




DRIVERS OF CHANGE



Republic of Serbia

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Implementing partner





DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Programme Achievements



Belgrade, September 2022

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Foreword

The Swiss PRO Programme constitutes the quintessence of the collaborative partnership between the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Government of Switzerland and UNOPS Serbia. Our joint initiatives have contributed to the improvement of local governance and a better quality of life for about 60,000 people in 99 cities and municipalities throughout Serbia.

In close cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and local self-governments, we have implemented activities that contributed to better access to rights, enhanced delivery of public services and the improvement of the socio-economic status of persons with special needs, the Roma, women, older persons, unemployed persons, the youth and children.

Together with partners from the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, Swiss PRO also supported capacity building for more than 5,000 employees of local self-governments. We are proud of the progress that less developed municipalities have achieved, particularly taking into account that the majority of the activities were carried out during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The work behind us, the processes we have been undertaking and the results we have jointly achieved do make us proud. Still, when added to the needs of local communities, they remind us of the work that is yet ahead of us. We understand the importance of taking the change we have initiated further, and will be happy to be, together with our partners, the drivers of this change, accompanying the communities towards accelerated socio-economic development.

We will continue to support the Government of Serbia and local self-governments on their sustainable development path, as well as to collaborate with the Government of Switzerland in various areas of development cooperation, keeping UNOPS mission - to help people build better lives and countries achieve sustainable development - a common priority.

Mikela Telatin

Director of the UNOPS Serbia
Multi-Country Office





ABOUT THE SWISS PRO PROGRAMME



REGION OF ŠUMADIJA AND WESTERN SERBIA

Mačvanski district

Bogatić, Vladimirci,
Koceljeva, Krupanj,
Loznica, Ljubovija,
Mali Zvornik
and Šabac

Kolubarski district

Valjevo, Lajkovac,
Ljig, Mionica,
Osečina and Ub

Pomoravski district

Despotovac, Jagodina,
Paraćin, Rekovac,
Svilajnac and Čuprija

Šumadijski district

Arandelovac, Batočina,
Knić, Lapovo, Rača,
Topola and Kragujevac

Zlatiborski district

Arilje, Bajina Bašta,
Kosjerić, Nova Varoš,
Požega, Priboj, Prijepolje,
Sjenica, Užice and Čajetina

Moravički district

Gornji Milanovac,
Ivanjica, Lučani and Čačak

Raški district

Vrnjačka Banja, Kraljevo,
Novi Pazar, Raška and Tutin

Rasinski district

Aleksandrovac, Brus, Varvarin,
Kruševac, Trstenik and Čičevac

REGION OF SOUTHERN AND EASTERN SERBIA

Braničevski district

Veliko Gradište, Golubac, Žabari,
Žagubica, Kučevo, Malo Crniće, Petrovac
na Mlavi and Požarevac

Podunavski district

Velika Plana, Smederevo
and Smederevska Palanka

Borski district

Bor, Kladovo, Majdanpek
and Negotin

Zaječarski district

Boljevac, Zaječar,
Knjaževac and Sokobanja

Nišavski district

Aleksinac, Gadžin Han,
Doljevac, Merošina,
Ražanj, Svrlijig and Niš

Toplički district

Blace, Žitorađa, Kuršumlija
and Prokuplje

Pirotski district

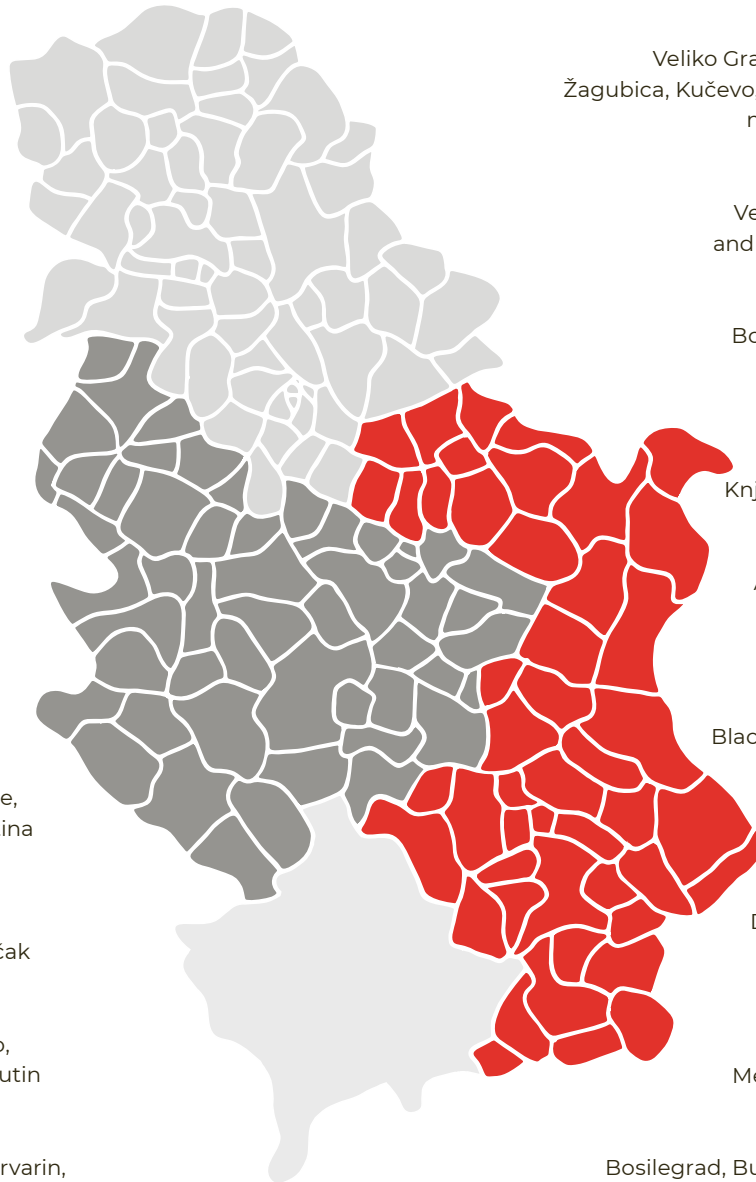
Babušnica,
Bela Palanka,
Dimitrovgrad and Pirot

Jablanički district

Bojnik, Vlasotince,
Lebane, Leskovac,
Medveđa and Crna Trava

Pčinjski okrug

Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han,
Vranje, Preševo, Surdulica and Trgovište



The Enhancing Good Governance and Social Inclusion for Municipal Development – Swiss PRO Programme funded by the Swiss Government contributed to improving the quality of life of the citizens of 99 local self-governments in the regions of Šumadija and Western Serbia and Southern and Eastern Serbia. The Programme helped advance the local capacities for applying the principles of good governance, implementing social inclusion measures and policies with a view to improving the living conditions of the population, in particular vulnerable groups, as well as for implementing gender equality policies and promoting the status of women in local communities.

