

ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT FOR 2023

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

support by Kvinna till Kvinna

The project outcome are:

1. A number of women victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable categories who obtained support for (self)employment in the Bijeljinska and Eastern-Herzegovina regions.
2. A number of women victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable categories who were provided with part-time education, re-training and additional training, allocation of social flats, social benefits over Centers for Social Work, incentives in agriculture and so on in the Bijeljinska and Eastern-Herzegovina regions.

Output 1.:

1. A number of interested entrepreneurs in employment of women victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable categories in the Bijeljinska and Eastern Herzegovina regions.
2. A number of recognized institutions which are relevant for economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable categories in RS, with a focus on the Bijeljinska and Eastern Herzegovina regions and a manner of agreed coordination/change.

Output 2.:

A number and manner of aid/support provided by the counselling centers for economic empowerment of women from vulnerable categories in the Bijeljinska and Eastern-Herzegovina regions, women from vulnerable categories.

Output 3.:

A number of municipalities which adopt Local protocol for prevention of domestic violence in the Bijeljinska and Eastern-Herzegovina regions. A number and a manner of measures included in Local protocol by the local communities.

R.1.- Established database of employers and institutions with competences and capacities to support economic empowerment as well as part-time high school education of women victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable categories of women in the RS, with a focus on the Bijeljina and East-Herzegovina regions.

-Increased amount of funds for (self)employment for women victims of domestic violence within the existing Government program.

Foundation "Ženski Centar" Trebinje and Foundation "Lara" Bijeljina, in addition to providing psycho-social support ("Lara" and legal support) in previous years, they also specialized in connecting employers and women from vulnerable categories who are looking for work. During 2023, as well as during 2022, we continued to contact employers relevant to the economic empowerment of vulnerable categories of women in the region of East Herzegovina and Bijeljina (subjects whose business activity is suitable for the employment of vulnerable categories of women), with the aim of establishing cooperation. We introduced the representatives of business entities to the specifics of vulnerable categories of women: which are most often the educational profile of women who turned to us for help with employment, the importance of economic empowerment of women victims of domestic violence and breaking stigma and prejudice against this category of women. The employers expressed their readiness to establish cooperation, with the emphasis still being on trial work for a month, and after that, based on the attitude of both parties and mutual interests, a decision would be made whether the contract on work was extended. Employers were still interested in how a woman could be protected if abuser harassed her in a random place, that is, how employers themselves could protect themselves if abuser interfered with the entire work process by harassing women at the workplace. However, unlike in 2022, the Government's program to support women from vulnerable categories for their employment and self-employment is available only to underdeveloped and extremely underdeveloped municipalities. So, in 2022, the statistics according to this program are: In February 2022, on the website of the Employment Agency of the Republic of Srpska, a public call to employers and unemployed persons to use funds under employment programs in 2022 was published. One of the programs implemented by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Srpska following a public call was the "Employment and Self-Employment Program of Target Categories in the Economy in 2022", whose total value was 3,650,000.00 KM, and which was financed from funds of the Budget of the Republic of Srpska. The program included two components: financing employment by employers of persons from the target group of the Program for 600 persons at 4,000.00 KM per person, which amounted to 2,400,000.00 KM in total, with the amount increased by 10% for the employment of women from rural areas, and financing self-employment of persons from the target group of the Program for 250 persons in the amount of 5,000.00 BAM per unemployed person, which amounted to 1,250,000.00 BAM in total. The public call was open for 30 days from the date of call, and the deadline for submitting applications was 7th March 2022. Furthermore, we contacted the users of the services and verbally informed them about the announced public call and the possibility of applying for it, which we estimated could be potential users of the funds. We noticed on the analytical graph that the number of views of our website was the highest in April and the deadline for applying for the Public Call was 3 April, so it is clear that the period for applying for the call should be extended. Therefore, regardless of the strong campaign that we led to make the call visible, the

problem is the short time for responding to it, which we pointed out in our request to extend the duration of the Public Call for 2023 year. Despite all the aggravating circumstances of daily political events, we managed with the Ministry of Labor and Disability-Veterans Protection of the RS to impose our proposal on the increase from 5,000 BAM to 15,000 BAM for self-employment and from 4,000 BAM to 8,000 BAM for employment, to the Working Group for consideration with hope that we lobbied them enough for the adoption of the proposal. But despite that because of economic crisis in RS, this proposal was not adopted:

So, the amounts remained the same and there was no improvement, including the amount and the length of the open call. Regardless of all our insistence and lobbying, due to the delay of the Ministry of Labor and Disabled Veterans' Protection of the RS with the creation of the "Action Plan for Employment of the RS for 2023." which was supposed to be adopted in December 2022, and which was adopted only at the beginning of July 2023, the amounts of money for (self) employment as well as the duration of the Public Call, remained unchanged. In August 2023, on the website of the JU Employment Office of the RS, a public invitation to employers and unemployed persons to use funds under employment programs in 2023 was published. One of the components of the Program implemented by the JU Employment Office of the RS according to the published public call was the co-financing of employment by employers of difficult-to-employ persons in extremely underdeveloped and underdeveloped municipalities for 300 persons (increased number by 50 persons) in the amount of BAM 5,000.00 each to an unemployed person, which amounts to 1,500,000.00 BAM in total. We contacted the beneficiaries of the "Ženski centar" Trebinje and "Lara" Bijeljina and verbally informed them about the announced public call and the possibility of applying for the same, which we estimated could be potential users of the funds, given that the program referred only to extremely underdeveloped and underdeveloped municipalities. We have also informed the Center for Social Work as well as the Branches of the JU Employment Office in those municipalities. It is clear that the Employment Agency of the RS went for the option of quantity and not quality of the offer to users of the Public Call for (self) employment of vulnerable categories of the population in the RS. The news about the public calls with details of the programs was published every year on the website of the Foundation "Zenski Centar" Trebinje and the partner organization Foundation "Lara" Bijeljina, as well as on our Facebook pages. The statistics of the news post were as follows (for all three years): number of people reached by the post - 84,003, interaction - 33,020, clicks on the link - 11,679, interaction with the post - 17,201, reactions to the post - 278, shares of the post - 54, saves of the post - 25, comments announcements - 21, audience: women - 82.2%, men - 17.8%, the Republic of Srpska - 90.01%, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - 9.99%.

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 (in the reporting period) 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.

This was followed by a strong advocacy activity towards the Institute for Adult Education of the RS, which is obliged by law to update its register with a database on the educational program for adults, which they are not very diligent about.

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

During the year, the representatives of the Foundation "Zenski Centar" Trebinje as well as the Foundation "Lara" organized several meetings with representatives of local self-government units (Trebinje, Bileća, Nevesinje, Gacko, Berkovići, Ljubinje, Lopare, Ugljevik, Zvornik, Bratunac, Milići, Vlasenica, Šekovići, Osmaci and Sokolac). The goal was to establish cooperation and joint action on the effective implementation of the protection of victims of domestic violence and the protection of women victims of violence in partner relationships, but also to introduce representatives of local self-government units to the importance of employment and economic empowerment of women who have experienced domestic violence or violence in partner relationships, putting in the foreground that one of the reasons for which the victim most often returns to the abuser is economic insecurity and financial dependence.

During the reporting period, the Foundation "Women's Center" Trebinje provided support to 131 women and girls through the counseling center for women's economic empowerment, and the Foundation "Lara" Bijeljina provided support to 439 of them. And this through these types of support: employment, self-employment, recognition of personal competencies, help with CV writing, training for the first interview with the employer, help in creating a business plan and mediation with employers in order to employ our clients. Most of them received psycho-social and/or legal help from our organizations, and some received accommodation in a safe house in Bijeljina, along with one or *more supports through the counseling center for economic empowerment.*

R.3. At least 6 municipalities have adopted local protocol for the prevention, countering and suppression of domestic violence in these two regions, which include some of the measures and/or actors relevant to their economic empowerment.

As part of this result, during the reporting period, in Eastern Herzegovina, a local protocol was signed in Trebinje, while the procedure for the preparation and signing of the local protocol was suspended in Nevesinje and Gacko, due to the adoption of the new Law on protection against domestic violence and violence against women in the RS, because local protocol must be

harmonized with this law, which is in the procedure of adoption in the National Assembly of the RS. The Foundation "Lara" signed local protocol in many more municipalities than the planned number, namely: Bijeljina, Sokolac, Zvornik, Lopare and Ugljevik.

"Capacity Building VI" **supported by OAK/Trag Foundation**

Project goal 1.

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

During the year 2023, the Foundation "Ženski Centar" provided a total of 290 interventions for victims of domestic violence for 23 women (16 new and 7 who approached us before) and seven children as well as one man - the victim of domestic violence. The age of the victims ranges from 25 to 65 years.

Support is provided through:

- psychosocial support - 209 interventions
- self-help groups - 42 interventions
- institute "person of trust" - 32 interventions
- providing free legal aid - 7 interventions

Other provided services, a total of 155, relate to assistance in obtaining social assistance, healthcare services, economic empowerment, referral and mediation for a total of 94 individuals. The Counseling Center for Economic Empowerment provided information, help in writing a business plan, help in writing a CV, help in preparing for the first interview with an employer and employment mediation for a total of 31 people.

In addition, 14 girls and 7 men/young men received information from the Women's Center about schools that have adult education programs.

