

“Only an economically independent woman can be a powerful woman”

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Project goal: Increased efforts in creating of a supportive environment for economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable categories in targeted municipalities in RS.

This project enabled an intensified effort to create an enabling environment for the economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable categories in the regions of Eastern Herzegovina and Bijeljina. Namely, our organizations have made an effort to contribute to the sensitivity of the private sector or relevant institutions to these vulnerable categories in the so-called "positive discrimination".

During the reporting period, we achieved the results of the change process:

R.1. A database of employers and institutions with competencies and capacities to support economic empowerment as well as part-time secondary education of women victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable categories of women in RS has been established, with a focus on the Bijeljina and East Herzegovina regions.

In order to achieve this result, in the part planned for the first project year (2021) we had to map the employers interested in the employment of our target group, enter them in the database, as well as sign a Memorandum of Understanding with them (which we did). Our organization signed a Memorandum of Understanding with 7 out of 10 contacted and a partner organization with 6 out of 11 companies contacted. Namely, with this Memorandum, the companies have committed themselves to enable positive discrimination during the employment, i.e. that if two people have the same number of points for the job and one of them comes from the ranks of vulnerable categories, priority in employment will be given to people from the ranks of vulnerable categories of women.

We also needed to develop a policy document and an advocacy plan to enable those over the age of 18 to attend part-time high school under the regular curriculum of those high schools. As we unexpectedly achieved this result in 2021, we have adapted the policy document and the advocacy plan to achieve additional results, and these recommendations have been incorporated into the advocacy plan:

1. Local communities should form councils within their communities in order to more effectively monitor and achieve adult education where there are schools that provide this type of education;
2. Advocate for the Ministry of Education and Culture to create and highlight on its website a functional network of educational institutions in the RS that conduct adult education;
3. Advocacy activities with the competent Ministry of Labor and War Veterans and Disabled People's Protection of the RS in order to increase the minimum cash benefit for self-employment. Currently it is 5,000 BAM per person to start a self-employment but we think it is very little and does not provide real enough support for the initial costs of starting your own business;

4. Development of an "Action Plan" of support for vulnerable groups of women and girls for adult education, retraining and additional training in cooperation with the relevant Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Srpska.

We have already held talks with the member of the RS National Assembly, PhD Ivanka Markovic, to delegate a request on our behalf to the Ministry of Labor and War Veterans and Disabled People's Protection of the RS in order to increase the minimum cash benefit for self-employment for the target category of women from vulnerable categories, and on the basis of Public call of the Government Programme for their self-employment.

This result led to a change in the policy of the competent Ministry of Education and Culture of RS (recognizing the needs of vulnerable categories of women and girls to provide quality part-time education for persons over 18 years of age that will give them the opportunity for (self) employment), but also with a number of employers in Eastern Herzegovina and Bijeljina region because they recognized the need and supported our efforts to economically empower women from vulnerable categories.

R. 2. The Counseling for Economic Empowerment of Women Victims of Domestic Violence has expanded the ways of providing help and support to other vulnerable categories of women.

In order to achieve this result, we needed to support women victims of domestic violence, Roma women, rural women, unemployed middle-aged women and women victims of war rape through our counseling centers for women's economic empowerment (our organization and partner organization "Lara"), what we did. In the reporting period, our organization provided support to 54 women. For 14 of them, we provided support in the form of assistance in recognizing personal competencies and training for the first interview with the employer as well as mediation between employers and clients, which resulted in the employment of 10 of them! We have provided employment for 10 of them. 7 of them received help in writing a business plan and all of them received funds for self-employment (one from the RS Employment Agency and the other from the City of Trebinje, which also issued a public call for starting their own business). We helped ten women write their CVs. The other 13 requested assistance in obtaining information on current calls for (self) employment in the RS, which are intended/available to women from vulnerable categories. Through its counseling, the partner organization "Lara" provided help and support for 44 women, and for 8 of them mediation with employers, who will provide them with a one-month probationary period in 2021, and further engagement will depend on their readiness and ability to respond to the needs of employers. The other 13 received help in writing CVs and 23 of them received information on existing support programs for their (self) employment. All these beneficiaries, along with economic support, also received psycho-social and a number of them legal aid from our organizations. Thus, through our organizations, 98 women from the vulnerable categories received help, and 18 of them obtained employment (some permanently some probationary) and 4 self-employment. Out of that number (98 of them), 23 of them directly turned to our organizations (Zenski Centar and Lara) as victims of violence (and that is how they applied: 13 for employment and 7 for self-employment and only three for information, while the rest was categorized as rural women or unemployed middle-aged women even if they are all victims of domestic violence. We still do not have a parameter of how many women/employers from vulnerable categories received incentives (self) employment through the Government program of (self) employment through the RS Employment Agency through the Public Call for Jobs because their statistical data processing is not yet available. Unfortunately, we still do not have

the proportionate number of requests from women victims of domestic violence for their (self) employment because they still prefer to declare themselves as rural women or unemployed middle-aged women, but there is still a significant increase of about 20%, at least compared to our organizations, sought this kind of support. Companies that have shown sensitivity to these categories of women (and some of them have already hired them):

