IMPLEMENTATION OF WBF PROJECTS

One of the main challenges of WBF caused by COVID-19 pandemic is to mark the progress on the implementation of WBF funded projects always aiming for desired impact. On page 4-6 you can learn more about implementation phase of our funded projects.

WBF COUNCIL OF SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

On December 23rd, the WBF 2020 Podgorica Chairmanship-in-Office successfully conducted the WBF Council of Senior Officials Meeting!

WBF PHOTO CONTEST “WESTERN BALKANS THROUGH MY EYES”

Few weeks ago WBF launched a Photo Contest named: “Western Balkans through my eyes”, and we were positively surprised by the response, resulting in: 85 participants and more than 400 photos received!

WBF Strategic Development Plan 2020-2024

We are happy to share with you the “Western Balkans Fund Strategic Development Plan 2020-2024”, result of an extensive process of consultation with founders, partners, grantees, peers, and a wide range of external stakeholders from/throughout the Western Balkans and beyond.

The Strategy development process has allowed us to discuss our ambitions and to consult with our stakeholders and with our Council of Senior Officials. It has enabled us to take a step back and look at our region critically to see how we can best support its peaceful development. We hope that every reader will realize the unique positioning and symbolic value of WBF, as well as its potential to create and facilitate tangible impact in bringing the societies of the Western Balkans closer together, in a cooperative and prosperous European region that is at peace with itself.

You can view the full document on the following link: http://westernbalkansfund.org/.../WBF-Strategic...
MESSAGE FROM DR. GJERGJ MURRA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WESTERN BALKANS FUND

Dear Partners, Colleagues and Friends of WBF,

The end of a year is a good time for reflecting on achievements, and to see what still needs to be accomplished!

For us at WBF, as for most of you, 2020 was a year of un-precedent challenges created by the COVID 19 pandemic. Despite the pandemic challenges, our Secretariat was in regular touch with the Council of Senior Officials and with the Chairmanship-in-Office, aiming to ensure continuity regarding governance and decision-making and share insights regarding challenges experienced by civil society. Through this process, the WBF Conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs endorsed the List of 24 Winning Projects within the 3rd Call for Proposals.

WBF successfully closed the projects of the Second Call and kept regular communication with all the grantees, discussing for alternative solutions for each project, according to new measures and rules that entail physical meetings, in some cases adopting necessary adjustment and identifying tailor-made solutions. Day by day, we learned and got more prepared in actively communicating between ourselves and with all the partners. Over the course of this year, the Fund successfully organized the Western Balkans Civil Society Summit in Tirana and has tried to keep the visibility high by maintaining an active communication with its audience through its medias and official accounts, through different PR activities.

The New Year, dear friends, it’s a chance to welcome a fresh start to reinvigorate our enthusiasm for chasing goals and dreams!

Cheers to health, happiness, and prosperity in 2021!
WBF COUNCIL OF SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

On December 23rd, the WBF Council of Senior Officials met under the Montenegro Chairmanship!

In the meeting it was discussed and taken stock of the achievements of the Initiative during the period October – December 2020. The Council took the necessary decisions, paving the way to further activities of the Secretariat in the upcoming year.

The CSO members had the opportunity to learn more in details about the implementation flow of 24 projects within the framework of the WBF 3rd Call for Proposals. Following the trend of reporting on Call, the Secretariat introduced the CSOs about information related to WBF’s Budget, representation and networking, public relations and fundraising.

The CSO meeting was another positive message of the good cooperation spirit between WBF Contracting Parties and of their willingness to continue supporting WBF. In 2021 the Republic of North Macedonia will take over the Western Balkans Fund Chairmanship-in-Office.

Farewell meeting with the Polish Ambassador in Tirana

The Ambassador of Poland to Albania, H.E. Mr. Karol Bachura, a reliable supporter of our Fund, will terminate soon his mission in Tirana!

Grateful for his continues encouragement to the WBF mission and for sharing valuable lessons from V4 Group experience, regarding the importance of regional cooperation, as the way forward towards good neighborly relations!

WBF Executive Director attended the launching of the THINK BALKANS

On December 11th, the WBF Executive Director attended the launching of the International Visegrad Fund supported project ‘Cooperation Instrument for the Western Balkans Think Tanks – THINK BALKANS’. One of the many objectives of this project is strengthening the cooperation of V4 and WB think tanks/analytical institutions.
Western Balkans in comparative perspectives – European Social Survey

WBF was part of the International online conference Western Balkans in comparative perspectives – European Social Survey.

This event brought together Universities around the WB and beyond and Think Tanks to promote the opportunity for both academic researchers and policy makers to use European Social Survey data and other longitudinal comparative data collection studies also take another step and bring together researchers and policy makers in the region to present and discuss research findings based on data of the European Social Survey and other comparative data collections.

