



**NEW SOCIAL INITIATIVE**

# INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

## GOOD PRACTICES REPORT



This report is produced in the framework of the project "Increasing citizen participation and accountability in local governance for northern Kosovo".





# TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction and Methodology.....6

Conventional Practices ..... 8

Unconventional Practices ..... 12

Recommendations Pilot Project ..... 22



# INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The Good Practice Report is the second deliverable of comprehensive research in framework of the project "Increasing citizen's participation and accountability in local governments in northern Kosovo" supported by PAX. The first deliverable was the assessment of local municipalities' adherence to principles of transparency and accountability in northern Kosovo with the emphasis on the assessment of the four northern municipalities' adherence to the principles of citizens' participation, transparency and accountability, as they are envisaged in formal law and international practices.

The overall objective of Good Practice Report was to contribute to strengthening of democratic potentials at the local government level in northern Kosovo, through assessment, identification, development and demonstration of innovative approaches in good governance, primarily in terms of civil participation and accountability. The specific objectives of The Good Practice Report were identifying good practices and exploring their applicability within the local context in one of the four municipalities in North Kosovo, as well as to provide recommendations and technical assistance to local governments to establish innovative mechanisms for interactions with constituency.

Research and its report were primarily focused on mapping and analyzing possible utilization of innovative practices (mostly those assisted by Information System Technologies) for citizens' participation, transparency and accountability in local governments. The research explored the challenges and dilemmas associated with direct citizens' participation, and reflected on the various models of the interactions of the citizen-local government and developed certain recommendations for moving beyond conventional participation. In an e-government and open government context, transparency and participation are means to reform public administrations, combat corruption, increase the rule of law, align public policies with public preferences, strengthen the legitimacy of public institutions, and, with that all, to build trust and confidence of citizens toward them. Open access to data and utilization of innovative practices through public portal, for instance, foster the accountability of public institutions. The Research will also gather useful information on the best regional and international innovation practices in this area, particularly connected services which change the way governments communicate with users by, for instance, being proactive in requesting information and opinions from citizens using Web and social media.

Data were gathered through desk and field research, and recommendations were drawn based on those. The report is foreseen as a tool that will be utilized for the purpose of developing a pilot project for one of four local governments in northern Kosovo (North Mitrovica, Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić). In order to research good practices, New Social Initiative used the following methodology:

- Desk research resulted in mapping out examples of the good practices and their further exploration;
- Research team visited regional municipalities in Serbia (Niš, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Zaječar, Indija and Paraćin) and Macedonia (Skopje) previously mapped out through desk research.

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- Research team conducted interviews, collected data, observed work, procedures and actions of municipalities and civil society organization in region for the purpose of exploring feasibility of application of models of good practices in targeted municipalities.

Good Practices Report brings together a variety of innovative and effective examples of good practice from the listed municipalities. The rationale for the choice of good practices is threefold. The good practices are considered because: 1) they relate to the principles of citizens participation, accountability and transparency; 2) they demonstrate various way of citizens' participation at either local or national level; 3) targeting similar socio-economic demography, (i.e. cities/municipalities with similar size of citizens or not).

## Organization of report

Report is organized in two sections that represent conventional practices, as well as innovative practices for citizens' participation identified throughout the research. There is, however, an overlap between this two dimensions and good practices often have multiply aims, that combine both conventional practices and innovative approaches. Additionally, findings of research emphasize that using conventional practices without the innovative ones are not attractive, while the innovative practices without the conventional ones have limited scope.

Conventional Practices dimension encompasses recognized practices and activities that facilitate citizens' participation in local decision making processes such as public consultations, town hall meetings, round tables, petitions, etc.

Innovative Practices dimension encompasses practices which provide opportunities for citizens to use new Information System Technologies such as web portals and smart phone applications to inform themselves about the work of local self governments and influence decision making at the local level. Additionally, they help the municipal authorities in delivering better services to its constituencies.



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# CONVENTIONAL PRACTICES

Citizens' participation is any activity that shapes, affects, or involves individuals, interests groups (non-governmental organization or private companies) in policy development processes. Citizens' participation ranges from voting to attending town hall meeting, public debate or consultation to sending a letter to local or national representatives/authorities.

In the context of this report, the conventional practices involve activities which can effects decision making processes, from signing petitions to taking part in demonstration, participation in surveys, public consultations, town hall meeting or even in the river cleaning actions. However, this report will give overview of common practices for citizens' participation in region that may help leadership of the local authorities in North Kosovo to develop mechanism for citizens' participation that may work in their respective context.

Conventional practices dimension concerns a type of practices that is associated with decision making regarding local planning, development of municipality yearly budget, or the definition of short term or long term strategies and priorities. Among others, New Social Initiative chooses three good practices singled out as successful, that can be applied in local context of 4 municipalities in northern Kosovo.

## **Example 1: Citizens participation - Budget hearings Paraćin Municipality, Serbia**

The Municipality of Paraćin was publicized as the most transparent municipality in Serbia in 2015 and 2016, based on Transparency Assessment Index Report conducted by Transparency Serbia.<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons for such the success lies in high level of citizens' participation in the process of development of municipal yearly budget. This is a good example of how efficient municipal administration works in order to foster political participation. The activities are carried out by municipality institutions at a local level. All residents from 16 years onwards can participate in budget hearings.

