

# NARATIVE REPORT FOR 2020

## **“Support to economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence in RS”**

### **supported by Kvinna till Kvinna**

The project addresses the economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence as a particularly vulnerable category on the territory of entire Bosnia and Herzegovina. It targets three aspects, as follows.

Initiating counselling centres for their economic empowerment as a pilot project for the Bijeljinska and Eastern Herzegovinian regions. Providing different services which enable them to build capacities in our beneficiaries on a personal plan (help in writing CV and/or business plan, training for the first interview with an employer and help in recognizing personal competencies) as well as to mediate in employers and institutions with the aim of their (self)employment have shown as extremely important and beneficial for women victims of domestic violence. The project is implemented in cooperation with the foundation Lara from Bijeljina, and we decided to introduce this activity as a new programme/service of our organizations targeted at victims of domestic violence.

That part also includes the further monitoring and lobbying on surviving of this category and at the same time improving a number and financial resources for the support programmes to their self-employment and employment by the RS Government. Governed by the example of good practice, we described our development path of attaining this result in an informative document “Guidebook through activities of Zenski Centar Trebinje and their partners/cooperatives to the example of good practice in the part of economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence in RS”. We have also shared our positive experience and lessons learnt with the colleagues from Federation BiH and inspired by this result in synergy with us are trying to convey this example of good practice to other Entity-FBiH. And the last but not the least part is a steadiness in work on developing and improving the multi-sector approach in combating domestic violence on the level of Eastern Herzegovina, where all of us, participants, - 63 institutions/organizations jointly work on the synchronized support and aid to victims of domestic violence and quality of services.

Even though we, along with everyone else during 2020, were faced with numerous challenges due to the negative effects of virus COVID-19 pandemic, we managed to overcome them and moreover, to create a new channel of communication-SOS application for smart phones, which will be beneficial not only for our but also for other women’s organizations, particularly for women victims of domestic violence throughout BiH.

## Results

During the reporting period 2019/2020 our organization achieved the planned results:

### R1. Continuous and quality support provided to women victims of violence thanks to coordinated community responses in Eastern Herzegovina.

Virus COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected an increase in a number of reports of domestic violence during 2020 on the territory of entire BiH and on the territory of the Republic of Srpska, as well. It is best testified by the official records of the Police Administration Trebinje which covers the entire Eastern Herzegovina. The total number of filed reports in 2019 was 29 and in 2020 53 reports (an increase by roughly 80%). In addition, there are the records of our organization with the total number of interventions in 2019 183 whereas in 2020 it was increased by approximately 13%, i.e. in total 208 interventions!

The increase in reports, primarily towards the institutions, has contributed to entering into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020 the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in RS with amendments including the institute “a person of trust”, as well as risks assessment. I am pointing out that ZenskiCentar, as a partner of Lara Foundation, and on their initiative since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 has introduced a person of trust first as a pilot project which proved as very effective and it has continued since 2018 until today, thanks to your support! Our joint cooperation and police training sessions have certainly contributed to the increase in the number of reports, retrieving trust in victims to get encouraged and to report violence not only to us but to the institutions, as well. The number is still not the same, but the increase in reports is surely encouraging.

During 2019/2020 the psychological counselling service, free legal aid and “person of trust” provided overall 391 interventions for 119 victims. Out of those, 113 were women, two girls and four men. In 90% of cases domestic violence was committed by a spouse (in marital or extra-marital community) whereas the remaining refers to closer family members (brother, son, daughter). The most common types of violence the victims experience were combined psychological, physical and economic violence, while sexual violence is still silenced. The overall number of their children is 216 (99 boys and 117 girls).

Both a psychologist and a lawyer as well as a person of trust were putting tremendous efforts into encouraging the victims to report the domestic violence to the institutions, but also putting efforts into building their own capacities in overcoming traumas. For instance, the physical presence of our “person of trust” (Nikola Deretic who is also a swimming instructor) had a soothing effect on them in terms of feeling physically safe to be in the same space where is usually an abuser invited (in the waiting room at the court, Centre for Social Work etc).

At regular meetings (totally 72 meetings were held) with the members of the Multi-disciplinary team for combating domestic violence in Eastern Herzegovina we initiated numerous joint activities or even they (the other team members) were proposers of the meetings with the aim of providing different types of support and help to the victims as well as their synchronization!

