

# INDIVIDUAL PHILANTHROPY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN SERBIA

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Global  
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Foundations



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## CONTENTS

MOONLIGHT FOUNDATION, SUBOTICA	<b>5</b>
SOCIETY FOR HELP TO PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES THE BLUE BIRD, KULA	<b>7</b>
SOCIETY FOR HELP TO PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES, TRSTENIK	<b>9</b>
ZLATIBOR CIRCLE, ČAJETINA	<b>11</b>
BETHESDA, BAČKA TOPOLA	<b>13</b>
THE RAINBOW, ZRENJANIN	<b>15</b>

## MOONLIGHT FOUNDATION, SUBOTICA



Subotica is the northernmost city in Serbia with lovely Secession architecture, but also with degraded economy, a great percentage of unemployment, a great number of refugees and on the trail of narcotics trade. Between World War One and Two the citizens were considerably practicing individual philanthropy, whose benefits are enjoyed by the people of today. After World War Two the individual philanthropy retreated among the walls of religious communities (primarily Caritas) and Red Cross. Today the philanthropy is being practiced through the same institutions, along with occasional fundraising actions for individuals (illness, surgery that needs to be performed abroad etc.), occasional donations from diaspora which are given to educational or health organizations, and reinforced activity of the Rotary clubs.

Moonlight foundation is founded in order to provide the financial means to finance the programs of the clubs which enable the children and the young, whose development is endangered out of social, cultural, socio-pathological or other reasons, to spend quality free time. After successful fundraising in the local community during the past few years, mostly from small and medium-scale enterprises from Subotica and its surroundings, the Foundation has organized a campaign for fundraising from individuals. The financial means acquired in that manner are intended for the foundation and furnishing of the new Moonlight clubs in Serbia, which organize activities for socially vulnerable children and the young.

The beginning of our campaign for fundraising from individuals was not encouraging. The idea for the fundraising to be an accompanying humanitarian activity at a popular film festival in Subotica, which is visited by the guests from



abroad, was not recognized by the organizers of the festival. The Moonlight therefore turned to a campaign in the local community which encompassed

**thorough media promotion and various activities,** founded primarily on the **cooperation with Mercator mega market** with the logic “wallet in hand - the small change in the money box”, so that the citizens had an opportunity to donate the money as they do shopping. The main activity was organized in partnership with the mega market which gave its parking space for **setting-up field Moonlight club** with a table for table tennis, table football, electronic dartboard, collection boxes and a stand where the promo materials were distributed to the citizens. Those actions resulted in a great response from the citizens, especially from the families with children, so **107.000** dinars were raised. Having found out that we fundraise for sport activities for socially neglected children, one citizen decided at the spot to give us her old pool table which was no longer used by her. The key elements of campaign’s success were **transparency and participation of the beneficiaries themselves** - the children in all activities, from preparation to the contact with the citizens, and even participation in making decisions on the financial support to the foundation of new clubs. Live contact with the children won



the citizens’ trust, but also resulted in greater empathy and dedication to the action. We were governed by the simple principles and by relying on the already

existing resources - we started by involving the parents, their friends and acquaintances, so the chain of supporters and donors started to spread around. Special value of this campaign lies in the fact that it is a successful example of pioneer attempts in one local community in Serbia to fundraise the means for further distribution that is for the budget of a community foundation which would further distribute the means to the organizations - the founders of Moonlight clubs, as well as to other potential partnerships. It is a great challenge to get the citizens familiar with the concept which is new and unfamiliar in their community, and ultimate success is surely confirmed by the great trust which our foundation has in the eyes of the community.

*“It is not the financial success that is crucial, it is the pleasant feeling that you have done something good and humane, and that you have helped a child who found itself at a life crossing to choose the right way. The first attempts are often unsuccessful and the mistakes are unavoidable, but they should be seen as an investment in the future and to rely on patience. Our experience has showed that the rule that people give when their wallet is at hand is not always the case. They give when they are motivated and encouraged to give for the cause which is close to them, and to which they are loyal.” - Deže Kiš, Moonlight foundation.*

**SOCIETY FOR HELP TO PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES THE BLUE BIRD, KULA**



Based in Vojvodina, and with some 50.000 inhabitants, the city of Kula, which was formerly industrially developed place, is now facing the unemployment problem, similar to the majority of Serbian cities. Although there are a great number of civil society organizations, the scope of their actions is very limited and there are no greater actions, especially in the field of philanthropy development and the development of citizens' activism. Occasional donations from diaspora which are given to educational or health organizations, and reinforced activity of the Rotary clubs.