Municipal institutions / authorities organize open budget hearings in all 35 villages/settlements, in order to hear citizens voice on projects and investments that should take place in the following year. Public hearings are quite visited and, according to municipal public relation officer, 2189 citizens took part in these activities in 2016 which represent around 15% of total municipality population. Hearings are announced at local radio station and through social networks in order to inform citizens on venue and time of hearing. The mayor and the departments directors take part in hearings and collect data and information on citizens' problems, needs and concerns. Based on citizens' feedback, the Municipality conduct feasibility assessment to develop projects and budget for the next year. The main feature of this practice is that citizens have a direct say in annual budgets and are also closely involved in short term and long-term planning and development of their neighborhoods. Additionally, local administration allocates a specific amount of money that citizens can use for their ideas. Citizens can suggest ideas for specific projects, such as renovation

<sup>1</sup> Paraćin the most transparent local self-movement in Serbia, Socijalno uključivanje, article available at <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/paracin-the-most-transparent-local-self-government>

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of city centers, reconstruction of the streets or investment in water or sewage system for remote villages.

### *Advantages*

- In-person citizens' participation offers the opportunity to citizens who don't have access to other types of outlets, including internet and social media to take part in processes;
- Utilization of all of the local offices; it makes the process a geographical disperse, for which citizens living in remote villages also have the opportunity to raise their voice and to be heard by decision makers;
- Making the meetings public enables citizens to keep local administration accountable for the promises made at the budget hearing meetings;
- Traditionalizing the mechanism, as this practice in the Municipality of Paraćin was introduced 10 years ago, makes it reliable and trustworthy (results are tangible);
- Duration of the process enables local authorities to consult and obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions throughout the process.

### *Disadvantages*

- Time consuming and costly;
- May exclude certain groups of citizens as employed (those working during the meetings) or students (those out of town during the week), or marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities (not all of the public premises are accessible);
- Potentially inefficient, as quality and the flow of discussions may not always be on the highest level, as high turn-outs sometimes lead discussions in a direction not related to budgetary spending;
- Challenging to follow up or organize additional series of hearings to follow up on ideas or recommendation discussed in the first meeting.

## **Example 2: Citizens participation - Policy development participation City of Skopje, Macedonia**

Macedonian Center for International Cooperation and the Municipality of Skopje in framework of the project "Good Governance in Macedonia" created mechanism which allows individuals and groups to participate in policy development processes trough participation in assembly/municipal committees and working groups. The participation is encouraged throughout various stages, until the acts are presented to local assembly for adoption. In order to increase citizens' participation, the Municipality cooperates with local civil society organizations so as to reach interest groups and individuals and motivate them to take part in all policy development phases. Additionally, citizens can follow up policy making process and provide comments on open public consultations. This mechanism is developed through USAID financed project and has the following features:

- Firstly, citizens and interest groups can launch initiatives for new legislative proposals, present ideas and critique government and submit official request for policy development. Later on, the proposal is forwarded to the relevant government department, which then writes back with an official response explaining what action was or was not taken and the reason behind it;



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- If an action is taken policy development process starts and municipality creates policy development working group that includes relevant departments' directors, subject matter experts, civil society, citizens or citizens groups. Once policy is developed citizens can participate in public consultations/hearings. Citizens and CSOs can publicly give their opinions about draft legislation prepared by working groups.

According to the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC), the project demonstrated that citizens are ready to actively participate in policy making processes, but the process requires a lot of engagement of stakeholders and campaigning in order to attract the participation. Local organizations in each municipality help MCIC to inform citizens and encourage participation. The project started in 2010 and more than 20 strategies, action plans and policy acts were developed with this mechanism.

#### *Advantages*

- Well designed, systematic process adopted as a civil society's mechanism for provision of policy proposals to decision makers;
- Citizens, citizens groups and civil society participate during the entire policy development process, from initiation to adoption, towards monitoring, that keeps local authorities accountable or less accountable for the actions;
- Capacity building component, as citizens, participating in the process, can learn about policy development;
- Can be utilized by certain groups concentrated on specific issues, such as minorities, disadvantaged groups and others.

#### *Disadvantages*

- It requires high level of efforts to attract participants;
- Slow and time-consuming process;
- Municipalities are not obligated to accept the request or adopt policies as official documents;
- Lack of monitoring mechanisms.

