

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



CENTER FOR PEACEBUILDING



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear friends,

we believe that the end of the calendar year is an ideal time to look back and reflect on all the events and activities of that year.

This year will remain striking to all because of the ubiquitous feeling of uncertainty, fear and helplessness if we look at the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But, although challenging and mentally exhausting, this year has given us the opportunity to continue to grow and develop on a personal and professional level.

We also remember the year by the solidarity of the local community, the joint dedicated community work at the Garden of Opportunities, the proactivity of young people, and by 24 skilled peace trainers and two manuals created during this year.

We still face various financial and logistic problems when implementing activities on the Peace Farm because of lack of capacities for accommodation and organizing of seminars. Therefore, we still count on your support and help like the years before.

For your selflessly support in this year we want to sincerely thank you and on this occasion we wish you to stay healthy and safe.

Happy holidays!



VAHIDIN OMANOVIĆ | **MEVLUDIN RAHMANOVIĆ**
Izvršni direktor Program direktor

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE WORK OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE ACTIVITIES OF CENTER FOR PEACEBUILDING IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:

Due to the situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic: along with many other countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina has reached an economic crisis as a result of measures taken by the government to mitigate the risk of infection and the spread of COVID-19.

In tandem with economic adversity, the new world of social distance, prevailing uncertainty and fear have caused an increase in psychological trauma, anxiety, depression, PTSD and domestic violence amongst the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In response to these adversities, our country has received funding; unfortunately, a large majority of this funding is being directed to foreign NGOs or municipalities outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed the Law on Compensation of Part of the Salary in response to COVID-19, which doesn't include organizations, although they have passed and are bringing significant funding from abroad, which then circulate throughout and stimulate the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the state doesn't seem to recognize this hefty economic contribution from organizations. Local NGOs, especially non-profit ones, are struggling with financial losses during this period because they depend on donations and external funds. The lockdown has forced some of the long-standing NGOs to shut down or postpone their work, dismissing workers because donor funds are being frozen or denied. Civil society organizations find are under pressure because despite all of these horrific external factors, the urge and necessity to work for the good of the community remains stronger than ever.

Regardless, local NGOs have yet to stop activities targeting vulnerable groups in this pandemic. Volunteers are working overtime to provide help and to support those in need, such as: children who don't have the resources to participate in online school, families struggling with poverty, elderly citizens with limited mobility and resources, and many others.

Similarly to many other NGOs, the Center for Peacebuilding has been working on these issues since the beginning. Throughout the many years of working with people suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, we gather that these circumstances will serve as triggers to re-traumatize the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who have experienced the war in recent history. In an effort to support our vulnerable community, we are offering psychological support, cranial-sacral therapy, and IBC coaching to community members who are overwhelmed by this situation. We are joined by the Red Cross to support them in the distribution of food and medicine for the elderly, the distribution of face masks, etc. The recent transition from traditional school attendance to the online learning model can be extremely stressful for many families with lower socio-economic status. As soon as this switch was announced, we contacted local schools to provide them with our support and join the "Give Equipment for Online School" initiative. On a volunteer basis, The Center for Peacebuilding worked to collect smartphones, tablets, computers and distributed them to students in the local community in close collaboration with primary school staff. At this time, thirty-six students have received the necessary equipment and successfully followed the online school from their homes.

To mitigate the risks of poverty, the Center for Peacebuilding called on the local community to work together on agriculture and food production on our Peace Farm / Garden of Opportunities. With ten families, we cultivated the land every day, sowing vegetables, fruits and herbs, the fruits of which were free for members.



The COVID-19 preventive measures that have been taken such as the transition to the online world, have affected the maintenance and implementation of our project activities.

All project activities were analyzed, redefined, and restructured in accordance with safety measures to minimize potential risks of spreading coronavirus infection. Local initiatives of Peace Camp participants and caravans had to be redefined and adapted to online work. This process required much overtime work for everyone involved, and yet, the project objectives were successfully realized.

We tried to fill the time spent in limited movement due police hour by sharing examples free education and courses that were available to everyone during that period. In that way, our companions were able to attend foreign language courses, photography school, visit virtual museums, read books and the like.

Although the situation was serious and negatively affected a large number of people, organizations, tourism and catering, the Center for Peacebuilding still managed to achieve surprisingly positive results. Namely, our Peace Camp participants and volunteers designed an online platform tagged- #letstalk where they invited people of different profiles and professions, activists, presidents of the Association, and athletes to talk in a relaxed atmosphere with young people from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. On that occasion, they hosted the famous athlete Amel Tuka, the president of the association Forgotten Children of War Ajna Jusić, actor and activist from Novi Sad - Uroš Mladenović and many others. They discussed topics such as tourism, movies, books, and the role of art in building peace.



