



Young Men Initiative

Program promoting gender equality, non-violence and healthy lifestyles





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CARE International in the Balkans

In the Balkan region, CARE International has over 25 years of experience in program implementation. During the '90-es wars and conflicts, CARE responded to the destruction, traumatization, displacement and inter-ethnic distrust with its massive humanitarian and life-saving work all over Balkans. From year 2000, CARE's orientation shifted to developmental work and its aim in the Balkans today is to ensure that social, economic and political rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups are recognized and fulfilled, contributing to sustainable peace in the region. CARE

Program Strategy is based on two pillars a) Socio-Economic Inclusion of vulnerable minorities and other marginalized groups by contributing to stronger capacities and improved opportunities for them, enabling them to integrate into society and access their rights. b) Gender Equality of vulnerable and marginalized groups by promoting the values and practices of gender equality, diversity and non-violence, strengthening the capacities of local, national and regional human rights and social justice actors and creating opportunities for innovation, participation, learning, cooperation and advocacy. CARE nourishes partnerships with local civil society sector and governments dedicated to contributing positive changes in the societies.



Young Men Initiative Program

Young Men Initiative (YMI) project started in 2006 and it is being implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo* and Albania. The project builds on CARE's comprehensive and programmatic effort to prevent interpersonal and gender-based violence as well as to promote gender equality in the region. YMI is targeting youth to build their knowledge and attitudes concerning gender equality and healthy lifestyles and to decrease levels of all types of violence. YMI started with a small size qualitative research exploring young men's attitudes and behaviours, then over the years grew into a comprehensive program with different components targeting young people, parents, teachers, educational workers, university students, journalists and other important stakeholders. Since the beginning, the YMI has directly worked with over 120,000 youth in over 230 high schools and over 1,600 high school teachers, while various educational programs and campaign activities reached 750,00 people throughout the Balkans.

Educational Programs

The core of the YMI intervention are a series of group educational workshops accompanied with social norms campaign that promote a critical and personal reflection on gender, masculinities and health, with a strong focus on violence prevention. The workshops are highly participatory and address health and rela-

tionships issues from a gender lens, including sexual and reproductive health, communication and negotiation, drug and alcohol use, anger management, and violence prevention.

One of the most important CARE and partner organization's goals is to introduce Program M (working with young men) and Program Y (working with young women and young men) into high school curriculum. So far, the program has been accredited in Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo* by relevant educational ministries. Most importantly in some sites it has become mandatory, being 25% obligatory part of homeroom classes. In this process, a successful cooperation with ministry representatives initiated series of trainings for teachers where they learn about Program M & Y methodology and also receive technical assistance from youth partner organizations for program implementation at their schools.

In addition to Program M & Program Y, CARE and partner organizations also developed special educational programs which arose from the work with young people and needs of the communities in the Balkans and they are as follows: Program E – for work with elementary school students (higher grades), Program Y Plus – for work with young people in risk of extremism and radical behavior, Program D – on working with

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. Applies to the whole document.

young women, Gender Sensitization Program on Media Reporting on Gender Based Violence – on working with media representatives. CARE and the partners have adapted Program T – the program for fathers, caregivers and health and social workers for promotion of involvement of fathers in caregiving.

For the purpose of responding to the emergency needs during the migrant crises since 2015, CARE has developed Engaging Men and Boys in Emergencies Program which is designed for work with young men – unaccompanied minors who have been travelling alone and are temporary settled in the Reception Centers along the Balkan route.

School based interventions

YMI is implemented in high schools, allowing it to achieve high levels of participation among young men and young women ages 15 to 18. In participating schools, YMI sessions are led by trained facilitators, and are integrated into the regular class schedule over the academic year, with a focus on four key program areas: (1) gender attitudes; (2) violence; (3) sexual and reproductive health; and (4) alcohol and drug use. YMI also extends beyond the classroom. The program includes an optional residential retreat where the facilitators lead additional sessions and team-building activities in a more immersive setting. The other important aspect of the program is “Be a Man” lifestyle campaign, which is intended to reinforce key YMI messages and foster change at the school level and beyond. The campaign is supported

by a variety of educational materials, social media, and “actions” organized and carried out by student members of “Be a Man” clubs (BMC). In the Balkan region there are 33 active BMCs with 2.600 active members.