### **Example 3: Disadvantages group participation - Commission for People with Disabilities, Town of Sisak, Croatia**

One of the best practices that increased participation of disadvantaged groups in decision making process was recorded in Croatia. The Commission for People with Disabilities of the Town of Sisak was established on 7th October 2013, following recommendations of the national act "National Strategy of Equalization of Possibilities for Persons with Disabilities" and of other related national and international documents. The purpose of the Commission was to create a local strategy providing opportunities for implementation of the National Strategy at the local level, to monitor it, assist in implementation and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities in Sisak. Commission meets in the premises of the Town of Sisak minimum once every three months, but very often every month. The first and the main objective is always to create a strategy, followed by an agreed methodology and, afterwards, to monitor implementation and recommend needed improvements, advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. Disability Persons Organizations are the key component

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in the Commission's work due to their daily contact with target group. Association of Disabled Persons in Sisak suggests measures, recommendations and improvements, while the Town of Sisak is responsible for implementing those measures in partnership with the Association. Informing and communicating with Disability Persons Organizations and individuals with disabilities is crucial for the Commission, both in terms of gathering relevant data and raising awareness of disabled people's challenges in the wider community. Recommendations of disabled persons are continuously gathered using different tools such as interviews, focus groups, round tables, CSOs reports, desk research and similar.

### *Advantages*

- Focused and specific approach - direct involvement of population in need for certain policy measures, where associations directly suggest measures, recommendation and improvements actions;
- Systematic mechanism developed in direct cooperation with beneficiaries and adopted as local mechanism/policy that is utilized yearly (i.e. institutionalization of the mechanism);
- Evidence based decision making process with tailor-made methodology for data gathering and processing.

### *Disadvantages*

- Targets only one segment of disadvantages groups in the community;
- The Commission doesn't have budget for execution of all initiatives;
- Time consuming.

# UNCONVENTIONAL PRACTICES - ePARTICIPATION

Many national, regional and local authorities (governments, provinces, municipalities) use e-participation (electronic participation) as a tool to increase citizens' participation in decision making processes, but also to foster transparency and accountability. E-participation is about enhancing civic engagement and open participatory governance through integration of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). Growing evidences point to the rapid expansion of e-participation as a tool for engagement and strengthened collaboration between governments and citizens. Its objective is to improve access to information and public services as well as to promote participation in policy-making, both for the empowerment of individual citizens and the benefit of society as a whole. E-participation tools can reduce administrative burden for stakeholders by enhancing government transparency. E-tools enable costs to lessen, the ones which are involved in obtaining, reading and understanding regulations. Public consultation with stakeholders about these regulations reduces the opportunities for corruption and strengthens awareness of the work of government agencies. E-consultation helps to gauge the expectations of the public at an early stage. This means costly mistakes can be avoided.

This report will list good practices identified in region, mostly in Serbia that might be applicable in context of 4 northern municipalities. As our targeted municipalities do not have official or unofficial web portals, The Good Practice Report includes practices from basic web sites to advanced mobile phone applications.

## **Example 1: Web portal - City Information System Municipality of Indija**

In 2002, the Municipality of Indija made a strategic development plan, in which improvement of local administration was among the first priorities. The administration started the installation of an integrated information system right away - essentially creating e-government and e-participation platforms, in order to enable all citizens to participate in solving local problems, as well as to facilitate their day-to-day communication with the local administration. A constant improvement of administration, elimination of conventional communication strategies and solutions and readiness to utilize technological solutions have made the Municipality of Indija one of the most advanced municipalities in Serbia. The Municipality of Indija was awarded two times by FDI magazine (issued by Financial Times) in 2008 and 2012, partly because of its efficient administration. The City Information System is available at following web location [www.indjija.net](http://www.indjija.net).

The web portal is a place where citizens can get information about different issues and perform various administrative services, but as well as to communicate with the municipality officials. Among other categories (News, Gallery, E-governance) the web portal has the category "Local Self Government" that contains information about municipal officials, organization structure, information about local communities, but it also enables insight into municipal documents, budget, strategic and spatial plan, various forms, decisions made by Assembly, the Municipal Council or the mayor. Also this section includes various presentations about the current decision making processes and the work of municipality. Among other information, there is a presentation about the way that the City Information System works.

