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The Western Balkans Fund was present at events prearranged in this framework, concretely at the Western Balkans (WB) Civil Society and Think-Tanks Forums, as integral part of Berlin Process agenda. WBF’s presence for the first time in the Berlin Process activities, was a special opportunity to present activities of the Fund, to get first-hand information about the WB Civil Society achievements, their specific needs and requirements, for better supporting regional activities aiming enhancing Regional Cooperation and people-to people contacts.

In the process of implementing WBF Projects of the Second Call

Together for impact

Academy of European Integration and Negotiations (AIEN), in partnership with Institute for Development Policy – INDEP and MSJA- Dr Martin Schneider-Jacoby Association, supported by Western Balkans Fund have the pleasure to launch the Competition “Youth Awareness on pressing climate change and sustainability issues.

Western Balkans Women Peace Talks

On June 15, one of the WBF’s project from the Second Call, “Western Balkans Women Peace Talks” launched its first panel in the National Gallery in Prishtina.

Youth Awareness on pressing climate change and sustainability issues

Three days Boot Camp was launched on June 26th in Skopje. The Boot Camp has gathered 60 participants out of which 50 of them represent young social innovators – prospective social entrepreneurs from Croatia and the Western Balkans’ (Sarajevo, Pristina, Skopje and Belgrade).
WBF at the Berlin Process activities. Poznan 3-5 of July 2019

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WBF’s presence for the first time in the Berlin Process activities, was a special opportunity to present activities of the Fund, to get first-hand information about the WB Civil Society achievements, their specific needs and requirements, for better supporting regional activities aiming enhancing Regional Cooperation and people-to-people contacts. In this context and to better present our Fund, WBF had its own exhibition boot in the fair that presented all grant organizations, chambers of commerce etc. Participants had a chance to learn from close about our mission, results and impact that we achieved through our work in the region. We were particularly honored to have the visit of H. E. Minister Behgjet Pacolli, the Chair in office of WBF, Mr. Colin Wolfe, Head of Regional Cooperation and Programs Unit at DG NEAR, European Commission.

WBF contributed to the panel "Our Region- Our Culture", a panel that was introduced for the first time in the Berlin Process. WBF confirmed the continuation of the support for regional initiatives and together with other panelists agreed to enhance the support toward cultural initiatives in Western Balkans, Ms. Beqiri, WBF Program Manager, stated that: “regional bodies and institutions in Western Balkans should unify their approach toward regional cultural cooperation, in order to support our communities in their transformation efforts in areas of mutual interest, such as culture and to make the best use of intercultural dialogue as an important tool for reconciliation processes”.

Civil Society Forum represents one of four priorities of the Polish Presidency in the Berlin Process, alongside security, connectivity and economy, and it was focused on “interactions”. Therefore, within the Western Balkans Summit Poznan 2019, numerous experts and activists were gathered to discuss, from a wider perspective, the current situation of the region, giving also their recommendations for the future.
In the process of implementing WBF Projects of the Second Call

In this section, we bring to you some news, activities and photos related to the main project activities

Together for impact

3 days Boot Camp has been launched on June 26th in Skopje. The Boot Camp has gathered 60 participants out of which 50 of them represent young social innovators – prospective social entrepreneurs from Croatia and the Western Balkans’ (Sarajevo, Pristina, Skopje and Belgrade).

The Boot Camp was opened by welcoming words of the WBF’s Senior Council Official member from North Macedonia, Mr. Draganco Apostolovski, and the WBF Executive Director, Mr. Gjergj Murra, including the Social Impact Award Managing Director, Mr. Jakob Detering, and the WBF’s project partners representing organizations of “Razlivaliste” from Serbia and SFERA-NOVA from North Macedonia.

In principal, regional cooperation and networking were drawn while addressing as focal words when it comes to the development of Western Balkans region, especially in regard to the support and development of youth, and social entrepreneurship in particular.