In addition, our Peace Camp community members were active in their local communities. One of the former Peace Camp and Caravan participants joined a Red Cross volunteer team in his community. Soon after, his desire to help others and leadership skills were recognized and he became Secretary of the Red Cross. In a situation where most people face dismisses, he got a job. He now manages a team of 20 volunteers. He says the following about his engagement:

“

When the COVID-19 virus appeared in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an activist I felt the need to make myself available and help Red Cross volunteers in any way. I felt a moral responsibility to get involved and give my contribution so that all those who were isolated and left alone in these difficult days could get help. I am currently the leader of a volunteer team and it is a great responsibility, but above all an honor. In order to improve and build the skills needed for such tasks, I must thank Center for Peacebuilding, because through their activities I have acquired the basic organizational skills that I really need in these moments.

”

SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION AND RECONCILIATION - STAR PROJECT

The Societal Transformation and Reconciliation (STaR) project is co-implemented by Karuna Center for Peacebuilding (“Karuna Center”) and our organization Center for Peacebuilding (“CIM”), and other Bosnian organizations Mali Koraci, PRONI Center for Youth Development (“PRONI”), and Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina (“YIHR”). The project also has strategic relationships with researchers from the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology and University of Massachusetts-Amherst for monitoring and evaluation, as well as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) for joint public events and information-sharing. The project takes place in Stolac, Bijeljina, Velika Kladuša, Olovo, Sokolac, Jajce, Banja Luka, Doboj, Mostar, and Sarajevo. It’s a two-year long project whose implementation started in October 2018.

The project works principally through youth to expand their perspectives and sense of belonging to a collective, multiethnic Bosnian society. Through guided, productive, engaging activity, youth of different backgrounds will experience a sense of purpose and develop interethnic friendships and partnerships. This creates a model of integrated society, reduces isolation, and provides direct, practical experience that contradicts the harsh public rhetoric that is spreading.

The project includes community discussions and the arts to help communities think about interethnic acceptance, through highly personal, transferable stories, risks, and consequences of returning to violence. Through guided activities, community participants become aware of the power of individuals while the community itself learns not to accept provocations, making provocateurs ineffective. For mature adults, these methods rediscover positive things about others that may be masked by this rhetorical climate, however, for young people, it’s education about people and ideas to which they have been exposed little or not at all.

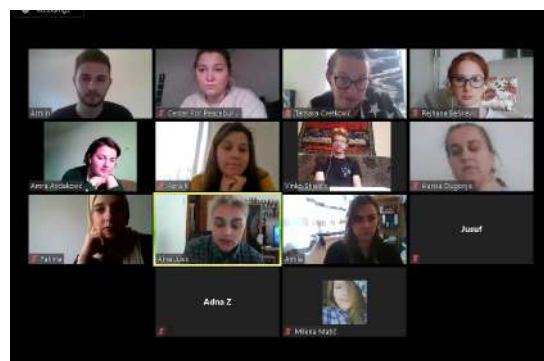
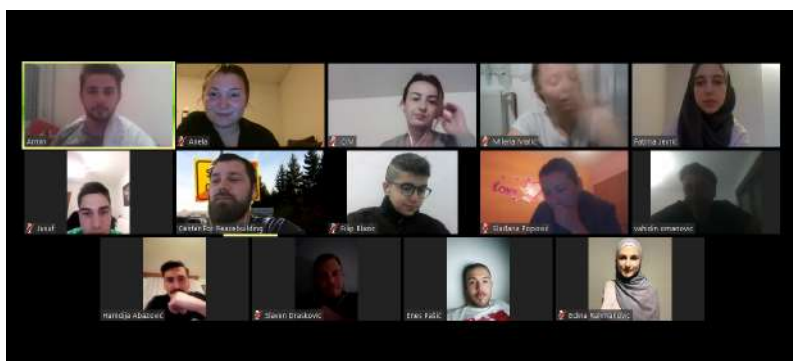
The beginning of 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, that significantly affected the way the planned activities of Center for Peacebuilding within the STaR project were maintained.

The local initiatives of the participants of the Peace Camp and Caravan held in December 2019 have been redefined and adapted to online maintenance. A total of 5 initiatives were held in online format.