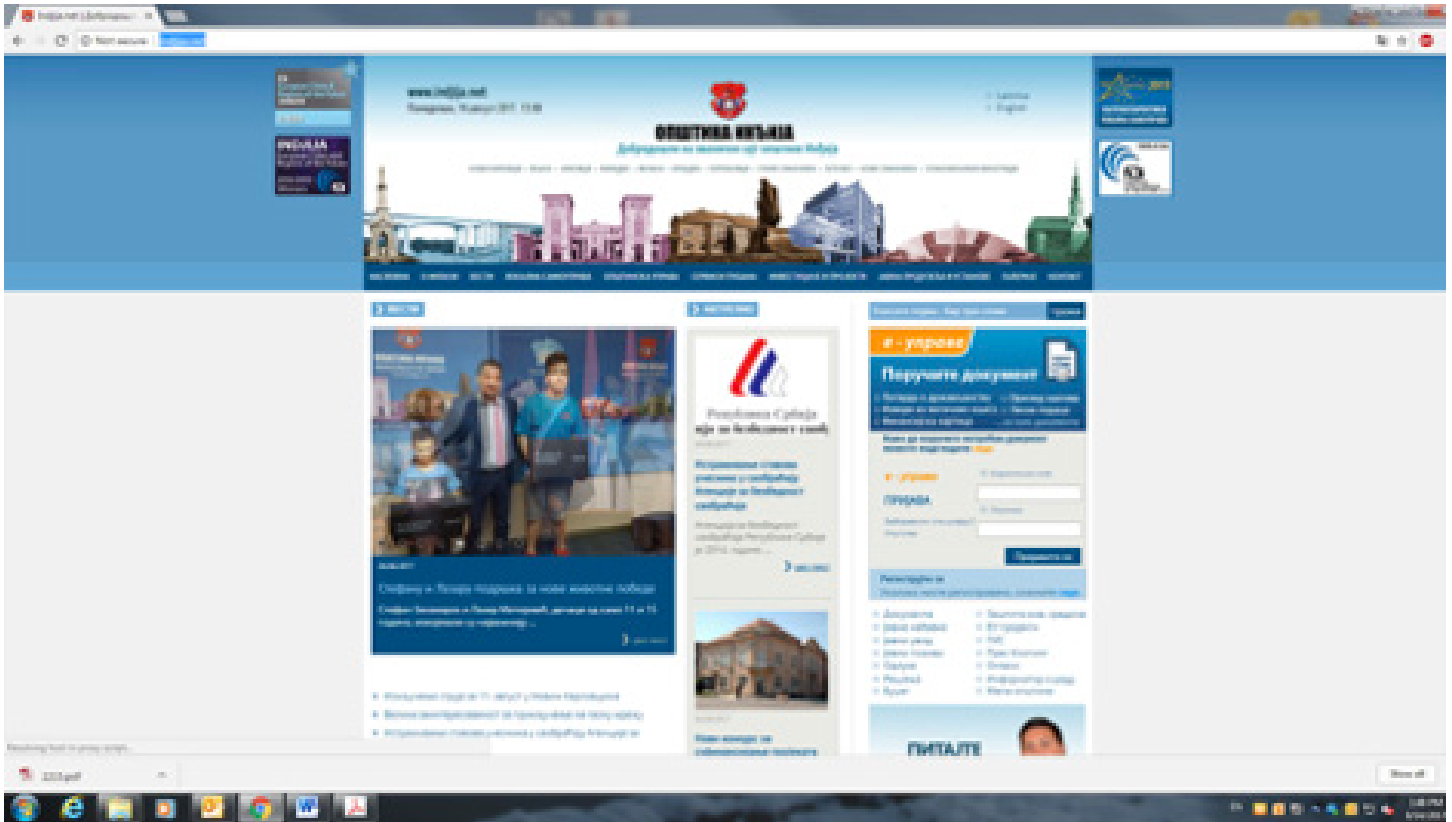


Photo 1: Municipality of Indija, City Information System

E-governance is a very important web site category that assists citizens to perform administrative services such as business registration, obtaining personal documents, but it is also the platform to access their personal commercial accounts and possibilities to submit different requests or complaints.

First of all, the City Information System of the Municipality of Indija enables citizens to be informed more, because it is regularly updated and it publishes invitations to public events and consultations and enables insight in public delivery processes. All the aforementioned features allow citizens to participate in various processes, open the dialog between citizens and administration and increase transparency. The web site surveys, regularly updated at the website, give opportunities to citizens to take participation in decision making processes. The surveys represent the first step in dialog which is then continued through direct mechanisms, such as strategic planning town hall meetings and public consultation. The Service "Ask Mayor and Departments Directors" gave results, since more than 4000 questions in average per year were received and answered.

### Advantages

- Modern and informative web site is a base for dialog between citizens and local administration;
- Requires development of communication strategy, visibility plan and coordination, which could result in better internal cooperation between departments, sections and units;
- Provides the public with balanced and objective information to assist it in understanding

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the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions;

- It is widely accessible, people from remote places could get timely information on local development processes;
- User friendly, in terms that it can be used at any time, place, and for desired duration;
- Increases visibility, transparency and information sharing.

### *Disadvantages*

- Expensive and time-consuming process, as it requires technical maintenance as well as content maintenance, additional trainings to civil servants to learn how to prepare web site content and manage their sections of the web sites;
- Not all citizens have access to computers or internet;
- Not all citizens are educated to use computers.

### **Example 2: E-governance portal and e-participation (online public consultation), Government of Serbia**

Government of Serbia established e-governance web and mobile phone platform portal [www.euprava.gov.rs](http://www.euprava.gov.rs) that enables at all levels (central, regional and local) to improve service delivery, but also citizens and business to obtain services electronically and to participate in public consultation process.

Services are divided into services for citizens and businesses. The most popular services for citizens are:

- Car registration extension;
- Cadaster services, declaration of non-movable property;
- Schedule appointment for obtaining personal documents, ID, driving licenses or passport;
- Apply for the personal documents (birthday certificate, certificate of marriage, certificate of death of family members);
- Tender and call for application for private companies or nonprofit organizations.



Photo 2: E-governance and eParticipation portal

Services can be searched based on different criteria (location, area or need) by clicking on the appropriate icon. In order to use the services, a user needs to register on the web portal using their personal email address. The execution of some electronic services is only available to those users registered through an electronic certificate, depending on the degree of authentication required by the state administration authority that provides the service. On the Technical Conditions page, users can familiarize with technical prerequisites for performing electronic services that require the use of an electronic certificate.

