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THE BIG PROJECT -BARABAR INITIATIVE (GOING) GRASSROOT

Informative Brochure

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Project Snapshot

Project Title: The BIG Project – Barabar Initiative (going) Grassroot

Implementation Period: February 2025 – January 2027

Lead Organization: Integra

Partner Organization: Center for Affirmative Social Actions (CASA)

Funded by: European Union

Location: Kosovo (local and central levels)

Main Focus: Social inclusion, inter-community cooperation, civic engagement through art and culture

Target Groups: Grassroots CSOs, women artists, local cultural practitioners, underrepresented communities

What is the BIG Project?

Kosovo's grassroots communities are rich with creativity, resilience, and potential for social change. Building on this foundation, the *BIG Project – Barabar Initiative (going) Grassroot* – brings together local civic organizations, women artists, local cultural practitioners, and institutions to promote inclusion and inter-community cooperation through the powerful tools of art and culture.

Led by Integra, in partnership with CASA, and supported by the EU, the project aims to enhance the role of grassroots civic actors in shaping a more cohesive and inclusive society in Kosovo. It introduces a fresh model of cooperation that connects community-level initiatives with national policy frameworks, placing art and culture at the heart of positive transformation.

Through establishing the Barabar Grassroot Network (BGN), the project will provide a sustainable platform that enables grassroots organizations, women artists, local cultural practitioners, and artists to collaborate, exchange ideas, and amplify their impact. Through training, creative programming, and policy dialogue, the BIG Project is designed to strengthen civic engagement, enhance the participation of women, support gender equality, and build bridges between divided communities.

This booklet presents an overview of the project's purpose, key beneficiaries, and the results it aims to achieve.

WHY THE BIG PROJECT?

The role of art and culture in social transformation

Art and culture have long played a vital role in helping societies reflect, heal, and grow. In Kosovo, they are uniquely positioned to connect people across ethnic, gender, and generational lines. Yet, their potential to promote inclusion and cohesion remains largely untapped, especially at the grassroots level.

The BIG Project builds on the success of the Barabar Centre, launched in 2023 in Pristina, where art and cultural programming sparked dialogue between communities, institutions, and civic actors. Now, the aim is to take these efforts further, beyond the premises of Barabar Centre and into the local communities where change often begins.

Through this project, grassroots civil society organizations, women artists, and local actors will be supported to use creative approaches in addressing complex social challenges, from social exclusion and discrimination, to post-conflict reconciliation and audience engagement in public culture.

At its core, the BIG Project recognizes that long-term social progress in Kosovo depends not only on institutions but on the active participation of citizens. The initiative introduces tools, networks, and support mechanisms that empower people, especially those from underrepresented groups, to take part in shaping their communities.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Target groups and key actors

The BIG Project brings together a diverse community of individuals and organizations, each playing a unique role in advancing its goals.

Grassroots Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

At least 15 local civic organizations from across Kosovo will be part of the Barabar Grassroot Network (BGN). These groups, working in areas such as youth, culture, inclusion, and human rights, will receive tailored support to strengthen their skills, design local initiatives, and participate in policy discussions. Their local knowledge and commitment are central to the project's success.

Women Artists and Civic Activists

The project places special emphasis on the inclusion and leadership of women in cultural and civic life. At least 10 women artists and socially engaged activists will join the Barabar Grassroot Network (BGN) as full members. They will be supported to lead creative initiatives that promote social inclusion and community dialogue. Their perspectives will be reflected throughout the project, from grassroots action to public policy engagement, ensuring that gender equality remains a cross-cutting value in all activities.

Institutions and Decision-Makers

The project also works with key institutional stakeholders at the central level. Their involvement ensures that the experiences and insights of local actors contribute meaningfully to public policies that affect inclusion, culture, and gender equality. Through structured cooperation and open dialogue, the project helps bridge the gap between institutions and the communities they serve.