ONLINE PLATFORM FOR YOUTH #LETSTALK

Although not initially planned, during the "closed state" and online meetings with the participants of the Peace Camps, an online platform for young people called #letstalk was established as a positive outcome of the emergency situation. The goal of the platform is to enable young people to discuss various interesting topics online to show that physical distance does not necessarily mean social distance. Topics for discussion as well as guest lecturers were chosen by the young people through a survey on the Facebook page of Center for Peacebuilding.

During the months of March, April and May, young people had the opportunity to talk about books, art in peacebuilding, movies and series, tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



The young people also hosted various personalities such as the president of the Forgotten Children of War Association Ajna Jusić, successful judoka Larisa Cerić, European record holder and most trophy athlete in Bosnia and Herzegovina and CIM's peace ambassador Amel Tuka, and youth worker and actor from Novi Sad - Uroš Mladenović.

Over 130 young people from all over BiH participated in a total of 8 online platform interviews

PEACE CAMP

In accordance with the epidemiological situation and thanks to the isolation of the Peace Farm, this year CIM organized two Peace Camps for a total of 45 young people. In June, we organized a seven-day Peace Camp at our Peace Farm. Young people from 10 deeply divided municipalities / cities covered by the STaR project participated in a transformative seven-day Peace Camp, where CIM founders and experienced facilitators Vahidin Omanović and Mevludin Rahmanović led them through an in-depth discussion on the identity and lasting consequences of historical violence. Carefully selected and implemented activities connected the participants as a team. They learned and applied peace principles and methods, and acquired skills in writing project proposals and planning local initiatives in their communities.

A participant from Banja Luka shared his thoughts:

“

I think the fact that an American organization is sponsoring this project to reconcile ethnic groups living in Bosnia and Herzegovina is bad enough and says a lot about our situation. This should be the responsibility of our country

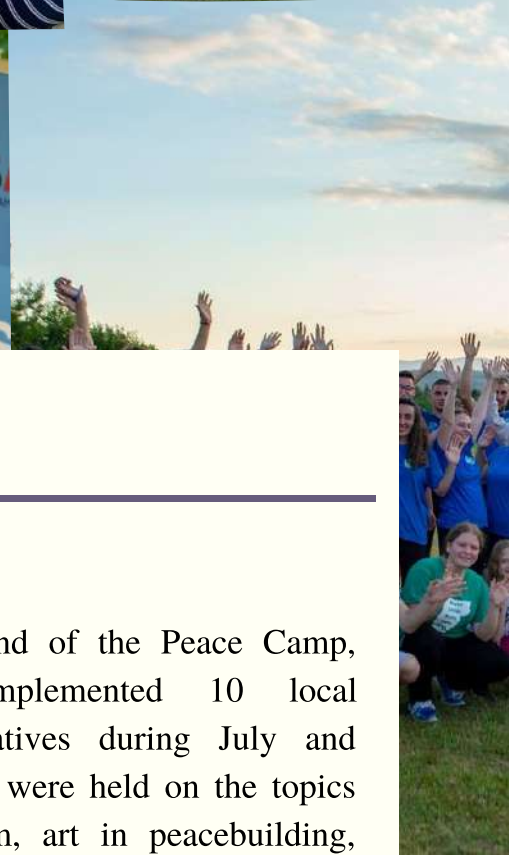
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One participant felt particularly empowered and encouraged to initiate change in her community:

“

I would like to say that when you fall off a bridge you realize that every problem is solvable except one, and that is that you still fall off the bridge. Basically, there is no problem that we cannot solve if not alone as an individual, but as a group, we just need to know who we can turn too. At least I got the impression that I could contact the Center for Peacebuilding for any questions, so I would like to thank everyone for making each of these days special.

”



Shortly after the end of the Peace Camp, young people implemented 10 local peacebuilding initiatives during July and August. Workshops were held on the topics of prejudice, racism, art in peacebuilding, interreligious dialogue, etc.

The second Peace Camp was held in September and was special for the facilitators who led the workshops. Namely, the fourth Peace Camp within the STaR project was led by the participants of the Training for Trainers organized in August for 24 former participants of the Peace Camps and Caravans.



TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

Training for trainers (ToT) is intended for participants of the Peace Camps with the aim of acquiring practical knowledge of conducting workshops and their training to lead the camp process. Participants were 24 young people from 10 municipalities / cities covered by the STaR project who showed strong motivation and desire for greater engagement in the field of peacebuilding. ToT is conceived as a seven-day intensive program during which participants actively and practically apply what they have learned, facilitating workshops with constant monitoring and supervision by experienced facilitators Vahidin Omanović and Mevludin Rahmanović. In addition to acquiring practical skills, participants also worked on the preparation and conception Retreat program for former participants in Peace Camps and local initiatives. The trainers worked on designing workshops and activities which they would then lead together with other participants in September during the Peace Week period.