Community interventions

YMI spreads its activities within and out of schools. YMI partners with young men and women design different community actions, theatre plays, BMC TV and radio, forums, round tables and conferences with the aim to gather all relevant stakeholders to discuss the importance of work with young men around prevention of violence and gender equality promotion. Each year, partners organize different conferences and round tables. In all counties Real Men Forums are formed which represent the forum of VIP (actress, musicians, politicians and all other public figures) who declared themselves as promoters of non-violence and who act as allies in the promotion of more peaceful masculinities and identities around manhood.

One stream of YMI interventions is directed towards the work with sport groups, pedagogy students, journalists and basically all groups that have impact on young people in their everyday life. One of the highlights of the YMI related community actions is the development and realization of a theatre play called “Macho Men” so far seen by more than 20,000 people all over the Balkan region and Europe and theatre play on youth extremism “How Can I Explain this To My Son” seen by 2,000 people.

**SUPER
DAD**

The Young Man Initiative program is active in a global effort by implementing the **Global Fatherhood Campaign – MenCare** that promotes men's involvement as equitable, non-violent fathers and caregivers in order to achieve family well-being and gender equality. The MenCare campaign is coordinated by Promundo and the Sonke Gender Justice Network in collaboration with the MenEngage Alliance that most of the YMI partner organizations are members of. MenCare has active campaigns and ongoing activities in over 25 countries on 5 continents.



**REACT AS
HUMAN**

**AGAINST
VIOLENCE**

If a girl says NO, I will repeat it to you
in case you didn't hear it good!

No!

brink

YMI partners are also engaged in the implementation of a Violence Prevention Campaign – **REACT AS HUMAN**, focused on by-standers. The campaign includes different programmatic and promotional activities and include young people, but also fathers, coaches, families and other relevant individuals and groups in the society.



**Uključi pamet.
Isključi hejt.**

**Ktheje dijen!
Ndale urrejtjen!**

Ne jemi të ndryshëm. Për këtë arsye është shumë e rëndësishme të mësojmë që të kuptojmë, të respektojmë dhe të pranojmë njëri-tjetrin. Urrejtja nuk është zgjidhje.

#NdaleUrrejtjen
#KthejeDijen #KBB

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TURN ON KNOWLEDGE, TURN OFF HATE CAMPAIGN

that is focused on prevention of extremism and radicalization among youth. The goal is promotion of pro-social behavior among young people by breaking stereotypes that are causing extreme attitudes, by setting and promoting real values and behaviors and creating safe spaces for young people.

ARE YOU OK?

Campaign is focused on promotion of prosocial behavior among young people in high schools. The aim is to change culture, make the school a supportive environment for young people, and encourage young people TO REACT: to recognize when someone is in the problem, to encourage young people to provide advice to their friend, to encourage young people to seek support and advise them where to seek for support.



Are you OK?

If you notice that someone is not OK

1. Start a conversation
2. Listen without judging
3. Respect that someone has trusted you
4. Provide support as a real friend

For everything else,
there is BMC!

#areyouOK



Are you OK?

It's OK

- To ask is someone OK
- To provide support with advices
- To listen without judging
- To nurture trust
- To show a friend that he/she is not alone
- To advise a friend to speak with someone else (professors, psychologists, BMC)

It's not OK

- To ignore that your friend has a problem
- To label others based on...
- To insult your peers on socialmedia

#areyouOK



YMI in COVID 19 pandemic

Once again in 2020, YMI has proved that its approach is resilient and adaptable to the context of the main target groups. The ongoing outbreak of COVID 19 has had a major influence on YMI activities and it didn't stop the activities, but created even more space to innovate, rethink and use youth designed solutions to create safe spaces for YMI participants. Being under major lockdown in March-May 2020 period, Be a Man Clubs were the most active online communities of young people and created hundreds of online solutions such as:

- Online Program Y workshops with 3 000 high school students;
- Online events with around 10,000 participants related to gender equality, nonviolence and life skills education;
- Numerous videos that were produced by BMCs for social media to react to the current trends and youth issues;
- Online campaigns - focused on gender-based violence and COVID 19 prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles that engaged 20,000 young people online;
- Podcasts such as BMC podcast, Eggplants in Pajamas, Youth and live shows such as Chat room were created to answer the current youth needs and reflect on the state of pandemic;
- YMI used variety of online tools to create quizzes, challenges and puzzles which were played by more than 5,000 young people during quarantine;
- Mental health became even more important during lock down, thus YMI offered psychological and/or peer support to more than 1,000 young people when dealing with their emotions, fears and daily life.



Future 4 YOUth Movement

Young Men Initiative Movement Future4Youth aims to bring diverse voices of civil society, informal citizens groups, parents, teachers and other stakeholders around the same goal – to address and advocate for violence prevention, gender equality, life skills and health education in schools across the Balkans.

THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE:

- Life Skills Education programmes such as Program Y mandatory in formal school curriculum in the Western Balkans region;
- Future4Youth platform acts as the resource center in Life Skills Education and advocacy hub for empowering members to share experiences and take collective actions on local, national and regional level;
- Empowered communities act as long-term agents of change for violence prevention, gender equality, life skills and health education in schools;
- Changed attitudes on violence prevention, gender equality, life skills and health education among youth in the Balkans;

Future 4YouTH

We develop and seek for partnerships with all well-intentioned, dedicated and consistent individuals and organizations and institutions, especially youth and their parents, teachers, peer educators, sports and social workers, pedagogues, psychologists, activists, members of academia who share the same vision and values to achieve the goals.

Join us – Sign the Declaration at
www.youngmeninitiative.net

#HealthEducation

#LifeSkills

#GenderEquality

#ViolencePrevention

Join us! It's time for a change!

Partner organizations

Since its start, the YMI program is being implemented by CARE and partner organizations – youth NGOs from the region. At first, CARE used to provide technical assistance for partner around work with young men, but over the years partner organizations have gained solid knowledge and experience on this topic and they've become agents of change and leaders in this area of intervention. They've become resource centers in their own countries and are being publicly recognized as most important players on the issues on engaging men and boys in violence prevention and promotion of gender equality. CARE's partners are the following: Status M Zagreb, Center E8 Belgrade, SIT – Center for Counseling and Research and YMCA Prishtina, Association XY Sarajevo, Institute

Perpetuum Mobile Banja Luka, Youth Power Mostar, Synergy North Mitrovica and Act for Society Centre from Tirana.

Smart Kolektiv, also a project partner, is a non-profit organization specialized in the field of social marketing, based in Belgrade. Within YMI they are the lead facilitator in the process of campaign development. They use participatory approach by involving young people and combining their opinions and creativity with those of the professionals involved. This methodology has proved to produce extremely successful social campaigns implemented by YMI partners and BMC members.

Awards

YMI's success has also been recognized by the international as well as national communities in a form of different awards:

- **2010 – The best social norms campaign –**
by Serbian Association for Public Relations
- **2016 – 1st Ron Kovic Peace Prize at My Hero International Film Festival**
for the film "Post War Machismo: Be a Men" done by Thompson Reuters Foundation which made a short documentary about BMC member from Banja Luka, Dragan Kisin.
- **2017 – Innovation Award Winner –** by Global Education Network Europe

Links:

www.youngmeninitiative.net

<https://program-y.org/>

- 📘 FB /youngmeninitiative
- 📷 IG /ymiinitiative
- 📺 YT: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZNjpaZPshMJOGfPZRlgsw>



Donors:

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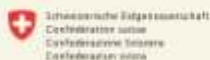
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