



NGO AKTIV

2015 AKTIV Annual Report

Revision of project activities for the implementation period 2014 - 2015

AKTIV Program Office
12/20/2015

Introduction

The year of 2015 has been a year of structural growth of organization, expansion of programmatic areas and tangible increase of organisation's infrastructure subject to the delivery of envisaged results. At the beginning of the year AKTIV launched two major projects with direct correlation with the mandate of the organization; an EU funded project **Strengthening capacity of CSO's in Northern Kosovo to become more effective contributors in decision making process**— that aims to create sustainable framework of northern Kosovo civil society for policy level intervention, and USAID funded project **“Mitigating conflict through community leadership connections”** implemented in cooperation with NDI and Pristina based D4D. The latter tackles the issue of building sustainable ties between ethnic communities in Kosovo. Mid-year 2015 AKTIV, in cooperation with Kosovo Open Society Foundation, initiated the preparations for the opening of Civic Energy Centre, a unique capacity in northern Kosovo for facilitation of open dialogue and direct democracy. These new endeavours, combined with several initiatives spread throughout the course of several years, all enabled AKTIV to remain a major factor at socio-political scene in northern Kosovo and lead the processes focused at creating democratic, pluralistic and inclusive Kosovo society.

1. Analysis of 2015 objectives:

At the Annual AKTIV Assembly, held in December 2014, AKTIV's Board of Directors adopted the list of priorities prepared by Executive Board and Program Office. Priority programmatic areas for 2015 were:

- 1. Establishment of Safe-House for the victims of domestic violence.**
- 2. Establishment of AKTIV as reputable organizations in policy level interventions**
- 3. Transformation of Aktiv Art Centre in self-sustained, semi-commercial and independent institution.**
- 4. Efficient and professional implementation of AKT, NDI and EU programs, three major project entrusted to AKTIV.**

- 1. Establishment of Safe-House for the victims of domestic violence.**

Establishment of the Safe House in northern Kosovo was identified as one of priority objectives of organization in 2015. In preparation for its fruition, AKTIV has produced feasibility study that identified major structural, protocol, and legal requirements prerequisite to its establishment including the establishment of the local Task Force. Feasibility study for the establishment of Safe House in Northern Kosovo became an integral part of a *comprehensive dossier*, which also included Task Force conclusions and recommendations, needs and capacity assessment of local institutions and conclusions and recommendations for establishment of Sage House based on Kosovo and regional experience. The Dossier was published and made available for relevant institutions.

Acting upon recommendation of Task Force for Establishment of Safe House, that North Mitrovica is the best option for the location of Safe House, AKTIV managed to secure a parcel assigned for the same purpose by the local authority. However, politically challenging environment and dualism of governance that remains in Mitrovica, paired with interlaced interests of political leaders led to a regretful lack of consensus of local community on the matter at hand leading to donor refrain. Additional element which added to the postponement of Safe House establishment was position of UN Country Team lead by UNDP that publicly endorsed rumoured initiative of Government of Serbia to establish such a facility in northern Kosovo. While these rumours discredited the efforts of NGO AKTIV, no follow-up on this issue has been offered by UNDP.

2. Establishment of AKTIV as a reputable organization in policy level interventions

The second annual objective of NGO AKTIV delivered tangible results in initiating pioneering initiative, that is, the creation of a framework for policy level interventions of civil sector in Kosovo Serb communities. Evidently underdeveloped, passive and without capacity, civil sector operational in Kosovo Serb community has been a silent observer of main socio-political processes in the past years. In order to tackle this, AKTIV endorsed the objective to increase the internal capacity of our organization as well as create cooperation framework among leading CSO in Kosovo Serb community to perform research and policy recommendation initiatives. Fund raising initiative to support these efforts came in its fruition with support of KFOS for the project “**Association of Serbian Municipalities – consulting the citizens**” and support of EU office for the project: “**Strengthening capacity of CSO’s in Northern Kosovo to become more effective contributors in decision making process**” that aimed to increase advocacy and lobbying capacity of CSOs at central and local level, establish CSO Platform for influencing decision making process at all levels of government and produce quality policy level recommendations in the areas of Minority Rights, Security Issues and EU Integration Process. The platform gathered fifteen (15) CSO organizations and engaged them in tailored training/tutoring program that is expected to produce results in form of policy briefs throughout year 2016.

As a result of strategic internal capacity building efforts in the policy level area, AKTIV’s program office delivered two research and policy level initiatives:

- **Report: Community/Association of Serbian Municipalities- “The sum of all our fears”**
- **Research: Views of the citizens in Northern Kosovo. Political, economic and security aspects**

Both papers attracted the attention of decision makers, media and CSOs in Kosovo and the region attesting the “ears opened” for authentic voice of Kosovo Serb community. The papers were presented at the media conferences and roundtables in Pristina, Mitrovica and Belgrade. These conferences reinvigorated the image of AKTIV as a leader in this area among Kosovo Serb civil society organizations. The Program Office remains resolute to continue with policy level interventions, and has already secured significant support in pursue of this objective.

In cooperation with Slovak Development Aid and PONTIS foundation from Bratislava, AKTIV will continue to work in policy level capacity building for CSO in northern Kosovo throughout 2016. Additionally, AKTIV has launched the Advocacy Platform “**Empirica**” at the end of 2015 in cooperation with KFOS. In the following years this platform will become a focal point for concentrated efforts of Kosovo Serb CSOs in increasing their influence over the decision making process in Kosovo. In addition to this, AKTIV already secured the support for initiation of annual tracker of dominating trends in northern Kosovo (so far with working title “**Trends and positions**”). The baseline study will be performed in April 2016 and its updates will be issued on annual basis in years to come.

