

Revival of the Local Art Scene



Country / region or city(ies):
**Bosnia and Herzegovina:
Banja Luka**

Name of the Cooperation Project:
**Revival of the Local Art
Scene**

Partner organization:
**Association of Artists Protok,
Banja Luka**

Coaching/monitoring partner:
**Dunja Blažević and Amra
Bakšić-Čamo**

Duration of the project:
**January 2008 - December
2010**

Protok, an association of young artists in Banja Luka, aims to revitalize the local art scene and to link it to the regional and international cultural scene. This is done through education, exhibitions, and providing organizational support to young artists in realization of their creative ideas. Also, the project will assist Protok in strengthening into a supportive platform for education and exchange of experience about new technologies.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is going through two processes simultaneously – postwar reconstruction (both physical and social) and transition process. In the past 11 years, most efforts were put on achievement of political stability and the country's economical development. However, the cultural development as a part of a process building of civil society has been neglected.

Banja Luka, the capital of Republika Srpska and second biggest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is experiencing discontinuity with cultural policy implemented in socialism, and the lack of theoretical and material base to support new cultural initiatives. The cultural scene in Banja Luka is divided on old establishment and new alternative NGOS. No dialogue between new and >



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old was going on for years. The gap was deep and wide. However, events promoting contemporary art have attracted the attention of numerous visitors, proving that Banja Luka already has an audience interested in this kind of art.

Protok is an artistic NGO founded in Banja Luka in 2005 with the aim of establishing a new and lively art scene which acts complementary and alternatively in relation the existing institutions on local level. The association of young artists and art theoreticians has already carried out several contemporary art projects, which have attracted a considerable public attention, like the "Continental Breakfast" realized in Cooperation with Museum Ljubljana (Slovenia) and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Banja Luka.

The main goal of the cooperation project is to stimulate the cultural life in the city and the region and to open spaces and create platforms for young artists to develop their potential through the introduction of modern technologies to the local scene and interactive educational methodologies. Every year, a specific topic is defined, around which different activities – like lectures, workshops, public events and exhibitions are organized. For 2008 the topic chosen is "Contemporary art and transition – art for social change".

Protok is also ensuring organizational and technical support to artistic projects in the field of contemporary art and new media identified by a public tender.

Another important element of the project is the institutional and capacity building of the association Protok itself. The members of Protok are participating in specific trainings and will develop their potentials in project management, Public Relations, financial planning, fundraising and general development of the organization.

In the process of the realization of the project, the Protok association will be coached by Dunja Blažević and Amra Bakšić-Čamo, two experienced collaborators of the Sarajevo Center of Contemporary Art and ProBa, an associated enterprise for new media, respectively.

The Swiss Cultural Programme in the Western Balkans is a joint initiative of the Arts Council of Switzerland PRO HELVETIA and of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC. The SCP encompasses Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo and the Ukraine.

It supports local partners, which emphasize the variety, independence and performance of cultural life. The SCP cooperation projects focus on the capacity building and institutional development processes of cultural organizations with a regional orientation. ■