

# CDF in Cities and Municipalities TOGETHER FOR A BETTER LIFE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Wherever you go in Serbia – from Apatin to Vranje, from small municipalities to larger cities – you will meet people who want their town to breathe more freely, function more justly, and live better.

On the path of local community development, the **Center for Democracy Foundation (CDF)** has been a recognized partner, supporter, and ally for over 30 years.



## Why are we here?

Because we believe that sustainable development of local communities is possible and that citizen involvement in development planning and decision-making is a necessary condition. Development is most visible where people live – in villages, neighborhoods, and towns. For us, development means economic and social progress along with the preservation and improvement of natural resources.

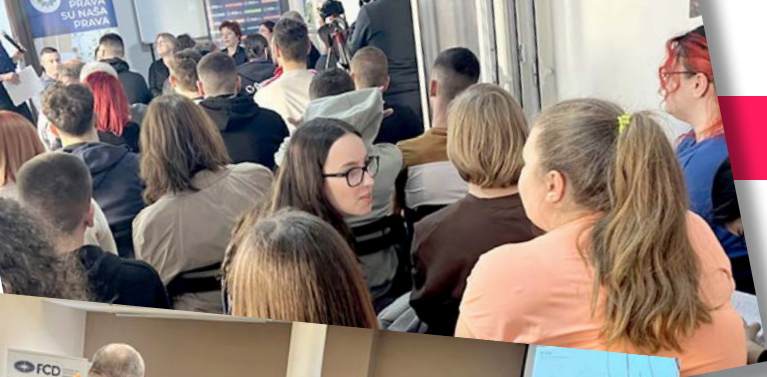
Through our engagement in over **40 local governments across Serbia**, we help communities become stronger, more inclusive, and better prepared for today's challenges.

## How do we work?

Field experience shows that improving institutional capacities is necessary, as well as strengthening human resources. It is also necessary to create and support frameworks for the exchange of knowledge and experiences in defining development priorities and planning social services. In conditions of limited resources, inter-municipal cooperation must be improved. Cross-sector collaboration between local governments, businesses, and civil society is also essential.







## Our focus areas:

- > European reforms at the local level
- > Democratic processes and citizen participation
- > Strengthening the capacity and accountability of local institutions, especially municipal and city assemblies and local administration
- > Gender equality
- > Improving the position of vulnerable groups
- > Development planning
- > Empowering civil society and civic activism
- > Supporting youth through education and regional networking



## That's why we listen, connect, and build

- > **We listen to people's needs** – especially those whose voices are rarely heard, through focus groups, interviews, and direct actions with citizens
- > **We connect all stakeholders** – the public sector, civil society, the private sector, academia, independent experts, schools, health centers, social work centers, media...
- > **We build partnerships and capacities** – for long-term change that remains after us, with citizen associations, local governments, elected representatives, employer associations, trade unions...
- > **We support the development of civil society** through assistance to informal citizen groups and associations





## What have we achieved together?

- > Improved local governance and offered concrete recommendations for better public policies – by analyzing policy documents and assessing their impacts
- > Strengthened the capacities of local governments and council members
- > Collected data and conducted social mapping – the needs and opportunities of vulnerable groups were recognized and their voices became louder, while new data filled gaps in local knowledge
- > Connected service users with decision-makers at the local level
- > Empowered civil society – especially women's, youth, and vulnerable group organizations
- > Contributed to improving social inclusion, gender equality, and the fight against discrimination
- > Integrated a gender perspective into local and regional development plans
- > Encouraged the economic empowerment of women, especially women in rural areas
- > Motivated citizens to participate in decision-making
- > Opened dialogue on important topics – from social inclusion to environmental justice
- > Advocated for solidarity, the fight against poverty, and sustainability as the foundation of local policies
- > Promoted European values and the importance of the social dimension of European integration

Every place carries a unique challenge, but one thing is the same – the desire for change. That's why we work with people who know their environment, recognize needs, and have ideas, but need support to implement them.

## What's next?

We will continue to go deeper into communities. To build networks of solidarity. To strengthen voices that are not heard enough. To be a support for those who want something better – for themselves and for everyone around them.