3. Efficient and professional implementation of AKT, NDI and EU programs, three major projects entrusted to AKTIV

After a period of consolidation and positioning at the CSO scene in Kosovo, in late 2014 AKTIV finally managed to secure partnerships and support for several major developmental projects. These projects enabled the organization to assume the role in substantial socio-political processes in the northern Kosovo and Kosovo as a whole. In order to be able to deliver good results and maintain the high quality of outputs in a situation in which the organization assumed primary responsibility for approximately 10 projects, AKTIV Executive Board has undertaken the review of internal procedures and introduced several mechanisms and procedures aimed at assuring the efficient and professional implementation of major projects entrusted to the organization. Although set for above listed projects, its application was seen through all projects in which AKTIV took part, leading to tangible standardization of organizations deliveries. Some of the most important measures undertaken with this objective were:

- Review of Financial Management Regulations and its adaptation to positive law in Kosovo and needs invoked by increasing scope of organizations interventions
- Review of Human Resource Policy and its adaptation to raising number of employees, consultancy contracts and associates
- Strategic switch in recruitment policy. As almost 40% of AKTIV staff in 2014 were international and regional recruitments, Executive Board of AKTIV decided to increase the number of members of northern Kosovo communities, to be employed in organization in order to increase the direct links with the community. The standard qualitative requirements in selection process were preserved at the same time, which lead to a significant improvement of recognition of AKTIV as grass-root organization in northern Kosovo
- Introduction of quality assurance indicators and its incorporation in monthly project reports. Indicators as: project progress table, planning tools, event-check lists and similar became integral part of AKTIV's everyday operations
- Training system for staff member. In order to introduce the practice of continued learning AKTIV reserved last Friday of the month as training day for the staff members. Both internal and external resources were utilized in this program. The training needs were determined through staff performance evaluation system.
- Personnel Evaluation Reports. Annual performance evaluation system that provides the senior management and staff members with objective evaluation of strengths and

limitations of each staff member to serve as indication of employee's specialization and improvement needs.

4. Transformation of Aktiv Art Centre in self-sustained, semi-commercial and independent institution.

Aktiv Art Centre is an independent cultural centre initiated by AKTIV in 2012. It facilitates informal cultural education and promotes cultural and social activism among young people in northern Kosovo. In the past three years more than 5,000 young people took part in some of the programs that Aktiv Art Centre established. Due to strategic determination of AKTIV to maintain the cultural activities as a channel for deeper social changes (reconciliation, social activism, cultural diversity) it was of outmost importance to develop the realistic sustainability plan for the Centre in the situation when donor focus has slide into other social and political priorities. The plan included introduction of commercial catering services by the company with the best bid at the tender issued by AKTIV at beginning of October 2015. In return, the company should cover all the costs related to maintenance of premises, including the rent and utilities and host the cultural and social events organized by AKTIV. As of November 2015 the management of the AKTIV Art Centre was entrusted to local commercial company "STR JAZZVA" while AKTIV's Cultural Development Department continues to facilitate the cultural and artistic events in the premises. AKTIV continues to facilitate several programs: Art Around the Corner (promotion of local artists), Cultural Diversity (events dedicated to cultural features of regional and EU nations), and Mitrovica Social Club but also introduces a new programs adapted to new commercial operational philosophy like "Café Academica" – extra-curriculum lectures for the students of University of Pristina temporarily settled in Kosovska Mitrovica. In the first two months of operations, this model reveals realistic potential for self-sustainable cultural centre.

2. Review of the 2015 annual progress in programmatic priority areas of AKTIV

According to the statute and mission statement of AKTIV our organization aims to enable the meaningful involvement of the Kosovo Serb community in the construction of a participatory, peaceful, and prosperous future for the region.

In order to do so, we established 5 specific objectives whole fulfilment should lead to mission accomplishments. Those objectives are:

Objective 1 - To provide sustainable framework for civic participation and democratic decision-making on local and central institutional level in Kosovo

Objective 2 – To fortify the commitment of local and central level institutions to human rights principles and democratic decision-making

Objective 3 – To facilitate sustained economic progress in Kosovo communities

Objective 4 – To improve cross-community relationships in Kosovo

Objective 5 – To reinvigorate the local tradition of positive cultural engagement

2.1 Objective 1 - To provide sustainable framework for civic participation and democratic decision-making on local and central institutional level in Kosovo

2.1.1. Policy level interventions:

Throughout the course of 2015 AKTIV tangibly increased internal capacities for policy level interventions and assumed the role of a leader among the Kosovo Serbs CSO in research and analytical work related to main socio-political processes relevant for Kosovo Serb Community. Additionally, AKTIV took a stewardship role in increasing overall capacity of civic sector in Kosovo Serb community to act at policy level.

The ***Policy for Change***, an EU supported project activities all aimed to achieve this precise objective. The capacities of 15 CSOs in areas of research and public policy analysis have been built. The formation of the non-formal think-tank, Platform for Analysis and Research (PAR), will ensure a possibility for the meaningful involvement in the analysis and adaptation of the public policies to all interested CSOs. The research and policy proposal writing skills are not only durable, they are also transferable, so even though ***Policy for Change*** was a pioneering project in North Kosovo, and the first that dealt with this particular type of civic participation, its sustainability is ensured. This is especially true in lieu of the current change in donor priorities, since many of the donors wish to support policy level activities and research and analysis activities. In 2016, PAR website will become functional and it will be used to make statements whenever political or security issues that are of importance to the Serbian community arise. The trainings conducted with the members of PAR were all designed to offer a way of monitoring and assessing the work of public institutions in a factual and scientifically acclaimed way. Should a future think-tank, a watchdog organization or any CSO wish to achieve a level of credibility, they are now equipped with the right tools to do so.

On April, 2nd AKTIV launched CSO Platform for policy level interventions that gathered 14 Serbian NGOs from North Kosovo and 25¹ of its members who underwent a series of trainings and mentoring sessions. In late April (17th – 23rd) 2015, a 6-day training on research methodology was organized in Bečići, Montenegro. A total of 24 members of CSOs part of Platform for Analysis and Research attended the training on how to conduct interviews, focus groups, round tables; how to formulate questions for the public opinion research and how to analyse the collected data in SPSS. The training was held by a methodology professor from the Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade. This training was followed by a concrete activity: public opinion research conducted in the four Serb-majority municipalities in North Kosovo (North Mitrovica, Zvečan, Leposavić and Zubin Potok) during May – July 2015. The research “**Views of citizens in Northern Kosovo**” included 799 questionnaires, 12 interviews, 4 focus groups and 4 round tables. Research topics were: rights and liberties of the citizens in North Kosovo, socio-economic problems of the community in the North, political participation of

¹At times, this number varied, as some NGOs expressed their intentions to delegate additional members to PAR, while two of the participants started working out of Kosovo. At the moment there are 15 CSOs and 23 of their members in Platform for Analysis and Research.

