



ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE  
ASSOCIATION FOR AFFIRMATION OF CULTURE  
FOR 2020

Belgrade, January 2021

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. INCORPORATION

The organization called the ASSOCIATION FOR AFFIRMATION OF CULTURE (hereinafter: ASK) started with activities in 2004 in Belgrade, and was formally established and registered in 2015 as a non-governmental, non-partisan and non-profit association, founded for an indefinite period of time, with the aim to promote culture through of creative activities, to act in the field of humanitarian aid, to work on the affirmation of culture and the affirmation of young people in society, as well as on the creative and professional development of young people, its members and society as a whole.

ASK carries out its activities on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, in accordance with its goals, as well as abroad in cooperation with local and international organizations. The association develops its activities both independently, through projects and actions which the organization itself initiates and implements, and also as a collaborator on numerous projects which are organized by other organizations.

At the very end of 2019, the association "Lighthouse of Knowledge" emerged from ASK, which continues to work under the umbrella of ASK as a part of it specially set for more transparent implementation and financing of the project Lighthouse of Knowledge.

### II. ASK OBJECTIVES

- Promotion and affirmation of all forms of culture;
- Affirmation of young people in the society;
- Acting in the field of humanitarian work;
- Acting in the local community, and in the Republic of Serbia, in order to improve local communities as well as the status of young people in them;
- Connecting with domestic and international organizations in order to achieve the goals of the Association;
- Promotion and advancement of all forms of cultural, educational, social, psychological, health, emotional and intellectual development of young people;
- Promotion and promotion of youth activism;
- Promotion of ecology and ecological principles as well as the use of renewable energy sources, recycling and other;
- Protection of human rights, youth rights, rights of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable categories of society;
- Development of the non-governmental sector and society as a whole;

- Organization of workshops, seminars, forums, cultural and other events to promote the Association and the goals of the Association;
- Professional development of its members

### III. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

The name of the Association in Serbian is: «ASOCIJACIJA ZA AFIRMACIJU KULTURE»

The name of the Association in English is: «ASSOCIATION FOR AFFIRMATION OF CULTURE»

The abbreviated name of the association is: «ASK»

The association has its headquarters in Belgrade, Brsjačka no. 28 str.

The association has an office and an educational center in Belgrade, Toplicin venac no. 11 str.

## WELCOME MESSAGE BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends, donors and associates,

Behind us is a difficult and complicated year full of challenges which has left numerous consequences on society as a whole. The past year has brought many changes in the patterns of behavior of both individuals and organizations from all sectors of our society. Understandably and as expected, the changes in the society in which we live and work have affected us personally and, of course, ASK as an association.

Nevertheless, after the first few weeks from the beginning of the COVID19 virus pandemic, we have managed to consolidate and, with great effort and a lot of hard work, to find models that will enable us to successfully implement our goals by the end of the year. The support of all of you, throughout the year, was of great importance for us.

I firmly believe that the fact that ASK has dedicated, hard-working and brave people in its team who were ready to carry out all the planned activities in the most difficult circumstances, believing in what we are doing, was crucial for everything we achieved in the previous year. Having that in mind, while addressing the widest audience, I would like to thank on my own behalf our entire team, all my dear colleagues from ASK and to tell them that I am proud of them and that I am extremely honored to have and had the opportunity to lead them.

It is important to note that ASK, i.e. the founders of ASK, at the end of 2019 registered another association named after one of our projects, the Lighthouse of Knowledge, with the intention of focusing additional attention on the topics of youth activism and environmental protection. The Lighthouse of Knowledge, although a separate legal entity, works in all matters and in all means under the support and supervision of ASK and its bodies.

During 2020, with the development of our major projects, we have further developed our strategic program goals: Youth Activism, Youth Employability and Environmental Protection. Thanks to the US Embassy in Belgrade and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, we were able to further develop the Lighthouse of Knowledge as a leading project in the field of youth activism, but also the Academy of Youth Entrepreneurship as our largest project in the field of Youth Employability. I would especially like to thank ERSTE Bank for providing the prize fund for the winner of the Lighthouse of Knowledge.

In addition to the above two areas, this year ASK paid special attention to the development of our third program area, Environmental Protection. Within this program area, our focus was on the promotion and development of the "Zero Waste" concept, which we have implemented through few very successful projects. ASK, with the support of the City of Belgrade Secretariat for Environmental Protection and the Belgrade Youth Office, successfully implemented the "Zero Waste 2020" project, which focused on the territory of the City of Belgrade, while we successfully implemented the "Green Economy of Serbia" project under the sponsorship of the Belgrade Open School with focus

to Pirot, Prijepolje, Kosjerić and Sremska Mitrovica. I especially want to thank our partner the [Food Technology Council of Serbia](#), for the exceptional cooperation without which the results we have achieved would not have been possible

Almost two hundred young people undertook ASK programs, and an additional two hundred users went through educations and courses that we organized by ourselves or in cooperation with partner organizations. The number of young people to whom we addressed directly and to whom our announcements, goals and results reached, both through traditional media and social networks, is measured in tens of thousands.

