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banjaluka, BiH

UZ PODRŠKU KVINNA TILL KVINNA FONDACIJA ŠVEDSKA



# WOMAN TODAY

11TH CYCLE

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Banja Luka, January 2008



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## INTRODUCTION

Here we are presenting you the eleventh publication “Woman Today”, which provides an overview of activities implemented within the project during 2007 in partnership of Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka and United Women Banja Luka. During this period, we implemented numerous activities: six preparatory meetings, preparatory workshop and research about gender stereotypes, round table in Banja Luka and public discussions in Bihać, Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Tomislavgrad, Trebinje, Višegrad, Prijedor and Bijeljina, where we presented the research result, four public discussions in Banja Luka with common title “Actual Moment” six TV programs, four press conferences, and publication “Why You Did Not Choose Better: on the occasion of tenth anniversary of SOS telephone for women. Beside that, on the initiative of our two associations, Board of Equal Possibilities of the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska organized the public hearing on the topic of “Financing the Safe Houses for Women and Children Victims of Domestic Violence.”

All of these activities, our advocacy actions and eleven years of our activism contributed to the fact that representatives of SNSD in the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska proposed, and Government of Republika Srpska approved including the budget item of financing the safe houses in the public budget of Republika Srpska for 2008.

We are using this opportunity to express gratitude to our partner organizations “Women from Una” from Bihać, “Woman BiH” from Mostar, “Women to Women” Sarajevo, “Human Rights Office” from Tuzla, “Duvanjske” from Tomislavgrad, “Women’s Center” from Trebinje, “Most” from Višegrad, “Sanus” from Prijedor and “Lara” from Bijeljina, as well as to Gender Center of Republika Srpska, whose participation and support enabled us to implement and promote the research with title “Gender Roles and Stereotypes”.

We also want to thank women members of the Board for Equal Possibilities of the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska and Nada Tešanović, Vice President of the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska, on understanding and support in our work on promotion and protection of women’s human rights in our society.

The project “Woman Today”, which we implement for the past eleven years with support of “Kvinna Till Kvinna” Foundation from Sweden, represents our contribution to elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and creating environment in which women and men will have equal possibilities.

Nada Golubović  
Lidija Živanović

Project Coordinators

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## PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS



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SVETLANA CENIĆ

## ROLE OF A WOMAN IN DEVELOPMENT – NECESSITY AND OBSTACLES

In September 2000, 189 states members of the United Nations adopted eight millennium development goals, and with doing it, they obliged to accomplish visible progress in eradicating poverty and reaching other development goals until 2015. As things are now, majority of stated goals will be hardly reachable until 2015. However, important thing is that these goals became the essential element of ways how governments, international development agencies and nongovernmental organizations are accomplishing their developmental strivings. Eight goals are very ambitious: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; reach universal elementary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; fighting HIV, malaria and other diseases; ensure sustainable environment; and developing global partnership related to development. Millennium development goals are defined through consultations with developing countries, in order to ensure their engagement in solving of their most burning issues.

Here I would like to direct your attention on the third millennium **development** goal, and that is promoting gender equality and empowering a woman! Women make significant majority of poor people worldwide. Female headed households are prevalent, women earn less money than men, and women have very limited control over income of their spouses. Women also very often have lower level of education, less access to formal sector, employment, social security and state employment programs. Combination of all mentioned facts is leading to situation where all financial resources available to women are much weaker and instable in relation to those resources available to men. Beside the fact that women are often less paid for similar work than men, essentially they also do not have access to working positions that ensure much better salaries.

Control of women over household incomes and resources is limited for many reasons. It is ultimately important the fact that large part of work performed by women is not valued – for example, role of women in preparing food and washing, and especially role in parenting. Furthermore, many women from poor households are not paid for work performed in family farming or entrepreneurship business. The common situation is that a man, head of household, controls all income from, for example, crops collected on family farm although significant part of farming work is done by his wife. In our society, it is still socially unacceptable to some extent for women to make significant contribution to household incomes, and this is the reason why women's work can be hidden and unrecognized.

Politics of development, which essentially increase differences in productivity of men and women, are also leading to increasing differences in income, and further undermining economic status of a woman in household. Majority of state programs for poverty reduction are often solely directed toward men, and they even increase this inequality.

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The fact that wellbeing of women and children is under strong influence of developmental policy emphasizes importance of integrating women in developmental programs, meaning that women must be involved in key economic flows. This brings also increase of women's participation in educational and other training programs in formal sector of employment, and programs of agricultural expansion. Process of development, which does not succeed to improve wellbeing of most vulnerable categories of people, mostly women and children, can not fulfill one of the key goals of development. In a long term perspective, low status of women will lead to slowing down of economic development rate, especially because the future educational results and social status of children will likely reflect status of a mother or a father. Advantages of current investments in human potential will probably transfer to future generations if women successfully integrate in process of development. When we take into consideration that human potential probably represents the most important precondition of development and advancement, than we can say that education and improved economic status of women are key conditions for reaching long term development goals.

### **Women in Agriculture**

The programs sponsored by government are almost excluding women, often because women do not possess guaranties for getting loans, or property is not registered on their name. Agricultural incentives and trainings are rarely provided for female candidates. Even the efforts to eradicate poverty through reforms in the area of agriculture are decreasing incomes and deteriorating economic status of women on some way, because the possession of land is almost always registered on male heads of household. Cultural and social limits for integration of women in agricultural programs are still unshakable, since incomes for a woman are perceived as threat for authority of a man. While men are educated about new methods for increasing production, women are, if involved at all, educated to perform less productive tasks that are considered compatible with their traditional roles—such are knitting, preparing food, handiwork, etc. Female components of development projects are often a bit more than programs of social assistance, and they do not succeed to improve their economic position.

Although the efforts to increase women's incomes through ensuring direct access to means and incentives were successful, programs that indirectly work with women are often failing to meet their goals. Studies show that women have better cooperation in projects when resources are under their direct control. It is clear that projects based on unpaid work of women will receive only minimal support. Adopting new agricultural raisings and technologies will be more efficient if production schemes are more consistent with interests of female members of household. Since active participation of women is of key importance for progress of agriculture, it is necessary to ensure equal benefits for women from developmental efforts in the process of developing agricultural policies.

### **Women in Informal Sector**

Women make majority of available workforce in informal sector, working for low salaries on insecure jobs, without indirect incomes and benefits of employees, and without benefits of social insurance.

Many women are managing small businesses or micro enterprises that require small or no initial capital, include marketing of homemade food or handicraft products. Studies show that women are capable to use capital on more productive way and start from much lower investment base. Their profit rates on investments are often exceeding profit rates of men.



Despite these indicators, majority of institutional loans are still channeled through formal sector agencies. As result of that, women still do not have possibilities to receive small loans, since there is the issue of collaterals.

In order to solve the problem of difficult position of poor urban women and their children, it is of key importance to invest the efforts in integration of women in major economic flows. In order to ensure benefits of women from development programs, it is necessary to consider special circumstances of women when drafting policy conceptions.

### **Instead of Conclusion**

Women make approximately 60% of population capable for work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the percentage of employed women is the lowest in Southeastern Europe. World Bank estimates there are 28% of women employees in BiH.

Experience shows that smallest percentage of women vote for women, and there is small number of women in politics and on executive positions. Therefore, it is difficult to expect that this picture would change soon, at least not before next general elections four years from now. However, what we can do in the prime time of privatization of large strategic firms, announced investments and development projects is to have proactive role of nongovernmental sector in order to present to the government the data about necessity of defining role for women in development, make public pressure, and develop the strategy in partnership with the Government.

In this moment, I believe it is the most important to inform and teach women about basic economic indicators, their role and possibilities, and developing network not only in Republika Srpska, but whole Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to enable exchange of ideas and business experiences between women, and to direct intention of the international foundations and donors on this field. In such difficult and politically tense situation, economic networking can be a key for better life, and in all of that, women have decisive role. They can not and must not allow anyone to play with their destiny and destiny of their children. In concluding part, I would like to emphasize that developmental economy, as the most complex type of economic studies, comprehensively deals with necessity of greater role of a woman in development of society of state. Furthermore, numerous organizations and studies worldwide deal with this issue. Unfortunately, there is little or no attention devoted to this issue in our country, so we do not need a lot's of wisdom to give at least part of the answer why we have such difficult situation in this field.

Banja Luka, 20 March 2007

## **SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Nongovernmental organizations should act together, and ask Government on what way and for which purposes they will spend financial means collected through selling of strategic companies. They should also request the participation of NGOs in creation of development programs that should be sponsored with these means. These are key conclusions from the public discussion held on 20 March 2007 in Banja Luka on the topic "Role of a Woman in Development – Necessity and Obstacles".

According to Svetlana Cenić, introductory speaker on the public discussion, women must be



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involved in creation of development strategies, and they must be represented at all places where decisions are made about development.

She emphasized that majority of development programs in Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina are directed toward men, although women make majority of population.

"Programs of prequalification are largely directed to men, mostly those dismissed from military and police service, which now are in need for securing new job. Majority of programs aimed for eradicating poverty are again directed to men. It is a high time for a woman to be involved in creating development strategies" said Svetlana Cenić.

"When the Prime Minister publicly presents large figures that will be invested in development of Republika Srpska, it must be a place for a woman there. Projects must be offered for women, but not those projects where women would do embroidery, crocheting, and knitting. Women can offer new ideas. If we do not start something now, than I do not know when we will do that" said categorically Svetlana Cenić.

According to her, female resources are underestimated, and their work is not awarded "although everyone who cares for economic development should count on female potential and creativity."

"If we talk about agricultural production, we can see that more income comes from growing and selling vegetables and fruits, and not from wheat and corn. And who is working in garden? Who is planting, weeding, and processing soil? All of that is done by a woman, and she does not own house, land, and tractor. Then, the government adopts the program of stimulating growing of wheat and corn, namely raisings that are traditionally related to men. That is "witches' brew" and we should stop this practice" said Svetlana Cenić.

She said that women represent the major workforce also within informal sector, where they work for low wages on insecure jobs, without benefits and social insurance.

"Army of women and girls without social and pension insurance works namely in large trade centers and clothing stores. Personally I believe this represents blunting of women. Nobody wants to offer them different model of work" said Svetlana Cenić, and added that "women are accomplishing excellent results where they have control over resources."

In discussion that followed, attorney Smiljana Moravac Babić noticed that women unfortunately allowed men to handle all property. "Why we have situations where five sisters renounce the property in favor of their brother? Why this happens when they are equal inheritors", she questioned.

Miroslav Samardžić from United Women Banja Luka said that "the problem is in men that do not want to give up from their positions in favor of women".

Nada Tešanović, Vice President of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska said she asks herself sometimes why she engaged in political life. "What this status brought to me? What I benefited from gender equality? It is very difficult to be wise nowadays", said Nada Tešanović, and added that political parties mostly engage those women who are obedient and would not refuse commands.

"Behind each successful man stands exhausted woman" commented Svetlana Cenić, and said that Dragan Čavić, former President of Republika Srpska did not forgive her for stepping out from her corner "where I worked very hard and where I was creating his ego."

Svetlana Cenić added that leaders of political parties remember women only in the eve of creating lists of candidates, when they are pulling for sleeves secretaries and their cousins, and those that are obedient sign up and they put them on the list of candidates. "They won't let women to be publicly visible, and they are afraid of smart women", said Svetlana Cenić.



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She criticized celebrations of 8 March, which are perceived by women as the opportunity to get dressed and see HIM. "He entered the room. HE cuddled her. He gave her flower", said Svetlana Cenić, and added that she personally does not like this type of celebration of 8 March, where all honors are directed, in fact, toward HIM.

"I believe now is the most important to inform and educate women what is income, what is economy, what are economic indicators, and what are possibilities for a woman to participate in creation of development programs. Women should be connected and exchange ideas and business experiences. In such difficult and politically tense situation, where everybody listen only what Haris said to Mile, and what Mile said to Haris<sup>6</sup>, economic networking can be the key for better life, and women should have important role in this process because they know what are the needs of family, what are everyday problems, and they are better in handling the money", said Svetlana Cenić, former Minister of Finance in Government of Republika Srpska.

She reemphasized importance of networking between official institutions, nongovernmental organizations, business sector and media that "only together can step out from this situation." Nada Golubović, President of United Women Banja Luka called Radio Television of Republika Srpska to organize TV program about economic topics, and provide opportunities for women to learn more about the key economic principles and terms.

The public discussion "Role of a Woman in Development – Necessity and Obstacles" was organized by United Women and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka as the part of the project "Woman Today XI" financially supported by Swedish organization Kvinna till Kvinna.

Summary prepared by  
Dragana Dardić

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6 Translator's note: "Mile and Haris" refers to Mile Dodik, currently Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, and Haris Silajdžić, currently Member of the Collective Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



## PUBLIC HEARING – PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

### ”A WAY FOR FINANCING SAFE HOUSES”

#### THE REPORT PREPARED BY DRAGANA DARDIĆ

On 18 June 2007, on the initiative of United Women and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, Board for Equal Possibilities in the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska organized the public hearing with title “Financing of the Safe Houses”. The public hearing was organized in the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska.

The public hearing was organized with the objective of identifying systemic solution for financing of the safe houses in Republika Srpska, and in order to enable for Board for Equal Possibilities to develop concrete opinion on this issue, and inform about it the authorized ministries in Government of RS and representatives in the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska, which will soon discuss changes and amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska that also regulates work and financing of the safe houses.

Nada Tešanović, Vice President of the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska emphasized that the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of RS appeared to be “impossible to implement as it is now”, and therefore it is necessary for proposed changes and amendments to be of good quality and possible to reach in the practice.

“That is also the purpose of this public hearing. To hear all sides and to offer the best solutions that can adequately respond on the widespread issue of domestic violence”, said Nada Tešanović.

