



***They Change
Their World for Better***



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They Change Their World for Better

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They Change Their World for Better

December 2011.

Dear readers,

This brochure, published in two editions – in Serbian and English language, is a result of the three and a half year long youth educational program called “Support for Kosovo Young Leaders” (SKYL) in four municipalities in the north of Kosovo: Northern Mitrovica, Zvečan, Leposavić and Zubin Potok. This project was implemented from the second half of 2008 until the end of 2011 by our local non-governmental organization - Center for Communities Development, in partnership with Mercy Corps and with USAID financial support. Throughout various activities, it rallied more than a thousand of young people, aged between 15 to 26 from the four northern municipalities, out of whom there were 738 who accomplished two-month, four-month and three-month-long internship in different organizations and institutions in the north of Kosovo.

We have closely monitored the performances of our interns during the SKYL program, as well as in later stages of their work. Many of them were not only active during training sessions, but also in their jobs. During the trainings, they were given opportunities to exchange their opinions and thoughts on concrete life skills required by the modern and competing business market. Further on, they upgraded their skills in their first and real jobs. At least 125 of our participants have continued to work even upon the termination of their SKYL internship, or they found new opportunities following the experiences gained during this program.

In the course of the program we nourished good cooperation and established new partnerships with various host organizations. We have jointly promoted an urgent need for young people in our municipalities to be provided with opportunities for qualitative educational programs, a possibility to play an active part in building their own positive and sustainable future.

Although the trainings on life, business&civic skills, and the internship program were our core activities, there were many more activities implemented during this program. After the internship, the SKYL participants designed and implemented around twenty small community projects – such as poetry and literature evenings, music events, sports

competitions, (the erection of street lighting in a Mikro Naselje), cleaning activities, the purchase of popular teenage books, photocopying machine and printer for the City Library, the purchase of equipment for cooling appliances maintenance for the Technical school students' workshop and so on. Also, as this program was implemented in other parts of Kosovo - Southern Mitrovica, Gnjilane and Novo Brdo, there were two joint training sessions and trips organized for youth groups from these municipalities, which included North Mitrovica.

The brochure contains only a small part of SKYL beneficiaries' experiences. The stories are positive since they have been written by some of the most active participants – our young leaders. The contributors to the brochure are also our implementing partner – the “Mercy Corps” organization with their text on the project, as well as Vuk S. Karadzic City Library Head, Milena Tepavcevic. The latter represents, in the brochure, the host organizations and institutions with whom The Center for Communities Development had an extraordinary cooperation during the project activities.

Enjoy!

The Editor

Mercy Corps on SKYL:

October 2008 – January 2012

Support for Kosovo's Young Leaders (SKYL) program, supported by USAID and implemented by Mercy Corps, together with local implementing partners provided young people in Kosovo skills that allowed youth to take active participation in community life and gain employment skills. Key program components included:

Youth Gain Employment Skills

SKYL enabled young people to gain job skills, work experience and employment opportunities through training, internships and apprenticeships in vocational sectors such as cartography, mechanics, architecture and medicine.

Community and Social Engagement

SKYL supported young people to re-engage with their communities by promoting youth-led community service.

Building Multi-Ethnic Connections

SKYL worked to build a multi-ethnic, inclusive network of young people who are skilled in negotiation, communication and joint problem-solving. Serbian and Albanian youth are now empowered to use these skills to identify projects that allow them to pursue their common interests.

The SKYL program supported young people of Kosovo to gain job skills and on the job experience, helping youth to build the confidence that they can be and are at the center of their communities, as well as can build reconciliation and tolerance among themselves. The program proved youth across Kosovo have similar concerns, wishes, thoughts and experiences to seek and to share.

The SKYL program is a program of change - and over the course of the program has led to change in the lives of young people.

In partnership with Mercy Corps, the SKYL program is implemented by three local non-governmental organizations (NGOs): Centar za Razvoj Zajednica (CRZ), Kosovo Center for International Cooperation (KCIC) and Mudnesia.