The abovementioned leads to the conclusion that a steady and quality support to women victims of domestic violence is a result of coordinated responses of the community in Eastern Herzegovina.

## R2. Women victims of domestic violence have access to (self) employment opportunities in targeted areas in the RS-entity

During the reporting period 2019/2020 there was a significant increase in a number of vulnerable categories of women including the victims of domestic violence (in 2018 there were 115 women, in 2019 1125 and in 2020 1261 women), and in financial terms, too (in 2018 500,000.00 BAM was provided, in 2019 5,002,478.00 BAM and in 2020 5,275,00.00 BAM) allocated by the RS Government through the Public calls for their employment and self-employment over the RS Employment Agency. The increase in both a number of beneficiaries and financial allocation for self-employment and employment of women from vulnerable categories, including victims of domestic violence, testifies about successful implementation of engaging women victims of domestic violence by our organization along with the support of the partner organization in the RS Government Programme and continuation of further advocating for improvement of this call (such as for the call to be open for not only one month as it initially was but until all funds are used i.e. until the end of that fiscal year, as it has been adopted as well as to increase a number of beneficiaries and financial resources).

In partnership with Lara Foundation we have undertaken the following activities:

### 1. Providing aid to victims in contact with the potential employers, help in writing a biography, CV, preparation for a meeting and other necessary services.

The direct aid in accessing the labour market was provided for 107 women, for 75 of them the aid was given during the Public call of the Employment Agency. 29 women who were our beneficiaries are employed, with only three of them as victims of domestic violence while the others used the possibility of status according to other vulnerable category such as age (over 45) and women from rural regions. Appointing meetings, preparation of biographies and other documentation for presentation and accompanying at the meeting with an employer were very significant for all beneficiaries. In addition, with all of them we worked on building their social skills in presenting personal capacities and negotiating about a salary. This side of work was aggravated due to epidemiologic measures and reduced demand for workforce in sectors where women work.

For a total of 16 women entrepreneurs we worked on business plans combining all available state subsidies (allocation for small and middle-sized enterprises, incentives for employment and self-employment), but most of them gave up because the economic situation could not guarantee that they would maintain their jobs.

### 2. Meetings with the employers from the territory of Bijeljina and neighbouring municipalities

- During 2019 both organizations held numerous individual and group meetings with employers (mostly from a private sector), as well as with the representatives of institutions responsible for exercising rights of victims of domestic violence on social protection and economic empowerment.

We held meetings with 26 employers (Zenski Centar with 17 and Lara with nine employers) out of planned 60 – leading to weaker effects. Due to delay in payment of the first part of funds, we initiated this activity rather late, since the public call closed meanwhile, and the meetings would be pointless. Some of these enterprises were ready to employ a victim of violence anytime, regardless of the state incentive. However, there is some caution due to possible incidents by a perpetrator and that the victims will not be able to fulfil their working responsibilities due to their family duties.

-During 2020 in total 17 individual meetings were held with 10 employers. The Zenski Centar held 10 individual meetings with six employers and Lara held eight individual meetings with four employers who were related to employment of victims of violence, mostly beneficiaries of the Safe House. Hairdresser training and practice were provided for one beneficiary of the safe house while the other found a job in a private restaurant, after leaving the Safe house. One beneficiary was employed in our social cooperative Smokvica!

### 3.Meetings with the representatives of the affiliation of the RS Employment Agency in Bijeljina and bureaus of the Employment Agency in Eastern Herzegovina and Bijeljina

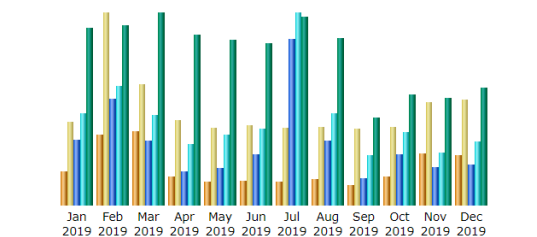
During 2019 on several occasions we held meetings with different municipal structures as well as Employment Agencies in both Eastern Herzegovina and Bijeljina, Lopare and Ugljevik with the aim of dissemination of information on introduction of counselling centres for economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence by our two organizations (Lara and Zenski Centar) as well as mediating for the best interest of our beneficiaries. We used these meetings to gain aid from clerks regarding identification of potential interested employers for this Public call for employment.