Witnesses of the public hearing initiators were Miodrag Simović, Judge of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nikola Dorončić, Representative of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka, Nada Golubović, President of NGO United Women Banja Luka and Gordana Vidović, President of NGO “Future” Modriča.

Initiators of the public hearing represented the attitude that financial means for work of the safe houses for victims of domestic violence should be provided from public budgets on entity and municipal levels.

“Securing financial means for work of shelters in Republika Srpska from the entity public budget would be in line with recommendations of the CEDAW Committee”, said Nada Golubović, President of United Women Banja Luka, and added that one part of the financing for safe houses should be secured from the public budgets of local communities.

She also emphasized that beside existing safe houses in Banja Luka and Modriča, additional three safe houses for victims of violence in Republika Srpska should be opened within the period of next five years – in Trebinje, East Sarajevo and Bijeljina. If accomplishing this objective, Republika Srpska would get closer to fulfillment of the international recommendation that minimum one place in the safe house should be provided on each 10000 inhabitants.

Nada Golubović reminded that violence against women does not represent a private matter but social issue, and that network for assistance and support for victims represent precondition for elimination of violence against women.



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Judge Miodrag Simović reminded on the international norms and standards that Republika Srpska is obliged to respect and implement, and these include implementation of preventive and protective measures aimed for protection of victims of domestic violence.

He especially emphasized that public budgets at all levels rarely or never include financial means for implementation of this type of measures “although CEDAW Committee recommended to the BiH authorities to allocate financial means needed for implementation of Gender Action Plan through creating special budget lines within ministries.”

Nikola Dorončić warned that Center for Social Work registered 158 cases of domestic violence in 2006, while it registered 118 cases only within first five months in 2007.

He said that the accommodation costs for women beneficiaries of the safe house should be re-examined. These costs are now 25 BAM, and he said that Center for Social Work will not be able to financially maintain this price.

“We are absolutely interested for existence of the safe house, but we would like to see other protection measures implemented in the practice as well, such is removing abuser from a house”, emphasized Nikola Dorončić.

Gordana Vidović reminded that the safe house exists in Modriča since 2000, and only this year it received first financial support from the Government of Republika Srpska.

“We believe now is the time for official institutions to take over financing the care for victims of violence. We have ground for this claim in the international documents, domestic laws, but we also believe that official institutions in Republika Srpska are aware of existing resources within nongovernmental sector, which are precious for any government”, said Gordana Vidović.

Contrary to witnesses of the public hearing initiators, representatives of the Government of Republika Srpska presented the opinion that starting with 2009 safe houses should be financed solely from public budgets of local communities.

“For bridging the period until 2009, and starting the financing of the safe houses from local level, Government of Republika Srpska secured 100.000 BAM from the budget reserves. These financial means are waiting to be distributed” said Svjetlana Radovanović, Representative of the Ministry of Finances in Republika Srpska. She added that this Ministry only implements governmental policy, and does not decide who will get the support, and how much financial means will be distributed.

Spomenka Krnić, Director of the Government of Republika Srpska said that their opinion about financing of the safe houses is “influenced by the institutional position of Gender Center of Republika Srpska and its mandate.” She also said they are supporting the model of financing the safe houses from local budgets. “That is unique solution, and represents a step forward in comparison to the situation in our region”, said Spomenka Krnić.

Ljubo Lepir, Representative of the Ministry of Health and Social Care of Republika Srpska said that “there is no government that provides finances for salaries of personnel of the safe houses”, therefore Government of Republika Srpska is not ready to make this step. According to him, principles of market economy will have to be introduced in the area of social protection. “There is a large interest from private capital to open geriatric centers, and we would have to follow this direction”, emphasized Ljubo Lepir.

Initiators of the public hearing strongly reacted on presentation of Ljubo Lepir, and protested for comparison of pensioners and victims of violence.

Radmila Žigić, Representative of Women’s Association “Lara” from Bijeljina said she is shocked with possibility for opening tenders for establishing safe houses, and for open market being the key principle for making rules for work of safe houses.



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“Safe houses are not someone’s private business. Do not make a circus out of it. It seems that you forget that we are often saving lives of women and children with sheltering them in the safe house”, said Radmila Žigić, and added that all people seems to forget that “every victim has the right to receive protection from a state”.

“We in Lara did not sleep for past ten days because we provided shelter for underage victim of human trafficking, which attempted suicide several times already. We provided shelter for her, not the state,” said Radmila Žigić.

Ljiljana Radovanović, Head of Department for Social Affairs in City Administration Banja Luka criticized the organizers of the public hearing for focusing only on discussion about the safe house “which only extinguish a fire”, and in the same time neglected other protection measures and other segments that are important for elimination of domestic violence. She said that City Administration Banja Luka will always be in possibility to find financial means for work of the safe house. However, she also emphasized that other local communities that have less budget resources would certainly face large difficulties to keep up with needs for financing of the safe houses.

“While we are talking here now, a woman with cranium fracture is sheltered in the safe house in Banja Luka, and the man who did that to her is paroled from prison. There is no doubt that we need safe houses, but it is not acceptable that all burden of financing for this service to be placed on local communities” said Ljiljana Radovanović.

Nada Tešanović clearly stressed that she will not support the draft changes and amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence “where the entire burden is transferred on local communities”. She suggested to the Ministry of Justice of RS to improve the draft law, and harmonize it with the presented opinions. She also expressed her believes that Government of Republika Srpska is certainly willing to support in finding systemic solution for financing of the safe houses in Republika Srpska.

Participants of the discussion about financing of the safe houses were also women representatives of nongovernmental organizations from Trebinje, East Sarajevo, and Prijedor – Ljiljana Čičković, Jagoda Savić and Milka Lončar, and they presented their experiences and proposals. Participants of the public hearing were also representative of Ombudsman of Republika Srpska, Director of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka, Borka Vukajlović, and representative of the Center for Social Work from Prijedor.

People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska  
Banja Luka, 18 June 2007.

**Presentation of Prof. PhD. Miodrag Simović, a judge of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Public Hearing in the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska**

## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, SAFE HOUSES – INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS RELATED TO THE FINANCING**

Violence against women represents type of discrimination of women that seriously disables them the right to full enjoyment of rights and freedoms on equal basis with men. According to the Recommendation no 19 of the CEDAW Committee, violence against women includes all acts that are causing physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats with such acts, compulsion, and limiting or depriving freedom.





One of the most hidden forms of violence against women is certainly domestic violence, so this might be a reason why the researches show that this type of violence against women is predominant in all societies. Because of that, elimination of violence against women and especially domestic violence receives the priority on regional level.

Beside CEDAW Convention, and for its more efficient implementation, the United Nations adopted the Recommendation no 19 of the CEDAW Committee, and suggested to the state parties the obligations related to elimination of violence against women. General Recommendation no 19 of the CEDAW Committee (1992) is entirely devoted to this issue. State parties are recommended to secure adequate protection and respect of integrity and dignity of women with adopting laws against domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. Beside legislative measures, which include criminal law sanctions, civil law protection and compensation of damage, as well as prevention measures, which include informational and educational programs, state parties are also requested to regulate and conduct adequate protection measures. These measures include establishing or support to the services for assistance for victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual assaults, and other types of gender based violence, as well as services for rehabilitation and counseling. Additionally, the state parties should ensure that these services are accessible also to women from rural areas, as well as marginalized groups (for example, women that face double discrimination, such are Roma women, etc.). These services must ensure security and safety of victims of domestic violence. Therefore, mentioned international standards are regulating several levels of obligations. The first is legislative level – adoption of adequate laws and regulations, and establishing institutional machinery for implementing obligations from the CEDAW Convention.

Second level relates to the preventive measures that are directed to dissemination of information, education and raising awareness of general public about domestic violence as form of discrimination of women.

Third level relates to the conducting protection measures through establishing or offering support to the services for victims' assistance.

**None of these obligations and especially not the obligation of conducting protection measures is possible to implement without adequate financial means.**

In relation to the implementation of international standards on local level, it is important to say that Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Gender Equality Law ("Official Gazette of B&H" no 16/03), and the entities adopted the laws for protection from domestic violence (2005). Additionally, Gender Equality Agency has been established within the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of B&H, and there are Gender Centers in both entities. Therefore, it is clear that there is legislative and institutional framework, but having just that is not enough.

For a long time, nongovernmental organizations are emphasizing that official authorities should conduct concrete steps on implementation of the obligations they have been accepted, and especially that economic planning and budgeting is not gender sensitive at all levels of governance (Group of NGOs, Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee, 2004).

Budgets at all levels of governance rarely, if any, include financial means dedicated for implementation of the obligations from the CEDAW Convention and laws, and improving condition of women's human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina in general. Beside that, nongovernmental organizations are emphasizing the lack of social services for assistance and support for women victims of domestic violence, including also the lack of accommodation for victims, counseling and rehabilitation programs. In relation to that, it should be noted



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that safe houses for victims of domestic violence exist only within NGOs, and they are financed from donor contribution. However, that is not enough, especially having in mind growing needs for this type of service. Participation in financing of the safe houses from local authorities is insufficient, if exist at all. Similar situation is with other services for victims' assistance, such are SOS telephones, legal services, and psychological therapies. Unfortunately, official authorities do not show serious interests to take over responsibility for financing accommodation and care for victims of domestic violence in existing safe houses, or establishing and financing services needed for efficient actions against domestic violence. When considering the official CEDAW report of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2006, CEDAW Committee concluded that adoption of the law and creation of gender machinery within executive and legislative governance at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina is very positive and encouraging. The Committee especially welcomed the activities on adoption of the action plan on gender equality, but also pointed that, in order to foster efficient implementation of the plan and CEDAW Convention, it is necessary to immediately continue with education of public officials at all levels, allocate financial means needed for implementation of the action plan through creation of special budget lines within ministries, and to work on further collecting of donor contribution.

#### **Proposals of the Initiators of Public Hearing**

We believe it is necessary to plan financial means in order to ensure implementation of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in the part related to work of Safe Houses in Republika Srpska. We propose to secure these financial means from the entity budget in amount of 70%, and rest of 30% to be secured from the municipal/city budgets.

With taking into consideration a difficult financial situation and possibilities of Republika Srpska, we believe there are no possibilities to fully respect the Recommendation WAVE 2004 – minimum one place in a safe house per 10.000 inhabitants. Because of that, we propose opening of five shelters in next five years in Republika Srpska, in the regions with existing Public Prosecutor's Offices, as follows: Trebinje, East Sarajevo, and Bijeljina, including shelters that already exist in Modriča (Doboj Region) and Banja Luka.

Justification:

Majority of local communities have small financial means and much larger needs in social sector than they are able to pay.

With this way of financing from the level of entity and local community:

- The entity of Republika Srpska would respect recommendations of the Council of Europe, CEDAW Committee, and other international documents in support and assistance to victims of domestic violence.
- Local communities would have fewer costs per each woman beneficiary, which would result in better protection of women and children victims of domestic violence.

People's Assembly of Republika Srpska  
Banja Luka, 18 June 2007

Republika Srpska  
People's Assembly  
– Board of Equal Possibilities –  
No. 02/12 – 997 – 2/07  
Date, 3 July 2007  
TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF PUBLIC HEARING  
SUBJECT: Report, delivery

Attached we are delivering you the Report from public hearing about financing of the safe houses, which was held on 18 June 2007. Conclusions adopted by the Board of Equal Possibilities adopted on its session held on 25 June 2007 are integral part of this Report.

We are asking you to secure implementation of these conclusions within your field of authority.

With Respect,

President of the Board

Ivka Ristić

\*Signature and Official Stamp of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska

**Conclusions – Part of the Report of the Board for Equal Possibilities of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska**

After provided statements, the Board adopted following conclusions:


1. Board for Equal Possibilities of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska supports the initiative for finding solutions for systematic solving of the issue of financing safe houses in Republika Srpska.
2. The Board supports the proposal for having temporary solution for this and upcoming year, and financing safe houses in this period through budget reserves, meaning the public budget of Republika Srpska. Starting with 2009, the system for financing safe houses should be established through the budgets of local municipalities and public budget of Republika Srpska, in accordance with the number of victims of domestic violence that are recorded in specific local communities.

The Board believes that nongovernmental organizations that are founders and owners of the safe houses should personally engage through their management, and ensure partial coverage of the financial costs for work of the safe houses through donations and engaging teams for volunteer work in the safe houses.

3. The Board recommends to the Ministry of Health and Social Care of RS to develop price list for services and standards for accommodation of the victims of violence in safe houses, in order to define precisely as much as possible the amount needed for the work of safe house, and all of this with the objective of better quality and more efficient services of the safe houses.

After developing the price list, it is recommended to the Ministry to cooperate

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with the Ministry of Finance of RS, Ministry of Family, Youth, and Sport of RS, and Ministry of Justice of RS, and define regional approach to this issue. The Board supports planned number and period of opening the safe houses, with suggestion to adjust realization of this program with financial possibilities of Republika Srpska.

4. It is recommended to the Government of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Health and Social Care of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Family, Youth, and Sport of Republika Srpska, and Gender Center of Republika Srpska Government to, as soon as possible, start with the activities of developing of medium term plan for fighting against domestic violence.
5. The Report about implemented public hearing will be sent to the Cabinet of the President of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Health and Social Care of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Finance of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Family, Youth, and Sport of Republika Srpska, citizens associations, institutions, and other participants in the public hearing.
6. At the end of 2007, the Board for Equal Possibilities will conduct analysis of the implementation of the conclusions related to the Public Hearing about financing of the safe houses.