Serbs in Kosovo institutions and security issues of the community in the North. The collection of data was entirely conducted by the members of PAR, who moderated focus groups and round tables, interviewed the key informants and did canvassing. All of the questions for the research activities were prepared by members of PAR. This research was presented on a conference on 12th of November after much delay due to political turbulences around the implementation of the agreement on revitalization of the Peace Park on the main bridge in Mitrovica.

Earlier in 2015 AKTIV issued an policy paper titled **Community/Association of Serbian Municipalities- “The sum of all our fears”** and offered its contribution and support to Brussels dialogue though attempt to vocalize the position and needs of Kosovo Serb communities in process of formation of Association of Serbian Municipalities. This paper as well as subsequent research and policy releases placed AKTIV at the centre of focus in policy level interventions.

2.1.2. Inclusive and democratic dialogue.

Affirmative civic participation in decision making process incept with creation of open and inclusive dialogue on community level. In 2015, AKTIV has increased its potential to facilitate such a dialogue through continuation of esteemed programs (MSC, Accountability couch) and introduction of new projects that aim to nurture the culture of open dialogue on the main problems Kosovo Serb community is facing. These programs were gathered under the umbrella of Civic Energy Centre opened in September 2015 in cooperation of Kosovo Foundation for Open Society.

A) Civic Energy Centre

Acknowledging deficiencies in the participation of Kosovo Serbs representatives at local and central level decision making processes, AKTIV, in late 2015, in cooperation with KFOS, initiated the far-reaching program that aims to reinforce the practices of the public dialogue and inclusive decision making. The opening of Civic Energy Centre as a focal point for such a process in northern Kosovo drastically increased the infrastructure and capacities of AKTIV to lead this processes. Civic Energy Centre (CEC) was envisaged as a community centre that supports civil initiatives and promotes a culture of open dialogue on relevant political issues and practices related to the Serbian community in Kosovo. The purpose of CEC in north Kosovo is to create a public space that will connect local civil society with leading, local decision makers. The Centre gathers citizens, NGOs, CSOs, government representatives, media and activists together in order to facilitate open dialogue between them, and encourage them to participate in the fostering of a new social reality. The Centre is a platform for public opinion to be heard. Its goal is to contribute to the development of democracy, a culture of open discussion and debate and the identification of shared solutions to current political, economic and social issues.

Its various products are all focused at increasing the capacity of civic participation in the decision making process either through open and inclusive dialogue. Programs facilitated under the auspices of CEC are:

Mitrovica Social Club

Mitrovica Social Club comprises of a series of debates which intend to provide a platform for inclusive discussion making in order to contribute to a culture of open debate in North Mitrovica. The concept of Mitrovica Social Club was developed by AKTIV in 2014, and aims to create open-dialogue framework for citizens of northern Kosovo. The idea behind Mitrovica Social Club was to open Mitrovica to different ideas and perspectives and promote certain topics other than only political, which are of interest to Serbian community in Kosovo, particularly: economy, unemployment, environment, youth violence, religion, culture, but also, current issues from the international scene. The topics selected for this project reflect the needs of community which have been identified through AKTIV's work in northern Kosovo over the last several years.

TV Show Sporazum

TV Show "Sporazum" is a political talk show which was created with the objective to facilitate open and multi-angled debates on important political questions and challenges facing Kosovo. The idea of this TV Show is to initiate discussion on current political issues of Kosovo not only on the local, but also on the regional level, thus to affect citizen perceptions on these matters in Kosovo, Serbia and further. Moreover, it gives the unique opportunity to ordinary people living in Kosovo to be heard and to directly pose some questions to members of high political elite sitting in our TV studio. Finally, "Sporazum" is broadcast twice a month and the concept of this project was created in coordination with our project partners (KFOS, Foundation Dokukino and Independent TV Mreža).

Point One

Point One is an initiative aimed at creation of local expertise for statistical and qualitative researches of public opinion. This program will create locally available group of trained analysts who will be capable of providing analysis of data acquired through qualitative and quantitative research as well as present data in an effective and interesting manner using GIS-based software's. The services of this expertise group will be placed at disposal of all civil society organizations engaged in socio-political studies and research work.

Empirica

Advocacy platform 'Empirica' aims to create the framework for converged advocacy initiatives in northern Kosovo and further Kosovo Serb community. The platform will aim to gather CSOs, discuss the prime areas of interest of the Serbian community, develop proposals and policy recommendations and deliver them to decision makers at central and local level. It will promote the research activities, studies, policy papers and similar tools that offer empirical evidences for substantiation of the existing local, national and regional policies of concern for Kosovo Serb community. Through creation of recognizable identity, lobbying and communication channels with Kosovo decision makers (both local and national level), and assurance of substantial visibility (media coverage), "Empirica" will

seek to become a central advocacy platform for civil society organizations in northern Kosovo and wider, Kosovo level and region, on the matters of interests of Kosovo Serb community (minority rights, cultural heritage, rule of law, human rights etc.) and developmental initiatives (economic development, social equity, environmental initiatives, local democratic practices etc.).

All above mentioned programs alongside of several other civil initiatives hosted in CEC nominated this facility to become a focal point for civic initiatives of northern Kosovo in near future. In about one hundred days of its operation, CEC hosted about 40 various events (conferences, roundtables, debates etc.) that gathered more than 1000 individuals.

2.1.3 Support to Civil Society Development

By the end of 2015 NGO AKTIV has delivered several direct CSO support programs that aimed at strengthening the overall civic potentials in Kosovo Serb society and their inclusion at local and central decision making process.