Western Balkans Women Peace Talks

On June 15, one of the WBF’s project from the Second Call, “Western Balkans Women Peace Talks” launched its first panel in the National Gallery in Prishtina. The WBF Project coordinator, Ms. Dijana Spalevic, attended the panel which have gathered over 30 women to address the question of “How different generations of activists can work and collaborate in order to maintain a more united stance in the feminist struggle from women’s empowerment in their respective communities, but the region as well?”.

The following activity of the project will take place at the “PitchWise” festival in Sarajevo, which will be organized by the Foundation “Cure” from Sarajevo, in direct partnership with the Foundation “Jelena Santic” from Belgrade and Center for Research and Gender Policy from Prishtina.
European integration of the Western Balkans: making a realistic perspective out of a shifting target

The Albanian Institute for International Studies the lead organization from Tirana in partnership with two other organizations, European Policy Institute, Skopje and European Movement Serbia, organized on June 17th in Skopje the kick off the the project: “European integration of the Western Balkans: making a realistic perspective out of a shifting target”.

This event is special to WBF as it marks the start of the implementation phase of the 24 awarded projects during the WBF Second Call. The goal of the project is to both nourish a positive debate about integration and most importantly to advocate jointly as #WBregion in the light of the recent challenges.

Roman heritage in the Balkans

On 20th of June 2019, in Sarajevo, the WBF project “Roman heritage in the Balkans”, was launched. The lead applicant is Digi.ba from Sarajevo with their partners from Belgrade, Podgorica and Tirana.

This Project aims to increase awareness and knowledge about the Roman heritage presence in the Western Balkans.

Participants had an opportunity to present the project implementation plan, to highlight their expectations about the project and to share their experiences about the previous projects that they had implemented.

Let’s make Western Balkans better

Association of Young Ecologist of Nikšić, welcomed participants from Sarajevo, Prijepolje and Nikšić, who had the opportunity to learn more about greeter service, the difference between the tour guides and greeters, how to become a member of Global Greeter Network as well as to have hands on field experience. Project “Let’s make Western Balkans better” implemented by Association of Young Ecologist of Nikšić, Wake up-Citizens’ Association from Sarajevo and Mountain Club “Kamena Gora” aims to strengthen the network of volunteers from Nikšić, Prijepolje and Sarajevo by forming the so-called Greeter Service, which would increase visibility and put on the tourist maps forgotten rural areas.
Essay Competition “Youth Awareness on pressing climate change and sustainability issues”

Academy of European Integration and Negotiations (AIEN), in partnership with Institute for Development Policy – INDEP and MSJA- Dr Martin Schneider-Jacoby Association, supported by Western Balkans Fund have the pleasure to launch the Competition “Youth Awareness on pressing climate change and sustainability issues”. We invite young people (15-29 years old) from Tirana, Pristina and Podgorica to participate by submitting one of the following application materials:

1. Essay/Article (max 1000 words) 2. Photo (including a short description or citation) 3. Videos (max 1 minutes) 4. Meme

All the materials MUST be original creations of the participants on the contest and no other content such as internet pictures, copied text from other articles etc. will be allowed. All the submissions MUST be in English and can also include a translation in native language. The submitted material will have to present an acute and actual problem that is faced in their respective regions/cities. Participants are encouraged to present environmental/climate issues that include cross border territories like issues of Lake Shkodra, Sharr Mountains, etc. Send your applications at info@aien.al, until 25 July 2019

First price 300 EUR    Second price 200 EUR    Third price 100 EUR

The main THEMES of the submissions can be/but are not limited to the following:

1. Effects of climate change in your city
   1.1. Hotter summers and colder winters as a result of climate change and the problems they are causing to the normal way of living
       a) Heating homes or cooling homes in more extreme temperature spike stations being affected by extreme weather
   1.2. How climate change has affected nature and animals
       a) Trees blossoming at strange timing
       b) Animals migration
       c) Heavy rainfall causing floods and erosion.
       d) How farmers are dealing with these changes and how does it affect crops and livestock
   1.3. Emigration issues as a result of climate change
       a) economic revenues from farming and worse infrastructure leads to emigration
   1.4. What is the government doing in regards to climate change mitigation and adaptation
       a) Energy management, (use of fossil fuels for energy, coal, oil etc.)
       b) Expansion of Renewable Energy
       c) Energy Efficiency