President of the Board  
Ivka Ristić

\*Signature and Official Stamp of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska

NATALIJA PETRIĆ

## “WHO IS PROTECTED BY THE LAW ON PROTECTION FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?”

— GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY —

Until few years ago, authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina were not ready to condemn violence against women, not even on the formal, legislative level. Reason for that was lack of their readiness to intervene within private sphere, and opinion that domestic violence related to family matters, in which the state does have neither obligation nor the right to intervene. The attitude about violence as family and private issue is still prevalent despite existence of the laws that prohibit it, and this attitude represents one of the main reasons for failure of the state to intervene. However, “the state has obligation not only to prohibit violation of women’s human rights, but also to undertake active measures of prevention and protection. The state is obliged to secure that domestic violence does not happen, and if it happens, its obligation is to secure protection for victims” (Nikolić–Ristanović 46). Although we can search for reasons why Bosnia and Herzegovina does not pay enough attention on protection of victims, among others, in recent war whose consequences opened a whole range of “more important” problems, and difficult economic situation, the situation is not much better in the countries of European Union, despite legislative framework and much favorable economic situation, which appears to be hardly reachable at least from the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Report published by the European Women’s Lobby in February 2007 states that “reality sometimes differ from official statements and reports that announce progress”, and there is “shamefully small number of countries that took measures to develop national action plans for fighting specific forms of violence against women” (*Reality Check* 6–7), mentioning as exceptions Denmark, France, Germany, Spain, and Sweden. However, even in those countries that established national action plans “checking of real situation shows critical situation, when we look beyond official discourse” (*Reality Check* 9).

When reading the laws of Bosnia and Herzegovina that regulate domestic violence, we can say that women have guaranteed legal protection, and only thing they should do is to start to use it. In other words, women victims have on their disposal the usage of rights guaranteed by laws.

Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina defines gender based violence in the Article 4 as “any act causing physical, mental, sexual or economic damage or suffering, as well as threats of such actions, which hinder the enjoyment of rights and freedoms based on gender equality, in public and private life, including trafficking in human beings for the purpose of forced labor, and any restriction or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, for persons exposed to such acts” (36).

We can say that this definition is the closest to description of the Committee of the Ministers of Council of Europe. In Recommendation Rec(2002)5, violence against women is recognized as

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Any act of violence based on gender/sex, which has, or can have as consequence physical, sexual or psychological damage or suffering of women, including threats with such acts, coercion or depriving freedom, regardless if it happens in public or private sphere.

(12)

Based on that, one can say that Bosnia and Herzegovina really secured protection of women victims of violence. On this way, false picture has been created that the state did everything to protect women from domestic violence, and that the main reason why women do not use this protection can be found in the fact that they are not really ready to seek protection. However, the fact is that even those women who dare to seek for such protection are facing with numerous obstacles that discourage them, and give general picture that, from the perspective of the state, abuser and not victim is the protected side. Despite existence of legislative norms, the state does not recognize violence against women.

Despite progress made during past decade in the area of legislation that today offers different forms of legal protection for women victims who survived violence, there is still need for asking ourselves: Why men are allowed to stay unpunished for this type of torture and abuse? What is the role of the state in secret agreement with abuser?

(Reality Check 20)

This type of opinion is understandable when we know that "legislation represents one of the necessary instruments for social and symbolic recognition of what certain societies are allowing, tolerate, or do not tolerate, and what they decided to mark as unacceptable behaviors" (Reality Check 20). It is indicative that only four European countries adopted the international definition of violence, as it is defined in the Point 118 of Beijing Platform for Action<sup>7</sup>. According to data provided by European Women's Lobby, these countries are France, Germany, Spain and Sweden (Reality Check 20). There is prevalent opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina that with opening of negotiations for accession into European Union many problems will be solved, not only those related to violence against women, and that gap between formal and real situation will be significantly reduced. However, it is the fact that many countries of European Union also share similar attitudes with Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Majority of the laws about domestic violence are written in gender neutral language, and majority of these laws define 'violence between partners' as domestic violence" (Reality Check 21). This attitude is justified with need for "law to protect every person, and that term 'violence against women' or 'gender based violence' in that sense is not correct..." although it is clear that women and children will have the most benefits of it" (Reality Check 21). Furthermore, they are justifying with the fact that "majority of laws is written in gender neutral form, and it is politically wiser to guarantee measures of human rights protection for men, when they are victims, to the same extent as it is guaranteed for women" (Reality Check 21). This is pretty unconvincing explanation if we have in mind that "the most visible statistics is the one where 95% of all acts of violence are committed by men against women they know. These acts of violence are the most frequently happening at home" (Unveiling the hidden data 9).

Laws on Protection from Domestic Violence in both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are not exception, as they are both written in gender neutral language<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand,

7 Article 118 of the Beijing Platform for Action recognizes violence against women as "expression of historically rooted unequal relation of power between men and women, which led to domination and discrimination against women by men and prevention of full progress of women" (62).

8 "Domestic violence represents any act that causes physical, psychological and sexual suffering, or economic damage, as well as threats with such acts, or omission of acting in due diligence, which seriously prevents members of a family to enjoy their rights and freedoms on the principle of equality of sexes, both in public and private sphere of life" (Article 6 of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska no. 118, from 30 December 2005)



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Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only country in the region<sup>9</sup> whose definition of domestic violence “states that domestic violence endangers enjoyment of human rights and freedoms, and which integrates principle of equality” (Ristanović–Nikolić 77). Beside the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, definitions of domestic violence are provided in additional four laws, as follows: Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Criminal Codes of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, District Brčko and Republika Srpska<sup>10</sup>. It is of special importance to mention the Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where this definition is “provided in wider sense, because it includes any form of prevention and inequality in private and public sphere of life” (Study on Domestic Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina 76).

Domestic violence is recognized by the international documents as violation of human rights. The basic obligation of each country signatory of the CEDAW Convention is to “integrate norms that prohibit any form of discrimination in domestic legislation..., that represents minimum of requirements for each country signatory of the Convention” (Nikolić–Ristanović 80). However, for protection of victims of domestic violence, it is not enough only to prohibit discrimination of women. Namely, governments should

Adopt special legislative solutions that will regulate domestic violence as criminal act and/or to enable compensation of damage for victims. Some documents are recommending that states should adopt special laws against domestic violence that provide all-inclusive covering of the issue, also including those questions such are criminal provisions, right on compensation of damage, protection measures, rights from social insurance, and general prevention measures.

(Nikolić–Ristanović 81)

However, special laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina that are dealing with protection from domestic violence “do not regulate criminal responsibility, as requested by the international standards, but minor offence responsibility. Primary sanctions for abusers are monetary fine and protection measures” (Nikolić–Ristanović 93). This is opposing to the international standards, which request from the state “to adopt all-inclusive legislation that explicitly prohibits violence against women, provides criminal sanctions, civil-law legal means (remedies), measures of protection and restraining, as well services for support and assistance, including shelters” (Nikolić–Ristanović 83).

I believe it is necessary to harmonize Laws on Protection from Domestic Violence, as well as Criminal Codes of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska with the Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with respecting international standards, and explicitly regulate criminal responsibility of perpetrator of acts of domestic violence, because such severe form of violation of women’s human rights such is domestic violence must be recognized solely as the act of social danger. It must not, neither per international standards, nor per obligations taken over by Bosnia and Herzegovina and political recommendations of the Ministerial Committee of Council of Europe (which BiH is the member country) be treated as violation of a legal norm, which is the nature of minor offence. Any excuse of other type of action against perpetrators of violence committed in private sphere and their privileged status in relation to perpetrators of the same acts in public sphere, by my opinion, represents discrimination, and puts the state on the side of abuser.

9 Countries with which Nikolić–Ristanović are making comparison are”... Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, and Montenegro” (7).

10 “Who uses violence, imprudent or ruthless behavior to endanger tranquility, body integrity or psychological health of a member of his/her family, or family community, will be punished with monetary fine or imprisonment up to two years” (Article 208, Point 1 of the Criminal Code of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, No. 49, 25 June 2003)



# 11

Among the causes commonly used in Bosnia and Herzegovina to explain (and very often to implicitly justify) inadequate protection of victims of domestic violence, beside tradition, religion, and customs, which I will not specially examine here (as this is not allowed by the international standards), but which in their entirety certainly cause violence of men within family, it is often emphasized that workers in official institutions who are getting in contact with victims of violence by nature of their work (social workers, health professionals, police officers, prosecutors, judges), do not possess adequate knowledge and skills for work on cases of domestic violence. This cause is also mentioned in the research conducted by the European Women's Lobby among states members of the European Union which states that "officials (police officers, judges, etc.) are not aware of gender structures of power, they are poorly trained, and they simply lack knowledge about domestic violence" (*Reality Check* 23). The next cause that can be recognized in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but according to the European Women's Lobby also among countries members of European Union is "lack of possibilities for removing the abusers from their homes where they committed violence, and finding solutions in removing victims, although laws say it should be the opposite" (*Reality Check* 23). Laws for Protection from Domestic Violence in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska introduced protection measures that are enforced against abusers in minor offence procedure, as follows: removal from the apartment, house, or some other type of living space; prohibition of access to a victim of violence; securing protection of a victim of violence; prohibition of harassment or spying of a victim of violence, but "in majority of cases women and children are those who need to leave a house or apartment, and not the abusers" (Nikolić-Ristanović 104). There is no official data of how many protection measures are sentenced to the abusers, with exception of unofficial information<sup>11</sup> that since the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska entered into force (1 January 2006) three protection measures are sentenced in total – one in Prijedor, one in Doboj, and one in East Sarajevo.

The reason for discrepancy between formal and real position of victims of domestic violence recognized in the countries of European Union is "lack of public awareness about domestic violence" (*Reality Check* 23), but also in the countries of Western Balkans, including Bosnia and Herzegovina where "neither one campaign of zero tolerance was organized ever" (Nikolić-Ristanović 111) by the governments. "Governments often support or take active participation in campaigns organized and initiated by nongovernmental organizations" (Nikolić-Ristanović 111), and "there are only modest efforts taken by governments aimed for securing usage of educational plans and programs for prevention of domestic violence, and securing respect of media for women and promotion of respect for women" (Nikolić-Ristanović 111).

"Victims are hesitant to report domestic violence" in the whole region, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also the countries of European Union (*Reality Check* 23). Here we have the situation where reality does not follow the laws, "lack of knowledge and information, durable criminal procedures that discourages, fear from abuser (related to lack of efficient protection measures), fear from public exposure of private matters, fear from condemnation by a family, children, environment" (Nikolić-Ristanović 97) are some of the reasons, but mostly because "victims do not have enough trust that their rights will be protected, and that perpetrator will be brought to justice" (Nikolić-Ristanović 97). This distrust of victims in legal system is confirmed through court verdicts that reflect light sentences for perpetrators, mostly paroled sentences, even for several times repeated act of domestic violence, which is

11 Data received from judges of Minor Offence Departments on the round table held in Banja Luka, on 23 February 2007.





contrary to international standards of protection of women from domestic violence, which recommend strengthening criminal sanctions. On the contrary, the intention is to soften criminal sanctions, and as it looks now, also further marginalize domestic violence, which is visible from current course of action on drafting Changes and Amendments of Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska. Proposal of changes directs to conclusion that all acts of domestic violence, including also sexual harassment, violence against children, meaning upbringing of children with using physical force, would be considered as misdemeanor and would be punished with monetary fines!

Implementation of Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Ministerial Committee of Council of Europe about protection of women from violence suggests that "women countries should classify all forms of violence as criminal act, to revise, and/or increase sentences" (22), as well as to introduce, develop and/or to improve national policy of fighting against violence that would be based on following principles:

- a) Maximal security and protection of victims;
- b) Strengthening women victims through optimal support and assistance of structures that avoid secondary victimization;
- c) Adjusting criminal law and civil law, including judicial procedure;
- d) Increasing public awareness and education of children and youth people;
- e) Ensuring special training for women and men professionals that are facing with the issue of violence against women;
- f) Prevention in all relevant fields.

(13)

These actions would certainly have positive effect on decreasing a gap between real and legal position of victims of violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Diminishing causes that are keeping different legal and real position of women victims of violence is certainly the first step that Bosnia and Herzegovina should take in order to secure protection for women victims of domestic violence, and show it stopped being collaborator to the perpetrators of violence. This is possible only through more active role of the state that would adopt the National Action Plan in accordance with the international standards, and therefore secure preconditions for improving real position of women victims of violence. My opinion is that laws are needed, but they are not enough. Beside existence of laws, we need willingness for implementation of laws in the practice, and well developed National Action Plan of monitoring, which should be a task for organizations that are working on protection of women's human rights, and have long term experience in advocating for women's human rights. This is also needed because cooperation of the state with nongovernmental organizations represents international human rights standard.

Banja Luka, 16 July 2007.

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## SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION

All provisions that are regulating domestic violence as minor offence should be removed from the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of Republika Srpska – this is one of the key conclusions from the public discussion held on 16 June 2007 in Banja Luka on the topic “Who is Protected by the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence?”

The public discussion was organized in the eve of public hearings about changes and amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska. Objective of the public discussion was to make contribution in developing amendments that will make the Law applicable in the practice, and submit them to the boards of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska.

In the introductory presentation, Natalija Petrić, Legal Advisor of United Women Banja Luka, emphasized that life without violence for all is **legally** guaranteed, but real situation is completely different.

She believes that with current legislative solutions the state sends clear message to a perpetrator that he would not be punished for violence committed against a woman.

“Acts of violence do not have equal weight. The fact that he was violent against his wife and not some other person is taken as extenuating circumstance for a perpetrator. Any justification for other type of treatment of perpetrators of violence committed in private sphere,



and their privileged position in relation to perpetrators of the same acts in the public sphere represents discrimination, and puts the state on side of perpetrator”, said Natalija Petrić. She emphasized there are only unofficial data that only three protection measures were sentenced based on the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence within year and half since this Law was adopted.

Natalija Petrić reminded the participants on numerous international declarations and conventions ratified by Bosnia and Herzegovina, but not implemented in the practice.

She said that “Governments in BiH never conducted the campaign of zero tolerance for violence, and they did not organize educations for police officers, centers for social work and health professionals that are working with victims of domestic violence, although they were obliged to conduct these activities”.