A participant from Banja Luka commented on her experience:

“

In this camp, I learned that with the support of the right people, anything is possible. I learned that you can work in a team if the team is good, that we get along as a family when it is a good team, that I can remain tolerant of some things and that sometimes all my humanity that comes from me and that I try to hide behind this profession is a master psychologist, the psychotherapist only reminds me that I am also a human being. I am glad that I came here, that you gave me the opportunity to progress both professionally and personally. I want to say that you can all count on me, no matter what our relationship is, we can work together professionally. I can't wait for the Retreat and I believe it will be challenging and difficult, that tensions will be present. I would like us to be calm and that it won't affect our relationship because this time we are responsible.

”



A participant from Mostar shared his impressions:

“

I have learned that what we do here is much more important and bigger than all of us individually and I am very glad that I am always able to forget or suppress all our disagreements here. I realized how many times we all have our past, the past that defines us. We should never form an opinion about someone before we find out some facts, there is something that preceded it. I will try to put myself in the position of other people to understand the way they react and behave.

”

In a safe environment, a group of participants from Sarajevo managed to overcome their fears:

“

I learned that my fear of public speaking was something I saw for myself. I want to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to overcome this. I hope to continue to overcome my fears. Thank you for inspiring me for this

”

One participant noted the skills of the trainer and group dynamics as an important characteristic of the facilitator:

“

Sometimes even when we don't feel accepted by the group, we can act strongly as an individual to contribute to the group, learn from each other and improve. What I learned already in the first camp and maybe I didn't understand how to apply it is the calmness of our coaches in given situations, how rationally, calmly they react and how, I can say, without a mistake to make a decision in those moments. It probably takes a lot more experience than I have, but I understand a little bit about how and how to deal with these situations.

”

RETREAT PROGRAM

The Retreat was organized from September 16th to 22nd and was the last activity of Center for Peacebuilding within the STaR project. The timing was carefully chosen and central activities were organized around the International Day of Peace. Given the situation and the obligation to comply with epidemiological measures concerning the limitation of the number of people at gatherings, this year's event was closed. Due to the organization of the open air, our Peace Farm, we were able to host a total of 60 participants who primarily came from 10 municipalities / cities covered by the STaR project, but also other areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Retreat was conceived as an opportunity to network young peacebuilders and activists with relaxed socializing and sharing experiences. In addition to creating a youth network, participants also participate in educational interactive workshops designed by peace trainers; activities ranging from storytelling, verse myrology, peacebook, peacegram, time capsule, creation of a peace monument, and foodology. The International Day of Peace was marked by the unveiling of a peace monument represented by the Peace Bench made as part of the participants' teamwork, the organization of the CIM's Peace Games and a Foodology where participants prepared traditional dishes and established differences in cooking from the provinces they come from. This was an opportunity to promote cohesion and develop community among the participants.



PROMOTION OF THE MANUAL

The final activity and the end of the two-year STaR project was marked by the online promotion of the manual on Societal transformation and reconciliation created as the end product of the project. The promotion was held on October 14 via the Zoom application and the speakers were representatives of partner organizations. The manual contains the methodology of work of individual organizations and is an extremely useful tool and resource for all individuals, groups and NGOs who want to deal with the topics of reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region.

Amila Behremović, CIM's project coordinator, pointed out the key results of our activities, but most importantly the connection of all participants, as well as strong motivation and desire for further training.