During 2020 Zenski Centar held only one meeting with the Employment Agency, affiliation in Trebinje at the beginning of February and the partner organization with the representatives of the affiliation of the RS Employment Agency in Bijeljina and department of the Agency in Bijeljina at the end of February 2020, prior to onset of state of emergency due to epidemic. The aim of the meeting was to gather timely information about calendar activities on conducting the government measures of employment and self-employment. The other planned meetings were not held due to restriction caused by the pandemic. Communication with the employment services was good but it was conducted online, by telephone and official correspondence. All the time while the public call was open for allocation of funds to employers for employment of vulnerable groups of women and for self-employment, we disseminate all information via our web site, Facebook account of the organization and personal Facebook

accounts of the employees in Zenski Centar and Lara and we sent notifications to the media we cooperate with in order for the information to reach as many women as possible.

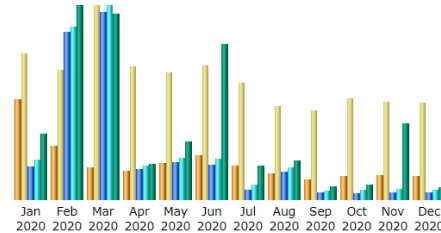
Moreover, we should not forget a large number of women who reached the information about kinds of support we provide as well as about the public calls for (self)employment of women from vulnerable categories on our web site, what is testified by the statistics on a number of views:

For 2019:



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2019	563	1,387	5,165	7,302	205.62 MB
Feb 2019	1,198	3,230	8,503	9,567	209.16 MB
Mar 2019	1,241	2,038	5,224	7,231	223.75 MB
Apr 2019	481	1,433	2,719	4,963	198.12 MB
May 2019	388	1,295	2,998	5,612	191.45 MB
Jun 2019	395	1,338	4,083	6,180	188.04 MB
Jul 2019	409	1,302	13,372	15,455	219.48 MB
Aug 2019	434	1,324	5,196	7,462	194.73 MB
Sep 2019	332	1,280	2,121	3,985	101.02 MB
Oct 2019	478	1,313	4,094	5,918	128.41 MB
Nov 2019	877	1,736	3,042	4,248	125.11 MB
Dec 2019	837	1,774	3,207	5,079	136.02 MB
Total	7,633	19,450	59,724	83,002	2.07 GB

For 2020:



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2020	1,652	2,410	11,924	14,562	203.33 MB
Feb 2020	901	2,137	60,294	62,468	590.92 MB
Mar 2020	548	3,195	67,752	69,931	567.28 MB
Apr 2020	464	2,196	10,922	12,047	109.19 MB
May 2020	596	2,078	13,318	15,022	175.68 MB
Jun 2020	728	2,213	12,740	14,900	474.33 MB
Jul 2020	559	1,929	3,671	5,461	101.97 MB
Aug 2020	426	1,528	9,878	11,276	120.48 MB
Sep 2020	321	1,460	2,342	3,344	40.82 MB
Oct 2020	387	1,655	2,259	3,470	44.95 MB
Nov 2020	393	1,614	2,521	3,622	232.37 MB
Dec 2020	377	1,589	2,337	3,206	38.62 MB
Total	7,352	24,004	199,958	219,309	2.64 GB

### R3. Inter-entity cooperation and exchange of experiences alleviate the creation of positive atmosphere towards the economic empowerment of women victims/survivors of domestic violence

Joint cooperation and exchange of experiences between the organizations, Zenski Centar Trebinje and CURE, on emphasizing the need for specialized programmes for women victims of domestic violence and the promotion of the example of good practice which we achieved in this field in RS, has contributed to creating a positive atmosphere in FBiH for women victims of domestic violence to be included as a special category in the government programmes with the aim of their economic empowerment. Thus, CURE sent to the Federal Ministry of Labour a set of measures including a proposal for introduction of women victims of domestic violence in the Public call for employment and self-employment of vulnerable categories of women on the FBiH level, and which should be included in the FBiH Employment Strategy in 2021/2027. This activity was preceded by two conferences during 2019 as well as PitchWise 2020 in September 2020 organised by CURE and one of the presenters on the abovementioned topics was LjiljanaCickovic.

During 2020 ZenskiCentar created the report on good practice in the local and English language titled "Guidebook through Activities of the Zenski Centar Trebinje and its partners/co-operators to the example of good practice regarding economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence in RS" which was distributed to both Foundation CURE and Foundation Lara.

