



YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



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During the past year, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights continued its mission of building an open and progressive society by strengthening the capacities of young people. Through various projects and activities, we directed our attention to topics that are of crucial importance to young individuals, paying special attention to their needs.

The initiative not only responded to the needs of young people but also encouraged them to take initiative in addressing issues of societal significance. We continue to believe in the power of youth and their ability to bring about positive change.

With the support of young individuals, we have made significant progress in achieving our goals. We will continue to work on strengthening young leaders, encouraging them to utilize their capacities and interests to contribute to communities and society as a whole.

We are excited to share the positive results achieved during this year and simultaneously announce new plans for the upcoming year. After the successes we have achieved, we will focus on topics related to addressing the past. We have decided to dedicate ourselves to building the attitudes of young people on the foundations of firmly established facts and neutral narratives. We believe this is crucial for us to move forward together, avoiding the repetition of past mistakes.

Taking into account legally established facts, we want to create a safe space for young people where they can openly discuss the past, exchange perspectives, and build understanding. We believe this is an important step towards building a society based on respect, equality, and diversity.

We will continue our dedication to fighting for equality for all and respecting fundamental human rights, celebrating diversity will remain a key component of our work, as we believe diversity is a strength that enriches our communities.

In conclusion, we would like to thank our donors, partners, members, and everyone who shares our vision. We look forward to the journey ahead towards a society that values the past, nurtures the present, and builds a future based on principles of justice and equality.

Below is a summary of our efforts during the year 2023.



The project **“Security for People and Borders - Combating Human Trafficking in the Western Balkans,”** supported through the sub-granting scheme of Group 484, presented a real challenge for our organization to which we successfully responded.

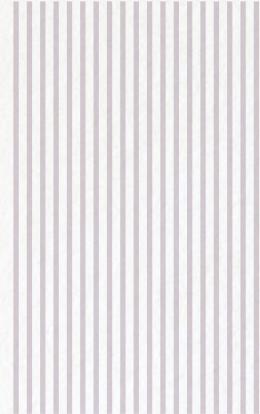
Through the implementation of this project, we have created informative flyers aimed at informing asylum seekers and migrants whom they can contact when they arrive in our country, as well as outlining their rights while staying in our territory. In addition to the flyers, in collaboration with the YIHR office in Serbia, a Legal Analysis has been prepared, available on our website, concerning the analysis of laws in Serbia and Montenegro regarding asylum seekers and migrants. During the project implementation, a seminar was held to acquaint media representatives and NGO sectors with the concepts of human trafficking and smuggling, and to provide media training on reporting on individuals who are victims of human trafficking



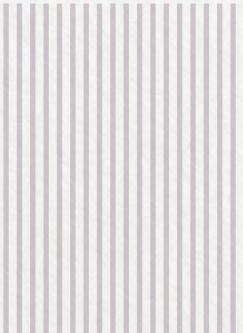
Conference: presentation of results

We presented the Legal Analysis, as well as all the activities we carried out during this project, at a conference organized by the Civil Alliance. On this occasion, we acquainted representatives of state institutions with the situation of human trafficking and smuggling in Montenegro.

With the support of the Fund for the Protection and Promotion of Minority Rights, the project **“Tolerance in Action”** represents a successful effort by the Initiative in creating positive changes in Montenegrin society. Through the implementation of workshops with young people from various municipalities, we have made a significant contribution to promoting interculturalism, tolerance, and multiculturalism.



The aim of our activities was to encourage dialogue among young people with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. We focused on discussions about important topics such as the dangers of hate speech and the need to nurture diversity as a source of enrichment rather than an obstacle. Through the organization of camps and seminars, with engaged lecturers, we created a space where we all learned, shared experiences, and realized that, despite our differences, we are connected by a common goal – building bridges of understanding. One of the key outcomes of this project is a booklet presenting the results of research on young people’s attitudes towards various national minorities, while also raising awareness about the dangers of hate speech.