The Blue bird society has been active for almost fifteen years, and is successfully working on providing support for the people with disabilities in mental development and their families. It has been acknowledged by the local community and the local self-government as the local provider of social security services for the people with developmental disabilities. The Blue bird has the experience and success in fundraising from individuals, thanks to however small number of the citizens who are close to the organization and its members, who are familiar with the activities and are always ready to help. During the past year they have for the first time undertook a broader campaign for fundraising from individuals, the proceedings of which were meant for furnishing the residential objects for support and acceptance of the people with disabilities. The building has been secured through other projects, and it is very important because it will for the first time in the community provide the lodging for the people with disabilities outside their family surroundings.

Our Society decided to fundraise in smaller amounts, but from a greater number of individuals Bearing in mind that the culture of giving is underdeveloped within the community, we have paid the particular attention to the campaign for informing the citizens by promo materials, the media and public actions. During the fundraising we plucked up the courage to test various techniques and try innovative ways, and some of the techniques were implemented in Kula for the first time. The financial means were acquired



through various activities: **street actions, collection boxes, direct mail, web auction, "student dinar" action,**

**party organization, at sport tournaments, humanitarian concerts, implementing the concept of "charity money" in coffee shops** (the price of one drink was raised and the difference in money was given to the organization), **through Facebook etc. The children beneficiaries were selling tomatoes from their own glasshouse as well as watermelons which were donated.** We have established the cooperation with the communal enterprise in distribution of direct mail, and 11% of the citizens positively responded to the letter received. We have established contacts and

received support from distinguished individuals from the community and beneficiaries' families from diaspora. Surprisingly, web auction and Facebook group proved to be very successful techniques. Due to addressing the widest target groups, we have adjusted the messages, slogans and the ways of addressing to every group of citizens. We took care to contact each donor by the phone and to thank them personally for the support, and thanks to that approach some of the donors were willing to become permanent donors for The Blue bird's activities. We contacted 100 donors with the question "Are you interested in donating again?", and 99 responded positively. The action resulted in exceptional success with 377.068 dinars raised.

*We have believed in the success of the action for the entire time, and we knew that the plan is achievable. After this experience, we realized the importance of fundraising and decided for the first time in our organization to put aside the financial means for that field. We recommend all organizations not to hesitate, to be brave and to experiment, but also to necessarily engage the people who will dedicate themselves specifically to fundraising for the organization.- Marko Košutić, Society for help to persons with intellectual difficulties The Blue Bird, Kula*

## SOCIETY FOR HELP TO PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES, TRSTENIK



Trstenik lies on the bank of Zapadna Morava river in Central Serbia, with some 50.000 inhabitants who work mainly in the agriculture. The municipality is one of the most underdeveloped municipalities in Serbia, without visible perspective, with decrepit economy and rural areas which are predominantly inhabited by the elderly. Impoverished citizenry which is in every day struggle for bare existence is disinterested and unmotivated to take the initiative in solving any problem which is not connected with direct material profit. One of the characteristics of the local citizens is the undeveloped social awareness when it comes to marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Society for help to persons with intellectual difficulties works on the integration of the disabled into the local community. By every day activities and regular media appearances, the Society is striving to create a positive attitude in the community towards the disabled children and youths, and to accept them as equal members of the community. The organization is constantly influencing the local self-government to encourage and support the development of new services within the local community, which strengthen the activism and support the independence of the disabled.

The primary activity which has been implemented by our Society for the past eight years is the non-institutional model of care and education of mentally challenged people through Day care center with creative inclusive workshops, which has been financed until now solely through the projects, with support from greater donors. Since 2007 we have been directing our activities, apart from our beneficiaries, towards the local community, with active participation of the children from regular population in interaction with our beneficiaries. By creating the conditions for friendship between both groups of children, the Society had an influence on the reduction of prejudice and the development of a tolerant attitude toward the diversities in early development period. Implementing regular activities with a great number of children asked for the refurbishing of Day care center's yard, which will serve for hanging out, sport and other activities of the community children, as well as pleasant stay and rest in fresh air for the regular beneficiaries of the Centre. We have started the fundraising action for the yard refurbishing by a **sport tournament in football**, which was organized in cooperation with football club from Odžaci settlement. By promoting the tournament on local television, along with support from the actors of the popular TV series, we have attracted a great number of citizens who bought the charity ticket. In agreement with private and state enterprises (Medical center, the Municipality, Electric Power Industry of Serbia etc.) we placed **charity boxes** at seven different spots. The biggest sum was raised in children and school wing of Medical center, whilst the lowest contributions were made in the service for paying the communal bills. It appears that the biggest obstacle in fundraising was the poor material situation of the citizens. In partnership with People's University we have realized a **five day selling exhibition of children's works** which were made in Day care center and in workshops. People's University has provided us with the exhibition room,

while our volunteers sold the works. Moreover, we used the **local fair** to sell the same works on a special stand. We managed to raise **109.000 dinars**. One of the unsuccessful attempts was the



negotiations with the representatives of the union of workers on organizing a fundraising action by allocating a sum from membership fees, or

according to the principle of rounding off the amount of net salaries. However, due to low wages and the already established deals for solidary support to the colleagues, the union representatives suggested that paying the means for the action should fall on the enterprises they come from, and not on the individuals themselves.