“I believe that violence against women represents the most severe form of violation of human rights. As such, it should be sanctioned as criminal act”, emphasized Natalija Petrić, and added that penalties for abusers should be increased and maximum safety and protection of victims of violence should be ensured.

According to her, the priority should be diminishing causes that are perpetuating difference between legal and real position of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the state should be more actively involved in securing protection of victims of violence.

In discussion that followed, women and men participants of the public discussion emphasized important role of nongovernmental organizations in fighting against domestic violence, need to strengthen media promotion of domestic and international standards that are regulating this issue, need for starting with awareness raising and education about prevention of violence from early age.

Furthermore, the participants of the public discussion agreed to send the proposal for amendments to the parliamentary boards, and request erasing all provisions that regulate domestic violence as minor offense from the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in RS. The amendments should also request following changes: financing of the safe houses for victims of violence should be provided in 90% from the entity public budget, and 10% from public budgets of local communities, placement of victims of violence in the safe house should be done by police and/or authorized worker of the center for social work, or guardianship institution, and maximum stay of a victim of violence in the safe house can be extended for additional three months in exceptional situations, namely until the end of judicial procedure and implementation of a court decision about protection measure against perpetrator of violence.

Summary prepared by  
Dragana Dardić

17 July 2007, Banja Luka

For: Media

*People's Assembly of Republika Srpska*

*Legislative Board*

*Board for Equal Possibilities*

*Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska*

*Gender Center of Government of Republika Srpska*

Respected,

Republika Srpska is in the process of adopting Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. This Law is of great interest for all women and men citizens of Republika Srpska, and especially women and children victims of domestic violence that are the most frequent victims of domestic violence. We are supporting adoption of Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska, but not with the provision that recognizes domestic violence as minor offense. We believe that domestic violence, as the most severe form of violation of women's human rights, should be sanctioned as criminal act.

On the public discussion held on 16 July 2007 with title "Who is Protected by the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence", organized by United Women and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, women and men participants adopted following conclusions:

5. We propose to erase those articles from the draft Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of RS that are recognizing and incriminating domestic violence in minor offense procedure.
6. We propose to secure financing of safe houses for temporary shelter for victims of domestic violence in 90% from entity public budget, and 10% from the public budgets of municipalities/cities.
7. We propose that police and/or authorized worker of the center for social work, or guardianship institution conduct placement of victims of violence in the safe house.
8. We propose that maximum stay of a victim in the safe house in exceptional cases extends for additional three months, or else until completing judicial procedure, and implementation of a court decision about protection measure against a perpetrator of violence.

Based on these conclusions, we are submitting following

**Amendments on the Draft Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence**

**On the Article 2 of the Draft Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, as follows:**

Word “prosecutors’ office” to be erased.

Paragraph (3) following the words “After collected evidences, police...” to be erased:

“submits request for initiating minor offense procedure to authorized court against perpetrator of violence, and if there are reasonable ground for doubt that committed violence has characteristics of criminal act of violence in a family or family community”, and following the words “inform about that authorized prosecutor’s office without delay” to be added: “submit report about committed criminal act”.

**On the Article 4 of the Draft Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, as follows:**

Paragraph (2) following the words: “without fear and danger” to add the words “police and”.

Paragraph (3) following the words: “from the budgets” to add the words “of the entity”.

Paragraph (4) to add: “Exceptionally, duration of this measure can be extended for additional three months, or else until completing of judicial procedure and implementation of a court decision about protection measure against perpetrator of violence”.

**On the Article 5 of the Draft Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, as follows:**

To erase Paragraph (1) as follows: “In the Article 8, Paragraph (1), following the words: “protection measure”, to erase a dot, and add words: “and monetary fine”.

**On the Article 6 of the Draft Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, as follows:**

Paragraph (7) instead of the words: “humanitarian organizations” to insert words “socially useful work”.

**On the Article 9 of the Draft Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, as follows:**

Paragraph (5) following the words “at latest within the period of” to erase the word “six” and replace it with the word “three”.

**On the Article 10 of Draft Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, as follows:**

In the Article 20 Paragraphs (1) and (2) to be erased.

Nada Golubović, President  
Lidija Živanović, Executive Director

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DIJANA ĐURIĆ

## PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence represents psychosocial problem, both because of its origin and methodology for treatment. There are no specific biological or psychological characteristics such as intelligence and personality, which would predestinate some person to be a victim of violence. A person becomes victim or perpetrator during socialization. Existence of traditional relations where a man dominates while a woman and children are his property, and witnessing violence in his/her own family are representing pathway toward acceptance and usage of violence latter in a life. Even if these factors are not present, life with the abuser leads to feeling of inadequacy, guilt, lost of self-confidence and self-respect, posttraumatic stress syndrome and other symptoms that are leading to changes in functioning of personality. In order to overcome these feelings, a woman living in a family where she is experiencing frequent episodes of violence against her develops personal survival mechanism that includes following:

1. *Developing certain sympathy toward aggressor*, his protection or finding excuses for his behavior. For “outsider”, it is difficult to understand such behavior and reasons why she does not allow other people to “stick noses in her private life”.
2. *Developing extreme passivity*, with immediate responses on all demands of aggressor without objection. This includes also warning the children not to provoke aggression (“being quiet while father sleeps”), or inviting them to be obedient to him, because this will ensure their safety.
3. *Functioning like machine*, without independence in feelings, thinking, or action. A woman places herself in the center around which all demands and wishes of aggressor are satisfied.
4. *Abusing children*, as a form of personal weakness to confront aggressor, as he is often much stronger. Children are weaker than adults, and “it is possible to channel” over them all accumulated anger.

Beside this, women can also have different views about domestic violence, which can be recognized based on her choice of behavior:

1. *Negation of the Problem*  
Problem does not exist – therefore there is no need for solutions. Women that choose this approach often develop inadequate health behavior – excessive usage of medicines (namely sedatives), excessive drinking and smoking, developing eating disorders (eating too much or too little).
2. *Positive Adjustment of the Problem*  
Efforts to positively adjust size of the problem include expectation “for better situation tomorrow” because there is love, common life, children, etc.



### 3. *Self-accusation and Seeking for Justification*

Some women survivors of violence in their everyday life is ready "to justify" violence of a partner with statements, such as "Maybe I am provoking the trouble", "He has explosive temper", or "He is just a great guy when he does not drink".

### 4. *Self-control and Control of Others*

In adjustment on existing situation, a woman often supports the view that abuser "has been provoked", and she carefully chose actions and words in communication. This often relates also to children that "should not make daddy mad", etc.

### 5. *Active Solving of the Problem*

With adjustment to everyday situation at home, a woman identifies and has "hidden" solution that will help her in crisis situation. The most often hidden solution is the plan how and where to go if situation becomes dangerous, if she loses control over it, or previous behaviors do not bring results.

### 6. *Seeking for Social Support*

Some women are seeking for support in crisis situation. They are more oriented toward friends and relatives than toward the professional services, such as social or health protection.

Many women are diminishing violence they survived. They hold back their negative experiences and live from memories on "good times". They trust a man when he says he feels sorry and will change his behavior. It is very important for a woman to talk with someone about her situation, even in the cases when she values partners' behavior as violence. In society that is oriented toward making a woman partially responsible for violence she survived or she is still exposed to, women have much less choices to speak about it. They are afraid, and unfortunately they are often right, that nobody will take their words seriously, and they will be seen guilty for abuse they suffer from. Beside that, in large number of cases, abuser makes concrete threat to a victim if she tells someone what is happening to her. Because of that, a victim hesitates to seek for help, because she strongly believes these threats are serious ("I will kill you, I will kill children, I will kill myself..."). Almost daily articles about tragic incidents related to domestic violence in black chronicles are telling us these threats should be taken seriously.

One of the problems represents deep rooted belief that violence represents private matter, or woman's intimate problem, which she should solve on her own way. Many people that support this opinion often forget that not every woman has the courage and strength to do this alone. Self-respect is necessary for development and implementation of constructive forms of solving the issue of domestic violence. The most often, self-respect is what a victim is missing, and she needs help and support of others in order to get it back and strengthen it. She does not need additional questions and prejudices. Beside that, researches show that women insufficiently make links between domestic violence and their own health and right to it. Additional problem represents woman's role as a mother, because children are the most frequent victims in the whole process. Also, we should consider woman's role outside of her family – their working and social role, which gets the problem out of home.

However, a woman makes her own decision how to act in her everyday life with partner abuser. The right and responsibility are based on individual level, but wider and closer environment make influence on woman's decision and/or bear consequences of any choice she make.



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### Comparison of the Women Victims and Men Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE	CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE
1. Have low self-esteem, and related underestimation of personal skills to do anything.	1. Have low self-esteem.
2. Believe in all myths about violent relationships.	2. Believe in all myths about violent relationships.
3. Have traditional attitudes toward division of gender roles in a family. They are convinced that a man is head of family, and they cannot take care about themselves alone and are dependant on a man.	3. Have traditional views about male superiority and stereotypical view on role of man in a family.
4. Believe they can prevent anger of abuser, and they accept responsibility for their actions.	4. Are blaming others for their own behavior.
5. Expressing serious stressful reactions, and psychosomatic disorders.	5. Have serious stressful reactions, and alcohol and violence abuse are frequent mechanisms for coping with stress.
6. Are using sex as mechanisms for establishing closeness.	6. Often use sex as act of violence.
7. Believe nobody can help them to solve their unpleasant situation.	7. Believe they should not have any negative consequences for their violent behavior toward a woman.
8. They stand suffering and frustration for a long time, and are passively accept behavior of abuser, with channeling anger toward themselves.	8. Have weak control of impulses, low tolerance on frustration, explosive and unpredictable temper, easily get furious, constantly express their rage, but also successfully cover it, when needed.
9. Show endless patience in expectation of "magic combination" for solving marital problems and marital violence.	9. Have weak ability to delay pleasures, and are strongly oriented toward "present time".
10. Gradually increase social isolation, including lost of contacts with their family and friends.	10. Describe their contact with a partner as the closest they ever had, but stay in contact with their family.
11. Have no success in convincing partner they are loyal, and are helpless in confrontation with accusations that they are "flirting" with other people.	11. Are extremely jealous and controlling over partner, often accusing her for infidelity and large fear from rejection or "cheating."
12. Are gradually losing the feeling of personal limits, are not capable to assess threat, and are accepting guilt.	12. Are violating personal limits of a partner, and reject responsibility for marital, family, or business failures, or personal violent behavior.
13. Believe their temporary acceptance of violence from a partner will bring long term solution of family problems, leading themselves with thoughts "If only this or that could happen....!"	13. Believe their threatening behavior keeps family together, and that they do it for the sake of a family.





14. Are accepting guilt for violence from a partner, believe their partner “could not help himself”, think their behavior was provocative, and they blame themselves.	14. Do not have feeling of culpability or guilt—conscience on the emotional level, even when they intellectually admit their violent behavior.
15. Have history of domestic violence, either as eyewitnesses of violence between parents, or they were directly exposed to violence during childhood.	15. Have history of domestic violence. Many of them as kids were watching their father beating their mother, or they were exposed to violence of parents.
16. Are participating in establishing of hierarchy of violence – determining which level of violence is acceptable for which “omissions”.	16. Are participating in establishing hierarchy of violence.
17. Are often thinking about suicide, have history of attempts of suicide, often wish their partner is dead, and are exposed to risk of making murder is self-defense.	17. Are establishing control over partner, threatening her with suicide when she attempts to leave them.
18. Are accepting children as pledge of relationship, and are feeling helpless to protect children.	18. Frequently use children as pledge and way of keeping control in relationship.

Banja Luka, 6 December 2007.

## SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION

As a part of 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women, United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka organized the public discussion about psychological characteristics of victims of domestic violence. Dijana Đurić, Clinical Psychologist, talked about psychological mechanisms developed by a victim, such as negation of the problem, self-accusation for a situation she faced, and hesitating to report violence. She said although the issue of domestic violence does not represent taboo topic any more, many people still believe that violence represents private matter and intimate problem of a woman that should be solved within a family.

Majority of questions and comments from women and men participants was related to mechanisms of protection for victims and prevention of domestic violence. One female participant that has direct contact with a victim of violence was interested to learn what she can do to encourage her friend to report the problem. “She is my good friend, but I can’t stand the pressure any more. Every our conversation ends up with talking about that problem. Every time I tell her that she must do something about it, to report the problem, and than our conversation stops, and she withdraws. I can’t break that wall, and our meetings are becoming so exhausting that unfortunately I am beginning to avoid her.” She asked for advice how to assist in this situation.

Dijana Đurić responded this represents the common behavior of a victim that wants to share her problem with someone, and on some way seeks for help, but she is still not ready to report violence. “I understand how difficult this must be for you. However, tell her that you feel very bad for what is happening to her and you want to help her, but the only solution for her is to report violence. Say to her openly that your conversations are leading nowhere and you feel very bad after talking with her. Tell her you can not sleep and



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each meeting with her is more and more difficult for you. The only way for this to stop is that she takes the initiative, explained Dijana Đurić.

Other women and men participants focused on sheltering victims of violence in the safe houses, and especially financial aspects of their sustainability. They concluded that safe houses for victims of domestic violence represent efficient mechanism for protection of a victim in the moments of acute violence, as well as the safe place for her rehabilitation and coming out from the role of a victim. Beside that, with objective of economic empowerment, there are continuous efforts for assisting victims of violence during their stay in the safe house through finding employment. Until today, this was successful in one case, when Motel "Dragana" provided a job for one victim of violence. Other activities include reviving their talents and skills, e.g. making decorations and other handicrafts that can be sold at the market.