A significant step by the Youth Initiative in addressing the employment issues of the Roma-Egyptian (RE) population was made through the implementation of the project “Inclusion to Employment,” with the support of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights. Through this activity, we contributed to empowering young members of this community to actively explore the labor market, enhance their knowledge and skills, and successfully tackle challenges when applying for jobs.

A series of workshops were organized, focusing on addressing specific challenges that young Roma face when seeking employment. Through resume writing and job interview preparation workshops, we provided them with basic skills and practical tools, demonstrating how to successfully handle job interviews. Our goal was not only to raise awareness about the challenges young Roma encounter in the employment process but also to provide concrete support to increase their chances in the labor market.

Additionally, we conducted research on the employment of members of the RE population, the results of which we publicly released, aiming to contribute to the better integration of this most discriminated group in our society.





We worked on raising awareness about the key issues facing LGBT individuals in Montenegro through the implementation of the project **“Human Rights Do Not Discriminate Based on Sexual Orientation - Discrimination Has the Same Meaning for Everyone,”** supported by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. One part of the activities included analyzing the legal and institutional framework and policies for the protection and promotion of LGBT rights in Montenegro, while the other part focused on raising awareness and sensitizing the broader public, especially students and youth, about discrimination against LGBT individuals in all spheres of life.



Through organizing lectures at universities and informative sessions with youth and students, we aimed to emphasize the importance of respecting human rights with a special focus on discrimination based on sexual orientation. Additionally, through this project, we sensitized a certain number of officials from the Ministry of Interior Affairs, police, social welfare centers, and health centers in targeted municipalities through training sessions, workshops, and seminars. **The culmination of this project was the conducted research and publication, as well as two closed-door meetings held with religious representatives, representatives of the LGBT community, and activists, which was a rarely held meeting of this kind.**



With the support of the National Endowment for Democracy, we initiated the project **“Promoting Public Dialogue on Transitional Justice”** by organizing the second module of the Transitional Justice School and preparing for research that we will conduct in the upcoming period. Within the School, we organized a visit to Dubrovnik a few days after commemorating the anniversary of the most aggressive day during the attack on this culturally and historically significant city on the Adriatic coast, marking one of the darkest chapters in our country’s history. Numerous peaceful activists and witnesses of the events of the 90s shared their knowledge and perspectives on this period of our history with the participants. After a three-day seminar, a group of young people gained a better understanding of this part of our history, and through their work, they will demonstrate what learning and being informed about this extremely important topic mean to them.

COMMEMORATION OF IMPORTANT DATES

In line with our commitment to significant dates and anniversaries that shape us as a society, we continue the practice of marking key moments that have left a deep imprint on our history and society. This year, with special respect and responsibility, we paid tribute to individuals and events that have left an indelible mark on our collective consciousness.

The anniversary of Srđan Aleksić's death was an opportunity to remember his courageous act and the sacrifice he made in the fight for justice and equality. His bravery remains a source of inspiration for all of us, reminding us of the importance of fighting to preserve fundamental human rights¹



¹ <https://www.yihr.me/index.php/saopstenje-povodom-godisnjice-smrti-srdana-aleksica/>



In collaboration with our offices in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, we conducted a joint action to commemorate three decades since the war crime in Štrpci. This action included delivering responsibility packages to the Governments of Montenegro, Serbia, and the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a commemoration at the railway stations, reflecting our commitment to the process of justice and truth.

The responsibility packages delivered to the Prime Ministers contained documents along with accompanying letters, inviting them to take a series of measures to fully elucidate the war crime in **Štrpci**.¹ Through the action of distributing flyers and engaging in conversations with passersby about the war crime in Kaluđerski Laz, as well as delivering our Book of Remembrance to the Special State Prosecutor's Office, we marked the anniversary of this war crime and emphasized the necessity of confronting the past.²



1 <https://www.yhr.me/index.php/inicijativa-predala-paket-odgovornosti-predsednicima-tri-vlade-za-zlocin-u-strpcima/>

