

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	3 - Udruzenje NIT - za izgradnju ljudi i zajednica (NIT)
PIC number:	881004150
Project name and acronym:	Actions Supporting the Participation of Youth through Relevant Education in Europe — ASPYRE Europe

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	11		
Event name:	Civic Cafés BiH		
Type:	Workshop / Training		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	BiH, Sarajevo		
Date(s):	25 March 2026, 1 April 2026		
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.instagram.com/p/DWoQzamCAOy/?igsh=YzhrZ3l0a25sOGl3&fbclid=IwY2xjawQ7P89leHRuA2FlbQlzMABicmlkETFiVDlkajFjTzR4QjFXNmFqc3J0YwZhchBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHvcd3VwDO8FGVKMmVnSVWUd2bFCCzawxnEVZ20pU3wzmMAf3uOakwXR1Ka6Q_aem_6PBTNBNGlPfNbKqLK2Mdlq		
Participants			
Female:	66		
Male:	27		
Non-binary:			
From country 1 [name]:	BiH		
From country 2 [name]:			
From country 3 [name]:			
...			
Total number of participants:	93	From total number of countries:	1
Description			
Provide a short description of the event and its activities.			
Summary of the event			

The third series of events of ASPYRE EUROPE in BiH was organised for the purpose of:

- Providing a platform for youth (ages 16–24) to present their civic initiatives developed through the ASPYRE EUROPE project, highlighting their ideas, leadership, and engagement with key social issues in their communities.
- Facilitating dialogue and connection between youth, professors, educators, and decision-makers, creating opportunities for feedback, encouragement, and potential collaboration to further develop and sustain youth-led initiatives.
- Demonstrating the impact of the ASPYRE EUROPE project's methodology by showcasing how structured support, mentorship, and experiential learning can empower young people to meaningfully participate in civic and democratic life.
- Encouraging future engagement by introducing professors, educators, and youth workers to the ASPYRE EUROPE toolkit and workshops as practical resources that can be adapted and used in their own contexts to continue strengthening youth civic participation.

BiH's Civic Café was held in two locations: on March 25, 2026 in the Humanities Faculty at the University "Džemal Bijedić" in Mostar and on April 1, 2026 at Tershouse Coworking Space in Sarajevo. Both brought together students and professors, educators, youth workers, and decision-makers in an interactive and dialogue-oriented setting, inspiring other students beyond the project that change is possible in their communities. The Civic Café in Mostar highlighted a Mostar student's initiative, in which various departments in the University of Mostar "Džemal Bijedić" granted financial awards to 8 students in four categories, celebrating their unique academic achievements. During this event, students got the opportunity to speak with and share their ideas for change with local (Mostar) decision makers, the dean of the university, and other professors. This student's initiative to grant awards is now set up to repeat annually. The second Sarajevo event created space for 8 groups of young people to share their projects—addressing issues such as food waste, social inclusion, and accessibility—while receiving constructive feedback and recognition from representatives of the local government, professors, youth workers, and others from the public. The atmosphere at each event was marked by strong student presentations, meaningful exchange, and a shared sense of possibility for continued collaboration. Numerous students had never presented publicly before and expressed gratitude for the opportunity for self-growth, and they were very encouraged to see that change was possible through youth like themselves in their city. Professors, youth workers, and decision makers as well expressed excitement for particular student initiatives that have been completed and/or are in process, connecting students to additional opportunities to advocate for their projects.

Participants from WP11 target group

- Youth (16–24): 75
- Teachers, educators and youth workers: 10
- Decision-makers: 5
- Others / the general public: 3
- Total: 93

Overview of activities

The Civic Café events were designed as an interactive and participatory event centered on youth presentations and dialogue with key stakeholders. The structure of the event allowed students to present their initiatives, engage with feedback, and connect with professors and decision-makers in an informal but purposeful environment.

Dates:

25 March 2026, 12:00 - 14:00

1 April 2026, 17:00 - 20:00

Schedule:

After opening remarks and introducing the ASPYRE project, student groups shared their advocacy initiatives (10 minutes each) and were given time after each presentation (5-10 minutes) to dialogue with local decision makers and educators in the audience regarding their projects. When presentations concluded, politicians and educators approached the student groups to recommend ways that the advocacy initiatives could reach their next stage of development. After concluding remarks, the public, students, decision makers and educators were able to mingle and connect on their own.

Communication and Dissemination

Online communication

2 April 2026 - Social media:

- Instagram: [Link](#)
- Instagram story advertising event:



Media coverage:

For the Civic Café event, Udruženje NIT and Youth for Peace engaged a photographer to document the evening and capture the presentations and interactions between youth, professors, and decision-makers. In addition, several photographers were present on behalf of the student presenters, with the intention of sharing and promoting their individual projects through their own networks and platforms.

As the event took place recently, initial steps have been taken to begin sharing content from the Civic Café, with further communication planned in the coming days. This marks a shift from earlier phases of the project, as this event was designed not only for internal development and feedback, but also to highlight and celebrate the outcomes of youth engagement.

