

ANNUAL REPORT
EVALUATION – 2011
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Osijek, December, 2011.

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INTRODUCTION

→ Local Democracy Agency in Osijek, Croatia

Local Democracy Agency (LDA) in Osijek history begins in 1993. LDA has been established as a non-governmental and non-profit association, a support programme of Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to foster local democracy, human rights, sustainable development and local economic development in war stricken Eastern Croatia.

Since then, LDA operates in accordance with its mission supporting and fostering democracy at local level by strengthening and building capacities of different local stakeholders and target groups in order to become efficient actors in their local communities and practitioners of democratic rule of law and therefore positively influence social and economic development of Eastern Croatia.

→ Unique among equals

Local Democracy Agency (LDA) in Osijek, Croatia, is one of 12 LDAs in the Balkans and the Southern Caucasus¹.

LDA uniqueness is in its embeddedness within the local setting: it is situated in Eastern Croatia, in Osijek-Baranja County that is specific for its dynamic and turbulent past and multiethnic (multifaith, multicultural and multilinguistic) presence, natural richness and economic scarcity². LDA comparative advantage is its small and flexible team committed to its goals, and sensitive to the needs of the

¹On the concept of LDAs within ALDA, see: http://www.alda-europe.eu/newSite/about_us.php (accessed: December 27th, 2011).

²The region of Slavonia and Baranja is known as a region of fertile plains and natural beauty, traditionally recognizable by its rurality and agricultural economy. During the latest decades, and a consequence of the war of 1990-1995, it has been viewed more through its features of depopulation, de-industrialisation and unemployment. See for instance, A. Sundalic research, "Pauperization and Underdevelopment – Slavonia and Baranja in the eyes of their own inhabitants", in *Socijalna ekologija: Journal for Environmental Thought and Sociological Research*, Vol.15, No.1-2, July 2006, pgs. 125-143.

community. LDA is focused on building partnerships with the local and regional authorities and CSOs on the one, and local, national and international CSOs on the other hand, with an aim to bring together partners to exchange best practices and expertise, and develop projects so that all sides can profit from the partnership. Thus LDA programmes and projects range from trans-border to national, regional and local, focusing on capacity building for local authorities and CSOs, youth and national minorities empowerment, EU integration and micro-crediting.

→ Local Democracy Agency and ALDA

LDA is a member of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies – ALDA, a wide European network with its seats in Strasbourg, France, “a non-governmental organisation dedicated to the promotion of good governance and citizen participation at the local level”, focuses on activities that “facilitate cooperation between local authorities and civil society. It works in Europe (27 members/states) to promote citizens’ participation in the public and European Policies and in the Neighbouring countries to promote local democracy from below, with the engagement of citizens and multilevel stakeholders.”³

While ALDA was established in 1999 at the initiative of the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to coordinate and support a network of Local Democracy Agencies, LDA Osiek’s beginnings can be traced down to 1993.

→ Local Democracy Agency vision, mission and principles of operation⁴

LDA **vision** is fully focused on active participation of citizens in the democratic life of the local communities and on activities leading to local sustainable development with an aim to contribute to the development of more just, liberal and richer society as an equal partner to the communities within the EU family.

³On ALDA see: http://www.alda-europe.eu/newSite/about_us.php (accessed: December 27th, 2011).

⁴Data for this section taken from LDA Osijek Narrative Report 2010.

LDA **mission** is to actively support the implementation of those public policies and programmes that promote and safeguard the rule of law and active democratic citizenship, social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and local sustainable development by using the methods of non formal education, networking and promotion of good practices and innovative programmes that contribute to the social and economic development of Eastern Croatia.

LDA **values** are:

- **Democracy** – promoting the principles of participatory democracy with an aim to strengthen solidarity and social responsibility of both individuals and institutions.
- **Human rights** – respect of human rights and fight against all sorts of exclusion and discrimination.
- **Social cohesion** – support for dialogue, trust and cooperation between all members of the society on local, regional and European level.
- **Sustainable development** – support for social development that meets the needs of its citizens, keeps the environment safe and clean, successfully manages natural resources, and supports growth in the area of economy and employment.
- **International cooperation** – networking with European institutions and partners, exchanging good practices, managing intercultural cooperation.
- **European values** – promotion of European standards and values on all levels of the society.

