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Title: **ENTERPRISES, SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS, SOCIAL COHESION AND PEACE - IMPROVING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES**

Round Table Topic: **Social Cohesion in Business: Improving Corporate Social Responsibility Practices (SKUP)**

Place and date: **Tešanj, 26th May 2022**

Organizers: **USAID's PRO-Future project and the Municipality of Tešanj**



In cooperation with USAID's PRO-Future project and the Municipality of Tešanj, a panel discussion, "*Social Cohesion in Business: Improving Corporate Social Responsibility Practices (SKUP)*", was held in Tešanj on May 26, 2022, bringing together representatives of the public, private and civil sectors from seven B&H municipalities and cities. The panel discussion aimed to exchange practices of responsible action of public administration, business entities and the non-governmental sector in local communities and further promote such efforts to increase the general well-being of the people and citizens.

The panel discussion brought together representatives of municipalities, companies, development agencies, business associations and NGOs from Tešanj, Teslić, Dobož, Usora, Dobož Jug, Maglaj and Žepče. They discussed ideas on how the economy contributes to building peace in the society and how a stable society influences the economy.

"There is no real and profound development without successful cooperation between the private and public sectors. We motivate, we drive, we inspire, we encourage each other! Today we are here to show how things can and should be done in the future", said the mayor of Tešanj, Suad Huskić, adding that today, more than ever, it is necessary to use our resources in people.

Peter Cronin, Director of USAID's Democracy Office, also addressed the audience, stating that positive practices indicate that business knows no borders and political divisions and they can be the initiators of significant social changes. "Events like this should be an inspiration across the country because today's panel discussion goes beyond business - social cohesion is our future. We can't succeed alone - we can only move forward together."

The essential message of assistant professor Goran Balotić, from the Faculty of Economics in Pale, University of East Sarajevo, referred to the demystification of the opinion that socially responsible behaviour is only an unnecessary expense for companies. Quite the contrary, every company has transparent economic interests to be an exemplary member of society and dedicate part of its resources to the betterment of various interest groups. This process should be observed as a long-term investment in strengthening the company's image and reputation, which has positive economic repercussions. "This topic is important, useful, and valuable, but above all, relevant in these moments when the need for cooperation, support, partnership, and mutual solidarity is on the highest level," professor Balotić said.

Anto Domazet, a professor at the Faculty of Economics in Sarajevo, pointed out that the ideas of connecting different social spheres are crucial because the government alone cannot meet people's needs, and other actors, such as businesses, should cover this gap. He explained that the business sector cares about the people's living standards because the better the life in the community, the better the conditions for business. "That is why businesses are interested in supporting various socially useful activities and thus contribute to social cohesion and a better living standard of citizens," Domazet said, emphasizing that peace is also a social responsibility dimension. "Innovative production can only be created in peace, only in peace can there be a stable demand for certain products, only in peace can you want to have a good laptop, to have the right software, to have a lovely apartment, a good car, and good opportunities for having fun."

Branka Janko, director of the Žepče Development Agency, Zorica Davidović, president of the Association *Vision* from Dobož, Semir Kantić, president of the Association of businessmen "Business Centre" Jelah-Tešanj, and Senad Šantić, a Mostar entrepreneur who returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina from Sweden, and runs the successful IT firm *ZendeV*, also spoke at the panel.

USAID's PRO-Future peace-building project is implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and operates in more than 75 local communities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through many years of work, the project has recognized the private sector's potential in peace-building processes and the need to discuss this issue at the level of local communities.

The PRO-Future project builds its strategy on positive peace, a concept established by Norwegian peace theorist Johan Galtung. Unlike negative peace, which is defined as the absence of war and violence without including society's tendencies towards stability and harmony, positive peace is defined as lasting peace based on sustainable investments in economic development and institutions, including social attitudes that promote peace. Positive peace strengthens society's resilience to respond to problems and challenges without violence or armed conflict. The PRO-Future project strives for positive peace by reinforcing all three spheres of social cohesion: socio-cultural, economic and political. Precisely because of the relationship between peace, social cohesion and economy, Majda Behrem-Stojanov, project director, in the introduction to the panel discussion, drew attention to the fact that "although at first glance people do not connect these concepts - peacebuilding and improving the business environment complement each other."