The Swiss Government extended €6.6 million to support the implementation of this intervention launched in January 2018. The Programme was implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in

cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Veteran and Social Affairs. Some of the activities geared at improving good governance at the local level were carried out in partnership with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM).

Swiss PRO built on the good practices and results of its predecessors, the EU PROGRES and European PROGRES Programmes. The projects supported within the Programme were selected through public calls and were implemented in accordance with the grant methodology, while the local self-governments were also extended comprehensive technical support, as well as support involving capacity building of their staff.

GOOD GOVERNANCE



SOCIAL INCLUSION



GENDER EQUALITY





Ambassador's Word

Swiss PRO, one of our flagship programmes in Serbia, has done an extremely good job at helping local authorities to apply Good Governance in practice, supporting them in strengthening democratic structures, based on the rule of law, human rights and social inclusion. Local governments play an important role in Switzerland, given the decentralized nature of its political system, and although the Swiss system cannot be copy-pasted to other contexts, ideas and experiences from Switzerland can be used and adapted to the Serbian situation.

Swiss PRO provided support to the central government and local governments in implementing a number of key and pressing issues : from improving accountability and transparency in execution of public affairs, reforms of the public administration, capacity development of civil servants, advancing eGovernment, to addressing the rights and needs of vulnerable populations, with the aim of leaving no one behind.

The Programme's noteworthy outcomes, matching the objectives of the Swiss Cooperation

Programme in Serbia, would have been impossible to achieve, were it not for the close cooperation with, and support from the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, local governments, civil society organisations, and citizens themselves.

I am convinced that Swiss PRO significantly contributed to the democratic, inclusive and sustainable development of Serbia and the well-being of its citizens. Together with my staff, I look forward to continue working with Serbian authorities to further advance good governance and supporting them in their reform efforts.



H.E. Urs Schmid

Ambassador of Switzerland
in the Republic of Serbia

About the Swiss PRO Programme



103* LSGs

RECEIVED TECHNICAL SUPPORT

* The SCTM implemented activities throughout Serbia and a total of 103 LSGs benefitted from Swiss PRO's support.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

- Municipal support packages
- Good governance and infrastructure projects
- eGovernment
- Funding CSOs
- Public service delivery
- Emergency management



SOCIAL INCLUSION

- Social inclusion measures
- Social protection policies



GENDER EQUALITY

- Local gender equality policies
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Institutional strengthening and advocacy



35

eGovernment
and eServices

107

Social
inclusion

28

Gender
equality



99

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS



FROM JANUARY 2018
TO NOVEMBER 2022



6.6 MILLION EUROS

FUNDED BY SWISS GOVERNMENT



337,893 EUROS

CO-FUNDING BY LSGs AND CSOs



9 PUBLIC CALLS

CONDUCTED



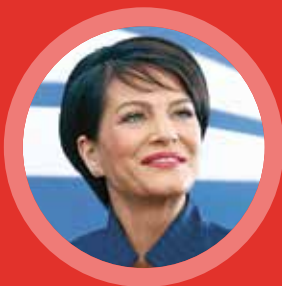
58,374

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

The Swiss Government's support extended via the Swiss PRO Programme was extremely important, because it crucially contributed to the efforts of the Serbian Government and the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments to turn public administration into a modern service for citizens and businesses.



Our Annual Awards to best municipal/city administrations demonstrate our strategic commitment to supporting the further improvement of good governance at the local level to ensure the best possible response to the citizens' specific needs and expectations.



Marija Obradović

Minister of Public Administration
and Local Self-Governments



Our Approach to Development

The Programme applied an incremental approach to designing and implementing development interventions in all its three stages to date.

The approach was reflected in the donor's declared goals and the beneficiaries' stated priorities, which were considered "objectives", while the focus simultaneously remained on the strategic level goal, the achievement of which brings qualitative change.

That goal is positive change bringing Serbia's society closer to a desired state in which citizens are living better quality lives, in which the rule of law is sacrosanct and the accountability and transparency of public officials and institutions at all levels is prerequisite for a functioning public sector, and in which citizens and civil society play their respective roles in inclusive processes of defining public policies and making decisions of public interest.

In other words, the achievement of this overarching goal boils down to the application of good governance principles in practice.

The Programme strongly supported the achievement of the Serbian Government's relevant strategic priorities formulated in public policy documents, strategies, action and other plans,

programmes, laws and decrees, primarily through their implementation at the local level.

For instance, technical support was extended to facilitate the development of local capacities and capabilities for implementing the relevant elements of public administration reform; the reform of the local self-government system; the development of eGovernment and information society; prevention of and protection against discrimination; the implementation of local social protection policies, measures and services; the social inclusion of vulnerable groups; the development and empowerment of civil society; and promotion of gender equality.

What is unique in our authentic approach to improving (good) governance at the local level, our support to local communities and society on the whole to achieve that “positive change” and progress in attaining the strategic goal of the development programmes?

This uniqueness could be summed up as the coherence of intention. Realising that good governance cannot be “introduced” through one intervention and always taking due account of the context, needs and priorities of the beneficiaries of its support, the Programme synchronously endeavoured to improve overall local governance through its tailored and integrated approach as a value added to the main intervention goals. Continuous institutional strengthening of direct beneficiaries (e.g. local self-governments) through technical support

as a knowledge transfer and capacity building mechanism lay at the heart of our approach.

For instance, the main part of the process in activities aimed at advancing eGovernment involved the development and introduction of local policies, processes and procedures concerning management of procedures for introducing or improving e-Government – in a nutshell, eGovernance. Or, most of the work in the introduction of new social protection services involved technical support, joint efforts to build capacities and create capabilities at the local level to base the development of their social protection policies on data, the rights and needs of vulnerable groups, whilst applying good governance principles.

The final outcomes of all the listed examples were the results of the described processes that undoubtedly contributed to positive changes in society and improved the lives of Serbia’s citizens.





