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# REPORT

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“Places of Diversity”  
Study visit – Albania and  
Montenegro

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27 October-1 November 2013

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## Introduction

Within the project “**PLACES OF DIVERSITY - Public Spaces as Field for Intercultural Dialog and Promotion of Social Values**”, funded by the Anna Lindh Foundation, a study visit to Albania and Montenegro was organized in the period 27 October - 1 November 2013. The study visit was organized in the towns of Albania (Tirana and Durrës) and Montenegro (Kotor, Tivat and Perast in Boka Kotorska Bay).

The project “**PLACES OF DIVERSITY - Public Spaces as Field for Intercultural Dialog and Promotion of Social Values**” officially began in August 2013 and it will last for 11 months.

## Project partners

Partners in the project are organizations **EXPEDITIO** Center for Sustainable Spatial Development, from Kotor, Montenegro; **Leaders of Tomorrow**, from Amman, Jordan; and **Co-PLAN**, from Tirana, Albania.

**EXPEDITIO** is an NGO whose mission is to encourage sustainable spatial development in Montenegro and the SEE region through activity in the fields of sustainable architecture, cultural heritage and urban planning. EXPEDITIO was established by six students of architecture in 1997, after participation in anti-Milošević’s student protests in Belgrade. The idea to establish NGO derived from the desire to work closely with communities on various urban and rural issues. Since 2000, EXPEDITIO is based in Kotor, one of two UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Montenegro.

**Leaders of Tomorrow (LoT)** is a youth-led NGO, active since 2007 in Jordan and regionally in the Middle East and North Africa. Their mission is to build a community of young Arab leaders who are educated, critical, initiative-takers, and capable of serving their local communities. LoT worked on many projects and initiatives, including EuroMed and YiA exchanges such as Diwanieh (public street debates), FOR9A.com (lifechanging opportunities for young Arabs), FADFED (public commenting), Mstkblna (prepping high school students), and Mo7aka (role-playing retreats) - that address youth challenges in the MENA.

**Co-PLAN** was established in 1997. It has an extensive experience in regard to all aspects of governance and sustainable spatial development, urban and regional planning and development, activities at multiple scales (i.e., the neighborhood, city, regional, inter-regional, and national levels) and with a spectrum of actors such as communities, local and central government, businesses, donors, and civil society organizations. Co-PLAN has collaboration agreement with Polis University from Tirana and is acting as its applied research agent combining the practical live experience with the academic studies.

## **“PLACES OF DIVERSITY” Project summary**

In many Mediterranean cities, especially those with less developed democracies, public spaces are often commercialized, or taken up by private capital investments. When planning public spaces the attention is usually devoted mainly to physical appearance, and much less to citizens’ participation in or the messages the space conveys to its users. Bearing this in mind, the project “PLACES OF DIVERSITY” can be an inspiration for those stakeholders who want to see social values promoted in urban spaces in their communities. Although the project will be developed for the towns in Jordan, Montenegro and Albania, the set principles will enable their application in other places.

**The overall aim** of the project “PLACES OF DIVERSITY” is to improve intercultural dialog between youth and civil society organizations from Albania, Jordan and Montenegro, through activities that increase citizens participation in promoting social values in urban/public spaces.

**Specific objectives** of the project are:

1. Increasing citizens awareness on intercultural dialogue and social values by using public spaces as a field to promote it
2. Improving collaboration between actors dealing with urban and social issues in Albania, Jordan and Montenegro, through joint activities in public spaces
3. Increasing participation of youth and CSOs in joint actions on re-thinking public spaces in Jordan, Montenegro and Albania

**The main project activities** include:

1. **Informing** stakeholders about the activities, objectives and results of the project;
2. Organizing **study visits** - Amman, Tirana and Kotor - linking, networking and learning from good practices of activism in the public spaces;
3. Organizing **creative workshops** for young people in order to develop ideas on how to promote desirable social values in public spaces;
4. Realizing **creative pilot projects in Jordan, Albania and Montenegro**, with the participation of local artists, designers, youth associations, etc.
5. Creating a **common web portal: How with small interventions in public spaces we can promote desirable social values?**

## Study visit - ALBANIA AND MONTENEGRO

**The aim of the study visit** organized in Albania and Montenegro from October 27 until November 1, 2013 was to visit project partners' countries in order to meet and network with local actors and organizations dealing with public spaces, intercultural dialogue and social issues, exchanging experiences with them and learning from good practices of activism in public spaces.