→ Local Democracy Agency donors and finances

LDA donors in 2011 were

Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes

Association of Local Democracy Agencies

City of Lausanne, Switzerland

Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina

European Commission

Erdut Municipality, Croatia

French German Youth Office

National Foundation for Development of Civil Society, Croatia

FINANCES**2010****2011**

INCOME, HRK	627.355 kn	460.092 kn
Services	14.200 kn	3.000 kn
Membership fees	0 kn	0 kn
Asset based	172 kn	1.886 kn
State budget donations	45.848 kn	152.500 kn
International organisation donations	400.898 kn	278.456 kn
Othe donations	15.000 kn	0 kn
Other income	151.237 kn	24.250 kn

EXPENSES, HRK	738.109 kn	371.240 kn
Staff expenses	217.044 kn	221.470 kn
Material expenses	491.587 kn	131.765 kn
Depreciation expenses	8.119 kn	8.355 kn
Finanance expenses	7.841 kn	2.142 kn
Donations	6.540 kn	7.508 kn
Other expenses	6.978 kn	0 kn

FINANCES**2010****2011**

Income surplus	0 kn	88.852 kn
Income deficit	110.754 kn	0 kn
Income surplus - transferred	166.311 kn	55.557 kn
Income deficit - transferred	0 kn	0 kn
Income surplus available in the future	55.557 kn	144.409 kn
Income deficit for coverage in the future	0 kn	0 kn

Financial balance at the beginning of the year	101.284 kn	7.352 kn
Total income to bank accounts and registers	1.292.784 kn	689.645 kn
Total outflow from bank accounts and registers	1.386.716 kn	578.003 kn
Financial balance at the end of the year	7.352 kn	118.994 kn

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY IN 2011

→ Local Democracy Agency programme lines and projects in 2011

In 2011, LDA worked within the three (3) programme areas and organized, hosted and/or participated in a total of ten (10) projects.

LDA programmes cover the following areas: *Active Citizenship*, where the main focus is support to development and promotion of values of active citizenship and citizenship participation in public policies and decision making processes in the local communities; *Sustainable Development*, endorsing local economy and promoting sustainable development; and *Bridges of Cooperation* promoting intercultural dialogue, tolerance and cross-border cooperation, improving social cohesion and promoting European identity.

Combining these areas, LDA intention was to integrate understanding, skills and values, encourage change and provide methodology that can be adapted to different settings – LDA projects were related and responded to the needs of the local community, provided critical education and examples of good practice, and focused on applicability and multipliers' effect.

→ To develop and promote the values of active citizenship and citizenship participation in public policies and decision making processes in the local communities.

PROGRAMME AREA: ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

→ 1. PEACE

The project aims at **Peace Education for Active Citizenship in Europe** and it has been part of the Europe for Citizens Programme, EC.

The overall goal of PEACE is the creation of a network of structures working on Peace Education, Citizenship and Human rights in the intent to use 20th Century European History as a tool for Active Remembrance.

Project participants were engaged in peer-to-peer experience, exchanges and reflections on how to improve teaching and work methodologies for achieving positive results among the general population on the topics such as: the European Union's values, understanding of the reasons that made possible creation of the Council of Europe and European Union, mutual understanding of cultural differences and sufferance – thus assuring the preservation of an unbiased memory and the construction of a tighter-knit Europe.

Within this project LDA hosted youth workshop and public lecture on “The Faces of Totalitarianism. How to recognize totalitarianism and how to be active in totalitarianism. The case of Dietrich

Main aim:

To support youth and representatives of national minorities and enhance their capacities for active participation on local level.

Key focus:

Youth (16-30) and national minorities.

Projects:

PEACE, CSADP, LCIT and VHRE.

OTVORENO PREDAVANJE 17. 11. 2011. godine, 19.30 sati

Prepoznati totalitarizam Biti aktivan u totalitarizmu

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, vjernik i nacizam

Prepoznati totalitarizam: lica i naličja totalitarizma. Nacizam kao najsnažniji primjer totalitarizma. Biti aktivan u totalitarizmu: totalitarizam i građanski otpor. Totalitarizam i vjernici. Totalitarizam i kršćanstvo. Primjer Dietricha Bonhoeffera (1906-1945).

Predavač: Julijana Tešija i studenti Evangeoskog teološkog fakulteta u Osijeku

FILMSKA PROJEKCIJA 17. 11. 2011. godine, 20.30 sati

Hanged on a Twisted Cross:

The Life, Convictions and Martyrdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1996)

Redatelj: T.N. Mohan

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) je njemački pastor, teolog i sudionik pokreta otpora.

Snažan protivnik nacizma i Adolfa Hitlera, bio je ogorčen zbog toga što Crkva ne reagira zahtijevajući veću ulogu Crkve u kritici nacionalsocijalističkog režima.