However, financial means for the safe houses are still not secured. Currently, accommodation of victims of domestic violence in the safe house is covered by Center for Social Work only in Banja Luka, while the safe houses in other local communities are still financed through foreign donations. Because of that, women and men participants proposed that Changes and Amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence should include precise obligation for financing of the safe houses, meaning that 70% of the financial means should be provided through entity public budget, while 30% of the financial means should be covered through public budgets of cities/municipalities. This would release burden from local budgets and ensure better quality of financing of the safe houses also in local communities with less financial resources. It was recommended that at least five safe houses should be opened in Republika Srpska and fully financed from the budgets of entity and local authorities, in the regions with existing public prosecutor's offices, as follows: Trebinje, East Sarajevo, Bijeljina, Modriča (Doboj Region) and Banja Luka.

Women and men participants had the opportunity to learn about work of mobile team that intervenes in the cases of domestic violence that are reported in the city area of Banja Luka. Members of the mobile team are women and men representatives of Center for Social Work Banja Luka, United Women Banja Luka and police. After receiving a call from the police, the mobile team goes at the field, and depending on the concrete situation, intervenes on appropriate way – from conversation and counseling to offering accommodation for victims in the safe house.

Summary prepared by  
Aleksandar Živanović

Ministry of Health and Social Care of Republika Srpska (to Mr. Ljubo Lepir, Deputy Minister)

Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska

People's Assembly of Republika Srpska (to Ms. Nada Tešanović, Vice President)

Board for Equal Possibilities of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska (to Ms. Ivka Ristić, President)

Gender Center of Republika Srpska

Media


On Wednesday, 5 December 2007, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka and United Women Banja Luka organized the public discussion with title **PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**. Participants of the public discussion were thirty (30) women and men representatives of public institutions, political parties, nongovernmental organizations, schools, and media.

Introductory presentation of clinical psychologist Dijana Dura aimed to provide overview of psychological mechanisms developed by victims of domestic violence, such as ignoring the problem, self accusation for situation she faced, and hesitation to report that domestic violence happened. Women and men participants of the public discussion concluded that Law on Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska is not consistently implemented in the practice, and there is lack of coordination in work of the official institution that should provide protection for women victims. Women and men citizens defined following

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Safe houses for women victims of violence are efficient mechanisms for protection of victims of violence in moments of acute violence, but also the place for their rehabilitation and getting out from role of a victim. Recommendation of the Council of Europe is that **one place in the safe house should be ensured per each 7500 to 10000 inhabitants**. Having in mind difficult economic situation and financial possibilities of Republika Srpska, it is not realistic to expect this Recommendation will be fully supported through the public budgets. However, we are calling the official institutions of Republika Srpska to ensure:
  - That changes and amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska incorporate precise and clear obligation of financing the safe houses in Republika Srpska from the public budgets, on the way to ensure 70% of costs from the entity public budget, and 30% of costs from the public budgets of local municipalities. These financial means must be harmonized with needs, and sufficient for fully functioning of the safe houses.
  - That Republika Srpska enable opening at least five safe houses that will be funded through the public budgets on entity and local levels, in the regions where public prosecutor's offices are established –Trebinje, East Sarajevo, Bijeljina, Modriča (for Dobož Region), and Banja Luka.



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2. Victims of domestic violence should be recognized by the Law on Social Protection of Republika Srpska as social category, and safe houses should be recognized as institutions of social protection, which will ensure adequate assistance and support.
  3. Interventions of “mobile team” in the area of Banja Luka are recognized as examples of good practice, as they ensure cooperation of police, Center for Social Work and nongovernmental organization United Women Banja Luka. Together they conduct field interventions, and have possibilities to provide urgent accommodation of a victim in the safe house.

The public discussion is organized with support of Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation from Sweden.

Nada Golubović  
President  
United Women Banja Luka

Lidija Živanović  
Executive Director  
Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka

## SUMMARY OF THE PUBLIC DISCUSSION "WOMEN IN POLITICS"

### NADA TEŠANOVIĆ, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

Women in political life are experiencing multiply discrimination. In political party, a woman is facing extreme difficulties to fight for her position, participation in its internal bodies and lists of candidates for elections. After that, a woman is discriminated during elections, where she can not accomplish results without personal campaign, as she is in the shadow of male political leaders during public discussions and media presentations. At the end, because of prejudices of the public, also other women, only small percentage of voting body actually votes for her. Beside that, only economically independent woman can be active in political life, as she does not have to worry for the basic existential needs of a family and children, and has support of her closest ones. Majority of families are still ruled by traditional division of jobs and responsibilities between men and women. These are only some of the messages from Nada Tešanović, Vice President of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska based on her long term political experience, which she shared on the public discussion "Women in Public and Political Life."

However, it is not impossible to fight these challenges, and this is visible from the results accomplished during previous decade – from two (2) female representatives in the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska in 1996, to nineteen (19) women in this legislative body today. Out of forty-one (41) representatives of the Party of Independent Social Democrats in the People's Assembly of RS thirteen (13) representatives are women. Out of thirty-one (31) delegates in the City Assembly Banja Luka, nine (9) delegates are women.

Nada Tešanović started her political career in small political party – Social Liberal Party. In 1998, she was leader of the list of candidates for the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska. "We knew we did not have a chance, it was useless to organize public discussions and run the campaign. Posters with my face were placed on walls throughout the whole Gospodska Street<sup>12</sup>, and I could not see myself. I was just turning my back and running away," described Nada Tešanović her first pre-election campaign. After president of this political party withdrew, the party was weakening, and majority of member liberals decided for the party to merge with the Party of Independent Social Democrats. "Majority of us shifted to SNSD, because we believed it represents normal orientation, the closest to what we did so far. We drowned into large political party", said Nada Tešanović.

In 2000, she was a candidate on the election list for City Assembly Banja Luka. "It was difficult to manage the situation, but I was looking where the women are, and cooperated with them, because it is easier with women. There were no personal campaigns conducted by the female candidates and results were weak," remembers Nada Tešanović, and adds that she entered the City Assembly Banja Luka because one of her party' colleagues had confi-

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12 Translator's note: Gospodska Street is the main walking zone in Banja Luka.



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ct of interests, left the delegate' seat and went to better position.

"During general elections in 2002 and the election years that followed, I realized importance of the personal campaign. Regardless of what the political party was doing, I additionally organized street campaigns and door to door campaigns. That period was the best also because women began to understand they should support other women their party' colleagues on the list," says Nada Tešanović.

She emphasized that educational programs and support of nongovernmental organizations were extremely important for her political success, because with them she passed many trainings, and learned a lot about the topics that are not usually in the narrow focus of governments or parliamentary representatives, such as domestic violence, gender equality, human rights, etc. As positive example when all nineteen women from the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska agreed, Nada Tešanović pointed at their consensus and support for the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence to be improved, and to ensure stable financing of the safe houses for victims of violence.

In discussion that followed the introductory presentation, Memnuna Zvizdić, Director of NGO "Women to Women" from Sarajevo, welcomed this example, but also added she is disappointed to see that many female politicians who passed education provided by NGOs did not continue to respond on needs of women and men citizens. Some of them even said "they are now responsible only to their president."

Nevanka Trifković, former representative in the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska from Party of Democratic Progress said she is not active in politics for several months, but she feels good as nongovernmental sector did not turn back to her, and she still feels as part of it. According to her, elected female politicians should stay in close contact with nongovernmental organizations, and women and men citizens.

In order to improve position of women in public and political life, women participants of the public discussion concluded that future priority should be advocacy for changes and amendments of the Election Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its harmonization with the Gender Equality Law in BiH. This should be done primarily in the part that regulates composition of the lists of candidates, on the way that political parties should ensure equal number of women and men candidates alternately distributed on the list. Since equal representation of the list of candidates does not guarantee the election of greater number of women, it is necessary also to ensure that compensational mandates in the assemblies are distributed to persons of less represented sex from political party that won a seat. Laws that regulate election and appointment in the executive governance also are not harmonized with the Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Desanka Rađević, former representative in the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska of the Serbian Democratic Party said her colleagues from the political party are marginalizing her lately. "On the parliamentary elections in 1996, I felt for the first time that I am on the way to someone. Everybody was alarmed for me not to be elected", she explained. In 1998, she won the seat in the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska for the first time. "When the lists were developing, I was called urgently to come to Banski Dvor<sup>13</sup> in Banja Luka, and accept to be on the list of candidates, as SDS did not have enough female members when they needed to respect the election rules. If my political party was asked, I would never be the parliamentary representative. However, another rule was in force during that period – gender equality should be respected if political parties won larger number of seats, therefore representative would not be a male candidate from position no. 4 on the list, but a female candidate from position no. 6, and that was me," Desanka Rađević.

13 Translator's note: Besides hosting the Cultural Center of Banja Luka, Banski Dvor is also hosts the Office of the President of Republika Srpska.

General problem for a woman in politics is that men do not look into the essence of gender equality, but they see personal danger in it, namely that “one woman more” automatically means “one man less”.

Summary prepared by  
Aleksandar Živanović

Banja Luka, 17 December 2007

**Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Commission for Gender Equality of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Commission for Gender Equality of the Parliament of Federation of BiH**

**Board for Equal Possibilities of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska (to Ms. Ivka Ristić, President)**

**People's Assembly of Republika Srpska (to Ms. Nada Tešanović, Vice President)**

**Gender Center of Government of Republika Srpska**

**Gender Center of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Media**

On Friday, 14 December 2007, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka and United Women Banja Luka organized the public discussion with title GENDER EQUALITY IN POLITICAL LIFE. Participants of the public discussion were thirty (30) women and men representatives of public institutions, political parties, nongovernmental organizations, and media.

Nada Tešanović, Vice President of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska provided the introductory presentation about challenges and obstacles women are facing on the way to lists of candidates and election in the governance institutions. Women and men citizens defined following

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. During the election process, female candidates are facing with multiply forms of discrimination in relation to male candidates: 1) they are discriminated by their own political parties – during creation of election' lists, and selection of candidates that will participate in public discussions and media presentations, 2) because of existence of gender stereotypes in the public toward women involved in politics, 3) according to some female politicians and nongovernmental organizations, there were examples during previous election campaigns when male colleagues from the list of candidates were using “door to door” campaign” to lobby against their female colleagues.
2. There is a need for urgent change of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, making it gender sensitive, and harmonize it with the Gender Equality Law

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of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee of United Nations.

3. Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina should regulate that each list of candidates includes equal number of male and female candidates alternately distributed on the list.
4. Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina should regulate that the same rule applies for compensation lists, and that methodology of selecting candidates for compensational mandates should be also harmonized with the Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina – compensational mandates should be filled with persons of less represented sex in an institution for which the elections are organized, and from the list of candidates of the political party that won the mandate.

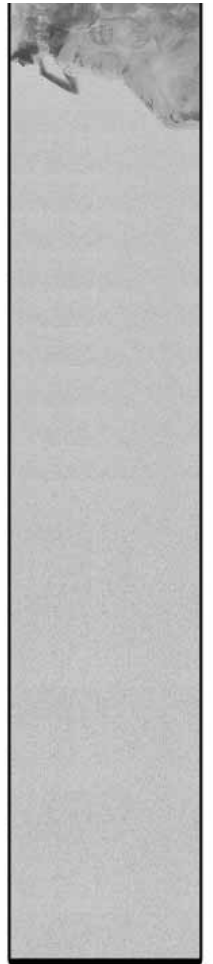
The public discussion was organized with support of Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation from Sweden.

Nada Golubović  
President  
United Women Banja Luka

Lidija Živanović  
Executive Director  
Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka

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# RESEARCH ABOUT GENDER STEREOTYPES

## —OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES—

In the period from March to July 2007, United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, with expert and advisory support of Gender Center of Government of Republika Srpska, within the project “Woman Today” implemented the research under title “Gender Roles and Stereotypes”. The key objective for implementation of this research was knowledge and information about small participation of women in public and political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a part of the research, we surveyed 680 women and men delegates of municipal assemblies, members of municipal commissions for gender equality, and other public servants employed in municipal/city administrations in Banja Luka, Bihać, Bijeljina, Mostar, Prijedor, Trebinje, Tomislavgrad, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Višegrad.

With this research, we wanted to determine how much are people that are working and making decisions in bodies of local governance aware of influence of gender stereotypes on discriminatory relations in a society, and issues of gender based discrimination, and how much are they familiar with legislative that regulate this area.

Local partner organizations – Citizen’s Association “Sanus” Prijedor, Citizen’s Association “Most” Višegrad, Citizen’s Association “Lara” Bijeljina, Citizen’s Association “Women’s Center” Trebinje, Citizen’s Association “Women to Women” Sarajevo, Citizen’s Association “Women BiH” Mostar, Citizen’s Association “Duvanjske” Tomislavgrad, Citizen’s Association “Women from Una” Bihać and “Human Rights Office” Tuzla – conducted surveys in their local communities. Prior to that, in February 2007, we organized preparatory workshops in order to introduce women members of partner organizations with methodology and objectives of the research.

Chapter 4 of the brochure that we published presents the results of research and messages we received:

*“The research included segment of gender roles in household and public sphere, as well as existing legislation and mechanisms for protection of gender equality. As direct participants in interviewing employees of the municipal administrations, as well as collecting and processing gathered information, we must mention that women and men that participated in surveys were providing socially desirable answers about perception of male and female roles in household and society.*

*The largest percentage of surveyed women and men believe that tasks in household should be performed equally by man and woman. Reasons that supported these answers are mostly related to reaching equality in private sphere, equal contribution and obligations, as well as the life need. Certain number of surveyed women and men stated that woman needs assistance in house is she is employed, but not the whole time, as well as that one person cannot manage to do everything, and we guess that this relates mostly to a woman. Equal participation of women and men reflect in performing household tasks, certain entertainment, farming work and decision making in relation to a family. Category of upbringing of children is something that majority of surveyed people recognize as responsibility of women, while men are recognized to be responsible for doing physical tasks and activities. The collected information is reflecting existence of stereotypes in our society, with a dominant role of woman as mother and role of man as reflection of power and strength. Through observing gender roles in society, we can conclude that perception of male pro-*



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professions matches among women and men, as their views do not show significant variations. As the most typical male professions, surveyed people recognize logger, doctor, miner, politician and mechanic. Criteria used for this selection are professions that require physical strength, or professions that enable various decision making situations. Female professions that are frequently recognized are doctor, hairdresser, nurse, woman cook, lawyer and educator. Here also we did not identify variations in perception of male and female professions among surveyed women and men. Based on these findings, we can not claim that this is result of lack of deep rooted stereotypes and prejudices, but namely situation in which women accepted to be seen as they are projected in prejudice.