In strengthening social cohesion, the PRO-Future Project starts from the premise that economic actors should be intensely and co-ordinately involved in the development of the local community, primarily supporting the strengthening of social cohesion, strengthening social capital and solidarity within the local and surrounding communities. Investments in the local community should be planned and coordinated with other actors (governmental and non-governmental sector, educational and religious institutions) simply because it is in the interest of the companies' development. Peace events, reconciliation activities and solidarity should be the focus of every business entity, as capital, market, and profit do not acknowledge borders or political divisions. Even companies develop faster and are more competitive in the market if they employ tolerant, broad-minded workers open to others and different experiences.

Discussions during the panel in Tešanj confirmed the validity of the project premise on the one hand and the different perspectives of social actors on this issue.

Representatives of academic institutions pointed out the necessity of affirming the dimension of peace as a precondition for overall social creativity and successful business. Running a socially responsible company, which actively participates in strengthening social cohesion and creating human and social capital, is an investment and not a cost. The success of this approach is illustrated by examples of good practice of social responsibility companies.

Although business sector representatives understand the need to invest in the community, as this can attract highly educated labor for advanced production in small communities, they also believe

the business sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not sufficiently developed, and therefore cannot accept social responsibility activities.

The lack of support from businesses and the public sector to develop project proposals for development projects is the most prominent problem for civil society representatives. Projects funded by the EU, international development agencies or other agencies usually require local co-financing, which most NGOs cannot provide on their own. Therefore, they often come into conflict due to the need to function on a market basis as a service provider and non-profit activities, i.e. advocating for the goals for which the NGO was founded.

A very straightforward message from the panel in Tešanj is that in the following phases of the project, it is necessary to continue talks between crucial actors and reconcile their views on the role of business in the development of the local community. It is also vital to develop methodologies and platforms for organized involvement of business entities in strengthening social cohesion processes and devise practical activities supported by all sectors that meet the needs of local community residents, especially young people.

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Naslov: **BIZNISI, DRUŠTVENO ODGOVORNO POSLOVANJE, SOCIJALNA KOHEZIJA I MIR - UNAPREĐENJE PRAKSI DRUŠTVENO ODGOVORNOG POSLOVANJA**

Tema okruglog stola: **SKUP – Socijalna kohezija u poslovanju: Unapređenje praksi društveno odgovornog poslovanja**

Mjesto i datum: **Tešanj, 26. maj 2022. godine**

Organizatori: **USAID-ov projekat PRO-Budućnost i Opština Tešanj**

U saradnji USAID-ovog projekta PRO-Budućnost i Opštine Tešanj, 26. maja 2022. u Tešnju je održana panel diskusija „SKUP – Socijalna kohezija u poslovanju: Unapređenje praksi društveno odgovornog poslovanja“, koja je okupila predstavnike javnog, privatnog i civilnog sektora iz sedam BiH općina, opština i gradova. Cilj panel diskusije bio je razmjena praksi odgovornog djelovanja javne uprave, poslovnih subjekata i nevladinog sektora u lokalnim zajednicama, te dalja promocija ovakvog djelovanja da bi se povećala opšta dobrobit naroda i građana.

Panel diskusija je okupila predstavnike opština, kompanija, razvojnih agencija, udruženja privrednika i nevladinih organizacija s područja Tešnja, Teslića, Doboja, Usore, Doboj Juga, Maglaja i Žepča u razmatranju ideja o tome kako ekonomija doprinosi izgradnji mira u zajednici, te kako stabilno društvo pogoduje ekonomiji.