WBF Capacity Development Workshop

From 8 to 10 December 2020, WBF was fully involved in the Capacity Development Workshop, supported by our Peace Nexus partners.

Through the support of external experts, the Programme focused on ensuring that the WBF Staff is offered theoretical and practical concepts of analysis of the current regional context, reconciliation and transitional justice, intercultural dialogue and effectively supporting CSOs.

Meeting with International Visegrad Fund

On December 21st, WBF Executive Director, Dr. Gjergj Murra, had a fruitful meeting with International Visegrad Fund Executive Director, Ambassador Edit Szilágyiné Bátorfi, and Deputy Executive Director, Mrs. Marianna Neupauerová.

Discussions focused on finding best modalities for implementing cooperation framework and intensifying the partnership between the two Funds!
Regional conference on intercultural dialogue and exchange of learning and experiences gained out of the Balkaravana 2020 – four bike tours realized in the part of the WB6 Region, was conducted on November 24th with 20 young Balkaravana 2020 participants, and in direct support of the five partners of the project “From sustainable mobility to sustainable peace”. Moreover, the conference served for the Youtube premiere of four videos made as a retrospective of each of the Balkaravana2020 bike tours realized.

In the link below you may watch the video realized by our grantee Streets for cyclists, and partnering organizations Center for environmental protection, Bajkultura, Biciklo.me and GO2.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?fbclid=IwAR1kzr9agYUexKSGcGUgOkaaUXdJpx_fi_Zy8EysjaCYAMz01gNPX4Ge9ws&v=88k7t2iwOe4&feature=youtu.be

In the framework of the WBF funded project “Partnership for circular economy – sustainable SMEs growth and regional development”, the “Circular Economy Webinar - through product redesign to minimize waste and increase profits” was successfully concluded.

The webinar focused on how to change the approach towards increasing environmental awareness, as well as on the opportunities offered for circular economy such as creating new jobs and generate savings on natural resources and energy in production.
On December 9th, the WBF Executive Director, Dr. Gjergj Murra, delivered opening remarks at the International Scientific Conference “Political Clientelism in the Western Balkans”.

The 3-days conference was organized by the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research - Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (ISPJR-UKIM), the Faculty of Philosophy - University of Belgrade, and the Faculty of Social Sciences - University of Tirana, in the framework of the WBF funded project “Western Balkans Group on Political Clientelism”.

Regional Green Youth Charter (RGYC) initiative was launched with 16 students from the WB6 region who will be actively involved in learning on the benefits of fair transition to the renewable energy production and advocate for a more ambitious agenda and its actions implementation related to the reduction of Green Houses emissions towards policy makers and relevant actors.

Pre-training orientation session was held by partners and experts, and it provided students with an in-depth information on the topic, and importantly on the actions planned to realize in the very beginning of 2021. This project is realized by the European Movement in Serbia, in direct partnership with the Center for Ecology and Energy from Tuzla, Democracy for Development from Prishtina and ALPHA Center from Niksic.

More info on the link below: http://www.emins.org/.../students-gather-for-clean-air.../
On the second week of December, the TullanoiseLAB – Youth skills development through New Media" gathered a group young regional musicians in Tirana!

This WBF supported Project is being successfully implemented by Tulla - Culture Center in partnership with ANIBAR and Kontrapunkt.

WBF is happy to share another great opportunity for musicians and composers from Western Balkans Region!

Talented musicians and composers are invited to participate in an open call and to gain a chance for their work to be performed by Regional Jazz Orchestra.

More info on eligibility criteria and application can be found on the following link: http://www.jazzartassociation.org/.../balkan-youth-jazz.../

Few weeks ago WBF launched a Photo Contest named: “Western Balkans through my eyes”. We are amazed with how talented you are, and yet positively surprised by your response, resulting in: 85 participants and more than 400 photos received! Selecting the winning photos, to illustrate 2021 official WBF Calendar, was not an easy task for the WBF Secretariat!

Commending the winners, we want to Thank You all, for your time and for being part of one of WBF activities! We have received 400 photos representing sites, people, customs, heritage of our beautiful region, and yet representing the artistic value of how our region is perceived and presented from your perspective. And we are thankful to you all, and proud on the fact how young people of the Balkans are talented, creative and yet inspired in showcasing their communities and the region accompanied with elements that represents our similarities but embraces differences as well.

As a humble sign of our gratitude towards your efforts and dedication, in the video below we are pleased to present an overview of photos received. Enjoy!

https://www.facebook.com/WesternBalkansFund/videos/44791292620566
Thank You!

11K

Followers

Our Facebook community has reached 11,000 followers! Thank You!!

It is at crucial importance to have you among us sharing same vision in making our region better!

WBF Newsletter is prepared with the financial support of International Visegrad Fund

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- https://www.instagram.com/westernbalkansfund/
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- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLuEaTSASEoaUu4ez5DlVow

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