About Mercy Corps:

Mercy Corps works amid disasters, conflicts, chronic poverty and instability to unleash the potential of people who can win against nearly impossible odds.

Since 1979, Mercy Corps has provided \$1.5 billion in assistance to people in 106 nations. Supported by headquarters in North America and Europe, the agency's global programs employ 3,700 staff worldwide and reach 16.4 million people in more than 35 countries. Over the past five years, more than 89 percent of the agency's resources have been allocated directly to programs that help people in need. Mercy Corps is a proud recipient of the 2008 Fast Company/Monitor Group Social Capitalist Award.

Everything is Easy When You Are Young?!

*By Sladana Nekić,
a journalist of local Contact Plus Radio*

The National Employment Agency in North Mitrovica registers 6704 persons, out of whom 3426 are older than 30. Despite being in the most productive period of life, those young people are resigned, with no clear perspectives, at least in the environment they live in. They have no great plans for future, neither business, nor private life plans.

Everything is easy when you are young- was a motto used by generations of people during 1970's and 1980's. It is not applicable nowadays. The golden times of socialism and socially owned enterprises, when the most important thing was to get employed and perform duties until retirement, are fading away. A young man, nowadays, cannot even imagine that he would live to be retired.

Youth sees no perspectives

Milan T. (22), a student of economy from Mitrovica, says that his only reason for studying is his parents' pressure, who still believe that only a University diploma will help him to get a job. "With the diploma or without it, I will be able only to work as a waiter or a shop assistant, if I manage to avoid hard physical jobs on constructions" says Milan.

Jelena R. (26), also from Mitrovica, graduated from Faculty of Psychology a year ago, but, as she says, she can hardly believe that she will be able to work in her on profession any time soon. Jelena works in a boutique as a shop assistant, in a black labour market: "I have no insurance, not a single day of accrued working time. However, it is not so bad, since I still live with my parents. My salary of 120 Euros is more a contribution to my parent's budget and vague illusion of my economic independence, since I do not have to ask my parents for money to buy clothes and going out". Jelena also says that she does not even think about starting her own family, as she

and her boyfriend could not afford themselves an apartment, let alone other expenditures.

National Employment Agency - branch office in North Mitrovica, reports on more than 6700 unemployed people, out of whom even 3426 are older



than 30. They are of various professional education background - from unqualified job seekers to well educated ones. Even though the National Employment Agency implements various employment programs for these people, it seems they are insufficient.

There are various prequalification or advanced programs organized, including The First Chance and Professional Apprenticeship 2011 to support job seekers over 30 to gain their first working experiences and to work independently. However, it does not seem to be enough. The only solution to this issue is to revive the collapsed industry in the City.

Young, educated people look for better future elsewhere. Those who succeeded to reach the capital (Belgrade) rarely come back. There are people who, regardless their qualifications, prefer to do even hard physical jobs all over the world for solid a salary. Few people believe in better future. Most would run away, never looking back, if just given the chance to live peacefully and earning good salary.

I am all in SKYL

*By Ana Marija Ivković,
a project officer at Centre for Communities Development (CRZ)*



During April 2009 I had an opportunity to take part in Support for Kosovo's Young Leaders (SKYL) project, implemented by Center for Communities Development (CRZ) local nongovernmental organization. Since I had had no previous experience in civic

work, I thought that SKYL was a good opportunity to try myself in the "third sector".

During four months of my very first job, I gained work experience, precious to me. I started with basic things, entered information into data base and performed basic office tasks. I observed my older colleagues and their way of work, absorbing information. After four months, I got a part time job at the same organization and continued to work and study at the new position. I managed the data base, quite a large one, since the International Winter University of Mitrovica was on-going, and Mitrovica International Business College was established at that time. SPARK had an active role in both of the projects. The Data base was enormous, since there were thousands of users at that moment. I was checking the proficiency in English of the candidates who applied to attend lectures in English, I informed our beneficiaries about SPARK's activities, especially about Winter University and Business College. Since I was still studying, it was a real challenge for me to work, attend lectures and study for examinations at the same time.