On the other hand, e-participation, a part of the portal, enables citizens to send comments, suggestions and documents in regard to subjects of public discussion. The provided link sends users to access policy documents such as laws, regulations and decisions that are currently in the phase of development and allows citizens to send comments, suggestions or give proposal on certain proposal. Owners of public discussion (e.g. ministry, municipalities) are responsible for answering comments or proposal received from citizens, civil society and private sector.

The e-participation web site is divided in different sections (areas), but it also has sections which lead to new public discussions documents, discussion with close deadlines, discussion with most comments and feedback. Users can navigate toward the desired consultation and obtain sets of information and tools to submit comments, feedbacks of proposals. Documents are available in all minority languages and accessible for people with disabilities. Users can download documents, leave comments and then upload documents with comments, or leave comments in classic comment section. Users can see members of working group that drafted a certain policy document and contact them via email.

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## Advantages

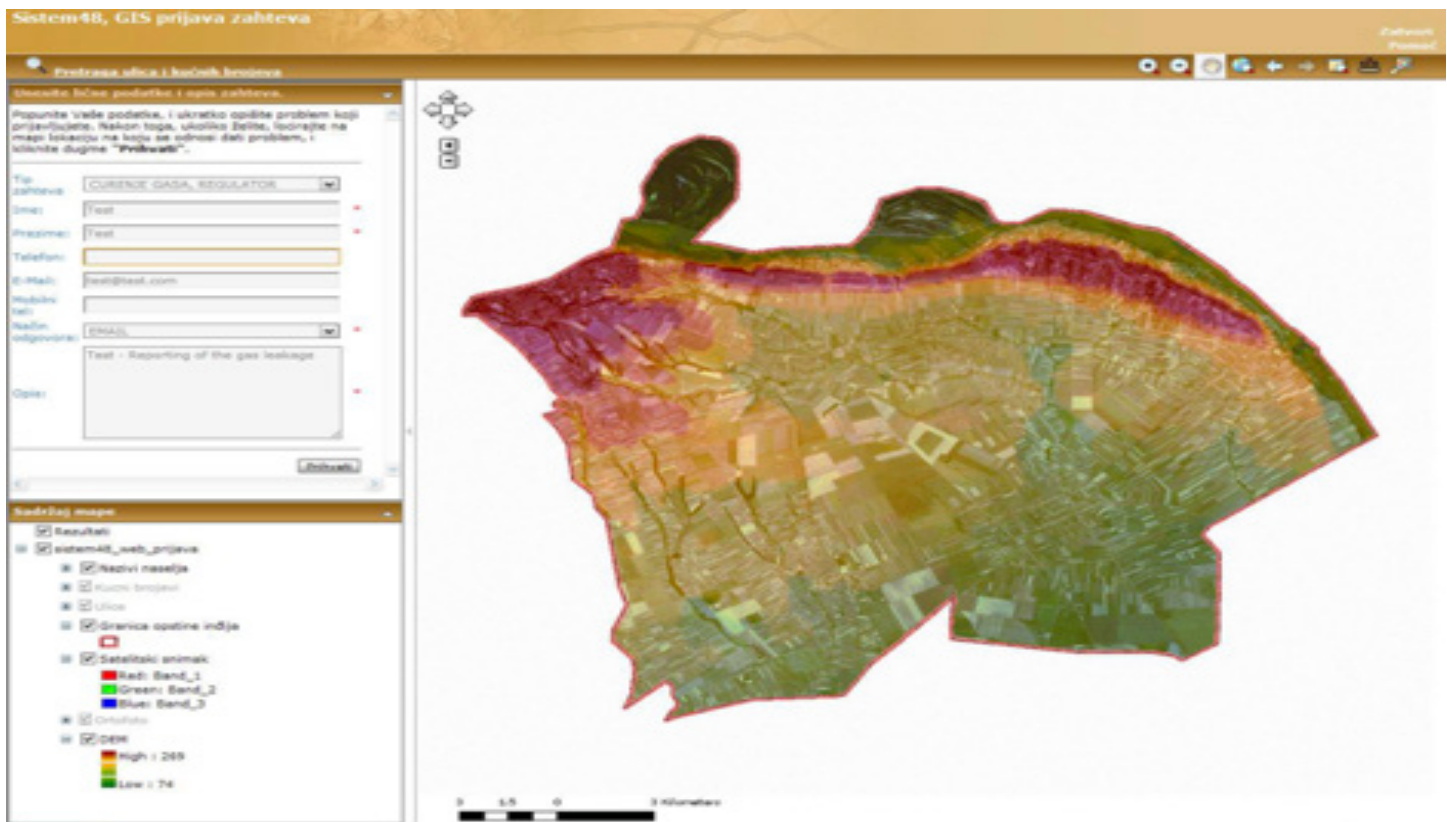
- Easy to use, accessible for all, including people with disabilities;
- Good platform for discussion that collects public thoughts on processes, but also ensures that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered;
- Creates partnership with the public in each aspect of decision making, including development of alternatives and identification of preferred solutions;
- Empowers citizens by putting final decision making in their hands;
- Keeps public informed, listens to and acknowledges concerns and aspirations and provides feedback on how public input influences the decision making process.

