



ANNUAL REPORT

2019

Foundation Step Forward
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I Brief Summary

The Foundation Step Forward (FSF) focused on 3 key areas in 2019: local resources mobilization (particularly individual giving), social capital building and diaspora engagement. Also, the grant received from the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland, enabled FSF to engage in the field of cultural and historical heritage, that plays an important role in the collective spirit of the community, as explained below.

Thanks to the support of the Global Fund for Community Foundations, FSF was able to conduct a systematic mapping of key leaders in Zajecar diaspora, building a significant database of individuals. Also, FSF launched My Zajecar web portal to serve as a virtual hot spot for the community and diaspora to gather, share the stories and act.

In terms of organizational development, the Foundation Step Forward intensified its efforts to develop capacities for philanthropically engaging local people in the community. Through various activities, the Foundation paid special attention to strengthening social capital in the community (trust, connections, relationships), which is a prerequisite for encouraging citizens to engage in that community. Also, the Foundation sought to identify and reach out to informal initiatives of citizens and cause-related groups, which are under the radar of other organizations and donors, and support their ideas, because such groups have a huge potential for genuine civic activism and community engagement.

II Major Activities Implemented in 2019

Grantmaking

In 2019, FSF has continued broadening its grantmaking efforts in the community, supporting CSOs, informal groups and individuals:

	Organization / group	Municipality	Name of the project	Amount
1	CSO "Children's Centre"	Zaječar	'Art Zone for All – the Festivals of Inclusivness'	\$100
2	Mountaineering Association 'Ljuba Nestic' Zajecar	Zaječar	'Installing new benches and tables'	\$500
3	Charity Fund	Zaječar	Various Individuals and groups	\$4,500
TOTAL				\$5,100

Philanthropy Development & Local Resources Mobilization

FSF has implemented / tested various resources mobilizing strategies organized in

2019, raising more than 5.000 USD for different purposes in the community:

	Source	Amount
1	Individual Donations (in cash)	\$5.500
2	Corporate Donations	\$300
TOTAL		\$5,800

- FSF teamed up with a group of young people from Zajecar and started organizing a Pub Quiz in the Zajecar Youth Center. Quiz initially attracted many people, while in summer garden it became one of the most attractive events for young people in Zajecar! Its organizers made one step further – they started donating funds collected from participation fees for various causes in the community! Thus, they have been both promoting knowledge and contributing to a better community! Further, FSF cooperated with several performers from the community, organizing 7 events to raise funds for various community needs. 69.740 RSD in total has been raised at these occasions;
- In cooperation with the Youth Center Zajecar, FSF launched another interesting initiative. Starting from 2019, 5 RSD from each beverage sold has been donated to the special Vital Fund established by the Foundation Step Forward. Vital Fund has been used to support small community projects. 119.500 RSD was raised during the winter season in the Youth Center.
- FSF continued organizing its traditional Charity Bazaars in 2019. Three editions of the Bazaars were organized, gathering more than 200 people, when 307.000 RSD was raised in total.
- Insurance Company ‘Dunav’ donated 30.000 RSD to the Foundation Step Forward.
- FSF expanded its network of the installed donation boxes in the community, succeeding to raise 281.104 RSD.

Diaspora Philanthropy

In 2019, FSF continued engaging with numerous Zajecar diaspora. With the support from the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF), FSF started systematically mapping diaspora representatives. Mapping process consisted of 2 main methods: 1) Gathering data through online research (Facebook, LinkedIn, Google) and 2) series of interviews with local citizens (84 interviews were conducted over the course of grant period).

The mapping process resulted in the comprehensive database of individuals belonging to community’s diaspora, containing the most relevant information: country of residence, location, profession and contacts. Database includes 482 individuals in the moment of the report writing. Mapping process has not been limited exclusively to diaspora leaders and key persons (business, religious leaders etc.) but also involved individuals of various professional backgrounds.

Within the same grant, a new web portal titled ‘My Zajecar’ was developed and launched to serve both as a communication channel among community members,

specifically targeting diaspora as well as an effective tool for building social capital in the community. My Zajecar website was designed as a crowdsourcing platform enabling citizens of Zajecar and diaspora to share their own stories and anecdotes about the community. Published content has been carefully selected to encompass those texts that connect and unite people rather than make divisions. My Zajecar portal includes following sections: Community's Spirit (containing various stories and texts about the community), Old Zajecar (a link to partner's website that is publishing local newspaper articles from 60s and 70s), Discover Zajecar (a link to another FSF website dealing with Zajecar cultural and historical heritage), People from Zajecar (promoting various people, particularly from diaspora). The portal is available at www.mojzajecar.rs.

Special Programs

In 2019, FSF was supported by the Academy for the Philanthropy Development in Poland within the program 'Global Challenges, Local Solutions'. FSF was seeking to involve local citizens in the community's historical and cultural heritage management as well as to promote its protection.