However, it was the challenge that actually motivated me to try more, work harder and upgrade my skills and abilities.

After several months, the position of SKYL Coordinator in CRZ was opened and I was invited for an interview. Following a short conversation with the Director and Chairperson of the organization - Nevenka Medić and Tatjana Lazarević, I got my first real full time employment.

Now, two years later, Tatjana and Nevenka are my colleagues. We still work together on SKYL program, we help young people to develop themselves and raise awareness on importance of volunteer work and gaining of early working experience.

It was a long way to go from a SKYL participant to a full-time employee. I put much efforts, but if there had not been SKYL, I would had not be given an opportunity to build my future in the civil sector, to gain skills, knowledge and experience.

My Way

*By Melisa Hot,
a finance volunteer at SPARK*



I am Melisa Hot. I am 21 and I live in North Mitrovica. I am a third year English language & literature student at the Faculty of Philosophy, University in Pristina, temporarily seated in North Mitrovica.

I heard about SKYL program from my friend Ana Marija. She told me all about the program teaching some

fundamental life skills and promoting mandatory internship, which does not exist in our schools. I had had neither previous experience nor contact with non-governmental organizations and other alternative types of educations, so I decided to try and see what was it all about. It sounded tempting, since it was different from the grey and boring daily routine.

It was fun, interesting, educational; not only training and lectures subjects, but also the manner in which our trainers transferred knowledge to us. Great numbers of young people in one place and group work had an inspiring impact on me. We had a five-day long training. It was a sufficient time to transfer knowledge: the importance of communication and its transfer channels (verbal and non-verbal), negotiating skills, CV writing, interview simulation, etc. After the first training session, we chose the sector in which we wanted to do our internships: private, public or civic sectors.

As I was not interested in the first two sectors, I was immediately attracted by the civic one. Why? I would not know it for sure, but I suppose that it is because that sector is not so "normal", so usual. However, being in position to watch all those people in the civic sector, their mobility and energy, I

realized that many people actually worked a lot there and that it was a creative work.

So, I started my internship with NGO “Spark”, a large non-governmental organization from Netherlands. It was a real pleasure when I signed my first three-month-long contract. All of a sudden, I realized that I was doing something serious. Since I had not worked before, I decided to absorb everything that the staff of this organization was doing and to learn it all. I have also realized that I was a part of a serious organization. I am a person who dislikes routine, so this was a real place for me to work in. I worked on various projects and assignments, such was translation of documents and office duties. I enthusiastically participated in meetings, and decision making process.

Now, many months later, even though the three-month project internship was finished, I continued to work for the same organization. I got much appraisals for my work and behavior, which was the main reason to get the contract extension. I am very happy, since I do the work I love, I learn from my experienced colleagues and we all get along well. Everyone is so kind to me. I am smiling while remembering how nervous I was at the beginning of this process and questions I had on my mind. I know that as the time passed by, with a great support of my kind colleagues, full of understanding – I have succeeded.

About SPARK:

SPARK is a not-for profit, non-political development organisation, with its headquarters in Amsterdam and field offices in Belgrade, Mitrovica, Pristina, Monrovia, Ramallah, Kigali and Bujumbura. SPARK develops education and entrepreneurship so that young and ambitious people are empowered to lead their post-conflict society into prosperity. We build the capacity of local economic and educational institutions so they can empower their own populations.

We have operated a field office in North Mitrovica since 2006. The office is currently located over the Raiffeisen Bank in Kralja Petra Street. Our approach is to offer concrete support to local institutions (such as the university and business advisory centres) to assist the population in providing better education and generate jobs and income. As a principle

we remain a strictly neutral stance on political matters (as also evidenced by our cooperation with the United Nations (UNDP).

Vuk Stefanovic Karadžić City Library

*By Milena Tepavčević,
Head of Vuk S. Karadžić City Library*

The twenty first century imposes a very powerful demand – a need for permanent learning, not only at school, but out of it as well, always and everywhere. Modern man is aware that knowledge is power. To gain knowledge is to seek for information. A real associate in this quest is **library**, however, it is the **modern** and strong library which follows all contemporary trends.

