



annual report

2007

PREFACE

Through the pages that follow you can find the information on activities of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka in 2007. In the last year our activities focused on strengthening of civil society and improvement of position of socially marginalised groups, particularly women, youth and ethnic minorities. While we focused more on capacity building, education and promotion of rights in years before, in 2007 we broadened the focus on analysis of documents that regulate their rights, advocacy for changes and amendments to related laws and regulations and enforcement of the law.

We particularly paid attention to the implementation of the Gender Equality Law of BiH, Election Law of BiH in ensuring equality between sexes and political rights of ethnic minorities and laws on protection of rights of ethnic minorities in entity and state level. We participated in campaigning action led by "United Women" Banja Luka for improvement of The Law on Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence and financing of shelters from the budget of Republika Srpska.

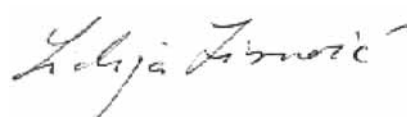
In my opinion, with pleasure I can express hope that this trend will continue and that it is supported by mutual cooperation, solidarity and partnership of NGOs advocating for aforementioned issues. The results of these actions are presented on pages that follow.

Besides advocacy activities for improvement and implementation of the law and public policies, the activities of promotion of human rights of socially marginalised groups, education of broader public, enforcing the peace and democracy values were implemented throughout the year.

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka continued its development and development of its education programmes, which it offers not only to its direct target groups, but also to broader public, institutions and organisations on a fee-for-service basis. This way we are trying to ensure further financing of our activities from domestic sources, but also to promote our ideas, values and knowledge beyond project scope. There was an increased interest for training in project proposal writing, public advocacy, public relations, strategic planning.

I wish to use this occasion to thank our long term partners, all organisations and institutions we cooperated with in this and previous years, our domestic and international donors, that will be mentioned in the chapters of this report.

Finally, my special thanks go to committed and hard-working personnel of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka, its members and Steering Board members.



Lidija Živanović
Executive Director

ABOUT US

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka (HCA) Banja Luka is actively involved in promotion, strengthening and networking of civil initiatives, locally and regionally, focusing on reconciliation and empowerment of marginalised groups for political engagement.

- **Our mission:** HCA is an organisation that supports and stimulates autonomy and freedom of all citizens through involvement of socially marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, in democratic processes.
- **Our vision:** Society of equal opportunities for all.

Priorities of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka:

- Empowerment of socially marginalised groups, particularly women, youth and minorities, for political action and improvement of their position in society,
- Influence on public institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina for improvement of laws and public policies towards socially marginalised groups,
- Increase of representation and improvement of portrayal of women, youth and minorities in the media,
- Raising public awareness of all citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina on discrimination of marginalised groups and mechanisms of protection of their rights,
- Strengthening of cooperation with other organisations and institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and internationally,
- Providing access to education programmes, literature, knowledge and skills related to peace-building, development of civil society, human rights to all citizens of BiH,
- Continuous education of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka staff and creating conditions for sustainability of the organisation.

HCA Banja Luka implemented the activities through three programme areas:

- Strengthening of Civil Society and Transformation of Public Authorities into Citizens' Service, particularly with regards to improvement of position of socially marginalised groups through: creating conditions for communication and mutual influence between civil society and public authorities; Planning and implementation of campaigns in partnership with marginalised and vulnerable groups; Creation of peace forum on local and regional level.
- Advocacy for Gender Equality through networking and support to gender equality related initiatives; empowerment of women which unfortunately are the largest marginalised group, particularly women in public and political life; education of women and men on gender equality; capacity building training for women; research and analysis of current policies; campaigns.
- Creating Conditions for More Intensive Involvement of Youth in Public Life through networking and support to youth related initiatives; empowerment of youth through trainings and skill development; campaigns; research and analyses.
- Educational Programmes - HCA Banja Luka gathers trainers, who for the purposes of HCA Banja Luka and other organisations lead trainings related to: capacity building of nongovernmental organisations (strategic planning, fundraising, campaigning, public relations....), non-violent communication, conflict resolution, human rights and gender equality.

This way Helsinki Citizens' Assembly promotes its goals and policy to other social groups, which are not directly covered by projects and also supports financial sustainability of the organisation.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATION HELSINKI CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY BANJA LUKA FOR THE YEAR 2007

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The year 2007 was marked with political crisis, burdened with interethnic intolerance that culminated in reform processes, such as constitutional and police reforms. Despite all turbulences, Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated The Stabilisation and Accession Agreement, while it is expected to be signed officially in 2008. This event is perceived as a potential opening for faster reform processes in the country.

Both local organisation and international community representatives reported on complete inefficiency of domestic public institutions. Nongovernmental organisation Centres of Civil Initiatives of BiH conducted a research and concluded that BiH authorities hardly implemented half of their annual plan. This organisation monitored the work of institutions for the whole year and concluded the plans were far from implemented, there was a lack of responsibility for bad results, public officials and delegates do not participate in sessions regularly, etc. The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina imposed The Laws and procedural codes for the Council of Ministers and Parliamentary Assembly of BiH with objective to improve efficiency of these institutions and reducing influence of ethnic factor in performance of these institutions, which provoked strong opposing reaction in Republika Srpska.

Due to obstacles in reforms, chair of the Council of Ministers of BiH resigned, addressing severe criticism to state institutions, however he soon withdrawn his resignation and returned back to position.

Ethnic division are evident in all segments of social life, from education where there are still fifty schools working as "two schools under one roof" where children are ethnically divided into two shifts, over status of returnees and slow solving of their basic existential problems, to legislative procedures and decision-making where ethnicity based voting and mechanisms of protection of vital ethnic interest are often used to block legislative process and return laws and documents for changes and amendments. BiH is also burdened with less visible and more subtle divisions, social exclusion and discrimination, for example, gender based discrimination, discrimination of people with disabilities, young and elderly people etc.

While political and ethnic disputes dominate the public sphere, population still suffers from poverty and unfavourable living conditions. Statistic Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina notes increase of prices in 2007 in comparison to previous two years, and particularly prices of telecommunication services, utilities, food and non-alcohol beverages as well as of health services. Decrease was only recorded in prices of clothing and shoes. Average salary in Republika Srpska in 2007 was less than 600 KM (about 300 EUR), and in Federation of BiH about 660 KM (330 EUR), although majority of citizens is paid far less than that. Furthermore there are drastic differences in salaries between more and less developed regions of the country. Official statistics in the entities noted that price of monthly consumers' basket which includes only costs of basic hygienic and food products for 4-members' family is close to average salary. However, trade unions and citizens' associations have warned that minimum costs of 4-member family, which include food, hygiene, but also utilities, transport, clothing are higher and reach 1000 to 1500 KM (500 to 750 EUR).

Economy of the country is still weak, although both local governments and international organisations record slight improvement in statistical development indicators. Due to all aforementioned, the institutions are often criticised by trade-unions, workers, pensioners, victims of war, domestic companies and farmers' associations etc.

programme area/
**STRENGTHENING OF
CIVIL SOCIETY AND
TRANSFORMATION
OF PUBLIC
AUTHORITIES INTO
CITIZENS' SERVICE**

Objectives of this programme area are building and strengthening of democracy, through informing and education of citizens on democratic principles and processes, their empowerment to start initiatives and participate or influence decision making on all levels of institutional power. This programme's intention is to provide them with necessary skills and knowledge and encourage their cooperation with public institutions.

