

HUMANITY IN ACTION

BOSNA I
HERCEGOVINA

**Encouraging Democratic Values
and Active Citizenship among Youth
2020/21**

Final Narrative Report

This project is generously supported by the National Endowment for Democracy and the University of Sarajevo School of Economics and Business.

>> PROGRAM DESCRIPTION >>

The year-long program seeks to train 15 aspiring young people, introducing them to democracy and human rights matters, encouraging them to employ critical thinking when considering sensitive topics, and to build their communication, presentation, and research skills. The program includes several educational modules: a nine-day-long learning and skills development training and a three-day-long debate workshop; individual research policy-briefs on democracy-related issues with assigned mentors; a three-day-long project-building and project-management training; a group project resulting in four civic campaigns; a two-month period for the promotion of the results of the implemented civic campaigns; and finally a closing ceremony with a final debate tournament.

>> ACTIVITIES >>

This report covers all program phases (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021), which includes the promotion and preparation for the implementation of the program, first educational module divided into online and in-person lectures and workshop, the second phase dedicated to individual research conducted by the participants with the supervision and support of assigned research mentors (December 21, 2020 – February 28, 2021), project and financial management training held in May in Neum, where the participants had the opportunity to develop ideas for the civic campaigns, the implementation of four EDVACAY group civic campaigns, their promotion in the media under the guidance of assigned mentors, and the closing ceremony of the program (including a debate tournament and a meeting with the participants of the HIA BiH “Game Changers” project). A section of the report is also dedicated to the Humanity in Action Fellowship program which NED supported with funding for Action projects, and 4 additional EDVACAY Alumni Civic Campaigns, also financially supported by NED.

>> Preparatory Activities

The ninth cycle of the EDVACAY program was prepared and organized in the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic, which implied many details and decisions that needed to be carefully considered and planned with keeping in mind the well-being of the new cohort and the team members as a priority.

The Call for Applications was open from October 5 until November 5, 2020. Besides daily promotion on the [Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina website](#) and social media pages (mainly Facebook and Instagram), the news about the Call for Applications was directly sent to all universities in BiH, and published on several student NGOs and associations, info web portals and on official university websites, inter alia: [Oštra Nula Association in Banja Luka](#), [Mladibl.com Youth info portal in Banja Luka](#), [Lonac.pro – online community for activism and entrepreneurship](#), [Hocu.ba](#), [Center for Career Development CERK](#), [Institute for Youth Development KULT](#), [Citizens against Terrorism CAT](#), [RadiYo Active Zenica](#), [Dobarportal.net](#), [STUDOMAT](#), [Perspektiva.plus](#), [University of Sarajevo Faculty of Political Sciences](#), [University of Sarajevo Faculty of Architecture](#), [University of Banja Luka Faculty of Political Sciences](#), [University of Banja Luka](#), [University in Banja Luka Faculty of Philosophy](#), [University in Mostar Faculty of Philosophy](#), [University in Zenica](#). The program was also promoted through Humanity in Action Senior Fellow Network and EDVACAY Alumni Network channels and many of the Alumni members shared the Call on their personal social media accounts.

Project staff also promoted the program in person at several NGOs and faculties at [University of Banja Luka](#) and [University of East Sarajevo](#) in September 2020. In October, we were invited to promote the program and the Call for Applications at the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in BiH supported online event 'EU Political Cafe', where the students of political sciences were invited, alongside

other distinguished panelists. Event was organized in collaboration with the Students' Club of the Political Sciences Faculty of the University of Banja Luka.

>> Participants

After careful review of the 30 applications received, our selection committee invited 15 students to participate in this year's program. The participants come from 8 cities and all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and are studying at 14 different faculties/departments, enrolled in 7 public and 2 private universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Name	Hometown	University and Faculty
Emar Đonlić	Tuzla	International University of Sarajevo (Genetics and Bioengineering)
Aleksandra Đukić	Bijeljina	University of Tuzla Faculty of Philosophy (Journalism)
Merjema Srna	Sarajevo	University of Sarajevo Faculty of Mechanical Engineering (Department of Energy, Process Engineering and Environmental Engineering)
Kristina Gadže	Ljubuški	University of Mostar Faculty of Philosophy (Journalism and Informatics)
Faris Mrako	Zenica	University of Zenica Faculty of Philosophy (Cultural Studies)
Milica Čikić	Gradiška	University of Banja Luka Faculty of Political Sciences (Social Work)
Mateo Todosijević	Sarajevo	University of Travnik Faculty of Education (Kinesiology)
Aiša Avdić	Tešanj	International University of Sarajevo Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences (Architecture)
Harun Talić	Sanski Most	Sarajevo School of Economics and Business (Financial Management/Marketing Management)
Edin Zorić	Zenica	International Burch University (Digital Communications and Public Relations)
Tarik Čardaković	Sarajevo	International Burch University (International Relations and European Studies)
Lejla Dautbašić	Sarajevo	International Burch University (International Relations and European Studies)
Ševala Huzejrović	Sanski Most	University of Sarajevo Faculty of Dentistry with Clinics
Din Hodžić	Sarajevo	International Burch University (Financial Management/Marketing Management)
Hana Halilbegović	Sarajevo	Sarajevo School of Economics and Business (Management)