This project has completely attained all three set results and it achieved the project goals, even in the situation when it was really difficult to work due to restricted movement, restricted work (i.e. work from home) as well as gathering due to virus COVID-19 pandemic during 2020. Although a number of enterprises interested in employing workers decreased in 2020.

As positive unexpected changes arising from the project we would state the already mentioned increase in a number of beneficiaries for this Public call for employment and self-employment as well as financial resources and prolongation of application deadline for these resources until they are all allocated i.e. until the end of a fiscal year.

The negative effect is that victims of domestic violence still avoid „naming things by their real names“ and they rather apply under other categories (mostly women from rural regions or unemployed middle-aged women) to exercise rights for these incentive funds. We think that it is important to continue working with them because we always have black figures of violence and it seems that this phenomenon is not so present in our society i.e. family, as it really is!

As an unexpected result we would state the establishment of the new channel of communication which our organisation is establishing on the level of entire BiH through the SOS application for smart phones (both IOS and Android). Even though it has not arisen directly from this project, aggravating communication with our beneficiaries has certainly affected our decision to create a creative and effective solution to this problem! Furthermore, our organisation developed the application which includes 13 organisations throughout BiH, by means of which victims of domestic violence would be able to report violence, to obtain urgent police intervention (Panic button), to obtain psychological and legal aid as well as other forms of support and information important for this category of women.

**„Empowerment of institutional support for victims of gender-based violence“  
Lara Foundation is a holder of the project supported by Kvinna till Kvinna**

In 2020 there were 208 recorded interventions, with 94 of them related to the person of trust. Those 94 interventions were provided to 19 women (i.e. 15 women and 2 girls), with 42 children (31 girls and 11 boys) mostly from Eastern Herzegovina. The interventions concerned provision of support in mediating between a victim and institutions (police, public prosecutions, centres for social work, educational institutions, employment agencies, entrepreneurs, ministries etc.) as well as providing support in terms of physical accompanying and active participations (where possible) at some meetings/hearings/judicial procedures with the aim of representing their interests and provision of direct support and aid. It is interesting to mention that in the period from March until July we experienced fewer number of reports when compared to the same period previous years, what is certainly related to negative effects caused by COVID-19 pandemic on victims of domestic violence, as well as the data that we had increase by 10% of interventions this year. Regarding this project, through monitoring police practices in RS, the best results were achieved by introducing a “person of trust” as a pilot project and which was introduced into the legislative framework in RS in May, 2020.

**“Support to economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence in East Herzegovina”**

**Supported by the Association of Citizens “Nesto Vise” through the project “Support to Development of Gender Action Plans (GAP) in six local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (2019-2020) supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Holland**

Victims of domestic violence are informed on accessing possibilities of (self) employment in the target regions in Eastern Herzegovina through development and distribution of informational leaflets along with a presentation that the Zenski Centar Trebinje has an established economic counselling centre for empowerment of women from vulnerable categories which includes dissemination of information about the existing programmes, help in writing a CV and business plan, training for the first interview with an employer and aid in recognising personal competencies.

**„Creating a network for SOS application“  
support by Trag fondation**

An informal network of 13 organizations was created to provide support to victims of domestic violence through the SOS application and a Cooperation Agreement was signed. The organizations service providers via the SOS application are the following: Foundation “Ženski centar” Trebinje, Foundation “Lara” from Bijeljina, Association of citizens “Budućnost” from Modriča, “Ženski interaktivni ruralni centar” from Istočno Sarajevo, Association of women “Maja” Kravica- Bratunac, “Inicijativa građanki/na Mostar”, Udruženje/Udruga socijalnih radnika SBK/KSB Travnik, Association of women „LI-Woman” from Livno, Foundation of local democracy Sarajevo, Association “Žene sa Une” from Bihać, Foundation “Udružene žene” Banja Luka, Association of citizens “Vive Žene” Tuzla and Centre of women's rights from Zenica.

**“Conference on networking and cooperation”  
support by TACSO**

Online conference held for 13 organizations of the informal network, agreed Protocol and rules on the conduct and use of SOS Applications for support to victims of domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SOS application has already been developed and connected to the informal network of 13 organizations, with our organization as a coordinator.

