



annual report

SCS

FOREWORD

A year behind us was marked with numerous and different activities, which we implemented as a part of eight projects in 2009.

In this foreword, we will mention just some of the initiatives and activities implemented by a small, but devoted team of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly. In continuation of this publication, you will have the opportunity to learn about each project in details.

In the second half of 2009, as a part of research projects that are important part of our activities, we analyzed local policies related to rights of representatives of national minorities in three municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we "peaked" into neighboring countries of Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia, in order to get clear insight on implementation of rights of national minorities at the municipal level in the Western Balkans region. As partners of the Human Rights Office from Tuzla, we were involved in the research about situation on social inclusion of seven marginalized categories of population in five cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This research clearly indicated that Bosnia and Herzegovina is in need of a fundamental reform of social policy, so that it would be developed based on true needs of people, rather than on mere categorization.

Active lobbying and insisting on BiH Gender Equality Law applicable in the practice resulted with the adoption of the Law on Changes and Amendments of Gender Equality Law in BiH. One of the amendments for which we lobbied, and which was included in the final text of the Law is especially important, because it removes obscurities and specifies that bodies at all levels of organization of the governance must include at least 40% of women, or less represented sex.

Almost parallel to the process of adoption of changes and amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, we witnessed one political process – the Butmir negotiations, during which our local male politicians, however, not including female politicians, tried to harmonize views on constitutional changes. We reacted, as many times before, and warned international diplomats that had initiated Butmir negotiations that there were no women at the negotiation table, as well as that woman did not participate in any of the negotiation teams, which had been deciding about destiny of Bosnia and Herzegovina, starting from Dayton Peace Agreement.

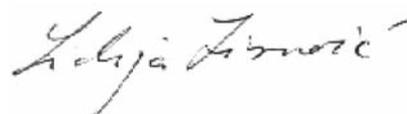
However, during 2009, our work on improving position of women was directed more on the local level, where we worked with representatives of municipal administrations, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organizations, and tried to activate the local gender equality commissions in order to establish gender sensitive and responsible policies at the local level.

Within the program area directed to advocacy for gender equality, we also initiated several projects in smaller communities, such are Rogatica and Grahovo, where women often lack access to financial and other resources needed for work. We assisted in the process of establishing the single parents association "Ponos" in Banja Luka.

During 2009, we had regular meetings with journalists in Banja Luka and Sarajevo. These working meetings called "Branches with Journalists" resulted with media reporting about problems of different marginalized groups in our society. Through these activities, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka continued to support their increased participation in public and political life. We also initiated establishing of the anti-discriminatory journalist award, as well as changes and amendments of the Family Law of Republika Srpska, in order to secure introduction of the term "single parent" in the legal text, and enable realization of social benefits entitlements for this category of parents.

This is not all, but our intention was not to "list" everything we worked on, or all events we supported, but to present you the scope of problems we tackled, and structure of the target groups we worked with, as well as to point to the need for continuous work on creating healthy climate and environment in which female and male citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to lead a fulfilling and satisfactory life.

We would like to express our gratitude to all that helped us in the implementation of the project activities, especially to our donors, partner organizations, journalists, and citizens that have been recognizing and supporting our work.



Lidija Živanović
Executive Director

ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE WORKED

In 2009, one citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina produced, in average, one kilogram of garbage per day. This data probably wouldn't be included in the list of important events and things that marked 2009, because who would pay attention to such "insignificant" thing such is garbage, when there are much more "important" things one should care about - at least this was suggested by our political leaders. Therefore, in 2009, we repeatedly cared about vital national interests, endangered interests of Serbs, Croats, and Bosniacs, constitutional reforms, and (in)just and (in)justifiable attacks on Milorad, Haris, Dragan, Sulejman, Mladen, and others.

In such constellation of political relations, a very few people have time to pay attention to vital or, if we translate this Latin word to our languages, "necessary or essential to life" things, such is the right to work and right to receive a salary for one's work, right to annual vacation, right to health insurance, right to other person's care and assistance, right to social assistance, right to protection at work, right to freedom of opinion, right to be different...

Therefore, adoption of changes and amendments of the Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina went unnoticed. These changes introduced a provision, which requires representation of at least 40% of women in governance bodies at all levels, including legislative, executive, and judicial governance.

