beneficiaries would shortly produce vegetables. By this approach, socially vulnerable people could quickly enter market 'competition' by selling agricultural products as a result of their own work.





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Mirsada Parganlija, a beneficiary from Goražde is a woman with severe psychological trauma caused by

the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mirsada's working disability is evaluated and claimed by the competent labor commission in charge, thus implying no official employment potential. She is married and has two sons registered as children with disability. One of the sons, who reached the school age, was not enrolled in the school due to his health and psychosocial condition. Her husband Bego is capable for work, but with significantly deteriorated health. As a family, they live from social support, some collection and sale

of secondary raw materials, and lately from small-scale agriculture.

The awarded greenhouse, BIOS T63 model, is fully equipped for active process with a 500 liter plastic tank, plastic irrigation water pipes and black foil. Beside the greenhouse, seeds were also provided for Mirsada's family. Work in and around greenhouse also presents a working therapy for the entire family.

"I wanted this for a long time. I think that I will have somehow my peace in it, but also benefits for my children, so that they can eat healthier food, and learn to work with me. I hear that I could produce a lot with this kind of greenhouse, so I hope I can make some money by selling vegetables to the neighbors, and then to buy some other stuff for kids " stated Mirsada.





### To earn, not to get!

According to Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) Statistics from end 2016, there are 8,362 registered mine victims out of which 1,739 are after-war victims. The high number of over 82,000 landmines indicates that mines still represent a significant threat for lives and hamper steady socio-economic development in the designated, mine-infected areas. Having in mind that Bosnian economy does not provide sufficient jobs and employment opportunities for its citizens in general and that unemployment level is the highest in the region, marginalized society groups, such as mine victims, are particularly affected by slow economic development and consequent lack of jobs. Traumatization and psychosocial vulnerability of mine victims additionally complicate the issue of socio-economic exclusion of mine victims and their families from the main stream of Bosnian society. Therefore, mine victims continuously face a problem of self-employment or employment and consequent social development what in turn creates unsecured future from socio-economic and psychosocial point of view.

In the past couple of years, within projects under the slogan "To earn, not to get", ASB was continuously helping this marginalized groups to increase socio-economic potential and income generation opportunities, through provision of business trainings and business grants in the project target areas. With financial support of the European Union, more than epsilon 1.5 million has been invested in Bosnia and Herzegovina by now in the projects addressed to the mine victims.

The last completed project from this component has enabled business trainings for over 100 beneficiaries, mine victims or members of their families as well as business grants for 69 of them in 11 municipalities / cities from both BIH entities. This innovative approach of provision of socio-economic support to vulnerable social groups has a competitive character which, through creation of business plans, selects the best business proposals and provides grants for the selected.

### Federal Managing Director of ASB Deutschland in visit to BIH

Federal Managing Director of the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland eV. Mr. Ulrich Bauch visited in May 2019 ASB South East Europe, office in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On this occasion, together with Regional Director of ASB SEE Mr. Elmir Bojadzic, he visited selected municipalities in BiH, where ASB SEE has been implementing projects for over 25 years.

With great interest and a desire to find out more about the results of the project, Mr. Bauch emphasized the importance of creating better living and working conditions for people with disabilities. He underlined the importance of respecting all rights guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

"It is very important that people with difficulties have right to work and be paid for the work they do. 3 people with this disability are employed in the ASB headquarters. In past decades, in Germany, the care for these people has improved considerably. Wherever living, people with disabilities deserve the same rights as other members of society", Mr.Bauch stated, adding that it is also important to solve the problem of adequate inclusive education for children with disabilities.







The Closing Conference under the slogan "To Earn not to get"– "Innovative approaches to the use of business grants" within this project, was held in Sarajevo on January 23rd , 2020. The event has gathered over 60 representatives of project beneficiaries, local and national authorities, civil society and the EU that was represented by Gianluca Vannini, Head of Operations Section for Social Development, Civil Society and Cross-Border Cooperation of the Delegation of the EU to BiH.







