



**Project: “Strengthening capacities and policy engagement of community service providers - IRIS PROGRESS”**

**Regional Social Academy : Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights in the Western Balkans**

**Bečići, 12-15 May 2025**

**Call for Applicants**





**IRIS** (Network of CSOs providers of social services) and **Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V.** are announcing the Call for participants of the Regional Social Academy, which will be held in Bečići, Montenegro from **12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025**.

## THE FOCUS

The Academy offers participants a unique opportunity to engage in a comprehensive training program that integrates a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) with gender equality strategies, service provision, and mechanisms for the protection and empowerment of women. Participants will attend a four-day, tailor-made training that incorporates diverse learning methodologies, including lectures, workshops, discussions, and field visits. The Academy program is designed to support participants in strengthening their knowledge and capacities in gender equality and women's rights within their professional and institutional contexts.

### Through a series of lectures and practical workshops, the Academy will:

- Equip participants with knowledge and tools to integrate HRBA and gender mainstreaming into policymaking, service provision, and advocacy efforts.
- Analyze the existing human rights frameworks and gender equality policies in the Western Balkans, identifying gaps and challenges, while drawing on relevant EU policies and best practices.
- Facilitate collaboration between civil society, public institutions, and other stakeholders in promoting gender equality and women's rights.
- Provide a platform for sharing good practices and developing practical recommendations to improve gender-responsive services and policies, with reference to EU standards and approaches.

### MAIN TOPICS OF THE ACADEMY:

- Gender-Based Violence and Protection Mechanisms
- Barriers to Women's Participation in the Labor Market
- Political Participation and Leadership of Women
- Legal and Policy Frameworks for Gender Equality, Including EU Standards and Approaches
- Intersectionality and Addressing Multiple Forms of Discrimination

### ELIGIBILITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Ideal participant should:

- **Be mid-career professionals** (at least 3 years of engagement) from one of the following sectors: (i) Civil Society Organizations representatives active in protection and social service delivery, (ii) Think tanks, researcher and academics working on social and welfare issues, (iii) Government bodies, institutions and agencies involved in social protection,
- **Be at an inflection point.** Ready or expected to scale-up their projects, take up new challenges or positions or jump-start new ventures. Ideal candidate goals are aligned with IRIS network principles and he/she is willing to engage in promotion of the networks goals.
- **Be caring for the social good.** We want candidates focused not solely on their careers and personal success but rather people who see their success and positions as leverages to make contributions to society and to have a broader impact. Participants will be obliged to organise follow-up seminar/lectures.



- **Have leadership potential.** We look for talented people who also have passion and a track record of starting new initiatives and ventures, organizing and engaging people. Candidates must indicate in which field of service delivery they need additional learning/skills and the reason for that.

The Academy will be offered in English. **Excellent command and understanding of the English language is precondition to the application.**

#### APPLICATION PROCEDURE

In order to apply, **all applicants fill the Application form in English**, link to the form is <https://forms.gle/XEUA74NtbNPFoL549> . Based on Call criteria and submitted applications, participants will be selected from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. **The deadline for application is 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 17.00.**

All applicants will receive information on the acceptance to the Academy no latter than 5 working days upon closing of the application deadline.

Information concerning the accommodation, transportation and other logistical issues will be subsequently delivered to the selected participants. All costs, except of per diems will be covered by the organizers. **Detailed agenda will be shared with successful candidates.**

#### FOLLOW UP

Successful participants will obtain certificates, and enter **Academy Alumni**. **Upon the training each of the participants will be obliged to organize follow-up seminar/lectures in their own communities. This activity will be completed in framework of 10 months upon the completion of the education.**

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

IRIS network connects more than 200 CSOs, providers of social services from Western Balkan region. Members of the IRIS network provide necessary social and health services to more than 10 000 beneficiaries each day. IRIS aims to strengthen the role of non-profit social service providers throughout SEE and to ensure that these organizations are recognized as equal partners by the public sector.

IRIS network was founded in 2012 and from the mere beginning it had a strong support from its partners in the European Union and in the Civil Society Facility program. Through its work IRIS network encourages a consensus among decision-makers, experts and civil society on the needs on effective coordination and use of available local resources and future EU funds earmarked for social inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

In February 2023, IRIS Network commenced new initiative within the project “Strengthening capacities and policy engagement of community service providers - IRIS PROGRESS” that is focusing on protection of human rights and anti-discrimination policies of marginalized groups in WB region. Main objective of the project is to achieve participatory democracies in EU approximation process of WB countries by advancing regional cooperation and good neighborly relations.

Regional Social Academy is part of the regular IRIS programme activities, organized annually.

#### CONTACTS

For more information on the IRIS Network visit <http://iris-see.eu/>  
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