**„Development of SOS application for support to victims of domestic violence in B&H“  
supported by Trag fondation**

Developed SOS application for smart phones for Android and IOS, including:

- Professional help, counselling, and provision of information (chat)
- Keeping a file of every person (dossier), when that person contacted, reasons... at the end it is a evidence material
- All information with contacts and addresses
- Map connected to navigation
- Steady tracking of a phone in case of “panic button” with a person’s name and surname and address where she is (on the basis of that an operator notifies the closest police station to send a patrol on that location)
- The application will contain information about the rights and possibilities of protection for victims and guidelines on acting in those situations.



**“THE PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE AGRICULTURE (FARMA II) for activities: Provision of training, counseling services and technical support to organizations producers (OP) in agricultural sector”**

**Supported by Sweden/USAID FARMA II Project**

During the reporting period it is evident that the Foundation Zenski Centar Trebinje achieved all the project planned activities and results. What only remains in the further period is organisation of the main planting of biannual fig seedlings, which will be organised in autumn with a large number of invitees and the media coverage and the representatives of donors and Sweden/USAID FARMA II will be invited, as well. As it is known, the reason for postponing planting is COVID-19 pandemic, and prohibition to undertake any works (in spring when planting usually takes place), then prohibition of gathering and restricted movement. Since the prolongation of the project was not approved (even though we asked for it), in the beginning of July 2020, we performed pilot planting of fig seedlings, while the main planting is prolonged for autumn 2020, and followed by promotion. All in all, all those activities that we were not been able to perform as preparation for spring planting, we are now performing as preparation for autumn planting!



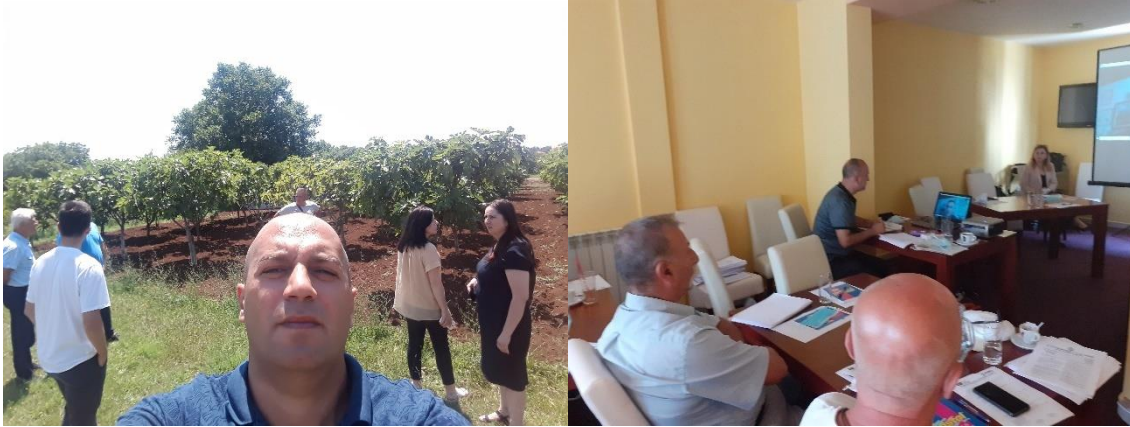
In addition, regarding the Contract defined activity, our team of four people (two from Zenski Centar and two from PZ Smokvica) as it was planned, in the second half of February 2020 (from 21 to 23 February 2020) attended a study trip in Rovinj, the Republic of Croatia, where through an intensive four-day training they gained new knowlegde on organic growing and processing of figs.



In Rovinj we had an opportunity to gain not only necessary theoretical knowledge on technological procedure of processing figs, but we also had an opportunity to visit a few farms, where they practically demonstrated the technology of production and where we had an opportunity to try the final products. Approximately 250 different products can be made from figs, and we have decided to enrich the initial four products (dried figs, jam, fig leaf tea and flour made from fig leaves) with about additional ten products (dried fig cakes, fig vinegar, fig porridge, fig with walnuts, fig with cinnamon, fig with mint, fig with ginger, fig with olive oil, fig with almonds and fig with honey) in the foreseeable future. Of course, all the products will be organic.



After this theoretical and practical training of our team to become trainers themselves in Croatia, our team organised a four-day training for agriculturalists from Eastern Herzegovina (from the initially 20 planned, 22 producers attended) in order to transfer the newly-gained knowledge and skills. This training in Trebinje held towards the end of 2020 was directly attended by PhD Zeljko Prgomet via Skype, who due to closing of borders by the Republic of Croatia could not personally attend.