During 2007, as a part of this programme area, we implemented two projects - "From Local to Global Dialogue" and "Dialogues". The projects were funded by The European Union.

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL DIALOGUE

Improvement of Cooperation between Municipal Authorities and Citizens

In the first three months of 2007, we completed the activities in frame of the project "From Local to Global Dialogue" in municipalities of Mrkonjić Grad and Modriča. The project was implemented in cooperation with municipal administrations and municipal assemblies and included public debates and presentations on performance of municipal institutions, publications - guides for citizens with useful information related to submission of requests to municipal bodies and burning issues in each municipality, as well as a manual for municipal officials related to cooperation with civil society, campaigning, public advocacy and public relations. Objectives of the activities were to advance communication between citizens and municipal administration and their encouragement to influence decision-making process in their municipalities. The project was financed by The Olof Palme International Centre, Sweden.

ACTIVITIES

In 2007 meetings were organised with representatives of municipal officials, local communities and non-governmental organisations in Modriča and Mrkonjić Grad. The topics of the meeting in Modriča were problems of population living in the area of inter-entity border, in vicinity of minefields. Upon citizens' requests, the mayor of municipality of Modriča initiated the meeting with the mayor of neighbouring municipality of Gračanica to start joint activities of de-mining of the area. Participants agreed to start practice of regular bimonthly meetings with the mayor and other relevant municipal officials with regards to burning issues in local communities. In Mrkonjić Grad the discussion focused on unemployment and emigration of youth from the municipality, as well as the need of construction of pavements in local community of Bjelajci, for which municipal administration announced financial aid. Through these meetings representatives of local communities applied skills and knowledge they received in trainings during 2006 and improve relations with municipal officials.

In these two municipalities public debates were held on burning topics, newsletters and citizens' guides were published with legal advices and information on procedures for issuing various municipal documents. In these municipalities we have noticed extremely low representation of women in positions of heads of local communities, while participants think their influence is weak in decision making in both families and local communities. The project succeeded to motivate women to participate in workshops and public debates, but mostly through local associations. Out of total number of direct beneficiaries in the project activities only 30% were women.

RESULTS

- Introduced practice of regular informing the public on news in performance of municipal institutions, which municipalities will intend to finance even upon completion of the project (in particular, public debates and newsletters). Both citizens and municipal officials share positive reactions on this result.
- Through educational activities in 2006 and practical meetings and lobbying in specific projects in 2007 citizens had the opportunity to develop negotiation and advocacy skills and continue the practice upon completion of the project (de-mining, road construction, etc).
- According the information collected upon completion of the project municipal authorities recorded increased activity and interest from the local communities involved in the project.
- There were 50 citizens participants in the activities in 2007, while in total project duration it involved 464 persons.
- Municipal administration of Čelinac submitted the request to Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka to approve using of the methodology of the project in its activities and support preparation of the newsletter, which was implemented in the project period.

DIALOGUE

Monitoring of the Implementation of the Laws on Protection of Ethnic Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka is a partner organisation to the Human Rights Office Tuzla which implements this project. The project consists of monitoring of implementation of the laws on protection of ethnic minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Framework Convention on Ethnic Minorities' Rights and Council of Europe recommendations as well as of advocacy actions for implementation of the law in which obstacles are determined. One of the fields of advocacy is influence on the process of adopting the Law on Protection of Rights of Ethnic Minorities in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and harmonisation of existing laws in Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina with European standards. The project is funded by European Union.

ACTIVITIES

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka monitored status of human rights of ethnic minorities in the region of Banja Luka and submitted quarterly reports to the project applicant. Collecting of data was performed through interviews with stakeholders (public institutions on local and entity level, associations of ethnic minorities, other organisations of civil society), media monitoring and analysis of the laws and other regulations relating to these issues.

In 2007 Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka prepared four quarterly reports to Human Rights Office Tuzla and participated in presentation before public institutions of BiH, nongovernmental and international organisations held in June.

General conclusion of the monitoring is that the associations of ethnic minorities in Republika Srpska are satisfied with the legal framework in this entity and that most of them share opinion ethnic minorities do not suffer discrimination and that the laws and Framework Convention are applied. When political rights are concerned, Council of Ethnic Minorities has been established by the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, and there are initiatives by municipal councils to change their statutes and ensure participation of ethnic minorities. However, a major problem is still a position of Roma and lack of strategic policy towards this population. Priorities are employment and housing. The best improvement in minorities' rights is in the field of media, where regular programmes have been introduced and dedicated to human rights issues, culture and customs of ethnic minorities. The programme could still be improved in terms of continuous coverage of burning issues of ethnic minorities and initiate their solution, as well as increase of share of programmes dedicated to human rights in comparison to that related to minorities' culture. On a general level of Bosnia and Herzegovina it is still necessary to continue advocacy for passing the Law on Protection of Ethnic Minorities in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some, mostly larger municipalities have developed policies for funding of associations of ethnic minorities, while some minor municipalities are still not informed on the law obligations. In the whole area of Bosnia and Herzegovina education of minorities remains an open issue in terms of classes of language, culture and history, but also in terms of integration of minorities and elimination of stereotypes and prejudices against other nations.

RESULTS

- Strongly influenced public opinion on position of ethnic minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- Provided continuous monitoring in problems ethnic minorities face with, which created a basis for further advocacy actions,
- Provided participation of ethnic minorities in creation of reports on their position and influence on public institutions in passing the laws and policies,
- Ensured influence of nongovernmental organisations and associations of minorities through creation of the Law on Protection of Ethnic Minorities on the level of Federation of BiH.

PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS ON CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS MONUMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

During 2007 Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka organised two public debates on topic "Destruction of religious, cultural and historical monuments", supported by German Foundation "Friedrich Ebert". The objectives of these public debates were to determine the level of tolerance among students from Banja Luka and Sarajevo and how they discuss about this issue. The first debate was organised in October in Banja Luka and the second in November in Sarajevo. Participants from both towns agreed that it is necessary to work on education of new generations about different cultures and their familiarising with cultures of all peoples living in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to develop tolerance and support preservation of cultural heritage. There were also proposals to introduce classes on respecting differences of culture and preservation of heritage in official school and university curricula and focus history classes only on historical facts. Participants also concluded such communi-



Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Assisted in Training on Project Proposal Writing for Roma Associations

Banja Luka, 10.03.2007 - "European Dialogue" London, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Tuzla and Association of Roma "Veseli Brijeg" Banja Luka organised in the period from 7 to 9 May, 2007 a workshop with title "Increase of influence of local projects with objective of improvement of status of Roma in Banja Luka region.

Participants concluded Roma face most problems in fields of education, housing, employment and health care. Workshop was facilitated by Dragoljub Acković, member of World Roma Parliament and director of Roma TV station "Voice of Roma" and Aleksandar Živanović, trainer of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka. Participants developed several project frameworks related to aforementioned problems, that they would propose to donors for funding in the coming period. The Associations were also informed on international conventions and domestic legislation that regulate rights of national minorities in BiH and basic goals of Roma Decade, to which Bosnia and Herzegovina hasn't approached yet.

cation between young people between two entities needs further support and that it can facilitate joint advocacy for preservation of heritage of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

COALLITION ADVOCACY FOR EUROINTEGRATIONS OF BIH

Purpose of the Project "Coalition Advocacy for the Process of European Integration of BiH" is to support faster European integration processes in our country. Main implementer of the project is Association for Interdisciplinary Studies from Sarajevo, while Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka is a partner organisation. The project is financed by Centre of Civil Initiatives. During the first three months the implementers conducted a research on main challenges BiH face on the way to European Union, and public opinion survey about awareness on European integrations among general public.