>> Nine-day Education and Skills Development Training Concept

Due to Covid-19 related potential health risks for participants, speakers and staff that a nine-day in-person module might impose, educational module was split up into online and in-person lectures

and workshop. First module was held from December 4-6 and 11-13, 2020 (online format) and December 18-20, 2020 (in-person 3-day Debate Workshop). The module hosted 20 lecturers and 1 debate trainer. Over the course of nine days (3 weekends – Friday, Saturday, Sunday), speakers explored topics related to human rights and democracy, identities, nationalism, dialogue, activism, media and helped participants develop their communication and research skills. The program agenda was created as a balance between lectures and workshops, putting particular emphasis on practical assignments that the participants successfully completed.

>> Short Description of Lectures in the First Program Phase

>> 1. Week (December 4- 6, 2020)

Organizing Youth Rights in Local Communities in BiH,
Jasmina Banjalučkić, Institute for Youth Development KULT

During her lecture Ms Banjalučkić spoke about various examples of youth organizations in BiH and their struggles to implement initiatives related to their education and other rights each young person is entitled to. Ms Banjalučkić gave concrete steps and instructions to our participants which are coming from her long term involvement in the field of youth rights how they can engage more and become active citizens.

Student activism – experiences and practice
Armela Ramić, Attorney-at-Law

Ms Ramić shared her experiences acquired during her BA studies at the University of Sarajevo Faculty of Law, where she was one of the founders of a student association, and how it made an impact on her current career. Based on some of her experiences she shared with participants, Ms Ramić explained and encouraged participants to step out of their comfort zones and ask for what they need from those in position in order to help the community and themselves build their careers. To put that in practice Ms Ramić gave participants a task to write a formal a letter requesting a meeting with a person they identified as a key contact in organization of their choosing.

How to encourage local activism among youth?
Hana Sokolović, founder and president of 'Network of Activist Changes' and a journalist

Instead of focusing on the media and her journalist experiences like Ms Sokolović has done in last year's educational module, this time she engaged with fellows in conversation and discussion about her activism experiences and what activism is in general. She explained and compared different methods of protesting in public space and even shared a live footage video of her with a group of young people protesting during a session of the assembly of Sarajevo Canton. She explained to the fellows why is it important to exercise the right to gather and protest and the results it can bring in policy making.

Fighting for the rights of "invisible" groups in BiH society
Ajna Jusić, President of Association "Forgotten Children of War"

Ajna Jusić talked about the important work of the Association of Forgotten Children of War, and their impact on shaping the narratives of post-conflict BiH. Dozens of thousands of women and girls were raped during the 1992-95 Bosnian war, according to some estimates, and it is believed that a number of children who were born as a result of that crime goes up to 4,000. They call themselves forgotten children of the war. Ajna Jusić is one of them. Ajna's mother was a victim of a rape during the Bosnian war. Ms Jusić lives in Sarajevo today and is a founder and an activist for the Forgotten Children of War association. According to her, the association has 15 active members but there are up to 60 inactive members across the country.

Youth and LGBT + initiatives in Prijedor
Branko Ćulibrk, Youth Center 'KVART'

Branko Ćulibrk from the KVART Youth Center in Prijedor talked to fellows about the rights of LGBT+ people in general and the struggle to exercise those rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to a historical overview of significant youth initiatives and their struggle for the rights of queer people from the period of Yugoslavia until today, the emphasis of the lecture was also on the LGBT + initiatives in Prijedor. Branko explained that there is a community of young queer people in Republika Srpska that congregates around some of NGOs in Prijedor, including KVART, and that they manage to gather and organise different events, despite the present local animosity and homophobia.

Fight for the rights of citizens in Banja Luka
Milica Pralica, Association 'Oštra Nula'

Ms Milica Pralica has been actively engaged in fighting for civil rights in Banja Luka for more than 10 years. She shared with fellows various difficulties and successes she and her colleagues experienced during their public initiatives, events and protests in Banja Luka and other cities in the Republika Srpska Entity. She also compared the situation in both entities regarding civil laws and gave insights into many differences and similarities between the governance of both entities.

Gender equality in public and political affairs
Edita Miftari, UN WOMEN Governance and Leadership Coordinator

Ms Edita Miftari opened a very engaging discussion with our fellows on the topic of gender equality in public and political life in BiH, observing the topic through the prism of laws and social norms set by our society. She also gave fellows many examples of gender discrimination to illustrate the current situation on gender equality in Bosnian society and educate the fellows so they can recognize discrimination and act to prevent it.