**Participants** in the study visit were six representatives of partner organizations from Albania, Jordan and Montenegro, two from each organization.

### 1<sup>st</sup> day - October 27, 2013

The study visit began in Tirana where the participants arrived on October 27, 2013. This part of the study tour was hosted by partners from Co-PLAN.



### 2<sup>nd</sup> day - October 28, 2013

In the morning of October 28, 2013, a public presentation of the project and partner organizations' activities related to public spaces was held at the POLIS University, beginning at 11.30. The presentation was attended by 68 students of POLIS University and 8 representatives of project partners.

In the introduction, the partners from Co-PLAN presented briefly the project **"SPACES OF DIVERSITY"**, stating its main aims and objectives and expressing pleasure in cooperating with



Leaders of Tomorrow and Expeditio. They mentioned a successful cooperation that Co-PLAN and Expeditio have had so far, especially in a recent project entitled “Revival of City Squares in Balkan Cities”.



After that, the partners from Leaders of Tomorrow held a short presentation of their organization, giving a couple of introductory information about Jordan and then presenting their main activities in public spaces: FADFED and DIWANIEH.

FADFED is a public event involving the placing of white papers in different public spaces and inviting people to express their opinion, in writing or drawing, on various political or social issues, with the purpose of making public spaces the places for public expression of opinion and of bridging the gap between citizens and decision-makers. FADFED documents diverse opinions in public spaces, creating dialogue that is shared online with “tagged” local community stakeholders on Facebook and Twitter (#FADFED). FADFED tackles public self-censorship and offers equal opportunities to all members of society to freely express themselves in public. Instead of controversial local issues remaining hush-hush behind private doors, FADFED listens to the voices in the street and delivers it to the inbox and newsfeed of local leaders.

DIWANIEH is a debate program running since 2012. Organized in public spaces, Diwanieh offer possibilities for young debaters to speak about sensitive social and political issues, providing at the same time young people with the opportunity to learn debating skills. One of the ideas is also to convert unused or neglected public spaces into debate stages.

In the final part of the presentation, Expeditio partners presented briefly their activities aimed at raising awareness of values of space in general and public spaces as places where different values could be promoted. They presented several actions serving as examples of more diverse usage of public spaces: different artistic interventions, mural paintings, social events, yoga practicing in parks, etc., which gathered local community.





The presentation ended with showing a short documentary featuring the project **“Revival of City Squares in Balkan Cities”**, which was implemented in 2011/12 in cooperation between Co-PLAN, Expeditio and KOR (Coalition from Sustainable Development) from Skopje, Macedonia. The project was aimed at contributing to the revival of city squares as viable public places that foster cultural identity and promote diversity through enforcement of public policies and active community participation.



In the afternoon, guests from Jordan and Montenegro were led by hosts to a specific sightseeing tour of Tirana in order to see different public spaces in the city where the colleagues from Co-PLAN conducted various artistic and other interventions during the Tirana Design Week, implemented as a part of the project **“PLACES OF DIVERSITY”**.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> day - October 29, 2013

In the morning of October 29, the project partners held a joint meeting in order to discuss the project activities in detail. The meeting was attended by six representatives of project partners, two from each organization.

At the beginning, the partners expressed their pleasure at the project being approved because it offers them with the possibility to meet partners from countries with whom they have not cooperated so far and to network with other organizations.

During the meeting, the following issues were discussed:



**1. Informing stakeholders about the project and its activities** by posting information of partners' websites and sending press releases to the media.