PLAN FOR 2008

Within the programme area "Strengthening of Civil Society and Transformation of Public Authorities into Citizens' Service", Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka in cooperation with partner organisations will focus on continuing the monitoring of implementation of domestic laws and Framework Convention on Protection of Rights of Ethnic Minorities, lobbying for adoption of The Law on the level of Federation of BiH and improvement of public policies and implementation of existing laws in BiH.

Special attention will be paid to political rights of ethnic minorities, since for the first time new regulations of the Election Law of BiH will be applied according to which municipalities that harmonised their statutes with the Law and introduced a place for delegate of ethnic minorities will have special voting ballots with candidate lists of ethnic minorities as well. We will monitor position of ethnic minorities during the election campaign, possibilities and rights of ethnic minorities' candidates by parties and those candidates of associations of minorities or independent candidates, possibility to present themselves in the media, as well as election results.

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka intends to continue cooperation and promote human rights of socially excluded groups in municipalities in which it implemented the project "From Local to Global Dialogue" and involve municipal officials in all the other activities planned for the next year. These issues will be in focus in the continuation of the project "Coalition Advocacy for European Integration of BiH", that will include presentation of research results on main challenges BiH face in this process and public opinion survey on perception and familiarity with European integration processes. Our organisation will present the results to institutions of Republic of Srpska, as a part of advocacy activities to support European integrations, and signing the Stabilisation and Accession Agreement, as well as to the general public through street campaigns and distribution of promotion materials and promotion in local media.

Project Peace Activism "CROSSROADS"

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka started implementation of The Project Peace Activism "Crossroads" in December 2007. The project will focus on evaluation of peace building actions of civil society organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and influence positive shift of public opinion about nongovernmental organisations. This will contribute to reconciliation, acceptance of diversity and renewal of peace values in post war society. We believe civil society organisations engaged in peace activism are on crossroads, since the results they developed through more than a decade can be ruined by daily politics and several months of election campaign. This project will be a contribution to new approach to peace-building, but will also continue to preserve all achieved until now. In its first phase two researches will be conducted: public opinion survey on peace organisations and evaluation of peace activism and projects in nongovernmental sector through interviews and two conferences. Findings, conclusions and recommendations will be published in a booklet on peace activism in BiH that will be promoted in 10 towns of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the second phase of the project. In December 2007 preparation of the project activities took place and principles of partner cooperation with "Women to Women" Sarajevo are agreed. The project is funded by European Union.

programme area/
**ADVOCACY FOR
GENDER
EQUALITY**

General objective of this programme area is elimination of all forms of gender based discrimination and creation of environment in which women and men have same opportunities. We implement this programme through networking and support to initiatives advocating for gender equality, empowerment of women who are currently the largest socially marginalised group, for participation in public and political life, education of women and men in gender related issues, building capacities of women in various skills, such as campaigning, research, public advocacy etc. Activities of this programme area focus on improvement of women's status in public and political life and advocacy for implementation of The Gender Equality Law of BiH. In 2007 we implemented the following projects "Woman Today", "Support to Gender Sensitive Development and Peace Policies in Western Balkans", "Gender Equality Law and Court Practice". Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka continues to support partnership to United Women Banja Luka in the project "Woman and Law".

WOMAN TODAY

Advocacy for Gender Sensitive Public Policies

2007 was the 11th year of implementation of The Project "Woman Today", realised in partnership of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka and "United Women" Banja Luka. Objectives were to collect data on prevalence and influence of gender based stereotypes present among public officials in municipal institutions; to define recommendations and advocacy for improvement of public policies, as well as promotion of gender equality in public and political life. The project has been funded by Swedish Foundation "Kvinna till Kvinna".

ACTIVITIES:

In implementation of The Project "Woman Today" the advisory board consisted of women activists from NGOs, political parties and women public officials has a special role. They assist project coordinators in defining priorities for advocacy campaigns and in realization of objectives within their own institutions and organizations. The advisory board held five sessions and determined priorities for 2007 as follows: monitoring of political events and their influence on women's status, combating domestic violence and improvement of visibility of this problem in general public, analysis of influence of gender based stereotypes of public officials on policies they create. Particularly important was the participation of Vice President of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska Mrs. Nada Tešanović in this board, who supported improvement of legal framework and financing policies for shelters for women and children victims of domestic violence.

In the first phase of the project a research has been conducted on prevalence of gender based stereotypes among municipal decision-makers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Survey was implemented in ten cities/municipalities in BiH (five in each entity) on a sample of 680 employees of municipal administrations and delegates in municipal councils. Although majority of majority of interviewees gave socially acceptable responses, the research showed presence of gender-based stereotypes, particularly in private life, lack of knowledge on legal regulations and public policies related to gender equality. The results of the research are presented in a round table and ten public debates in various towns of BiH, with total participation of 250 people.



During the year five public debates were organized on various topics related to our missions. Topic of the first session was role of women in development processes, where participants concluded women are insufficiently involved in development processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that nongovernmental organizations should request from the Government of RS to involve women in planning of development programmes that will be funded by selling strategic companies in this entity. The next was public hearing about funding of shelters for victims of domestic violence, organized in cooperation with Gender Centre of Republika Srpska and Board of Equal Opportunities of The People's Assembly of Republic of Srpska. In this session appeal was drafted and sent to relevant institutions to provide regular funding of shelters for women and children victims of domestic violence.

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka and "United Women" requested 70% of costs of shelters to be covered by the entity budget, while 30% would be covered by municipal authorities, and asked the Government to assist opening three more shelters, apart from existing ones in Banja Luka and Modriča. The Board of Equal Opportunities supported the initiative for defining systematic solutions for funding and suggested the ministries and Gender Centre to start drafting the action plan for combating domestic violence, which would incorporate this issue as well. These requests, as well as the request that the law must not treat any form of domestic violence as a misdemeanour, were repeated in the next public debate entitled "Who is protected by the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence?". The current law, but also the practice, sends a message to perpetrators of violence that they will not be punished, since violence in private sphere is treated differently from the one that happens in public sphere, and that there had been only three protective measures for victims taken since the Law was passed. At this

Advocacy for implementation of the Law on Gender Equality in the Election Process

In 2007, United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka continued to advocate for better implementation of the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina in public and political life. In January 2007, we expressed strong protest related to violation of the Article 15 of the Law in process of nomination and appointment of only male ministers in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In February 2008, we sent an open letter to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina in relation to violation of the Law in the process of appointing of the Council of Ministers of BiH composed solely by male ministers. On 20 February 2008, after these activities did not provoke any reaction, our two associations submitted requests for examining violations of the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, in the following cases: 1. Issuing approvals for appointing Deputy President of the Council of Ministers of BiH, ministers and deputy ministers in the Council of Ministers of BiH, by the Central Election Commission of BiH; 2. Confirming appointment of the Deputy President of the Council of Ministers of BiH, ministers and deputy ministers in the Council of Ministers by the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH.

We requested from the Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina to initiate judicial procedure against the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH and the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the front of the court with real and place jurisdiction in Bosnia and Herzegovina, because of violation of the Article 15 of the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Agency for Gender Equality of BiH did not examine violation of the Law, but only informed us that "it does not have an active legitimating and legal basis to initiate judicial procedure" in both cases. Although we were disappointed with such response, we realised deficiencies in mandate or judgment about the mandate of the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, and decided to initiate the judicial procedure in relation to this issue. In March 2007, our two associations submitted the joint petition to the Administrative Unit of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, against the decision of the Central Election Commission of BiH.

