

Upon some women's activities to make peace stronger in Montenegro

NGO "ANIMA"- Centre for women and
peace education, Kotor

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Briefly about the NGO "ANIMA":

- I shall speak, here, *Upon some women's activities to make peace stronger in Montenegro*, primarily, from the perspective of the NGO "ANIMA" - Center for women and peace education, in Kotor (Montenegro).

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Briefly about the NGO "ANIMA":

- Due to its permanent activities from 1991, up to now, "ANIMA" has succeeded to become visible in our Montenegrin society. The "ANIMA" came from peace activism and for a long time, non-violent communication has priority among its aims and projects.

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Briefly about the NGO "ANIMA":

- The development of the Program of Women Studies and "INDOK" have moved it away from its peace activities, but in 2006, it has defined its strategic goals of developing and strengthening peace from the feminist perspective.

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Briefly about the NGO "ANIMA":

- In aim to be efficient, here, my colleagues from "ANIMA" and me, decided to answer two basic questions being proposed like "markers" by the organizers of this Conference:
 - What makes peace fragile in Montenegro?
 - What makes it stronger, and what women can do about it?

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What makes peace fragile in Montenegro?

- There are numerous factors due to that Montenegro should be placed among the countries in which the state of the peace is too close to the state of the war, and we tried to list some of them within the following slides:

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What makes peace fragile in Montenegro?

- the (common) people poverty in economical sense;
- the lack of moral values (or, presence of “ordinary” moral values inversion, at all social levels);
- the lack of the people critical consciousness;

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What makes peace fragile in Montenegro?

- the lack of the democratic alternative, i.e. the democracy processes are mostly illusory ones, since, usually “the argument of the majority” expels “the argument of the reason”;
- usually, improper functioning of the institutions for Government control;
- the absence of the permanent monitoring of putting the Law into effect;

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What makes peace fragile in Montenegro?

- the high level of nepotism and corruption;
- the Government seems unchangeable in such conditions;
- there is the lack of political will for working on confronting with the last war crimes;
- there are numerous unclear murders;

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What makes peace fragile in Montenegro?

- the supporting national politics by the political elite and keeping the state of the division on the national and religious bases is still present;
- the lack of the organizations concerning the peace making activities and peace education;

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What makes peace fragile in Montenegro?

- small number of organizations dealing with human rights;
- strengthening the primitive patriarchal rules at all social levels;
- up-risen level of violence against women;
- the lack of the women at all levels of decision making, etc.

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What makes peace stronger in Montenegro, and
what women can do about it?

- Let's as start from the NGO "ANIMA" – Center for women and peace education very beginnings:
 - On 2nd February, 1991, at the Square of Army in Kotor, women who will later formed "ANIMA" have organized the protest meeting entitled "Call for reason and peace";
 - On 7th March, 1991, "The women circle" started to function, in aim to gather women in the "dark times";

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What makes peace stronger in Montenegro, and what women can do about it?

- On 18th September, 1991, we sent the letter to the President of the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of the following content: “During the days, we are listening, watching, sending appeals, demonstrating, praying, worrying, waiting for your solution, and your solution is – let people to be killed. We do not need this kind of concern about ourselves any more! Let's carry out order and work, and about the love and peace among us we are capable to take care for ourselves. Respected Presidency, if it is not late to change your decision aimed people to died, decide us to work and live in peace and prosperity! – Respectfully, Women from Kotor Municipality”;

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What makes peace stronger in Montenegro, and what women can do about it?

- On 10th October, 1991, we organized the duty of the psychologists for offering help to the people who are anxious due to the actual events. By the days no one call us for help, so we stopped this activity after three months;
- In 1992, we changed the name “The women circle” into “Circle”, since some men thinking *differently* joined us;

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What makes peace stronger in Montenegro, and what women can do about it?

- On 11th June, 1992, we organized the performance “By silent against killing, destroying, material and cultural poverty”. Twenty of us were staying, in silence, it was raining and we were crying, for an hour...;
- In 1993, we gave the support to the children development in the changed conditions by war happenings, under the slogan “Smile keepers” (Tivat, Budva, Kotor);
- In 1993, we were giving psychological help to the people who were prisoners in war camps in Bosnia and in Baošići;

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What makes peace stronger in Montenegro, and what women can do about it?

- In 1996, the “Circle” became the NGO “ANIMA”!
- In April 1999, we organized a performance and collecting citizens' signs against men from Montenegro going to the war to Kosovo;
- Up to 2000, we were working upon the culture of peace and non-violent communications by the permanent process of education and occasional performances;
- In 2002, we were involved into the attempts for organizing informal women network for peace, it was “Peaceful initiative of women organizations”, which has bunch of activities in 2003, as well;

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What makes peace stronger in Montenegro, and what women can do about it?

- In 2004, on 8th March – Women's Day, we organized the performance "Right to the rebellion";
- Within the "ANIMA" magazine "ŽINEC", the serial of texts "The pacifism is my choice" have been published, mostly by "The Women in Black" organization;
- Within the "ANIMA" program of Women studies we have obligatory seminar: "Women and peace politics", with lecturers from "The Women in Black" organization;

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What makes peace stronger in Montenegro, and
what women can do about it?

- On 8th March 2006, we organized the performance “Feminism did not wage the wars”;
- On 18th May 2006, we organized the performance “Against the fear – I create the peace”, accompanying by Peace dance at the Kotor's central Square of Army;
- In 2007, numerous workshops were organized with an aim to promote peace;

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What makes peace stronger in Montenegro, and what women can do about it?

- In 2007, “ANIMA” organized the women voyage to Srebrenica due to the commemoration event there;
- In 2008, “ANIMA” opened the House of the Free Thought, where, briefly said, individuals and groups can openly and, of course, peacefully, express their feelings and attitudes toward the current social moment(s). Some more information about the House of the Free Thought are available at URL: www.ksm-anima.org

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Instead of the conclusion:

- Although, the NGO “ANIMA” main goal is not oriented toward peace activities, we believe that through the education, program of Women studies, through the social gatherings, performances, appeals, etc.; we contribute to the development of peace, and whenever we can, we note and support peace activities.

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Instead of the conclusion:

- In the future, our main intention should be affirmation of the positive peace concept and human (social) safety in general. In this aim we would like to strength and broaden our cooperation within civil sector and wider, i.e. with some government institutions and other political bodies.

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Instead of the conclusion:

- Specially, we would like to strength and broaden our cooperation with “Women in Black”, whose seminars and conferences have been attended by women from “ANIMA” several times. Though, the cooperation with “Women in Black” still exists, we would like to make it deeper. However, we are open for cooperation with each other organization oriented, through its activities, toward creating and implementing peaceful and development politics into the social structures at all levels.

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Thank you for your attention!

A faded, semi-transparent image of two hands shaking is visible in the background, positioned behind the text. The hands are rendered in a light teal color, matching the overall theme of the slide. The handshake is centered horizontally and occupies the lower half of the slide's vertical space.