

New Capacity building programme for strengthening capacities and competences of CSOs in the Environment sector held in Zrenjanin

Second year of implementation of the program "KnowHow2Act, brought new Capacity building programme for strengthening capacities and competences of CSOs. The programme was held in Zrenjanin in the period from 2.-5. December 2013. And it was led by the message "We have to connect and to act together".

Representatives of numerous civil society organisations that are involved into the issues of environmental protection, participated on this 4 day long trainings, lectures and consultations had the opportunity to meet the challenges, opportunities and possibilities in the field of environment. Together with the experts in specific fields, participants gained new knowledge, skills and advise of the experts in order to achieve goals they had set in front of their organisations.

On the first day of the training, focus was on interested public, on the methods how to increase their activism and significant participation in the field of policy development. From the beginning and the lecture held by Darinka Radojevic, representative of Center for Advanced Economic Studies, main message of the program was formulated. Networking, creating partnerships and communication in all phases of development of strategic plan regarding environment were emphasized many times as main principles by which the members of OCDs have to be led by in order to make a significant change. Implementation of policies is also conditioned by the quality of cooperation among interested public. In order to put the environmental policies into the context of EU integration process, Vladimir Medjak from the European Integration Office introduced the participants with the negotiations of full membership of the Republic of Serbia in the field of environment. Talking about the fact that EU negotiations are in fact adjusting to the standards of EU in all fields, he emphasized the importance of the core of adjusting that implies essential adjusting and not only transcription of directives.

On the second day focus was on law, legislative and the opportunities that people have at disposal in the process of protecting environment. With the assistance of lawyers Katarina Golubovic (YUCOM) and Sreten Djordjevic they learned about proper ways of submitting complaints, about form of documents and the most effective means of fighting for their rights. According to Mirko Popovic from Belgrade Open School, it is impossible to bring important decisions away from the subjects that are directly involved, without active public it is illogical to expect that fulfilling rights and freedoms will occur by itself. He also suggested that along with chasing flaws made by the representatives of self-government and authorities, it is extremely important to offer solutions in order to strengthen their argumentation and fight for their goals.

In order to strengthen gained knowledge by practice, on third and fourth day focus was mostly on practical exercises. Through the activities of writing policy papers, participants actively took part, practiced new skills and dealt with structuring work that will sure come in handy in their organizations after training. Reactions after first practical sessions were positive which complied with initial request which frequently encouraged participants to increase their level of activism. Questions regarding to

formulation, presenting and making comprehensible material were tackled with through practical cases. Innovation in approaching to public in order to gain support is highly recommendable. Networking, good suggestions and communication empowered among the participants promise important cooperation in the future also.

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