The petition states following:

"Petitioners believe that when adopting the Decision about issuing approval for candidates for ministers and deputy ministers (which concludes there are no legal obstacles for taking over the duty), the Central Election

public discussion, amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in RS were developed, and sent to the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, authorised ministries and Gender Centre of RS Government.

Topic of the following public discussion focused on psychological characteristics of victims of violence. This public discussion was organised as a part of the Campaign "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence". Key conclusion was that although violence ceases to be taboo topic, the public still perceives violence as a private issue, which should be resolved within a family. Women and men participants had the opportunity to hear the conclusions of the previous public discussions, and develop public request to the authorities to allocate financial resources for the safe houses for women and children victims of violence in Republika Srpska. Until the end of 2007, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka and United Women Banja Luka continued to keep intensive communication with official institutions of Republika Srpska, in order to ensure that changes and amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska that were planned for the beginning of 2008 are adjusted to the mentioned requests.

Topic of the public discussion held in December 2008 was related to the women's participation in political life. Women and men participants developed and sent recommendations to the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, institutional mechanisms for gender equality and media. Recommendations included request for initiating changes and amendments of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to ensure alternate distribution of male and female candidates, and to ensure that compensational mandates are given to the persons of less represented sex.

Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not apply the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Article 7 of the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Annex 1 of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina). We believe it is not necessary to especially prove that violation of the Law and the Convention happened, having in mind that Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina is composed on one sex, exclusively men We believe that Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina was obliged to remove this deficiency, and refuse verification of the candidates, as the Commission knew and was warned by Petitioners on the violation of the law."

And we are asking from the Administrative Unit of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina to make following judgment: "The Decision about issuing approval for candidates for ministers and deputy ministers in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted on 7th Session of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 31 January 2007 is to be annulled, and Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina is obliged to repeat the procedure of verification of candidates for ministers and deputy ministers in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with respecting the Article 15 of the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Article 7 of the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of Women."

Since submitting the petition, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina asked us to provide decision of the Central Election Commission of BiH, and to pay court taxes, which we did. A year after initiating the procedure, we do not have any information about its course.

In December 2007, our two associations sent the Recommendations for harmonisation of the Election Law of BiH with Law on Gender Equality of BiH and CEDAW to the Central Election Commission of BiH, legislative bodies, and institutional mechanisms for gender equality. We requested change of the law in order to incorporate provisions that each list of candidates must be composed of equal number of male and female candidates alternately distributed, and to apply the same rules for compensational lists. The way of distributing compensational mandates should be harmonized with the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, and these mandates should be distributed to persons of less represented sex from a list of political party that won the mandate.

During 2007, we organized six television programmes on the Radio Television of Republika Srpska. Participants in these programmes were women introductory speakers and women participants of the public discussions, and they presented key conclusions and recommendations. In addition, we organized four press conferences to present the activities related to lobbying for changes of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska, work of the Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka, and discrimination of women in the election process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the end of the year, we prepared and printed the brochure "Woman Today", in which we presented an overview of the activities in 2007, introductory presentations on the public discussions, and results of the evaluations of the project.

RESULTS:

- Collected data on presence of gender stereotypes in institutions of local self-governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The data show that employed public servants and delegates have gender based prejudices and stereotypes that could influence public policies, and show lack of knowledge about gender equality legislation.
- Publications with results were distributed to public administrations throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- Improved level of knowledge and information in the public and official institutions about issues related to domestic violence and proposals for changes and amendments of the related legislation,
- Improved cooperation with women politicians from the area of Banja Luka region, and initiated common public advocacy actions,
- In December 2007, People's Assembly of Republika Srpska supported the initiative for including costs for financing of the safe houses in Republika Srpska in the public budget on the entity level for 2008, in the amount of 300.000 BAM.
- Approximately 300 women and men public servants and 160 women and men citizens were informed about gender based discrimination in public and political life, and issues related to domestic violence. Wide public was informed about these issues through media.
- Through evaluation interviews with women and men participants at the end of the project, we determined that, in majority of local communities, public discussions about gender stereotypes provoked positive reactions of the public. We also received feedback that education of public official and representatives of the municipal commissions for gender equality should be continued, and development of action plans for gender sensitive policies at the local level should be supported.



GENDER EQUALITY IN BIH AND JUDICIAL PRACTICE

Study on Implementation of the Law on Gender Equality

Goal of the project "Gender Equality and Judicial Practice" was to create preconditions and contribute to implementation of the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was adopted in 2003. Since this period, it was visible in the practice that small number of judicial processes related to protection of rights regulated by this Law has been initiated in front of the courts in BiH. With this project, we wanted to identify cases in which victims of gender based discrimination searched for judicial or institutional protection, and obstacles they were experiencing during the process. The project focused on research about practical implementation of the Law on Gender Equality, developing recommendations for improving content of the Law or its implementation and promotional and advocacy activities in order to improve practice, and improve knowledge about the Law within professional legal circles, and among women and men students of law. The project was financially supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

ACTIVITIES

As a part of project activities, we implemented three-months field research that focused on collecting data from courts, prosecutors' offices, pedagogic institutes, ministries of education, Gender Centres of RS and FBiH Governments, Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, Regulatory Agency for Communications of BiH, Press Council of BiH, trade unions, and nongovernmental organizations that are offering legal assistance for women and men citizens. Second part of the field research focused on analysing content of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, and its commentary.

Research team that cooperated with us in this part of the project "Gender Equality and Judicial Practice" was composed of following persons: Vildana Helić, a Judge of the Cantonal Court in Tuzla, Selma Šaćirović, Judge of the Basic Court in Bijeljina, Hajrija Hadžimerović Muftić, Prosecutor of the FBiH Prosecutors' Office, Zilka Spahić Šiljak, Coordinator of the Postgraduate Religious Studies in the Center for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies (CIPS) at University of Sarajevo, Natalija Petrić, Legal Advisor in nongovernmental organization "United Women" Banja Luka, and Aleksandar Živanović and Dragana Dardić, activists of the nongovernmental organization "Helsinki Citizen's Assembly" Banja Luka.

Research and analysis of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH showed that some provisions of the Law are unclear and imprecise. Furthermore, many provisions of the Law do not impose any sanctions, and therefore it was impossible to offer comprehensible model that could be used in the judicial practice. Additional confusion was caused by existence of the two different verdicts for the same act - sexual harassment (punishable per the Article 27, and in relation to the Article 4 of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH) - one condemning verdict and one verdict that released an offender from responsibility for the committed act. The research team proposed also the concrete changes and amendments of the Law that were submitted to the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH (as the official institution authorised to initiate changes and amendments of the Law).

Results of the research were presented in the Study "Gender Equality and Judicial Practice", which was printed in 1000 copies on the local language, and 300 copies in the summary version on English language. The Study was distributed on various addresses of the official institutions and nongovernmental organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad, and posted on the web page of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka.

In the period that followed, presentations of the Study' findings were organised. We also conducted consultations with judges and prosecutors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in relation to the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality and recommendations of the Study. Media and other nongovernmental organisations showed great interest for this project and findings of the Study, and additionally promoted conclusions of our research. The key purpose of the research was to establish regular judicial practice in which victims of discrimination would enjoy adequate judicial protection.

