

In September 2002 "LINGVA" has started implementation of the program "Women's Club", which includes 120 women which belong to marginalized groups (internally displaced persons and refugees, and local socially endangered women) with aim of their economic strengthening, as well as providing social support.

In February 2010 "LINGVA" has started activities with the aim of transforming "Women's Club" into the Social Cooperative "Creative Workshop". Through the activities of Social Cooperative "Creative Workshop", we plan that beneficiaries improve living conditions and to contribute to solving the existential problems accumulated, with the help of "LINGVA" experts, as well as through the realization of their own ideas. Beneficiaries have started activities such as making unique clothes, preparing food for winter, making jewelry, ethno works, decorative painting of wooden, ceramic and glass items, providing services, etc ... "LINGVA" provides space to beneficiaries for work, production and services, as well as ongoing sales gallery in the lobby of "Lingva Center". Materials needed for production are purchased for beneficiaries, and all income goes to the person who produced the item that is sold.

Income generated in this way is very important for beneficiaries, because they realize financial income, but it should be emphasized that the socio-psychological effect is also significant for beneficiaries. Since the financial income makes women more independent, that also results in the reduction of domestic violence that they have experienced, by the spouses, of whom most are alcohol dependent.

Since August 2010, after additional training, procurement of additional equipment for production and services, as well as finding permanent, stable market, we plan to register "Women's Club" as the Social Cooperative "Creative Workshop". Membership in the "Creative Workshop" will be based on the competition of ideas, and each member of the cooperative, with the help of "LINGVA" trainers, has been already working on developing of their own business plan and will apply it in practice.

In this environment it is necessary to develop the concept of social entrepreneurship as a means of support to poverty reduction in socially and economically marginalized social groups. Experience of "LINGVA" indicates that cooperatives are not based on the logic of profit, but rather on the moral values which aim is not only benefit of members, but also the quality of life in local communities.

"Creative Workshop" will not only reduce the problem of unemployment and poverty, it will be an active factor in solving social problems of the local community, because it will acts as an integrating factor, headed by the principle of market, and solidarity as well. Social Cooperative "Creative Workshop" will be definitely accepted as an effective way to solve the problem of poverty not only in the local community, but also at the level of the Republic.

For the realization of these planed goals additional financial support of the international organizations, republic institutions is needed, with financial support that the Norwegian people's Aid SEE has been providing since the establishment (2002), as well as the French Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development (since February 2009.)

On 18th March Ivana Kahrmann, Programme Manager NPA-SEE (Norwegian People's Aid – SEE) and Milica Krstanovic Deputy Programme Manager NPA-SEE visited Women's Club of the Lingva Centre.