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# The Role of Civil Society in Family Mainstreaming

BRATISLAVA, 28 October 2016

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# What does society consists of?

1. Government
2. Business
3. Civil society



# What is civil society?

**Civil society** is comprised of groups or organizations working in the interest of citizens, expressing their will and operating outside of the governmental and for-profit sectors



# What does civil society consist of?

PEOPLE, CITIZENS organised in

- Churches
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Trade unions
- Different civil organizations
- ....



# NGOs

- Not operated by the government
- Very often reliant on donations
- Tend to be comprised of volunteers



# Relation of the Church members and NGO members

- In the **plural society** every attitude/position of the citizen - no matter does the person believe in God or believes that God does not exist – has the **same access to th**
- **We have to propose arguments and in the case of different opinions – established ways of democratic decision making is applied**



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# NGOs as translators

- NGOs „translate” values that Church teaches into the every day life of people who are not practicing their faith, but share values
1. Scientific (medial, sociological, psychological..) arguments valid for all people
  2. Modern language
  3. Modern means of communication – social networks, films...



# NGOs - where am I, personally in this?

- Every activity starts from WHO I am and WHAT is important to me





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- What is most important to Željka?
- What are my goals?
- What are the things I don't want to miss?
- What makes me happy?
- What am I responsible for – besides myself?





# We act on all levels of responsibility:

- 1) Personal**
- 2) Family**
- 3) Professional/economic**
- 4) Social and cultural**
- 5) Political**



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# Personal responsibility

## A) Grow in faith

✓ Sacramental life

✓ Everyday prayer

✓ Deepen knowledge of the church teaching

(Catechism of the Catholic Church)





# Personal responsibility

## B) Self-education

- ✓ Acquire new knowledge, develop own talents
- ✓ Improve oneself in the role of father or mother
- ✓ Observe and critically consider everything that is happening around us





# Personal responsibility

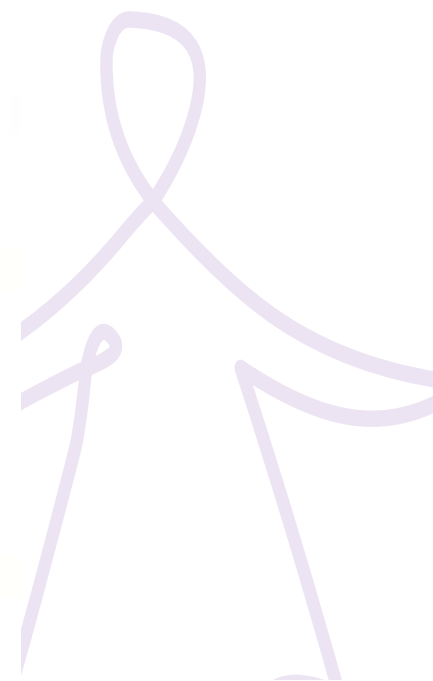
## C) Professional development

- ✓ Continuous training in one's profession
- ✓ Achieve financial independence
- ✓ Contribute to progress and accept responsible positions





# Family responsibility





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# Family responsibility

- ▣ Dedicate enough time to your spouse and children
- ▣ Raise children by example for values, invest in their education, encourage them to be independent and critical
- ▣ Connect with families of similar values – positive environment





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I go to church, I educate my children, I cover my personal and family responsibilities - don't have time...

**WHY SHOULD I BE ACTIVE IN THE CIVIL SOCIETY?**



# Antonio Gramsci (1891 -1937)





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# Cultural hegemony

- **Cultural hegemony -culturally-diverse society** can be ruled or dominated by one of its social classes - **dominance of one social group over another**
- Today - **Left-liberal cultural hegemony** is often imposed by **so called civil society**



# Society creates pressure – in good or bad directions

While growing up - children internalize the values we teach them and form their own identity (importance of **freedom** and **argumentation**)

## **MECHANISM OF SOCIAL PRESSURE**

**Due to fear of social rejection** – person changes their opinion, internalizes other people's (imposed) and **changes their identity**





# Values and peer and social pressure

## **Social pressure:**

- 1) Direct – from individuals we know
- 2) Indirect – from individuals we do not know, and we think they act in a certain way – importance of the media!