RESULTS

- Collected data about judicial practice in relation to the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which clearly reflect that this Law is not implemented in the practice, contains ambiguities, and regulates some acts as misdemeanours without any sanctions,
- Published Study "Gender Equality and Judicial Practice" in 1000 copies on the local language and 300 copies on English language, and distributed to the legislative and executive governance institutions at the state and entity level in BiH, to judges, prosecutors, local and international nongovernmental organisations,
- Determined ambiguities and lack of sanctions for some misdemeanours in the existing Law on Gender Equality, and determined suggestions for changes and amendments of the Law,
- More than 100 judges, prosecutors, women and men activists of nongovernmental organisations informed about results of the Study.



GENDER SENSITIVE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN THE WESTERN BALKAN

Regional Exchange of Knowledge and Experiences of Women Activists of Nongovernmental Organisations

Objective of this three-year project is to support improving and adoption of the gender sensitive peace and development policies in the area of Western Balkan, through regional exchange of experiences, knowledge and examples of good practices. First year of the project implementation focused on identifying basic characteristics of the situation in the region, and based on that, initiating several activities that will be implemented during the second and third year of the project implementation. The project is financially supported by IKV Pax Christi from the Netherlands.

ACTIVITIES

In June 2007, we organised three-day conference with title "Women's Activism - Experiences and Examples of Good Practices in the Post-conflict Period", with participation of 35 women activists from the region. Participants analysed activities of the women's NGOs in the past, and concluded that women were first to cross state, ethnic, and entity borders after the war, and had truthful intentions to establish communication and trust. When it comes to the general climate in which activities were organised, participants concluded that political scene does not contribute to the reconciliation in the region. Participants said there is also no consensus on the citizen's scene about path to reconciliation, and some organisations are abandoning ideas and values of the peace movement, and are trying to trivialise guilt. Women can make contribution to the reconciliation, but only when they get power and when they become majority at decision making positions. When it comes to women's human rights, they are continuously degraded, despite rapid multiplication of the institutions for gender equality and developing legislative frameworks for gender equality. Awakening traditionalism and clericalism in a society are present, and they are accompanied with strict division of gender roles. Women participants at the Conference defined following priorities for future actions: fighting against violence against women, strengthening role of women in decision making, and economic empowerment and employment of women.

In November and December 2008, we organised regional and local workshop for planning of gender sensitive policies and gender sensitive budgeting, facilitated by female trainers from Serbia, the Netherlands, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Women participants acquired knowledge and experiences in gender analysis of public policies, gender sensitive budgeting on the local and state levels, analysis of media content, advocacy for gender sensitive media and regulatory framework for work of media, programs of fighting against domestic violence and financing of the safe houses. We also opened the planning process for women's election campaign for local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008.

With the help of partner organisation in this project IKV/Pax Christi, we were able to invite the Dutch female expert in this field, and she shared her experiences with women participants from the region.

RESULTS

- Enabled exchange of experiences and defining common conclusions about position of a woman in development and peace processes in the area of Western Balkan,
- 44 women activists from the Western Balkan region informed about principles of conducting gender analysis of public policies, advocacy for adoption of gender sensitive public policies, and gender sensitive budgeting,
- Developed action plans for advocacy in relation to domestic violence issues, discrimination in public and political life, and discriminatory provisions of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- Developed draft action plan for public pre-election campaign for local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008.

WOMAN AND LAW - PHASE 11

Providing Free Legal and Psychosocial Assistance for Women Victims of Violence

Since 1 March 1997, United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka are partner organisations in implementation of the project "Woman and Law". The project is implemented with financial support of Swedish Foundation Kvinna till Kvinna and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Goal of the project is to improve legal and psychosocial security of women, improving position of a woman in society, family, and public life, elimination of all forms of gender based discrimination and reaching equality of sexes.

Centre for Free Legal and Psychosocial Assistance "Woman and Law" exists as a part of the project, and provides women and children victims of violence with free legal advice and assistance in writing all types of petitions, representation at the court and in front of other official institutions (if women beneficiaries have no means to cover costs of the legal representation), and advises how to protect from violence.

ACTIVITIES:

In the period from 1 January until 31 December 2007, SOS telephone for women victims of violence received 886 calls, mostly from women victims, and office "Woman and Law" provided advices and information for 204 women and legal assistance for 63 women victims of violence from Banja Luka region. Beside providing support to women victims of violence, the project activities focused on monitoring implementation of laws and policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the area of fighting against violence against women and domestic violence, cooperation with official institutions, public advocacy for improving mechanisms for prevention and protection of women from violence, and education of women and men representatives of official institutions that are working on issues of violence against women and domestic violence.

In cooperation with eleven nongovernmental organisations (United Women Banja Luka, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka, Women's Association "Lara" Bijeljina, Foundation "CURE" Sarajevo, NGO "Future" Modriča, Women's Centre Trebinje, Women's Association "Bridge" Višegrad, Women's Association "Medica" Zenica, Citizen's Association "Vesta" Tuzla, Women's Association "Forma F" Mostar and Association "Woman and Family" Gradiška) a cycle of specific activities was organised within the Campaign "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence" (period from 25 November - the International Day of Fighting Violence Against Women, and 10 December - the International Human Rights Day). Campaign activities included placing billboards and distributing leaflets on the streets of cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, media programs, public discussions, press conferences, etc.

Na Međunarodni dan ljudskih prava NVO upozorile na stanje u BiH

KAD PRAVDA UTIHNE

Radnici trpe šikaniranje, žene nasilje, tri hiljade domaćinstava u BiH živi bez struje, a oko 40 hiljada izbjeglica i danas su beskućnici



Obezbjedjeni radnici ombudsmana RS su u 2007. godini uputili oko 650 žalbi, a kojima narode da rade na crno i prekovremeno, bez posebne naknade, te da plate i doprinose ne primaju mjesecima ili čak godinama.

Primerom su da zaštiti svojih prava traže pred sudovima, ali mnogi ni tada i ne dočekaju presudu - kaže ombudsmanka za ljudska prava RS, Nada Grahovac.

Kštenje prava iz oblasti rada najčešći ali ne i jedini oblik diskriminacije.

Kancelarija ombudsmana RS primila je od početka godine oko pet i po hiljada žalbi, što ukazuje na to da se u RS ljudska prava krše u svim oblastima poručila je Nada Grahovac, povodom 10. decembra, Međunarodnog dana ljudskih prava.

Više od 730.000 građana BiH nema zdravstveno osiguranje, upozoravaju NVO. Iz Saveza udruženja izbjeglica, raseljenih lica i povratnika u BiH podjeleću da 12 godina nakon okončanja rata, 40.000 beskućnika u BiH čeka obnovu uništenih kuća, a njih oko sedam hiljada još uvijek živi u postavljenim uvjetima alternativnih smještaja.

Oko tri hiljade domaćinstava živi u mraku, bez struje, a samo jedan odsto povratnika radi u organima uprave - poručuju iz ove organizacije, pozivajući vlasti u BiH na odgovornost.

Na odgovornost pozivaju i predstavnici udruženja porodica nestalih lica, podsjećajući da je

soština 17.500 nestalih lica s područja livne Jugoslavije još uvijek nepoznata.

Jedim od najgorih i najprijetužnijih načina kršenja osnovnih ljudskih prava jeste nasilje nad ženama i djecom, upozoravaju aktivistkinje NVO "Udružene žene" i Helsinki parlament građana. U posljednjem letaku i ljepljivim plakatima još su im se u ličnoj kuci predstavile i aktivistkinje drugih organizacija, te predsjednica Narodne skupštine

RS, Nada Tešanović. Ovom akcijom okončana je šestomesečna kampanja protiv nasilja nad ženama, koju je jedanast partnerskih NVO provelo u gradovima širom BiH.