„Bez uspješne saradnje privatnog i javnog sektora nema pravog i ozbiljnog razvoja. Jedni druge guramo, vučemo, podstičemo, bodrimo! Danas smo ovdje da pokažemo kako može i treba u budućnosti“, kazao je načelnik Tešnja Suad Huskić, dodavši da je danas više nego ikada potrebno iskoristiti vlastite resurse u ljudima.

Prisutnima se obratio i Peter Cronin, direktor USAID-ovog ureda za demokratizaciju, rekavši da pozitivne prakse pokazuju da biznis ne poznaje granice i političke podjele, te da mogu biti pokretači velikih promjena u društvu. „Događaji poput ovog trebaju služiti kao inspiracija širom zemlje, jer današnja panel diskusija prevazilazi biznis – društvena kohezija je naša budućnost. Ne možemo uspjeti sami – samo zajedno možemo naprijed“.

Ključna poruka doc. dr. Gorana Balotića, sa Ekonomskog fakulteta Pale Univerziteta u Istočnom Sarajevu odnosila se na demistifikaciju uvjerenja da društveno odgovorno ponašanje preduzećima predstavlja samo nepotreban trošak. Upravo obrnuto, svaka kompanija ima jasne ekonomske interese da bude uzoran član društva i da dio svojih resursa posvećuje boljitku različitih interesnih grupa. Taj proces treba posmatrati kao dugoročnu investiciju u jačanje imidža i reputacije kompanije što ima svoje pozitivne ekonomske reperkusije. „Ova tema je važna, dragocjena i korisna, ali prije svega je aktuelna, posebno sada kada je potreba za saradnjom, podrškom, partnerstvom i uzajamnom solidarnošću najveća.“ rekao je profesor Balotić.

Prof. dr. Anto Domazet, profesor Ekonomskog fakulteta u Sarajevu, istakao je da su ideje o povezivanju različitih sfera u društvu važne jer država sama ne može odgovoriti na potrebe ljudi i tu prazninu trebaju pokriti i drugi akteri, poput biznisa. On je pojasnio da poslovnom sektoru nije svejedno kakav će biti životni standard ljudi, jer što je život u zajednici kvalitetniji i uslovi za poslovanje su bolji. „Zato biznis ima interes da podržava razne društveno korisne aktivnosti i tako

doprinosi socijalnoj koheziji i boljem životnom standardu građana“, kazao je Domazet, naglasivši da je i mir dimenzija društvene odgovornosti. „Samo u miru se može stvarati inovativna proizvodnja, samo u miru može biti stabilna tražnja za određenim proizvodima, samo u miru možete željeti da imate dobar laptop, da imate dobar softver, da imate dobar stan, dobar automobil, da imate dobre prilike za zabavu.“

Na panelu su govorili i Branka Janko, direktorica Razvojne agencije Žepče, Zorica Davidović, predsjednica Udruženja Vizija iz Doboja, Semir Kantić, predsjednik Udruženja privrednika „Biznis centar“ Jelah-Tešanj, te Senad Šantić, mostarski poduzetnik koji se iz Švedske vratio u BiH gdje vodi uspješnu IT firmu Zendev.

USAID-ov projekat izgradnje mira PRO-Budućnost provodi organizacija Catholic Relief Services (CRS), a djeluje u više od 75 lokalnih zajednica širom Bosne i Hercegovine. Kroz dugogodišnji rad projekat je prepoznao potencijal privatnog sektora u procesima izgradnje mira i potrebu da se o ovoj temi govori na nivou lokalnih zajednica.

