Minority
Commissioner
a model for inclusion
of minorities

MINORITY RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are considered as standards that recognize and protect the dignity of all human beings and govern how individual human beings live in society and with each other, as well as their relationship with the State and the obligations that the State has towards them.

Minority rights are part of the general human rights framework and thus protection of minority rights is an important task of the governments and local self-governments. However, there are not many cases of its implementation in the Western Balkans' economies.

This course provides an entire framework for minority rights protection especially at the local level, starting from a broad overview of the concept and scope of human rights, to further elaborate on the aspects of equality, discrimination and minority rights, which are crucial for understanding and introducing the proper mechanisms of minority protection at the local level. Understanding of the international policy framework and how minority rights are embedded in the sustainable development goals is a prerequisite for proper alignment of minority rights protection aspects in the WB economies' national policies and legislation, but also for local governments to implement these policies and establish a proper strategic, legal and institutional framework for minority protection.

In order to help LSGs to establish the proper institutional framework, this course presents some viable social inclusion models and discusses two best practice examples, one from Germany and one from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Since 2012 the constitution of Schleswig-Holstein recognizes Sinti and Roma as minorities, and today, all minorities live peacefully together in the German-Danish border region with the local population. Schleswig-Holstein is well known for its minority policy model in Germany and beyond. The Minority Commissioner is an essential pillar of Schleswig-Holstein's minority policy and a reliable point of contact and dialogue for the minorities in the region. Their role is that of a mediator between the minorities and the government as well as that of an advisor to the government regarding needs and demands of minorities in the region. Impetus for development of the prominent model of European minority policy of intercultural dialogue and cooperation was the great cultural and linguistic diversity, the historic experience and the systematic efforts of all stakeholders to bring peace to the region.

The implementation and protection of minority rights in the Western Balkans is still a challenge, due to stereotypes, prejudices and other grounds for social exclusion. Despite the significant improvements over the past decades and the reforms in the area of rule of law and human rights, members of various minority communities throughout the region remain among the most vulnerable citizens of their countries who are exposed to poverty, social exclusion, and various forms of discrimination. Traditional roles, prejudices and discrimination are anchored deep in society and influence the political discourse as well socio-economic situation of the population.

HOW WILL THIS ONLINE COURSE HELP YOU?

Positive practice for minority inclusion is not a universal remedy – it might not be adequate unless transformed with respect to a particular context and should be undertaken with respect to the specific legal and institutional frameworks, their own capacities, and access to resources. A model-transfer is in fact a transfer of an idea, adapted to local needs and realities. The position of the Minority Commissioner should fill in an existing gap at local level since identified needs can improve the planning and delivery of Municipal services to the vulnerable groups through efficient communication and better contacts between the service providers and the beneficiaries.

This course will help you to get an insight about the MC approach, the successful transfer experience in Bijeljina and Živinice and provide you with the necessary knowledge on how to adapt this social approach within the very context of your local environment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this e-learning course is to introduce the Minority Inclusion Model to local self-governments in the Western Balkans' economies and enhance local stakeholders' capacities for implementation of the human

rights-based approach which would improve the quality of life and access to available municipal services by different minorities and disadvantaged groups.

- By the end of the course, you will able to:
- Understand the basic human rights concepts, equality and minority rights and how to identify and address different types of discrimination,
- Comprehend the international policy framework for minority rights protection and how it relates to national legal and policy frameworks,
- Understand how establishment of the Minority Commissioner model for inclusion can overcome societal discriminatory practices, stereotypes and prejudice against minority groups
- Learn tools and techniques for minority rights implementation and inclusion of minority groups

TARGET AUDIENCES

The course is designed for professionals employed in local self-government units and local government associations responsible for minority protection, with a certain level of initial knowledge on the topic, as well as for representatives of civil society organizations who deal with human rights and minority rights.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is divided into four modules:

- Module 1 – Human Rights, Discrimination and Minority rights
- Module 2 – Policy Framework for Minority Rights Protection
- Module 3 – Social Inclusion and Models for Minority Protection and Inclusion
- Module 4 – Implementation of Minority Rights Mechanisms at the Local Level

Between module 3 and 4 there will be a peer exchange webinar session on the following topic: *Exchange of Experience and Analysis of Case Study Models for Minority Rights Protection and Inclusion.*

The entire Course takes four weeks, with one module delivered per week.

LEARNING METHODS

This course is facilitator-guided and offers online learning methodology and tools including readings, case studies, videos, guided discussions, assignments and quizzes. These interactive tools will enable you to share your views, discuss with others and receive feedback. Vivid forum and online discussions and exchange of ideas and thoughts will encourage you to establish a permanent network of practitioners who work in local governments on social protection.

HOURS OF STUDY

For successful completion of the entire course, you will need to devote 12 hours in total, or 3 hours of learning per module, per week.

EVALUATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND CERTIFICATE FOR COURSE COMPLETION

In order to get a certificate for course completion, you should complete all the readings, actively contribute to the discussion forums, responding to the specific assignments, and complete the quizzes. Each of these tasks is scored with maximum of 100 points, while the threshold for successful completion of the course is 60 points.

LANGUAGE

This course is available in English language.

COURSE DELIVERY

The course will start on September 10, 2021 in collaboration with NALAS' member Local Government Associations. To express interest for the course, please contact your Local Government Association or NALAS, at info@nalas.eu

THIS COURSE IS PART OF NALAS e-ACADEMY

NALAS e-Academy is an online platform which enables dissemination of relevant regional knowledge to each municipal employee in SEE, in the same time offering opportunity for an interesting, creative, step by step learning. NALAS e-Academy provides a superb knowledge on topic relevant for local government professionals in the areas relevant to their work. Taking advantage of new technologies, the learning experience provided by the NALAS e-academy is affordable, innovative and practitioner focused.

COURSE FACILITATORS

Memet Memeti is a public administration and policy making expert with an MPA from Indiana University and PhD in the area of decision-making process in the local government. His main interests include public management, public administration reform, public policy making process, citizen participation and inclusion, decentralization, gender mainstreaming and GRB in the public sector, leadership, institutional and human development of public administration and governance. He has been teaching in Universities in Republic of North Macedonia (South East European University) and Kosovo and has been engaged as a consultant on a variety of projects throughout the Western Balkans' economies, dealing with public administration reform, gender equality, decentralization, local government, e-governance, inclusive policy making good governance principles and decentralization.
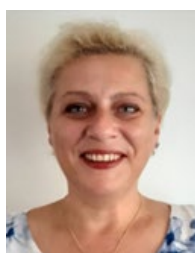
Gordana Nestorovska is a freelance consultant for project management and human rights-based approach. She closely cooperates with various NGOs (especially at the local level) and local self-governments on identification of their needs for capacity development. She is a trainer for strategic development, human rights-based approach, social inclusion, gender equality and mainstreaming, participatory budgeting, partnership and networking of different target groups. She has been engaged in many projects related to the preparation of research and capacity development methodologies for improved good governance of local democracies, as well as for civic participation at the local level. She is the President of the Association for Social Innovations and Sustainable Development RADAR and founder of several CSOs engaged in gender-related issues, environmental protection and sustainable development.