At the end, it is important to point out that the humanitarian action "You are Santa Claus too", our first activity since the founding and a favorite one till today, has been a huge success this year. Despite the circumstances in which we worked and all the difficulties that arose due to the pandemic, we managed to distribute more than 900 packages throughout Serbia and break all previous records. I would like to thank the Rotary and Rotaract clubs Belgrade Skadarlija for their long-term cooperation.

Apart from fulfilling the program goals, and due to the extraordinary circumstances that struck both Serbia and the rest of the world, we had the opportunity and enough time to additionally dedicate to ourselves, i.e. the development of our team members and ASK as an organization. To this end, our members underwent internal and external trainings, and the Board of Directors paid significant attention to developing procedures, competencies of the teams and members as well as toward developing a new web site. Through the joint activities of all members, and "team building", we tried to strengthen the team spirit and to focus on each other in order to achieve greater success together.

It is a great honor and pleasure for us that the previous year gave us the opportunity to continue the old partnerships but also to establish new ones. We have established cooperation with the Ministries of the Republic of Serbia, with embassies, civil society organizations, companies and individuals, and all of them together have made it possible to achieve our goals.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all our members and associates, promoters and ambassadors of ASK, who channeled their energy and efforts into significant support for the organization. The Board of Directors and all our associates have shown that with great effort, work and desire the achievement of any goal possible. Our donors, friends of ASK and everyone else without whose support this would not have been possible have shown a high level of social responsibility and, in the first place, trust in ASK, and I thank them all from the bottom of my heart.



Andrej Balanč

Founder and Executive Director

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## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

The previous year concluded with a report that defined three key goals for 2020:

- Increased focus on environmental projects and programs which ASK would prepare in cooperation with partners and donors;
- Strengthening the internal capacities of the association; and
- Regionalization of the project "Lighthouse of Knowledge".

Epidemiological situation caused by the corona virus has significantly hindered the fulfillment of the set goals and the development of the organization and projects in the right direction since March 2020. However, despite the negative impacts ASK managed to harmonize its activities with the recommendations of the competent authorities and successfully implement existing and some of the new projects.

We have continued successful implementation of two major and important projects "Lighthouse of Knowledge" and "Academy of Youth Entrepreneurship", which are funded by the Embassy of the United States in Belgrade and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia. These projects were a great success and were very well received. Through those projects, we have managed to develop new young people and youth organizations, and also raised awareness of the importance of involving young people in improving life in their environment, especially in less developed municipalities in Serbia.

In addition to the two major projects, special focused was on environmental projects, as one of the goals set at the beginning of the year. Since environmental protection has finally received the support of the public and the institutions of the system it deserves, due to enormous pollution factors, ASK took the opportunity to implement several projects with partners on Zero Waste concepts of thinking and acting which we consider key in this area.

Also in 2020, we have met the set goal to raise internal staff capacity, hence ASK team members participated in over 20 seminars and conferences, trainings, webinars, workshops and other public events in the field of youth activism, employment, ecology and humanitarian work during 2020, which resulted in raising the capacity of ASK as a whole.

Unfortunately, previously mentioned negative impacts have stopped our plans to regionalize certain projects and activities of the organization, therefore this goal remains one of the most important in 2021, if circumstances allow.

Finally, this year we have a strong growth of the association manifested through progress in the financial aspect, which helped us to further improve technical features of the organization and create opportunities to continue with extra-curriculum activities such as humanitarian action "You are Santa Claus too" which ASK has been implementing for 7 years and from which ASK started.



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More detailed information on key financial indicators, strategic goals, projects and development of the organization in 2020 are presented in the following chapters of this report.