Projekat PRO-Budućnost svoje strategije gradi na pozitivnom miru, konceptu koji je uspostavio norveški teoretičar mira, Johan Galtung. Za razliku od negativnog mira, koji se definiše kao odsustvo rata i nasilja i ne obuhvata tendencije društva prema stabilnosti i harmoniji, pozitivni mir se definiše trajnim mirom koji se bazira na održivim ulaganjima u ekonomski razvoj i institucije, kao i na društvenim stavovima koji potiču mir. Pozitivni mir jača otpornost društva da odgovori na probleme i izazove bez nasilja ili oružanih sukoba. Projekat PRO-Budućnost stremi ka pozitivnom miru jačanjem sve tri sfere društvene kohezije: društveno-kulturne, ekonomske i političke. Upravo zbog povezanosti mira, socijalne kohezije i ekonomije, Majda Behrem-Stojanov, direktorica projekta, u uvodu u panel diskusiju skrenula je pažnju da “iako na prvi pogled ljudi ne povezuju ove pojmove - izgradnja mira i unapređenje poslovnog okruženja se međusobno nadopunjuju.”

Projekat PRO-Budućnost u jačanju socijalne kohezije polazi od premise da bi privredni akteri trebali biti snažno i koordinirano uključeni u razvoj lokalne zajednice, prvenstveno podržavajući jačanje socijalne kohezije, jačanje društvenog kapitala i solidarnost unutar lokalne zajednice, ali i sa zajednicama u okruženju. Investicije u lokalnu zajednicu bi trebale biti planirane i koordinirane sa ostalim akterima (vladin i nevladin sektor, obrazovne i vjerske institucije), naprosto zato što je to u interesu razvoja samih preduzeća. Mirovni događaji, aktivnosti na pomirenju i solidarnost trebali bi biti u fokusu svakog poslovanog subjekta s obzirom da kapital, tržište i profit ne prepoznaju granice ili političke podjele, i zato što se preduzeća brže razvijaju i konkurentnija su na tržištu ukoliko imaju radnike koji su tolerantni, širokih shvatanja i otvoreni prema drugima i drugačijima.

Diskusija tokom panela u Tešnju potvrdila je valjanost projektne premise s jedne strane, te različite perspektive društvenih aktera o ovom pitanju.

Predstavnici akademskih institucija ukazali su na nužnost afirmacije dimenzije mira kao preduslova za ukupno društveno stvaralaštvo i uspješan biznis. Vođenje društveno odgovornog biznisa, koji aktivno učestvuje u jačanju socijalne kohezije, i stvaranju ljudskog i društvenog kapitala treba biti posmatrano kao investicija a ne kao trošak. Uspješnost ovog pristupa ilustrovan je primjerima dobre prakse društvene odgovornosti poslovnih subjekata.

Predstavnici poslovnog sektora smatraju da poslovni sektor u Bosni i Hercegovini nije dovoljno razvijen, te stoga ne može prihvatiti na sebe aktivnosti društvene odgovornosti. S druge strane, razumeiu potrebu ulaganja u zadovoljenje potreba zajednice jer to može pospješiti privlačenje visokostručnih kadrova za naprednu proizvodnju u malim sredinama.

Izostanak podrške biznisa i javnog sektora za izradu projektnih prijedloga za razvojne projekte je najveći problem za predstavnike civilnog društva. Projekti koje financiraju EU, međunarodne razvojne agencije ili druge agencije obično zahtjevaju lokalno sufinansiranje, koje većina NVO ne može samostalno da obezbijedi, pa zato često upadaju u protivrječnost zbog potrebe funkcionisanja na tržišnoj osnovi kao pružaoca usluga s jedne, i neprofitnog djelovanja, odnosno zalaganja za ciljeve zbog kojih je NVO osnovana, s druge strane.

Vrlo jasna poruka sa SKUP-a u Tešnju jeste da je narednim fazama projekta potrebno nastaviti razgovore između ključnih aktera i približiti poglede svih aktera o ulozi biznisa u razvoju lokalne zajednice, razviti metodologije i platforme za organizovano uključivanje poslovnih subjekata u procese jačanja društvene kohezije i osmisli praktične aktivnosti koje bi bile podržane ood strane svih sektora, a koje zadovoljavaju potrebe stanovnika lokalne zajednice, a posebno mladih.