

# YOUNG WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN IT SECTOR

## BACKGROUND

In the past decade Serbia has made a steady recovery from the war and turmoil of the 1990s, and despite the current economic crisis, it is likely to continue its resurgence if meaningful economic and civic opportunities are created, integration with the EU progresses, foreign investment continues, and extremism is tempered.

The most challenging and problematic areas in Serbia for the future progress are South Serbia and Sandžak as they are the most economically and socially deprived regions in Serbia populated by mixed ethnic population. Regions have a turbulent history of conflicts, which together with economic backwardness results in continual ethnic tensions, high unemployment rate, and poverty. Both regions became home to a number of IDPs, refugees and returnees under the readmission agreements. The ethnic groups are divided internally and disenfranchised by the central government. There is a threat of inter-ethnic and intra-communal conflict. The level of social exclusion is high, so is dissatisfaction with the work of the local self-government, and young people have a great wish to migrate.

Young women are especially endangered. They share all above problems, and are additionally marginalized as Sandžak and South Serbia are so called “traditional” areas where women do not have equal opportunities to get appropriate education or/and to get employed.

In addition, citizens of South Serbia and Sandžak lack knowledge and skills that are directly applicable by businesses. This prevents them from engaging in self-employment or actively seeking employment. Formal education does not follow rapid developments in IT industry thus rendering the knowledge acquired through regular education unusable in present circumstances. Again, especially difficult is situation for the most vulnerable group, women.

Making of websites are commonly given to companies from Belgrade and other developed cities, with prices usually too high for local conditions. Young women will thus have further opportunities to offer their services and get comparative advantage when starting their own business.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The main goal of the project is to enable young, marginalized and women coming from different ethnic groups and to provide them with skills and knowledge that will be immediately applicable to the needs of businesses and thus will increase their chances for finding suitable jobs.

Additionally, set of received skills and knowledge will provide an opportunity for them to engage in self-employment or joint ventures. Thus, the project will also enable young women to unite forces, to develop web sites and presentations for the benefit of local businesses. This will strengthen their position in the local communities, but will also set an example for other young and women in general that being proactive and acquiring additional education is a way to secure economic and personal future.

Civic Initiatives will, together with professional engagement of „Krojačeva škola“ provide to the students on the project –month training course for web design. Through this course, participants will obtain professional skills in high demand on labor market, especially in the targeted areas, strengthen their position in the community and become significant resource for local organizations and institutions.

Training will be conducted over 20 days (total 40 training days – 20 in Novi Pazar, 20 in Bujanovac), each training day consists of 8 lessons. Minimum of 160 lessons will cover following topics: Internet Clients and servers, Contemporary trends in technology, Elements of web design (typography, photos, page design etc), HTML5, CSS3, and WordPress etc.

Special attention will be given to professional appearance on the Market of communication and information technologies, so that these young women will be prepared to act and promote their skills on the global market. This training course is provided by „Krojačeva škola“ – award winner of the most significant national IT awards and

acknowledgments, whose students have won over 200 awards. „Krojačeva škola“ is official Apple Regional training center.

At the end of the course, Civic Initiatives will provide study visits for all project participants to IT companies. Four-day-visits will be organized for 2 group of students. Purpose of the study visit is to enable insight to company operations, their needs in human resources, as well as to talk to managers and get detailed information on how participants can utilize new skills.

Also, participants will receive additional 60-lesson training of personal skills to further support their growth and independence. They will learn about local development, activism, local partnership, youth participation as well as the enhancing potential for creating job opportunities and start up businesses. Participants will be introduced to EU integration processes and the role of youth in these processes, as well as the topics relevant to this group – human and minority rights, with focus on women rights.

After the trainings and study visits, participants, with support of Civic Initiatives, local Youth offices and other local partners, organize local actions to promote their skills, but also, local development, and women participation in decision making, with emphasis on women rights to be educated and employed. Actions will be supported by local companies, civil rights organizations and institutions.

Civic Initiatives and „Krojačeva škola“ after formal completion of the project will continue to promote participants in order to further help them to find employment and/or start their business.

All project activities will be conducted under methodology of Youth Build Serbia program, successfully conducted 5 years in a row.



Youth Build action- Cleaning of Gazivoda lake, Serbia

Serbia YouthBuild (YB) program is implemented by the Civic Initiatives and it is developed resembling the model of the International YB program that produces excellent results in 15 countries around the world. With over 30 years of experience, YB has prepared over 94 000 young people to be active, engaged and to build their local community. Serbia YouthBuild program is tailored to meet the demands of multi-ethnic groups of young and unemployed people. So far, 207 young people passed the Program. 80% of them founded the jobs or volunteered in their communities after graduating from the Program. Citizens, business and local communities supported local actions implemented by young people with more than 22.000\$. Local actions included renovation of kindergartens, schools and playgrounds, cleaning of Parks and other gathering spots, construction of a ramps for persons with disabilities and celebrations of important Human right days. Those actions were visited/ followed by more than 20.000 citizens. In addition and in order to meet new demands, CI developed IT YB model that focuses on enabling of young people to be successful at IT market.