Granting schemes were implemented through 3 supporting programs **(1) Advancing Kosovo Together-USAID, (2) Building Capacities of the civil society in the North of Kosovo -Slovak Balkan Public Policy Fund and (3) Support to the newly established municipalities in the Northern Kosovo through the development of educations, culture and** implemented with the financial support of Royal Embassy of Norway and Office for Community Affairs. In these programs, AKTIV facilitated and co-managed the granting scheme for 33 various CSO and informal youth groups in total value exceeding 250.000 euros. Below is the list of all organizations and programs selected for support within these programs.

Granting scheme within Advancing Kosovo Together, funded by USAID:

Name of CSO	Municipality	Project Name	Area of intervention	Project Duration	Project Value
Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC) in partnership with Media Pulse	North Mitrovica Leposavić	Organizational Capacity Building of USAID/AKT-LS CSO grantees	Capacity building of local CSOs	Oct 2015 – April 2016	\$25,000
Center for Trainings and Development (CTD) in partnership with Business Support Center Kosovo (BSCK) as lead agency	North Kosovo	Entrepreneurship Program for North Kosovo	Trainings for Entrepreneurs from northern Kosovo	Oct – Dec 2015	\$50,000
Friendship	Leposavić	Support to Local Government in Leposavić municipality in achieving cooperation and functional links with civil society	Support to LG in outreach to local constituency and involvement of CSOs and local communities in decision making processes	Dec 2015 – May 2017	\$10,000
Under the Lucky Star	Zvečan	Transparency-Way to success!	Support to LG in outreach to local constituency and involvement of	Dec 2015 – May 2017	\$10,000

			CSOs and local communities in decision making processes		
Kosovo Relief Committee (KRC)	Zubin Potok	Advancement of development policy in the municipality of Zubin Potok.	Support to LG in outreach to local constituency and involvement of CSOs and local communities in decision making processes	Dec 2015 – May 2017	\$10,000
Center for Women Development (CWD)	North Mitrovica	Support to transparent development of North Mitrovica municipality	Support to LG in outreach to local constituency and involvement of CSOs and local communities in decision making processes	Dec 2015 – May 2017	\$10,000
Domovik	North Mitrovica	Multi-ethnic cultural and sports festival "Summertime"	Small scale cultural events	July – Sept 2016	\$5,000
Radio Contact Plus	North Mitrovica	Notes in Time	Intangible Cultural Heritage (mapping, classification, documentation and promotion)	6 months (starting in 2016)	\$5,000
Institute for Development of Civil Society "Innovate" in partnership with Developing Society Center (DSC)	Leposavić	Youth Cultural Center Leposavić	Projects supporting Youth Cultural Centers and inter-ethnic artist-led events	12 months (starting in 2016)	\$20,000
Media Pulse in partnership with Municipal Sport and Tourism Organization, Leposavić	Leposavić	Leposavić - the gate of Kosovo	Municipal branding initiative	8 months (starting in 2016)	\$20,000

Granting scheme Building Capacities of the civil society in the North of Kosovo through the Slovak Balkan Public Policy Fund, funded by The Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation

	Name of CSO	Municipality	Project Name	Project Duration	Project value
1	IT Youth Association of Northern Kosovo	Leposavić	Establishment of IT Youth Association in Northern	15 May 2015 to 15 October 2015	6.205 €

			Kosovo"		
2	ALETRO	Zvečan	Developing employability	25 April 2015 to 25 September 2015	5.448 €
3	Forum Theatre	Mitrovica	Forum Theatre	25 April 2015 to 25 September 2015	5.955 €
4	The Upgrade Society	Zubin Potok	Sport up	25 April 2015 to 25 September 2015	5.408 €
5	YouthEducationalClubSynergy	North Mitrovica	Boys as allies in violence prevention	25 April 2015 to 25 September 2015	5.750 €
6	Volunteering Youth Group	North Mitrovica	Volunteering for change	25 April 2015 to 25 September 2015	6.230 €

Granting scheme Support to the newly established municipalities in the Northern Kosovo through the development of educations, culture and youth, implemented by financial support of Royal Embassy of Norway and OCA.

Name of CSO	Municipality	Project Name	Project Duration	Amount
Human Center	North Mitrovica	Multi ethnical visit of cultural historical objects in Kosovo	1st October 2015-31st December 2015	4996 €
Healthy life	Leposavić	The only salvation of the planet are the children	1st October 2015-28th February 2016	5000 €
Friendship	Leposavić	Friend youth	1st October - 31st January	5000 €
Me Dore Ne Zemer	Mitrovica South	Cultural promotion of	1st October - 31st January	4500 €

		peace		
Prezent Marketing	North Mitrovica	Design fest	1st October 2015-31st December 2015	4535 €
Advocacy Center For Democratic Culture (ACDC)	North Mitrovica	Empowering of Youth in Northern Kosovo at Labor Market	1st October 2015-31st December 2015	3000 €
CETUS	North Mtrovica	We can and we will	1st October - 31st December	4163 €
The Upgrade Society	Zubin Potok	Improve your argument	1st October - 31st January	4000 €
Domovik	North Mitrovica	Stop hate speech and cyber bullying	1st October 2015-31st March 2016	4000 €
Innovate	Leposavić	Construction of terrain for beach volleyball	1st October - 31st January	5000 €
Center for Legal Volunteering	North Mitrovica	Small school for law students and youth activist on Brussels agreement	1st October - 31st December	3966,70 €
Radio Mitrovica North	Zvečan	Media work shop- MOVE ON	1st October 2015 -31st January 2016	4000 €
Association for protection of children Abuse SANTA MARIJA	Zvečan	Support to inclusive education	1st October 2015-30th November 2015	3990 €
Diversity Of Mitrovica	North Mitrovica	Better days for culture	1st October 2015-31st March 2016	2943 €

Radio Mr	Leposavić	Summer school of journalism	1st October 2015 -31st January 2016	3990 €
Ecological Medical Care	North Mitrovica	Norwegian language course	1st October 2015 -31st January 2016	3997 €
Chess Center Rvatska	Leposavić	Basic, middle and high chess education	1st October 2015-31st March 2016	5000 €

2.1.4. Technical capacity building

Each of the program of direct support to civil society organization and initiatives was accompanied by technical capacity strengthening training program delivered by AKTIV internal or/and external resources. Training program was developed upon need assessment analysis of beneficiary organization and included topics like:

- Fundraising for CSOs
- Project Cycle Management
- Training on Reporting, Monitoring and Cost-sharing
- Training on Indicator Reporting Matrix
- Financial management training
- Networking and partnerships

In total more than 250 civil activists underwent this one or more session of this training program.