In spite of specific circumstances, Vuk St. Karadzic City Library was opened in North Mitrovica in 2003 under auspices of UNMIK Administration. Library was officially opened by Mina Jarvenpaa, head of UNMIK Mitrovica, in presence of other high ranking UNMIK, OSCE and other international organizations personnel, local authority representatives and citizens. The main task of this cultural institution is to meet the needs of our beneficiaries and to provide services. Library becomes the city's cultural and information center.

The Library was initially placed in a rented facility of 160 m². Its first book fund treasured 5000 publications and it had a number of readers. Numbers of books and readers increased as the time was passing, so the existing space became insufficient and inappropriate.

In 2007 UNMIK Administration used USAID funds to build an annex of additional 350 m². Working in completely new conditions, Library played an exceptional role and significance for cultural development of the city and enabled the beneficiaries a true access to information, a possibility for them to develop ideas and imagination.

Currently, the Library has around 3000 readers. Our beneficiaries, members of all social, cultural and economic backgrounds, have various

demands and needs. Here I particularly underline the needs of primary and secondary school pupils, as well as needs of University students, not only from North Mitrovica, but even wider. The Library is there to meet everyone's needs by providing its services and creatively designing new ones, more appealing, different, even unusual, original ones, primarily meant for the youngest beneficiaries.

The library book fund in the City Library has been increasing. The Library possesses more than 30.000 publications thanks to UNMIK Administration, numerous donors, publishers, Ministries of Republic of Serbia, National Library of Serbia, gifts from writers and various individuals. The fund mainly contains domestic and foreign novels. Both kinds are read equally.

The readers are extremely well informed about contemporary literature. They are demanding, know what is trendy, what are the bestsellers. Library uses its own revenues for purchase of the latest editions, so our top reading list does not differ much from those made by other even bigger libraries. Besides fictions, Library also offers professional literature in various fields: general culture and civilization, philosophy, psychology, religion, sociology, politics, economy, law, education, medicine, techniques, architecture, arts, music, cinematography, sports... The professional literature is mainly used by students, primarily by those studying Faculty of Philosophy, literature, pedagogy, psychology, philosophy, foreign languages, history and other faculties of University in Mitrovica.

Besides Children's and Adult's Department, Library also has ***Electronic Center*** which provides services to all beneficiaries interested in IT and technology. The Center has the most contemporary IT equipment: computers, laser printers, scanner, copy machine, projector and good quality internet connection. The rich computing and IT book fund is also available in the Center. Offering technical services, the Center provides multimedia support to organization and performance of all cultural and educational manifestations. The computer courses are also held in the premises of the Electronic Center.

American Corner also functions as a part of City Library. It is a mini American library, i.e. a cultural-multimedia, multi-program space. It

organizes various manifestations, provides information about America in order to make the culture, values and visions of the USA closer to its readers. It builds bridges of friendships and understanding. American Corner is funded by the American Government, which provided adequate, modern technology, multimedia equipment, books and magazines in English, movies and other various programs. The Corner has its own members, high school students, but there are primary and pre-school pupils as well. Numerous cultural-educational manifestations are held in the Corner. Classes of conversation, lectures, video projections, exhibitions, thematic workshops and children programs are held. Many of them became our volunteers.

Apart from regular librarian activities, Library also performs other cultural and educational activities (promotion of books, poetry events, thematic lectures, workshops, celebration of international holidays...) promotion of



books and reading as such, contributing to education and intellectual development of a personality.

In order to enable access to knowledge, modern thought and culture, we have left our door wide open to young people, **volunteers**, who were ready to work for their community, help others. They gained new experiences and became useful members of the society. Thanks to **Center for Community Development** and its members who expressed their will to volunteer in Library within SKYL program, investing joint efforts, we have succeeded to achieve our objectives, i.e. to gather as many young people as possible, foster culture of reading and preserve cultural identity.