Nije podržavao antisemitsku politiku. Iz potrebe za otporom nacizmu, zajedno sa još nekoliko uglednih crkvenih dužnosnika, osnovao je Ispovjednu Crkvu.

Pomagao je da Židovi napuste Njemačku. Nacisti su mu zabranili propovijedati, kasnije poučavati a na kraju i svaki javni rad.

Organizirao je predavanja za pastore Ispovjedne Crkve, a povezoao se i sa pripadnicima Abwehra (Njemačke vojne obavještajne službe) koji su htjeli zbaciti nacistički režim.

Nakon što je Operacija Valkire (Srpanjska urota) 1944. godine propala, zatvoren je i seljen u razne konc-logore završivši u Flossenburgu, gdje je pogubljen

vješanjem u zoru 9. travnja 1945. godine, tri tjedna prije oslobođenja grada.

Junak njemačkog otpora nacizmu.

Klub MOPeD, Cvjetkova 32, Dvorana J. J. Strossmayera.

ULAZ SLOBODAN!

Bonhoeffer". The event was followed by a film evening about the life of D. Bonhoeffer. All three activities attracted attention of local youth and general audience/citizens of Osijek and produced good discussions.

→ 2. Civil Society in Action for Dialogue and Partnership

A two year project on *Issue Based Networks – IPA 2009*, Delegation of European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Designed as a comprehensive set of capacity building and awareness raising measures, the project was implemented both through partners' networking actions and locally designed activities. Issue based and sector CSO networking activities represent a core of the action as the main prerequisite for their proactive participation in creating a more supportive local environment capable of recognising their democratic potential.

Activities envisaged will support both horizontal and thematic, issue based co-operation between CSOs operating within different local contexts and thus help harmonise local practices related with institutionalised cooperation with local authorities and procedures for their financing.

One part of the project included also filming documentaries, postproduction and dissemination of filmed materials. LDA in Osijek was hosting the follow-up twinning and study visit coordinated by the local implementing partner in Osijek.

→ 3. Local cooperation and intercultural training

The project has been supported by the French-German Office for Youth. It aimed to support and develop informal network of youth workers from involved countries which will serve as intercultural exchange platform between Germany, France, Croatia and Serbia.

Its objectives were to train at least 20 participants to design, prepare and implement youth exchanges, to support intercultural dialogue among youth from 4 countries, and to support region as a local cooperation. During this project, 5 Croatian participants and future leaders of LDA intercultural youth exchanges were helped, increasing thus capacities of LDA for managing such projects in the future.

→ 4. Volunteering in Human Rights Education

Training, Youth in Action, EC funded project.

Volunteering in Human Rights Education - an active tool for personal development – is an intercultural training course on Human Rights Education directed to youth leaders that work with young people or for active young people that wish to work further on their self-development in the youth work sector. The training took place in the City of Mostar, Bosnia Herzegovina in November 2011, in duration of 7 days. The training gathered 10 partner organizations and 30 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Italy, Hungary, Romania, Turkey, and Portugal.

The aim of the training is to give to the participants new tools to work with youth and to teach them the importance of respecting other's rights. LDA participated in the project by sending 3 youth leaders, workers and trainers working to develop strategies and activities to address racism, xenophobia, discrimination and gender-based forms of non respect.

Marking of European week – Primary school Tenja, Croatia



→ To support local economy and promote sustainable development.

PROGRAMME AREA: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

→ 1. STANDUP

Main aim:

To contribute to the development of the local economy and to promote the values of sustainable development.

Key focus:

Local authorities and CSOs.

Projects:

STANDUP, Institutional Support and Partners Meeting.

STANDUP is a project for **Strengthening Twinning Agreements and Networking for Development – United in Partnership** – Measure 2.2. Support Measures, Europe for Citizens Programme, EC. STAND.UP aims at strengthening CSO's involvement in the overall framework of EU twinning in order of creating a better organised cooperation system between local authorities & CSO and a more present Public-Private Partnership in the fight against economic and social crisis, in the promotion of mobility for democracy and the ownership of European identity.

Its focuses are Economic innovative initiatives, Local Development and Volunteering using 3 international workshops and 17 local preparatory meetings in which local authorities, economic stakeholders and CSO but also citizens' groups in a more dynamic evaluation of what cooperation can bring in the building of a developed Europe.

Topics were decided given the European thematic priorities (2010 Fighting poverty, 2011 Volunteering) and ALDA's needs (that with the 12 LDAs and 300 partners is working now for years with EfC) in reassessing its network's capacities in inducing real change in local development and active citizenship.

