



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

Providing Support to Youth in Local Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

FACT SHEET

July 2016

Background

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), like other countries in the Western Balkan region, continues to face major challenges including socioeconomic gridlock, perceived corruption within a wide range of sectors, unresolved legacies from the war, and youth disenfranchisement, which have created a conducive ground for the proliferation of extremist ideologies. This had a direct influence on communities across the whole BiH, where small, yet vocal and active groups have developed around these ideologies.

Significant proportions of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in rural and sub-urban areas, are disenfranchised and disengaged. Some of them are angry at political and socioeconomic elite that is often seen as corrupt, self-serving, and not responsive to their needs. Though joblessness alone does not drive young people to violent extremism, the perception of injustice pertaining to this joblessness, as well as injustice based upon corruption and other failings of the state constitute drivers of violent extremism. In most of these communities, particularly those outside principal cities, young people exist on political and social peripheries; this marginalization constitutes a persistent source of hostility.

Project Outline

Period	October 2013 - July 2014
Donors	Italian Embassy in Sarajevo
Executing Agency	International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Partner(s)	N/A

Project Description

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to preventing the possible development of all forms of violent extremism (VE), through piloting new approaches that reduce youth disenfranchisement and enhance the scope for young people to proactively participate in community initiatives.

The project "Providing Support to Youth in Local Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina" aims to ensure the active participation of local authorities, civil society, community and religious leaders to underpin all activities and enhance the long-term sustainability and impact of the intervention. The participation of local authorities constitutes a crucial element in building trust between authorities and local communities, most pertinently disenfranchised young people, as well as building a sense of common purpose around which all community members can unite. The main focus of the project is placed on community based approaches,

as communities are the main societal units which can utilise and implement different models of preventing violent extremism in order to ensure local ownership.

Young people want to be provided with opportunities to participate in community initiatives and enhance the community around them. If young people are provided with opportunities to better themselves, psychologically, socially, and economically, they will fully utilize them.

If local authorities and community leaders are engaged and heavily involved throughout the process, this can serve to initiate a dialogue between the youth and local authorities and contribute to reduce disenfranchisement and perceptions of injustice, as well as the resultant anger, as young people and wider communities can become self-sustainable, thus facilitating proactive community engagement subsequent to the conclusion of the project, particularly if community influencers and local authorities are actively engaged within the projects.

Project activities have, to-date, taken place within six communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The overall intervention was designed to encourage the active participation of local authorities, civil society, as well as community and religious leaders to enhance both the sustainability and impact of all activities. The project additionally engages with community liaison points and community experts to enhance community engagement and tailor activities to each local context.

Accomplished Activities: Inception Phase

- Assessment on drivers of VE in targeted communities: the project conducted analysis on the perception of community members, public institutions and non-state actors on issues of discrimination, corruption, and other drivers of VE within targeted communities. The assessment methodology took into consideration a wide range of stakeholders and local actor perspectives in order to demine the critical issues surrounding, drivers for, and possible solutions to young people being drawn to violent extremism within their respective communities. The result of this analysis is being used to ensure that project activities are tailored to the specific context of each community, including rural versus urban contexts.
- Life-Skills Workshops (pilot): the project will design and oversee individual and group life-skills sessions focused on confidence and identity building, as well as improving self-esteem, and improving critical thinking, with the aim of enhancing the resilience of beneficiaries.

Ongoing and Upcoming Activities

- 'Unemployment as a Driver' Analysis: IOM is currently conducting a comprehensive analysis of unemployment as a driver of VE in the targeted communities, as well as of critical labour market needs, in order to design a targeted intervention within this sphere. This intervention will be designed in consultation with young people, and be demand-driven, to best ensure linkages to opportunities for sustainable income generation within the local economic sphere.
- Flexible Grant Scheme: Building upon the inception phase activities, the project will introduce a flexible small grants scheme within the targeted communities that will fund sustainable community-led, community-wide initiatives to counter the drivers of VE. Grant-funded activities may include: cultural events, sporting events, performing arts productions, creation and dissemination of films, infrastructure interventions, such as the (re)construction of youth centre, tennis court, etc. depending on the most pertinent local needs identified.
- Community Events: Periodic community youth debates will be organized within the project, bringing together community members to discuss and critically reflect on ideas, including inter alia, democratic principles, transitional justice, ethno-nationalist mantra, and active citizenship.

- Media Workshops: Media and outreach workshops will be organised for a number of young people, who will be supported to proactively participate in local media, either through their involvement within existing media outlets or by establishing new media outlets, depending on the local needs and capacities.
- Providing life-skills courses to youth: This support will be based on elements of the methodology of the Integrated Complexity which has been verified during the Inception Phase. Integrative complexity concerns the ability of individuals to recognise and integrate multiple perspectives and possibilities. Those with low IC perceive the world within the spheres of “black and white”, “us and them”, and “right vs. wrong”. When integrative complexity is low, violent conflict between groups is more likely to occur, but when integrative complexity rises, peaceful solutions tend to ensue. However, IC is not only a tool for reducing radicalization, but is also a strong tool for increasing tolerance and readiness for cooperation among participants, and hence increases employability in various environments requiring team-work and cooperation between persons with differing outlooks.
- Engagement of parents: The project will develop education modules for parents to promote knowledge on the dangers and warning signs of extremism. By identifying early warning signs, parents will be encouraged to seek out relevant organizations that have pre-existing programmes of support.
- Education Modules: As a result of the Inception Phase Assessment, it was noted by the local representatives that there are possibilities to include these topics in education programmes in BiH. As a result IOM is including this activity to the overall Programme. The focus will be on raising awareness on topics surrounding violent extremism and radicalisation among school children. The aim is to include these topics to existing educational curricula through which young persons will be given the opportunity to increase resilience to drivers of VE but also learn to accept different cultural and religious values of other groups.
- Regional Workshops: The project will serve to strengthen the evidence base for PVE programming in the wider Western Balkans region through facilitating regional coordination meetings, and, in doing so, serve to support the conceptualisation of models within further countries encompassing interlinked and mutually reinforcing components for preventing violent extremism based upon the BiH model. This will constitute a critical element in allowing organisations and practitioners to strengthen existing or develop new programmes or policies in this field.