Failure to adopt the draft Law on Social Protection of Republika Srpska was also overlooked, although the representatives of different marginalized groups in Republika Srpska have been waiting for adoption of this Law for a long time. Adoption of the Law on Professional Rehabilitation, Training, and Employment of Persons with Disabilities of FBiH was also prolonged. Many people are waiting on this Law for more than five years.

There was lack of the public attention directed on adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This Law establishes the framework for realization of equal rights and possibilities for all persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in all fields of public life, regardless of their race, skin color, religion, ethnic affiliation, national or social origin, link to a national minority, political beliefs, property, membership in unions or other associations, education, social position and gender, gender expression or orientation.

The decision of the European Court for Human Rights, which requests from BiH to change the Constitution in order to enable the representatives of national minorities to run for members of the Presidency of BiH and House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH would have been overlooked as well, if it was not for the political parties that saw this decision as a good opportunity to "push through" their views on constitutional changes.

In fact, this topic – the constitutional changes, i.e. the issue of functional organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina – was the top agenda of political elites in 2009. Their negotiations in Butmir, initiated by foreign diplomats, ended with fiasco. Again, women were not involved in the negotiation process.

Beside unsuccessful Butmir negotiations, the year of 2009 was marked with appointment of Valentin Inzko for the High Representative for BiH; annulment of duties on 90% of products that BiH imports from the European Union countries; applying of BiH for the Action Plan for NATO membership; making agreement with the International Monetary Fund on 1.2 billion euro standby arrangement over three years; releasing of Biljana Plavšić, the former President of Republika Srpska from Swedish prison "Hilsenberg", after she served two thirds of the sentence for crimes against humanity during the war in BiH; a conflict between Valentin Inzko on one side and the RS Government and National Assembly on the other, as both institutions stated that they would not accept imposed laws and decisions of the OHR and the High Representative. The year of 2009 was also marked with open protests and strikes of workers throughout Republika Srpska, announcements of cuts aimed to decrease consequences of global economic crisis, but also announcements that overly high salaries for members of BiH Parliament will increase once more.

Beside political and economic events, last year was marked with the sport results: BiH soccer team qualifying for the world cup, but also sports' violence – conflict between fans of soccer clubs "Sarajevo" and "Široki Brijeg", which resulted with tragic death of a 22-year-old man.

In 2009, issuing of biometric passport started in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it is still unknown when we would not need visa to travel with this new document. Price of biometric passport in BiH ranges from 45 to 200 BAM, and it depends from how fast you want to get it.

These were short notes about environment in which Helsinki Citizens Assembly was working together with partner and other civil society organizations, trying to improve legislative framework and opportunities for life and work of women and men citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ABOUT US

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (hCa) Banja Luka was officially registered on 16 August 1996 as a local non-governmental organization in Republika Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since that period, hCa Banja Luka has actively participated in promotion, strengthening, and linking civil initiatives, working on reconciliation and empowerment of marginalized groups for political activism, both on local and regional level.

Our Mission: Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka is an organization that supports and stimulates autonomy and freedom of all citizens through involvement of marginalized social groups in democratic processes, particularly women and youth.

Our Vision: Society of equal opportunities for all.

Priorities of Action of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka:

- Empowerment of socially marginalized groups, particularly women, youth and minorities, for political action and improvement of their position in society;
- Influence on public institutions in Bosnia ad Herzegovina for improvement of laws and public policies towards these socially marginalized 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 marginalized groups and mechanisms of protection of their rights;
- Strengthening of cooperation with other organizations and institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and internationally;
- Providing access to education programs, 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 organization.

During 2009, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka implemented its activities within three program areas:

- Strengthening civil society and transformation of public governance into citizens service
- Advocacy for gender equality
- Creating conditions for more active involvement of your people in the public life

Educational Programs – Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka gathers women and men trainers that are developing and implementing trainings for hCa and other organizations within following areas: strengthening capacities of nongovernmental organizations (strategic planning, fundraising, campaign, public relations, etc), nonviolent communication, conflict resolution, human rights, and gender equality. On this way, hCa Banja Luka promotes its objectives and policy within other social groups that are not directly targeted with the projects, but also contributes to the financial sustainability of the organization.