Improvement of the status of vulnerable groups is one of the priorities of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Veteran and Social Affairs and Serbian Government. Our goal is to extend support to citizens who need it most. The achievement of this goal rests on everyone's support, because only together in partnership can we achieve the best results.

We are grateful to the Swiss Government and the Swiss PRO Programme for supporting the implementation of local self-government projects improving the quality of and access to social protection services, particularly those focusing on the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Darija Kisić Tepavčević

Minister of Labour, Employment
and Veteran and Social Affairs





**Уїрава по мери
свих нас**

 **МИНИСТАРСТВО
ДРЖАВНЕ УПРАВЕ
И ЛОКАЛНЕ
САМОУПРАВЕ**



Creating Partnerships

The most important relationship of trust was established through Swiss PRO's partnership with local self-governments.

The partnership is built through joint endeavours to both strengthen human resources and managerial capacities and to improve local regulations and processes. The quality of the cooperation was reflected in the extension of support tailored to local needs, all with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of lives of Serbia's citizens.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments was the Programme's main partner. It strategically guided the activities in the area of public administration reform and extended financial support to the promotion of good governance in the form of the Annual Award to local self-governments.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Veteran and Social Affairs provided strategic guidelines for interventions in the area of social inclusion and extended support to local self-governments and civil society to implement their joint activities aimed at improving the status of vulnerable groups of the population.

As the Programme's partner, the SCTM extended comprehensive technical support to local self-government to advance governance, especially in terms of accountability, transparency, participation, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Programme forged partnerships with national institutions, such as the National Public Administration Academy and the Office for Information Technologies and eGovernment, in order to build the capacities of experts in good governance, i.e. eGovernment and eServices.



The trust and quality relationships the Swiss PRO Programme built with the representatives of local self-governments, civil society organisations, as well as national and international partners, are among the key factors of success of the activities implemented with huge commitment and fellowship in 99 cities and municipalities.



Marko Vujačić

Head of Programme of the UNOPS Serbia
Multi-Country Office



Using the Swiss experience and expertise in democratic governance, local governments in Serbia supported by the Swiss PRO, improved good governance, and provided more efficient, effective, and inclusive public services in local communities, including those pertaining to social protection and inclusion of left behind groups, while at the same time improving citizens participation in public policy and decision-making processes.

I am quite proud of the fact that we successfully reached out to Serbia's local governments, including the least developed communities, and made significant achievements in attaining the objectives of all three Programme's pillars, resulting in improved lives of the citizens and in better, more equitable public services delivery.

Richard Kohli

Head of Cooperation of the
Embassy of Switzerland
in the Republic of Serbia





GOOD GOVERNANCE



Good Governance

Good governance is a process by which the community, either at the state or local level, governs the territory. It is crucial for achieving socio-economic development based on the principles of accountability and the rule of law, transparency, participation, non-discrimination and equality, efficiency and effectiveness.

Through its comprehensive capacity-building intervention, Swiss PRO facilitated the institutionalisation and formalisation of the process of applying good governance principles in the work of local self-governments. The visible systemic changes were achieved in cooperation with the SCTM through the development of 446 local regulations applied by 62 LSGs, improving the fulfilment of public duties and responsibilities, while the capacity-building activities helped 164 LSGs improve their staff's knowledge of good governance at the local level.

Particular attention was devoted to improving access to eServices by improving eGovernment in 70 LSGs, as well as to improving public service delivery in 27 LSs. Furthermore, public participation in budget-making improved the

efficiency of budget spending in the communities' interest in 16 LSGs.

The Annual Award for the Best Practices in Applying Good Governance Principles at the Local Level was introduced in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and SCTM, with the support of the Swiss PRO Programme. The Annual Award, accorded for four years now, is a long-term Serbian Government measure aimed at improving good governance and administration at the local level.



37,205

BENEFICIARIES ACCESSED
SERVICES AND IMPROVED
THEIR KNOWLEDGE



Finding interlocutors on the topic of good governance at the local level was a challenge 10 years ago. We now already have a network of experts in more than 50 local self-governments across Serbia.

Dragan Mladenović

Swiss PRO
Good Governance Advisor



62 LSGs
IMPLEMENTING

446 REGULATIONS
FOR IMPROVING
LOCAL GOVERNANCE



164 LSGs
IMPROVED THEIR
GOOD GOVERNANCE CAPACITY



70 LSGs
IMPROVED E-GOVERNMENT



27 LSGs
IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY
AND WORK WITH CITIZENS



16 LSGs
CONDUCTED PUBLIC DEBATES
ON THEIR BUDGETS





Improving Services

Contributed to improvement of local public services through active citizen participation.

The citizens' satisfaction with their quality of life is measured also by their satisfaction with the services they are extended. This is precisely the reason why the Swiss PRO Programme largely focused its intervention on improving public services.

After conducting a survey of citizens satisfaction with the quality of service delivery in 50 LSGs, Swiss PRO supported cities and municipalities in establishing mechanisms for responding more rapidly and eliminating the shortcomings identified by the population. A total of 60 adopted measures resulted in lasting service delivery improvements in 27 LSGs, in the fields of agriculture, tourism and transportation among others, as well as in greater public participation in local decision-making processes.

The unique approach to introducing good governance principles in local infrastructure project implementation supported by complementary programmes EU PRO and Norway for You yielded new values to these projects' planned outcomes and changed the local self-governments' understanding of and approach to defining and achieving public interests. The broader contribution of the process to linking the application of good governance principles to specific project activities is corroborated also by the fact that over 32,000 beneficiaries (18,000 from vulnerable groups) in 26 LSGs had easier access to their rights and thus improved the quality of their lives.

Furthermore, Swiss PRO's technical support to 16 LSGs resulted in the development and improvement of processes, procedures and regulations on funding local projects implemented by civil society organisations, while 32 of their staff members were trained in implementing the processes in accordance with good governance principles.



60 MEASURES

FOR IMPROVING
SERVICES
ADOPTED



26 LSGs

IMPROVED MANAGEMENT
OF LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECTS



32,000

CITIZENS HAD BETTER
ACCESS TO SERVICES
AND RIGHTS



16 LSGs

IMPROVED PROCEDURES
FOR FUNDING CSO
PROJECTS



32 STAFF

IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE
OF FUNDING CSO
PROJECTS



We are especially grateful to the Swiss Government and our partners in Swiss PRO for applying an approach relevant to Serbia's context, thus securing an effective tool for improving good governance at the local level.