→ Institutional support

The grant - Institutional support for stabilization and development of the association – was awarded to LDA in Osijek in 2011 by the National Foundation for Development of Civil Society.

This was as a three-years grant to support of their activities and efforts in the field of democratization at the local level. Through this grant, relevant assistance was provided for LDA staff capacity building in different areas, but above all in the financial and organizational management.

→ Partners Meeting

As a part of its efforts to ensure greater operational capacity and close coordination between those working in the field the Association of Local Democracy Agencies during 2011 allocated part of its Operating Grant of the European Commission in the framework of its activities on European Active Citizenship to support LDA in Osijek .

LDA in Osijek used that grant to strengthen its partnership and communication with the City of Lausanne as its lead partner first of all but also to strengthen partnership with Croatian LDAs (in Brtonigla and Sisak) and thus contribute to better functioning, cooperation, sustainability and synergy in the future. In that context visits of the City of Lausanne' representative, Ms. Eva Svenonius Affolter and of representatives of LDA in Brtonigla and Sisak to Osijek were organized.



„STAND.UP“, Erdut, Croatia



→ To promote intercultural dialogue, tolerance and cross-border cooperation, and to improve social cohesion and promote European identity.

PROGRAMME AREA: BRIDGES OF COOPERATION

→ 1. Regional Partnerships for Intercultural Exchange

Main aim:

To support intercultural dialogue, tolerance and cross-border cooperation; to strengthen social cohesion through promotion of policies of inclusion of vulnerable/marginalized groups, to promote the idea of European identity.

Key focus:

Youth and national minorities.

Projects:

RPIE, EuroMob, Back to the Future.

The project has been supported by EC programme of support to Civil Society Dialogue, “People to People”, and co-financed by the City of Osijek.

Designed and carried out as a two year activity, the project aimed at enhancing co-operation between public authorities and civil society organizations in promoting minority rights and good governance at local level. The project was carried out in a partnership between ALDA, LDA Subotica (Serbia), LDA in Osijek (Croatia) and LDA Mostar (Bosnia and Hercegovina), and the Light House Media Centre Wolverhampton (UK). Within it, LDA in Osijek carried out two activities related to the *School of Local Democracy*: the Second Round Table (December 2nd 2011), and the study visit *Cities in Partnership for EU*.

The main objective of this project and the component titled *School of Local Democracy* was to help improve intercultural dialogue in the region through improving the interaction and co-operation between the local governments included on one side and representatives of diverse organisations and institutions from multiethnic local communities, contributing thus to good intercultural governance in the local communities involved in the project.

The Study Visit by Partner Cities to Osijek gathered some 20 representatives of local administrations and CSOs from Mostar and Subotica that visited the premises of the City Archeological Museum, old downtown city, former military barracks transformed in the University campus, and the Tourist Information centre. The events coincided with marking of the Day of Osijek and other side events, including the international seminar for the youth councils and the signing of Co-operation agreement between Subotica and Osijek.

→ 2. EuroMob 1957-2011

EuroMob was a youth exchange set up in the framework of the European programme, Youth in Action. It was a 3 week project with an aim to bring together 43 young people aged from 16 to 25 years old and coming from 7 different European and Mediterranean countries: Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy and France. Groups of participants were composed of 5 young people plus 1 leader. Groups were informal gatherings of people or constituted young organisations. The exchange was based on the topic of mobility with its different meanings: physical mobility, cultural mobility, mobility in space and in time (history).

Euromob 1957-2011“- youth exchange, Youth in Action, France





„Back to the Future“ – youth exchange, Youth in Action, Italy



→ 3. Back to the Future

„Back to future“ was a 9 days long youth exchange that took place in Alba, Italy involving 6 countries: Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Lithuania and Serbia with 6 youngsters in the age from 15 to 20 and 2 youth leaders per each country. It was designed as self-improving program to help participants to better understand their responsibilities toward the future.

Youth Exchange is a type of project which brings together groups of young people from two or more countries, providing them with an opportunity to discuss and confront various themes, whilst learning about each other's countries and cultures.

The groups plan together their Youth Exchange around a theme of mutual interest. It gives an opportunity to young people to travel abroad, meet their peers from different cultural and social backgrounds and thus experience Europe and feel like European citizens.

PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

Evaluation purpose and methodology

→ 1. Evaluation purpose

The evaluation was carried out in the period between November 25 and December 25, 2011.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide an objective look at the work and activities of the Local Democracy Agency in Osijek (LDA), their programmes and projects, as well as their management, organizational capacities and human and financial resources for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2011.