Program Area/
**STRENGTHENING
CIVIL SOCIETY
AND
TRANSFORMATION
OF PUBLIC
GOVERNANCE
INTO CITIZENS
SERVICE**

Objectives of this program area are strengthening democracy through raising awareness of female and male citizens about democratic principles and processes, encouraging citizens to initiative various initiatives and participate in decision making at all levels of governance. We are working to establish better cooperation between female and male citizens and official institutions through different activities within this program area.

During 2009, as a part of this program area we implemented part of the activities within projects "X-press – Social Inclusion Through Media", "Neighborhood-Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Cooperation on the Municipal Level in Western Balkan Countries", "With Social Inclusion and Integration Toward Active Citizenry," which we implement in partnership with Human Rights Office Tuzla. We completed implementation of the project "Peace Activism – Crossroads. "

X – PRESS: SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH MEDIA

In December 2008, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka started with implementation of the Project "X-press," in partnership with Foundation "Cure" from Sarajevo and Association of Young Journalists of Republika Srpska. Key objective of the project is to increase sensibility of media for reporting about marginalized and vulnerable groups in our society. Idea is to use media to influence relevant public institutions to improve public policies and practices toward these categories of population.

Our objective is also to use "X-press" project activities to network women and men journalists and various associations of marginalized and vulnerable groups, and to place media emphasis on specific issues that affect these groups, in order to avoid stereotypes and politically incorrect language in media reports, and to use professional and adequate way to inform the public about these issues.

This project is funded by the European Union.

ACTIVITIES

Following are the most important activities implemented as a part of this project during 2009:

- "Branches with journalists"– these sessions are organized once a month in Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Representatives of associations of vulnerable and marginalized groups are talking with journalists about their issues, and issues of their beneficiaries. During 2009, twenty-two (22) brunches sessions were organized, with participation of more than two hundred (200) journalists and representatives of governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Following are some of the topics discussed during the sessions: violence against women, issues and obstacles that the for blind and visually impaired are faced with, persons with underdeveloped mental capacities, people affected with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS), children's rights, and consumer's rights, children from mixed marriages, independence of media, issues of Roma people, invisibility of sportswomen in Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.
- Continuous collecting of data for the Manual About Professional Reporting on Marginalized Groups through conferences and brunchs with journalists, with the objective of increasing professional reporting of journalists and improving knowledge of students of journalism about these specific topics.
- Continuous collecting of data for publishing of the Dictionary of Politically Correct Language, in order to specify and explain terminology that should be used in reporting about specific marginalized and vulnerable groups in BiH society.
- Workshops with students of journalism – during 2009 we organized four (4) workshops for students of journalism and communications in Banja Luka, Sarajevo, and Istočno Sarajevo. Having in mind that female and male students of journalism are lacking specialized courses about professional reporting on marginalized and vulnerable groups as a part of their formal education, we wanted to use these workshops to improve their knowledge within this specific area.





- Annual conference during which we discussed about professional and ethical standards in reporting about marginalized and vulnerable groups, through discussion about journalists' ethics, commercialization of media, possibilities of cooperation between nongovernmental organizations and media, and examples of good practice at both sides.
- Setting up a working group with the task to establish criteria and rules for awarding anti-discriminatory journalist award for reporting about marginalized groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

RESULTS

- More than hundred and fifty (150) journalists that participated at „branches with journalists” familiarized with issues of specific associations of marginalized groups, as well as the specific terminology and approach toward these social groups
- More than eighty (80) articles and reports published in media from branches with journalists, and several special interviews with representatives of marginalized groups conducted by journalists
- Collected data for Manual for Professional Reporting about Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups and Dictionary of Politically Correct Language
- Through four (4) workshops, eighty six (86) students of journalism and communications increased sensibility for reporting about marginalized groups
- Supported establishing of the anti-discriminatory journalist award that would be awarded for journalistic accomplishments that affirm and promote professional media reporting about marginalized groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and result with concrete actions and improvements in the practice.