The role of youth in the digital and media space: opportunities, responsibilities and limitations for active engagement
Mahir Sijamija, Foreign Policy Initiative BH

Mahir Sijamija, EDVACAY Alumnus, discussed the role of young people in the digital and media space through an interactive workshop. Fellows participated in different exercises and learned about new tools which demonstrated the opportunities for their activism online and in public space.

The Process of Reconciliation among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Dr. Sabina Čehajić-Clancy, Stockholm University

Dr. Čehajić-Clancy described the process of affirmation of individual and collective identities, in relation to recognition, emotional fears, proximity to "the other", and forgiveness. She also spoke about contact interventions, concluding the lecture with emphasizing that, although we are a society with great challenges, we are much closer to reconciliation than other nations due to specific circumstances that simply need to be used to our advantage.

>> 2. Week (December 11-13, 2020)

EU and BiH: membership – how and why?
Doc.dr. Nedžma Džananović, University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Political Sciences

Dr. Džananović dedicated her lecture to one of the burning issues of BiH – membership in European Union. After the introductory and mostly known facts by the local citizens, participants learned in detail about the lesser known facts of what the membership in EU implies and what it means for the BiH society and lives of every citizen in BiH. After the lecture there was an interactive segment where each participant was given a chance to ask questions about the

information they learned about thus opening new subjects and discussions.

Current Challenges of Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Doc. dr. Midhat Izmirlija, University of Sarajevo Faculty of Law

During his lecture about the challenges the democratic system faces in today's society, Dr. Izmirlija discussed the very definition of democracy with the participants, philosophical concepts which form the basis of democracy, as well as the human rights protection mechanisms expressed in constitutions and laws. Finally, he defined the four main elements of consociational democracy (coalitions, veto power, proportional and parity representation, and group autonomy) through their materialization in the BiH constitution, and discussed the pros and cons of this system.

Democratic Representation in Multiethnic States

Dr. Damir Kapidžić, University of Sarajevo Faculty of Political Science

Dr. Kapidžić focused on exploring why democracy is, in its essence, the rule of the majorities, and the role of majorities in protecting minorities. He explained the difference between substantive representation, which advocates minority rights, and descriptive representation, where citizens are represented by ones most alike to themselves, as well the role of positive discrimination. He also elaborated on the division of ethnic, multi-ethnic and non-ethnic parties, touching upon the differences between national and ethnic identities.

On political relations in BiH - a special review of political events in the Republika Srpska entity

Mr. sc. Tanja Topić, political analyst

Ms Tanja Topic, political analyst and research associate and leader of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Bosnien und Herzegowina office in Banja Luka, gave fellows a lecture on the very complex political relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing especially on the political events in the Republika Srpska entity related to the latest local elections results. She commented on the newly elected candidates, compared their policies to the previously elected officials and their ruling, referred to the Federation of BiH's newly elected officials and opened the floor for many questions our fellows had for Ms Topić.

Structural Economic Challenges in Post-Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina

Damir Šaljić, British Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr Šaljić talked about the basics of the economic system in BiH, describing the difficulties caused by the division of the decision making process between the different levels of government. He analyzed new economic trends and the monetary system of BiH, as well as several other issues such as unemployment (especially among youth), inflation, taxes and potential economic reforms in the country.

Communication with public administration bodies in BiH

Aiša Telalović, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project

After Ms Telalović shared several stories from her work experience, she engaged in discussion with the fellows about how democratic values and human rights are incorporated into different legislative texts, focusing especially on the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the applicable international legal instruments. Ms Telalović described the mechanisms that are at the citizens' disposal when it comes to reporting human rights violations in the country, as well as the jurisdiction of the Joint Committee for Human Rights at the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The lecture ended with advice on communicating with public administration as means of civic activism.

Media literacy in BiH

doc.dr. Vuk Vučetić, Uni of East Sarajevo Faculty of Philosophy

Dr. Vučetić talked about the term “media literacy” and what fields and skills it encompasses. She spoke about the importance of media literacy as a fight against spreading misinformation and fake news, a fight against pseudo-sciences and conspiracy theories and especially as a fight against radicalization. Participants learned a right way to interpret news and were encouraged to use their critical thinking in some news articles given to them as examples of media manipulation.

The Role and Influence of Media in Social Life in BiH

Anida Sokol, researcher and project coordinator Mediacentar Sarajevo

After a discussion about the perception of the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ms Sokol talked about several important concepts, such as the relationship between journalists and politicians from both perspectives, buying space for advertising on different media platforms, media performance, and the possible influence that can be achieved through blogs and social networks. Ms Sokol also spoke about the rules of interviews and importance of “giving a voice” to the minority groups in society because of their lack or very minor presence in the media.