FSF organized three consultation meetings bringing together key community actors related to cultural-historical heritage: Representatives of Municipal Tourist Organization, Municipal Historical Archive, National Museum, local authorities, CSOs and media took part in these meetings. Also, new website 'Discover Zajecar', available at www.upoznajzajecar.rs was designed and launched. The website contains six sections: About the Website (key information about the website and this project), Locations (both list of and Google Map with the most important cultural-historical sites in Zajecar marked with QR codes), Zajecar Stories (the most interesting and rare stories from Zajecar's past), Donations (possibility to donate for renovation of Zajecar public spaces), Important Links (links to relevant organizations and institutions dealing with cultural-historical heritage management) and Sustainable Development Goals (introduction to SDGs, targeting wider population). There is also a separate link on this website, inviting citizens to contribute to the process of mapping of cultural-historical sites in Zajecar. The website is linked to a number of tables with QR codes. Representatives of FSF and participants of consultation meetings held within this project have selected 53 cultural-historical sites in Zajecar to be marked with specially designed info-tables with unique QR (Quick Response) code (the design of the tables is attached with this report). Info tables were available in two different formats: A4 (21.0 x 29.7cm) and A5 (14.8 x 21.0 cm). By scanning the code on the table, using a smartphone or tablet, people get an immediate access to a respective page at 'Discover Zajecar' website, containing detailed information on the monument/site with the appropriate time-line. The main goal of these tables is to educate local population and tourists about Zajecar cultural heritage.

FSF also invited citizens to gather and to jointly renovate the famous site 'Roman Stairs' located in Kraljevica Hill near the town. This was the one of the most massive collective action of citizens in the recent Zajecar history that brought together more than 120 people to clean and renovate this popular location. During this action, the

location of the 'Roman Stairs' as well as nearby areas and access roads and paths were completely cleaned, while old and damaged bricks were replaced with new ones that have the similar look. The whole action attracted extensive public and media attention.

III Major Achievements in 2019

Leadership Role in the Community

FSF activities had the significant role in fostering active community cooperation in heritage management – this was the very first time, that a broader group of community stakeholders, both from public and private sector, set together to discuss and plan ways and approaches of managing cultural-historical sites.

Engaging Local People

Engagement of the local community i.e. citizens is critically important for FSF. As mentioned above, FSF succeeded to organize one of the most massive collective actions of citizens in the recent Zajecar history gathering around 120 people to clean and renovate 'Roman Stairs' location. What is also very important to underline, the people of significantly different backgrounds (profession, age, interest, education...) participated in the action, proving that carefully chosen community issues (so-called 'triggers') are able to generate interest of people to engage for the local causes, even in the context of civic apathy and passivism.

Also, FSF engaged more than 20 local individuals to contribute to both My Zajecar and Discover Zajecar platforms with various community-related content.

Diaspora Philanthropy

Conducted diaspora mapping resulted in the creation of a database with 482 entries. FSF has continued updating / expanding this database regularly. FSF also gained unique experience and know-how in exercising such mapping processes that will be further applied in expanding the database of Zajecar diaspora.

What should be mentioned, there is a growing interest of both Zajecar diaspora and local people for contributing to My Zajecar platform with various content (texts, stories, photos, anecdotes...) This confirmed initial thoughts of FSF that such online platform is able to serve as a glue, contributing to relations, cohesion and trust-building within the community. Mapping of diaspora also spurred an interest for FSF and its activities among a wider community in Zajecar. Simply by conducting a series of interviews, FSF was able to effectively promote its ideas for engaging diaspora in the community as well as its wider plans and strategies for the local community.

Local Resource Mobilization Advanced

FSF managed to raise more than 550.000,00 RSD only from the local people through various resource mobilization strategies (fundraising events, direct donations, donation boxes and Charity Bazaar events). These were mainly very small donations. This result has additionally encouraged FSF to consider new strategies for raising individual donations from local citizens and to expand existing ones. It is estimated that around 200.000,00 RSD more has been donated locally in kind by individuals.

In late 2019, the section of FSF website for raising on-line donations from individuals was finally finalized and will be extensively used in 2020.

Raised Visibility and Awareness of FSF in the Community

FSF continued effectively promoting its activities and achievements through digital channels and traditional media. Increased communication efforts related to FSF activities resulted in the ability of citizens to recognize the work of FSF and the results made in the community.

Both My Zajecar and Discover Zajecar web platforms significantly contributed to FSF visibility and communication / outreach capacities. In 2019, FSF also started working on a separate communication strategy targeting diaspora exclusively. In this respect, FSF hired Ms. Dijana Vasiljevic, a communication specialist with a comprehensive background in working with Serbian diaspora to design a tailor made road map for developing an effective communication with Zajecar diaspora representatives, particularly aiming to:

1. Identify specific channels, messages and objectives for Zajecar diaspora members;
2. Assess FSF internal communication capacities and
3. Identify diaspora clubs and associations that fit the best in the overall strategy of the foundation.

Strengthened Social Capital in the Community

In 2019, FSF continued successfully facilitating community processes that foster collaboration among various structures and individuals. FSF provided space for local people and groups of different backgrounds to cooperate.

'My Zajecar' portal that was built and launched in 2019, has been promoted as a 'place for all Zajecar people and those who feel like that'. Such a portal is of particular importance in the situation of a continuous derogation of social capital during recent decades. There have already been a number of people from the community and diaspora who reached out to FSF to deliver various texts and photos and contribute to the content. My Zajecar is designed to create a space for the content that will bridge existing gaps in the community and bring local people of various backgrounds together instead of making divisions.

Having in mind the interest of people to engage and contribute to this portal, My Zajecar is a very promising tool that has a big potential to advance community's social capital.