- Young people's binge drinking on Saturdays
- Marriage, family...





# Values and peer and social pressure

- 85 % of Croats think marriage is not an obsolete institution
- 82% of children in Croatia are born in wedlock
- 98% of Croats responded that family is “important or very important”





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# Example: Referendum on marriage

MEDIA – reports during the campaign

75% against the referendum on marriage

15% neutral (i.e. negative)

10% for the referendum on marriage

\*67% voters FOR

\*only 4 out of 124 cities against marriage



# Social advocacy

- Social advocacy means undertaking a series of actions and turning attention to certain issues in order to change “what is” into “what should be”, where “what should be” represents a more fair and just society





# What do we do in the civil society - Social advocacy

- Questions the way policies are implemented
- Cooperates in determining **what is important in the society** by raising specific, important questions



# Social advocacy

- “Attacks” the political system because “this system does not respond to the needs and requests of the citizens”
- Connects and involves as many participants as possible
- Offers solutions
- Opens up the space for public discussion



# “In the Name of the Family”



## CASE STUDY



- With its activities as a civil society organization, in only 3 years, **“In the Name of the Family”** has become an important stakeholder in the promotion of **family values and democratic life of the Republic of Croatia**, funding itself almost exclusively with private donations of our supporters



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- In 2013, we made it possible for a referendum to be held, which resulted in the **introduction into the Constitution of a provision that marriage is a life union of a woman and a man.**



**750,000 signatures collected in 2 weeks by 6,000 volunteers**



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**narod.hr**

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**AKTUALNO** (VIDEO) Ivano Balić i je li hrvatski rukomet u krizi? 'Mi od 2003. godine mislimo da vrijedimo za zlato!'



***Narod.hr* has over 1.8 million visits on a monthly basis**

- Having witnessed the lack of freedom, and partiality of the media during the entire referendum period, in February 2014 we launched our own news portal *Narod.hr*

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[www.uimeobitelji.net](http://www.uimeobitelji.net)



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- In 2014 we collected more than 380 000 signatures for a change of the unjust electoral system demanding a **referendum**



**2015 parliamentary elections - 1 preferential vote with census**  
**2016 – 3 preferential votes**



**We are the leading Croatian  
NGO in observing elections**

- **We organized and trained 850 independent observers for the presidential election of 2014.** “In the Name of the Family” is the only civil society organization that had so many observers





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- We keep contact with the **Croatian members of the European Parliament**, suggesting them how to vote to protect the dignity of life and family in the EU.



**Croatian MP Marijana Petir**



Alongside with other members of the International Union for the Abolition of Surrogacy, we have **launched the international petition “No Maternity Traffic”**



We translated and published the book “**What is marriage?**”, making it possible for nearly a thousand of our citizens to read one of the best defenses of marriage.



**“In the Name of the Family” provides consulting assistance to partner NGOs and learns from their activities**



**OCTOBER 2015**

The first international conference **“Family – The Key to Demographic and Economic Recovery”**, which hosted international and Croatian experts on the issue of the position of family in the society.



**OCTOBER 2016**

The second international conference „**Family and School – The Key to Education for Values**”

Attended by **300 teachers, educators, parents,** recognised as official training for teacher by the Governmental Agency



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- **The First National March for Life**, more than 15,000 participants and a great deal of media attention, raising awareness of the dignity of every human being.



**Walk through the center of Zagreb**



We are a **member of the Mum, Dad & Kids initiative**, which asks the European Commission to propose a law which would define marriage as a union of one man and one woman – reflecting minimum consensus on what is marriage





- We launched a project called “Parents Decide on the Education of Their Children”, which **supports the parents’ presence in our school system.**

  
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April of 2016

Believers were offended and attacked by left-liberal columnists

In the name of the family filed a first case for discrimination against believers



# Constitutional court submission on right to life case





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THANK you for your attention!

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