*Our Society has been fundraising in the community for a long period of time, and we think that it is time for other organizations to realize similar actions. The reasons for our average success, and that is how we estimate our success, lie in small community, poor material situation, the influence of vacations, as well as the preparation of the children for school and the preparation of preserves. The important innovation we implemented is the participation of the children in fundraising activities - the beneficiaries have made the works they were then selling at the exhibitions. Our idea is to help other societies to develop individual philanthropy, to influence the citizens to realize that something which does not mean a lot to them, may mean a lot to someone else.- Ljiljana Mihajlović, Society for help to persons with intellectual difficulties, Trstenik*

## ZLATIBOR CIRCLE, ČAJETINA



Based in Southwestern Serbia, with some 15.000 inhabitants Čajetina mostly relies on very developed tourism thanks to the potentials of Zlatibor mountain. Citizens' activism within the community is visible primarily through the work of many sport clubs, cultural societies, tourist and youth organizations and other citizen societies. The culture of giving and philanthropy has not been present much so far, except in solidarity cases towards ill individuals, especially the children.

In 2009, in partnership with Centre for Social Work and with support from the local self-government, Citizens society Zlatibor Circle founded a day care center for the disabled children entitled Little ray. However, the financial crisis, which is ever more visible in this area, has influenced the decrease of tourism and the lack of financial means within the municipality, and so it influenced the possibility for further financing of Little Ray. Not wanting either to allow the termination of work because of lack of donors, or social isolation of the disabled children, Zlatibor Circle launched an action for fundraising from the citizens of the community.

Despite the lack of experience, we have approached the fundraising with great enthusiasm. We first managed to **win over the majority of local partners to join the action: CMOK** engaged volunteers for street actions, door-to-door fundraising, cards and tickets sale, project promotion; **The Municipality of Čajetina** has helped with the ticket sales for charity concert, **Cultural-sport center Čajetina** has provided the place for the concert, provided technical support and staff; local **Radio Max** has given us free media space; with a great support from the priests the **local church** has participated in concert organization with its folklore group, and helped in fundraising through charity boxes. On religious holiday Transfiguration of the Christ 11.000 dinars were raised in front of the church. The best results were achieved by a **charity concert**



with a great response from the citizens who bought several tickets, even when they could not attend the program. During the concert we fundraised about 50.000 dinars, while **114.000 dinars** in total was raised during the campaign. On Balkan Brass Bands Music Festival in Guča, we organized a **card sale**. Part of the money was raised from the employed citizens who donated a **percentage of their salaries**. The biggest challenge during the fundraising process was the citizens' lack of trust, as a result of former negative experiences, as well as passivity and disinterest of the citizens due to the lack of habit for giving, insufficient

information and relying on the state institutions. Despite of that, the process was successful, very dynamic and alive with constant adjustment of the strategy and techniques in relation to the change of the circumstances within the community.

*The positive thing is that we have learned how the citizens respond to the idea of donating money, how to create a strategy and what we may expect in the future. Our bad judgment was that*



*we thought we could fundraise from the tourists, which proved unsuccessful. We have realized that during the fundraising we should concentrate exclusively*

*on the local citizens, and that we should fundraise for the group which is a part of that community, and with whose problems the citizens are already familiar and therefore motivated to help. In every process, as is the case with this one, it is important to know the needs and the mentality of the community, to adjust to the situation on the spot, to create special approach for every target group, to find allies and maintain a good cooperation with partners and individuals with whom we find mutual interest. It is important to be recognized in your own local community, to involve as many citizens as possible, to show them trust and sometimes go out of the frame of cooperation with familiar and reliable partners, and make new contacts. - Ivana Milojević, Zlatibor circle*

## BETHESDA, BAČKA TOPOLA



The development of **Bačka Topola**, which is an ethnically diverse and bilingual community in the north of Bačka, with some 16.000 inhabitants, has been slowed down significantly during the past 20 years. The enterprises are working poorly, the unemployment is growing, and the social and cultural life is poorer and poorer. However, when it comes to activism, civil society organizations and a small number of local institutions are asserting themselves.

Since 2003, **Humanitarian society Bethesda** has been developing various programs for the disabled, and providing support for their families. Day care center for the most vulnerable group of the disabled - the children and the youth with difficult and combined impediments, is constantly active under the supervision of Bethesda. During seven years of its work, the organization has acquired over one hundred donors who periodically offer support in the means of merchandise and money, most often upon the call from the organization. However, during 2010 they have for the first time undertook fundraising from individuals for a certain cause - the refurbishing and adding new contents to the old playground in the yard of the Day care center, which serves as a place for rehabilitation and motor skills development of 26 beneficiaries of Bethesda.

