FONDATION
IMPACT HOPE

Building a common future while respecting differences

Banja Luka, Bosnian Serb Republic

Background

Although more than twenty years have passed since the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, reconciliation between the different communities is still far from being effective. Young people who were only children during the war, or who were not even born, are living in a logic of separation. They have often been brought up in hatred of other communities without ever having had the opportunity to get to know them.

Young people make up about 20% of the population. With their energy and potential, young people could generate new conflicts. Unemployment, lack of education, poor quality of care, lack of opportunities for young people with talent and ambition are factors that could further increase frustration and demonize other communities. Intensive reconciliation and exchange work are therefore necessary.

A recent socio-economic analysis has identified the causes of continuing tensions and significant migration to the rest of Europe:

- Geographical separation of communities
- Disparity between education systems and labour market requirements
- Lack of career guidance and knowledge of personal skills
- Lack of support in school-to-work transition
- Lack of networks and contacts with potential employers
- Lack of State support
- Lack of training opportunities
- Lack of funding opportunities
- Low participation of women in the labour market

Brief summary of the project

Bosnia and Herzegovina is historically a meeting point for different peoples, cultures and religions within the Balkans. The 1992-1995 war left scars among the three main ethnic and religious groups. This project envisages reconciliation between these three groups, strengthening people's capacities and reducing the unemployment rate. All project beneficiaries will participate in reconciliation workshops and will be encouraged to enter the labour market. The project will provide market-oriented training, immersion courses, develop technical and business skills and encourage social entrepreneurship.

Specific objective and expected results

The project aims to promote reconciliation, equality, justice and solidarity through employment training.
To achieve this objective, the project will pursue the following results:
R1. Stereotypes and prejudices about different communities are reduced.
R2. The technical and business skills of the most marginalized people are improved.
R3. People are educated and trained according to the needs of the labour market.
R4. The economic independence of the unemployed is improved.
R5. A positive business environment is developed.

Activities

A1: Stereotypes and Prejudice

Reconciliation workshops - 17 two-day workshops will be organized to break down prejudices and stereotypes between communities and to encourage mutual respect, cooperation and understanding. The workshops will be interactive, with 20 to 25 participants each. The workshops will be carried out by the Institute of Adult Education (SEC) with the support of local organizations dealing with reconciliation issues.

R2: Business skills

Training in business skills, with the help of local government and non-governmental organizations involved in employment promotion. The workshops will cover the following areas: interpersonal skills, business correspondence and communication, CV writing, corporate culture, personal presentation in the real and virtual world, public appearance and job search tools.

Training in social entrepreneurship and development of a business plan for the creation of a social enterprise.
Experience in a real business environment in companies that have agreed to participate in the project. Each company will have a trained mentor who will lead the intern throughout the internship.

R3: Education and Training
Analysis of labour market shortages. 5 most strategic occupations on the labour market will be selected.
Curriculum for shortage occupations: 5 curricula for shortage occupations will be developed. The curriculum will have to include theoretical and practical training.

R4: Economic independence
Career guidance for the unemployed. Two vocational guidance counsellors will be trained for every 1,000 unemployed people.
The project will ensure the identification of people who are more difficult to employ, the analysis of their professional skills and work experience, the assessment of training and training needs, and the provision of professional support in finding or starting a job.

R5: Business Environment
Training of career counsellors. The following topics will be addressed: training of future trainers, business skills and counselling skills. In addition to advising individuals, career counsellors will work closely with the companies hosting the trainees, supporting them in the mentoring process.

Contribution of the project to a real change

The project should bring about a major change by working on the two axes necessary for the development of Bosnia: coexistence between communities and the promotion of employment. If properly paid jobs are created, many young people will be less tempted to leave and will no longer transfer their frustrations to other communities.

Location of the project

Diocese of Banja Luka - North-Western Bosnia and Herzegovina

Local partner

Caritas Banja Luka was founded in 1986 by Franjo Komarica, Bishop of Banja Luka, with the aim of promoting solidarity and voluntary work. It employs more than 100 people.

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995, Caritas was dedicated to collecting and distributing aid for survivors and medical assistance for those without insurance. After the war, it worked on reconstruction, legal advice, and setting up small businesses. It opened its doors to all people in need, regardless of nationality and religion, with the aim of minimising the current unrest and contributing to reconciliation and coexistence.

Direct and indirect beneficiaries

-Members of vulnerable categories of society, of different nationalities and religions: minimum 400 (50% women, 50% men, 1% disabled)
- Unemployed: at least 1,000 (50% women, 50% men, 1% disabled, 50% young people, 10% aged 14-18)
- Local government and non-governmental organizations (minimum of 6 organizations) dealing with employment issues
- Career counsellors (at least 12 members from local government and non-governmental organizations)
- Local businesses (minimum of 50 local businesses that need qualified staff)
- Trainee mentors: minimum of 100 employees from local businesses who will mentor the trainees.

Overall, the project will have around 1,600 beneficiaries.

Sustainability of the project

The project will achieve sustainability through the early involvement of local employment authorities. The project will address a real employment need by providing targeted training to candidates. The training will therefore mostly lead to a job requiring specific skills. The climate of conviviality between the communities will also open up opportunities and should put an end to clientelist practices of the various communities.

Monitoring and evaluation

The project will be monitored on a daily basis by the Caritas team. The team will collect feedback from beneficiaries, reports from career counsellors, certificates of entry in the commercial registers, lists of participants in the various training courses, and reports from mentors.
Caritas will organise surveys on the needs of the labour market, update the number of jobs filled, monitor working conditions in companies.
An internal evaluation will be carried out at the end of each year.
An external evaluation is planned at the end of the project.

Duration of the project

July 2020 - December 2022