Acting in Public Space

Leila Bičakčić, Director of Center for Investigative Reporting (CIN)

Ms Bičakčić lead the participant into her lecture by screening several short documentaries showing the finds her team of journalists have discovered by conducting investigations regarding the revenues and movable and immovable property of more than 120 officials and politicians of the ruling and opposition parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ms Bičakčić explained that the Center for Investigative Reporting has the most complete database with information on education, professional and political careers, as well as information on savings, loans and shares in companies, including stocks. Information on lawsuits and court rulings against politicians and officials are also available. By using these examples Ms Bičakčić engaged participants into conversation about the ways general public can become more aware of the conduct of the ruling figures in BH society and how they can use such information to act in a more participatory manner in society.

Dialogue and Tolerance

Dr. Dino Abazović, Professor at University of Sarajevo Faculty of Political Science

Professor Abazović started the lecture by discussing the concept and definition of mentality as a pattern of established thoughts, beliefs and behavior, and its relationship with traditionalism. He talked about anti-intellectualism, and described the concepts of collective identity and mass ideologies. Professor Abazović emphasized the importance of eliminating prejudice in ethnically and religiously diverse communities, and the necessity of tolerance in these communities as a tool of breaking misconceptions.

>> Debate Workshop with Ivana Kešić, Program Manager at CIVITAS BiH

Through a highly interactive three-day in-person debate workshop, Ms Kešić introduced the participants to the historical development and forms of debate. Participants were then introduced to the Robert Popper debate form which they continued to use in individual and team work to develop their critical thinking skills in building a case while also practicing their oratory skills through presentation. Workshop continued with sessions focused on explaining the basics of the British Parliamentary debate format, followed by debates, as well as several exercise focused on recognizing logical fallacies, improving the speaking style, and developing argumentation. Over the three days of the highly intensive workshop, students participated in four full debates, exploring topics related to human rights and democracy which were analyzed over the first six days of the program, and learning how to approach these topics from different standpoints.

Introduction into the Methodology of Research

Prof. dr. Jasmin Hasić, HIA BiH Executive Director

The workshop started with a detailed explanation of the required policy brief format for the individual research assignments, which the participants will work on during the second phase of the program with the support of assigned research mentors. After presenting several examples of conducted research from the previous years of implementation, professor Hasić worked with all participants individually on their suggestions for research topics, which they further developed in cooperation with their mentors.

>> Second Phase of the Program: Individual Research Assignments

The participants were assigned three research mentors: Amra Karčić, Mahir Sijamija and Daniel Lazarević. They worked with groups of five participants.

During the previous four years of the program, the 'policy brief' format has proven as a very successful for expressing participants' creativity, research skills and analytics. The format is continued to be used, with the students describing a democracy-related issue in their community or the country, analyzing three comparative examples of possible solutions from elsewhere, and elaborating how said solutions could be implemented in order to resolve the analyzed issue. Some of this year's topics are related to women in politics, sexual education in schools, reconciliation through culture, disinformation and fake news conspiracy, youth unemployment, entrepreneurship etc.

After a successful completion of the first program module, the participants were assigned research mentors who helped them with researching and developing the selected topics. The mentors provided hands-on support throughout the research process, and organized meetings with the participants before the final submission deadline. The students analyzed a variety of democracy and human rights-related topics, focusing on both the state and local levels. While conducting their research, the participants were also asked to send a request for access to public information to relevant institutions, and to include the information from the received reply in their policy brief as an additional illustration of the problem at hand.

The analyzed topics in the policy briefs are as follows:

Mentor: Mahir Sijamija

Aleksandra Đukić - "Regulation of Hate Speech in Federation of BiH"

Din Hodžić - "The Impact of Street Art on Human Rights Raising Awareness"

Lejla Dautbašić - "Affirmation of Female Athletes in BiH Diplomacy with a Focus on the Promotion of Human Rights"

Edin Zorić - "Visas for Digital Nomads in BiH"

Merjema Srna - "The Issue of Excessive Food Disposal in the Sarajevo Centar Municipality"

Mentor: Amra Karčić

Milica Čikić - "Introducing Measures to Reduce the Number of Drivers under the Influence of Alcohol in order to Increase Traffic Safety"

Aiša Avdić - "Gender Equality in the Political Life of BiH"

Faris Mrako - "Solving the Issue of Violence Against Women"

Hana Halilbegović - "Efficiency of Education and Support for Caretakers and Children in Children's Homes"

Emar Đonlić - "The Problem of Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Public Transport"

Mentor: Daniel Lazarević

Mateo Todosijević - "Conversion of Waste into Biofuels"

Harun Talić - "Misinformation and Fake News on the Internet"

Ševala Huzejrović - "Introduction of Obligatory Sex Education"
Tarik Čardaković - "Tackling the Issue of Youth Unemployment in BiH"
Kristina Gadže - "The Process of Reconciliation in a Post-conflict Society Through Art"

>> On-line lectures as an introduction into the EDVACAY's third module

During April 2021, we organized two online meetings with our participants which served as an introduction to the third module of the program and has allowed participants more time to be creative and think about their future projects.