Our several months' long experience in working with a few volunteers from Communities Development Center have shown us that the work may be a real pleasure. Furthermore, work in the library was an important way for the volunteers to express their energy. It is best shown by their readiness to work without any financial income.

The Library staff welcomed our volunteers – Jovana Pavićević, Nevena Jelić, Jovana Jakšić, Tamara Jakšić and Božidar Đuričić. We recognized accountable, curious, persistent and communicative people in them. I want especially to emphasize their communication skills and capability to positively cooperate with readers of all profiles, especially peers whom they recommended bestsellers. They were also able to recognize beneficiaries' needs and they were opened for team work.

Their interest in acquiring new skills, i.e. professional development in librarian field of work was evident when they learnt the basis of the UDC system – (Universal Decimal Classification), the classification system designed for filing books on the shelves. The knowledge allowed them to arrange books in free access. Their knowledge of modern computing and information technologies enabled the electronic registration of publications, as well as a serial of other additional activities which made bringing of books to readers faster.



Thanks to **New Books for the New School Year Project**, donated by the Communities Development Centre, and implemented by its staff Igor Simić, who had understood the proactive and hard

work of our Library, and its openness to the youth, Library has got a greater number of 77 books and a A3 printer. The list of the new books are the latest bestsellers of our and foreign writers, as well as new editions for teenagers, since the old ones got shabby due to their frequent usage.



In light of the new digital era, the libraries, as the institutions of key cultural and educational significance, express willingness to adjust to the new trends. Therefore, the upgrading of Library itself and its librarians is of the utmost necessity. It is necessary to modernize technical equipment, to create and provide an electronic data base to its users, whereas the business management automation should ensure that Library remains the bond connecting information and a user. It remains a cultural core of a society.

Surrounded by Books

*By Jovana Pavićević,
North Mitrovica Comprehensive School student*



I have spent most of my time reading ever since I know for myself. At beginning I read nursery poems, later I started with fables, fairy tales, and novels. My taste in literature was changing as I was growing up and becoming more mature as a person.

My love towards books, however, and the world of imagination where everything is possible, has remained permanent.

A new period of my life started as I entered the high school. I wanted to become more independent and start to provide for myself, not to be completely dependent upon my parents. Furthermore, I wanted to gain precious working experience. Purely by chance, I have learnt from my friend about SKYL program, which was ongoing in my town for some time. I liked the idea that it promoted real values attempting to emphasize how much knowledge and experiences have advantage over money. The program promoted and supported the volunteer work. The training sessions I went through, which lasted for two weekends, were extremely interesting. The lecturers were mostly qualified and motivated to work and convey their own experience and knowledge. I liked especially that the training sessions were not boring lectures, but a set of interactive role plays and workshops ensuring an active participation of each group member. I attended the training sessions during autumn and winter 2009.



Even though history, physics and biology studied at school are important sciences, writing of CV and motivation letters, as well as projects, are of key importance for success in business world nowadays. The training sessions have enriched my general culture and helped me to attain skills that most of my peers do not possess.

While considering places where I could gain my three-months long volunteer experience, I determined that the library was the most logical choice. North Mitrovica, the town in which I was born and where I live, is no longer a place where events promoting culture are frequently held. The living conditions and events which people had to go

through in this territory over the past ten years made them to embrace some false values. Very often I had to listen that volunteer work which I was about to start in the local library was a pure waste of time. However, I had no doubts about the decision I had made. Even before that opportunity, I was visiting the library every day and reading most of its titles.

It seemed that my assistance arrived at the right moment. My volunteer work in the library lasted from January to April 2010. The kind library staff, led by Director Milena Tepavčević, cordially welcomed me and my friend Nevena Jelic. Over these three months' time we performed various activities dealing with the librarian tasks. I found the contact with readers the most interesting. To suggest a new book to the reader was as if giving him/her a key of the entirely new, still unexplored world. At the same time, it was a great responsibility. Also, Nevena and I learnt about other, more or less interesting sides of the librarian work. Management of books, card filing without which no book could be borrowed, and electronic catalogue book filing were just some of new experiences and skills we attained over those three extremely interesting months.