- in Eastern Herzegovina: agricultural cooperative "Smokvica" with p.o. Trebinje, ZU specialist ophthalmological clinic "Dr. Vujović" Trebinje, Optics "Dr. Vujović" Trebinje, "PL PRINTEX" sp. Trebinje, "AGROCENTR" d.o.o Trebinje,
- In the Bijeljina region: "MEGA DRVO" d.o.o Bijeljina, "Ženska zadruga" p.o. Bijeljina, "OLIMP" -Group d.o.o., "Krugovi" Tatjana Bajić s.p. Bijeljina, "Ethno village Stanišići" Bijeljina, "Kontroprom" d.o.o. Bijeljina.

The achieved change is reflected in the change of consciousness of women victims of domestic violence, i.e. increased number of requests for help and support in order to empower them economically by our clients, women victims of domestic violence, under this category compared to the previous period!

R.3. At least four municipalities have adopted local operational plans for the prevention, countering and suppression of domestic violence in these two regions, including some of the measures and/or activities relevant to their economic empowerment.

In order to achieve this result, we needed in at least two local communities, i.e. a total of 4 (in two of our organizations and two in partner's) to establish local operational plans for combating domestic violence in the Bijeljina and East Herzegovina regions during a two-year project. In the first project year, our organization commenced this story in several municipalities of Eastern Herzegovina, where the most was achieved in Trebinje. A pre-final version for signing was made for Trebinje, which was postponed until the establishment of a safe house because it is also part of this Local Operational Plan. A commission has been formed in Nevesinje for now. We forwarded the working version of the Local Operational Plan to the municipal structure in Nevesinje, as well as to the one in Trebinje, so that they could harmonize and form their own with other protection entities from those municipalities.

The partner organization has prepared a working version of the Local Action Plans in the municipalities of Vlasenica and Bijeljina, which was signed by all subjects of protection except the police, which is awaiting the approval of the RS Ministry of the Interior.

The essence of these operational plans is reflected in the legal obligation for each local community to educate and coordinate a team for multisectoral suppression of domestic violence and its prevention in the RS. Given that we, as well as our partner organization, have for many years developed a multidisciplinary approach in their regions in the prevention and suppression of domestic violence, and that we were not only the initiators but also coordinators of this activity, it is logical that our organizations will now be the umbrella organisations in the realization and implementation (in the form of crucial support) of these obligations imposed by law on local communities.

The change is reflected in the adoption of models built by women's organizations in order to address the prevention, countering and suppression of domestic violence, by local communities in the pilot regions of Bijeljina and Eastern Herzegovina.

“Capacity building VI”

supported by

OAK/Trag foundation

Project goal 1. is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of women and children in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an emphasis on domestic violence.

In the reporting period, our organization provided psycho-social and legal assistance, where a total of 201 interventions were provided for a total of 97 people, of which 95 are women/girls and two are men. A total of 33 interventions were provided through the “Persons of Trust” Institute. When writing a project, an average of 100 interventions were planned per year, but this number is more than twice as high in the first project year.

In the same period, support for a total of 54 women was provided within the counseling center for women's economic empowerment. From 2021, this counseling center has expanded its support from women / girls victims of domestic violence to Roma women, women victims of war torture, rural women and unemployed middle-aged women. Thanks to our counseling center, (self-) employment was achieved in the reporting period by a total of 17 women out of a total of 40 women on a three-year level.

At the time of writing (March 2022), the SOS smartphone application finally received approval from the iPhone to put the application into operation. We have been waiting for their approval for a full 9 months. So we are late with this activity for justified reasons because we did not want to release an application that is only available for Android phones until we get the consent of the iPhone! So, the SOS application in which 12 other organizations participate is ready for use throughout B&H, where we will provide support to victims of domestic violence (legal, psycho-social, informational) via the chat option, and through the "panic" button we will report the violence at the time of the event. So, at our initiative, the SOS application was created as a new distribution channel between service providers and victims of violence in addition to the existing ones: phone, email and face to face, in which we included these organizations: "Lara" Bijeljina, "Udružene žene" Banja Luka, "Budućnost" Modriča, “ Le-Women” Livno, “Inicijativa građana/ki Mostar”, “ Maja” Kravica, “ Ženski interaktivni ruralni centar” Istočno Sarajevo, “Žene sa Une” Bihać, “Vive Žene” Tuzla, “Fondacija lokalne demokratije” Sarajevo, “Udruženje/Udruga socijalnih radnika SBK/KSB” and “Centar ženskih prava” Zenica. In this way, we covered the entire territory of B&H and enabled all women, regardless of place of residence and social status, if they have smartphones, to have equally available services and support of women's organizations and reporting violence.