The local self-governments have continuously been improving the accountability, transparency and inclusiveness of their work and public service delivery by incessantly fine-tuning their in-house procedures and introducing new practices.

Sanja Putnik

Assistant Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments,
EU Integration and International Cooperation Sector







A MORE EQUITABLE APPROACH TO HEALTH SERVICES HEALTHIER SOCIETY

The Žagubica Municipality implemented an infrastructure project involving the reconstruction of the heating system of its Out-Patient Health Centre in order to improve energy efficiency, whilst taking into account the needs of vulnerable groups. The Health Centre adopted a Rulebook on Treatment of Patients from Vulnerable Groups, prioritising treatment of persons with special needs, pregnant women and children under 15 and thereby ensuring the implementation of the non-discrimination principle in practice.

The Health Centre has also been conducting surveys of the patients' satisfaction with the delivered services and the results of the application of the Rulebook (94% of the respondents rated them as satisfactory), which strengthens the participation principle.







Digitalising society

We brought local self-governments closer to citizens through new eServices and Open Data.

Modernisation of the work of local self-governments entails advanced eGovernment to facilitate efficient provision of services to both citizens and businesses. Thirty-five LSGs built their technical capacity for e-Government by implementing computer equipment procurement projects. In cooperation with the Office for Information Technologies and eGovernment, Swiss PRO extended comprehensive support to 70 LSGs to improve their local eGovernment capacities and procedures, put in place the relevant regulatory framework and master practical skills for developing and introducing eServices. A total of 351 members of staff improved their skills and knowledge related to data opening, eServices, electronic data exchange and eRegistry.

New services developed and launched on the eGovernment portal by 32 LSGs provide the population with fast and easy access to specific rights and services in the jurisdiction of the local administrations, such as issuance of information on sites, submission of applications for maternity leave allowances and reporting communal, traffic or environmental problems.

In addition, 42 LSGs improved their institutional frameworks for data opening and annual budgets and posting many other publicly available data in machine-readable format. The Programme supported 42 LSGs in introducing assistive technologies for accessing the cities' and municipalities' official websites, as well as in bringing their websites in compliance with the guidelines issued by the Office.

Within the "Let's Click Together" campaign, over a million people were informed via social media of the advantages of using eServices and Open Data, while promotions of new e-services were also organised on town squares across Serbia.



With Swiss PRO's support, we introduced eight new eServices, thus improving the city administration's efficiency and accessibility to our fellow citizens, who can now exercise their rights, whilst saving both time and money.

We are proud of the fact that we published 65 sets of data on the Open Data portal, which significantly contributed to the transparency of public administration and greater trust of citizens.

Nihat Biševac

Novi Pazar
Mayor



Let's click
 together!



35 PROJECTS

BUILT THE LSGs' TECHNICAL
E-GOVERNMENT
CAPACITY



351 STAFF

MEMBERS ENHANCED
E-GOVERNMENT
CAPACITIES



32 LSGs

ARE EXTENDING
NEW E-SERVICES



12 MILLION

VIEWS OF PROMOTIONAL
CONTENT ON BROWSERS
AND SOCIAL MEDIA



42 LSGs

PUBLISHED BUDGETS
IN MACHINE-READABLE
FORMAT



200 REPORTS

IN MEDIA WITH LOCAL
AND NATIONAL
COVERAGE



16 LSGs

IMPROVED THEIR
WEBSITES AND INTEGRATED
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES





Disseminating knowledge

We promoted local good governance experts and encouraged their upskilling through national institutions.

Capacity building of civil servants is prerequisite for the development and provision of higher quality public services. Swiss PRO devoted particular attention to their acquisition of knowledge of the application of good governance principles. The two-year training for representatives of 32 LSGs (22 of them women) resulted in the establishment of a network of experts in the field, as an important resource in local development processes. These resources were further empowered for horizontal dissemination of the acquired knowledge through training of trainers, the two cycles of which were successfully completed by 49 representatives of local institutions (23 of them women). At the end of the process, 23 expert teams were formed and nine trainees were accredited as full-time lecturers of the

National Public Administration Academy. The establishment of these teams at the local level created lasting resources for applying good governance principles in decision-making and local policy-making processes and the preparation of development projects.

Numerous activities of our partners from the SCTM strongly contributed to advancing the capacity of local self-government staff and decision makers to apply good governance principles. A total of 59 various local and regional trainings, webinars, online courses and experience sharing workshops were organised to advance the skills and knowledge of 2,088 civil servants (1,391 of them women) through attendance of accredited trainings. In addition to improving the existing and developing new procedures and enactments in line with best practices, the skills and knowledge of 2,631 civil servants were developed at trainings organised within the implementation of support packages.

A Handbook on the Implementation of Good Governance Principles at the Local Level was published and the Good Governance Index was used to conduct two analyses of the LSGs' performance and capacity for applying good governance principles. The Index registered an increase in the LSGs' overall capacity for applying good governance principles in the areas of transparency and citizen participation, anti-corruption policies, as well as administrative efficiency and effectiveness. The increase was particularly pronounced in cities and municipalities that had received support packages in these areas.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the research of its consequences indicated that LSGs lacked the capacity and resources for operating in emergencies. Swiss PRO extended technical support to 30 LSGs to build their emergency response capacities by developing models of in-house enactments, guidance and training of staff in emergency management. A Guide outlining practical guidance on an integrated approach to risk management in emergencies was developed for this purpose as well.



The good governance training greatly helped me develop my skills and knowledge, which I apply now daily in my work. I'm especially glad that I have built my capacity to improve my local community and share my knowledge with my co-workers to ensure that the local self-government is prepared to extend better services to citizens.

**Mia Vukić
Vitomirović**

Zaječar City Youth
Office Coordinator





4,719 STAFF
OF **164 LSGs** IMPROVED
KNOWLEDGE OF GG



23 LSGs
FORMED EXPERT GOOD
GOVERNANCE TEAMS



54 STAFF
BUILT CAPACITY FOR
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT



49 STAFF
IN LSGs COMPLETED
TRAINING OF TRAINERS

The results of our cooperation demonstrate that cities and municipalities are willing and able to improve their local legal framework, procedures and practices in fields such as public participation in decision-making, especially in the development of the local budgets, transparency, prevention of corruption and advancing the work of the administration.