## Disadvantages

- Hard to coordinate; requires development of internal policies and standards, but also commitment of public authorities to engage in providing feedback to those who participate in on line public consultations;
- Requires engagement of high number of employees in all municipal departments and sections which could be problematic, bearing in mind lack of capacities in municipalities to deliver basic services to citizens;
- Expensive and time consuming, requires campaigning to involve citizens and educate them to participate in online public consultation processes;
- Not all citizens have access to computers or internet;
- Not all citizens are educated to use computers.

## **Example 3: 48-hour system, the municipalities of Indija, Paraćin, Sremska Mitrovica, the City of Belgrade, the City of Niš and many other municipalities across Serbia and the region**

A very innovative project has been piloted in the Municipality of Indija and later on multiplied across Serbia. The project is a web based application that could be integrated to municipality web portals, but also delivered as a mobile phone application. It is a municipal information system designed to improve cooperation between local government, municipal departments, and public utility enterprises on one hand and service recipients on the other. It allows citizens to easily report different issues, including those specifically relevant to environmental qualities: pollution incidents such as sewage leaks, improper disposal of waste, and similar. An inquiry can be sent online (using text form, or pointing the location of the issue on the map), using SMS, phone or other communication devices. In 48 hours, citizens are guaranteed to receive a proper response, followed by an action of the respective department if needed. In this way, citizens are encouraged to actively take part in municipal affairs. Furthermore, receiving a feedback assures citizens that the municipality government listens to the public and working on solving problems.



*Photo 3: Reporting an issue and pinpointing its location on the web-based map*

The System48 can be used as a tool to identify sources of problems in municipality. Thus, it can also be viewed as a form of participatory sensing. This crowd-sourced data help municipal service providers to define priorities, but also to receive a valuable feedback from public that can be used for planning purposes and evaluation of the existing planning measures. The value of the system for planning purposes rests within the stages of the on-going and post-project monitoring, as well as a means of securing relevant information on vulnerable sites, environmental quality, specific issues that require immediate planning responses, etc.

There is a service center in the background of this system. All reported issues and feedback information are managed and stored in a single place. As soon as an issue is reported, operators in the center route the information to the appropriate municipal authority or the public utility company. To make this system work, weekly meetings are held between the mayor, the heads of municipal departments and the executives of utility enterprises.

The system48 is based on the similar CitiStat system implemented in Baltimore, US (Microsoft, 2007). It is installed in 2004 and Indija is the first urban area in Europe where such the system was installed. By 2007, this system was used more than 6500 times (citizens inquires) (Microsoft, 2007), and by 2017 more than 35,000 times.



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### *Advantages*

- Easy to use, accessible for all, quick and effective;
- Collects data, provides necessary information to decision makers, thus facilitates better and effective solutions and quick decision making process;
- Obligates local authorities to provide feedback to those who submitted inquiries in the period of 48 hours, leading to better service delivery, accountability and transparency;
- Develops relations and trust between local authorities and citizens.

### *Disadvantages*

- The system requires development of IT infrastructure which could be expensive for municipalities;
- Time consuming, at least 3 to 6 months to prepare project implementation;
- Requires full engagement of all municipal departments, sections, units;
- Requires a specific feasibility study to assess capacities of targeted municipality to implement system;
- Not all citizens have access to modern technologies or internet;
- Not all citizens are educated to use modern technologies.

### **Example 4: Web portal and Mobile Phone application “Moj Odbornik”, Serbia**

Moj Odbornik is a project implemented by nonprofit organization “ProActiv” from Niš, Serbia. Since the project is essentially web site and mobile phone application, Moj Odbornik covers 32 cities and municipalities in Serbia. Moj Odbornik connects citizens with their representatives in local administrations and open virtual space to improve relationship between decision makers and citizens, and to discuss problems, needs and concerns of local communities, as well as to identify joint solutions for the citizens’ issues.

Registered users can see biographies of the representatives, overview of their political affiliation, statistics and overview of initiatives initiated by certain representatives. Users have a feature that allows direct contact with representatives in respective location by contacting them via portal, mobile phone application or SMS.