EDVACAY Alumnus, Mahir Sijamija, facilitated the first online meeting with our participants on April 01, 2021. During the 2 hours long session all participants the results of the research they conducted throughout the second module with their assigned mentors. The session developed into a highly productive discussion, where participants had the opportunity not only to share their discoveries, but also to get feedback from the HIA staff, generating ideas that later became the basis for another one of the four civic campaigns to be implemented in the fourth program module.

The following online meeting and an introductory lecture into project management was facilitated by Veronika Kusyova (HIA volunteer and temp staff member) on April 16, 2021. She talked about project management, financial management of projects and the media promotion component civic campaigns. After the session, Veronika gave the participants an assignment to submit a one pager of one or two ideas for a civic campaign based on what they've learned and the issues they would like to tackle in their communities.

>> EDVACAY CIVIC CAMPAIGNS >>

After successfully completing the project and financial management training held in May, 20 – 23, 2021 in Neum, and developing proposals for four civic campaign ideas, this year's EDVACAY participants successfully implemented their respective group civic campaigns, from the beginning of June to mid-August 2021. The projects were very diverse in their nature, and included: creating a coloring book depicting birds characters which represent the three main ethnic groups of Bosnia and Herzegovina living together peacefully; launching an extensive social media campaign to gather a large number of positive and up-lifting stories happening in the community in times of the Covid-19 pandemic and publishing them online and in a form of a printed publication in order to reduce the level of isolation; honoring the essential workers who risked their lives in times of the pandemic in BiH through promotional artistic posters; and using video format to introduce the term 'eco-mainstreaming' into BiH society in order to raise awareness on the importance to include eco-perspective into every aspect of life and how changing small things can help in creating a more sustainable environment.

Group A: "[Break the Cage](#)" - Merjema Srna, Hana Halilbegović, Kristina Gadže, and Emar Đonlić

The team behind the project aimed at bringing the divided Bosnian society together in a fun and artistic way by creating a coloring book presenting three birds living together peacefully. The idea behind depicting three different species of birds is to represent the three main ethnic groups of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who live in a divided society and within the realms of their respective ethnic/religious group. The main goal for developing the coloring book is to show to young children how different ethnic/religious groups can still cohabit together peacefully and happily by using illustration. To create the coloring book, the team joined forces with HIA Senior Fellow Kerim Hodžić (2020 John Lewis Fellowship) who has put the team's ideas together and created the bird characters, drawing them in different situations and locations throughout BiH and depicting them as working together in unity.

After the coloring book was completed and printed, the team organized a public promotional event on a sunny Saturday afternoon (July 31) in the busiest recreation spot in Sarajevo, which gathered many young people and parents with small children, who have especially enjoyed their coloring time. Following the event, the team gathered once again and successfully promoted and distributed their coloring book in an elementary school in Sarajevo. Their goal after completing the project within this program cycle is to reach out and find additional support to get as many coloring books printed and distributed in schools, kindergartens and youth centers across BiH.

Group B: “Pozitivnije” - Aiša Avdić, Aleksandra Đukić, Milica Čikić, and Ševala Huzejrović

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the lives of billions of people around the entire world. Not just physically, but mentally as well. However, despite the general negative effects it had worldwide, the pandemic time also had some positive effects on random people's lives. “Pozitivnije” is a project led by young Bosnian women who share common goals - the promotion of interpersonal relations in crisis situations such as the pandemic, raising awareness of the importance of maintaining good communication and interpersonal relationships, giving the opportunity to people to tell their story to others and for it to reach a large number of people, reducing isolation through interactive online socializing, spreading positive energy and positive human stories, and ultimately overcoming differences through identification with other people.

The team gathered the stories using an extensive social media campaign in order to reach as many people as possible. The short stories and testimonies, received by their audience, were shaped into a printed Story Book, published on their [website](#) and promoted on a public event on August 06. The publication and the website contain human stories of friendships, love, new opportunities that presented themselves during the pandemic or coming out of toxic relationships. A large number of people shared that it was only during the pandemic that they realized the true values they had forgotten, and that they returned to activities they had neglected because of the hectic life we lived before the pandemic. The team shared to the audience on what they aimed to achieve with their publication which is to show that everyone experienced the same or similar feelings during the quarantine, but also that many important things happened to a lot of people, and finally that the pandemic may even have shown us the way forward.