- Partners agreed on using their usual methods to disseminate information
- Partners agreed to send to Expeditio contacts of stakeholders in their countries in order to create a mailing list for sending project information and newsletters

## **2. Study visit to Albania and Montenegro**

The partners agreed to circulate photographs and exchange presentations, while Expeditio, in cooperation with other partners, should prepare a report of the study tour.

### **- Study visit to Jordan**

According to project plan the study visit should last for 6 days.

The following has been agreed:

- The study visit should be planned for the March 2014 (13<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> March) in order to coincide with one of DIWANIEH that partners from Jordan are planning to organize in the town of Aqaba in the south of Jordan, so that the partners can attend it
- The aim of the study visit is to network with different stakeholders (NGOs, institutions, authorities) who deal with public spaces, urban planning, etc.
- The study visit should include meetings with representatives of Faculty of Architecture/Spatial planning to talk about role of education in context of public spaces planning and utilization; with public authorities; with Anna Lindh network members in order to discuss possibilities for cooperation
- Partners meeting in order to discuss already realized and further activities of the project
- Partners from Montenegro and Albania should check visa procedures
- Partners from Jordan should inform other partners, during January, about final dates of the study tour, in order to have enough time to arrange for air-tickets and make other preparations

## **3. Organizing creative workshops with young people in order to develop ideas on how to promote different social values in public spaces and**

### **4. Realizing creative pilot projects in Jordan, Albania and Montenegro**

- Workshops should be organized as one-day events, intended for young people, discussing what social values are important and meaningful for them and how they can be promoted in public spaces using small interventions
- Several ideas created during the workshops should be then selected and developed into concrete interventions in public spaces; Interventions can also be implemented in inner public spaces.
- Partners from Jordan showed interest for the mapping of public spaces, which was an activity implemented by Expeditio; Expeditio should send them methodology
- Partners from Albania have already conducted this activity during September 2013
- Other partners should implement workshops in the coming period October/November/December 2013, while public spaces interventions should be finished by May 2014

### **5. Dissemination of project ideas – leaflets, posters, in local languages**

- **Leaflets** and other PR material will be developed jointly by partners
- **A joint website** – portal of ideas for interventions in public spaces- it should be created as an open page for putting ideas on how small interventions in urban spaces can promote social values; the website will be created by Expeditio
- Partners from Albania suggested that instead of creating a completely new website it would be more

useful to open separate pages within the existing websites of partners, because of its sustainability after the end of this project;

- **Project's logo** – partners concluded it would be good to have a project's logo although it was not originally planned; the partners can propose their ideas for the logo and it will be designed by Expeditio

In the afternoon of October 29, the partners left for Kotor, Montenegro. The next two days of the study tour were hosted by Expeditio.

## 4<sup>th</sup> day - October 30, 2013

On October 30, in the morning, a meeting was organized at Expeditio office in Kotor with representatives of three local organizations from Boka Kotorska, **“UrbaNova”** from Herceg Novi, **“Youth Cultural Center of Herceg Novi / Sinestezija Festival”** from Herceg Novi and **“Our Action”** from Kotor. These organizations are active in promoting civil activism, working with young people on different issues and organizing alternative artistic and cultural events in public spaces gathering to a large extent young people. The idea of the meeting was to establish contacts, exchange ideas, share experiences and possibly get ideas from some new activities or projects.

**“UrbaNova”** is a relatively new organization from Herceg Novi organized a few months ago. They work with children and young people belonging to different vulnerable groups, through interactive performances and theatre of the oppressed. They are interested in networking with other youth NGOs in order to unite resources.

**“Youth Cultural Center of Herceg Novi / Sinestezija Festival”** - **Sinestezija**

**Festival** is a five-day artistic event that has been organized for three years now in Herceg Novi. The idea is to collect different activities into one and make Nerceg Novi “the town of artists” again, as it used to be known in the past when many artist (writers, painters, sculptors, etc.) resided and created in this town. **Sinestezija** is a themed festival that includes different events, artistic interventions, music performances, painting and exhibitions, racing up the city stairs (Herceg Novi is, because of its geographic features, is know as the town of 100 001 steps), all taking place in different public spaces, many of which are usually unused of in a state of neglect. They managed to obtain a space, given by a private owner, to create a Youth Cultural Centre. They have around 50 members and volunteers.