Nikola Tarbuk

Standing Conference of Towns
and Municipalities Secretary-General







Creating teams

We built local expert good governance teams in 55 LSGs by developing skills and knowledge and sharing experiences.

Aleksinac, Babušnica, Bajina Bašta, Bela Palanka, Bogatić, Bojnik, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Čuprija, Dimitrovgrad, Doljevac, Gadžin Han, Gornji Milanovac, Ivanjica, Jagodina, Knić, Knjaževac, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Krupanj, Lapovo, Lebane, Loznica, Majdanpek, Medveđa, Negotin, Niš, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Preševo, Priboj, Prijepolje, Prokuplje, Rača, Raška, Rekovac, Sjenica, Surdulica, Svrlijig, Smederevska Palanka, Sokobanja, Svilajnac, Šabac, Topola, Tutin, Užice, Valjevo, Varvarin, Velika Plana, Veliko Gradište, Vlasotince, Vranje, Vrnjačka Banja, Žagubica and Zaječar.



SOCIAL INCLUSION



Social Inclusion

Although we live in an era advocating the respect of all human rights, all societies are still grappling with deeply rooted systemic inequalities among people. This is why social inclusion interventions remain the key process for achieving equal opportunities and guaranteed access to fundamental civil, political, social and economic rights, as well as public services.

The Swiss PRO Programme endeavoured to advance social inclusion at the local level by improving the quality of life of the people in the local communities, facilitating the realisation of their rights and the fulfilment of their needs.

In result, it contributed to building the capacity of 52 LSGs for planning policies and implementing social inclusion measures based on the citizens' needs, while the implementation of 107 projects directly improved the socio-economic status of 15,172 vulnerable individuals (8,190 of them women).

The opening of 300 new jobs was the value added of the projects.



We took every opportunity to encourage cooperation between civil society organisations and local self-governments with a view to improving the status of vulnerable social groups.

Nataša Ivanović

Swiss PRO Social Inclusion
Programme Officer





52 LSGs

BUILT THEIR SOCIAL INCLUSION CAPACITIES



15,463

BENEFICIARIES IMPROVED LIVING CONDITIONS AND INCREASED KNOWLEDGE



41

SOCIAL PROTECTION



34

SOCIAL INNOVATION



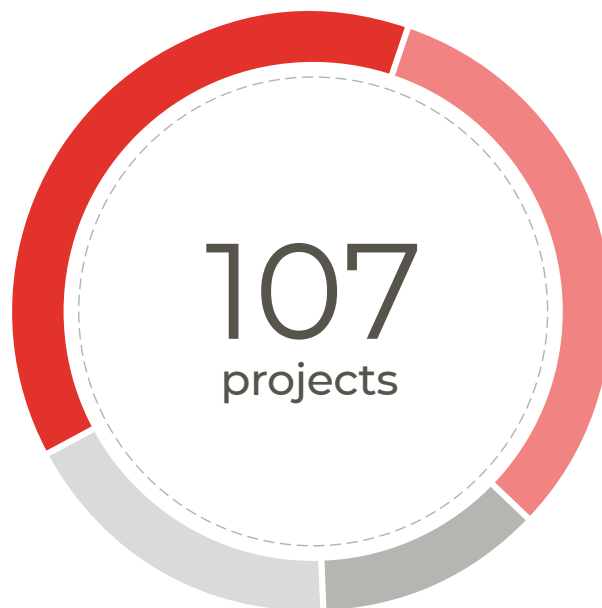
13

CITIZENS' ADVISORY SERVICES



19

SUPPORT TO SUBSTANDARD ROMA SETTLEMENTS







Public Services Availability

We worked on improving the status of vulnerable groups in local communities in tandem with local self-governments.

Given that universal access to public services by all citizens on equal terms is crucial for the functioning of a modern society, better access to public services is one of the key outcomes of the Swiss PRO. Namely, 85 projects provided 13,905 beneficiaries (6,786 women) with better access to public services in the areas of social protection, health and education. Half of the projects achieved full sustainability by securing continuous funding from the local budgets, as well as at the policy level, through the adoption of the relevant regulations forming the legal basis for the further delivery of the services. In addition, the sustainability of the services resulted not only in a substantial increase in the number of beneficiaries, but in tailoring the services to all the identified citizens' needs.

The Programme devoted particular attention to social protection, both by extending technical assistance for assessing the needs of the population and developing social protection policies, and by funding projects. In result, 25 LSGs substantially improved the efficiency and quality of their services, in particular by applying the cross-sectoral approach, while 50 social protection projects improved the quality of life of 4,353 beneficiaries (2,580 women), including 992 persons with special needs. The projects also facilitated access to health services - general and specialist examinations - for 5,193 beneficiaries (2,230 of them women) and extended educational support to 842 beneficiaries (417 women).

With a view to facilitating the vulnerable groups' access to their rights, Swiss PRO provided financial and technical assistance for the establishment of 13 Citizens' Advisory Services extending free advisory services; 3,517 beneficiaries (1,559 of them women) realised their rights within this intervention, while the local self-governments were promptly prepared for the implementation of the new Legal Aid Law.

The Swiss PRO Development Programme recognised local self-governments as one of the most important parts of the social protection system and supported the comprehensive building of its capacities.

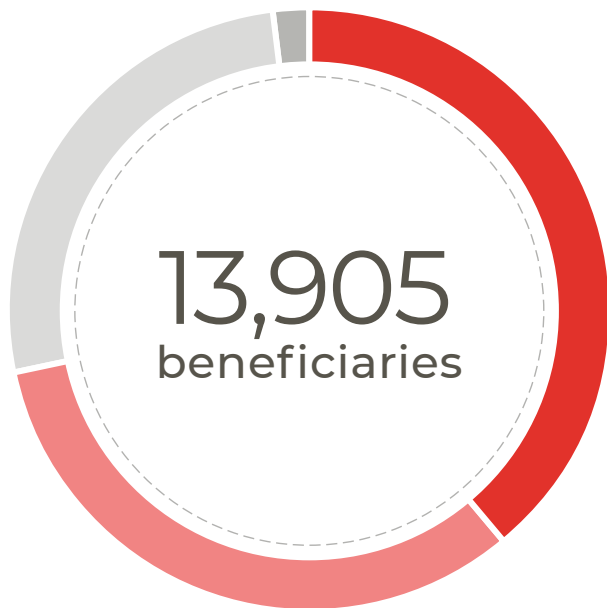


The support extended by Swiss PRO is invaluable, given that local self-governments are to assume an even greater role in social policy-making and extension of social protection at the local level.