The highlight of our work was Poetry Eve organized in the Library's premises by me and Nevena, though with no prior experience in this field of work. The event took place in June 2010. Before Poetry Eve, we rehearsed every day for two hours with all participants, boys and girls from our Comprehensive School. Those were our school friends who came to support us asking for no compensation. As a part of our project, Nevena and I were able to donate free library membership cards to the residents of North Mitrovica, those in need, as well as to children and pensioners. Supported by our volunteers, we invested joint efforts and organized a special journey through the world of the greatest poets' and playwrights' written words. The event was extremely well attended and promoted. We have also received acknowledgement of the society for our hard work and success we made.

Knowing that you have contributed to some kind of improvement causes great feelings; especially if you have contributed to promotion of culture in one's own hometown. The volunteer work showed that money is not and should not be the only compensation for work. It is far more important to be satisfied with yourself and with little things. Those little things make life and great people. This was only the first step I made on my way to the great, a bit of a cruel world - the world of the grown-ups.

Teen Life

*By Andjelka Dančetović & Milana Vukomanović,
North Mitrovica Comprehensive School students*



Who are we?

We are Andjelka Dančetović and Milana Vukomanović, the third grade students at Comprehensive school of North Mitrovica. We are also the editors-in-chief and presenters of the Teen Life talk show at local RTV station "Kiss" in our town. This is the very first youth show in our place. We are proud of being the very first young people to have a local youth TV program. And it motivates us to put more efforts and to perform our work with a better quality.

How did it start?

In December 2009, we went to the Centre for Communities Development (CRZ), which is a local NGO in our city, to join the SKYL program. It was our very first meeting and experience with any NGO. We joined a twenty-member-trainee group at the CRZ. Our trainings were about communication, negotiation, job and civic skills, such were how to write a CV for example. It was the mixture of lectures, games and exercises, including our intergroup communication, so the 5-day-training program passed quickly.

During the trainings, we had a great fun with our mates, we met new people and we learned many things. The trainings were followed by our

internships. We were given a chance to implement the acquired knowledge in practice. Each of us found a job in public, civic or business sectors. The two of us were interested in media work, which was the reason for us to contact the owner of the most influential local RTV "Kiss". We presented him an idea of a new teen show, and he liked it immediately. He accepted to host us as SKYL interns for three months. And that is how we started.

We named our show the "Teen Life, according to our age and interest. We were curious, motivated, and enthusiastic. We drafted the schema for our future shows. Every show was planned to speak about a certain topic that is in interest of youth in our town. The choice was great as young people are attracted to so many topics and we were happy to decide on our own about them.

Our first show was about fashion. We overcame the beginner's stage fear, and the first show shooting resulted in a success. The owner and his staff helped us to learn how to make a show, though they let us stay free in editing. We made the 'skin', which is a draft of any TV show with the entire time and activities schedule. Then we had to do the editing and we did it with a great support from our cameraman. We were happy and hardly waited to get back home and watch the show on TV. And we informed our friends and school mates. It was a Saturday, at 17:00hrs. And then the same time every second week, the show after show for months now.

After initial success, we had even a greater enthusiasm to continue. Our TV stories were about Facebook, love, haircuts, makeup. As we were getting more experienced in TV work, we could go out in a field and shoot real life on streets and in cafés, do vox-pop, etc. We invited our guests in studio, spread the network to our schools mates and friends. More and more people started watching us. The feedback was great, in particular from other teenagers in the city, of who we got a great support. Still, the most of the work was done by the two of us, and our cameraman, who was the entire technical assistance to us. What a many member TV crew does at some larger TV, only the three of us did it here, in modest conditions but with great organization and motivation. Our internship program was finally over by the summer holidays in 2009 with five great shows.

What are we doing now?