Group C: “Ekotok” - Lejla Dautbašić, Tarik Čardaković, Faris Mrako, and Mateo Todosijević

“Ekotok” is a project developed and implemented by a group of young enthusiasts passionate about ecology. Through the concept of “eco-mainstreaming”, the group aimed raise awareness of how ecology is embedded into almost every aspect of everyday life and how making small changes can help in creating a cleaner and better environment. The Fellows channeled their idea into a short [video](#) which applied the concept of eco-mainstreaming in four professions. The film follows the daily work of hairdressers, waiters and delivery people, and shows how ordinary individuals can prevent further destruction and pollution of nature with their activities. Also, the film shows a great example of waste collection, disposal and recycling, which teams believes can help in achieving a healthier environment in BiH.

One of the growing points for everyone in the team, as they reported, was the challenge the team faced with while shooting the film. It related to how to shoot and present the problem of (in)adequate garbage disposal. That is when the team finally decided that it was best to contact the company that deals with the issue directly. The company "Alba Zenica d.o.o." recognized and supported their project and enthusiastically agreed to help them create content for the film and provided their personnel to shoot the scenes for the video. The video was premiered at the public event on August 18, which gathered a group of young people eager to talk about this topic. Afterwards, the video was extensively promoted on social media platforms and local media. Ekotok's final goal is to create action and push a major part of the BiH's professional society and its citizens into becoming more aware about the environment in which they are living and taking care of it through small everyday actions.

Group D: “Solidarivanje”* - Din Hodžić, Harun Talić, and Edin Zorić

* a coined term made from “solidarnost” (solidarity) and “darivanje” (giving)

Doctors and nurses, as well as many other professionals, have undoubtedly been the pillars in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemics. However, during the pandemic, there have also been other actors who have played a major role in keeping things ‘normal’ while also risking their own lives for the benefits of the general public. “Solidarivanje” is a project about honoring the essential workers who risked their lives in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic in BiH through artistic posters which were displayed in the busiest places in Sarajevo, Zenica, and several other cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By creating ten posters depicting individuals from different professions, such as bakers, tailors, dentists, pharmacists, super market workers etc., the team highlighted occupations and individuals that were exposed directly in the fight against the coronavirus, but who were not given much importance or recognition.

The team also aimed at promoting the involvement of young people in local communities in the fight against pandemic conditions and generally promoting solidarity, humanity and kindness to remind everyone that being kind to each other is crucial, especially being kind to people who risk their own lives to help and make others feel better. The posters were also exhibited at the promotional event on August 13, and were later distributed to other participants of the program at the closing ceremony to further spread the message across Bosnia and Herzegovina, amplifying the initial goals of the project by showing solidarity with other teams’ members.

>> PROMOTION OF CIVIC CAMPAIGNS IN THE MEDIA >>

The four civic campaigns were extensively promoted in the BiH media throughout the summer. All groups collaborated with assigned mentors for media promotion. All four civic campaigns were featured at top ranking online media in the country and in the region of the Western Balkans (e.g. Klix, VOA BiH, BH national TV and Radio, N1 CNN regional TV, etc.). The four campaigns have generated a total of 46 appearances in various media outlets, including the news portals and other websites, as well as appearances on television and radio stations.

>> THE CLOSING CEREMONY: DEBATE TOURNAMENT AND ‘GAME CHANGERS’ BOARD GAME PLAY SESSION >>

Humanity in Action BiH team organized a closing event of the program in Sarajevo on September 18, 2021. As a part of the final event, the fellows participated as speakers and judges in a final [debate tournament](#), on the topics related to COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, they debated whether sanctions should be introduced for unvaccinated persons. The participants were able to use the knowledge they acquired during the first program phase, not only about constructive dialogue, communication and debating skills, but also about the importance and role of human rights. The progress that fellows made in their debating skills since the start of the program in December 2020 was evident right from the beginning of the tournament which was traditionally facilitated by Ivana Kešić (CIVITAS BiH) who gave Fellows valuable feedback and appraised their progress.

After the debate tournament, as a part of the 2020/21 program cycle closing ceremony, HIA BiH team has brought together EDVACAY Fellows and [“Game Changers”](#)¹ project participants for a game play session during which the participants presented the three board games they created over the course of six months: [“The Ugly Truth”](#), [“The Vortex of Life”](#) and [“Tokens of Equality”](#) board games. The Fellows were divided into three playing teams and spent almost two hours playing, getting to know each other, learning and having fun.

At the closing ceremony, all fellows were awarded certificates of successful completion of the nine-month long program, with a description of all program components. They became members of the EDVACAY alumni network, committed to continue actively working on promoting democratic values and sharing what they have learned throughout the program with their peers.