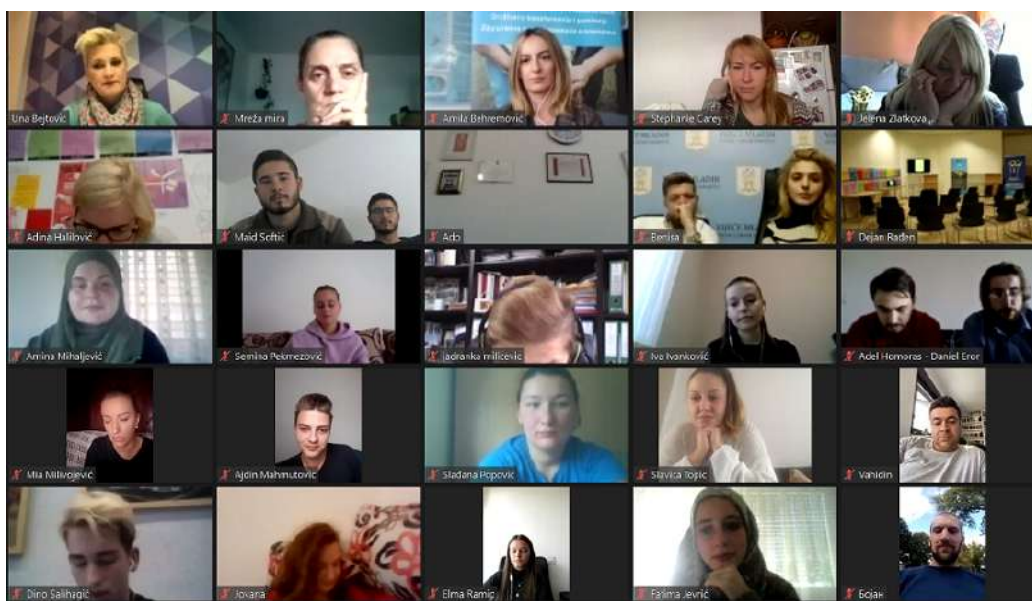
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Educations such as seminars by dr. Paule Green, founder of the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, and the Peace Camps and Caravans program, gave participants the opportunity to further implement their local initiatives, involving close to 1,000 of their peers in the transformation process. In August, 24 camp participants attended the training and, after practical work, acquired the title of peace trainers.

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During the presentation of the manual, participants from 10 local communities emphasized the importance of their involvement in the project and invited other young people to participate in similar activities.

"There are no words to describe what this project has brought us," said one of the participants from Mostar.



MEMORY AND HISTORY AS A BASIS FOR SOCIAL RECONCILIATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In October 2018, the Center for Peacebuilding in partnership with the Berghof Foundation started implementing the project “Memory and History as a Basis for Social Reconciliation in Bosnia and Hercegovina.” The Berghof Foundation, headquartered in Berlin and Tübingen, is an independent nongovernmental organization and advocates for the promotion of peace, nonviolent conflict resolution, and creating a platform for transforming conflict in post-war areas. In addition, the foundation is also a research center for issues of peace and conflict, and has also worked in various post-conflict areas such as Azerbaijan, Karabakh, Georgia, Abkhazia.

This project primarily focuses on recording and archiving the life stories of people who have a memory of the war period, as well as exchanging experiences, stories and critical reviews of trauma during workshops, in order to promote peace, empathic understanding, and human action during the war, ultimately contributing to holistic healing. Project implementation will last two years and will take place in two cities (Prijedor and Banja Luka) and two municipalities (Sanski Most and Ključ) in the Sana River Valley.

Since the beginning of the project, we have collected 171 war stories of citizens of 3 ethnic groups of these cities and municipalities. Our 25 facilitators engaged in this project held a total of 607 workshops in the cities covered by this project.

“

It is useful for the history of this area to record some things, especially when it comes to older people, because their deaths and memories disappear, beautiful or ugly, but related to the period 1992-1995. It is fascinating how some people overcame all obstacles and through whose stories we learned that they continued on through life stronger and did their best to succeed, to overcome all ugly memories. It is very important to hear the story of the "other side". Stories of soldiers, ie. direct participants in the fighting are particularly striking. It was also interesting to listen to various interpretations of what the speaker wanted to say in his narrative. I think that the project contributes to a better understanding of the past, especially among the younger population.

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A facilitator from Sanski Most says the following about her healing experience:

"Since I myself experienced the horrors of war, the workshops in which I was a participant and then a facilitator were a form of psychotherapy for me personally. At the beginning, I cried during and after the workshop because every obedient story pulled out a sad, somewhere hidden part of my past. After our conversations and story analysis I would feel better every time. For this reason, I recommended to all my friends and acquaintances to come to these workshops who later shared my opinion, gladly came to the workshops and were happy to have the opportunity to talk openly about their past. We often cried together, but there were also fond memories. Through the workshops, they realized that many people, regardless of nationality, have experienced similar fates. I am especially happy that I was able to gather one group of young people to participate in the workshops. All those stories were something new, scary and unimaginable for them. I hope that they will always remember these workshops and that violence and war will never be an alternative to them. I hope that people will continue to have the opportunity to listen to the real past and history of the people of whole Bosnia and Herzegovina, which in my opinion are stories that we had the opportunity to listen to and analyze in our workshops."