PLAN FOR 2010

During 2010, as a part of this project we will continue to organize “branches with journalists” every month in Banja Luka and Sarajevo. We are planning to organize twenty-two (22) sessions. We are also planning to organize four (4) workshops with students of journalism and communications, and annual conference about professional and ethical standards in reporting about marginalized and vulnerable groups in our society. We will publish the Manual for Professional Reporting about Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups and Dictionary of Politically Correct Language, which should assist present and future journalists, and other actors, to articulate their work in a better way. A larger part of the project activities will be dedicated to the anti-discriminatory journalist's award, through securing media sponsorship and donor contribution for the awards, informing journalists how they can apply for the award, and involving large number of nongovernmental organizations in selection of the award for continuous reporting about marginalized groups.

NEIGHBORHOOD – AFFIRMATION OF MULTICULTURALISM AND COOPERATION ON MUNICIPAL LEVEL IN WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

In May 2009, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka initiated implementation of a two-year project titled "Neighborhood – Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Cooperation on Municipal Level in Western Balkan Countries", with the aim to analyze municipal policies on minorities and their implementation in the practice, improving existing policies by improving cooperation of municipal authorities and associations of national minorities, in order to meet the needs and rights of minorities in local communities. We are implementing this project in partnership with the Association for Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms „HOMO" from Pula (Croatia), Center for Regionalism from Novi Sad (Vojvodina, Serbia), Union of National Minorities of Republika Srpska and Helsinki Monitor for Human Rights from Ljubljana (Slovenia).

Local communities involved in this project are Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Prijedor in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pula, Umag, and Vodnjan in Croatia, and Zrenjanin, Bor and Bujanovac in Serbia.

The project is funded by the European Union.

ACTIVITIES IN 2009

- Beginning of the project implementation was marked with presentations of the project to the municipal authorities and civil society associations in each municipality, during which we received support for the planned project activities. Some of the observations from these presentations became initiating point for discussions during further project activities, for example, a need for introducing coordinating body for cooperation between municipal authorities and representatives of minorities in Prijedor, need for regular meetings with the mayor of Tuzla municipality, and need for clearer setting up of the criteria for allocation of the public budget resources to the associations of national minorities in all three targeted local municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Research of the local policies and practices – after harmonization of the research methodology, it was agreed to conduct the analysis of the harmonization between municipal documents with the international and domestic legislation in countries targeted by the project, in relation to protection of rights of national minorities, as well as scope of the practical application of the local policies in relation to cooperation and improving position of national minorities. The research was implemented in the period from September to November 2009, and includes series of interviews with representatives of management of municipal bodies that are working with national minorities, presidents of the local assemblies, delegates of the national minorities in the local assemblies, and representatives of the associations of national minorities.
- Publishing of the research results in the study with title "Rights of the National Minorities and Local Policies – A Study on Application of Standards for Protection of Rights of Representatives of National Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia".

Chapters II, III I IV of the Study are focusing on presentation of data on position of nation-



al minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia, while concluding comments presented in the Chapter V are presenting advantages and weaknesses of the specific legislative and institutional solutions related to rights and protection of national minorities in the three countries. A separate research was not conducted in Slovenia, as this country has been the member of the European Union since 2004. Due to that, it was assumed that Slovenia fulfilled the European standards related to protection of rights of national minorities. However, overview of the situation in Slovenia prepared by the Helsinki Monitor for Human Rights of Slovenia, clearly shows that this country still did not solve the issue of post Yugoslavian national minorities (Croats, Serbs, Macedonians, Bosniacs, and Montenegrins) that lived in Slovenia before its formal accession to the European Union, and which were erased from the registry of Slovenian citizens in 1992. Although the European Union had information about this obliteration, it did not condition accession of Slovenia to the European Union to resolve the status of the "erased citizens." The Study can be accessed under the section Publications at www.hcabl.org.

- The first sequences of the documentary were recorded – recording will continue in 2010, and the documentary will cover the key project events, and comparatively present the situation of minority communities on the field, with examples that reflect their life in majority communities, and ways of nurturing tradition and culture of the national minorities.
- Promotions of the project – during 2009, majority of activities related to promotion of the project were implemented. They included guest presentations on TV and radio stations, as well as the organization of the round table in Banja Luka "European Day of Languages – Language as Cultural Identity", and a school class about multiculturalism in the Elementary School Cyril and Methodius in Trnopolje, titled "Let's Learn about National Minorities". The round table was held on 26 September 2009, on the European Day of Languages, with the objective to provide support to preservation and further development of lingual tradition of national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the key element of their cultural identity and heritage. It was concluded that minority languages are endangered, because they are sporadically nurtured in a private family sphere. In relation to that, the need was emphasized for greater support of authorities to the institutional and systemic preservation of this cultural resource.

