



# VOICE, INCLUSION, COHESION

## *HELVETAS' GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO IN EASTERN AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE*

### *Capability Statement*

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HELVETAS supports local actors in achieving sustainable systemic change that

- amplifies the **voices** of vulnerable communities, migrants and refugees
- enhances the space for civil society and the private sector to meaningfully participate in **inclusive** decision making
- strengthens the capacities of public institutions to deliver gender and youth responsive services and to articulate transformative policies for a **cohesive** society

# Key Strengths and Value Propositions in Voice, Inclusion, Cohesion

The main working fields of the Voice, Inclusion, and Cohesion in Eastern Europe are:

**Governance & Civic Space:** Our aim is to ensure that communities and civil society can claim their rights and meaningfully engage in development and policy processes. To achieve this, we develop the capacity of civil society to wield influence, and for local governments to manage resources and efficiently and transparently deliver public services.

**Urban engagement:** We encourage urbanization that is sustainable and inclusive by advancing the capacities of public institutions and facilitating citizen engagement in urban planning.

## Core Competencies



### Strengthening governmental institutions for improved public service provision

- Performance management
- Public finance management
- Public services & infrastructure

## Spotlight 1: Improved service provision synced with national Government agenda in Albania

*Our solutions and roles:*

In the [Bashki të Forta project](#), HELVETAS Albania work with all 61 local governments in the country on establishment of a performance-based system and the training academy for local governments in line with the Governmental agenda. The project also works on developing service standards for waste management and preschool services.

*Key achievements in 2023:*

Capacity-building activities involved 1,000 persons (42% women; 20% young people), while 65 civil society actors were supported in advocacy efforts. More than 90,000 citizens got better access to public services. The satisfaction level of citizens with waste management services increased from 49% in 2021 to 63% in 2023.

## Spotlight 2: Greater citizen satisfaction with municipal services in Kosovo

*Our solutions and roles:*

In 2023, HELVETAS Kosovo – [Decentralisation and Municipal Support Project](#) (DEMOS) collaborated with 34 municipalities and 13 CSOs to enhance citizen satisfaction with public services. 131 persons (50% women) participated in capacity-building programs on the Municipal Performance Management System.

*Key achievements in 2023:*

In the past years, there has been an evident increase in municipal performance: 46,476 citizens got improved access to public services in 2023. The Government is committed to further improve the grant scheme to incentivise the best-performing municipalities.

## Spotlight 3: Property tax platform in Serbia

*Our solutions and roles:*

The [Municipal Economic Development project](#) (MED) supports local governments in own source revenue generation, making them less dependent on the central government.

*Key achievements in 2023:*

In Serbia, more than 2 million of citizens are registered users of the digital platform "Unified Tax Information System of Local Self-Government Units", developed with the technical assistance of HELVETAS. Citizens pay property tax via the ICT-supported platform which enables them to access their tax balance and make payments online.



## Empowerment of civil society organizations – addressing the challenges of shrinking civic space

- *Institutional strengthening of civil society organizations*
- *Support to informal groups & movements*
- *Multi-sector networks*

### Spotlight 4: Citizen-led advocacy for enhanced public services in Serbia

**Our solutions and roles:** In light of the deteriorating democratic governance in Serbia, HELVETAS tackles the obstacles confronting civil society activism. In 2023, through [ACT - For an Active Civil Society Together](#) project, HELVETAS worked in partnership with 147 civil society organizations to advance their institutional sustainability and the effects of advocacy efforts. The partner CSOs started 134 advocacy initiatives at the local and national level.

**Key achievements in 2023:** 34 policy documents were adopted at the local level, and 11 at the national level, which brought improvements in the rule of law, human rights, social inclusion, citizen participation, and environmental protection. Cca 90,000 citizens (55% women) benefited from these activities.

### Spotlight 5: Empowering Community Voices in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Our solutions and roles:** HELVETAS implements [PRAGG – Proactive citizens](#) project that aim at more active participation of citizens, especially the socially excluded, in advocacy and creation of public policies. In 2023, we worked with 15 civil society organizations. 12 local advocacy plans were created to raise awareness, influence public opinion, and advocate for positive changes.

**Key achievements in 2023:** The advocacy campaigns mobilized 1,193 citizens who have an interest in improving the situation for youth, people living with disabilities, and women victims of violence. One community campaign succeeded in the mobilization of citizens for [building a playground with equipment for children in Trebinje](#). This is an excellent example of how joint efforts can shape a better future for the youngest!



## Sustainable and inclusive urban engagement

- *Encouraging sustainable and inclusive urbanization*
- *Focus on small- and medium-sized towns*
- *Citizen engagement in urban planning*

### Spotlight 6: Improved public engagement in urban planning in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Our solutions and roles:** Within the Sarajevo Urban Transformation Project (UTPS), HELVETAS implemented activities for improving participatory urban planning mechanisms, including a compilation of the best practice publication, provision of capacity building and technical assistance for cantonal and municipal bodies.

**Key achievements in 2023:** In 2023, we provided assistance for organization of public discussions on the Draft Urban Plans in the Sarajevo Canton. There were 10 public hearings and 5 smaller-scale dialogue events with the participation of cca 800 citizens – experts, students, businesses, and civil society representatives. The key messages from all events will be analyzed and incorporated into the final Urban Plans.

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## Our Offerings

Partner with HELNETAS to drive impactful projects, promote innovation, and build a reliable sustainability network through:

- Supporting the design, implementation, adaptation and reviews of projects;
- Promotion of innovations through applied research and sourcing of good international practices;
- Developing and contextualizing methodologies, tools and approaches such as Conflict Sensitivity; Political Economy & Power Analysis, Socially Inclusive and Gender Responsive Budgeting, Social Dialogue & Audits, Experiential Peace Education;
- Conducting DAC evaluations, feasibility analyses, and capacity development;
- Managing knowledge, capitalizing and sharing of project experiences;
- Concluding partnerships in consortia, and joint project implementation.

### HELNETAS Governance projects in Eastern and Southeastern Europe



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