Largest percentage of surveyed women and men agreed there is discrimination against women in our society as the consequence of high influence of patriarchy and tradition. Certain number of surveyed women and men said their opinion is based on personal experiences, and they believe it is more difficult for women to find employment, and women would be paid less than men for the same job.

The research showed that surveyed women and men believe we need greater participation of women in politics, justifying it with personal characteristics of women, as they are recognized as more tolerant, smarter, like to prove themselves, more moderate and calm, and are reaching agreement more easily.

Through processing and analysis of collected data, we find out that both women and men are not really aware of discriminatory influence of stereotypes on gender equality. The results show there are no significant differences between sexes in perception of male-female roles. With considering components of employment, affiliation to a political party, and marital status, we also could not identify significant variations between opinion of surveyed women and men, except in some individual answers. Existence of stereotypes is the most visible in free answers of surveyed women and men, which are not significant in statistical processing and analysis, although we could not ignore these opinions.

When planning the survey and research, we believed that women and men employees of municipal/city administrations will be adequately informed about obligations of official institutions, laws, mechanisms and areas these regulations are related to. Research results show low level of knowledge and information about all of this, and we can only conclude there is a need for additional education about human rights and freedoms in order for increasing attention and focus on equal participation of women in all segments of public and political life."

Amela Bašić, *Gender Roles and Stereotypes*,  
Banja Luka: Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, 2007

After consolidating and analysis of survey results and publishing the brochure "Gender Roles and Stereotypes", we organized the round table in Banja Luka, where we presented the final results of the research, and defined recommendations for future work of nongovernmental organizations and official institutions aimed for more adequate promotion of legislative regulations that protects and promotes gender equality in our society. Participants of the round table were representatives of Gender Centers of Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vice President of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, President of the Board for Equal Possibilities of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, representatives of Government of Republika Srpska, Center for Social work Banja Luka, women and men members of gender equality commissions from Prnjavor and Modriča and women representatives of partner organizations.

Banja Luka, 27 September 2007

For: Media

Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Gender Center of Government of Federation of BiH

Gender Center of Government of Republika Srpska

Women and men participants of the Round Table "Gender Roles and Stereo types"

After six months of work, United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka completed the field research on the topic of "Gender Roles and Stereotypes", with assistance of women's nongovernmental organizations from nine cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and expertise and advisory assistance of Gender Center of Government of Republika Srpska. Focus of the research was questionnaire among 680 women and men employees in the local governance institutions of ten cities and municipalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Trebinje, Prijedor, Višegrad, Bijeljina, Sarajevo, Bihać, Mostar, Tuzla, Tomislavgrad and Banja Luka). The research helped us to determine their views on gender roles of women and men in our society.

On 26 and 27 September 2007, in Hotel "Bosnia" in Banja Luka, we organized the round table with title "Gender Roles and Stereotypes" in order to mark the end of research and publishing its results. Participants were forty (40) women and men representatives of non-governmental organizations, political parties, public servants on local and higher levels of governance from eighteen cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Based on the research findings and organized discussion during the round table, women and men participants defined following

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Discrimination and stereotypes recognized during this research are beginning within family and spread into other segments of society;
- Textbooks in the whole Bosnia and Herzegovina should be revised to include gender equality perspective, but also other contents that would be acceptable for new age children;
- Political parties should give greater importance to women within internal decision making bodies at all levels, in accordance with Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Women's sections and forums and their policies should be incorporated in programs of political parties, with the main objective of wellbeing of women and men;
- We are calling women and men citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to use existence of gender equality institutions: The Agency on the state level, and Gender Centers on the entity levels, as well as commissions within legislative and executive governance on local, cantonal, entity, and state level, in seeking for realizing rights regulated by the Gender Equality Law;
- Law about Political Parties and Election Law are not harmonized with Gender Equality Law, and this process should be completed as soon as possible;
- According to Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, media have obligation to eliminate gender stereotypes in their programs. However, nowadays we can see that media are mostly supportive to gender based discrimination through stereotypical portrayal of women and men.

Lidija Živanović,  
Executive Director  
hCa Banja Luka

Nada Golubović  
President  
United Women Banja Luka



Beside the round table in Banja Luka we presented the results of the research, in period from October to December 2007, in cooperation with local partner organizations we organized nine local public discussions in Tuzla, Bihać, Prijedor, Tomislavgrad, Mostar, Višegrad, Sarajevo, Trebinje and Bijeljina, with participation of two hundred and ninety six (296) women and men representatives of official institutions and nongovernmental organizations.

#### Overview of Public Discussions and Round Table Where We Presented the Brochure “Gender Roles and Stereotypes”

Date	City	Expert	Association	Number of Participants
26 September 2007	Banja Luka Round Table	Amela Bašić Natalija Petrić	United Women Helsinki Citizens Assembly	40
30 September 2007	Banovići	Subhija Glinac	Human Rights Office	12
19 October 2007	Tuzla	Subhija Glinac	Human Rights Office	11
19 October 2007	Bihać	Rejhana Selimović	Women from Una	20
29 October 2007	Prijedor	Mirjana Maksimović	Sanus	20
31 October 2007	Tomislavgrad	Ajša Ramić	Duvanjske	35
13 November 2007	Mostar	Azra Hasanbegović	Woman BiH	52
13 November 2007	Višegrad	Alma Erak	Most	24
27 November 2007	Sarajevo	Amra Ajnadžić	Women to Women	31
30 November 2007	Trebinje	Miomira Krunic	Women's Center	30
23 December 2007	Bijeljina	Radmila Žigic	Lara	21

The following text presents interviews conducted by a journalist Dragana Dardić, with women representatives of local nongovernmental partner organizations that were involved in organization of the public discussions, as well as interviews with some of the women and men participants of the public discussions. Aim of these interviews was to get their opinions about effects of the public discussions and plans for the future – what can be and should be done in order to decrease existing gap between perceptions what are male and female tasks, responsibilities, and professions. We also wanted to find out if there is a difference in perception of gender roles between young people and adults, between urban and rural population, and opinion of interviewed women and men what is the main reason why majority of people still know very little about the basic legislation and mechanisms related to women's human rights.

## **INTERVIEWS WITH WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES OF PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **REJHANA SELIMOVIĆ, WOMEN FROM UNA BIHAĆ**

**1. How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

Male domination is still visible. When it comes to household responsibilities, it is pre-supposed that a woman washes, cooks, cleans, irons, cares about children...while men are taking care about cars and conduct some small repairs of household appliances. This situation is prevalent in 90% of families, and especially visible in small closed communities, such is for example Bužim. You can simply feel it – a man is head of household.

**2. Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

Yes, there are some effects. There was news story at TV after the public discussion, and when I meet people in the town they ask me what is happening, there were discussions and comments about activities. We also distributed 25 booklets with results of the research, and at least someone will open and read them. That was certainly something.

**3. Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?**

A new group of women should gather and we should present them about results of the research. We should continue to talk about it, and constantly repeat that a woman also can earn income, and women should get equal pay for equal job, simply to promote women's rights...

**4. So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

I did not experience this type of situation. I had a small baby when the war started, and I was with her during the whole time. Latter I started to work – I felt unpleasant to sit at home all the time – I organized myself to have enough time for my child and my job. She did not feel neglected because of my job. One of her teachers says she is healthy and happy child. I believe that says and means something...

**5. Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination?**

Oh yes, there is a difference. I will start with my mother and me. I have one brother and he was always priority, she was constantly talking about her son. I visited them recently, and saw my sister-in-law cleaning the snow in front of the house. My mother was making a pie, and sister was bringing woods in the house. I asked them what is my brother doing, and my mother started immediately to defend him. You can see the obvious difference – her perception is of 64 years old woman, and mine is quite



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different. I am more tolerant, and younger generations are even more emancipated. And this is how it should be, they should defend their positions.

6. **Great majority of surveyed people responded that household responsibilities are divided between women and men? Some people say these responses are socially desirable. Do you think that surveyed people were providing responses in line with that, or, perhaps, roles of women and men in our society are much more equal than some people might want to admit?**

I will start from situation in my household. My husband does not have an issue with preparing coffee and vacuum cleaning. But men are somehow feeling ashamed to talk about it. I do not see anything bad if they sometimes wash dishes, as if a woman does not do anything. She does not lie down and sleep. But they are very hesitant to admit that, probably they are afraid someone would say they are “henpecked”. And still they continue with doing some household work regardless of what they say in the public. That is normal thing to my generation.

7. **According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

People became self-oriented. They hear something at the main news, and they do not have money for buying newspapers every day. It would cost 30 BAM just to buy a newspaper every day, and one should buy groceries and pay bills. People simply became self-oriented, they believe that someone else is responsible to care about it, and that state has responsibility for it. Situation is difficult...

### **AMRA AJNADŽIĆ, CENTER FOR SOCIAL WORK SARAJEVO, WOMEN TO WOMEN**

1. **How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

The survey and public discussion showed that prejudices about male and female roles in all segments of a society really exist, not only among delegates in municipal assembly and municipal public officials, but also among children. Woman was always oppressed and she definitely stayed in that position.

2. **Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

I do not know what to respond on that question. It seems to me that all surveyed people were giving socially desirable answers. Effects can not be evaluated easily, especially not in terms of collective awareness about these issues. We can discuss some effects only on individual persons. Some changes in a way of thinking, changing of awareness about male and female roles and jobs maybe happened among some individuals that participated in survey and were challenged to think on a different way about these relationships, and among some children to which we presented the research results. Majority of them learned for the first time about terms of gender discrimination and gender stereotypes during our presentation. However, in general terms, in order to change public perception and awareness about gender based discrimination, official institutions and media should have more proactive role.

Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?

I really do not know. It would be the best to phone them and ask...



**4. So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

I did not have such experience. But it is well known what priority – personal life is. Professional career and private life can be harmonized. It is possible to go for career advancement, if a person has well organized and harmonized private life.

**5. In which segment of private and professional life you feel the most visible gender discrimination, if you perceive it as such?**

I do not have these issues personally.

**6. Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination?**

Children are growing up with attitudes learned from their parents, and they inherit a lot's of that from parents, which are adult and developed individuals. Contrary to adult persons, children are still learning and they are in period when they are developing their personality. Some of them learned about gender stereotypes and prejudices for the first time during our presentation. They received our booklets with research results...

**7. According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

You can not force anyone to read something if he or she does not want it. That is on individual basis. If someone is not interested in Gender Equality Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he or she will not take it into hands. For example, I have to know all details about the Law on Social Protection, since I work in that type of institution, but you do not need to know anything about it.

## **ALMA ERAK, ASSOCIATION MOST VIŠEGRAD**

**1. How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

Survey and public discussion showed what was already well known – marginalization of a woman in every aspect, from her working place to her home, and marginalization of a woman in society in general. Some informal discussions are showing more about that than the survey and public discussion. Many things are revealed when there is “eye to eye” conversation, apart from public meetings.

**2. Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

I have doubts about that. When we were conducting the survey, we could see that people were seeking for answers that would please us, as you would say, socially desirable answers. And then they circle some answers just to please us. I believe that 90% of surveyed people provided false answers. The public discussion was something different, it was more relaxed atmosphere. One female participant said to us that she was not noticing division of household jobs on male and female before. Now she realized that her mother was marginalized all time, first from her husband and then from her son. It is easier when you initiate discussion, because people then start to be aware of male and female roles and their division in a society.

**3. Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?**



We are planning to use these research reports. I believe that young people must be involved in follow up activities as much as possible, starting with final years of elementary schools and those youngsters from high schools, as well as women from rural areas. They should be specially targeted and influenced to understand their position and learn about their rights. Situation in urban areas is significantly different. Women that are living in cities have television and can watch various TV programs about women. It often happens that some of these women contact us and say: "We were watching those women your friends from Banja Luka" or "We saw Rada and Goca on TV". Women are starting to recognize them, and they are more informed than women living in rural areas, as some of villages do not have TV signal. Also, it is very important to continuously work with these women, not to leave them alone.

4. **So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

No, I did not face that kind of situation. I am trying to recall, but in my case everything somehow matched, both before and now.

5. **In which segment of private and professional life you feel the most visible gender discrimination, if you perceive it as such?**

Well, I do not feel any form of discrimination in my family as a woman. To tell you honestly, I am surprised how little I am discriminated. I was simply thinking how discrimination exists everywhere so it has to be in my case as well. On the other hand, I was eyewitness of following situation – a daughter was losing consciousness, but her mother was not paying attention on that, she was afraid only for her son, because he is a man. That happened three or four years ago, but I still think about that because it shocked, her fear for son, while she said her daughter will manage somehow.

6. **Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination? Is there different perception of this issue between people living in urban and rural areas?**

Of course it exists. Your people are struggling with social chains and stereotypes and seeking for their place in a society. They have their ways to reach harmony, and more equitable relations in a family. Nowadays it is not strange to see young men walking children at street and taking them to doctor, without any shame. It was not like that before.

7. **According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

Well I do not know...I think there is a lack of public discussion about cases of gender based discrimination. They are rarely publicly shown, except in cases of some powerful people such is Vlado Adamović. On the other hand, only few of these cases are prosecuted, and all of that is generally perceived as something irrelevant and of less importance.

## **MIRJANA MAKSIMOVIĆ, SANUS PRIJEDOR**

1. **How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

I can respond based on what we experienced after the survey and public discussion that topic was interesting for people as they do not avoid discussing it. What surprised



me and made me happy is that young people are very interested for these issues. They were even stopping me at the street and asking when we will organize more seminars about issues related to gender based discrimination and gender equality.