2.2 Objective 2 – To fortify the commitment of local and central level institutions to human rights principles and democratic decision-making

Partnership between local authorities and civic society sector as prerequisite for substantial involvement of CSO in monitoring and development of democratic practices at the local and central level government has always been a sore point in attempts to improve the role of civic sector in Kosovo Serb communities. Burdened with distrust, opacity in operations, substandard and crudeness in CSO interventions, such a partnership hardly ever produced fruitful and sustainable results. Acting from the position of community interests' warden, AKTIV have invested vast efforts in increasing the cooperation and communication with local and central level authorities.

Starting point in these efforts was the establishment of direct presence of AKTIV in municipal structures in northern Kosovo to improve information flow between civic and public sector. Early 2015, within the program Advancing Kosovo Together supported by USAID, AKTIV in cooperation with Mayors of North Mitrovica, Zvečan, Leposavić and Zubin Potok municipalities, AKTIV appointed two regional coordinators with the objective to act as municipal liaison officers within AKT and other programs of our organization. Their presence not only improved communication exchange and awareness of municipal authorities on civil initiatives and interventions, but also assured meaningful participation of local authorities in capacity building programs delivered within program Advancing Kosovo Together. This training program

organized by AKT US (USAID implementing agency Chemonics Inc.) at which AKTIV/AKT-LS team facilitated the participation of Municipal Officials from four northern municipalities (North Mitrovica, Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić/q) encompassed following topics:

1. Introduction to the SIAP methodology seminar – held in North Mitrovica for the representatives of all four newly established Municipalities in the North
2. Workshop on Draft Law on Property Tax and Revenue Collection – Prevalac, Prizren
3. Advocacy Training – North Mitrovica
4. Workshop on Transparency in Municipal Work – Prishtine/Pristina
5. Training on SIAP methodology - Zubin Potok
6. Workshop on the Challenges of the Municipal Offices for Communities and Returns and Recommendations for strengthening of MOCR role – Prishtine/Prishtina
7. Workshop on Transparency in the Work of Municipalities – Prishtine/Pristina
8. Workshop on "Strengthening Communities Role in Municipalities (SCRIM)" – Prishtine/Pristina
9. Workshop on Strengthening Communities Role in Municipalities (Transparency and Communication with the public) - Millosheve/Milosevo
10. Training for MOCR on Minority Rights – Prishtine/Pristina
11. Workshop for MOCR - Project Management Cycle – Prishtine/Pristina
12. Workshop on "Data analysis and finalization of SIAPs for Energy Efficiency" - Zvečan/Zveçan
13. Workshop on organization and systematization of municipal positions, tasks and duties - ZubinPotok
14. Workshop on the Role of the local government in the process of EU integration – Prishtine/Pristina
15. Forum on Municipal Budgets: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities - Zvečan/Zveçan
16. Workshop on Municipal Mid-term Budget Framework - Zvečan/Zveçan
17. Workshops with ZubinPotok and Zvečan/Zveçan Working Groups for SIAP development
18. Workshop on Inter-municipal Cooperation for Municipal staff working in the Office for European Integration and representatives of municipal Legal Offices – Prishtine/Pristina
19. Workshop on Efficient Fundraising for Municipalities for Municipal officers working in Economic Development and Finance departments – Prishtine/Pristina
20. Workshop with Energy Efficiency Expert for ZubinPotok and Zvečan/Zveçan Working Group on SIAP

In additional efforts, throughout 2015, AKTIV, has sought a direct project partnership opportunities with local municipalities in northern Kosovo. As a result, AKTIV and Municipality of Leposavić have formed the partnership in implementation of the project **Strategy of Cultural Development in Leposavić Municipality** supported by European Council which dealt with inclusion of minorities in local developmental strategies. Although project faced significant

implementation obstacles caused by transitional status of municipal structures, it has contributed in improving the treatment of minorities and upgraded the affirmative views of civil-public partnerships in northern Kosovo.

2.3 Objective3 – To facilitate sustained economic progress in Kosovo communities

As reflected in AKTIV mission statement, economic welfare is the crux of a capable and vibrant society generating the resources to respond to its own needs. AKTIV put forth a great effort to expand the market for small and medium entrepreneurs, assisting them in building their own capacities to become competitive actors in Kosovo and regional markets. The main area of our work in this field is assistance to Kosovo Serb community entrepreneurs in achieving the standards and creating contacts for successful expansion on Kosovo and regional markets. AKTIV's engagement in achieving sustainable economic progress in Kosovo Serb communities unfolds at three programmatic strategic levels:

- Market expansion for Kosovo Serb business/ program: Single Market Kosovo
- Youth employment initiatives
- Direct assistance to businesses through granting schemes

2.3.1 Market expansion/Single market Kosovo

Economic cooperation and development is essential factor in the process of stabilization of intercommunity relations in Kosovo. Perturbed interethnic relations in Kosovo are affecting overall business environment by denying/harrowing the Kosovo Serbs access the overall market of Kosovo, central institutional support and networking opportunities. As a consequences the developmental potentials of Kosovo Serbs business has not reached the optimal level nor the economic cooperation fully contributed to upsurge of inter community relations in Kosovo. In order to tackle this deficiency it is necessary to assist the MSMEs in generating the business connections with Kosovo Albanian counterparts leading to expanded opportunities for access to overall Kosovo market. This process will foster favourable dynamics in overall economic development and lay foundation for continued and unassisted economic cooperation and networking. Ethnic cooperation based around a common interest, tangible as economic, is a strong contributing factor to overall process of relieving inter-community relations. Precondition for self-sustainability of these actions is to build substantial and need based cooperation. Such cooperation in economic sector should unfold on two level; first one being direct individual and sector based business cooperation contacts, while second one is joint policy level actions between entrepreneurs from both community that will contribute to creation of business perceptive environment.