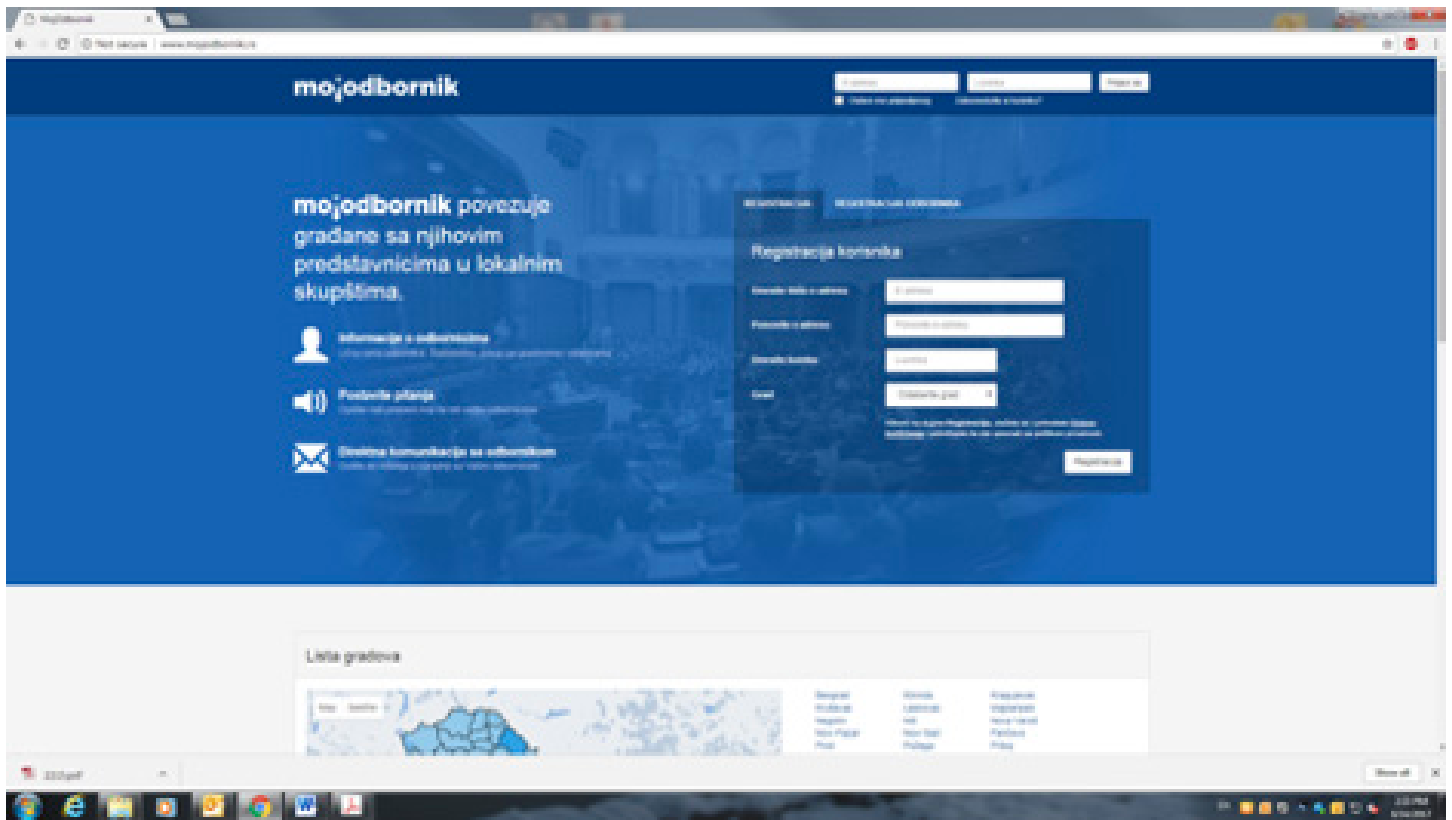


Photo 4: Web Portal "Moj Odbornik, accessible at [www.mojodbornik.rs](http://www.mojodbornik.rs)

### Advantages

- Opens channel of communication between local representatives and citizens;
- Collects data, provides necessary information and statistics to citizens about engagement of those who received citizens' trust at the local elections;
- The portal can be administrated at one place, but covers many municipalities which decrease costs and thus increase effectiveness;
- The portal is easy to develop and maintain, but requires constant coordination between administrator and municipalities and local deputies/representatives.

### Disadvantages

- Sustainability; the problem of financing is visible, since municipalities often don't see this as attractive measure;
- Time consuming, at least 6 months to prepare project implementation;
- Requires full engagement of all municipal departments, sections, units;
- Requires a specific feasibility study to assess capacities of targeted municipality to implement system;

- Not all citizens have access to modern technologies or internet;
- Not all citizens are educated to use modern technologies.

### Example 5: Mobile Phone application “Inspektor Građanin”, Zaječar, Knjaževac, Serbia

Mobile phone application “Inspektor Građanin” has been developed by nonprofit organization “The Timok Club” and the municipalities of Zaječar and Knjaževac in order to increase citizens’ monitoring on communal problems and reporting on issues to municipality administration for response. The application enables citizens to use their mobile phones as a medium to report the problems and take a photo or a video of a problem that the application sends directly to municipal departments who are in charge for a specific issue. In addition to the photo and the video application, users can add a description of the problem and propose a solution they would like to see. Many cities and municipalities developed similar applications in order to give opportunities to their constituencies to influence decision making, point priorities, but also initiate a project. On the other hand, municipalities can answer to initiative and in form those who report issues on status of their inquiries directly in the application. The application is developed for Android platform with possibilities to be developed for IOS mobile devices.

