



SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
DIOCESE OF BACKA  
KOVILJ MONASTERY  
REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



THE LAND OF THE LIVING  
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
NOVI SAD

## *THE LAND OF THE LIVING*

*We can build a healthy global society.  
It is never too late to change our future!  
We are the ones we have been waiting for.*

**March 2011**

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## Introduction

“ The Land of the Living” is a nonprofit organization, which deals with psycho - social rehabilitation and re-socialization of young drug addicts. The entire project is based and coordinated with actions taken by Republic of Serbia in prevention, rehabilitation and social reintegration.

## Project description

### *Background*

The project is implemented in three stages:

- Presentation of the "The Land of the living" to the young people with drug problems and preparations for joining the program;
- Entry and free stay of young people with addiction problems in the camps and their education;
- Taking responsibility for the new program participants;

Preparations for joining the commune “The Land of the Living”, for the implementation of education, are made through intensive interviews with addicts and their parents. Interviews are conducted once a week, and it continues for 8 weeks. Attending these, specific preparation, future participants make the first steps toward the camp, because they are required to make the following changes during the preparatory stage:

- Cessation of drug use from the first meeting;
- End of contact with the old society - drug addicts, drug dealers;
- Preparation of the family, the parents to cooperate in the program;
- Detailed health examinations (Dental, Dermatovenerology, tests for HIV and HCV, the opinion of a psychiatrist)
- Community service.

All jobs in the community are carried out by the recipients, depending on their maturity and the time spent. Stay in the community involves psychosocial and spiritual rehabilitation. Recipients are engaged in the commune on jobs which allow them to build healthy personality. Each new award is gradually given more responsible tasks.

Exposed to such a structured and heterogeneous programs addicts are taught to be responsible and conscientious, they can point to errors and omissions noticed. In

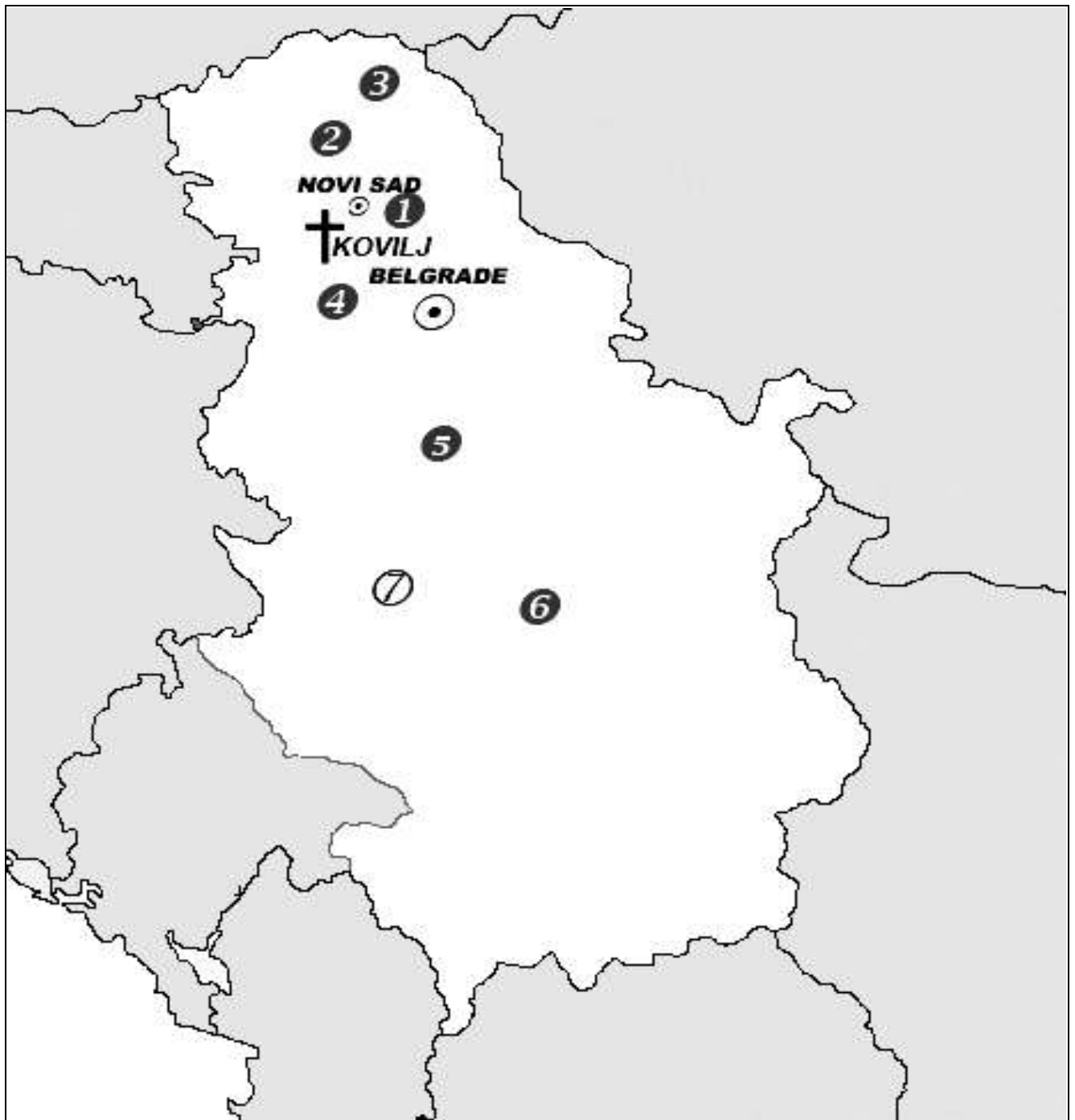
this way we achieve the desired goal: one day to be responsible for their families and the society as a whole. One of the most important things is to progress in the development of personal relationships. In order to solve disagreements and to live in harmony and peace with the surrounding, community members are encouraged to conduct mutual educational talks in their free time, to teach themselves creativity, honesty and openness.