**2. Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

I believe they did, especially in relation to encouraging work of municipal commission for gender equality. We have this commission but it was practically inactive during the past period. President of the Municipal Assembly was delighted to hear that we will organize the public discussion, and proposed to organize it together, among other things also to encourage the work of this commission. I believe we succeeded to encourage the commission to make some concrete steps in its work.

**3. Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?**

We just started with implementation of the project on the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina related to sexual and reproductive life of youth people. I believe it will be great follow up of our activities in the area of gender roles and stereotypes. We will work on education of youth people about sexuality in general, as this topic is relatively unknown and not often discussed among this population.

**4. So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

Luckily I did not. I belong to category of women that learned about themselves long time ago, and learned to look on themselves with confidence. When you know yourself on that way, you can fight with stereotypes and prejudices, and everything else that a society enforces as some norm of behavior. I managed my path alone, and did not have any dilemma – work or private life. I could travel, and there was always someone around to help me. Once it happened that someone asked me if my children are ever ill.

**5. Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination? Is there different perception of this issue between people living in urban and rural areas?**

Adults are wiser and know what is expected from them, and behave and act accordingly. Contrary to that, young people are having some different plans that are more normal. What I noticed is that young men are starting to be more and more oriented toward children. In some previous times, mothers were taking children to vaccinations and doctors, and now fathers are doing that as well. They are now spending more time with children, they like to be with them, and that is very good.

**6. Great majority of surveyed people responded that household responsibilities are divided between women and men? Some people say these responses are socially desirable. Do you think that surveyed people were providing responses in line with that, or, perhaps, roles of women and men in our society are much more equal than some people might want to admit?**

There are two types of families – those living in urban areas and those living in rural areas – and they can not be compared at all. There is no woman in rural area that can show she is offended with something. Women in urban areas are working, they are educated, and there is different situation. Probably we also exaggerate when we say that women are so much discriminated. However, it is completely different situation in rural areas.





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**7. According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

Well, you see, responsibility of the municipal gender equality commission was to, if nothing else, prepare informational leaflets about laws and other acts related to gender equality. They could go to some high school and inform students about it. People know and talk about it very little. Only a few organizations are working on these issues. Citizens are left alone.

**AJŠA RAMIĆ, DUVANJKE, TOMISLAVGRAD**

**1. How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

I was with girls when they were surveying employees in the municipality. With listening what they were saying I concluded that everything is “milk and honey”, and when you ask them concretely for Gender Equality Law, they ask: “Is that exists?” Approximately 80% of employed men believe they should not deal with household jobs, with explanation “why I should work when my wife is at home all day.” There are also men that say everything is a matter of agreement between spouses.

**2. Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

Well...something changed – and then it did not. I could not see clearly. The situation will stay the same as it is today. Young people that have sisters, brothers, mother, see that mostly women are doing household work. This will not change in a future so easily. It would not make any harm to men if they make a lunch! However, it does not go so easily in the practice. It does not make any difference the fact that we have laws when people do not know how to apply them and were to search for assistance in concrete cases.

**3. Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?**

The results can be used. In 2008, we will organize seminars in relation to protection of women's human rights, and we will combine it with this research.

**4. So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

No, never, because when you really wish you can reach harmony between your private life and work. When I was working, until 1993, I was managing to do my household responsibilities and to work. I only wish to have the same opportunity now.

**5. In which segment of private and professional life you feel the most visible gender discrimination, if you perceive it as such?**

Personally I believe I was not discriminated. Although grandmothers used to tell me: “don't play with a boy, that's not for girls...” I know my rights, especially since I started to be active in nongovernmental organization that works on protection of women's human rights.”

**6. Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination?**

I also have two children, son and daughter. It happens to me as well. My son does not want to clean after himself anything. My daughter wants to clean after herself, but

not after her brother. She says he would not stay crippled if he does something. When they leave home, when they get married, their behavior will depend on the fact if they will live alone or in community with their mothers in law. Because, you know, which mother would like to see her son helping his wife in household? I remember how my brother used to say before he got married that he would not do anything in household, and no woman was born yet who would force him to work in house. However, when he got married things changed, he was helping his wife, and he was changing diapers to their child. Things are changing lately. Young people enjoy more equality during past few years. Young women are asking their husbands to work in house, and husbands are changing their behavior. I can see this boundary between male and female jobs slowly vanishing.

**7. According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

There are two reasons for that – one is lack of interest, and second inefficiency of legislative solutions. Because, you see that media recently published news that judge Vlado Adamović is released from indictment for sexual harassment. Who would then waste the time and look for protection of human rights, when you look funny at the end. We do not have anyone who would enforce some decision. If someone initiated the judicial procedure, did he or she succeed to accomplish something?

## **MIOMIRA KRUNIĆ, WOMEN'S CENTER TREBINJE**

**1. How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

I believe that surveys do not show real picture about situation at the field. People were filling in questionnaires more in accordance with what they were thinking that was expected from them, and not in accordance with their real opinions. Although I must notice that we had slightly better situation in Trebinje in relation to other municipalities and cities, because we have women directors at many key positions in municipality, we have a woman chief of finances, which is position that was reserved only for men in a previous period.

**2. Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

I believe we have good results, namely because we raised attention of the official institutions and media for this issue and fighting against discrimination of women in every aspect. Diverse groups of people that attended public discussion also show that some key institutional actors were ready to work on prevention and fighting against violence against women.

**3. Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?**

We believe that education and networking of all actors responsible for implementation of the laws related to women's human rights should continue, and our organization will continue to work in that direction. Survey data can be used on different ways, among other thing also for developing some workshops. We already have very good cooperation with schools and kindergartens, and signed memorandum of understanding with these institutions. We agreed that gender equality will be included as one of the topics

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for discussion on homeroom classes. We also reached agreement with kindergartens that each of them ensure free enrolment for two children from families with disturbed family relations and families affected with domestic violence.

Youth Forum asked us what they can get from materials, beside the booklet with results of the research about gender roles and stereotypes, so they can organize discussions and educations as a part of their regular activities.

4. **So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

I did not face that type of situation, and everything was developing naturally somehow...

5. **In which segment of private and professional life you feel the most visible gender discrimination, if you perceive it as such?**

You know, we are all living in accordance with some traditional believes and models of behavior. Foundations of our families can not be changed just like that. No matter how much I am aware of some things, it happens that I simply give in a bit, and go over certain things, because it should be like that.

6. **Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination?**

Of course there is a difference. Thanks to media, young people think in a different way. They also make differences between male and female jobs, but not in such narrow and evident form. I did not see such a way of thinking among adult people. They are trapped in traditional structure, and think it represents “God’s wish”.

7. **According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

Essentially we have laws which we force so much and not so many people know about them. I believe that people are lacking information. On the other hand, for us who work in nongovernmental sector on the issues of prevention of violence and discrimination, and constantly talk about laws, all of that looks well known to the wide public as well, but it is not like that in the practice. Ordinary women and men citizens are not familiar with legislative regulations.

## **SUBHIJA GLINAC, “HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE”, TUZLA**

1. **How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

We organized two different presentations in Tuzla – one for Roma women trainers that are working on promotion of women’s human rights and education, and one in Human Rights Office. I can tell you that gender roles are perceived on two different ways – women that are not educated are deeply rooted in their roles of housewives, mothers, and good daughter in law, and they do not notice discrimination at all. These women believe that a role of men in household is indisputable. On the other side, you also have women that stepped out or want to step out from their imposed roles. In any case, it is important to work with both groups of women in order to change their awareness about gender stereotypes.

One man with PhD. that attended presentation said women are not discriminated at all, and everything is their own choice. He does not understand what they want at all. You

would not expect from a person with this level of education to think like that, but it happens...

**2. Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

Certainly there are visible results. When we distributed brochures with results of the research, we received several calls from gender equality commissions, from women that are working in these bodies. They were asking for more copies of brochures and also asked us if it is possible to organize some presentation or seminar for them. We have only two copies of the brochures in our office, we distributed everything. This material was very useful.

**3. Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?**

We will continue to work on promotion of Gender Equality Law, because women, especially in gender equality commissions do not know what is gender, are not familiar with mechanisms, and do not know much about this Law. They were appointed to these commissions because they are members of political parties. We have to work on building capacities of gender commissions if we want these women to be active in gender mainstreaming, and if we want all of this to be reality, not just empty talking.

**4. So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

I personally changed a lot's of things in my life. All of this helped me to strengthen my self-confidence and change many things in my family. We as women that are working on promotion of women's human rights must start from us and show through personal examples what women's rights really mean in the practice. This is necessary in order not to have ten women on seminars where you are educating them about their rights leaving home in a hurry because they must give their husbands a lunch.

**5. In which segment of private and professional life you feel the most visible gender discrimination, if you perceive it as such?**

I felt it on my working place. I was a manager to men, and had the experience that various insinuations were said against me, not because I was a bad manager, but because I am a woman, therefore being weak and helpless...

**6. Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination?**

It depends from which environment young people are coming from. We are going back to a question what is happening in a family. You can clearly see what types of relations are ruling in a family through young people and their models of behavior. Their perceptions can be shaped, but this requires action. You can clearly see who comes from which environment – urban or rural. That can not be compared at all. Young people and women are forgotten in rural areas. You have different perceptions – from totally gender sensitive people to people with rigid patriarchal attitudes that are supporting traditional models of behavior and divisions in a society.

**7. According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

There is lack of action at places that should be leaders in this field – commissions have money to work on this, but they are not working properly. And, when you ask people which mechanisms for protection of human rights they know, they always mention nongovernmental organizations, because NGOs are working a lot on this issue.





## AZRA HASANBEGOVIĆ, “ŽENA BIH”, MOSTAR

1. **How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

Surveys and public discussion showed that small number of women is familiar with their rights, and which places and institutions are able to help them. There is a lot's of stereotypes, namely in relation to household tasks.

2. **Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

There are some effects, as these activities provoked some people to think why they need to do all household tasks, and why it should be like that. People began to realize that these kinds of things can be also changed.

3. **Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?**

We will use the results and continue to work on promotion of women's human rights in line with direction of actions in our organization. For a long period, our organization prepares tea get-together every 13th in the month, and we use it to talk with women about actual topics. We will continue to gather and inform women.

4. **So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

I do not know if I was ever forced to choose...to me, my job was always at the first place. Also before the war I was working on such position where I had to travel frequently. I was leaving my family, traveled and worked. There were discussions in a family, but I was persistent and did not want to give up. I believe I am one of the rare women who are realizing their rights on aggressive way. Contrary to some of my female friends, which say they have to prepare lunch or dinner to a husband first, and then we can go out together.

5. **Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination?**

I am not quite sure about that. By looking at young and “older” married couples, it seems to me that women in these “older marriages” have more help from their partners. However, I also noticed some progress when it comes to young couples. Nowadays, there are a lot's of men that are present when their wife is giving birth, and latter they take care about a baby. I like that very much, but I believe that, essentially, these young wives are carrying a burden of all those household tasks we are talking about.

6. **According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

The main reason is that people do not have trust in a legal state. Laws are dubious, and judges and prosecutors are corrupted. There is no trust in judiciary, which is perceived as some higher power. In our country, a person faces numerous difficulties to realize some of legally guaranteed rights. This relates not only to the Gender Equality Law, but any other law as well. There is a lot's of various documents and papers.

Unfortunately, everything ends with this paperwork. I will give you one example from Mostar – a man took a big loan from a bank in order to start a private business with his wife. However, he waited so long to finalize this formal paperwork and had to give up from everything and sell the object where he wanted to open the factory for processing and drying fruits.



**RADMILA ŽIGIĆ, “LARA”, BIJE LJINA**

**1. How your environment perceives gender roles of women and men? What are the results of surveys and public discussion?**

Regardless to education, jobs they do, and positions they take in governance structures and public services, both women and men see their and the opposite sex in traditional gender roles – a woman is, above all, mother and housewife, and a man is cornerstone of a family, the one who makes decisions. If you move this to a public sphere – women see themselves more often in positions of those who are performing various tasks, but they are not necessary those who make decisions. Although surveyed people were giving socially acceptable (desirable) answers, in their responses on the question – which professions are the most acceptable for a woman – both women and men practically showed their gender perceptions are stereotypical. For example, women recognized “lawyer” as profession attached mostly to women, but not also a judge or attorney.

Women participants of the public discussion were shocked with some of the survey results, namely perception of professions that are acceptable for women and men.

**2. Are there any effects of surveys and public discussions about this issue? If they exist, please provide us the explanation?**

Survey and public discussion practically confirmed assumption about existence of gender stereotypes also among more educated layers of population, especially among employees of public administration. On certain way, survey results provided us explanation why the changes of public policies in the field of gender equality are slowly developing. Lack of gender equality has been insufficiently recognized as the problem in structures that initiate and make decisions.

**3. Do you and your organization plan to organize follow up activities on this topic? How you can further use results of the survey and conclusions of the public discussion?**

Conclusions of the public discussion will be incorporated in our strategic objectives for further action. Beside that, findings of the survey are real indicators, which we need to use in our advocacy actions.

**4. So far, were you personally challenged by dilemma, or were you forced to choose between your private life and work? Did you have to choose?**

I did not, but I know persons that were forced to make this kind of choices.

**5. In which segment of private and professional life you feel the most visible gender discrimination, if you perceive it as such?**

I would have to work more than men in my environment in order to fight for my status in any job I was engaged so far.

**6. Your perception – is there any difference between perception of young people and adults of what represents the division of work and gender discrimination? Is there different perception of this issue between people living in urban and rural areas?**

Majority of young women I know are not ready for traditional division of tasks, and great number of young men, also, do not expect relations of gender roles their parents have in their own partnership with a woman. In pediatric ambulances, you would usually see young couples that bring children for check up, and not only mothers. Men significantly changed their relation toward parenting, and they are more actively involved in upbringing of children.