Photo 6: Inspektor Građanin, Application Interface

Another project component includes trainings and campaigning that inform citizens on mechanism they can utilize to participate in decision making processes at local level. The application was launched in September 2015 and thus far more than 5000 problems were reported, while 3000 problems were addressed by municipal authorities.

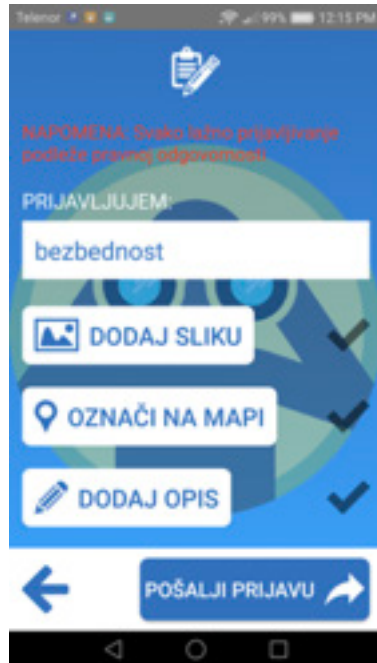


Photo 5: User interface mobile phone application “Inspektor Građanin”.

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### *Advantages*

- Easy to use, inexpensive and requires low level of maintenance and updates;
- Attracts attention and increases participation in reporting the problems at local level;
- Collects relevant data and directs utilization of budgetary lines allocated for everyday services;
- Builds relations and trust between local authorities and citizens.

### *Disadvantages*

- One way communication; feedback is not provided;
- Accessible only for Android devices;
- Not all citizens have access to modern technologies or internet;
- Not all citizens are educated to use modern technologies.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## PILOT PROJECT

Based on the assessment of local municipalities' adherence to principles of transparency and accountability in northern Kosovo, The Research of the Good Practices, and the discussion with 4 northern municipalities, NSI recommends implementation of the pilot project in the Municipality of Zvečan/Zveçan. The local administration lead by Janković, the mayor, showed the greatest interest to reform good governance practices, enhance dialog with the citizens and increase their participation in decision making processes.

The goal of the pilot project is to offer wider spectrum of innovative (web site, online e-participation/public discussions and the 48-hour system) and conventional (participative budget planning, campaigns) practices in order to enhance citizens' participation, transparency and accountability in socio-economic and development processes at the local level.

The expected result is to increase citizens' participation for at least 30%.

The project would be implemented in the following phases and includes:

### 1. Web portal development

This phase includes the following activities: 1) purchase of domain and hosting for web portal; 2) draft website structure and engage internal resources; 3) engagement of consultant IT company to develop web portal; 4) training of staff engaged in the initiative, 5) developing web-site content.

### 2. Development and integration of the 48-hour system

This phase should include: 1) assessment of the current capacities and readiness of service provision institutions to engage; 2) visiting one of municipalities that implements the 48-hour system and building capacities of engaged staff to implement the system; 3) development of necessary IT system in municipality to support the System48 in cooperation with IT consultant company; 4) incorporation of the system in web portal.

### 3. E-participation / Public consultations

This phase includes the following: 1) IT consultant company develops section on the Web Portal that supports platform for online participation based on the guidelines provided by e-governance portal; 2) conducting a training to build capacities of municipal departments to manage online public discussions; 3) developing content for the trail period.

### 4. Mobile phone application development

Once the aforementioned steps are implemented, the whole portal should be redeveloped and replicated as a mobile phone application, in order to be available to mobile devices users.

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## 5. Participative budget planning

Budgeting planning process is the most interesting to public and this process should be followed by specific activities that will allow citizens to present problems, needs and concerns and propose priorities and alternative solutions. In that regard, the recommendation should be replicating Paraćin budget participatory process and involving citizens in online or live public debates, town hall meetings or hearing in all municipality towns, villages and settlements. Participants should be able to submit their proposals in paper to local administration, but also to elaborate at public debate sessions. This will also be the opportunity for the municipality to inform participants on ongoing online participation opportunities through web portal that might be developed through the pilot project.

## 6. Campaigns

To achieve full utilization from potential users, Innovative citizens' participation tools such as web portal, the 48-hour system or e-participation, public consultations should be promoted through the following campaigns that will both promote platform and educate citizens to utilize the offered services.

- Social Services promotion; each service should have its own profile on social network and regularly inform citizens about news, developments or introduced features
- Live street campaigns or promotional stands where volunteers or civil activists will use mobile phone devices and educate citizens to use their features
- Free coffee campaign; every citizen who utilizes one of the established mechanism and sends a comment, a post, a question to the mayor or a department director from a coffee shop where campaign is organized will get a free coffee

NB: NSI donor (PAX) has already provided funds for some parts of the pilot project in value of €5000,00; however, NSI, together with the Municipality of Zvečan, will conduct a project scoping, and cost analysis to develop detailed budget of the pilot phase. Based on the scope and the costs, NSI will finance the full or a partial implementation of the pilot project. In case some components of the pilot project are marked as not feasible due to the lack of financial resources, the Municipality of Zvečan is invited to co-finance completion of all the components foreseen in the pilot project.



# INCREASING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN KOSOVO