The analysis intend to assist LDA by identifying both positive and negative factors that impact their work and activities, and through that, to help in their future work.

The evaluation was participated by LDA team members, Miljenko Turniski (LDA President), Branka Paskuljevic Turniski (Programme Coordinator), Dubravka Lovric (Accountant), Marijana Bundic (Project assistant, volunteer), seven (7) Board members and six (6) volunteers.

PEACE - local workshop, Osijek, Croatia



PEACE - local workshop, Osijek, Croatia



→ 2. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation aimed to give a view on (1) the efficacy of LDA work (planned vs. realized); (2) the quality of LDA organization and resources management; (3) the strengths and weaknesses of LDA activities and through that, their impact in the community (threats and opportunities); all followed by (4) a set of recommendations for enhancing LDA future work.

The analysis took into consideration (a) LDA materials (various documents such as LDA Strategic Plan for 2010/2013, LDA Statute, different project materials and reports, financial data and other); (b) questionnaires – collected and analysed responses to two questionnaires for LDA Board members and volunteers; (c) written notes and observations from oral interviews with LDA team members; and (d) analysis of LDA visibility activities (their web site, different printed materials as well as press clipping data).

Note about the process: collecting of documents and other data went quite smooth; the questionnaires were filled in and submitted back to the interviewer on time; the staff showed readiness to share their experiences and comments with the interviewer.

RESULTS OF EVALUATION

→ I. Evaluation equation

Premise: The year 2011 was successful for LDA for a number of reasons.

The team managed to take part in 7 regional projects (Regional Partnerships for Intercultural Exchange, STANDUP, PEACE, Civil Society in Action for Dialogue and Partnership, Volunteering in Human Rights Education, Euromob 1957-2011, Back to the Future) as well as to conduct 3 projects (Local Cooperation and Intercultural Training, Institutional support, and Partners meeting 2011) and a number of activities on local level hosting the European Day, organizing public lecture, debate and film event regarding *Totalitarianism*, launching the EU Info desk in Osijek, sending volunteers to different training seminars, organizing study visits to local institutions and units of self-government both in Croatia and in the region, sending their team/staff to different training activities and coordination meetings, etc.

Premise: The year 2011 was very difficult for LDA for a number of reasons.

LDA is, notwithstanding their creativity, flexibility and efficiency, understaffed. Though they use well the outsourcing having a number of quality experts involved in their projects, majority of administrative tasks are performed by the two members of LDA team (and a part-time accountant) with occasional support of different volunteers acting as project assistants involved in different projects and activities.

In 2011 LDA moved to a new office, on a new location, which required additional organizational efforts and financial costs.

Concluding GRADE

LDA continues to firmly stand for promotion of the EU values of democracy, interculturalism, peace, equality, tolerance, social inclusion. Regionally, nationally and internationally, LDA is well recognised as a reliable partner and valuable resource for EU projects and activities for both individuals and groups interested in the afore values.

Live Nativity Manifestation 2011 in Aljmaš, Croatia



While measuring the impact of LDA programmes and projects, we took into consideration the the micro, meso and *macro levels*. We defined the micro level as the impact of LDA activities at the local level having in mind LDA capacities and their local partner network. LDA is a fairly small organization: it has two full-time employees, one outsourced accountant several volunteers, and a network of experts. The experts are local (resources), creative and knowledgeable about their environment. LDA Board members are also local; they are part of the decision-making process and experts within their areas acting as catalysts and participating in LDA key decisions. LDA also has a good network of partner-organizations on local level (within the city of Osijek, on the level of the Osijek-Baranja County and in Croatia, though mostly relying on LDA Sisak and LDA Brtonigla).

The impact of LDA within the community as a *meso* scale, was viewed through the active participation of LDA team, Board members and experts in different local government decision-making bodies, academic institutions, local and regional networks and other. For instance, LDA is a member of ALDA European Network as well as in the Osijek-Baranja County Council for European Integration. Members of LDA team are part of the steering committees for the *Fair of Flowers and Rural Tourism* and the *Fair of Old Customs and Crafts* as well as of the organisation of the *Live Nativity* in Aljmaš. LDA Board members are part of local CSOs and academic bodies on international level.

The *macro* level was investigated by viewing the correspondence between LDA strategic goals and recommendation of ALDA, CIVICUS, EU Democracy Index findings as well as the the Croatian National Foundation for Civil Society Development strategic goals 2012-2015.