The facilitator from Ključ emphasizes the importance of the project itself and the involvement of young people in these processes:

"I started working on the project in November 2018, I started with the fear that I would have no interlocutors and that dealing with the past would be a topic they don't want to talk about anymore. In the beginning, during the workshops, there was a certain amount of nervousness, but over time, I spontaneously and naturally overcame that. During the workshops, a lot was discussed except about the war and life after the war. Participants were open to share experiences, there were no negative reactions which contributed to my expectations for the workshops being met. I am especially glad that I was able to gather young people as one group, since they did not take part in the war, their perceptions rely entirely on what we tell them about it. There were many situations at the workshops that left a strong impression on me, I think that one of the ways to reach the participants is to start from personal stories and personal experiences, I personally spent the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in that way I found it easier could connect with the whole concept of workshops. What I consider a success is that the groups were held together, the topics were not scared. I believe that this is a topic that must be worked on for a long time, and that the importance of talking about this topic is increasingly recognized. What is necessary is to try to involve as many local communities as possible, to try to implement projects that deal with the past so that they can create a realistic view of recent history, not only in Krajina but in the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN REDUCING GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Since October 2019, the XY Association, in cooperation with the Center for Peacebuilding, has been implementing the project Community Involvement in Reducing Gender Stereotypes and Eliminating Violence against Women and Girls, funded by the UN Women agency.

Project activities are a continuation of successful practices of our partner organizations through the implementation of the educational program Program Y - Innovative approaches in the prevention of gender-based violence and the promotion of healthy lifestyles among boys and girls. Project activities are aimed at: strengthening the capacity of local communities to independently implement comprehensive and scientifically based prevention programs, strengthening the capacity of NGOs to make educational resources available in the local community in which they are located, strengthening the capacity of high schools to establish schools of excellence for violence prevention.

"Development of a comprehensive violence prevention program: Training for members of expert groups" is the name of the workshop held in February in Sanski Most, which was attended by teachers of local primary schools, religious leaders and representatives of religious communities from the local community with the aim of preventing violence in our society.



One of the participants - the imam of the city mosque and the coordinator for the non-governmental sector of the Islamic Community of Prijedor, Omer Redžić, pointed out that the Islamic Community and religious communities have the privilege to attend such a workshop:

“ *It should be honest and say that religious communities in their methodologies use already archaic and outdated methods of weaning people from various social anomalies. This workshop is in some segments of methodology and really fully usable material in accordance with the actions of the religious community in local communities. that by using the methods we have heard today and which we can read, the Islamic Community can successfully implement and influence the reduction of peer violence, gambling, alcohol and psychoactive substance abuse and other destructive habits to which our society is unfortunately subject.* ”

Marko Vidović, a priest from Prijedor and a religious teacher in primary and secondary schools in and around Prijedor, emphasizes the importance of the manual:

“ *We should start making manuals that could be used by all educators, but religious teachers would be at the forefront. This is one way to actually make life better, because faith and violence do not go together.* ”

Innovative methodological work with children and young people delighted the pedagogue of the elementary school "Fifth of October" Dževid Hasić:

“ *This is something new and good for me today that I will be able to use in my work. I can't wait to learn another new method and idea from your teachers. I will be able to apply in school. The most interesting idea for me is that we can form certain groups or clubs of young people who would work on the prevention of certain negative phenomena in society. I have done a lot of activities so far but without clubs to continue the process I started. This today and yesterday what I saw gave me the impetus to continue doing something I had left halfway through and to end up working further in the interest of the local community* ”

Numerous meetings were held later in the year to discuss the development of a Framework for the Work of Religious Communities in the Prevention of Violence, and in December Center for Peacebuilding Center organized a promotion in Sanski Most attended by principals of local primary schools and the Center for Social Welfare. work, religious teachers, pedagogues and religious leaders and presented the guidelines defined by this important resource in the fight against violence.

YOUTH REGROUP! YOUTH FOR YOUTH IN KRAJINA

In August, the implementation of a project called Youth Regroup! Youth for youth in Krajina started, implemented by Center for Peacebuilding with the financial support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) within the BHRI program.

The program involves 22 young people aged 17-30 from seven municipalities in the Krajina region covered by the project, namely Bihać, Bužim, Bosanska Krupa, Sanski Most, Ključ, Novi Grad and Prijedor. These municipalities lack space and functional support for young people to socialize, learn and be active. Through participation in trainings, we want to increase engagement, develop skills and opportunities among young people from Krajina to take responsibility, advocate and lead youth initiatives and contribute to positive changes in their local communities.

The first six-day training was held in September at the Peace Farm and included topics of prejudice, stereotypes, non-violent communication and the concept of peace building. The stated topics were aimed at training future coordinators of youth clubs for objective and impartial work with different ethnic and religious groups and different profiles of people in general. By participating in experiential workshops, young people became aware of personal prejudices and their impact on behavior as well as the consequences that arise from it. The importance of including peacebuilding topics in youth work stemmed from the long-term experience of the Center for Peacebuilding and analysis of the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hate speech and political manipulation based on ethnicity are still present and peak during election years. Therefore, an important segment of work with young people is represented by these topics whose goal is to create a cohesive and harmonious society.