We have established on the revised website of our organization (www.zenskicentar.org) for experts dealing with domestic violence as well as for the distribution of important information on rights and opportunities, laws and publications that cover domestic violence, for start at the level of Republika Srpska. In this way, we have facilitated access to the expertise of individuals and women's organizations dealing with domestic violence, both victims of domestic violence and institutions in B&H. We also

provided increased access to information for women victims of domestic violence throughout B&H on their rights and opportunities for economic empowerment in B&H, as well as opportunities to provide direct support.

We provided assistance in drafting Protocols and Action Plans for multisectoral teams in combating domestic violence in all municipalities of Eastern Herzegovina, and in the coming period they are expected to be signed and implemented. In this way, we contribute to strengthening the cross-sectoral approach in providing adequate, sensitive and specialized protection to women victims of domestic violence in Eastern Herzegovina.

During the reporting period, we monitored the work of the police on cases of domestic violence, where we, as partners of "Lara", worked on determining the reasons for suspending investigations into cases of domestic violence in the regions of Istočno Sarajevo Police Department and Trebinje Police Department. This allows us an insight into the case law and the work of the police and lobbying for its change in favor of victims of domestic violence in RS. Our representative participated as a member of the group in the drafting of the new Family Law of the RS, where she used the opportunity to include in the proposal of the new law that during divorce, mediation is not mandatory for domestic violence. It is also included in the Family Law that the Centers for Social Work are obliged to initiate a non-litigation procedure for deprivation of parental rights for parents who sexually abuse their children / child and to permanently deprive them of this right, which has not been defined so far.

We held 5 one-day online (same) trainings for five groups (100 people in total) from the representatives of institutions throughout RS from the police, prosecutor's office, courts, educational institutions, health institutions and Centers for Social Work on Domestic Violence (prevention, documentation, procedures, interviews with the victim, reporting, case law, application of the legislative framework and good practices from the environment, etc.).

Project goal 2.: Capacity building of the Women's Center Trebinje Foundation, both financially and institutionally, in order to empower it for work on prevention and support to victims of domestic violence as well as economic empowerment of women from vulnerable categories in B&H.

During the reporting period, with the support of our organization PZ "Smokvica" planted figs on a total prepared area of approximately 5 acres as well as planted collard greens (with the aim of obtaining organically certified seeds). A strong wind destroyed our 500 m² greenhouse and we were forced to invest in it to rebuild it. A surveillance system has been installed with cameras and sensors powered by solar panels. We procured two containers that we merged into one to have greater use-value for the planned purpose.

Due to problems and travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Professor Željko Prgomet did not come to Trebinje. We hired a young agronomist in the cooperative, for the needs of maintenance and care of seedlings.

The Women's Center website was redesigned and a platform created. The redesigned website of the Women's Center of Trebinje increases the visibility of the work, expertise and results of the Women's Center, and also the availability of valid information to the victims of domestic violence.

This project year, as well as every other year, external evaluators and auditors were hired to prepare the report. So, every project year, we have documentation that is an indicator of the success of our work, both financial and activist.

“Network platform of actors from institutions of protection entities, women's organizations and individuals for the fight and prevention of domestic violence in the Republic of Srpska”

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Canada through the Canadian Local Initiatives Fund

Project goal: Increased visibility and made available expertise of activists gathered in the field, from the women's NGO sector and individuals working in the field of domestic violence, to subjects of protection in order to be incorporated into the institutional response to domestic violence in RS.

This project has contributed to the victims of domestic violence having easier access both directly to organizations (educated 20 local organizations across RS) geographically and information that is now gathered in one place - our web platform! On the other hand, we have contributed to further sensibilization and increasing the level of knowledge among professionals from the ranks of subjects of protection in terms of maximum use of the newly adopted legal framework in favour of the victim. Finally, by increasing the visibility of NGO experts and individuals through the informal network platform, we contribute to its incorporation into the activist expertise system.

