CBM IN 6 MONTHS

After a successful end of the year in new, better working premises, CBM started its work in 2020 with plans in place, ongoing projects and activities developed and implemented. The new offices enabled organization not only to have a more convenient working condition and atmosphere, but it also enabled more space for activities with beneficiaries, visitors. Staff of the organization continued with regular work following sets of planned activities within individual and specific projects. The Management of the organization continued meeting and networking with various stakeholders, existing and potential, new partners.

COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on everyone’s lives and therefore work. CBM staff worked from home since the March 16th and adjusted its activities online which were very successful considering the new circumstances in which we found ourselves. On June 1st, CBM returned back to the office and has complied with the rules for Government prevention of pandemic: the organization’s premises have been disinfected for the second time, with other protective measures in place as well.

WHAT’S NEW AT CBM:

- New Offices
- New Projects
- New Partners
On January 2020 the team from “Building Strong and Resilient Communities in Mitrovica” project started off with implementing its activities as planned. Similar to previous years they organized the winter camp 2020. Despite it being the most favorite alumni event for the students, it turned out to be the stepping stone for future activities and actions that our students organized according to their wish.

During the past 6 months the project team was challenged a lot with COVID-19 situation, but managed to take immediate measures and adapt to the situation within few days. While in quarantine, all activates and lectures were moved online in full coordination with our stakeholders. It was rather challenging time to deal with, however the students were very active with their activities from home. Just to name few, they made short videos called “a day of my life in quarantine” and participated on the #GCERFchallenge in attempt to uplift the community spirit, and keep our community strong. Students from the medical school during the whole lockdown period prepared “health tips” on how to prevent the spread of the virus and protect each other. The professors continued their lectures with the new group of Peer to Peer and CES students online through zoom. Fortunately we did not face any major difficulties that would prevent us from conducting our lectures and activities online, on the other hand we had to postpone some of our alumni events such as summer camp until further notice since gatherings are still to this day not recommended.

After the lockdown period was over, with the recommendation from the government the team came back to the office and started working with extra caution and limited number of people entering the office. As mentioned above, the students raised their voice and took action against rape with the motto “We are your VOICE!” in front of the court and in front of the municipality of Mitrovica. The actions that our students took were highly appreciated and supported by many people from all around Kosovo, these students were also invited in two very well know national TV station where they talked about the initiative and how CBM trained them to take such initiatives by themselves when needed.

We are destined to change our society for better, and we will continue to do so moving forward. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Project Team
The Inclusive Development Program is a three-year initiative implemented by UN-Habitat, Community Building Mitrovica (CBM) and PAX in seven Mitrovica region municipalities in northern Kosovo. The specific program component facilitated by CBM is to 'Increase local government transparency, responsiveness and accountability through civil society mobilization and public dialogue.

During Q1 and Q2 of 2020, the Inclusive Development Program team was focused on implementing regular Program activities relating to cooperation with local and central-level government stakeholders, capacity-building initiatives for local NGOs and joint advocacy actions fostering good governance and citizen participation. Key achievements in this period:

Citizen Participation Plans - a policy document developed in cooperation with local and central level government, civil society sector and citizens, tailored to specifically address the needs of each Mitrovica region municipality. Citizen Participation Plans are expected to progressively mainstream citizen participation and consultation in policy formulation, planning, implementation and monitoring. The document is currently under review and is expected to be finalized by September 2020.

Mitrovica Region Monitoring Team - CBM facilitates coordination and exchange of civil society organizations in Mitrovica region by hosting meetings for the Mitrovica Region Monitoring Team (MRMT), bringing together approximately 20 civil society organizations on a monthly basis. As part of the capacity building activities, MRMT members are given the opportunity to join workshops and on-the-job trainings on topics identified by the MRMT. The team is currently preparing joint initiatives which will be implemented in each of the Mitrovica region municipalities. More information coming soon!

Civil Society Catalytic Fund is a project funding scheme developed with the aim to stimulate effective and innovative civil society action in northern Kosovo, with a strong focus on inter-municipal collaboration. Through two calls for project proposals, the project team has selected a total of seven (7) project proposals since 2018, benefiting a total of thirteen (13) NGOs from each of the Mitrovica region municipalities. You can read more about the activities of our CSCF grantees by following the Program Facebook page!

