

# 2018 – Annual activity report

## *ABOUT YRS*

Young Researches of Serbia (YRS) is a non-profit, non-political NGO that gathers young people around common interests, ideas and goals.

Our vision is to be the driving force for all those whose aim is to make our planet a more peaceful, just and healthy place.

Driven by science and education, our mission is to contribute:

- to environmental protection and nature conservation,
- to development of voluntarism and its values,
- to scientific creativity and active participation of the youth

Our main aims are environmental protection, environmental education, youth exchange and work with young people, as well as the promotion of sustainable development, scientific creativity and voluntarism.

## ***IN 2018 WE HAVE HAD***



Very intensive project development. For example, in the environmental protection programme over 10 project proposals were submitted to donors on national and EU level.



Together with 26 local hosts and dozens of their local partners and 17 voluntary services (out of which 11 resource centers of the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia) we organized 35 two-weeks workcamps of total duration of 353 working days and 26.100 volunteer hours..



Sent 433 volunteers from Serbia to the workcamps aboard, in 29 countries. Almost all countries in Europe but also in USA and Mexico.



Organized dozens of meetings of CSOs and institutions in Serbia, as well round tables, seminars, trainings etc.



Influenced development of two strategies, 5 laws and several sub-legal acts in the area of environment. We also gave more than 20 recommendations to the institutions for better implementation of policies in the areas of horizontal legislation, water and protection of nature.



Continued to mainstream gender issue in the environmental policies and the bigger participation of women in decision-making processes.



Included 38 young people in 7 youth exchanges, 2 trainings, conference and seminar abroad.

## OUR TEAM IN 2018



Vera Bukilić Radusin

Administrativni poslovi



Poslužaj više



Tanja Petrović

Uvratna dionikarka



Poslužaj više



Dušica Trnavac  
Bogdanović

Projektna menadžerka



Poslužaj više



Bojan Beronja

Placement officer



Poslužaj više



Milka Gvozdrenović

Koordinatorica ekološkog programa



Jelena Ristić Beronja

Koordinatorica volonterskog Servisa Srbije



Jelena Mičić

Koordinatorica



Milica Milić

Koordinatorica razmene volontera

## YRS Managing Board



Nikola Božić  
Predsednik Upravnog odbora MRS



Aleksandar Ristić  
Član Upravnog odbora MRS



Aleksandar S. Petrović  
Član Upravnog odbora MRS



Tijana Ljubenović  
Članica Upravnog odbora MRS



Natalija Radivojević  
Članica Upravnog odbora MRS

## ***ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME***

### **The scope of work and key activities**

Key areas of action under the YRS Environmental Protection Programme in 2018 were: protection of nature and biodiversity, water, environmental policy, sustainable development, implementation of the Aarhus Convention and Women and Environment.

**Nature protection and biodiversity** – activities in this area have been implemented through education (numerous trainings, seminars, online courses; prepared and distributed educational material), and through work in protected areas during voluntary workcamps.



*International voluntary workcamp in Obedska bara*

**Water** – activities in the field of water included work on the policies governing this area, educational programs as well as the monitoring of new developments in the hydropower sector.

The recent problems related to regional hydro energy projects were followed by participation in the "*SEENET meeting*" at the Sholta in July, with the participation in "*protest*



*First European Rivers Summit Photo © Nick St*

*against MHE – National Zbor*" in Pirot and "*the first European Summit for River*" in Sarajevo, held in September 2018 and by participating in the "*Regional Round Table on the Strategy and plan of the regional campaign against small hydropower plants*" in Banja Luka at the end of the year.

Cooperation between YRS and the Water Directorate of the Republic of Serbia *had* continued during the event "*The central celebration of the Danube Day in 2018*".

Traditionally, the workshops were organized in the elementary schools for International Water Day and Planet Earth Day.