Achieved results:

- Increased visibility and expertise of activists gathered in the field, from the women's NGO sector and individuals working in the field of domestic violence, in order to be incorporated into the institutional response to domestic violence in RS. Facilitated access to information on domestic violence of importance (such as laws, publications) for victims of domestic violence in the RS.
- 20 local organizations across the RS have built their own capacities to support women and children victims of domestic violence in writing requests for emergency protection and protection measures.
The result is the introduction of 100 relevant representatives of local and international organizations / institutions with the effectiveness of legislation dealing with domestic violence in the RS, as well as the policy document itself.
- The result is that at least 100 professionals from the system of protection entities from all over the RS will adopt new knowledge and skills, which were created as an expertise of long-term work of female activists (individuals and women's organizations) in the field of domestic violence

We carried out these activities:

- Through our redesigned website, we promote an informal network of women experts (from the women's NGO sector but also individuals) through a platform established for this purpose. Within the platforms on the website we have established updated information on the existing legislative framework of the RS as well as other information / publications related to the field of domestic violence.

- We held two two-day workshops for a total of 20 representatives of women's organizations whose focus was not on domestic violence which cover the geographical area of the entire RS.

We produced and distributed to these local organizations 5,000 information leaflets for victims of domestic violence.

We conducted a survey with a “policy” document on the effectiveness of the legislative framework with a novelty (RS Criminal Code and RS Law on Protection from Domestic Violence) and with recommendations.

We published this research in 500 copies and distributed it to local and international organizations / institutions as well as to the subjects of protection in RS, 100 of them.

- We held five one-day trainings with the same topic: "Documenting domestic violence and risk assessment" for 20 or a total of 100 subjects of protection (police, centers for social work, judiciary, health centers, educational institutions) on innovations in the legislative framework governing the field of domestic violence in RS and its more efficient application.

“Economic empowerment of women from vulnerable categories in a rural part of Trebinje city”

supported by

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Sarajevo

During the reporting period, our organization, in accordance with the project application and your support, procured a container of approximately 28 m² for the technological process and it performed construction preparatory work. However, this amount at the time of planning and at the time of implementation was changed due to hyper-inflation covered by our organization. Since we received money from your Embassy in August, we had to wait until September to receive 3 tenders because the companies were mostly on collective vacations. After that, we started the implementation and made payments for the most favorable tenders based on the pro forma invoice, but the companies issue invoices only after the executed, i.e. implemented situation.

Our organization has recognized the need to finance a dryer that is double the capacity (because it is important for the cooperative) instead of previously planned dryers, by transferring funds to the account of the social cooperative so that it can receive part of the money from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Srpska.

In any case, through this project, we managed to provide a conditional space as well as the basis (dryer, oven and pots) for the production of dried figs and fig jam.

„ Strengthening of institutional support to stop gender-based violence”

supported by

Kvinna till Kvinna through a partnership with the Foundation “Lara”

MAIN GOAL OF THE PROJECT is to improve the response of the police and the prosecution, including the development of new standards in the protection of women from violence. Most of the activities carried out in the project should provide better legal protection for survivors of violence and establish zero tolerance for violence against women.

Planning and implementing activities for the period 01.01.2021. - 30.06.2021. year:

- Organizing round tables in Banja Luka, Mostar and Tuzla on the need to improve criminal law protection, monitoring results and examples of good practice in the actions of subjects of protection,
- Creating three policy documents to improve the response of the police, prosecutors and other protection actors in cases of violence against women,
- Creating a stakeholder analysis and mapping the most important actors to improve the response of the police, the prosecution to GBV violence and the protection of victims,
- Creating, designing and printing leaflets to inform victims,
- Creating of video for online advertising,
- Providing assistance to victims - a person of trust.

During the reporting period, our organization provided a total of 19 support interventions through the “Person of Trust” institute.

„Strengthening institutional support to stop gender-based violence – phase II“

supported by

Kvinna till Kvinna through a partnership with the Foundation “Lara”

The general goal of the project is to improve access to justice for victims of gender-based violence through the consistent application of existing and the introduction of new standards of conduct for police, prosecutors and other protection services and expanded support services by women's organizations.

Project team meetings were held,

The process of establishing cooperation with target groups has begun,

A team has been formed to develop a methodology for monitoring the work of prosecutor's offices in the RS, on cases of the criminal offense of violence in the family and family community, and a developed methodology and tools for monitoring the work of prosecutor's offices,

A two-day educational workshop was held with the employees of the centers for social work,

Organized four-day training for self-help groups,
Direct assistance provided to victims of gender-based violence through legal and psychosocial counseling of victims, implementation of the "Person of Trust" institute and online counseling.