Biljana Zekavica

Assistant Minister of Labour, Employment and Veteran and Social Affairs, Social Protection Sector



5,193 BENEFICIARIES
HEALTH SERVICES



4,353 BENEFICIARIES
SOCIAL PROTECTION SERVICES



3,517 BENEFICIARIES
ADVISORY SERVICES



250 BENEFICIARIES
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT



85

PROJECTS
IMPROVING ACCESS
TO PUBLIC SERVICES



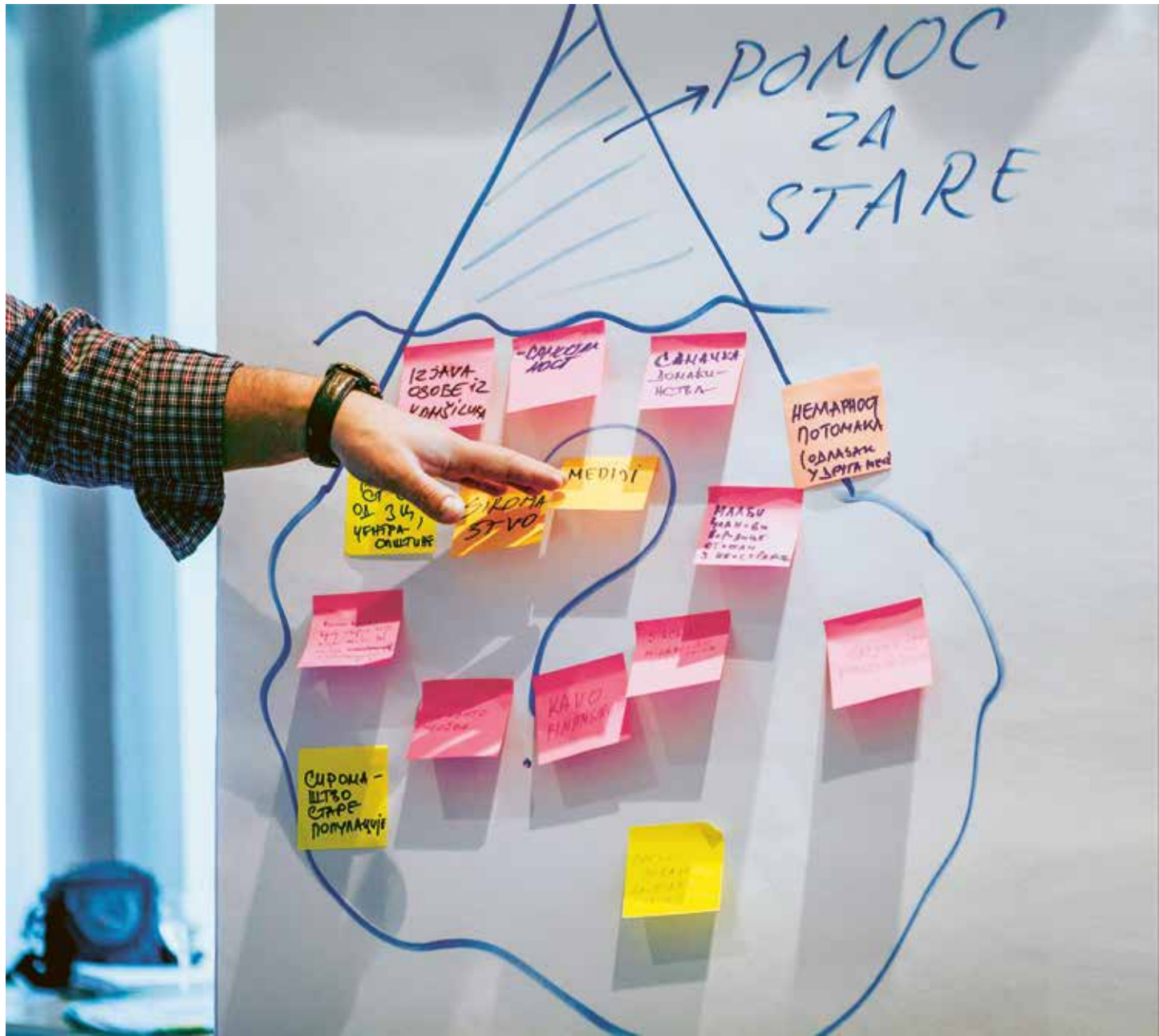
291

PARTICIPANTS IMPROVED
CAPACITIES FOR
ENHANCING SOCIAL
INCLUSION MEASURES



25

LSGs SUBSTANTIALLY
IMPROVED EFFICIENCY
AND QUALITY OF SOCIAL
PROTECTION SERVICES



ПОМОЩЬ ЗА СТАРЕ

ИЗЈАВА
ОСОБЕ ИЗ
КУЛТУРА

САНАЧКА
ПОМОЌ

САНАЧКА
ПОМОЌ

НЕМАРНОСТ
ПОТОМАКА
(ОДМАСТУ
УЛОЖИ МЕД)

ОСТАТ
ОД 34,
УЧЕНИЦИ
ОКУЛТУРЕ

САНАЧКА
ПОМОЌ

МЕДИЦИ

МАЈКУ
КАКО ЕН
ПОМОЌ
ОСТАТ
С УЧЕНИЦИ

САНАЧКА
ПОМОЌ

САНАЧКА
ПОМОЌ

КАРО
ФИЗИКА

САНАЧКА
ПОМОЌ

САНАЧКА
ПОМОЌ

СИРОМА -
ШТО
СТАРЕ
ПОУЧУВАЈЕ

САНАЧКА
ПОМОЌ

ONE STOP SUPPORT TO ALL VULNERABLE GROUPS

After successfully implementing two social protection projects funded by Swiss PRO, the City of Loznica adopted a Rulebook providing for the establishment of a Social Inclusion Counselling Centre extending services to all vulnerable groups. The Counselling Centre is designed as a one stop centre extending support to various vulnerable groups in overcoming life crisis situations, acquiring skills for independent living and preserving their quality of life to ensure their faster and better inclusion in the community.

“Cooperation with the Swiss PRO Programme motivated us to improve our social protection services in order to ensure the fullest possible social inclusion of various vulnerable groups in the local community,” says Ljiljana Ranković from the Loznica City Administration.