Although our SKYL internship program was finished, RTV Kiss's owner Miodrag Radomirović invited us to stay on TV. We were so happy and yes, we accepted the offer. A new school year started, and the new season for our shows could begin. We brought some fresh ideas, also. Now, our shows are composed of four parts – “The stories from the city”, “In focus”, “Mirror”, and “The world of films and books”. We have more guests in studio, we shoot more stories and news outside the studio, bring more celebrity news, present more fashion trends and styles and finally talk more about books and films and popularize education and literature. Just recently, on 31st December, we had the special New Year's TV Teen Life show. We invited friends and we made a party at the studio with live music played by our school band.

Our future plans?

We are planning to continue our work and perhaps become professional presenters some day. We shall bring more changes in our show and improve our skills. We have just opened a Facebook page for our fans and we want to get in touch with them. So we use this opportunity to invite all friends to our show to join us on,

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Emisija-Teen-life/114817541922023>

and share some new ideas with us about possible stories in future. Creativity is never enough and with our viewers, the success is guaranteed!

„Instead to Get Angry With Everyone....”

*By Miloš Šarković,
Budi Muško Club volunteer*



Four years ago I came to a big town from a rural area. Lots of people do not consider North Mitrovica as a big town, but since I was brought up in an utterly different environment and circumstances, North Mitrovica looked like a metropolis to me.

Lots of things have changed ever since, because North Mitrovica and Kлина are two completely different environments. It was very hard to resist to all novelties, both good and bad ones. Things which were unthinkable for me in Kлина, have become a daily routine here – playing truant and participation to each and every rally, for instance.

I wanted to learn about people and the town itself as soon as possible. I simply wandered all over the town and gladly participated in various political debates and activities. I thought that non-governmental organizations were enemies to my people. I was convinced moreover, that they are all the same, spies paid by Americans to work against my state and my nation.

However, one day, purely out of curiosity and upon my friend's invitation, I decided to attend a training organized within SKYL program. At the beginning, I had very opposing attitude towards possibility to have young people actively engaged in community issues. But, when I started my

internship at “Resource center” and realized that I had concrete activities and assignments and when I got my first payment, I was thrilled and full of enthusiasm for new projects.

I have become a volunteer in a club called „Be a Man“, implemented under auspices of the „Center for Community Development“ organization and now I am actively trying to change things in this city instead of sitting and being angry with all, just because I am not satisfied with my own life. I do not think any more of myself as being just a number with no voice. Problems of my peers are also my problems, therefore I cannot just stay still. My days are fulfilled, I travel around surrounding counties and most importantly, I finally feel useful.

A Two-member-youth Team Chat

By Igor Simić & Stefan Veljković
Coordinator & Team Leader of YMI Project

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Hello everyone!

We are Igor and Stefan, young boys out of many from North Mitrovica who participated in SKYL program. Except socializing with our peers, exchanging ideas and having discussions, it was a good opportunity to expand our knowledge on civil society and to advance our communication skills.



Igor: Back to my high school days, I remember that I wanted to do volunteer work. I was then an active member of JAZAS. However, due to obligations I got after I had enrolled in a faculty in Belgrade, I made a pause in my volunteer work. After graduation, I came

back to Mitrovica. I could not find any job adequate to my qualifications. I needed a job, so I worked whatever I could. I was a waiter and worked as a bookie. Then I came back to the civil society activism through SKYL program. I took a group of my friends to new trainings after my experience. The old ideas on social engagement and community development came back to me. I also wanted to develop myself personally. Fortunately, the managers of "The Center for community development", who implemented this program, have recognized my abilities, a kind and polite personality, so

I immediately got a good position in this organization. The “Initiative of young men” project was about to start and I became a project coordinator.

Stefan: You are absolutely right. All those young men and their energy expressed during training sessions and other activities have not left me indifferent either. I also wanted to take an active part in the community and team work. Motivation in the group is the best thing. I could join in, since I immediately continued to work as a team leader on the project which Igor mentioned. The project is actually very similar to SKYL since it deals with young people. We have opened a club called “Be a man” within this (YMI) project and we share team spirit and motivation nowadays....