**Environmental Policy** – working in this field includes participation in the implementation of international agreements in the field of environment (primarily the *Aarhus Convention* and *the Convention on Biological Diversity* ); Implementation of international agreements in the field of water and transposition of the EU legislation in the water area (*Water and Health Protocol* and *the Water Framework Directive*); Participation in public

debates during the drafting of the law (for example, in 2018 the YRS participated in public debates for the Law on fees, the Law on planning and construction, and preparation for the preparation of the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment); Membership in working groups for strategic documents (for example, in 2018 YRS participated in the preparation of the Strategy of Nature Protection in Serbia); Development of joint positions of CSOs on environmental policies and similar.

**Public participation in programs and processes related to environmental protection** – is realized through coordination of the work of the Green Chair (organization of participation of the representatives of CSOs in the meetings of the Committee for Environmental Protection of the National Assembly, through Open doors with national MPs, through the preparation of educational brochures and similar) and a SEKO group for the environment and climate change. YRS works to stimulate the dialogue of CSOs and institutions through organizing round tables, meetings and similar events.

**Monitoring of chapters 27** – involves monitoring the process of transposition and implementation of EU acquis, making recommendations for the areas of horizontal legislation, water and nature protection. The YRS recommendations are also during 2018 presented the Coalition 27 Shadow Report.

### **Aarhus center New Belgrade**

Activities of the Aarhus center New Belgrade in 2018 were implemented in cooperation and with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. The celebration of Aarhus Convention 20<sup>th</sup>

The representatives of the YRS were involved in working groups to produce documents related to the negotiating position for chapter 27, such as the Working Group for drafting a specific plan for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Serbia (DSIP WFD). Additionally, we participated in various seminars organized by the responsible institutions.

**Sustainable development** - activities are realized within all existing programs, including membership and work in the Global Compact in Serbia, an organization that gathers over 60 members, private and public companies, institutions, organizations.

The representatives of YRS participated in several events (seminars, conferences) regarding sustainable transport, climate change and other aspects of sustainable development. Additionally, in cooperation with GIZ team from Serbia in July, a project proposal on strengthening the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Serbia was prepared, but the project did not receive the donor' support.

**Environmental protection programs are targeting and/or are realized in cooperation with:**

1. citizens,
2. civil society organisations working to protect the environment and promote sustainable development,
3. managers of protected areas,
4. relevant institutions at the local, national and international level.

Anniversary was one of the most important events, where representatives of Aarhus centers in Serbia participated.

Furthermore, the following activities were realized:

**Informative leaflet on Environmental Impact Assessment;**



*YRS promotion in the Week of human rights celebration*

**Consultative meeting "20 years of the Aarhus Convention"** with representatives of municipalities of the city of Belgrade;  
**Round Table "Law on environmental impact assessment from our angle";**  
**Set devoted to environmental protection as a human right**, within a week marking the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

Information on activities of the Aarhus Center New Belgrade are published on the website [www.arhusnbg.mis.org.rs](http://www.arhusnbg.mis.org.rs) on Facebook page @arhuscentarnbg

### **Women and environment**

In all activities that were realized during 2018 equal inclusion of girls and women was promoted. Also, in March 2018 YRS has been contacted by the Office of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality with the request to share information, research or publications on gender equality in the environment, which has been done.

As a part of a public debate on the draft Law on climate changes conducted by the Ministry of

Environmental Protection, the YRS has sent written comments. Part of the comments was related to gender equality, through a recommendation that the Council for Climate Change should be gender balanced and that the Office of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality is included in its work, which would contribute to the inclusion of gender issue in climate change policies. This recommendation was adopted.

### **Projects and donors in 2018**

**Institutional grant under CSOnnect programme**

Project Partners: TERRA's, Arhus center Novi Sad, Center of modern skills, GM Optimist and Grupa Kobre.