Joining Forces

We supported partnerships of local stakeholders improving their response to community needs.

Programme also extended support to civil society organisations in introducing socially innovative measures and strengthening cooperation with local institutions in their joint response to community needs. This has not only contributed to the quality of life of the beneficiaries of the services, but to the efficiency of service delivery as well. The results of the implemented 34 social innovation projects are reflected in the improved socio-economic status of 5,881 beneficiaries (3,436 women). The beneficiaries were empowered through trainings improving their employability and access to health and social protection services. In addition, cooperation among various local stakeholders resulted in positive changes involving the introduction of six innovative social protection measures that have

achieved full sustainability. The innovative measures involved the provision of socio-educational and counselling support to youths with behaviour problems, persons suffering from malignant diseases, and 16 children with special needs and their parents. The social inclusion of the most vulnerable members of the local communities was improved through individual work and cross-sectoral cooperation.

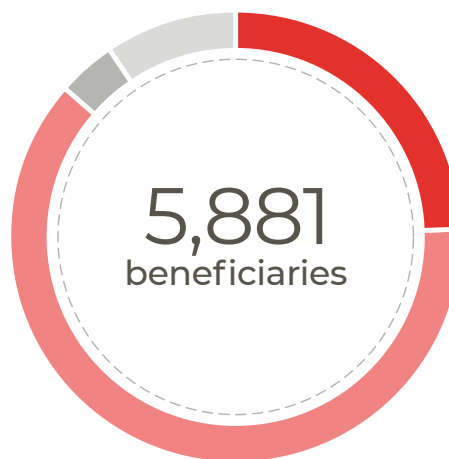


With Swiss PRO support we made official the cooperation between local institutions through the establishment of the Day Care Centre. The cross-sectoral approach improved the quality of the services and facilitated an efficient response to the beneficiaries' needs.



Mila Milivojević

Bor Association "Kokoro"
Chairwoman



1,445 BENEFICIARIES

SOCIAL PROTECTION SERVICES



3,636 BENEFICIARIES

HEALTH SERVICES



250 BENEFICIARIES

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT



550 BENEFICIARIES

ECONOMICALLY EMPOWERED



6 SOCIALLY-INNOVATIVE
MEASURES INTRODUCED

SUPPORT TO CANCER VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES

With Swiss PRO's support, the Association of Health Workers of the Rasina District established the Narcis Counselling Centre for cancer victims within the Kruševac General Hospital, which extends additional health services to over 1,800 patients.

The Counselling Centre is staffed by a trained psychologist, nutritionist, social worker and physical therapist, whose services are not included in the hospital's standard chemotherapy treatment.

The benefits the Counselling Centre brings to the citizens has been recognised also by the City of Kruševac and the neighbouring municipalities, thanks to whose budget allocations the Centre now extends services at the regional level, to patients across the entire Rasina District.







Strengthening The Community

We improved the social inclusion of vulnerable social groups by addressing COVID-19 effects.

The inadequate living conditions in substandard Roma settlements in Serbia further deteriorated during the COVID-19 pandemic, deepening the vulnerabilities of this category of the population and its exposure to both health and socio-economic risks.

The Programme supported the implementation of a total of 19 projects addressing the consequences of the pandemic by civil society organisations or local self-governments in partnership with associations. A total of 2,170 beneficiaries (of them 1,348 women) gained better access to health services or education, higher income and better sanitary conditions (potable water, sewage system) prerequisite for meeting their substantial needs.



2,710 BENEFICIARIES

IMPROVED THE QUALITY OF LIFE



1,401 BENEFICIARIES

HAVE BETTER ACCESS
TO HEALTH SERVICES



592 BENEFICIARIES

RECEIVED EDUCATIONAL
SUPPORT



384 BENEFICIARIES

LIVE IN BETTER SANITARY
CONDITIONS



333 BENEFICIARIES

ECONOMICALLY EMPOWERED



The exceptional results of projects supporting Roma substandard settlements within the Swiss PRO Programme show that the Swiss Government's support focused on the preservation of social capital within the Roma community, along with the sustainable empowerment of the people and their better access to their rights and public services.

We hereby again express our gratitude to the Swiss Government and its citizens for the opportunity to build greater solidarity among people.

Osman Balić

YUROM Centre
Chairman, Niš



BLEND OF HUMANENESS & RECYCLING HUMANITARIAN SERVICE “ODNESI”

The launch of the *odnesi.co* platform put in place an innovative method of recyclable collection, ensuring the health-friendly collection of larger amounts of waste free of charge.

The project resulted not only in the legalisation of the work and increase in the income of collectors of recyclables in the substandard settlements in Niš and Pirot.

Initiative also resulted in the establishment of a humanitarian service: people donate furniture, household appliances, clothing, footwear and food, which are then regularly distributed to the most vulnerable families in the substandard settlements in Niš and Pirot.





GENDER EQUALITY



Gender Equality

Although gender equality is a fundamental human right, it is still not fully realised in many areas of social life.

This is why Swiss PRO implemented an intervention aimed at institutionally strengthening the local gender equality mechanisms and their visibility, especially among local decision-makers.

The implementation of the relevant projects and activities built the capacities of local representatives, thus contributing to positive changes, the consolidation of local gender equality mechanisms and the creation of networks of councilwomen, with visible results in 44 LSGs.

The promotion and advocacy of gender equality in local communities were facilitated by the establishment of 31 local gender equality mechanisms, while the implementation of local gender policies adopted by 28 LSGs increased women's equality in decision-making and a resulted in a more inclusive local budgeting process and public service delivery.

The forming of councilwomen's networks in 30 LSGs enabled the use of the previously untapped potential for the continuous implementation of gender initiatives at the local level. A step towards the fulfilment of the common aim – improvement of gender equality - was made by encouraging and supporting cooperation of local councilwomen from different parties.





We have increased the visibility of the local gender equality mechanisms, improved the status of women in rural communities and encouraged greater women's participation in decision-making.

Maida Jusufović

Swiss PRO
Good Governance and Gender Equality
Programme Officer



44 LSGs

BUILT THEIR CAPACITY
FOR ADDRESSING GENDER
EQUALITY ISSUES



31 LSGs

ESTABLISHED GENDER
EQUALITY MECHANISMS



30 LSGs

FORMED COUNCIL WOMEN'S
NETWORKS



28 LSGs

ADOPTED LOCAL GENDER
EQUALITY POLICIES





Supporting Equality

By empowering local gender equality mechanisms we contributed to greater women's participation in decision-making.