Zbog nesavršenog finansiranja, i inače malobrojnih, "sigurnih kuća", mnoge žrtve multivrtne nasilja nikada ne budu adekvatno zaštićene, upozoravaju iz "Udruženih žena".

Kao ni mnoge druge zakone u BiH, ni Zakon o zaštiti od nasilja u porodici ne prate budžetska sredstva za njegovo provođenje - upozorila aktivistkinja NVO "Udružene žene", Minka Danjanović.

Intruzivne "Udružene žene" pokazalo je da lokalne zajednice u RS za socijalnu zaštitu iz budžeta izdvajaju svega tri do četiri odsto, a RS samo 0,4 odsto, iako je preporuka Evropske unije da se za socijalna davanja više obavezati od deset do 12 odsto budžeta.

V. DZD/20

RESULTS:

- Provided legal advices and information for 204 women, and legal assistance for 63 women victims of violence from Banja Luka region. SOS telephone for women and girls victims of violence received 886 calls for assistance, predominantly from women victims of violence. Through offering legal and psychosocial assistance, victims were encouraged to think positively about their future life and not to place guilt on their own actions and behaviour, which represents the biggest challenge for many of them.
- Representative of the project "Woman and Law" participated in the Working Group for preparing changes and amendments of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska, and presented views of nongovernmental organisations,
- 94 women and men representatives of police, centres for social work, health institutions, courts and prosecutor's offices from North-western part of Republic of Srpska were informed about the issue of domestic violence, with objective of improving understanding of violence against women and increasing knowledge about the most efficient methods of support for women victims of violence.
- Improving cooperation of "United Women" Banja Luka and "Helsinki Citizens' Assembly" Banja Luka with the City Administration Banja Luka, police, Centre for Social Work, and Health Centre Banja Luka. In 2007, "United Women" Banja Luka succeeded to secure financial support for running costs of the Safe House from the public budget of City Administration Banja Luka, which enabled opening of the Safe House in February 2007, for the first women and children beneficiaries. Mobile Team for Field Interventions in Cases of Domestic Violence was formed in May 2007. It is composed of women and men representatives of Centre for Public Security Banja Luka, Centre for Social Work Banja Luka, and "United Women" Banja Luka.
- "United Women" Banja Luka and "Helsinki Citizens' Assembly" Banja Luka increased public advocacy activities and cooperation with female parliamentarians in the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, with objective of ensuring full support for financing of the safe houses in Republika Srpska from the public budgets. In December 2007, People's Assembly of Republika Srpska voted for the initiative of including costs for financing of the safe houses in Republika Srpska in public budget on the entity level for 2008, in amount of 300.000 BAM.

Could You Have Chosen a Better One? - 10 Years of Work with Women Victims of Domestic Violence

The book resulted from 10 years of work of the Office for Free Legal Assistance for Women "Woman and Law" and SOS Telephone for support for women victims of violence. It brings appalling stories of victims, but also testimonies of brave women who dared to step up from circles of violence and search for help. Testimonies are also showing there are no rules -victims of domestic violence are women that live in both urban and rural areas, highly educated women, and those women that did not finish elementary school. There women are sharing their experiences with women and men readers, and point at consequences of long term violence, which was happening behind closed doors. Symbolic title "Could You Have Chosen a Better One?" represents an answer that a woman victim of violence received from an employee of the centre for social work, when she asked for help. It also testifies about difficulty to find a way out of violence, despite existence of laws and institutions. This publication of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka and United Women Banja Luka was promoted at the press conference in Banja Luka, and it was distributed throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.



PLAN FOR 2008

The basic framework for activity plan in 2008 in the programme area "Advocacy for Gender Equality" will focus on municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina that will be held in October 2008. In cooperation with women's nongovernmental organisations, we are planning to organise a strong campaign for increasing visibility of women in the election process, and call women and men voters to support female candidates. These activities will be accompanied with educational programmes for female candidates, aimed to improve their public presentation and campaigning skills.

Our regular public discussions about gender equality will focus on the local elections, but also other topics relevant for women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We will organize education about gender sensitive public policies for women and men delegates in the municipal assemblies and members of the municipal commissions for gender equality. In cooperation with United Women Banja Luka, we will also support development of action plans for adoption of gender sensitive public policies in three local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the end of 2008, we are planning to present the accomplished results in this field to the newly elected municipal authorities.

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka and United Women Banja Luka will continue to advocate for harmonisation of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Law on Gender Equality, in order to enable actually equal representation of women and men in governance and decision making bodies. Our two associations will conduct further steps to follow up on the judicial petition against the decision of the Central Election Commission of BiH about verification of mandates for members of the Council of ministers of BiH, which we initiated during 2007.

With objective of improving Law on Gender Equality of BiH, and realisation of the recommendations from the Study "Gender Equality and Judicial Practice", Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka will establish stronger contacts with the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH. Work Plan for 2008 of this institutional mechanism for gender equality envisages preparation of the Draft Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka will continue with research activities and analysis of the existing public policies with the Law, as well as public advocacy for its implementation in the practice.

The Study will be presented to women and men students of the Law Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Joint project - office for free legal assistance "Woman and Law" will continue with the activities in 2008, and our association will continue to support activities of United Women Banja Luka aimed to create conditions for sustainable work of the Safe House for Women Victims of Domestic Violence.

At the end of 2008, we will provide space for exchange of experiences about all issues we focused on during 2008, both with our partner organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and organisations from the whole region of Western Balkans.

programme area/

CREATING CONDITIONS FOR MORE INTENSIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH PEOPLE IN THE PUBLIC LIFE

Objectives of this programme area are creating conditions for more intensive participation of youth people in the public life, empowering and networking of youth people per interest areas for more active participation in the public life, and increasing number of youth people in the political life. We are realising it through educational activities, campaigns, analysis of position of youth people in different social areas, and promotion of youth activists. During 2007, we implemented the project "Political Academy", with financial support of the Olof Palme International Centre, and educational programmes for women and men youth politicians and activists of nongovernmental organisations, financially supported by "Konrad Adenauer Stiftung", Foundation "Eduardo Frei" from the Netherlands, and CARITAS.

ACADEMY FOR WOMEN AND MEN POLITICAL LEADERS

For a new generation of women and men politicians

The project "Academy for Women and Men Political Leaders" had the objective to educate youth activists from political parties and create new generation of politicians that will cooperate to improve their communities and society as a whole. Because of that, we initiated the "Academy" as a type of informal education of young women and men politicians aimed for acquiring knowledge and skills in the area of public and political life. Academy for women and men political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina was supported by the Olof Palme International Centre from Sweden.

ACTIVITIES

Academy consisted of 4 thematic modules: "Media, Advocacy and Leadership", "Political System and European Integrations", "Human rights in BiH and Conflict Resolution", and "Youth People in BiH - Regional Cooperation". The first generation of the Academy consisted of 25 (twenty-five) male and female students, and 23 (twenty-three) students successfully completed all the activities within the Academy. Besides attending modules, the program included organization of the practical work and preparing seminar papers.

Thirty eight lecturers and ten mentors from different areas, representatives of governmental institutions at all levels, local and international nongovernmental organisations, universities of Sarajevo and Banja Luka, women and men journalists and representatives of other organisations that are working on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, were involved in implementation of the project "Academy".