Bearing in mind the circumstances in a small community such as Bačka Topola, the success of the action has overcome even our expectations - **164.986 dinars** were raised, instead of 100.000 dinars which were estimated. The biggest assets were raised **from individuals in direct contact** - from the citizens and the representatives of the business sector, with detailed information on the cause for which the means will be used. A great portion of the community responded to the call for cooperation, so the **charity boxes** were

placed all over the city: in photo shop, at pharmacy, the bike shop, technical supplies shop, Agricultural school. **Youth Tolerance camp**, which gathers the young and the visitors from abroad, has enabled the setting-up of boxes, while **the pensioners have surprised us during the celebration of International Day of the Elderly** by donating us the means for the playground. We have come up with a creative way for fundraising in this community - we have placed two containers for recycling PET and ALU waste, and in cooperation with the media and elementary schools **we have invited the pupils to gather recycling waste voluntarily**. In that manner the awareness on the protection of the environment has been developed among the young, along with the development of the culture of giving and volunteerism.

Unexpected response was received from a **circular letter** through which we fundraised over 50.000 dinars from the citizens, individually and through the institutions. However, the best effect

was achieved through **direct and personal contact with the citizens** - it rarely happened that our appeal for a contribution was rejected, while the contributions ranged from 100 to 5000 dinars. During that process, it was crucial to find a right measure, to listen to the people, and to respect social and cultural conditions within the community, as well as to clearly state for which purposes the money will be spent. In that manner we are continuing the expansion of our donor base.

*We believe that the exceptional and unexpected success was achieved thanks to the good reputation our organizations has in our community - most of the citizens are familiar with our work, and they appreciate it. Since the*

*very beginning we have believed in the success, and our enthusiasm grew with every positive response and support received, which motivated all the members of the organization to activate themselves. We have realized the manifold and mutual use in fundraising from individuals: the organizations gets a chance to develop and grow, and the citizens feel good, because they know for sure that their donations has been used for good purposes. We believe in our strength to continue with this initiative with the slogan - We should dream, but within the frame of reality. - Roža Cipo, Secretary at Bethesda.*



## THE RAINBOW, ZRENJANIN



Formerly one of the most developed cities in Vojvodina and Serbia, a multiethnic community of rich cultural tradition, **Zrenjanin** is now facing the general problems - the unemployment and economic decline. Citizens' activism, which has been until recently visible in the participation of the citizens through union organizations, political parties and local communities, is now somewhat more developed.

Since 2003 **Humanitarian center The Rainbow** has been working on the rehabilitation, re-socialization and de-stigmatization of the people suffering from mental diseases. As the principal program relates to psycho-social counseling and creative workshops, the organization soon faced the problem of sustainability of those activities. As much as the donors were benevolent and supportive, the activities which were financed through the projects were always limited to a certain time period. Therefore, the idea of fundraising from individuals posed itself as a logical solution which may ensure the continuity of regular activities and secureness in supporting the beneficiaries.

In that manner we have offered the citizens an opportunity to participate in the welfare of the entire community, because the activities which are being implemented in Rainbow are significantly easing the state institutions whose resources and capacities are limited - Psychiatry, Center for Social Work, Ministry of Internal Affairs etc. The greatest understanding and willingness to allocate the means have been showed by the citizens who were already acquainted with our work. In order to build up motivation and interest in the action, it was vital to inform other citizens about the program, and to build up the trust in the organizations' work. We have used **Beer days** and **World Mental Health Day** celebrations for fundraising actions. The majority of donations were raised in **personal contact with**



**the citizens, during the tribune and exhibition of the works made by the beneficiaries,** when the citizens reacted with a lot of emotions and

understanding upon the message of the charity action Mental illness is not contagious, but the indifference is.

In that manner we have raised 121.000 dinars, out of **154.000 dinars** in total. Considerable support was given by the local partnership organizations Caritas and Healthy Life, while the volunteers and the beneficiaries themselves were actively participating in the entire action. Through Facebook



social network we have made new contacts and received offers for potential partnerships. **At the beginning of our work we felt**

***uncomfortable, a bit scared and discouraged, but quickly enough that feeling disappeared and we increasingly believed in the positive outcome. We realized that the citizens have a positive opinion on our activities, and a great wish to help the people suffering from mental diseases. We plan to continue with fundraising activities - we will place charity boxes in two supermarkets, selling exhibitions have become one of our regular activities, as well as lectures on mental health, and we even plan to organize a charity concert. We wish to secure the sustainability of our activities, but also to expand them. Based on our experience, we believe that civil society organizations should turn to the citizens in fundraising, and that the reaction they will face will be much better than anticipated.*** - Dragica Bu, the Rainbow, Zrenjanin

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