After the first training in September, in the period from 18th to 23rd November, the second training was held within the project Youth regroup! Youth for youth in Krajina whose participants were young people from the following 7 municipalities: Bihać, Bosanska Krupa, Bužim, Ključ, Sanski Most, Prijedor and Novi Grad.

On this occasion and with their active participation, young people gained theoretical as well as practical knowledge necessary for youth work and coordination of youth clubs. They have created a plan of future activities that they plan to implement in their local communities. In 2021, we hope that these young people will have a place where they will be able to learn, socialize and exchange experiences, and work together to realize the rights and needs of young people.



UPGRADE FOR PEACE

From October 1st to the 5th, the Center for Peacebuilding in Sanski Most, with the financial support of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, organized an advanced training in the field of peacebuilding and hosted 20 young people aged 18 to 30 from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina motivated to work in the field of construction peacebuilding. The aim was to expand knowledge on peacebuilding topics as well as to encourage the skills of facilitating 20 young peacebuilders and to raise awareness of the need for peace education and peace activism. Over the course of five days, participants participated in activities and lectures on peacebuilding, circles of revenge, the importance and possibilities of forgiveness, and oral history. The training also offered networking opportunities and a chance to create future partnerships for CIM, for local and international peacekeepers who attended.



“

After the peace camp, local initiatives that I organized together with other participants from Sarajevo, training for trainers, Retreat and training Upgrade for Peace, I can say that I learned a lot. Prior to my participation in these programs, I didn't understand or think about peacebuilding and what it means for the future of our society. Also, here I have met people who are full of passion for everything they do and who truly touch the hearts of everyone they meet. They made me step out of my comfort zone and overcome some of my fears. One of these fears is presenting in front of a larger group. In this short time, I have recognized that this is a fear I have imposed on myself, thanks to CIM, which has created a safe environment and a circle of trust in which I feel fully accepted. I am just at the beginning of my peace story and I am not sure where exactly this path of peace will take me, but I know that I will forever remember the summer of 2020 and my stay in Sanski Most as the place where my journey began. I hope that I will sow the seeds of peace wherever I go.

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PEACE FARM

GARDEN OF OPPORTUNITIES

In 2020, our Peace Farm, Garden of opportunities, underwent a transformation. Although we recorded positive changes in the last year as well, this time the garden "blossomed".

As stated, in the many ways COVID-19 has affected the Peace Farm - but in a surprisingly positive sense.

In a state of shutdown and uncertainty about the existence of sufficient resources and food, the citizens of Sanski Most turned again to agricultural production. While in recent years independent agricultural production has been in a constantly declining trend, the appearance of a pandemic in our area has led to a change in consciousness. Namely, the fear of unavailability and possible shortage of food led to an increase in agricultural production. Its potential and the fact of high arable land and fertility of the land were also recognized by the governing structures, which soon after the outbreak of the pandemic offered incentives to the population in the form of planting material for individual needs.

The support for the municipality in the form of planting material for potatoes and beans was also given to the Center for Peacebuilding. A total of 10 families from the area of Sanski Most joined our initiative Garden of Opportunities and every day, together, cultivated the land and planted various crops of vegetables and fruits. We grew potatoes, beans, red and garlic, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, zucchini, corn, radishes, peas, cucumbers, beans, cauliflower, watermelon, spinach, carrots, beets, strawberries and many others. In addition to vegetables and fruits, we also grew herbs and herbs such as basil, coriander, dill, lemon balm, rosemary, lavender and calendula.



We made syrup from wild nettle and mint, while we prepared oil from marigold and St. John's wort.

In addition to land cultivation and agricultural production, we took care of the appearance of our farm. We removed the old auxiliary facilities and started building new ones that offer more space for storing materials and tools.

We decorated the farm by planting ornamental flowers, velvet, petunias and surfinia



The smell of freshly dug earth, the wonderful color of freshly blossoming sunflowers, in the twilight bathed in drops that thirsty plants crave. In times of stress, when every individual needs their "oasis", our garden is just that "oasis" - that's how we felt in the ambience of CIM's garden

I love everything that CIM does and organizes, but this work in the garden with such a wonderful team was something wonderful, relaxing just at this time of the crown, I hope in the future there will be even more activities like this.