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In municipalities of Bihac, Velika Kladusa, Lukavac and Zvornik, ASB awarded beneficiaries with 58 units of cattle, under the project "To Earn, Not To Get". 12 cows, 4 bulls and 42 sheep were delivered to 11 families in selected municipalities, due to increase socio-economic potential and income generation opportunities for mine victims or members of their families in this area. Beside large cattle, ASB awarded beneficiaries with tractor attachments and moto-cultivators.













## EU Assistance for flood relief in Bosnia and Herzegovina

After the massive floods in May 2014, ASB conducted several recovery programs in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with support of ASB Deutschland, EU, German government and local authorities. € 14 million was invested in this programs in period 2014-2019, 96% supported by the EU.

At the moment, ASB in BIH is implementing flood recovery program worth over € 6.7 million, financed by the EU, (84%), Government of the BIH Federation and local authorities, together with UNDP in BIH, Hilfswerk International Austria and IOM along with the partner municipalities and cities.

The greatest number of program beneficiaries originate from Zenica-Doboj Canton that suffered badly from consequences of natural disasters.

According to expert estimates, 40% of total Bosnian land surface was hit by floods and/or landslides totaling to over € 2 billion of estimated economic impact of the disaster while over 41,000 homes were damaged and 2,000 destroyed by flooding. The ASB support foresees reconstruction of 80 housing units and construction of 80 new homes.











### Return and (re)integration

For the past decade, ASB has continuously worked on return and (re)integration of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, who have left their countries and homes, fleeing wars and poor lives or as part of economic migration.

After big migrant wave hit the Balkans in 2015, when millions of refugees travelled the Western Balkans route, ASB provided significant humanitarian support. In the last year the route that stretched through North Macedonia via Serbia to the EU, has shifted to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the country is currently faced with a large number of migrants waiting, in a very poor living conditions, for their opportunity to reach and cross the border with the EU.



At the same time, ASB office in Serbia continued to support the program of integration or return of internally displaced persons from Kosovo. The European Union remains the biggest donor of assistance for refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees in Serbia. Since 2001, the EU has donated more than EUR 90 million to support economic independence, decent housing and the legal rights of refugees, IDPs and returnees in Serbia.

Under the Program "EU support for the sustainable solutions for internally displaced persons and returnees" totaling € 5.65 million, ASB SEE Office in Serbia is currently implementing two projects worth over € 1 million, addressed to improving socio-economic situation of IDPs from and returnees to Kosovo.

### Providing assistance to refugees and migrants in Serbia

At the pick of the crisis, the needs of the refugees along co-called Balkan route were numerous. There were supply gaps in food, medicine and psychosocial support and protection – thus especially for vulnerable groups such as mothers with small children or unaccompanied minors. Not even nearly all the refugees could be supported adequately.

Through the projects for support to Syrian refugees in Serbia and the region, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office with more than € 2.5 million euro, ASB in cooperation with Association for social support of the youth – ARSIS, Initiative for Development and Cooperation – IDC and PREDA Plus, has provided assistance to migrants and refugees in form of humanitarian aid, medical operations and improvement of infrastructure in Greece, North Macedonia and Serbia.

### Distribution of aid

In Serbia, ASB focused activities on distribution of aid supplies, provision of medical assistance and improvement of infrastructure in reception refugees centers, namely in Subotica and Dimitrovgrad. ASB distributed over 168,500 parcels of water, food and hygiene to refugees in the camps in Serbia, North Macedonia and Greece.

### Medical assistance

ASB's partner Initiative for Development and Cooperation established 4 medical teams which have been active in Subotica, Šid, Dimitrovgrad and Principovac. These doctors and nurses provided medical treatment to 10,000 refuges and migrants in reception centres and for those outside of shelters. Besides regular medical treatment by doctors and medical staff, IDC medical team in Šid provided dental services as well. In cooperation with Health Center of Subotica, IDC provided an ambulance vehicle for urgent medical transport of refugees. Additional to this, more than 5,000 medical parcels were delivered.