Given the positive response to the events—particularly the quality of student presentations and the engagement of attending professors and decision-makers—the project team is encouraged to explore more intentional communication and outreach moving forward. This includes considering how media and storytelling can support the visibility and sustainability of youth-led civic initiatives.

As a pilot initiative, the Civic Café demonstrated strong potential for future development. The project team is particularly interested in exploring ongoing collaboration with universities and other educational institutions, including the possibility of establishing a regular rhythm of similar events (e.g., semester-based presentations or competitions) that connect students with professors and decision-makers. Such an approach could contribute to strengthening a culture of civic engagement among university students, and potentially extend to younger age groups over time.

Gender sensitivity and non-discrimination

The event demonstrated a strong commitment to gender sensitivity and inclusivity, with a clear majority of participants identifying as female (66 female and 27 male participants). Although no participants identified as non-binary in the registration forms, all communication leading up to the event employed gender-sensitive language, intentionally avoiding biases and stereotypes. This ensured that the language used was inclusive, respectful, and mindful of diverse gender identities.

This commitment was also reflected in the content of the youth initiatives themselves. One project, *“Women’s Bodies,”* focused specifically on issues affecting women, creating space for awareness and dialogue around gender-related topics. Another initiative, *“Sarajevo bez barijera”* (Sarajevo without barriers) addressed accessibility challenges for people with disabilities, highlighting the importance of inclusive urban spaces and equal access for all citizens.

Throughout the event, concerted efforts were made to ensure that all participants, regardless of gender, ability, or background, were given equal opportunities to contribute to and engage in the presentations and discussions. There was also an active effort to include students with physical disabilities and to create a space that was accessible and welcoming. Particular attention was given to fostering an environment in which youth presenters felt confident to share their ideas and perspectives, and where all attendees could interact respectfully and constructively.

This approach reinforced the project’s commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where diversity is valued and everyone can participate meaningfully.

Outcomes and Impact -

This third event in BiH as part of the ASPYRE EUROPE project demonstrated the tangible impact of the project’s methodology, particularly in moving from training and preparation to concrete youth-led civic action. The event generated the following key outcomes:

1. Successful development and implementation of youth-led initiatives

A total of eight student groups were supported from initial idea development through to project implementation and presentation. Several of these initiatives have already achieved meaningful progress and visibility within their local contexts. For example, one initiative in Mostar successfully brought together students from different schools and backgrounds to celebrate positive youth engagement across fields such as humanities, sports, volunteerism, and the arts, culminating in a public event and awards that fostered collaboration across ethnic divides. Another initiative, *“Replate,”* is in the process of developing a business model and mobile application to reduce food waste by redistributing surplus food in a safe and regulated manner. Additional projects focused on recycling, neighborhood clean-up, and improving urban accessibility have taken concrete steps toward implementation, including engagement with municipal structures and the proposal of practical solutions such as the installation of recycling infrastructure. Another group is actively working with municipal officials to advocate for the creation of dedicated youth spaces in central Sarajevo.

2. Youth engagement, empowerment, and increased civic capacity

Youth participants were effectively mobilized throughout the project, not only in developing their initiatives but also in learning how to navigate the processes required to bring about change. This included engaging with local council members, initiating formal petitions, and interacting with institutional actors. Through these experiences, participants demonstrated increased confidence, strategic thinking, and a stronger sense of agency in relation to civic engagement. Many expressed a

belief that their voices can have a tangible impact, even within complex political and institutional environments in BiH.

3. Engagement of professors, educators, and decision-makers

The Civic Café provided an opportunity for professors, educators, and a smaller number of decision-makers to directly observe the quality and potential of youth-led initiatives. Despite modest attendance from this group, those present expressed strong interest in the students' work and openness to further collaboration. Several participants engaged directly with student groups, offering feedback, encouragement, and in some cases exploring possibilities for ongoing support or partnership. One group ("*Prostor za mlade*" - advocating for dedicated space for youth to learn and do group work) has already presented their initiative to the local Parliament. Another group ("*Replate*" - reducing restaurant waste) has also been advocated for by local decision makers.

4. Strengthening foundations for institutional collaboration

The event contributed to building a foundation for deeper collaboration with universities and other educational institutions. There is growing interest in exploring how such initiatives can be supported and sustained through institutional structures, including the possibility of integrating similar project-based civic engagement models into university offerings. Establishing a regular rhythm of student project development, mentorship, and public presentation—potentially on a semester basis—emerged as a promising pathway for fostering ongoing youth civic participation and connecting student initiatives with decision-makers.

5. Strategic approach to sustainability and future growth

At this stage of the project, the primary focus is on building long-term relationships and trust with key stakeholders, particularly university partners and engaged decision-makers, rather than pursuing rapid expansion or high-visibility media coverage. This approach reflects an awareness of the broader political and institutional context in BiH, where civic engagement and advocacy can be sensitive. By prioritizing sustained collaboration and carefully developing channels for youth engagement, the project aims to create durable pathways for student-led initiatives to influence local communities.

Looking ahead, there is also interest in exploring how this model could be extended to secondary school students, despite the structural and regulatory challenges within the education system in BiH. If successful, this could further expand the reach and impact of the ASPYRE EUROPE approach, contributing to a broader culture of youth civic engagement across different age groups.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).