Underrepresented Groups and Local Communities

Ultimately, the BIG Project serves Kosovo's wider society, especially women, youth, persons with disabilities, and non-majority communities. These groups will benefit from more inclusive practices, broader participation opportunities, and increased recognition of their social and cultural contributions.

WHAT WILL THE BIG PROJECT DO?

Phases and activities

The BIG Project unfolds in three interlinked phases over two years. Each phase builds on the previous one, reinforcing impact and fostering long-term change.

1. Mobilization and Network Building

The first phase focuses on identifying and connecting individuals and organizations that share a commitment to using art and culture as tools for social change. Through an inclusive outreach process, the project will establish the Barabar Grassroot Network (BGN), a framework for collaboration among civic and cultural actors across Kosovo.

2. Capacity Development

Once the network is formed, BGN members will take part in a targeted training program designed to strengthen their practical skills. The training will focus on three key areas:

- Using art and culture to drive positive social change
- Designing inclusive community initiatives
- Developing strong project proposals and fundraising strategies

All sessions will be based on real local needs, drawing on expert insights and participatory methods to ensure relevance and quality.

3. Creative Action and Policy Engagement

In the final phase, network members will apply their new skills at both local and national levels. Locally, they will implement initiatives aimed at increasing inclusion through cultural engagement. At the central level, they will contribute to public policy through collaborative formats such as Policy Hackathons, offering creative solutions to long-standing social challenges.

WHAT THE BIG PROJECT ASPIRES TO ACHIEVE?

Outcomes and expected impact

The BIG Project is designed to deliver tangible and lasting results, both for individual participants and the broader society. Its impact will be visible on multiple levels:

Stronger grassroots organizations

Through the training and networking opportunities offered by the project, local civic organizations will strengthen their ability to engage communities, advocate for change, and influence public dialogue. Their improved visibility and credibility will enhance their role as key drivers of social inclusion.

New spaces for women's leadership

The project promotes the active participation of women in both cultural production and civic leadership. By supporting women artists and activists to lead local initiatives and engage in national dialogue, the project helps challenge gender-based barriers and promote more equitable cultural governance.

Creative solutions to complex challenges

By encouraging the use of art and culture in addressing social divisions, discrimination, and post-conflict legacies, the project fosters new forms of engagement that

are imaginative, participatory, and emotionally resonant. These approaches help build understanding across communities and give voice to marginalized groups.

Policy inputs grounded in grassroots experience

Policy recommendations developed through the project will be rooted in the lived experience of communities and the practical insights of civic actors. This ensures that institutional strategies for inclusion, transitional justice, and cultural development are more responsive, inclusive, and effective.

A sustainable platform for cooperation

The Barabar Grassroot Network (BGN) will continue beyond the life of the project as a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and coordinated action. It will enable long-term partnerships between civic actors, artists, and institutions committed to building a more inclusive society.

MOVING FORWARD

Staying connected with the BIG Project

The BIG Project is not just a set of activities, it is a growing community of people who believe in the power of creativity, collaboration, and civic participation to build a more inclusive Kosovo.

Over the course of two years, the project will continue to highlight the value of grassroots action, elevate the role of art and culture in public life, and open space for new voices in decision-making.

While future opportunities for direct participation, such as training, sub-grants, and creative collaboration, will

be announced later on, this information booklet serves to introduce the project's broader vision, values, and expected outcomes.
If you are an individual or organization interested in the role of culture in social change, or simply want to stay informed, follow the work of Integra, CASA, and the Barabar Grassroot Network online.

Stay in touch for upcoming opportunities

Project partners' websites and social media channels will regularly share updates on activities, achievements, and participation opportunities. Keep an eye out for:

- Open Calls for BGN membership
- Announcements for training and grant applications for BGN members
- Invitations to public events and national forums for BGN members and relevant stakeholders

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Together, we can turn creativity into a force for justice, inclusion, and community change.