Education within the nonprofit organization "The Land of the Living" involves a comprehensive approach, because first of all, along with psychologists, psychiatrist, social workers, and other experts, it takes care of restoration of the whole identity, which makes the essence of the problem of addicts. Recipients who participate in the project free of charge, after 2-3 years spent in the camp, depending on the length of drug abuse, become able to perform peer education within groups and among individuals with intention to prevent drug addiction and to raise the level of social and community responsibility when it comes to a problem of a drug addiction which has long time ago got epidemic proportion.

Successful cooperation was organized with Gerontological center from Novi Sad, also with the Republic Center for contemporary education CES, and cooperation with municipal, provincial and Republic institutions. The cooperation with media organizations was also achieved, with RTS, RTV, TV Prva, B-92 and with other local televisions in Serbia.

## Evaluation

The criteria and methods for the success of this project are achievements gained so far. Since 2005 when "The Land of the Living" as a nonprofit organization started work on this project, **350** young people have passed through the peer education program and the withdrawal of **82%** successfully completed the program for giving, and peer education and managed to be productive. They became active and productive members of the family, found a job, continued their education etc. Finally, they are good examples for youth generation in Europe.



**The Land of the Living as nonprofit organization has established seven communities from 2005 to 2010.**

### ***Problem***

Number of addicts is increasing day by day. Nowadays, it is a global world problem and in Serbia as well. Drugs are available in the most remote parts of Serbia. **DRUG ADDICTION** is one of the most dangerous problems in Serbia.

### **Project summary**

Within the project there are seven communities in the process governing the rehabilitation and social reintegration. In seven communities 150 people are located two to three years depending on how the process goes of rehabilitation.

Radio television of Vojvodina (RTV) has made two documentary films about life in The Land of the Living. In more than twenty towns there were presentations given with the members of the communities. Their testimonies were precious for the young as preventive measure.

There were many presentations given in Novi Sad in elementary and in secondary schools in which many questions were asked. The visits of young people to the communities were organized. Many members of the communities go to the local inhabitants to do the peasant work.

Within the project "*Play as you breathe, Theatre as Life*", in cooperation with Netherlands Foundation for central and Eastern Europe there was a performance called "*The Line*" as a product of workshops for the application of applied theatre. The workshops were organized and conducted from October 2008 till June 2009 within communities, with the support of the young with the problems of addiction.

### ***Objectives of the project***

The overall objective of the project is to:

- Develop multy-sector cooperation in the fight against all forms of addiction, especially psychoactive substances.
- Develop of holistic support programs in the process of treatment from psychoactive substances;
- Inform and educate children, teenagers, parents and other general public in order to disseminate information regarding damaging effects of psychoactive substances (PAS).

The specific objectives of the project are:

- Rehabilitation of psychophysical condition of addicts and education of project target groups.
- Promotion and development of a healthy lifestyle with the aim of preserving and improving the health of young population.
- Preparation of young population for peer-to-peer education with aim to protect and prevent from psychoactive substances.
- Increasing number of peer educators (volunteers) in rural areas with aim to protect and prevent from psychoactive substances.
- Training of peer educators for the purpose of continuing education of a broad youth population on the issue of alcohol and drugs.
- Qualifications of young people through peer education, acquire knowledge and practical skills for constructive partnership and how to react in a communication to prevent substance abuse.
- Understanding the basics of developing a volunteer group within the schools that are directly engaged in peer education to prevent substance abuse.
- Cooperation with local people in places of the commune to correct the bias against the population of addicts to PAS and to improve re-socialization the very protégés.

### ***Target groups***

Direct and indirect beneficiaries covered by the project, their number and structure: The direct beneficiaries are young boys and girls who have problems with drugs and the number depends on the vacancies in local authorities and the willingness of candidates to accept the rules which apply in the "The Land of the Living", the structure is diverse regardless of religion, ethnicity, economic status and place of residence.

Direct beneficiaries of this project are also children in elementary and secondary schools, where the projects are realized in order to encourage peer education among young people;

Indirect beneficiaries are the families of addicts who entered the program, which go through educational lectures by educators and familiarize themselves with life of residents in the communes.

## Project team

**His Grace of Jeger Bishop Dr Porfirije**, The leader of the project  
Nenad Draskovic, Deputy Minister of Human and Minority Rights  
Predrag Djokic, Public Relations and International Cooperation

*Spiritual fathers and advisors* : Branko Ćurčin, Jugoslav Ćurčić, Milan Malinić,  
Aleksandar Novaković, Miloš Jevrosimov, Milovan Miodragović, Rade Despotović

*Professional Associates*: dr Biljana Anđelković psychiatrist; mr Ljubica Kovačević,  
Special education teacher; dr Žarko Dimitrić urologist; Aleksandra Dickov  
psychiatrist; dr Stamenko Šušak; Aleksandra Jelić film director etc.

*Social workers*: Stamenko Božić; Žarko Srdanov; Dejan Zekovski;  
Dusanka Pelagić, secretary

*Volunteers as educators*: Lazar Majstorović; Mihailo Gavrić, Dejan Perišić ;Selimir  
Vagic,

**Contact information:**  
**Kovilj Monastery**  
**Phone: +1381 21 889 699**  
**cellphone: +1381 64 800 2632**  
**e-mail : [spc.zemljazivih@gmail.com](mailto:spc.zemljazivih@gmail.com)**

*I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

*Psalm 27,13*