

# “Difference is our Strength”

## DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING IN SLOVENIA

### THE NGDO PROJECT FOR THE SLOVENIAN PRESIDENCY 2008

*In the first half of 2008, Slovenia will be the first new EU member state (NMS) to hold the Presidency of the European Union. SLOGA, the Slovenian development NGO (NGDO) platform, set its presidency agenda on development education and awareness raising as the basis for effective development cooperation.*

The inequitable North-South relations, the interdependence between the EU and developing countries and the resulting responsibility are not widely known to the Slovenian public. Development education does not exist in the education system and there is little pressure from the public to include development issues into school curricula and informal education systems. The Slovenian EU presidency seems the right moment to mobilize support for development among all stakeholders, with a special focus on raising awareness of the living conditions in African countries and of the situation in the Balkans.

#### AIMS AND TARGET GROUPS

Around 20 Slovenian NGDOs from different sectors will implement the presidency project, which intends to address the lack of development issues in political discussion, in public and media awareness and in educational material, as well as to

strengthen the civil society already active in this field. The three target groups of the project are civil society organisations, political decision makers and the Slovenian public. The project aims to enable Slovenian citizens to look at their own lives in relation to the lives of people throughout the world, and at increasing understanding of the interrelations between economic, social, political and environmental factors as the main causes of poverty. One goal of the project is to develop skills and values within civil society which would encourage advocacy for equitable North-South and West-East relations.

#### THEMATIC FOCUS OF THE SLOGA PRESIDENCY PROJECT

The main focus is on development education and will be addressed on two levels: firstly as a cross cutting issue, which will encompass all activities in order to elaborate a variety of educational materials as well as to improve knowledge on development, and secondly as one of the core working groups of the presidency project. The further thematic priorities which the NGOs will concentrate on are linked to questions of social exclusion and environment. They are Climate Change, Women Trafficking, Children, Intergenerational Dialogue and Migration. Being the most relevant topics to the Slovenian context, they are able to serve as a basis for bringing development perspectives from civil society into the political discussion arena. Each topic will be tackled by a working group of interested NGDOs who will organize related events, seminars, roundtables, trainings and press conferences to engage the attention of the various stakeholders. Regular meetings between SLOGA and representatives of the current and future Troika countries will ensure continuous cooperation across Europe and with the partners in developing countries.

#### LINKING WITH PREVIOUS AND SUBSEQUENT PRESIDENCIES

During the Finish presidency, a multi-stakeholder task force was established to



develop a European framework for development education and awareness raising. As a result, the European strategy on development education was presented during the Portuguese presidency. In close cooperation



*International SLOGA Conference on the Western Balkans, February 2007*

with the Development Education Forum of CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development, the Slovenian presidency project will follow up on this strategy and discuss its implementation on national and EU levels. It is planned that the final policy document will be submitted to the European Commission during the French presidency in the second half of 2008.

#### MAIN EVENT: DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION CONFERENCE IN JUNE

The main event of the Slovenian presidency project will be the international Development Education Conference in Ljubljana on 9-10 June 2008 which will address the role of NGOs in development education and awareness raising. This will be the opportune moment to discuss the European development education strategy and its Europe-wide implementation with key stakeholders and decision makers from NGOs, from governments and from the European Commission and Parliament.



*Anja Mešič, Marjan Huč, Mateja Kraševc  
Slovenian NGDO platform SLOGA  
info@sloga-platform.org  
www.sloga-platform.org*

### Main governmental presidency events

**January 2008:** Slovenia to chair the CODEV (Council Development Cooperation Working Party) meeting; focus on division of labor and aid effectiveness.

**January 2008:** Slovenian MFA in cooperation with the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) – launch of a study on Children and Women in Armed Conflicts as an issue in EU Development policy.

**March 2008:** EU-ACP (Africa Caribbean Pacific) joint Parliamentary Assembly in Ljubljana.

**April 2008:** Slovenia to chair the GAERC (General Affairs and External Relations Council) meeting.