ALDA' goals in the region of Western Balkans and Croatia consequently, has been based on "building a SEE regional co-operation platform through strengthening the Local Democracy Agencies and fostering the dialogue between civil society and EU."⁵ LDA also followed the findings and recommendations from the *Preliminary Report on the CIVICUS Index on Civil Society Projects in Croatia* stating that „to truly have an impact, CSOs must take part in true collaborations with government and local authorities, mobilising the necessary human resources to have an impact on policies“⁶. This was stressed also by the *EU Democracy Index 2011*, where it has been said that "the impact of the economic and financial crisis on political trends has been most marked in Europe, both east and west" is expected to result with the rise of "populism and anti-immigrant sentiment" as well as "increased social unrest"⁷ which should be the areas of work of the CSO actors. This has been followed by the Croatian National Foundation for Civil Society Development whose strategic goals for 2012-2015 highlight the importance of citizens activism and active participation in the development of the local community, empowerment of the civil society actors for active participation in the society, development of inter-sectoral cooperation and cooperation on the level of CSOs, increase of public influence and visibility of CSO activities as well as support to different social initiatives.⁸

Thus LDA programmes and activities for 2011 were linking local and regional, crossing the borders inside the Western Balkans and involving these areas/countries in joint activities with different countries from EU; cross-sector, bringing together the CSOs with the local units of self-government including business and academic sector representatives, as well as connecting different target groups though focusing mainly on youth and national minorities.

⁵ALDA' Work in Western Balkans at http://www.alda-europe.eu/newSite/strategies_regional_dett.php?id=5

⁶Bezovan, G. (2001), *Croatian Civil Society: On the Path to Becoming a Legitimate Public Actor. A Preliminary Report on the CIVICUS Index on Civil Society Projects in Croatia*. Centre for Development of Non-Profit Organisations, Zagreb, 2001, pg. 17.

⁷Democracy index 2011. *Democracy under stress. A Report from the Economist Intelligence Unit*, <http://www.eiu.com>

⁸National Foundation for Civil Society, *Strategic Plan for 2012-2015 (March 2012)*, <http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/frontpage>

→ II. Evaluation findings

The evaluation found that in 2011 LDA made further steps toward promoting EU issues and values, ensuring vibrancy of CSOs, local authorities, and volunteers.

- In 2011, LDA worked in accordance to its Statute and LDA Strategic Plan for 2010/2013, following the directions of LDA Management and Executive boards.
- In 2011, LDA coordinated more than 20 different activities within the 3 programme areas, Active Citizenship, Sustainable Development and Bridges of Cooperation. These activities were part of the 10 regional projects involving more than 100 relevant beneficiaries (man and women of different ages, national and faith backgrounds, volunteers, members of CSOs, representatives of local authorities, SMEs).
- In 2011, LDA sent its staff and volunteers to 3 seminars to increase their effectiveness and knowledge, and to 4 meetings with their partner-organizations in order to enhance the effectiveness of the joint activities.
- In 2011, LDA hosted 4 regular meetings of its Board defining LDA steps, exchanging information and monitoring LDA work.
- In 2011, LDA focused on supporting and strengthening youth and national minorities as their key target groups, though neglecting not other individuals and organizations such as the representatives of local authorities. This was achieved through organizing public lectures, seminars, training programmes and networking.
- In 2011, LDA acted as a catalyst for ALDA projects focusing their scope onto Slavonia and increasing the synergy, interconnection and knowledge and skills of the different project beneficiaries.
- The evaluation also established that LDA acted as information and resource centre presenting opportunities for different training programmes for volunteers and CSOs, but also for the local public authorities, in their individual work, in seeking for partnerships and networking.
- Connected to this is the LDA effort to make their initiatives replicable. Namely, LDA insists on the so called multiplying effect of their activities empowering their beneficiaries with skills to steer and lead activities on ground by themselves, creating a network of local resource persons.

The evaluation also identified various factors that contributed to LDA efficacy and good results in 2011. To name a few:

1. The scope of projects from promoting EU concepts of active citizenship, identity and democracy, trans- and cross-border bridge building

and regional and local partnerships and networking with special target on youth and national minorities, cross-sector cooperation of local authorities, CSOs, interculturalism, tolerance and reconciliation promotion, to support of local development and sustainability serving as a resource and information centre to both local CSOs and local public institutions, volunteers and individuals.

2. The selection criteria used to identify beneficiaries at individual and regional/country level carefully inter-crossing the variables such as age-sex-religion- language-nationality-interest-eagerness for multiplying the activities within the local setting,
3. The intensiveness and richness of training programmes for volunteers, CSOs and local government representatives,
4. The autonomy granted to beneficiaries to utilize their new skills and knowledge,
5. Strengthening close collaboration with various partners, including regular meetings, with an aim to enhance the effectiveness of the cooperation,

and last but not least,

6. Positioning LDA as information and resource point for connecting the CSOs and local authorities within Osijek-Baranja County, helping them in finding partners in the region and Europe.