The institutional grant was used for activities related to negotiation for the Chapter 27 in Serbia' EU integration process. Focus was on: more efficient advocacy of transposition and implementation of Directives in relation to horizontal legislation, nature protection and waters;

bigger and organized participation of CSOs in decision making processes for Chapter 27 (capacity building of CSOs, strengthening existing networks and initiatives, gathering new members etc.); dialogue of different stakeholders on reforms that implementation of EU acquis brings (planning infrastructural environmental projects, an adaptation of policy documents, financing); increasing visibility of YRS and partner organizations in public, growing citizens' support to YRS' work (campaign to promote work of YRS and other CSOs on Chapter 27).

Main project results are: set long-term learning environment for targeted topics (horizontal legislation, nature protection, public participation); efficient cooperation and dialogue between CSOs and institutions related to EU negotiation Chapter 27; developed a mechanism for monitoring implementation of targeted EU Directives in Serbia; CSO' advocacy activities supported by citizens.

Funding Sources: REC office in Serbia through CSOconnect programme, supported by SIDA (48 000 EUR).

**NOTE:** The project implementation was interrupted in September 2018 due to the financial problems of REC.

### **BioNET position paper on EU Biodiversity strategy and Chapter 27**

The aim of the document was to introduce BioNET and share its standings regarding EU strategic framework for biodiversity, encourage EU to adjust CSOs' position towards inclusion of Western Balkan countries within the processes of planning and implementation of the EU environment initiatives but also to make pressure for considering technically qualified CSOs from the region for implementation of the biodiversity-related policy through partnership with the national institutions in charge of nature conservation. Considering the very short period of implementation the project has achieved great results: it has increased the visibility of the regional network of biodiversity-related civil society organizations in South East Europe;

the position paper is of a good quality and has a big potential to influence the EU decision makers in adjusting the processes for development of the EU Strategy for Biological Diversity by the inclusion of the opinion, and needs and challenges that the Western Balkan Countries are facing in practice; cooperation among BioNET members and between members and ORF Biodiversity team has been improved.

Funding Sources: GIZ - ORF Biodiversity (4.000, 00 EUR)

### **The Return of The Ibis 2018**

Project Partner was NGO Zeleni Pogled.

The aim of the project was to improve biodiversity protection in the special nature reserve Obedska bara through fostering cooperation between PA manager and CSOs on the implementation of the active conservation measures.

Project results are:

1. Improved conditions for the return of birds in Obedska bara.
2. Increased interest of youth for the voluntarism in the protected areas.
3. Better infrastructure for tourism in Obedska bara.
4. Enhances cooperation between institutions, NGOs and PA manager on the implementation of the active measures in the Obedska bara.

Funding Sources: Ministry of the Environmental Protection of The Republic of Serbia (1.000 000,00 RSD)

## Partnerships/coalitions/membership in other networks



*Meeting of MPs and OCD in 2018*



*Shadow report promotion in 2018*

### **Green Chair**

In cooperation with the Center of modern Skills and the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, MIS co-ordinates the work of the *Green Chair* – the institutional mechanism of cooperation between CSOs and Environmental Committee of the National Assembly.

In addition to monitoring the work of the Committee with regular presence in meetings and reporting to the CSO network on the progress and conclusions of the meetings, the Green Chair coordination is also dedicated to the strengthening of the organizational structure of the network and better connecting the members.

### **Coalition 27**

Through cooperation with other organisations within the Coalition 27 YRS has been involved in monitoring Serbia's EU

membership negotiations regarding chapter 27. Coalition 27 publishes *Shadow Reports* in which it gives an overview of progress in Chapter 27, emphasizes the attitudes and recommendations of the CSOs.

In 2018 the Shadow report was named "CHAPTER 27 in SERBIA: A REPORT on (NO) PROGRESS."

During May and June 2018 with a support of CSOconnect Program the Report was promoted in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Subotica, Gornji Milanovac and Niš.

The representatives of the MIS are active in the international networks **YEE**, **CEEweb**, **BioNET** and **SEENET** (participation in meetings, annual assemblies, planning of joint projects and/or new initiatives).