## KEY FINANCIAL INDICATORS

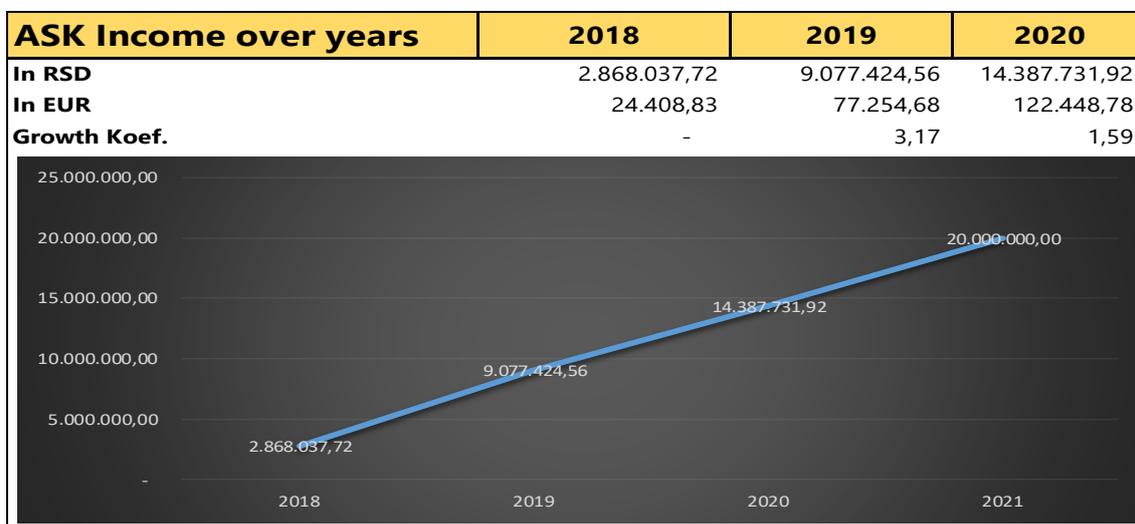
The development of the organization and financial framework in 2020 continued the positive growth trend compared to the previous period. The transformation of personnel and a professionally oriented team that is committed to the development of civil society is reflected in a significant increase in comprehensive financial turnover and activities through implemented projects and other activities of the association.

Table 1 - Revenue structure in 2020

Structure of Revenue 2020	in RSD	in EUR	
<b>Donations</b>	<b>12.995.051,43</b>	<b>110.596,18</b>	<b>90,01%</b>
Donations - Individuals	885.914,81	7.539,70	
Donations - Corporations	101.600,00	864,68	
Donations - Organisations	1.469.303,45	12.504,71	
Donations - Emmbasy	2.238.128,50	19.047,90	
Donations - State	8.300.104,67	70.639,19	
<b>Sponzorstva</b>	<b>340.000,00</b>	<b>2.893,62</b>	<b>2,35%</b>
<b>Fakturisana Dobra i usluge</b>	<b>1.052.680,49</b>	<b>8.958,98</b>	<b>7,29%</b>
<b>Ulozi i članarine</b>	<b>50.000,00</b>	<b>425,53</b>	<b>0,35%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.437.731,92</b>	<b>122.874,31</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

The increase in the number of activities was accompanied by growth and diversification of sources of revenues (14.44 million dinars - an increase of 59% compared to 9.07 million dinars in 2019). In addition to institutions and grants, which are the largest sources of funds, the organization received significant support through donations from individual donors (0.89 million dinars). During 2020, special focus was on the development of commercial revenues, which, thanks to the visible development of personnel, successfully organized a number of seminars, workshops and conferences for partner organizations and companies.

Table 2 - Revenue structure in the previous 3 years



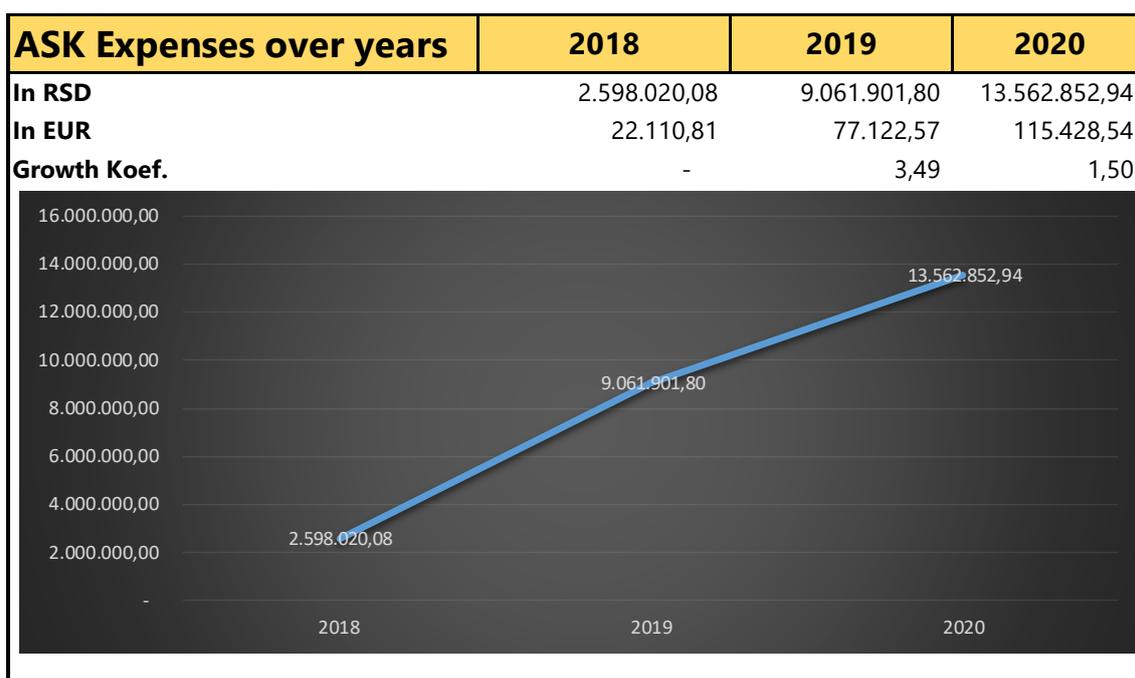
Activities during 2020 were carried out in different parts of the Republic of Serbia, which was a logistical challenge, required research of the market of goods and services in remote places outside the city of Belgrade and development of cooperation with local organizations in the areas where the activities took place.