In 2015, AKTIV, in cooperation with British Embassy in Kosovo, launched the project ***Increasing business cooperation in post-Brussels Agreement Kosovo*** that produced significant results in expansion of inter-ethnic business cooperation. This program alongside of USAID funded program of ***Conflict Transformation*** enabled AKTIV to deliver more than 40

individual business-to-business summits between Kosovo Serb entrepreneurs and their counterparts/possible partners from other parts of Kosovo. These arrangements resulted with creation of long-term cooperation agreements between counterparts contributing to gradual elimination of ethnic boundaries in economic cooperation.

Acting as a member of **Advancing Kosovo Together- Local Solution** consortium, in September 2015, AKTIV organized participation of 15 northern Kosovo businesses at Business to Business conference organized by American Chamber of Commerce. At the occasion, more than 80 businesses Kosovo wide participated.

Additionally, in 2015, AKTIV managed to facilitate pioneering participation of northern Kosovo businesses at national level business fairs:

- Agricultural Fair in Gnjilane/Gjilane July 2015 (10 northern Kosovo small agricultural producers)
- Agriculture and Gastronomy fair AgroKos, Pristina, October 2015 – 25 northern Kosovo food producers
- KosICT 2015 – The fascinating tech voyage, Pristina November 2015 (4 northern Kosovo IT companies)

2.3.2 Youth employment

Mainstreaming element in these efforts is boosting the youth employment opportunities through assistance in increasing the technical capacities for self-employment, direct assistance in start-up programs and pioneering the experience accumulation program for young people through internship program. In 2015, AKTIV and its partners in program **Advancing Kosovo Together** delivered 36 start-up and business expansion granting contracts throughout Kosovo. Young entrepreneurs were one of the prioritized target groups in this program, which resulted with approximately 30 grants for direct business support to this vulnerable social group. Additionally, AKTIV experts pools managed to assure on-going technical advisory assistance to interested young entrepreneurs in application for this and other similar program taking place in northern Kosovo. In total 143 consultations with 46 different individuals were delivered throughout 2015.

In efforts to improve the job-market eligibility of young people, AKTIV throughout 2015, continued with wide-ranging internship program initiated in 2012. During the reporting period, in total 12 young people from Kosovo, region and Europe went through internship program and took opportunity to engage in everyday operations of our organization and increase their leadership and managerial skills to be utilized at job market following the conclusion of program. Programmatic areas of the 2015 internship program were: policy research and reporting, financial administration of non-profit organizations, and small-scale project cycle management.

With the same objective, AKTIV engaged in promotion and facilitation of self-employment youth initiatives, and creation of vocational association of young people. Concrete results of these efforts were establishment of Volunteering Network of Northern Kosovo (with more than 80 young people) and IT Youth Association of Northern Kosovo consisted of 25 young IT graduates and enthusiast. Both associations were created within Slovak Development Aid supported project that aimed at to support youth advocacy initiatives. Later one, IT Youth Association of Northern Kosovo revealed great potentials since several technical capacity

building initiatives and Kosovo level networking endeavours have been initiated in last three months of 2015. ITYA Northern Kosovo with GIZ support engaged in training program in cooperation with STIK Kosovo in Java programming that will take place in first couple months of 2016. The Association is currently developing market entry strategy that will enable concrete short and medium term employment opportunities for its members.

2.3.3 Direct assistance to businesses through granting schemes

In 2015 AKTIV for the first time engaged in providing the services of direct granting assistance to micro and small scale business. Granting scheme provided through **Advancing Kosovo Together Local Solution** consortium, encompassed 16 municipalities with majority or significant Kosovo Serb communities. In total 48 businesses were awarded in a two lots (start-up and business expansion). AKTIV took a leading role in promotion of the program and provision of technical consultancies for 4 municipalities in northern Kosovo and delivered 360 consolidated applications out of which 14 were awarded.

2.4 Objective 4 – To improve cross-community relationships in Kosovo

AKTIV strives to bring about the multilateral interdependence of communities in Kosovo resulting in stable, respectful and non-discriminatory interethnic relations, and foresee interethnic cooperation as being a crucial step in this direction. These objectives are widely reflected in our set of projects, in which we provide forums for constructive and positive dialogue between CSOs in Kosovo, pave avenues for peer-to-peer (P2P) dialogue, and seek to pioneer structural cross-community economic cooperation. While this element is being mainstreamed in majority of AKTIV projects, consolidated efforts in this directions are being structured through **Conflict Transformation Program**, implemented in partnership with Pristina based organization Democracy for Development (D4D) and National Democratic Institute- Kosovo, and supported by USAID. This program aims to help facilitate and enable Kosovo Albanian and Serb communities to improve interethnic relations by increasing opportunities for formal and informal interethnic dialogue and cooperation. The project has engaged various ethnic community leaders, students, woman, entrepreneurs and youth in a people-to-people encounters and cooperation on issues that both divide and bind them.

Throughout 2015 project implementation teams have organized 15 events and summits that engaged 375 participants from all communities living in Kosovo (K-Serb, K-Albanian, Roma, Gorani, Bosniaks). Focus on youth (students) cooperation produced tangible results in changing the perception young people in northern Kosovo on freedom of movement, interethnic animosities and widespread prejudice on neighbouring communities, leading to several post-event cooperation initiatives triggered by student itself. Additional program of AKTIV named **Reinvigorating debating culture in Kosovo** supported by Balkan Trust for Democracy, have extended student-to-student cooperation to regional level, through inclusion of students (30 in total) from Belgrade, Pristina and Mitrovica University in debating skills training program.

On other scales of social spectrum, tangible results were generated in business-to-business cooperation between entrepreneurs from northern Kosovo and their counterparts

south of river Ibar. Although this element extends through several other projects of AKTIV, its significant results have assured support for continuous efforts in this area in years to come. As elaborated above (under Objective 3) AKTIV managed to, through several programs facilitate more than 80 business-to-business meetings and initiatives and assured participation of 40 northern Kosovo business in 3 various national level sectorial fairs.