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You can often notice that young women express more stereotypical views about their role than men expect from them. Although it is difficult to speak in general terms, both women and men above 40 years of age are burdened with gender stereotypes, while population below 40 years of age shows decrease of these type of perceptions.

In rural households, traditional division of gender roles and tasks is almost absolutely ruling, and this did not change for many years. Women in rural areas are doing two or three jobs – in a house, in a garden, caring for livestock, and working at the field.

7. **Great majority of surveyed people responded that household responsibilities are divided between women and men? Some people say these responses are socially desirable. Do you think that surveyed people were providing responses in line with that, or, perhaps, roles of women and men in our society are much more equal than some people might want to admit?**

It is difficult for me to respond on this question without detailed research. I believe that answers in the survey on this question were mostly socially desirable, but they reflect perception of surveyed men and women, how do they perceive division of labor, and uncertainty what would be a fair division of responsibilities.

For example, a husband is ready to clean the house or prepare lunch on occasional basis. For such treatment, a wife would say “he is helping me” or even “we are sharing tasks, and when I am very tired he would do things in a house.”

Generally, divisions of tasks are more present and more frequently used by partners than it was 20 or 30 years ago, and boundaries are changing. However, public awareness about what kind of gender relations should exist in a household is still very low.

8. **According to you, what is the main reason why people know very little about laws that regulate and promote gender equality in our society?**

Our educational system is not oriented toward teaching young people how to manage within social structure, what their rights are, and how to realize them. Gender equality is not integrated in educational system at all. Public information system also neglects the area of citizens’ education about their rights, and official institutions completely neglect this type of professional development of employees. Beside that, gender equality policy is not even close to becoming part of official public policy.

### **CONVERSATIONS WITH SOME OF THE WOMEN AND MEN PARTICIPANTS OF THE PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Muamer, student of 3rd grade of a high school in Sarajevo**

People make differences between men and women, because our society is set up on that way. Physical jobs are considered to be male jobs, and some easier jobs are considered as female jobs. Should it be like that? Well, I do not know, it does not matter to me. Women are fighting to be equal to men, and that is OK. I live with my mother and two sisters, our father is not here. I also work in the house, just like them, but only when it does not bother me.

Related to the public discussion that was organized in our school – listen, why not to talk, we should talk about everything, about all issues. Conversation is sometimes the only way to solve problems.



### **Verica Šanjević, Trebinje**

That is determined by birth. When people are born, women are taught to keep female side, and men are taught to keep male side. However, this is not so alarming today. I believe that gender discrimination feels mostly within home, namely in relation to physical violence that women are exposed to. Related to physiological violence, I believe it can be seen also as women's guilt, because sometimes they are even more unscrupulous in doing this type of violence against men.

Thanks God, I was never in situation where I had to choose between private life and work. In relation to my personal and professional life, and your question if I was discriminated on gender basis, and on what way...this is to question myself. We were growing up and were educated in a way not to notice that. I should go back in past and recall various situations in a life...but, you know—our society fosters different rules for men and women. Nobody would criticize a drunken man — no harm, but if a woman gets drunk, people immediately say: "Look at her!"

**Public discussion in Trebinje** — I am really supportive for this type of activities, especially for raising awareness of women about these issues.

### **Biuković Dragica, Bihać**

There are different types of gender stereotypes. There are deep rooted believes what woman can and can not do. Yesterday in one school, a male colleague was commenting about election of a new school director. He said that woman can not be elected on this position as no woman was school director ever before. It is difficult to change what is in our heads.

Gender discrimination is especially visible and present among Roma people. Roma women are double discriminated — because they are women and because they are Roma. To them, it is difficult both in a family and the public.

In our municipality, there is no marriage among Roma people that was not arranged, and that bride was not sold. Recently, a father of one seventeen year's old Roma girl told me he will sell her because he needs to buy a car and laundry machine. There are all kinds of cases. Suitors, Roma men from Germany were coming here to see the bride. They gave up from marriage because they did not like bride's teeth.

But things are getting better. Roma children do not sit in the back in school and you can hear them saying: "Nobody would sell me".

In relation to my personal life, I believe that I feel some kind of discrimination or repulsion at some public places, when I am alone in a trolley, or when I am going back home alone at evenings. Or, if women want to go alone to some restaurant to celebrate something, they would be looked at differently than if there were men with them.

Everything is a matter of upbringing, those things we learn in our family. It is still perceived shameful for a man to do some household tasks, and children are learning this from their mothers. However, when our people come from Germany or Switzerland, they are not the same old Bosnian men with rigid attitudes. This is because they saw German men taking the garbage out and having a walk with their children. In our society, fathers are still rarely attending parental meetings in schools as this is not their concern.

We should continue to talk and organize public discussions, because many women do not understand these issues — latter they are commenting it, and than they tell what they hear to other women in their neighborhood, they tell to their female friends where they were and what they heard...and information simply spread out. It is simple — we should talk about it...






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## MEDIA PROMOTION

# 11



**D**uring 2007, we organized several media promotions, including TV and radio programs on public broadcasting service of Republika Srpska, and press conferences, with objective of informing wide public about position of women in BiH society, and activities aimed for improving their position.

We used media activities in order to again direct attention of the public on the issue of domestic violence, deep rooted stereotypes that prevent real equality of women and men, as well as non-participation of women in processes of vital importance for the state, such as negotiations for accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the European Union.

## PRESS CONFERENCES

### **Banja Luka, 7 March 2007**

On the occasion of 8 March – the International Women’s Day, we organized press conference where we again talked about historical importance of 8 March.

Additionally, we pointed at lack of implementation of Gender Equality Law and Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. Existing safe houses for women and children victims of domestic violence are facing with numerous problems. Financing of their work is not systematically solved, and regardless the work of United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, but also many other civil society organizations on these issues during the past ten years, problems are still visible.

### **Banja Luka, 4 September 2007**

At this press conference we promoted the publication “Why You Did Not Choose Better”, which we published on the occasion of tenth anniversary of SOS telephone line and legal counseling for women and children victims of domestic violence. The publication consists of testimonies of women victims of violence, beneficiaries of the legal counseling.

### **Banja Luka, 27 September 2007**

Promotion of the research “Gender Roles and Stereotypes”, which we implemented during 2007 with partnership assistance of nine women’s nongovernmental organizations in ten cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and advisory assistance of Gender Center of Republika Srpska. This was also the opportunity to inform women and men journalists about recommendations of the round table with title “Possibilities for Common Action.”

### **Banja Luka, 10 December 2007**

The press conference on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day was dedicated to the issues related to implementation of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, Gender Equality Law and sustainable financing of the safe houses. Women and men activists of our associations presented the information about work of the safe house in Banja Luka, interventions of mobile team, and statistics about calls on SOS telephone for victims of violence. They called official institutions to use current changes and amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in RS to define the obligation of financing the safe houses on the way that 70% of costs should be covered from the entity budget and 30% of costs from the budgets of municipalities/cities. Furthermore, victims of domestic



violence should be recognized as social category by the Law on Social Protection of Republika Srpska. Safe houses should be also recognized by this Law as the institutions of social protection, as this would ensure them adequate assistance and support.

## TV PROGRAMS

All TV programs were broadcasted at Radio Television of Republika Srpska as the public broadcasting service, and Svetlana Pezer Šukalo, a journalist of RTRS was facilitating discussions of guests.

First TV program with title “Role of a Woman in Development – Necessity and Obstacles” was broadcasted on 21 April 2007. The guests were Svetlana Cenić, an economist, and Minja Damjanović, Tatjana Majstorović and Miloš Blagojević, students of economy from Banja Luka.

Ms. Cenić commented the current position of women in political life worldwide, namely Finland as specific example of the country that recently elected its first government with majority of female ministers. She emphasized importance of protection of women’s human rights that is recognized by the Millennium Development Goals, and talked about current position of a woman in BiH society, discrimination of women at workplace and employment, and role of women in household. Svetlana Cenić especially emphasized her opinion that very tired woman stands behind each man.

Second TV program was broadcasted on 26 May 2007 at Radio Television of Republika Srpska, with objective of informing the public about problems of victims of domestic violence, laws in this area, and financing of the safe houses for women and children victims of violence. Guests of TV program were Mira Ćuk, Director of the Center for Social Work from Trebinje, Renata Ritan, a representative of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka, and Dragana Dardić, Project Coordinator in Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka. They emphasized that only multidisciplinary approach in solving these issues can give good results.

Third TV program with title “Public Hearing – Financing of the Safe Houses in Republika Srpska” was broadcasted on 30 June 2007, and guests were Nada Tešanović, Vice President of the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska, Radmila Žigić, President of Women’s Association “Lara” from Bijeljina, and Nada Golubović, Project Coordinator of “Woman Today”. They presented the course of discussions and conclusions of the public hearing that was organized on 18 June 2007 in the People’s Assembly of Republika Srpska. .

Fourth TV program was broadcasted on 27 October 2007, with objective of presenting the results of research “Gender Roles and Stereotypes” implemented by United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka. The research was implemented in ten cities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, in partnership with nine women’s nongovernmental organizations and support of Gender Center of Republika Srpska. During TV program, conclusions of the round table “Possibilities for Common Action” were presented. Participants of TV program were Azir Mrđanović, Representative of Gender Center of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Amela Bašić, Author of the Research, and Lidija Živanović, Project Coordinator of “Woman Today”.

Fifth TV program was broadcasted on 24 November 2007 with focus on the issue of violence against women and how to prevent it. This was the opportunity for us to announce activities planned for the Campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence.



Participants of TV program were Taida Horozović, Representative of Foundation “Cure” Sarajevo, Srđan Mazalica, Representative in the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, Dalila Bojić, Representative of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka, and Nada Golubović, Project Coordinator of “Woman Today”.

We ended the cycle on 22 December 2007 with broadcasting of TV program with title “Women in Politics”. Guests of TV program were Nada Tešanović, Vice President of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, Gordana Lihović, Delegate in the City Assembly Banja Luka, and Lidija Živanović, Project Coordinator of “Woman Today”. They talked about importance of cooperation between women politicians and women NGO activists, and what they can do together. As example of common advocacy action, they emphasized that, for the first time, entity budget of Republika Srpska for 2008 includes financial resources for the safe houses.

# 11



# 11



**Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (hCa) Banja Luka** is a nongovernmental organization registered on August 16th, 1996 in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since then, it has been actively involved in promotion, strengthening and networking of civil initiatives both locally and regionally in South Eastern Europe, working on reconciliation and empowerment of marginalized and disadvantaged groups. Nowadays hCa Banja Luka is an advocacy and support organization as well as a resource centre directing its actions into three main program areas: strengthening civil society and transformation of public institutions into a citizens' service, advocacy for gender equality, creating conditions for more intensive involvement of youth in public life.

**Our mission:** hCa Banja Luka is an organization that supports and stimulates autonomy and freedom of all citizens, involving depressed social groups in democratic processes, particularly women and youth.

**Our vision:** *Society of equal opportunities for all.*

**Priorities of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka in the nearest future:**

- Empowerment of marginalized groups, particularly women, youth and minorities for political engagement and improvement of their status in society,
- Influence on public authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina with purpose of improvement of public policies related to these groups,
- Increase of representation of women, youth and minorities in the media and improvement of reporting in qualitative terms,
- Raising of public awareness in Bosnia and Herzegovina on discrimination of marginalized groups and mechanisms for protection of their rights,
- Strengthening cooperation with other organizations and institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and internationally,
- Providing access to resources, educational programs, knowledge and skills related to peace-building, civil society development and human rights to all citizens' in BiH,
- Continuous education and training of personnel of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka and work towards organizational sustainability.



**The United Women Banja Luka** is nongovernmental organization founded on August 16 1996 in Banja Luka. Through the activities and projects of our association, we are advocating for improving social position of woman and her right to life without violence in family and public life. We want to see more women at decision-making positions in official institutions at all levels of governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Our vision is:** Woman aware of her power, equal, respected, employed, and happy. Our

**mission is:** Strengthening and affirmation of women through advocacy and work on implementation of women's human rights.

**Overall Strategic Priorities and Objectives of United Women Banja Luka:**

- Fighting against violence against women through offering free legal and psychosocial assistance for women and children victims of violence, work on introducing new official policies and institutional mechanisms of fighting violence against women;
- Strengthening awareness of women and men citizens about violence against women and gender based violence through media advocacy, and strengthening and increasing cooperation with other NGOs and official institutions working on these issues in B&H and the region;
- Strengthening awareness of women and men citizens about trafficking of people in B&H, and public advocacy for more efficient work of official institutions in B&H on prevention of trafficking of people;
- Empowering women to participate in social changes through public advocacy for their active and equal role in creation of public policies, and political decision making at all levels of B&H;
- Gender equality in media B&H – public advocacy for diminishing discrimination and abuse of women in electronic and printed media in B&H, and creating conditions for equal access of women and men on creation of media policies in B&H;
- Public advocacy for strengthening position of women in our society, and diminishing discrimination of women in political, economic, and social sphere through monitoring of the positive laws and public policies, and initiating procedures for changes of discriminatory laws and public policies at all levels in B&H;
- Support for sustainable return in Bosnia and Herzegovina through work with women and men in rural communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Strengthening cooperation with other civil society organizations and official institutions at all levels in B&H;
- Developing internal capacities of the Association through engaging new staff and volunteers and working on development of organizational sustainability through long-term financial, program and management planning.



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Projekat

**ŽENA DANAS 11**

**Izdavači**

Udružene žene Banja Luka

Helsinški parlament građana Banja Luka

**Za izdavača**

Lidija Živanović

**Prevod na engleski jezik**

Aleksandra Petrić

**Prelom i dizajn**

Maja Ilić

**Štampa**

“Grafid” Banja luka

**Za Grafid**

Branislav Ivanković





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