*Table 3 - Structure of expenditures in 2020*

<b>Runing Costs for 2020</b>	<b>in RSD</b>	<b>in EUR</b>	
<b>Budget Item</b>			
<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>2.814.187,66</b>	<b>23.950,53</b>	<b>20,71%</b>
<b>Office Costs</b>	<b>831.338,36</b>	<b>7.075,22</b>	<b>6,12%</b>
<b>Communication costs</b>	<b>238.435,80</b>	<b>2.029,24</b>	<b>1,75%</b>
<b>Transport</b>	<b>43.927,66</b>	<b>373,85</b>	<b>0,32%</b>
<b>Activities</b>	<b>9.075.026,71</b>	<b>77.234,27</b>	<b>66,79%</b>
<b>Transaction and Postal Charges</b>	<b>238.450,12</b>	<b>2.029,36</b>	<b>1,76%</b>
<b>Accounting, Consulting and Audit</b>	<b>345.250,00</b>	<b>2.938,30</b>	<b>2,54%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13.586.616,31</b>	<b>115.630,78</b>	<b>100,00%</b>

The most significant share in our costs are, of course, the costs of activities carried out for users, which is a total of 9.07 million dinars or 66.79% of the total budget of the organization. By developing the capacity of staff and expanding the network of external professional associates, we managed to hire a significant number of professional staff, whereby the total cost for staff engaged in projects amounted to 2.81 million dinars or 20.71% of the total budget.

*Table 4 - Structure of expenditures in the previous 3 years*



In many areas of the organizational culture our team is still developing and we continue to strive towards the maximization of growth in 2021. With a better revenue structure and quality staff, we will embrace new challenges. By developing existing and introducing new programs with a stable financial framework and a professional team, we are boldly moving forward towards a brighter future for all layers of our society.

## OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS BY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### I. YOUTH ACTIVISM

Through the program area of youth activism, ASK encourages young people to actively participate in all areas of social life through capacity building, personal and professional development through projects aimed at solving problems through public advocacy at both local and national levels. The continuous development of both young and entire local communities as well as the economic development of society as a whole is encouraged through the contribution to strengthening active participation in society.

Our goals within the program area of youth activism are:

- Development and improvement of programs, knowledge and skills related to active advocacy in society;
- Development of informative programs for young people;
- Increasing the participation of young people in various forms of formal and non-formal education;
- Empowering young people to take active, responsible and effective management of their careers;
- Encouraging the development of young researchers, scientists, athletes, artists and innovators in order to accelerate economic growth and prosperity;
- Promotion of the concept and idea of activism;
- Development of Alumni network and educational program for members in order to continue education after projects and capacity building.

During 2020, ASK implemented the project Lighthouse of Knowledge 4.0 within the program area of youth activism.

### LIGHTHOUSE OF KNOWLEDGE

**Donors:** Embassy of the United States of America in Serbia  
Embassy of the United States of America in Serbia

**Amount of the donation:** 5,809,064.36 dinars

**Implementation period:** 10.7. 2020 – 10.2.2021

**Project description:** The project “Lighthouse of Knowledge” represents a competition between 60 high school students from 15 different local communities, with the goal of creating project that can benefit the communities they come from. Every team contains four students of the third and fourth year of high school (17, 18 or 19 years old). With the professional help from experts on the regarding topic, coordinators from youth organizations and alumni mentors, teams

work on creating ideas, which will improve life in their communities. This year's generation is the fourth generation of this project, after successfully organizing "Lighthouse of Knowledge" in the years 2017, 2018 and 2019. Until now, throughout the project 60 projects were successfully created as well as 240 high school students that were educated and who continue to improve the communities in which they live.

The purpose of the project is that the high school students, with our help and professional guidance, during the period of realization create and detail create their project on one of the five given topics (ecology, public health, tourism, culture and youth activism) that will benefit the communities in which they live. This way, the youth will have an opportunity to give their contribution in solving problems in the communities they are familiar with. In the duration of the project, we want to give practical knowledge and experience from educators so the participants can be active participants in communities they live in.