In the end, apart from these key results, we would like to emphasize some additional non-planned results which will be really visible in the foreseeable future, and which are the results of this project:

- Number of applied producers is over 20 (26 of them applied in the first phase of this project, but due to disease and inability to attend the training due to closure of borders with Croatia, in the end 22 participants attended the training in Trebinje;
- Almost all who attended the training are interested in being our cooperatives and in starting organic growing of figs;
- Thanks to this training, we easily reached potential cooperatives which will get through IFAD project co-financing in amount of 50% for the first investments (purchase of biannual seedlings, purchase of plant stakes for seedlings, purchase of organic fertilizers and development of soil analysis);
- Moreover, the representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of RS, who engaged in the program and who attended our four-day training in Trebinje for one day, are motivated by a number of interested agriculturalists in fig growing and by PhD Prgommet as a top expert, and they suggested organizing a study trip for the whole group of the training participants, with our logistics, with the aim of touring plantations and processing of the Mediterranean cultures (figs, olives, domestic and wild pomegranate) in the Republic of Croatia in the near future, when all conditions are fulfilled;

**„Building capacities V“**  
**Supported by Trag/OAK Foundation**

During the reporting period (2020) our Foundation conducted the following activities leading to partial or complete achievement of the planned results:

A.1. Every second month meetings of the multi-disciplinary team for countering domestic violence in Eastern Herzegovina led to the complete achievement of results:

R.1. Empowerment of inter-sector approach in providing appropriate, sensitive and specialized protection to women victims of domestic violence in Eastern Herzegovina.

In 2020 there were 36 meetings (per six in every municipality) with creation of joint action of the entire team in particular local community for every victim. Taking into account that according to introduced novelties in the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in RS, Municipalities are obliged to establish these teams consisting of the subjects of protection building coordination with them, our organization offered the full support to implementation in terms of providing aid to the representatives of the Municipalities in developing protocols on acting in the cases of domestic violence.

A.2. Provision of direct services to victims of domestic violence: legal aid and psycho-social counseling, as well as introduction of a new program: counseling centre for economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence in Trebinje and in Bijeljina, led to implementation of the objective.

R.2. Victims of domestic violence have quality support with the aim of overcoming domestic violence and their economic empowerment.

Along with their regular support schemes on the initiative of our organization in the regions Eastern Herzegovina (Zenski Centar Trebinje) and in the Bijeljinska region (the partner organization Lara Bijeljina) they introduced from a pilot program into a steady program the counseling centres for economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence with the aim of providing maximum support to this category with their employment and self-employment. It means dissemination of information about the existing programs of support for this category (by the RS Government through the Public Call announced by the RS Employment Agency to the other programs if they exist), mediating in employers with the aim of their lobbying to use these programs as well as giving them “a chance”. In addition, there is help in writing a business plan, CV and for the first interview with an employer and recognition of personal competencies.

A.3. Through monitoring of police practices in RS, a pilot project Institute “a person of trust” was recognized and introduced in RS in Bijeljina (holder of initiative Lara) and in Eastern Herzegovina (Zenski Centar as a partner), what is certainly the greatest result of this activity, particularly because it is introduced in the legislative framework of RS from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

A.4. During the report period we have initiated a research on femicide in RS and it is in its final phase and it will be done in two languages (in Serbian and in English). This will be the first



research of this type in BiH, whereas it was conducted in Serbia and Croatia, but not in other countries of the West Balkans.

A.5. Development of social entrepreneurship encompassed an entire range of activities regarding establishment of social cooperative for plantation growing of figs which was expanded to collard. Thus, in 2020 we planted 5 000 seedlings of collard, we set up a greenhouse with a drip irrigation system, we finished cleaning, land management and fencing of about 4 ha, digging of holes for seedlings, purchase of seedlings, purchase of tools, purchase of solar panels for water supply and drip irrigation and purchase of surveillance system with cameras and sensors. We employed one woman from the category of vulnerable categories and one agronomist from the youth category. Due to rainy season we had to postpone planting of figs for the spring season! Therefore, the result related to these activities was partially achieved. We have managed to impose fig production as a subject for consideration for growing in this area and we have already had over twenty interested potential cooperatives.

A.6. During the project year the training for strategic planning was conducted in Neum leading to development of the Strategic Plan of Zenski Centar 2021/2021.