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAMMES

### Areas of influence and key activities

Voluntary Service of Serbia (VSS) is a sector of YRS that promotes and develops volunteerism through several long-term volunteer programmes, all in connection with the other YRS programmes.

**International exchange of volunteers and coordination of the informal network of contact points in Serbia;** in 2018 over 1000 domestic and foreign volunteers got involved.

This programme consists of:

- Sending volunteers from Serbia to international voluntary workcamp abroad (outgoing).
- Hosting domestic and foreign volunteers in international voluntary workcamps in Serbia (incoming).
- Preparatory meetings for the volunteers going for the first time abroad.
- Coordination of 9 contact points in Serbia.

### Organization of international voluntary workcamps in Serbia

In 2018, together with 26 local hosts and dozens of their local partners and 17 voluntary services (out of which 11 resource centers of the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia) we organized 35 two-weeks workcamps of total duration of 353 working days and 26.100 volunteer hours. 642 volunteers took part, out of which 60 teenagers (364 international, 77 national, 68 camp leaders and 133 local volunteers). For this purpose, 50 new young leaders were trained, out of 68 engaged in total. 77 national volunteers came from 33 different municipalities in Serbia. On the other hand, we sent 433 volunteers from Serbia to workcamps abroad, in 29 countries of the

world, mainly European, but also to Mexico and the United States of America.

Workcamps were held in: Donja Toponica, Tršić, Drača, Hajdukovo, Kragujevac, Bikovo, Užice, Beograd, Apatin, Titel, Deliblato, Ruski Krstur, Sremski Karlovci, Obrenovac, Mošorin, Golubac, Bor, Valjevo, Bački Petrovac, Kupinovo, Požarevac, Novi Sad, Novi Pazar.

### Programmes of VSS speak to the following actors:

Volunteers of all ages, especially young between 15 and 30, from all of Serbia and the world, no matter their background, upbringing, gender, sex, social status, nationality, ability;

Associations of the following profile:

Our 9 contact points for the exchange of volunteers: since 2010. ten associations and youth offices

Local hosts of workcamps in Serbia: 28 to 35 workcamps

International voluntary service organisations: approx. 90 partners from 50 countries all over the world with whom we have signed the partners agreement for the international exchange of volunteers

Institutions and networks engaged in our field of work, on national and international level.



*International workcamp in Serbia*

### Sub-groups

**Promo group** of volunteers with previous experience in workcamps: the group consisted of 10 members in 2018, who independently organised promotional events in Belgrade and in Serbia, as well as online.

**Camp leaders:** 68 camp leaders were involved, out of which 50 newly trained

**Mentors and help in the office:** 29 mentors helped volunteers who went for the first time abroad in 2018; 18 people volunteered in the office during high season

### Projects and donors in 2018:

“National youth volunteering programme YOUTH RULES 2018”, 31/08/2018-28/02/2019; donor: Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia

### Partnerships/Coalitions/Membership in networks

**Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations**, European based network counting 51 members from 30 countries; VSS has the most active relationship with the members of the Alliance in terms of volunteers' exchange

**CCIVS - Coordinating Committee of International Voluntary Service**, global network of voluntary services, founded and operating under the UNESCO

**SCI - Service Civil International**, the oldest global network of voluntary services

**Informal network of 10 contact points across Serbia**, recruiting volunteers for workcamps in Serbia and abroad and reaching out to the most vulnerable youth.

We represented the organization in:

Working Groups of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations (for Gender Equality, for Staff Development).

Pool of trainers for the realization of the General Conference of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations.

Pool of trainers of the Tempus Foundation (Serbian National Agency for Erasmus Plus Programme).

Pool of accreditors of SALTO SEE for European Solidarity Corps.

Committee for youth and clubs of UNESCO of the Republic of Serbia's Commission for cooperation with UNESCO.