At the moment when we were experiencing the greatest stress in the work we were doing, our Garden of Opportunities came to relieve us and give us peace. I gladly went to the garden, where I met people dear to me and a lot of warmth. The job was special. We all tried to be the best and fastest. We talked, hung out and supported everyone.

Our lake got its first inhabitants. The two turtles found their home next to numerous frogs and insects. In September, 12 carp joined them.

In the state of restrictive preventive measures against the spread of COVID-19 infection, many activities of non-governmental organizations have moved to the online world or have even been canceled. In this case, our Peace Farm proved to be an ideal place to organize activities since outdoor gatherings were allowed within certain limits. Isolation and natural environment have enabled us to organize as many as 2 Peace Camps, ToT and Retreat programs as part of Peace Week. However, the organization of these activities is possible only in the summer due to favorable weather conditions, given that our participants stay in tents.

During the camps, unfavorable weather conditions on several occasions endangered the continuation of activities and the stay of the participants themselves. Therefore, in the coming period we plan to build a facility that will serve as accommodation for our participants and which will allow us to organize activities throughout the year and thus increase the number of activities, reach a larger number of participants and achieve greater impact.

VOLUNTEERS CLUB

CIM's Volunteer Club has been implementing and organizing projects and activities for young people from Sanski Most for many years, and they had the opportunity to continue their work in 2020. In the new COVID-19 situation, volunteers, together with participants of our Peace Camps and volunteers from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina, launched a new initiative as an online platform for young people called #letstalk. This is a kind of platform within which young people had the opportunity to talk to each other and exchange opinions and views on various topics namely culture, art, psychology, ecology, youth and peace activism, etc. Discussions took place via ZOOM video conferences several times a week. This platform is designed to raise young people's awareness of the seriousness of COVID-19 and to provide them with educational and entertainment programs during isolation.

Elma Ramić, a long-term volunteer, participant in numerous trainings and a trainer of the Center for Peacebuilding, shared her experience with the Volunteer Club:

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No youth organization is functioning in Sanski Most, but that lack is not felt, because the volunteer club of the Peacebuilding Center compensates for that. I have been volunteering at CIM for two years now, it gives me great experiences, it creates a field in which I can freely express my creativity and desire to do something for myself and my community. Anela works with us and does not allow the difference between her and the volunteers to be noticed, but she is always there to help us and perfect our ideas. There are currently 10 of us in the volunteer club and I am glad that in that way we have the opportunity to improve our work in the team. As a member of the volunteer club, I also learned about the camps organized by CIM, so I got the opportunity to train as a coach, and work as a coach at two camps. The role of coach has brought me a lot. I developed leadership skills, but also the ability to work in a team. I learned how to perform tasks responsibly, be objective and transfer the acquired knowledge well. Fortunately for us trainers, we have always had the support of our directors Mevludin and Vahidin, who were there for us at all times.

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The Volunteer Club has designed a new activity for young people from Sanski Most called "Readers' Club" which is intended for all book lovers aged 15 to 25 from Sanski Most, to have the opportunity to exchange their opinions and experiences about the book read or to hear how others have experienced the same literature. The meetings were held once a month so allowing ample time for members to read the book prior to discussing it. "Readers' Club" extends beyond just books, introducing new activities such as movie nights, where club members have the opportunity to relax and hang out in a safe and welcoming environment.



PARTNERSHIPS, COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

- The Center for Peacebuilding in 2020 presented its work, its mission and vision to numerous local, national and international organizations.
- During the pandemic, we joined the Red Cross to help the citizens of Sanski Most with them
- We held numerous meetings with the Mayor of Sanski Most, Faris Hasanbegović, and his advisors.
- The Center for Peacebuilding has participated in numerous campaigns organized by GlobalGiving: LittlexLittle, GivingTuesday, Photo Contest, July Bonus Day.
- CIM member Anela Talić participated in the ZOOM seminar on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Local Voices and Initiatives organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Project coordinator Amila Behremović participated in a two-day online training on digital tools and ICT tools in civil society organizations organized by the EU TACSO 3.
- Executive Director Vahidin Omanović participated in a four-day seminar in Sarajevo organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the topic of the seminar was the Advanced Seminar for the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Local Voices and Initiatives
- CIM members participated in an online digital security training
- Project assistant Anela Talić participated in the Digital Academy implemented by Citizens against Terrorism (CAT)
- CIM Executive Director Vahidin Omanović, as a visiting professor, gave online lectures on peacebuilding at Bennington College in Vermont, USA.

You can follow our work on the following social media and the official website of Center for Peacebuilding:



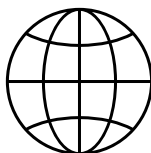
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