Igor: That's right, Stefan! The energy and motivation of young people out of whom many had just finished trainings and SKYL internship, brought us new young men interested in taking part in this specific project, which primarily deals with high school students. Our “Be a man club” and “Youth forum”, which exist in the scope of the “Initiative of young men” project are known for dealing with topics such as healthy life styles, peer violence combat and other issues interesting to our peers. Thanks to SKYL activities, our managers were able to identify issues which are now dealt by our YMI project. So, YMI is a specific follow up to SKYL activities...

Stefan: “ The Initiative of young men” is actually a project of regional character. It is being implemented in major cities of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina... and it has extraordinary results. We travel a lot, study together and socialize. We have become peer trainers and lots of young people learn from us.

Igor: High school students who attend our Club are educated on important issues, such as healthy life styles, how to recognize and combat addictions and infectious diseases, AIDS for instance. We also host guest lecturers. We organize sport and cultural activities and trips on regular basis. In general, we try to make this stressful life of young people in Mitrovica more relaxed, more interesting and to draw their attention away from daily political problems to sports and personal development.



Stefan: I would like to use this opportunity to invite and encourage all young people to become socially active, to get engaged in voluntary work, to choose good quality programs which achieve positive changes and allow for personal development.

From SKYL, Journalism to University and Business College

*By Danica Trbolevac,
IBCM student*

For eleven years now, Radio&Television “Mir” (“Peace”) in Leposavić has been the most influential local media station in the area. It is the only station in the north which broadcast news covering entire Kosovo. The symbol of this station is a white pigeon which best promotes real values of this media. Besides its informative character, the program of RTV “Mir” also promotes peaceful initiatives.

RTV “Mir” was established in November 2000 as a television station; however it had existed as a radio before that period. When this media was established, the owner and director, Nenad Radosavljević realized the importance of necessity to inform local community members about all current events, which have impact on their own lives, regardless from which community the news come. During eleven years, supported by numerous international programs, he succeeded to technically upgrade the TV station and invest into education of young journalists and cameramen. The TV station currently employs seven technicians and journalists who do not have a strict editorial work division due to better efficiency of such small TV and limited financial means.

Long term investment into own capacity development always gives results. In the past three years, the program evidently improved: quality of scientific, educational, movie and other programs. The progress is primarily evident in quality of local news and service information broadcast daily at 16:00 and 20:00, lasting 10 to 20 minutes. Reported topics are various, starting from current daily political news, real life stories, travels, documentaries... Besides politics, other topics are also in accordance with the viewers' interests and expectations.

RTV "Mir" has developed a strong and relevant cooperation with the most important international organizations in Kosovo: UN, UNDP, USAID, IREX, OSCE, KFOR, etc. Also, the cooperation with non-governmental sector was established. Consequently, Center for Community Development implemented its project "Support for Kosovo's young leaders" (SKYL) in cooperation with this television. RTV "Mir" was partner to this non-governmental organization from North Mitrovica over the three year implementing period. RTV "Mir" did not only allocate its space for trainings and workshops, but this television also welcomed a great number of young people from this municipality to do internship and voluntary work. Some of them have continued to work even after the three month long internship program was over. Great numbers of people imagine the work on television or radio as ideal due to popularity of mass media and other informative programs. Training sessions on communication and employment skills, organized in scope of SKYL program, helped the youth who volunteered at Mir Television to gain self-confidence and improve skills before they started working.



My personal experience in this project was precious. Following the lectures which improved my knowledge and skills in business communication and cooperation, I clearly expressed my wish to stay to work there. During the training sessions and other events organized in the Television's premises, a new door has

opened to me. I was watching the employees and their hasty work, cameras and studio lights. "That's it" I said to myself. I believed that I would be good, since I was always active in school literary clubs and I used to write well. Using information I got in lectures, I completed my knowledge during the internship period. When the program was over, I got an opportunity to stay and work as associate in TV program, which I gladly accepted.

Currently I am preoccupied with attending two faculties in North Mitrovica, so I occasionally go to television. However, my entire journalist experience and participation in a civil society project empowered and inspired me to become more proactive and courageous in life. A new door has opened to me – I enrolled in the International Business College, an institution we have not had in our environment before.





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