*International workcamp' participants*



*Voluntary work*

## ***EDUCATION PROGRAMME***

### **E-learning [www.obuke.mis.org.rs](http://www.obuke.mis.org.rs)**

YRS Online training platform was launched in 2013. By the end of 2018 the platform has 1017 registered users, and the total of 16 courses in 6 thematic areas.

During the 2018 no new courses are developed, but work was performed on technical improvement of the platform: it was done the updating and maintenance of platform, user review mode (increased

number of categories for selection, enabled selection by category and similar) and new options for preparing lessons in courses are developed.

In addition, during 2018 all the problems that have been reported in issuing the certificates of users who have passed the final tests on courses have been solved.

### **ERASMUS PLUS PROGRAMME**

In 2018 we successfully closed two projects for 2017, having their reports approved by the European Commission, and we submitted two new project proposals, which were both approved. Moreover, we sent 38 young people and youth workers to 4 youth exchanges, 2 trainings, 2 conferences and 1 seminar abroad. New project proposals:

“GREEN VOICE OF YOUTH IN MEDIA: innovations and environmentally responsible consumer behavior”: submitted under KA1 action line of the grant on 4/02/2018 to the Tempus Foundation, approved and realized (international training of non-formal education) 20-25/08/2018 in Belgrade;

The objectives of the training were:

- Transferring knowledge of the basics of sustainable green living concept covering production made with social and environmental concern and its eco-labels
- Raising awareness about the importance of involving young people

and how media such as social networks and blogs can be useful

- Sharing tools to disseminate importance of those sustainable parameters via media for youth
- Sharing tools to disseminate green innovations and empower youth in green entrepreneurship
- Building skills of youth workers and youth leaders on how to develop messages that engage targeted audience
- Stimulating sharing of young people’s interests and knowledge connected to environmental issues
- Creating space for exchanging examples of best practices; for networking and exchanging experiences

“XCHANGE 2.0 exchange of youth leaders in International Voluntary Service” submitted under KA2 Capacity Building action line of the

grant on 7/03/2018 to the Executive Agency EACEA, approved and to be realized in 2019. The project involves 14 partners from 8 countries and one European network where all are members – Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations. It helps explore new innovative ways for the movement to address the needs of young people and youth organisations. XCHANGE is about the exchange of youth leaders, as a response to a common challenge of decrease in number of youth leaders in the movement. In the period between 15/12/2018 and 1/06/2020 the consortium plans to provide a theoretical (training) and hands on experience (practice phase) to 20 youth leaders from Serbia and 20 from partners' countries. The leaders will coordinate 40 local community projects (workcamps) involving 450+ young volunteers from all over the world.

#### Project Results:

- 40 trained youth leaders, 20 from Serbia and 20 from the partner countries
- minimum 30 international voluntary workcamps included in the project with 450+ international volunteers and 30 local communities in partner countries
- upgraded content of the web documentary [www.youthleaders.online](http://www.youthleaders.online) with new testimonials from camp leaders and translated into Italian, Serbian, Spanish, French, Slovak, Czech, Turkish
- practice of international exchange of camp leaders taken roots among the members of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations and promoted as a promising practice for the future of IVS movement

We successfully submitted reports for projects realized in 2017, that, further on, got approved:

- Rur.IT.A.N.I.A.- Fostering international mobility and IT competence of young people from rural areas
- XCHANGE – Exchange of youth workers in International Voluntary Service

As partners in other Erasmus Plus projects we sent participants to international youth exchanges, seminars, conferences and trainings abroad:

- Technical meeting of the Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organizations, 1-7/03/2018, organizer: INEX SDA, Czech Republic
- Training “Youth exploring participation”, 17-23/03/2018, organizer: Youth Environment Europe, Czech Republic
- Training “Youth for environmental future”, 08-15/07/2018, organizer: Youth Environment Europe, Czech Republic
- Youth exchange “Crossing Paths-driving change”, 04-13/07/2018, organizer: WWF Austria
- Youth exchange “Métalocaux, villages en transformation“, 06-26/08/2018, organizer: Kreiz Breizh Villages d’Europe, France
- Youth exchange “A good(s) life. The chances and reality of a civil economy“, 23-31/08/2018, organizer: Legambiente, Italy
- Youth exchange “Impact 0“, 27/08-09/09/2018, organizer: CBB, Belgium
- Seminar “Partners in Peace - asylum seekers and youth workers creating a sharing platform, 14-29/10/2018,

organizer: Kansainvälinen vapaaehtoistyö ry, Finland

- Conference "Experience - Record - Share - Involve: Evaluation and dissemination meeting", 27/10-1/11/2018, organizer: Alliance of

European Voluntary Service Organisations and the association DeAmicitia.

**The BUILDPEACE project** is a three-year project of "strategic partnership" of non-formal and formal education (KA2 Erasmus +), where Young Researchers of Serbia are one of 3 partners in the sector of non-formal education (with 1 international organization and 3 University). The project, which began in September 2016, during 2017 was marked with the planning and first joint five-day workshop at Coventry University (United Kingdom). During 2018 the project activities were focused on the partner work on the planned "products" of the project. Young Researchers of Serbia have coordinated the work on the *Handbook - For those who are beginning to learn about building peace*, in collaboration with representatives of the University of Mugla from Turkey. This university hosted a second joint workshop (held from 8-13 July 2018 in Marmaris), where the YRS team also presented the methodic framework for the production of "key framework competence". Through the participatory process in which all partners participated, earlier, to decide on the choice of 14 key competences in which beginners should set their way of learning about building peace (at a *meeting of Project planning*, which was hosted by YRS in February 2018 in Belgrade). By the end of the year, YRS provided the participation of all partner organizations in the preparation of the first draft version of the handbook and made their contribution in the drafting of the other 7 products (such as T-kit, online courses, etc.) that coordinate other project organizations.



*Buildpeace meeting*

**Together** is a project that was created in response to a call for project ideas (small grants) of Project consortium *Divided past - Common future*. The proposal was accepted and the project started with realization in December 2018.



*Danube Art Master work*

International competition “**Danube Art Master**” is the activity of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River and the Global Water Partnership for Central and Eastern Europe. The competition targets the age of 6-18 years and is implemented in all 14 countries on the Danube basin since 2004.

Works from 25 schools arrive for the competition on average annually. The last competition was the largest in terms of the number of schools and the number of individual works. In 2018, we received 121 artwork and 16 videos, created by 250 students from 30 schools in Serbia.



*The winner of 2018 Danube Master Art during the ceremony of Danube Day celebration in Belgrade*

### **Partnerships/coalitions/membership in other networks**

In 2018 is marked with a participation in events such as annual meetings, assembly, joint activities, and partnership application for financial support:

**KOMS** (*Krovna organizacija mladih Srbije*) – participation in the Assembly 19-21 January 2018 in Vršac;

**NAPOR** (*Nacionalna asocijacija praktičara i praktičarki omladinskog rada*) – participation in the network assembly 24-26 November 2018 and co-organization of the Conference “*Incentive Environment for youth*” 12-14 December in Karateš;

**SEEYN** (*South East European Europe*) – Participation in the annual online assembly, at a meeting with the Peace Nexus in connection with the second phase of strategic planning of the Network (May 2018) and participation in running trainings of SEEYN training center. YRS was also part of a project consortium consisting of the RYCO and 6 members of SEEYN (national Volunteer Centres) in the competition of the “*Norwegian fund for the Western Balkans*” (Three-year project ROUTE WB6, was approved and started with implementation on 01<sup>st</sup> of January 2019).



*SEEYN meeting, may 2018*

**YEE** (*Youth Environment Europe*) – Participation in annual activities, the work of the Network Committee and the implementation of the workshop (mini grant within YEE “*Take a Green stand*”, October 2018.).

## **Annual activity report of YRS for 2018**

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