These points are considered a stronghold of LDA and its activities for 2011 and the future.

→ III. Questionnaire analysis

1. LDA mission, aim and projects

LDA worked within the three defined programme areas and developed a range of projects that are in accordance to the strategic goals and organizational aims and values.

LDA project activities are measurable in terms of their results and targeted populace. Their goals are long-term being focused on good practices, sustainability and replicability.

LDA identified well the needs of the local community and targeted groups. It also identified well its partner organizations connecting local authorities and CSOs, regional organizations and local institutions. Though 2011 by the LDA team, Management Board and volunteers has been viewed as successful, their general complaint was related to the number of project applications submitted to different EU agencies that were not accepted thus becoming a challenge in LDA work.

2. LDA management of human and organizational resources

LDA is well structured organization – the team is small but efficient which is a result of a clear division of tasks (management (president) – operation and administration (coordinator) – assistant administration (volunteer assistant, accountant). LDA members of team know their responsibilities and tasks, though at the same time have no problem about stepping in and assisting each other in times of need.

The volunteers appreciated the positive environment in the organization, and also the support and practical know-how they received from the LDA staff. The Management Board members stressed the efficacy of LDA team and its collegial governance: all the decisions are reached by joint agreement, LDA team seeks for expert views on issues that they feel unfamiliar with, and stress their own knowledge on issues related to their own area of expertise.

LDA hold regular staff meetings, as well as regular quarterly Board meetings.

LDA has a solid base of volunteers and experts they use as a resource/assistance and expert pool (outsourcing). The new location is seen as „useful“ and “advantageous”: although aloof from the central city area than before, LDA benefitted from the relocation in terms of having more space for their activities (the EU Info desk): being close to the students as their primary target group (the new student campus is in Donji Grad, and the new LDA premises are within the Evangelical Theological Faculty student campus with canteen, library and several classrooms with technical equipment available for use upon agreement): in the close vicinity of only few offices away are several other CSOs, etc.





→ 3. SWOT questions

LDA strengths

- LDA has been recognized in its local setting as well as nationally and regionally.
- LDA has been seen as valuable partner, responsible and good team with high performance.
- LDA has been active for the last 19 years, both in the years of crisis, as well as in the years of peace,
- It has been known by its focus on EU-related themes and issues.
- LDA is viewed as well-connected, actively involved in several regional/international networks (with ALDA network well connected on EU level, then in a number of regional networks with CSOs and local authorities from Serbia, Bosnia, Hungary).
- LDA team is considered experienced, knowledgeable of the local community and their needs as well as of the European and global trends.
- LDA is viewed as a good resource for trained volunteers and experts.

LDA weaknesses

- LDA contacts (on the level of local authorities, CSOs, networks) are not used enough due to the small (staff) capacity of LDA.
- LDA lacks stronger local and regional long-term partnerships.
- LDA volunteers should be more involved in LDA activities – there is no person that could be assigned this particular task and thus the volunteers cannot be properly used to assist LDA work.
- LDA lacks personnel, or more precisely, LDA lacks a person that would deal in particular with EU project and fundraising.

LDA opportunities

- LDA has good experience in working in the area of youth – the next step could be promoting active citizenship for youth.
- LDA could develop new services for the local community that could be, on a long run, financed through the EU structural funds.
- LDA can develop self-sustaining and financing activities (education – services) for the local community.
- LDA can strengthen its networking with the CSOs of similar profile. LDA can strengthen its networking with the local authorities.
- LDA can serve as resource centre for EU projects for those organizations (of national minorities, for instance) lacking staff, experience and skills to apply for the EU funds.
- LDA can develop partnerships with local entrepreneurs in promoting corporative democracy and other forms of responsible and democratic governance.

LDA threats

- Fewer opportunities for financing small CSOs in the future.
- LDA might face fewer opportunities for co-financing bigger projects due to its limited staff and budget capacities.
- Consequently, LDA might face lack of resources for self-sustainability.

→ 4. LDA influence in the society

LDA is active in Croatia and in the wider region for the last nineteen years. LDA has been well recognized by its activities and well connected both on local and regional level. LDA projects are well targeted both in terms of the needs of the local community and target groups. There are clearly positive civil society outcomes in several cases.