**NGO “Our Action”**, with a slogan “Work today for a better tomorrow” was established 3 years ago with the idea to raise citizens’ volunteerism and activism and connect with various organizations. They





organize different actions with volunteers and events that include different groups of people, clean-up actions, scouts actions, collecting of money for different charitable purposes, etc. Three years ago, they started coordinating the organization of events dedicated to Mother Earth Day, with actions taking place for whole month in different towns in Montenegro.

In the afternoon, the partners had a sightseeing tour in the Old Town of Kotor, which is, together with the whole inner part of the Bay of Boka Kotorska, one of the two UNESCO World Heritage sites in Montenegro.

The day finished with a visit to the neighbouring town of Tivat where the partners had a meeting with a newly established informal group of activists called SOVE. SOVE presented their interventions implemented so far in public spaces in Tivat (yarn bombing in a local park - a type of graffiti or street art that employs colourful displays of knitted or crocheted yarn or fiber rather than paint or chalk, garage sales, story-reading sessions for children in open spaces, artistic installations, etc.). During this ideas and experience exchanging meeting, SOVE had a chance to learn about activities of Leaders of Tomorrow and they were very interested in the idea of FADFED and DIWANIEH activities.

## 5<sup>th</sup> day - October 31, 2013

On 31 October, the partners meet with the **KOMPAS** from Kotor, which deals with young people and has implemented many local actions involving young people and volunteers.



In the afternoon, the partners visited the town of Perast, situated within the UNESCO protected area of Kotor, which is very famous for its historical and cultural heritage, especially its baroque palaces and churches and the islands of St. George and Our Lady of the Rocks.

In the evening of 31 October, a public



presentation was organized in the neighbouring village of Kavač, in the House of Free Thought, owned by the local organization ANIMA dealing mainly with gender issues. The public presentation was intended for all

interested citizens and Montenegrin members of the Anna Lindh Foundation network. The presentation was attended by 13 participants.

During the presentation, the participants had a chance to learn more about Jordan, its history, culture, economy, gender and other social issues, sharing also information about Montenegro and finding many similarities between the two countries.

## 6<sup>th</sup> day – November 1, 2013

Departure of participants.

## APPENDICES

### PROGRAMME OF THE STUDY VISIT

**Sunday, October 27, 2013 | TIRANA, Albania** Arrival of the participants

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**Monday, October 28, 2013 | TIRANA, Albania**

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**In the morning:**

**11.30-12.30:** Public presentation at the Polis University

**In the afternoon:**

**15.00-18.00:** Sightseeing the places of Co-PLAN's interventions during the Tirana Design Week

**Tuesday, October 29, 2013 | TIRANA, Albania | KOTOR, Montenegro**

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**In the morning:**

**10.00-12.30:** Partners meeting at the Co-PLAN's office

**In the afternoon:**

**15.00-22.00:** Visiting Durres and Travelling from Tirana to Kotor

**Wednesday, October 30, 2013 | KOTOR, Montenegro**

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**In the morning:**

**10.00-13.30:** Stakeholders meeting at Expeditio office

**In the afternoon:**

**16.00-17.00:** Sightseeing tour of Kotor

**18.00-20.00:** Stakeholders meeting in Tivat

**Thursday, October 31, 2013 | KOTOR, Montenegro**

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**In the morning:**

**09.30-11.30:** Stakeholders meeting in Kotor

**12.00-16.00:** Sightseeing tour of Perast

**In the evening:**

**19.00-21.30:** Public presentation in Kavač (the House of Free Thought)

**Friday, November 1, 2013 | KOTOR, Montenegro**

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Departure of participants

Report written by

Vesna Leković, project coordinator at Expeditio