>> 2021 HIA SARAJEVO FELLOWSHIP - ACTION PROJECTS >>

After the HIA Online Summer Fellowships were successfully wrapped up on June 23, our Bosnian Fellows, including two EDVACAY Alumni Elma Kodro and Minja Čulić (EDVACAY 2019-20), submitted three project proposals based on which they were awarded three NED grants to implement and promote their Action projects. All fellows were mentored by EDVACAY Alumni and HIA project coordinator Daniel Lazarević.

Vršnjačko nasilje kroz vrijeme - Hana Hodžić, Medina Mahmić, and Imane Bellaadem

“Vršnjačko nasilje kroz vrijeme” (Peer-to-peer Violence through Time) is a project developed by Hana Hodžić (2021 Amsterdam Fellowship), Medina Mahmić (2021 Amsterdam Fellowship) and Imane Bellaadem (2021 Copenhagen Fellowship). It focuses on raising awareness of parents, teachers, and students about the topic of intergenerational and peer violence and its effect on the victims and bullies. By using a timeline of events related to the topic, the project aimed to showcase to children around Bosnia and Herzegovina how violence is never the appropriate way of reacting or responding to another person.

The project addressed said topics through workshops with children held in Sarajevo and Bihać in cooperation with trained psychologists, a social media promotional campaign and an anonymous online survey which resulted in publishing a collection of peer-to-peer violence confessions in a form of a booklet. During the workshops in Sarajevo and Bihać, the team invited students, teachers, and parents and asked them to donate one object that reminded them of times when they experienced peer-to-peer violence.

Additionally, the goal was to encourage school management to address peer violence within schools, which was attempted through contacting a large number of primary and secondary schools and presenting the project to attempt to establish cooperation. However, the team reported that achieving this goal was their biggest challenge, mainly because none of the schools they contacted wanted to cooperate, and the team needed to use alternative methods to attract participants to apply for the workshops such as reaching out to personal contacts etc.

By using the *time capsule format*, at a final ceremony in Sarajevo, the team symbolically buried the received objects. The Fellows’ idea is to invite all the people who donated certain objects after 15 years, to come and be part of the object “excavation”.

365zaljudskaprava (365 for Human Rights) – Melina Kalem, Benjamin Nurkić, and Kanita Buljubašić

#365zaljudskaprava (365 for Human Rights) is a project initiative developed and implemented by Melina Kalem and Benjamin Nurkić (2021 Sarajevo Fellowship), and Kanita Buljubašić (2021 Copenhagen Fellowship). Through an interesting and innovative format, the Fellows’ goal was to remind everyone about their own human rights and how they tend to be at stake every day, especially in the times affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Their general idea was to create a design template that features quotes from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, interesting quotes related to human rights, pictures, or important information that will include the status of a certain group whose human rights are currently endangered in BiH. After creating the design, their aim was to attract companies in BiH whose products are popular on the Bosnian market and attempt to convince them to use their design in the form of a sticker on the packaging of the company’s products by sending them the video with a mock-up design of their product demonstrating the appearance with the applied sticker.

The team envisioned the final event to feature the companies which agreed to use the sticker on their products and who want to collaborate with the 365zaljudskaprava team. They encountered several declines by larger companies but managed to have several smaller companies which were happy to include their design on their products and packaging, The plan is to launch the product packages with the sticker for commercial use beginning of December 2021 to coincide with Human Rights month.

The team believes that with this initiative they will bring the fight for human rights to the heart and the eyes of the everyday buyers and raise awareness about the importance of equality and respect all over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Human Rights Reality – Minja Čulić, Vladica Radonja, and Elma Kodro

Human Rights Reality Show is an initiative developed and implemented by three 2021 Sarajevo Fellowship participants, Minja Čulić (EDVACAY 2019/20), Elma Kodro (EDVACAY 2019/20), and Vladica Radonja. The project gathers five young people coming from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina – HIA BiH Alumni Emir Zukić (EDVACAY 2018/19), Anes Hodžić (EDVACAY 2019/20), Nikola Kandić (EDVACAY 2019/20), Kristina Gadže (EDVACAY 2020/21) and Mehmed Muradbegović, giving them a safe space to discuss various topics related to human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina while being on [camera](#). Fellows selected as first round of discussion topics to be related to the ecology and environmental issues in BiH, as well as the LGBTQ+ rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, planning to cover other important topics in the future. By using this format, Fellows seek to actively involve young people in the process of lobbying in policy-making and to encourage them to express freely their opinions and attitudes towards the human rights issues and topics that are current in BiH.

>> NED ALUMNI CIVIC CAMPAIGNS >>

This year there are three additional Alumni civic campaigns which will be implemented by EDVACAY Alumni from the beginning of October until the end of November 2021 with a following media promotion by the end of the year.

