



EU TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS
IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

CHANGE MAKERS

Civil Society Success Stories

FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

Highlighting stories
that show **incredible
resilience** and
positive impact in our
communities.



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Green Roots: Local Solutions for a Sustainable Future



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FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

REHEMP – 2024 VIA PANONIJA

CHALLENGE

In the face of growing rural poverty and climate change, Serbia lacked scalable, local solutions for sustainable energy. Industrial hemp—an eco-friendly, regenerative plant—remained unused, despite its enormous potential.

CHANGE

REHEMP developed clean energy pellets made from hemp stalks, achieving zero CO₂ emissions. Young researchers led the innovation, which was validated by the Bioenergy Institute in Vienna. The project revitalised agriculture, improved rural income, and proved that local, green energy is possible.



FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

Farm to Fork Academy for Green Western Balkans-Our Shared European Future – 2023-2027

CHALLENGE

In many parts of the Western Balkans, farming communities were disconnected and fragmented by outdated practices, vulnerable to climate shocks, and excluded from shaping sustainable policies. Civil society voices were underrepresented in the agricultural reforms, and rural areas struggled to keep pace with EU environmental standards.

CHANGE

The Farm to Fork Academy project reached over 1,000 farmers, CSO actors, and local stakeholders, providing training, participatory consultation, and dialogue. It produced national reports and fostered public debate, helping farmers contribute to EU-aligned food policies and transforming rural communities from passive recipients to active agents of the Green Agenda.

FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

"For lovelier Andrijevica" – 2024

„Local touristic initiative "For lovelier
Željevica"

Help - Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V. MN

CHALLENGE

The reactivation of a stone quarry on Zeljevica hill threatened to disrupt rural life and harm tourism-based livelihoods. Locals remembered the dust, noise, and heavy trucks from the quarry's past and feared losing their peaceful environment—and their future in the village.

CHANGE

A group of rural households launched their own initiative to protect the hill. They cleaned and mapped a scenic trail to the top, built a summerhouse for visitors, and created a new rural tourism offering. Zeljevica now attracts nature lovers and strengthens the local economy—without sacrificing the land.

FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

Back to the Roots in the Rural Sector – 2023 Natural Life Association

CHALLENGE

Small farming communities in rural Türkiye faced degrading land, shrinking incomes, and little access to green alternatives. Women and young people, in particular, were excluded from the shift toward sustainable agriculture and renewable energy.

CHANGE

A local farm was turned into a learning hub, where residents gained hands-on training in organic farming, vermicomposting, and solar energy. A production unit was launched employing women and people with disabilities. Village-to-village outreach brought climate-smart solutions to life and pride back to the land.

FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

Sport Without Waste – 2022–2024
ENVERÇEVKO Derneği

CHALLENGE

Türkiye's Zero Waste policy was disengaged from culture and sports. Schools and communities were missing tools to integrate sustainability into everyday activities, especially for younger generations.

CHANGE

ENVERÇEVKO, who acted as the project partner of 'Sport Without Waste,' blending environmental education with cycling and sports events. Activities ran in schools and universities across eight countries, raising awareness of sustainable lifestyles in cooperation with young people and CSOs and supporting youth-led environmental action, reinforcing Türkiye's climate goals at the grassroots. ENVERÇEVKO also acts as the national coordinator of EuroVelo and NowWeMove.

FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

Civil Society and Youth for Inclusive and
Sustainable Development through Circular
Economy – 2024–ongoing
People in Need

CHALLENGE

With a recycling rate of just 1%, North Macedonia faced urgent environmental challenges. Most of the public was unaware of circular economy principles, and young people, especially in schools and rural areas, had few opportunities to learn about sustainable alternatives or launch green initiatives.

CHANGE

Twelve grassroots CSOs joined the Circular Economy Academy and launched local zero-waste initiatives. Over 300 young people participated in training, experimenting with mushroom and insect farming as models of circular entrepreneurship. The project helped build both awareness and skills, laying the foundation for a new generation of eco-leaders.

FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

Cycling Without Waste – 2023–2024 Sport Without Waste (SWW)

CHALLENGE

Public awareness of waste management in Türkiye remained low. Young people and schools needed tools to connect environmental education with healthy lifestyles and climate action.

CHANGE

Through a creative blend of cycling and environmental education, the project reached students and young athletes across cities. Using the “Cycling Without Waste” model, participants learned practical eco habits, reducing waste while promoting active living.

FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

Making Learning Fun and Ecological –
2020–2021
Eco Logic

CHALLENGE

Many young people in rural North Macedonia do not have access to education on green entrepreneurship and environmental responsibility. young people unemployment is high, and traditional teaching methods fail to inspire ecological thinking or innovation.

CHANGE

Eco Logic delivered 15 interactive workshops, developed a digital learning platform, and trained over 200 young people and educators—focusing on green entrepreneurship and related topics such as sustainable design and innovative ecological solutions. The project engaged young people from both rural and urban areas—including those from socio-economically marginalized communities—to develop practical green business ideas, turning environmental awareness into real-world opportunity and action.

FROM CHALLENGE TO CHANGE

Education, mapping and preservation of wild medicinal plants in the area of Durmitor and Sinajevina - 2024

Ilinka Radojević (individual) -

Help - Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V. MN

CHALLENGE

Reckless and unregulated harvesting of wild herbs in Durmitor and Sinajevina threatened to destroy entire habitats of medicinal plants, putting local biodiversity, traditions, and livelihoods at risk.

CHANGE

The project mapped key wild plant locations and educated locals and tourists about sustainable harvesting. Wooden boards were installed with clear instructions, and the local Tourist Organization began promoting “wild plantations” as part of eco-tourism. Now, plants are picked carefully, in limited amounts—preserving nature and culture together.