### Volunteer team

A volunteer team of 25 volunteers was established during the course of the project. The volunteer team in Serbia supported medical teams in Sid, Subotica and Dimitrovgrad with sorting, packing and transporting necessary medicines, collecting date on provided medical services and other actions such as delivering hygiene parcels. Over 200 volunteer actions were realized with up to 5,000 beneficiaries in total. In Greece, ASB has supervised urgency accommodation for 660 unaccompanied minors and provided them with psychosocial support.









### Marija voluntarily teaches migrants Serbian

Since March 2016, our volunteer Marija was organizing workshops for migrants at the Mixaliste Day Care Center, supporting language learning for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Serbia.

"During their prolonged stay in Serbia, the refugees had a desire to learn Serbian. First, I held classes in Mixaliste for young men who were not included in enrollment programs, but already had a high school or college degree. There were those who wanted to learn some basic Serbian language, so that they could easily get into everyday communication, and there were those who took the Serbian language as a serious task. Unplanned, as it usually happens, volunteering has taken me to completely new waters - teaching Serbian as a foreign language. In the mechanism of working with refugees and asylum seekers, I found my place. It was no longer a one-time help, but something we have worked together with the users. For me, volunteering has become an activity through which I could see the progress of the beneficiary, but also my own progress. From November 2017 I started teaching at the Asylum Center in Krnjaca in cooperation with IDC and the Divac Foundation. I continued to teach, mostly those who lack formal education in Serbia. Through learning the language, refugees learned how to do shopping, tell if they need medical assistance, how they feel, to buy talk to vendors or bus passengers. The barriers and differences between us were broken. Also, through language workshops, migrants learned about Serbian culture, geography and history"







On the territory of Republic of Serbia there are currently approximately 210 000 IDPs, unable to resolve their housing and social-economic concerns without an assistance. Significant improvements are made thanks to the EU and other donor support. However, situation is far from final and durable solutions, especially in the local communities of Central Serbia with the large number of IDP and returnee population.

With that in mind, and with the financial support from the EU, ASB initiated two projects for IDPs and returnees to Kosovo with the total value of over € 1 million EUR.











### A better life for Radica and her children in Serbia

"We had nothing... For years we have been living on the streets of Serbia and Germany, having nothing to eat and no place to sleep... Being abused, beaten. We have traveled thousands of miles in searching for food and bedding. Me and these three of my weak children, hand in hand, slowly... Today I stand here in front of you, in front of the house ASB gave me, and I still cannot believe that all this is not just a dream. Thank you ... We finally have a warm bed and the ability to prepare food. I am happy, I will work hard, we will grow fruits and vegetables, and when I save some money, I will buy a pig," tells Radica Asanovic, an internally displaced person from Kosovo, while three little children hug her tightly around her entire body.

Radica is one of the many beneficiaries of the project "Support to IDPs and returnees in 4 LSG in Central Serbia through provision of durable housing solutions and economic sustainability measures" implemented by ASB.

She came to Serbia several years ago from Kosovo, following her now ex-husband, with whom she has three children. Due to a difficult life and disagreements, Radica was forced to go to Germany during the migrant crisis. While waiting for asylum in Germany, with a baby of a few months in her arms and two children around her feet, Radica survived on the street, hiding from bad weather, but also thieves and burglars. As part of the project, ASB donated her a rural house, construction materials for renovation as well as furniture and household appliances.

"My kids are happy now, healthy, there is hope for them to have a little bit of childhood from now on".

Radica and her children from Krusevac are one of 13 families who received village houses with small packages of building material within the project. Additional to this, ASB will donate 9 prefabricated houses, equipped with furniture and appliances, 18 greenhouses and equipment for agriculture and 14 building material sets.

The project is being implemented in four municipalities in Serbia and is funded by European Union funds under the program "EU support for the sustainable solutions for internally displaced persons and returnees".







### New homes for families in Krusevac

During International Day of Human Rights in 2019, keys to new homes for internally displaced persons were handed over, as part of the program "EU support for the sustainable solutions for internally displaced persons and returnees".