In this regard, the majority of victims of domestic violence as well as other vulnerable groups of women (poor, Roma women, rural women, unemployed women aged 45+, women victims of war rape) used the same types of support several times as well as several types of support. The Women's Center provided support in terms of health care, but also in distributing food and clothing to vulnerable categories of the population.

We launched the creation of a desktop application of a single registry and database for at least 13 organizations that provide direct support to victims of domestic violence, which will enable the collection of the same information and, through a "uniform" form, enable broader statistics of indicators of domestic violence within the non-governmental sector.

Project goal 2: Building the capacity of the Foundation "Ženski centar" Trebinje, both financially and institutionally, with the aim of empowering it to work on the prevention and support of

victims of domestic violence, as well as the economic empowerment of women from vulnerable categories in BiH.

During the reporting period, with the support of our organization, PZ "Smokvica" built a structure for a tasting room in the village of Mesari (on the plantation).

We have acquired a boiler for storing jam and marmalade, and we are well on our way to acquiring a machine for grinding dried figs, a delivery vehicle as well as an additional system for solar panels.

In this project year, as in every other year, an external evaluator and audit house was hired to prepare the report. Therefore, every project year, we have documentation that is an indicator of the success of our work, both financial and activist.

“Women's CSOs – united against domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina”

supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands through the MATRA program

This project contributes to the elimination of domestic violence because it enables the reporting of violence in moments when the victim is prevented from moving as well as conversations because through the chat (silently) she will be able to request psychological and/or legal help and/or information, including reporting violence to an organization that provides support through SOS application (which the victim of us 13 chooses herself) or if she is threatened by clicking on the "Panic" button, it automatically alerts the organization that she is threatened, by clicking on the "Panic" button, it actually automatically sends a message containing her location and name, and to whose address the organization will report the violence to the police station closest to that location and request its intervention.

On the other hand, enabling the collection of broader data on the occurrence of domestic violence in B&H through a single register and database will enable various quality research and understanding of this phenomenon, as well as the development of a strategy to combat domestic violence.

The planned "policy" document will provide the first guidelines for the work of CSOs in this field in B&H.

Of course, both applications (SOS and the register with the base) are also applicable to other vulnerable groups of women and girls, although often the victims of domestic violence come from multiple marginalized groups such as the disabled, poor women, refugees, Roma, rural women... Precisely a unique register will be able to bring it all together and finally obtain data from which groups women and girls victims of domestic violence most often come from.

The project will be implemented in the period from September 1, 2023. until August 30, 2025.

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

support by Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in B&H

During the reporting period, our organization, in accordance with the project application and your support, completed the upgrade and adaptation of the assembly-dismantling facility-tasting room at the organic fig and olive plantation in the village of Mesari (Trebinje). However, this amount at the time of planning and at the time of implementation was changed due to hyper-inflation covered by our organization. During the reporting period, we conducted the process of obtaining three offers.

Thanks to the support of your Embassy, by upgrading and adapting the assembly-dismantling facility, we have prepared a covered area for the tasting room, where tastings of fig and olive products, as well as other well-known Herzegovina products (wine, prosciutto, cheese...) will be organized. It will also be used for the sale of cooperative products. We covered the existing container (of 28 m²) with a roof structure (of 10.50 m² x 10.50 m²) and 9 supporting columns. In this way, we got a protected/covered area (terrace) that can accommodate over 50 tourists, while the existing container will contain the cooperative's products.

„I HAVE THE RIGHT!" To life without fear! To a life without violence! To safety!

supported by the Safe Network

Through this project, we distributed information leaflets and agitates, as well as held a show with the aim of combating violence against women and children on the local radio station Radio Trebinje. Leaflets were distributed through various institutions as well as our organization in the area of the City of Trebinje. In addition to the slogan "I HAVE THE RIGHT! To life without fear! To a life without violence! To safety!", our organization also used these messages: "Move, wake up, you are not alone!" and "Take your life into your own hands!".

„Strengthening institutional support to end gender-based violence (GBV)“– Phase II

**supported by Kvinna till Kvinna through a partnership with the Foundation
"Lara" Bijeljina**

During the reporting period, our organization organized 6 meetings of self-help groups for 7 people. 32 interventions were also provided to 11 persons by a trusted person. The Women's

Center conducted surveys for subjects of protection for the area of work Basic Court in Foča, Basic Court in Trebinje, District Court in Trebinje, Center for Social Work Trebinje).

"Campaign to raise funds to build a safe house"

supported by Trag Foundation

Thanks to support from the Fund for Self-Sustainability, it was possible to purchase a door for a safe house as a symbol for its complete future construction in Trebinje.

"Campaign to raise funds to build a safe house"

supported by the GlobalGiving platform

During the reporting period, the fundraising campaign continued through this platform for the construction of a safe house in Trebinje.