2 <https://www.yhr.me/index.php/obilježavamo-24-godine-od-kaluderskog-laza/>



We also commemorated the 31st anniversary of the tragedy of the Klapuh family, together with representatives of the Special State Prosecutor's Office and the Bosniak Council, at the bridge "Obrada Cicmila" near Plužine, where the war crime itself occurred. While waiting for this tragedy to receive the deserved resolution in which the perpetrators will be held accountable for their crime, we as activists will continue to remember and remind that justice must be served.¹



¹ <https://www.yihr.me/index.php/presude-bez-kazne-31-godina-od-ubistva-tri-clana-rodice-klapuh/>

By laying flowers at Pobrežje, we participated in commemorating the anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica. Through this modest act, we are dedicated to preserving the memory of the victims. By remembering this tragedy and through tireless work, we contribute to building a society that is resilient to similar tragedies.

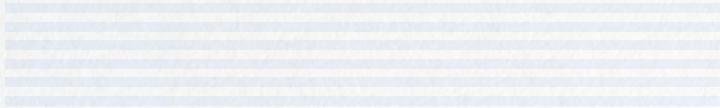


In December, by issuing the statement “Dubrovnik - one of the questions on the test of collective memory,” we reminded of the 32nd anniversary of the attack and destruction of the core of the old town under UNESCO protection. Crimes do not recognize time, nor can we allow time to affect our memory. ¹

¹ <https://www.yihr.me/index.php/dubrovnik-jedno-od-pitanja-na-testu-kolektivnog-sjecanja/>

INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION CENTER

The Information and Documentation Center celebrates its third year of existence, not only marking its continuous growth but also a series of significant visits to its new premises. These visits have not only contributed to the diversity of experiences at the center but have also laid the groundwork for an exciting period ahead.





Representatives of the Bosniak people from the region's countries visited the premises of the Information and Documentation Center (IDC) on April 19, 2023. On this occasion, guests from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia were introduced to the work of the Center, as well as its special archival materials consisting of documents related to the war events during the 1990s in Montenegro.



The visit concluded that there is a need for further efforts to strengthen regional relations aimed at contributing to the more effective resolution of war crimes committed during the 1990s and expedited extradition of individuals convicted in Montenegro who have not yet served their sentences.

We especially highlight the visit of H.E. Philippe Donckel, the Ambassador of Luxembourg to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro. This visit on April 26 not only emphasized the importance of IDC's work but also provided an opportunity for the exchange of ideas and experiences. During the visit, Ambassador Donckel praised the work and expressed words of support for the Center's activities focused on liberating Montenegro's socio-political life from the burden of the past. Thanks to this support, we successfully implemented the first module of the Transitional Justice School in mid-October.



Furthermore, we are particularly proud of the visit from colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Srebrenica Memorial Center. The visit is part of the "Good Practices" exchange program within the project "Truth, Dialogue, Future," where two colleagues spent five days with our team in October to enhance our memorandum of cooperation and learn from each other. This visit not only strengthened our mutual bonds but also opened the door for collaboration in the field of memorial initiatives and education.





Another significant moment was the visit of 11 students from Clemson University in South Carolina. This visit reflects the global reach and recognition of IDC's work, providing an opportunity for dialogue on important issues related to transitional justice processes and facing the past in our region, specifically in our country.



The Transitional Justice School was organized as a three-day seminar as part of the project of the same name funded by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The school, attended by 15 young people, was held from October 26th to 28th. Participants had the opportunity to gain a better understanding and expand their knowledge of topics related to facing the past and transitional justice through discussions, sharing experiences, and asking questions to our lecturers. Over the course of three days, we discussed collective narratives and reconciliation through youth engagement and storytelling, followed by a lecture from a researcher from the Community Information Mechanism Program (CIMP) to learn more about the history of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. All these activities and workshops served as an introduction for the continuation of the School through its second module held in early December. ¹



¹ <https://www.yhr.me/index.php/skola-tranzicione-pravde/>



*As we celebrate the achievements of the past three years,
we are also preparing for the period ahead.
IDC continues with its visionary approach
and aims to make an even greater contribution
in the field of facing the past.*