RESULTS:

- Improved knowledge and skills of male and female students of the "Academy" from the area covered by offered modules, and provided opportunity for practical research work on selected themes. The first generation of the "Academy" students will be actively involved in realisation of the project during 2008, as lecturers, mentors, and organisers, depending on interests and individual capacities.
- Seminar papers about fifteen actual topics in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be used as literature for the second generation of male and female students of the "Academy for Women and Men Political Leaders".
- Male and female students worked in groups when preparing their practical seminar papers, which additionally strengthened cooperation of representatives of youth sections of different political parties.



EDUCATION OF YOUTH POLITICIANS

Youth and the Media

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka organised a series of workshops and a conference for youth politicians with objective to increase their capacities for participation in public and political life. Special attention was paid to participation of youth politicians from smaller and distant communities in BiH. In the period April - June 2007 three workshops were organised with topic "Media Presentation and Public Speech", which gathered more than 60 youth politicians from different political parties in BiH. Special focus was on preparation of participants for leading the public campaigns for local elections in 2008. The activities were supported by German Foundation "Konrad Adenauer" Sarajevo and Foundation "Eduardo Frei" from the Netherlands.

TRAINING FOR THE STAFF OF YOUTH CENTRE LJUBIJA

Capacity Building

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka implemented a serial of training programmes for staff and members of The Youth Centre Ljubija, which contributed to building of capacities of this organisation. The following trainings were organised: Project proposal writing and project cycle management; Strategic planning; Media presentation and public advocacy. The results are already visible through increased media presence and visibility of the organisation, numerous applications submitted to donors. Detailed evaluation of the trainings will be conducted in 2008. The Programme was financed by Swiss CARITAS. Our organisation was also in position to provide series of one day programmes on conflict resolution and local actions planning for children (beneficiaries) and volunteers of The Youth Centre, thanks to funds of Delta for The Balkans. This project completes at the beginning of 2008 with purchase of books and equipment for Youth Centre Ljubija.



PLAN FOR 2008

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka transferred the rights for use of idea and implementation of The Project "Academy for Political Leaders" to the Association "Perpetuum mobile" Banja Luka which participated in realisation of the 1st year of project implementation. According to the current plans the next generation of the "Academy" will be organised in similar manner, and first generation of students will take active role in its implementation.

In the next year Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka plans to continue the education activities dedicated to youth through the programme of "Open University".

TRAINING CENTRE "OPEN UNIVERSITY"

Education for all

The intention of the training centre called "Open university" is to provide broader population, particularly students of secondary schools and universities with access to knowledge and skill building trainings related to human rights, gender equality, public advocacy, non-violent communication, fundraising, facilitation, media presentation etc. in a new, attractive and interesting way. In 2007 we implemented trainings related to facilitation, public advocacy, media presentation and gender equality passed in total by 70 participants.

Several additional trainings were organised upon request from other organisations and institutions, which were described in previous chapters of the report.

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka printed a manual "Media - Your Allies" to be used in the training on media presentation, which is the ninth training manual published by our organisation. Implementation of the training programmes was funded by the European Union.

TRAINING OFFER

Civil society and human rights

Basic trainings

Title	Topics
Civil society and activism	Civil society, nongovernmental organisations, their role, status and legal framework in BiH, establishment and registration of an association, community activism, leadership...
Human rights in my community	Human rights, their history, discrimination, mechanisms of protection of human rights, socially discriminated groups, models of influencing the public authorities for protection of human rights...
Gender equality	Sex and gender, gender based discrimination, gender based stereotypes and prejudices, sexuality, position of women and men in BiH society, legal framework for gender equality in BiH...

Advanced trainings / Trainings for professional groups

Title	Topics
Gender sensitive policies	Gender analysis, gender sensitive and responsible practical policies...
Reporting diversity in media	Role of the media in modern society, stereotypes and prejudices in media, socially marginalised groups and their portrayal in the media, discrimination in the media (with possibility of focus on specific social groups)...
Gender sensitive reporting in the media	Role of the media in modern society, portrayal of women and men in the media, legal and regulatory framework for media in BiH, gender analysis of media content (possibility of focus on specific topics)...

Organisational Capacity Building

Title	Topics
Management of nongovernmental organisations and fundraising	Nongovernmental organisations, legal framework for functioning of nongovernmental organisations, decision making, mission, vision and programme activities of nongovernmental organisations, fundraising...
Strategic planning	Strategic planning, importance of planning process, mission and vision, problem analysis, programme planning, goals and results, analysis of internal and external preconditions for implementation of action plan, allies and enemies...
Project proposal preparation	What is project proposal, problem analysis, goals and results, logical framework matrix, form of the project proposal - outline financial aspect of the project and proposed budget, contract with donors...
Basics of financial management in nongovernmental organisations	Specifics in work of nongovernmental organisations, legal framework, financial obligations towards tax institutions and donors, harmonisation of procedures to meet donors and tax institutions requests, organisation of financial management within an NGO

Personal Capacity Building

Title	Topics
Public advocacy, campaigning, lobbying	Public advocacy, planning of advocacy action, target groups of public advocacy, campaigning, lobbying...
Public relations and media presentation skills	Public relations, methods of communication in public relations, media presentation, how to become a news, press release, press conference, specifics of tv- and radio- programme...
Conflict resolution and non-violent communication	Conflict, methods and approaches to conflict resolution, interest based conflict resolution, positions and interests, conciliation and mediation, communication skills - non-violent communication...
Negotiation	Negotiation, interest based negotiation, positions and interests, obstacles to negotiation and road to settlement, phases in negotiation process, options analysis, defining of proposals...
Facilitation and decision making	Facilitation, decision making in a group, communication skills, compromise and consensus, voting...
Train the trainers programme with possibility of mentoring	Principles of adult education, defining training objectives, planning and designing the training programme, forms and methods of work, exercises and games for relaxing and concentration, this training can also include mentoring - advisory support to students in his/her first trainings...

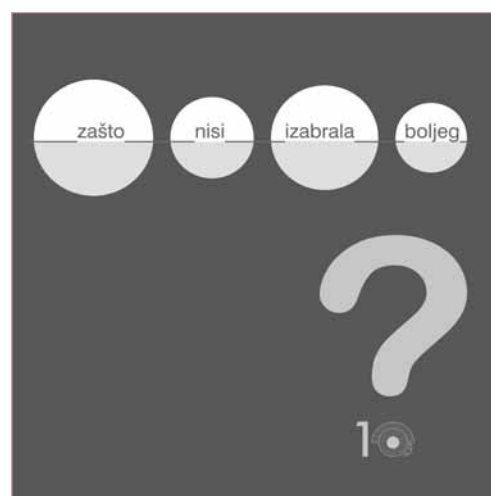
PUBLICATIONS PRINTED IN 2007

COULD YOU HAVE CHOSEN A BETTER ONE?

The inspiration for the book came from 10 years of work of SOS telephone line and the programme "Woman and Law" providing legal assistance to women and children, victims of domestic violence. This office is run by "United Women in partnership with our organisation. There were 6868 clients who visited the office and were provided legal assistance in the last ten years, while SOS line received 7096 calls. This book presents notes and impressions of the office staff working with women victims of domestic violence.