De-isolation Hackathon - Hana Sarajlić and Vanna Ćurin

Hana and Vanna, who had previously implemented another civic campaign called “Just Another Day” in 2020, decided to do a follow-up project. Armed with last year's knowledge they acquired on negative effects of social isolation on members of marginalized social groups, such as people with mental disorders, LGBTQI+ people, and people with development disabilities, the team decided to now have a broader social group as a target group of their project - not only the people who do not fit into the imposed societal norms of ‘normalcy’ because of their diagnosis or lifestyle, but also all those who experienced the feeling of isolation, loneliness, and insufficient support as a result of the pandemic.

The main idea is to bring together all the people online for a 5-6 hours-long Zoom workshop, who have trapped feelings of depression, anxiety, discomfort, or any other negative emotion related to the pandemic and allow them to express themselves creatively and shape it into a text, song, painting, photograph, or any other form of creation. The final products will be published and promoted through the project website and social and traditional media which will allow project's ideas to reach a wider audience and hopefully bring people closer to each other in the times of crisis. Unlike their last project in which the pandemic was used as a metaphor for a wider social problem, in this project the focus is precisely on the negative consequences of the physical, and thus mostly the social isolation that is encouraged by the pandemic.

Project “Cat’s Eyes” - Lamija Čelik

Bosnia and Herzegovina has seen a drastic increase in the number of migrants entering the country in the past few years. Competent institutions face daily challenges in terms of human and financial resources. One of the arising issues on migrants’ route through the country is their low visibility on the road during the night when they are actively on the move. Drivers’ recklessness, high speeds and poor lighting can cause accidents and endanger human life. The most vulnerable group on the road are the pedestrians, as they are at a greater risk than the drivers. The problem of pedestrian visibility in road traffic is an occurring issue in the autumn and winter time of year when, due to smog, fog or snow, visibility on the roads is often reduced.

EDVACAY Alumna Lamija Čelik (2019/20) had the idea to make hats, caps, scarves and pendants with the key component of adding cat's eyes (luminous plastic used for better perception and visibility in traffic) or reflective strips that glow in the dark. With winter and colder weather coming, Lamija believes that this project would bring benefits such as protecting the user from the cold, but also helping them be better spotted on the road. Lamija will join forces with a local association of girls and women who will be engaged in knitting hats / scarves / pendants, which will also serve as a promotion and support of their work. This project has the potential for growth and evolve in a sense that the focus groups do not have to be exclusively migrants and migrant children, but also other pedestrians in traffic, such as first-graders, whose schools are located near busy roads.

Flowering Marathon - Lejla Mašić

In recent years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been facing exceptionally high levels of pollution, increased deforestation and very polluted air. To put it simply, BiH is facing a large number of environmental issues, which are mostly neglected due to ignorance, misunderstanding or simply a lack of interest. The Brčko District has also been facing these issues. And as if all the mentioned challenges are not enough, the Coronavirus pandemic has made it even more difficult, so in the Brčko District the issue of polluted air and deforestation are absolutely neglected. The most devastating fact is that the educational system in the District pays little or no attention to raising awareness of environmental issues in students.

This eco-friendly community-building project initiative was developed by EDVACAY Alumna Lejla Mašić (2019/20). Lejla has been actively involved in her community for several years now and has so far initiated more than a few actions of planting trees in this town and has seen the benefits that these actions bring. Her idea behind this project initiative is to gather a group of people of all ages, from children to older citizens of Brčko, for a one-day ‘Flowering Marathon’, during which a large amount of flower seeds will be dispersed around the Brčko city area by the participants, especially focusing on areas which seem neglected. Apart from the flower seeds, which will mostly be scattered by the younger participants of the ‘marathon’, older participants will plant several tree seedlings and symbolically give their solemn pledge to the public that they will continue planting trees and flowers in the future and take great care of their environment. This project will result in increasing the Brčko citizens’ awareness about their existing environment and the care that it requires while bringing the community together.

EDVACAY Alumni Podcast – by Daniel Lazarević and Mahir Sijamija

This initiative is focused on showcasing the work and successes of five participants from the previous nine generations of the EDVACAY program through a trending format of video podcast. Through five episodes of podcasts, EDVACAY Alumni Daniel Lazarević (2014/15) and Mahir Sijamija (2013/14) want to show to the wider audience how some of the participants benefitted from this program, how they used it in their formal and non-formal education, and how they led by their example and encouraged others to be socially responsible and active in their local community.

By making these podcast episodes and talking to some of the most successful participants, Daniel

and Mahir believe they can achieve their project's goals which are additional promotion of the EDVACAY program and encouraging the youth in BiH to apply to the new programming cycle, and to raise awareness about human rights and what it means to be an active citizen by show casing examples of implemented projects from previous years. All recorded episodes in video format will be broadcasted through the Humanity in Action BiH social networks and web platforms which will serve as an additional promotion of the program, its participants, and will enable potential new applicants to see what impact the program has on youth activism in BiH.