2. How Climate Change impacts the Western Balkan region and cross border issues
On June 17, in Tirana was conducted the first kick off meeting of WBF 2nd Call Project, “Regional Export Promotion”. The main goal of the project is to increase export promotion and competition in terms of mutual cooperation between Pristina, Tirana and Skopje.

This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Come to Amfi/Dodji na Amfi Festival
Another WBF powered regional project “Come to Amfi” (Dodji na Amfi) festival will take place from July 18 through July 20, 2019.

This is the 8th time in a row that such festival is taking place. This speaks a lot that the festival is evolving from year to year – it started as local, and is evolving from an inter-regional into the international kind of festival.

Writing as a Tool for Intercultural Dialogue
The “Write the Change” workshop is a collaborative regional project involving four organizations (Punkt Montenegro as a lead applicant, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Kosovo*, Templum publishing, North Macedonia, Klaster Art, Serbia), and is supported by the Western Balkans Fund.

Would you like to share your work with other writers from the Western Balkans?
You can find more information related to the workshop here: shorturl.at/fjy29

Regional Export Promotion
On June 17, in Tirana was conducted the first kick off meeting of WBF 2nd Call Project, “Regional Export Promotion”. The main goal of the project is to increase export promotion and competition in terms of mutual cooperation between Pristina, Tirana and Skopje.

I love Balkan
NGO Lady organized the first kick off meeting in Prishtina. This meeting gathered all six project partners powered by Western Balkans Fund aiming to reinforce retrospective and impressions with a unanimous motto – I love Balkan!
EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Meeting with the MFA Delegation from Pristina

On June 7th, a delegation from MFA Pristina headed by Mr. Valdet Sadiku, representing WBF Chairmanship in Office, paid a visit to the WBF Secretariat premises. The meeting was a good opportunity to discuss on current activities of the Fund and its further development, aiming at future strategic planning as well. During the meeting Mr Sadiku underlined the good job done by the Secretariat and reiterated the Chairmanship commitment to continue promoting WBF activities. While Fund’s Executive Director Mr. Gjergj Murra, focused on WBF future activities, with a view of better involving WBF stakeholders, especially in the context of Strategic and Organizational Development of the Fund.

Infosession with students from Luarasi University

A group of undergraduate students and professors from Luarasi University in Tirana paid a visit today to the Western Balkans Fund premises. This was a good opportunity to meet with the Fund’s Secretariat staff and get informed by them about the Fund’s mission, programs and activities.

Education and Youth are two key areas were WBF activities are focused, so during the meeting the students got answers to their questions, equipping them with the right knowledge and guidelines to become potential applicants on the next WBF Call for Projects.

Balkanweb, the Albanian web portal, published an article related to the event: https://bit.ly/2S1Y8aR

WBF Strategic and Organizational Development

Within the framework of WBF Strategic and Organizational Development for better shaping its actions and structures in the future, WBF had a four-day intensive workshop. We are grateful to our expert for guiding us and to Peace Nexus for the opportunity provided.
Meeting with professionals from Tirana based organizations

On June 28 the WBF staff were happy to host professionals from Tirana based organizations (Balkan Youth Councils, Albanian Society Development, ADRA Albania, Albanian National Youth Network, and UN Youth Association Albania), and learn about their mission and youth development activities in Tirana and Albania and their plans on youth related activities expansion within the WB6 region as well.

The WBF continues to demonstrate openness to meet with potential partners and a will to assess the need and advise on finding ways for enabling people-to-people links and cooperation, which contribute to further development of our region.

For more information related to this Newsletter, please contact us: info@westernbalkansfund.org