WOMAN TODAY 11

Eleventh book in a series of "Woman Today" publications presents activities implemented within the project in 2007 by partner organisations Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka and "United Women" Banja Luka. There were many of them, such as six preparation meetings for project implementation, workshop and research on gender based stereotypes, round table in Banja Luka and public debates in Bihać, Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Tomislavgrad, Trebinje, Višegrad, Prijedor and Bijeljina, presenting the results of the research, four public debates in Banja Luka on burning topics in the country, six tv-programmes, four press conferences and a publication "Could You Have Chosen a Better One?" related to tenth anniversary of the SOS line. Apart from that, a public hearing was initiated by our organisations in The Peoples' Assembly of Republika Srpska with topic "Funding of shelters for women and children victims of domestic violence". All introductory speeches and information on activities can be found in this publication.

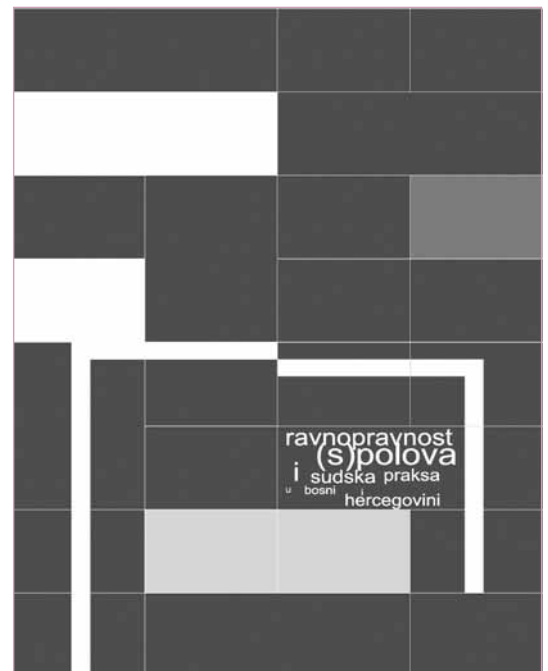


GENDER EQUALITY AND JUDICIAL PRACTICE IN BIH

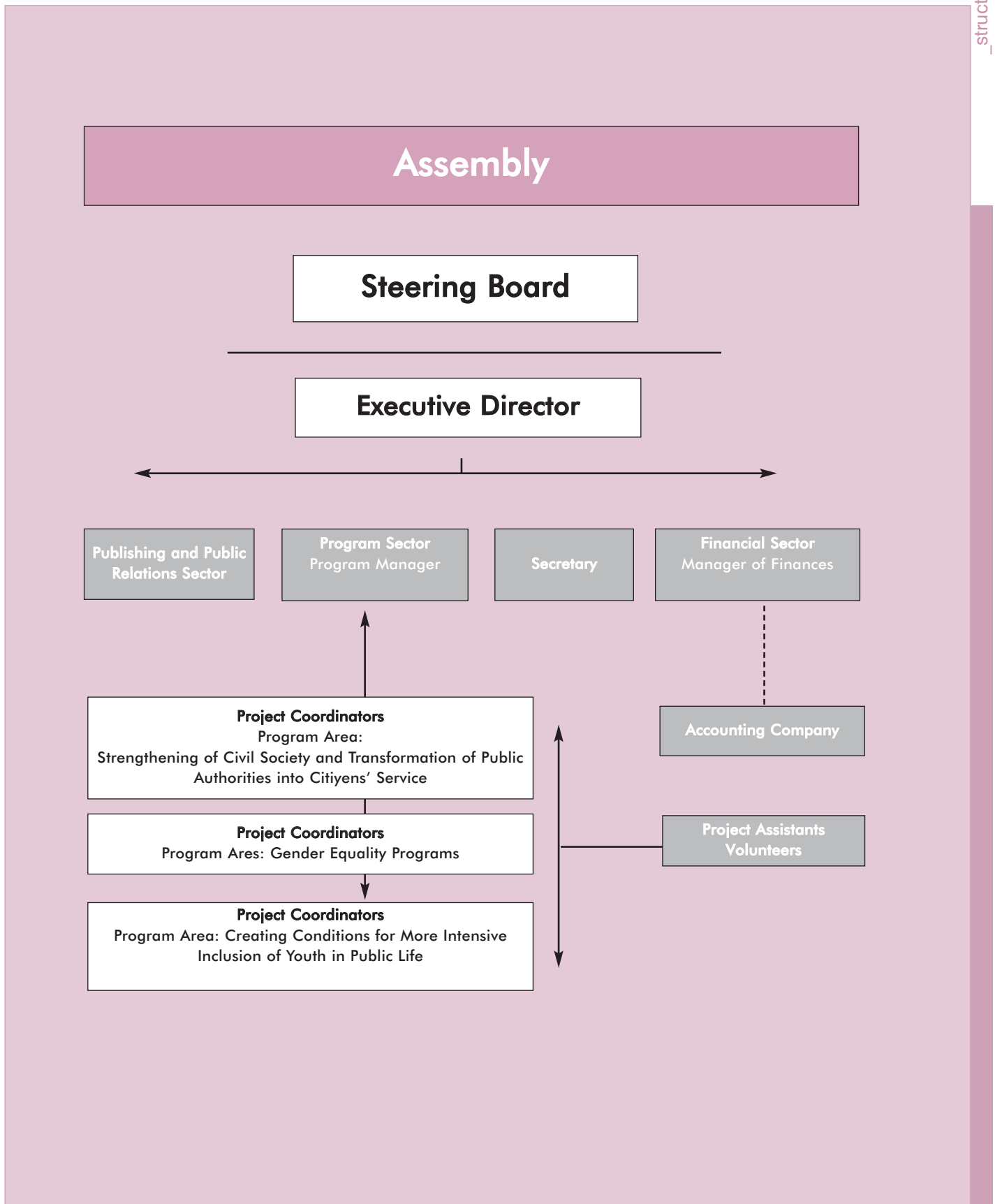
This study is a result of the project with the same title, whose implementation started in 2007. The Study presented main results of the research of implementation of The Gender Equality Law of BiH in segment of court and institutional protection of rights proclaimed in this law, as well as guidelines and recommendations for further implementation of The Law. The Study includes results of content analysis of The Law, statistical data collected from the courts, prosecutors' offices, institutional gender mechanisms and conclusion of the interviews with activists of nongovernmental organisations - legal aid providers. Based on these results recommendations were presented on how to improve The Gender Equality Law in BiH, as well as for the other activities that would support the implementation of The Law.

GENDER ROLES AND STEREOTYPES

Women in BiH society are prisoners of stereotypes. In patriarchal environment a woman is expected to perform house work, be in a shadow of their husband, give birth and raise children, while a man should earn money for family, run politics and public functions. When speaking about role of women in our society we can not avoid mentioning how culture determines her role and imposes to women and men certain type of behaviour. If they break cultural rules, society excludes them. This publication presents results on presence of gender based stereotypes among public officials in municipal institutions and influence of stereotypes on public policies they create.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE HCA BANJA LUKA



FINANCES

FUNDS TRANSFERRED FROM 2006 IN BAM	101.740,51
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INCOME IN 2007	u KM
Donations	492.439,00
Trainings	10.618,00
Members Donations	3.875,00
Interests	590,00
TOTAL	507.522,00
TOTAL FUNDS IN 2007	609.262,51

EXPENSES IN 2007	
Salaries (net)	87.356,02
Income Taxes and Benefits	43.908,06
Purchase of Equipment and Office Running Costs	8.382,00
Costs of Activities	287.056,92
TOTAL	426.703,00
VARIANCE	182.559,50

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IKV Pax Christi, The Netherlands

Foundation "Friedrich Ebert", Germany

Foundation "Konrad Adenauer", Germany

Foundation "Eduardo Frei", The Netherlands

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Delta for The Balkans

City of Banja Luka