ASB donated prefabricated houses to Djordjevic and Parlic families. The goal of the project is to assist local governments in Serbia in finding a lasting, adequate housing solution and economic sustainability measures for IDPs and returnees. "ASB has been contributing to this idea for twenty-five years by providing durable housing solutions and economic sustainability measures for IDP and refugees. For many years, we have been implementing various projects, like this one, funded by the European Union, and many of them have been implemented in cooperation with Krusevac and with the support of the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia. "concluded Mauro Mascioli, Coordinator for ASB on this project, adding that these were the first houses built under the overall program worth € 5.65 million, implemented by several organizations in Serbia.

In addition to addressing housing and socio-economic issues, the implementation of this project is expected to improve the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of local action plans for IDPs by the end of next year in 4 communities: Krusevac, Cicevac, Arandielovac and Ub.

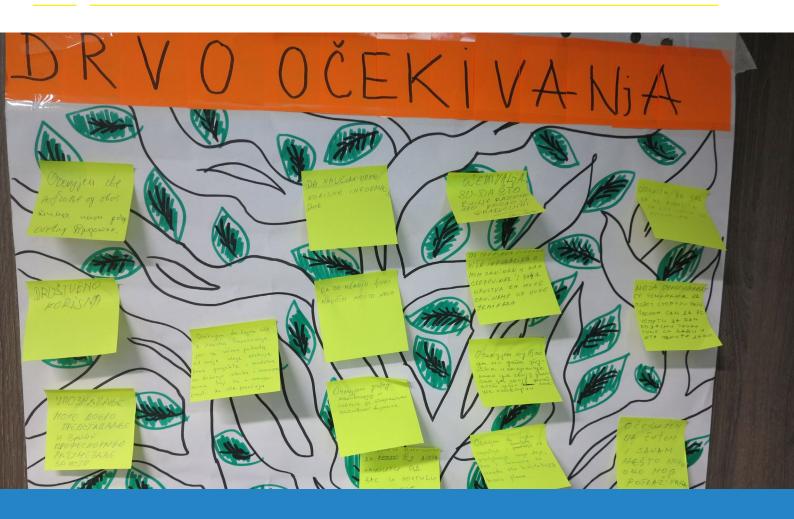




Deka Djordjevic and his family which counts 12 members, are first to receive the keys of new prefabricated house. "We came from Kosovo in the '90s, running from the war. At first we have lived in a broken house which the state had assigned us. Due to political situation, our neighbors did not like us. We had no one to turn to for help. There were those who threw tomatoes at us and shouted to go back where we came from", Deka was starting his hard story, "I came from Kosovo with my father, mother and brothers. Luckily, we were healthy, so we could get started some work. We built this house where we live now. However, we all got married, got kids, it's hard for four families to live under this roof. I wish that my family and children have better living and education conditions. By getting this house, we all have enough space to live and work, so we can make our lives better "







# IDPs workshops for business start-up





Around 24 young IDPs attended the two-day workshops for developing business plan (held during August –October 2019 in Serbia). The purpose of workshops was to guide young IDPs who previously attended ICT courses (JavaScript, JAVA and Graphical design courses) through business plan methodology in order for them to draft and develop their business ideas and later on apply for grants. At the same time, the business plan workshops were organized for 93 IDPs engaged in agriculture and crafts. Most successful candidates will be awarded business grants in form of equipment (worth € 2.500).

The workshops were conducted in the framework of the project "Support to sustainable return of IDPs to Kosovo", funded by the EU and implemented by ASB & CenTriR.









**Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V (ASB)** – the Workers' Samaritan Federation – is a German aid and welfare organisation, engaged in areas such as civil protection, rescue services and social welfare services employing over 23,000 workers and 15,000 volunteers within its over 220 local branches in Germany. As a non-political and non-denominational organisation, ASB has, since its foundation in 1888, represented continuity and reliability.

ASB South East Europe is present in SEE for the last 25 years with three fully operational country offices in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Prizren. ASB SEE has implemented over 350 humanitarian and developmental projects in the Balkans totalling over € 185 million of predominantly EU and German Government funds and assisted more than 120.000 persons in need for reconstructed homes, socio-economic sustainability, technical and social infrastructure and other types of social support and economic assistance.



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