Structural preparation of AKTIV for long-term engagement in the areas of reconciliation and conflict transformation has been identified by Executive Board as one of the priority areas of our organization for 2016. The commitment of AKTIV to lead these efforts in cooperation with its partners will be determinative for programs of internal capacity building, recruitment strategies and other elements required to assure the expertise in this areas will be create and institutionally embedded in our organization.

2.5 Objective 5 – To reinvigorate the local tradition of positive cultural engagement

Cultural and artistic development has great potential to bring together people from various marginalized and underrepresented groups and gives them a voice through cultural expression. AKTIV embraced this aspect of community development and has proceeded with it as a core element of our efforts to encourage young people in Kosovo to actively engage in social life. We believe that in so doing, we broaden their perspective and cultivate sensitivity towards differences. At the heart of this endeavour lies Aktiv Art Centre (AAC), founded in Mitrovica at the beginning of 2012. Ever since then, AAC has offered various informal artistic educational programs, organised exhibitions promoting the unrecognized local artist, and promoted cultural diversity and awareness, among other things. In 2015, Aktiv faced tangible decline of donor support and the interests for the programs facilitated in AAC, more precisely the lack of support in providing the structural grants required for everyday maintenance (rent, utilities, and maintenance). In response, AKTIV Executive Board brought about the sustainability plan that aims to provide self-finance of the AAC structural costs and several suitable artistic programs. The plan included introduction of commercial catering services by the company with the best bid at the tender issued by AKTIV at beginning of October 2015. In return, the company pledged to cover all the costs related to maintenance of premises, including the rent and utilities and host the cultural and social events organized by AKTIV. As of November 2015 the management of the AKTIV Art Centre was entrusted to local commercial company “STR JAZZVA” while AKTIV’s Cultural Development Department continues to facilitate the cultural and artistic events in the premises. Programs of the AAC are adapted to the new operational philosophy. Trainings, workshop and other programs that required non-commercial use of space have been dismissed while the new set of the programs has been identified in order assure continuation of efforts on promotion of artistic and cultural development, social expressions and social dialogue. Some of the programs that will continue throughout 2016 are:

- Art around the Corner (promotion of local artists),
- Cultural Diversity (events dedicated to cultural features of regional and EU nations),
- Mitrovica Social Club (open dialogue on social, political, cultural and economic developments in northern Kosovo)

- Caffe Academica – extra-curriculum lectures for the students of Mitrovica University in leisure atmosphere
- Forum Theatre– amateur theatre group that promotes social activism through art

Despite new circumstances, AKTIV Art Centre will continue to seek partnerships and support for growing number of cultural initiatives.

3. List of projects implemented/initiated in 2015 and financial overview

Name of the project	Supported by	Duration start/end	Total budget	2015 expenses	2016 transfer
Strengthening the community mobilization potentials of CSO organization in Northern Kosovo	European Commission	January 2014 - June 2015	120.850,00€	48.469,99	/
Strengthening the Institutional Response to Domestic Violence in northern Kosovo	The Embassy of Finland	April 2014 - April 2015	49.985,00€	20.427,08€	/
UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women	UN Fund	April 2014 - December 2015	37.022,37€	21.477,83€	/
Mitrovica Social Club	US Embassy	September 2014 - March 2015	11.585,68€	3.815,00€	/
Advancing Kosovo Together Local Solution	USAID	October 2014 - September 2017	247.642,00\$	91.332,07\$	156.309,93\$
Community/Association of Serbian Municipalities - Consulting The Citizens	KFOS	November 2014 - April 2015	9.980,00€	8.126,73€	/
Mitigating Conflict Through Community Leadership Connections	USAID (through National Democratic Institute)	November 2014 - August 2016	155.070,00\$	88.695,08\$	66.374,92\$
Building Capacities of the Civil Society in North Kosovo through Slovak - Balkan Public Policy Fund	Pontis Foundation	December 14 - February 16	30.960,00€	23.826,74€	3.460,00€

Policy for Change - Strengthening capacity of CSO's in Northern Kosovo to become more effective contributors in decision making process	European Commission	January 2015 - July 2016	135.074,66€	77.584,43€	57.490,26€
Strategy for coordinated cultural development of ethnic groups in the Leposavic Municipality	Council of Europe	February 2015 - January 2016	9.390,00€	3.020,00	6.370,00€
Support to the newly established municipalities in the Northern Kosovo through the development of educations, culture and youth	Embassy of Norway	March 2015 - June 2016	88.000,00€	67.103,16€	20.896,84€
School of European integration	KFOS	April 2015 - December 2015	8.492,00€	8.489,91€	/
Regional economic cooperation - Increasing business cooperation in post - Brussels Agreement Kosovo	British Embassy	June 2015 - March 2016	58.727,54€	41.200,56€	17.527,18€
Don't hate. Debate! – Reinvigorating debating culture in Kosovo	BTD	September 2015 – February 2016	13.545,88€	8.363,14€	5.182,74€
Multifunctional center North Mitrovica - Civic Energy Center (CEC)	KFOS	September 2015 – June 2016	95.500,00€	34.971,69€	60.528,31€
Create a more transparent society by answering on pressing issues among the local population	CBM	Sept 2015 – March 2016	5.930,00€	3.642,50€	2.287,50€
UNKT Program on Gender-based and Domestic Violence	UN Fund	November 2015 – June 2016	17.534,00€	8.901,00€	8.633,00€

4. Priority programmatic/strategic areas for 2016

- Increase the quality and reach of policy level and advocacy initiatives
- Maintain the Safe House at the agenda of local decision makers and international community
- Establishment of transparent and efficient procedural system in granting schemes
- Increase the technical capacity of the staff members in order to amplify quality of current project implementation
- Initiate the process of internal capacity development to build the expertise in reconciliation/ Conflict Transformation programs in Kosovo
- Structural growth of AKTIV

4.1 Increase the quality and reach of policy level and advocacy initiatives

AKTIV is the most noticeable Kosovo Serb organization with programmatic focus on policy level interventions. Our resources are directed toward the myriad systematic omissions in facilitation of Kosovo Serb community in Kosovo constitutional framework. Practical manifestations of such policy oversights are detrimental toward Kosovo Serb communities and prevent comfortable livelihood and fruitful cooperation of ethnic communities in Kosovo. Consequently Program Office of AKTIV seeks tangible increase of excellence in policy level interventions accompanied with augmented mechanisms for lobbying and advocacy actions at central level of governance.