During the course of 2020, we produced the fourth generation of the project for which more than 150 young people applied. The 60 best applicants that were chosen for participation in the project came from 15 different cities from the Republic of Serbia.

Activities on Lighthouse of Knowledge 4.0 were conducted in several phases: Preparation activities, Seminar, Working on ideas and writing the projects, Final event, Public presentations and Alumni seminar.

All of the activities were followed by a dynamic campaign on social media and regular media, both local and national. Through one part of the campaign, we shared experiences from previous participants of the project and motivated young people to apply.

Teams had an opportunity to meet during the three daylong Seminars, an intensive educational program that included an introduction to the program and the responsibilities for the future period. Having in mind the current situation regarding the epidemiological situation, the whole event was moved to the online alternative. The chosen participants listened to different lectures, participated in workshops and had group activities with qualified personnel where they focused on teamwork and prepared for the forthcoming period.

During the phase of working on ideas and writing the projects the participants were given the opportunity to listen to webinars on a weekly basis. The webinars were held by experts on the individual topics and followed the chronological process that is necessary for project writing. The organization team for Lighthouse of knowledge followed the creative and writing process through progress checks and guided and help shape their projects as well as preparing them for the final event.

The final stage of the competition was a three daylong Final event held in Vršac. The whole event was in a hybrid format where the participant presented their ideas in front of a board that

had four members, representatives from The Erste bank, The Embassy of the United States of America in the Republic of Serbia, MPG marketing agency and Ana and Vlade Divac foundation.

Erste Bank provided a cash prize for the first place winners in the total of 300.000 dinars for the realization of their project.

The following phase was Public presentation. The best six teams had an opportunity to present the final versions of their projects to their local communities and the whole of Serbia and that way ask for additional support.

The final stage was an Alumni seminar where we gathered 40 of the best participants from all four generations and provided them with additional education through workshops with the aim of improving their personal and professional skills.

The team from Novi Sad has after the Final event gathered the funding for their idea and organized a project for young people with disabilities.

Teams from Šabac and Leskovac have applied for a grant and made it to the shortlist of candidates in an open competition by the Trag foundation.

Coca Cola HBC, Swisslion Takovo and Plazma supported the project, aside from already mentioned companies, and provided the participants with refreshments during the project.

One of the greater achievements is activating the Alumni network which counts 240 participants and whose expansion is being planned for the following period.

### **Strategic goal for the year 2021:**

Development of the Alumni network of the Lighthouse of Knowledge through additional education of all alumni members and through strengthening the capacity of young people. ASK will implement promotional activities in order to connect young people throughout the Republic of Serbia, gain new partners and develop the regional component of the project and involve young people from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, all in order to educate young people and encourage active participation at the local level, as well as at the national and regional level.

Main focus will be on public advocacy and youth policies to encourage the involvement of local government representatives to help young people implement their projects and solve potential problems in their communities.

Work on an active promotional campaign for young people that will additionally motivate them to participate in the project itself and encourage activism.

## II. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Through the program area of youth employability, ASK supports individuals to respond to the challenges of (self) employment or advancement in business and private plan through the development of entrepreneurial ideas and business plans. ASK emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning as well as the development of knowledge and skills related to entrepreneurship, but also career management in order to enable young people to facilitate the transition from education to employment. Indirectly, the continuous development of both young people and entire local communities as well as the economic development of society as a whole is encouraged through the contribution to strengthening the employability of young people.

Our goals within the program area of employability are:

- Development and improvement of programs, knowledge and skills related to entrepreneurship;
- Capacity building of young entrepreneurs, with special emphasis on marginalized groups and young people from underdeveloped local communities;
- Creating a resource hub for all young entrepreneurs;
- Promotion of the concept and idea of entrepreneurship.

During 2020, ASK implemented the project Academy of Youth Entrepreneurship 2.0 within the program area of youth employability.

### ACADEMY OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP 2.0

**Donors:** Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia

Ministry of foreign affairs,

Directorate for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region

**Amount of the donation:** 4,339,744.67 dinars

**Implementation period:** 15.7.2020 – 10.12.2020

**Project description:** Project description: Academy of Youth Entrepreneurship 2.0 is a project that the Association for Affirmation of Culture is implementing for the second year in a row, and which is created for young people who want to start, create or improve their business or idea. Selected young people work on the development of their entrepreneurial idea and business plan in a completely free educational program. Selected teams of participants, young people aged 18 to 30, go through an intensive training program that allows them to develop their entrepreneurial idea and make a business plan out of it, prepare business proposals for its implementation and present it to an expert jury.

During 2020, the second year of the project was conducted, in which more than 70 young people applied for the competition, of which 14 best teams were selected, consisting of 23 young

people from different local communities in Serbia. The project bases on the development of entrepreneurial ideas of young people in Serbia with the aim of enabling young people to develop business ideas locally and thus contribute to the development of local communities through strengthening employability skills, through continuous mentoring support.