Thank you for following our work!
January kicked off with celebrating New Year with kids with special needs in their school, as well as decorating the Christmas tree in the main square. Santa Clause made a special appearance which made kids even happier. Students from Gracanica sent their decorated New Year postcards to their peers in Mitrovica. It was a great way to start the year. Students were pleased to host the U.S. Ambassador Philip S. Kosnett in the American Corner. The ambassador encouraged the students to make a change in their communities by working hard every day and creating better living conditions for everyone. As every year, students are marking important dates such as 8th of March and made gifts for females in their areas. Black History Month was one of the topics for the student’s class, too. This activity was promoted on a local TV outlet in Gracanica. As the COVID-19 pandemic started, the classes moved online. Access Program Team got strong support and is very thankful to the U.S. Embassy from Belgrade, from U.S. Embassy Pristina, for the support for allowing Access teachers to work with their students online. Moving onto an online platform, teachers and students worked hard on developing an activity to mark up Earth Day. Being challenged to stay in quarantine and keep social distancing, students and teachers focused on awareness-raising of such an important issue. In addition, students were pleased to have a presentation by an IBC-M Environmental and Agricultural Management student, on why is important to mark this day and being engaged in the matter of keeping our planet clean and sustainable. While still being in quarantine in this period, Access program students from Gracanica & Mitrovica were pleased to have cooperation with American Advisory Center. Students had the opportunity to learn how to apply for studies in American Universities. Moreover, the program continued its cooperation with AAC Youth Prep Club classes with Flutura Kaliçani, AAC Center Assistant. Students also learned about scholarships in the U.S. and how to use a College Board platform. One of the important highlights in this period was the initiation of the Kosovo Access Joint class. Access Kosovo programs in Gračanica, Prizren, and Mitrovica, have had their first joint Online Sessions with students who joined through the Zoom platform and all three Access families had a great time through Kahoot quiz, Hangman and Pictionary game. Furthermore, students have had the opportunity to discuss and learn more from the guest speakers on topics such as Black Lives Matter, Domestic Violence (guest Tijana LaValley, NGO Zensko Pravo), Virtual Career Talks with the cooperation with YES, Media literacy. Finally, in June, students held an outdoor class in Minor Hill in Mitrovica, while Gracanica students held their class in Ulpiana. Also, US Independence Day was marked while students learned more about this holiday.
The project “The role of universities in dealing with the past” is a project developed in partnership with University of Pristina, Faculty of Law and is funded by the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of the Norway. The project consists of two phases. The first phase is dedicated to all Law Faculty students, whereas the second phase is dedicated to all interested students including the students at work. The call for participation was publicized within the University of Pristina web-page, social media networks and leaflets continuing information on the project have been distributed at the University campus. The program has raised high interest by students. 200 students have applied in both calls. Based on the university criteria for acceptance, 100 students have been selected and have participated in two phases of the program.

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic the activities and lectures were held regularly, online, and the interest of the students to participate in the program remains high. Internship program is also offered to the students and their interest in attending it is also high.

The program established the Transitional Justice Resource Center at the University of Prishtina. Currently, the staff is being engaged on working on the MA program on Transitional Justice within the University of Law, and the interest of the students for this program quite high.

The program also gave the opportunity for regional and international exchanges, both for staff and the students. Professors from University of Prishtina went to Oslo, Norway to get the necessary knowledge and information about master program on TJ, while the students had the opportunity to visit Civil Society organizations, prominent activists and historians in Belgrade, Serbia. A planned visit to Belgrade, originally designed to happen earlier this year, was postponed for upcoming months, due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

As the program has shown great results at first:

- With the high number of student participants (including here students from all communities studying at the University of Prishtina),
- Engagement of Civil society organizations; the very proactive engagement with other activities related to the transitional justice theme; cooperation established with centers and universities in Serbia and BiH
- Established cooperation with the ICTY and organized a series of lectures online with the representatives of ICTY including ex judges and academics
- Capacity building of the TJRC two students/interns of the TJRC have been awarded scholarships to accomplish MA studies; one student in Geneva Academy for International human rights and transitional justice and the other on in Ohio state university USA
- Students of the TJRC are being consulted by the Office of the President in the work of the Truth Commission for Kosovo
- The academic coordinator of the program has been appointed by the Ministry of Justice as a member of the working group for establishing Department/Directorate for War Crimes within the Ministry of Justice
- The administrative coordinator of the program is a regular member of the International Group for Transitional Justice organized and managed by the Swiss embassy in Kosovo
- TJRC and Human rights Center of the Oslo University have entered into joint application for Erasmus+ program exchange of students and staff (2 year program). The results of the application will be known in July 2020.
**CBM helps with saving a sick stray dog**

During the COVID 19 pandemic, CBM staff worked from home, with most of the regular activities being moved online. However, during this period the organization had an activity which goes slightly beyond its regular scope of work - a stray dog with a severe skin condition was spotted on the streets of Mitrovica and was planned to be put down. Thanks to the team of good people the dog was taken over by Shqiponje Gashi, a volunteer of an informal group named "Te bashkuar per kafshet"/"United for animals". The treatment started immediately and the poor dog received the necessary therapy. After several weeks of persistent medical help, the dog recovered! The dog regained its natural beauty and is put up for adoption! A second chance for this lucky doggo. CBM covered all the costs of the treatment, and has bought dog food for the stray dogs residing near Mitrovica bridge. The dogs have been fed during the quarantine and CBM continued feeding them even after the quarantine ended.