- Increase a quality and structure of practices in producing the policy inputs through inclusion of Kosovo level expertise, upgraded methodologies and continuous capacity building program
- Emprica and Platform for Research and Analysis should become will became a focal point for concentrated efforts of Kosovo Serb CSO in increasing their influence of decision making process in Kosovo. In addition to this AKTIV already secure the support for initiation of annual tracker of dominating trends in northern Kosovo, so far with working title "**Trends and positions**". The baseline study will be performed in April 2016 and its updates will be issued on annual basis in years to come
- Increase the capacity for communication and coordination with central level decision makers should be achieved through opening of Pristina based Liaison Office.

- Open dialogue programs should be consolidated in terms of implementation practices and provided support and substantiated with participation of diversify experts and ethnic participation

4.2 Maintain the Safe House at agenda of local decision makers and international community

In 2016 AKTIV should work to maintain the agenda of Safe House at the level of local decision makers and international donors. This objective was incorporated in AKTIV's Strategy in Women's Right Programming 2015-2020 (Annex 1) which also identifies the action points that should lead to its fulfilment. Implementation of the Strategy is imperative in 2016 and years to come. Commitment of local authorities as crucial element in securing the full and sustainable functionality of such a facility has been tackled at the very beginning of the project. The resolute support from the Mayors of other three municipalities in northern Kosovo should be considered as one of the possibilities for way forward.

4.3 Establishment of transparent and efficient procedural system in granting schemes

Structural growth of the organization in the past several years, followed by adoption of transparent, legally compliant internal procedures has not pass unnoticed by several major donor agencies. The capacity of organization to deliver on more complex technical administrative tasks lead to entrustment of several small granting schemes to our organization. Sub-granting schemes throughout 2015 have addressed CSO, business and informal civil groups. As this opportunity was unprecedented in the civil society affairs in northern Kosovo, it produced new capacity of AKTIV and generally the whole civil society in northern Kosovo that is insightful overseeing in adaptation of genuine community needs through granting programs, local capacity in overseeing implementation of the projects etc. that all lead to better results of granting programs. To prepare for increasing demand for assistance of local CSO in granting process AKTIV will develop and adopt the practices in granting schemes using the proven procedural milestones of existing donor agencies.

4.4 Staff technical capacity increased

The AKTIV's human resource portfolio represents combination of experienced, professionally developed team members and young, educated and enthusiastic individuals. Such a structure enables AKTIV to maintain high quality of outputs while training energetic and promising up-comers. Although this permits on-going transfer of knowledge and experience, the executive board of AKTIV recognize the need for training program that will enable structural growth of AKTIV team members. The professional growth in this sense refers to both, technical skills in relevant areas and ethic and professionalism principles in everyday work (especially in relation to stakeholders). To address this challenge AKTIV executive board will develop an on-going training program, through facilitation of internal and external expertise. The practice of staff trainings to be delivered every last Friday of the month will be introduced in regular operations of AKTIV.

Furthermore, AKTIV already initiated the introduction of digital accounting system through purchase of appropriate software for financial management. The system of choice is

QuickBook financial management software and its application is planned for mid-2016, following the appropriate training delivery to relevant staff members. Gradual introduction should conclude by the end of 2016 when all the financial operations in organization will be utilized through this system.

4.5 Initiate the process of internal capacity development to build the expertise and structure required to lead the reconciliation/ Conflict Transformation programs in Kosovo

Inter-community cooperation has been adopted as one of two strategic direction of AKTIV operations, back in 2013. In last two years, AKTIV has managed to developed and identify the support for several initiatives that focuses on reconciliation process and increase of interethnic community cooperation at peer-to-peer and professional level. Most significant of these initiatives is joint program of NDI AKTIV and D4D Pristina; Conflict Transformation Program piloted in late 2014. As this program prospects long-term partnership with D4D and 'at hand' technical expertise transfer from National Democratic Institute, Executive Board of AKTIV is determined and proposes implementation of an array of internal structural pursuits leading to preparation of organization for long-term adept intervention in this area. These measures that are to be set for immediate objectives for 2016 include:

- Expansion of human capacity within organization that is technically equipped to lead conflict transformation initiatives (increase of knowledge and experience, identification of long-term dedicated staff members to build institutional knowledge etc.)
- Establishment of long-term, strategic cooperation with Pristina based D4D and National Democratic Institute for interventions in this area (program development, joint project infrastructures, joint program implementation structure)
- Profiling of AKTIV as expert organization in the areas of reconciliation and conflict transformation through incorporation of this objectives in organizations Strategic Development Plan for period 2016-2020.

Strategic Development Plan 2016-2020 will embed need-tailored developmental actions required for organization to achieve above listed specific objectives. The Strategy will be presented to Board of Directors by March 2016

4.6 Structural growth of AKTIV

Faced with the challenges of high intensity of activities, imposed programmatic objectives (by donors), difficult and changing political environment, and mandate requirements, AKTIV should prepare for structural growth that will increase internal potentials of organization to play a major role in Kosovo Serb community in years to come. Various challenges lie at that path, including but not limited to, truncated trust between CSO sector and community, inability to structure the programs on the community need basis, lack of communication channels with local and central level decision makers and other. All this combined, imposes a difficult challenge before organization to became responsible, transparent CSO that represent the interests of Kosovo Serb community in its best capacity. To increase these potentials AKTIV will aim to increase internal capacities in following areas:

- Public communication and transparency (remedy: establishment of PR office that will aim to transpire organizations achievements, objectives and intentions to wider community in Kosovo)
- Fund raising – (remedy: to establish internal Fund Raising Team tasked to cooperate with Program Office in translating the identified needs of the community and target groups into a pertinent programs/projects and secure the support for its implementation)
- Increase the capacity for communication and coordination with central level decision makers (remedy: opening of Pristina based Liaison Office...)