Activities at the Academy of Youth Entrepreneurship 2.0 were realized in several phases: Preparatory activities, Info days, Accelerator, Development of ideas and webinars, Master seminar, Development and work on business plans and the Final event. In order to promote the idea of youth entrepreneurship and attract the attention of young people, the AOP team successfully realized two online info days in the altered circumstances caused by the Covid-19 virus pandemic and on that occasion answered more than 50 questions from young people about application conditions. This activity, like the others, accompanied a dynamic campaign on social networks and active email promotion.

The teams had the opportunity to meet during the ten-day Accelerator, an intensive training program, which was moved to the online space due to the epidemiological situation, during which participants attended lectures, workshops and practical work in selected teams, where in great detail we explained important entrepreneurial subjects and gave them space for implementing their business plans. During the development phase of ideas and webinars, participants had the opportunity to improve their business ideas, and they had chances for practical teamwork, as well as continuous joint or individual mentoring support. After having a three-day Master Seminar at Fruška Gora, the knowledge of the participants was further improved, and after thorough work on business plans, the seven best teams were selected for the Final Competition in Belgrade. The competition was held at the ASK Educational Center, and the three best teams provided a network of contacts and won additional educational materials and attendance at seminars.

Participants specialized in the topics of entrepreneurship, business strategy, basics of business and finance, marketing, project, process and operational management, crowdfunding and subsidies. The teams also gained knowledge about the ways in which the brand is built, what is the role of leaders and human resources, as well as the basics of public speaking and negotiation techniques. Eminent experts and educators in the field of entrepreneurship, foreign lecturers, young entrepreneurs and key players of the startup community in Serbia held lectures, workshops and webinars on these and many other topics. In addition, a partnership was established with the Embassy of Israel in Serbia and the Swiss Contact organization, which significantly contributed to the quality of knowledge and skills adopted by the participants of the Academy of youth entrepreneurship.

### **Strategic goal for the year 2021:**

Regionalization of organization and projects, popularization of youth entrepreneurship in Serbia and strengthening of the alumni network of the Academy of Youth Entrepreneurship. The

Association for Affirmation of Culture will organize meetings through promotional activities in order to acquire new associates and partners in the project, with the aim of regionalizing the organization and in order to enable participation in the competition for young people from the region. Active promotion on social networks and traditional media will additionally strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit of young people and encourage them to start their own business and indirectly strengthen their employability. Through the work of the alumni network, new participants will have the opportunity to hear relevant experiences of previous participants within their stories, interesting video formats and organized sessions.

### III. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Through this program area, ASK encourages young people as well as entrepreneurs to actively participate in segments related to environmental protection, establishing problems and finding ways to solve these problems, all through educational programs in order to raise awareness of its importance. The continuous development of both young people and entire local communities as well as the economic development of society as a whole is encouraged through the contribution to strengthening active participation in society.

Our goals within the program area of environmental protection are:

- Developing awareness and behavior of both young people and entrepreneurs and other citizens in the spirit of sustainable development, environmental protection, as well as the preservation of natural heritage;
- Prevention and reduction of risks to the health of citizens that may arise from environmental pollution;
- Providing conditions for active participation of young people in decision-making related to environmental protection;
- Raising awareness of the importance of environmental protection, and creating a social climate about ecology as a national priority;
- Collection and consolidation of environmental data, their processing and preparation of reports on the state of the environment and the implementation of environmental policy

During 2020, ASK implemented the projects Zero Waste 2020 and Green Economy of Serbia within the field of environmental protection.

#### ZERO WASTE 2020

**Donor:** Belgrade Youth Office, Secretariat for Environmental Protection

**Amount of the donation:** 900.000 dinars

**Implementation period:** 01.07.2020 – 30.10.2020

**Project description:** The Zero Waste 2020 project was created with the aim of raising awareness about the importance of food waste and popularizing the Zero Waste way of thinking and acting. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Food Technology Council of Serbia.

The project activities began with the implementation of a research in which a "Study on the application of the Zero Waste model in the case of food waste in the city of Belgrade" was created, followed by educational lectures for young people, entrepreneurs, producers and the HORECA sector in Belgrade. The project also initiated a discussion with catering managers and food producers, gathering them in round tables and directing them to think about disposing of their waste. In this way, the project gathered key target groups, worked directly with them on the realization of its basic goal, and influenced the raising of general social awareness about these problems. The project was a great starting point for further development of environmental activities of our organization.

### **Strategic goal for the year 2021:**

The Association for Affirmation of Culture will connect with its colleagues in other relevant organizations, with whom it will share its observations and present the results of the research. Based on these results, further education of young people on this topic will continue, as well as contact with managers of catering facilities and food producers, who will be given the opportunity for further education and implementation of concrete changes with expert advice from the Food Technology Council of Serbia.