LDA regional projects brought about increased engagement of all partners at grassroots level. They had a positive impact on groups most at risk of exclusion and inequality (youth and national minorities in particular), influenced increased citizen participation, and encouraged partnership building at the local level. These projects provided study visits, training seminars and other forms of practical education for the participants – the skills

obtained were related to project development, organizational management, networking, volunteering, etc.

Local authorities and organizations were strengthened through launching local initiatives for sustainable development and rural tourism. The presence of pre-existing grass roots organizations was a critical element in both, and used to reinforce the local capacities and link them on national and international level (sending them to training programmes, conferences, networks). The benefits were expanded understanding of the political decision-making process, increased confidence between different national groups living within the areas of concern, etc.

Micro-credits offered by LDA in Osijek and provided through the Council of Europe Development Bank and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway supported development of small and medium entrepreneurs. Within the two-year period, 119 application for different credits were received out of which 29 were applicants launching their business. The balance between sectors was also interesting: 36 credit requests were within the area of agriculture, 27 in tourism and services, 28 in production, 15 in services and 5 in trade, while 8 were classified as „other“. The overall amount given for the 15 credits of local entrepreneurs in Slavonia and Baranja county was 393.676,65 €



Local cooperation and intercultural training, Neuruppin, Germany



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

→ **Planning and managing projects**

There is a need to plan for greater flexibility when it comes to budgeting. LDA insofar had a smaller number of projects that are of two to three years (with greater budgets), while majority were those that are one year activity (small projects).

A bottom-up approach introduced during project planning proved effective in bringing about a common understanding for the partner organizations and final beneficiaries about the projects.

LDA used a method of combining theory (education) and practice (training and assignments) which advanced the process of acquiring knowledge/ practice and provided continuity for the project by helping participants to internalize the training and learning.

In addition, delivering a project successfully provided for the development partner/funding institution (EU/EC, other) the motivation and confidence to invest in other LDA projects.

→ **Planning and managing human and organizational resources**

LDA needs more long-term projects. In order to achieve this, the team is in need to employ at least one person to assist the administrative work load for the EU/EC and similar applications. This can be achieved by further specialization of LDA as well as by stronger reliance on networking which will allow greater funds.

The involvement of all project partners in the planning and operational stages of the projects was done well and considered very important within this evaluation, as this pre-empts the challenges during project implementation.

→ Recommendations and conclusions

EU promotion of democracy and human rights is usually high on rhetoric but low on achievement. LDA proves that persistence in promoting these values and principles in practice can be beneficial in long term.

Through the concepts of active citizenship, sustainable development, networking and bridge-building and strong cross-sector cooperation, by using selection criteria to clearly identify target beneficiaries at local and regional level, by focusing on topics of importance for the local communities regarding training programmes, by offering intensive and rich training curriculum, and a possibility for the beneficiaries to utilize the skills and knowledge gathered, LDA has positioned itself as training and resource centre of excellence, not only in the city of Osijek, but in the region as well.

Supporting networking and closely collaborating with various partners on local, regional and international level as well as combining the sectors of civil society, local government, academic, research and training, and supporting the efforts of small and medium entrepreneurs, LDA has contributed to its mission: active participation of citizens in the democratic life of the local community (with special accent on youth and national minorities), fostering activities leading to local sustainable development (including rural tourism and micro-crediting).

LDA has also implemented a range of strategies implemented to ensure that the project administration and its implementation ran smoothly. These were: personal development (LDA regularly sent its staff and volunteers to seminars and other events to increase their effectiveness and knowledge), organizational development (LDA is itself part of a network of ALDA that sets meetings for its partner-organizations in order to exchange experience and know-how), networking (within ALDA network, with local CSOs, local authorities and other institutions), regular communication and coordination of LDA members of the Executive, Management and Supervisors' Board, diversity, transparency, accountability and reporting; accessibility, creativity and information exchange and experience sharing; exchange program and facilitated visits, and sustainability.

LDA reporting includes assess of accounts and wide dissemination of different LDA activities data. The budgeting procedures are 'all inclusive': all partners within the project are invited to be part of the decision-making on different pillars of action. LDA Management Board is regularly informed about the planned activities. LDA seeks their decisions on any issues of concern inviting the members of the Board to participate in proposing the budget. LDA has narrative annual reports as well as strategic reports that are planned and prepared for three-year periods.

The evaluation also established that LDA is committed to its core values including: transparency and accountability, gender equity, unity in diversity, ethics and integrity, volunteerism, inclusiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, adaptability.



AGENCIJA LOKALNE DEMOKRACIJE
LOCAL DEMOCRACY AGENCY

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