Swiss PRO continuously worked on improving the local institutional framework in the field of gender equality and increasing women's participation in decision-making processes in the local communities.

The Programme's technical support to advancing the gender equality mechanisms and policies at the local level in 31 LSGs resulted in the introduction of gender statistics, while 38 LSGs refined their gender-responsive budgeting procedures, which was an important step towards establishing a system for monitoring investments in the improvement of the status of women. Furthermore, 28 LSGs adopted the European Charter for Equality of Women and

Men in Local Life to demonstrate their long-term commitment to gender equality, while 26 LSGs adopted local gender equality action plans geared at creating equal opportunities for all women and men in practice.

In addition to technical support, the Programme organised seven relevant trainings for 128 representatives of councilwomen's networks and gender equality mechanisms.

The trainings substantially contributed to their understanding of gender mainstreaming of local policies. Particularly important efforts to build the relevant capacities focused on 14 women mayors of cities and municipalities - elected decision-makers with the legitimacy to encourage and guide the implementation of the relevant policies, regulations and practices concerning gender equality at the local level.



Improving gender equality requires not only political will, but also continuous support to local self-governments in strengthening the voice of women in decision-making, especially in establishing gender-responsive budgeting.



Brankica Janković

Commissioner for the
Protection of Equality



28 LSGs

ADOPTED THE EUROPEAN
CHARTER FOR EQUALITY OF
WOMEN AND MEN IN LOCAL LIFE



26 LSGs

ADOPTED LOCAL GENDER
EQUALITY ACTION PLANS



38 LSGs

IMPROVED THEIR
GENDER-RESPONSIVE
BUDGETING PROCEDURES



31 LSGs

INTRODUCED GENDER
STATISTICS



128 WOMEN

FROM COUNCILWOMEN'S
NETWORKS EMPOWERED
IN APPLYING GENDER POLICIES



The Knić Municipality activities implemented with Swiss PRO's support over the past three years contributed to the consolidation of the councilwomen's network and the launch of a greater number of initiatives aimed at advancing and improving understanding of the gender equality principle.

Thanks to these joint activities, the Knić Municipality won the Serbian Government Gender Equality Coordination Body's recognition for its efforts to improve gender equality for two years running.

Svetlana Anđelić

Knić Assembly
Chairwoman







Launching Initiatives

We supported local initiatives for strengthening women's roles in the community.

With a view to empowering the gender equality mechanisms, Swiss PRO supported projects and local initiatives for the implementation of measures set forth in the local gender equality action plans. The projects' concrete results included gender mainstreaming of the relevant policies, gender-sensitive budgeting, capacity building for gender-responsive management and improvement of the status of women in local communities.

The implementation of the projects resulted in raising awareness of gender equality and improving the LSGs capacity for applying gender policies in practice. The projects also improved the legal and institutional frameworks for gender equality at the local level, as well as strengthened the position of women in those communities.

Over 5,578 beneficiaries (3,331 women), including rural women, youth, job-seekers and persons with special needs, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups directly benefitted from project activities. These activities in 28 LSGs improved the status of women in their local communities, as well as women's participation in decision-making processes and the work of local committees and municipal boards.



The greenhouse and training in greenhouse farming I received through the project was the support that gave wind to my sails, helped me become more independent, stay on my farm, provide for my family and, most importantly, be economically stronger.



Sanja Miletić

Rašica village,
Blace Municipality



28 PROJECTS

AND LOCAL GENDER EQUALITY
MECHANISMS SUPPORTED



5,578 CITIZENS

IMPROVED THEIR STATUS
IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



1,687 WOMEN

ACHIEVED BETTER ACCESS
TO PUBLIC SERVICES



757 WOMEN

PARTICIPATED IN
DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES



502 UNEMPLOYED

WOMEN EMPOWERED
THROUGH TRAININGS

WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT STRENGTHENS THE COMMUNITY

Activities raising women's awareness of the possibility of actively participating in decision-making resulted in the substantial increase in women's participation in the work of local municipal boards in Kruševac, especially in rural areas.

In economic terms, women were empowered to form their own associations and launch their own businesses. Within one project, one association was formed and as many as 33 business plans were developed enabling the beneficiaries to apply for self-employment subsidies.





Closing Words

Good governance, social inclusion and gender equality at the local level are principles and ideals even the most developed states and societies are striving to achieve, perpetual challenges they are endeavouring to address.

It goes without saying that improvements in these areas posed an even greater challenge in poor and underdeveloped Serbian municipalities. However, huge headway was accomplished through all, even the smallest results in these areas, because they directly influenced the lives of ordinary and often marginalised people.

With the Swiss Government's support, we together initiated changes contributing to the openness, transparency and inclusiveness of local administrations with a view to improving their response to the population's needs. Rather than extending one-off assistance, we opted for the harder, but more sustainable path, involving the building of the system, improvement of technical capacities, and the empowerment and comprehensive training of LSG staff. The relevant ministries, the SCTM, the



local self-governments and civil society organisations were the natural partners Swiss PRO succeeded in rallying to effect change.

We are proud of the fact that the Programme activities implemented for almost five years succeeded in contributing to the development of better local regulations and their better application, to more effective public policy implementation, and facilitated access to socio-economic rights and public services. Improvement of local governance, social inclusion and gender equality resulted in greater public participation in social life and the improved status of women, persons with special needs, Roma, the elderly, the unemployed, youths and children.

Simply put, Swiss PRO contributed to institutional headway resulting in improved quality of life of citizens, particularly of vulnerable social groups across Serbia. This is, of course, a long-term goal and process and UNOPS will continue responding to the needs of the local communities and extending support where it is most needed.

We believe that improving the status of our beneficiaries is a major contribution to the development of our country. This is why I would like to thank everyone on behalf of Swiss PRO and UNOPS for their devoted work and great contribution to positive changes in Serbia.

**Ana
Nedeljković Belja**

Swiss PRO National
Programme Manager







The List of Projects

Overview of Swiss PRO support provided to the cities and municipalities.

The list of projects and technical support provided by the Swiss PRO Programme in order to enhance good governance, social inclusion and gender equality at the local level can be accessed on the Programme's website available at swisspro.org.rs or via QR code:



DRIVERS OF CHANGE

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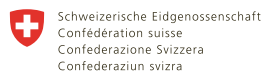
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