## **GREEN ECONOMY OF SERBIA**

**Donor:** Belgrade Open School

**Amount of the donation:** 1,245,303.45 dinars

**Implementation period:** 1.10. 2020 – 15.3.2021

**Project description:** The project "Green Economy of Serbia" is designed to bring the "Zero Waste" principle closer to local governments, businesses and citizens in order of further align Serbia with the obligations of Chapter 27 for accession to the European Union. The project is implemented with the support of the Belgrade Open School through informative and expert visits for the local economies and local administration, data collection and processing and preparation of guides for production improvement and an educational campaign.

The main result of the project is the development of the guide "Zero Waste through the Green Economy of Serbia" as the final product of research and visits to production plants in 4 local governments (Kosjerić, Pirot, Prijepolje and Sremska Mitrovica). The guide contains an overview of

waste management issues and recommendations for solving these problems both through the food industry segment and through legislation, as well as preparation of public policies.

### **Strategic goal for the year 2021:**

With the help of the Regional Chambers of Commerce of the Zlatibor and Pirot districts, we will work on developing an information brochure informing companies about their obligations regarding the environment and waste management, all with the aim of strengthening public policies and public advocacy at both local and national levels.

Our goal is to develop a program to support micro and small businesses due to the lack of professional knowledge and professional assistance, and the research that was done in the first generation of the project will significantly help.

## **CHARITY WORK**

Altruism for the Association for Affirmation of Culture is not just giving - material or logistical assistance, or a response to humanitarian crises and community needs. The most important act of solidarity is the maintenance of human dignity through the achievement of goals of a philanthropic nature, such as various charitable and educational activities that serve the common good and which are in the public interest. Through additional forms of charity, ASK strives to help the development of the most vulnerable group of citizens - children and youth, through the now traditional humanitarian action "You are Santa Claus too". Through this project and cooperation with partner organizations Rotary and Rotaract clubs Belgrade Skadarlija, we had the opportunity to work with several companies such as Plazma, Coca-Cola HBC, Swiss lion, Flama Fructis (GoG), Marbo, MPG SouthEast Europe, UNI- CHEM doo, Deus digital drivers doo, Karakal doo and many others and thus help great number of young people in the previous eight years.

### **YOU ARE SANTA CLAUS TOO**

**Organizers:** ASK in cooperation with Rotary and Rotaract clubs Belgrade Skadarlija

**Donors:** Legal and natural persons

**Amount of the donation:** 2,200,000 dinars

**Implementation period:** 15.11.2020 – 31.01.2021

**Project description:** For the eighth year in a row, the Association for Affirmation of Culture, with the help of Rotary and the Rotaract Club Skadarlija, is conducting a humanitarian action "You are Santa Claus too" with the goal of providing New Year's presents to children from the most endangered categories.

During the humanitarian action 2020/2021, packages were provided for the protégés of the Children's Shelter in Zvezdara and New Belgrade, the Society for Cerebral Palsy and Childhood Paralysis from Kragujevac, the protégés of the humanitarian organization from Sopot "COCI - child care", the protégés of the association "Give me a hand", protégés of the home "Spomenak" from Pančevo, as well as students of the school for children with special needs "Anton Skala". These are just some of the institutions, and the results of this year's action are as follows: over 900 packages, 19 institutions, 13 cities, and the value of donations exceed 2,200,000 dinars.

The action "You Are Santa Claus too" has been recognized by state institutions, as well as local institutions, other associations, companies, media and a large number of individuals as the largest action of its kind in our country. This recognizability is the result of the biggest growth in the number of packages and, most importantly, the huge amount of joy and smiles it brings to the little ones.

Activities on this project include quantitative determination of the number of packages, as well as communication with representatives of institutions in order to gain insight into the exact number of children, their gender and age. The action also includes communication with sponsors, companies and individuals willing to join the action. The planning and implementation period is accompanied by a dynamic campaign on social networks in order to collect as many packages as possible, as well as the promotion and visibility of the action itself. The sorting of donated material, as well as the packaging of personalized packages, was organized in the premises of the Association for Affirmation of Culture. The packages were largely customized for children in all homes, and included toys, books, coloring books, school supplies, clothes, sweets, saltines, as well as many other items that were collected thanks to the great response of public.

### **Strategic goal for the year 2021:**

The Association for Affirmation of Culture plans to continue with the realization of humanitarian activities in 2021 through various projects. The action "You are Santa Claus too" aims to gather a larger number of donors and sponsors, as well as media partners who will contribute to greater visibility of the action and even more diverse and adapted packages for children. In addition to the institutions with which there is current cooperation, the action will focus on the establishment of new cooperation so that the project would include over 1,000 children. This will include basic preparatory and logistical activities, as well as a larger number of volunteers on the project.

## COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to project and humanitarian activities, ASK conducts and organizes commercial activities with the idea of self-sustainability, meaning that revenues from commercial activities partially or fully finance projects and humanitarian work of the organization, and thus reduce dependence on donors.

In that sense, ASK, and its founders, in previous years have invested significant funds in adapting and equipping the premises called ASK Educational Center, which is located at the address of the association. ASK Center is tailored to all types of educational needs with a focus on clients from the civil and corporate sector, team training, conferences and lectures. In the long run, the idea is that the ASK Educational Center, through the organization of education and training that we organize independently or organized by our partners independently or in cooperation with us, becomes a place for lifelong education and training.

The previous year brought many challenges in the development of the program, since the preventive measures of the authorities significantly narrowed the possibility of gathering a larger number of people, and at some moments during the year, it completely banned any gatherings. An additional negative effect was the justified concern of people and organizers that the infection could spread, so the interest dropped significantly compared to the very beginning of the year when the results and the vacancy were promising.

Nevertheless, revenues from the commercial activities of the ASK Educational Center cover about 7.5% of the total expenditures of ASK, which is an incentive for further work and development of this idea.

With the recovery of the economy and returning things to normal daily flows, we expect that the work of the ASK Center will stabilize and return to the path of development it had, especially because during the current year special programs are being prepared to raise the activities and occupancy of the ASK Center. With that in mind, we plan to hire one of the team members, or to expand the team with a person whose primary activities is exclusively focused on the development of the ASK Center.

## DEVELOPMENT OF ASK TEAM MEMBERS

ASK continuously invests in the development of engaged members, so during 2020, ASK team members participated in over 20 seminars and conferences, trainings, webinars, workshops and other public events in the field of youth activism, employment, environmental protection and humanitarian work, which resulted in an additional increase in the capacity of the ASK as a whole.

During the previous year, six internal trainings were held, and the lecturers were ASK team members who passed on knowledge and skills to their colleagues on topics such as project and financial management and communication. In addition, in January 2021, strategic planning was successfully implemented in order to prepare the entire team for the current year and, in accordance with the economic and socio-political context, create the expected changes, results and indicators.

One of this year's novelties is the creation of a system of competencies, which will continuously monitor the development of members of the ASK team in order to provide a system of support and counseling on their career path, as well as the most successful project activities. The system of competencies and work through the Teamwork platform will further affect the effectiveness and efficiency of all planned activities of ASK for the coming period.

During 2020, the constant growth of metrics, a larger number of followers strengthened ASK communication channels on social networks, and the visibility of ASK projects was also increased. Currently, ASK channels on social networks have more than 10,000 followers, and our sites have more than 20,000 visits in 2020.

## IMPROVEMENT OF TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

During 2020, the technical capacities of the organization were significantly improved - the office on Topličin venac is fully equipped with furniture and computer equipment obtained from partner organizations or organizations that have stopped working. In addition, during the year, a financial and administrative manager was hired, who is in charge of keeping proper documentation and taking care of the association's property.

At the end of the year, ASK purchased a license for Teamwork - a cloud platform for project management that facilitates the management of various project segments within its functions. The platform is expected to help project team members in communicating and establishing organizational processes, implementing a list of tasks, easier tracking of execution time, uploading files and messages.

It is important to note that the ASK Center is fully equipped with all technical devices that provide full support to internal and external, commercial, users in carrying out their planned activities in the ASK Center - from education and training, through seminars to PR activities.

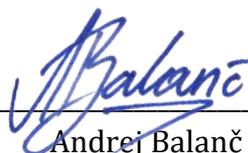
## KEY GOALS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR

At the beginning of 2021, a planning meeting of all members and teams of ASK was held in order to define the goals and strategic planning for the current year. The following are defined as key objectives:

- Regionalization of the organization and projects, which implies the expansion of the activities of the association to countries in the region, with special emphasis on regional cooperation with organizations that have already recognized in their activities in the surrounding countries. Primarily, regionalization refers to the project "Lighthouse of Knowledge", but also to the project "Academy of Youth Entrepreneurship" as cooperation with regional partners in the implementation of other regional projects in accordance with the strategic goals and statutory activities of the organization.
- Another key goal is to create a communication strategy that will fully unify the external communication of ASK as an association of citizens dealing with youth activism, youth employability, environmental protection and humanitarian work.
- The third key goal is to work on new projects that would become traditional and recognizable, such as today's "Lighthouse of Knowledge", "Academy of Youth Entrepreneurship" or "Zero Waste" projects. The focus will also be on finding donors who would use their resources to strengthen the organization's capacity.

In addition to these key goals, there are many other, very important goals for us, which relate to the improvement of existing projects and partnerships, but also to the technical and organizational development of the organization - we will mention only a few of them such as consulting services, CO-WORKING space and E- Learning platforms..

In Belgrade, January 2021



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Andrej Balanč  
Executive Director