ENCOURAGING JUDGMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

hCa Banja Luka welcomes the judgment delivered by the European Court of Human Rights by which it is condemning BiH of discrimination towards its Jewish and Roma national minorities in the election process for the members of the BiH Presidency and the House of Peoples of the BiH Parliament.

For the last several years, hCa has been actively working on strengthening capacities and promotion of national minorities in BiH, and it pointed to the fact that the constitutional provision "others", which includes national minorities in BiH, prevents members of national minorities to nominate their representatives for positions in the BiH Presidency, which has been reserved exclusively for constituent peoples. In addition, the determinative term "others" is humiliating and degrades national minorities' members to second-rate citizens in relation to constituent peoples.

Although the European Court's judgment was passed in relation to the attitude of the authorities towards Roma and Jewish national minorities in BiH, this decision automatically applies to all the other members of national minorities that have been discriminated in this regard. The European Court's decision should help to all national minorities, as well as to all other citizens of BiH that do not declare themselves as members of constituent peoples, to be able to be field as candidates for the BiH Presidency and the House of Peoples.

The applicants of the suit were Mr. Jakob Finci who is the President of the Jewish community and Mr. Dervo Sejdic who is the member of Roma Council in the country.



Conference in Brussels

On 6 and 7 July 2009, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka participated at the Conference in Brussels, which focused on the projects funded by the European Commission in the Western Balkans Region, as a part of the program "People to People Action." EC funded projects are directed at consolidating partnership between civil society organizations and public authorities aiming for enhanced respect for minority rights in the region.

The goal of the Conference was to enable representatives of the civil society organizations from the Western Balkans; currently implementing EC funded projects, to familiarize themselves with the instruments and mechanisms of the European Commission for minorities' protection

The Conference also enabled networking of civil society organizations in the Western Balkans Region, and they agreed about methodology of communication in a future, with objective of exchange of information and examples of good practice during implementation of their projects directed toward overall improvement of position of national minorities in the region.

Projects financed by the European Union as a part of the Program „People to People Actions" are related to improvement of local policies and practices aimed for advancing rights of national minorities, inter-cultural understanding, and stabilization of interethnic and interreligious relations.

RESULTS

- Representatives of national minorities and local authorities in nine local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia are informed about project objectives, and consulted about specific project activities, in order to recognize and integrate their recommendations and ensure successful implementation of the project
- More than hundred (100) representatives of local authorities and national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia are interviewed as a part of the filed research about implementation of the rights of national minorities on municipal level

PLAN FOR 2010

During 2010, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka plans to present the study Rights of National Minorities and Local Policies, and to open discussion about conclusions and recommendations of the study during these presentations. Our intention is to determine what would be realistic to implement in the upcoming period, with full respect for priorities identified by representatives of the national minorities.

As a part of the project, we will organize three (3) regional workshops with representatives of municipal executive and

legislative bodies in all three countries, and representatives of the associations of national minorities. Each regional workshop will be reinforced by local workshops, with the objective to adjust recommendations developed during the regional gatherings to the local settings, with respecting of specifics of each local community.

During 2010, we will also continue to make the documentary, and organize promotional activities directed toward spreading the idea of multiculturalism, and increasing public awareness about rich cultural and artistic tradition of the national minorities.



CHARTER OF INTER-ETHNIC TOLERANCE



At the 4th Annual Assembly of the Association of Multi-Ethnic Cities of South Eastern Europe – PHILIA, held in Sarajevo, on 3 and 4 July 2009, Lidija Zivanovic, Executive Director of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka was awarded the Charter of Inter-Ethnic Tolerance. This Charter is being awarded to prominent individuals for their contribution to enhancing multiculturalism and establishing good inter-ethnic relations in their environments.

Apart from Lidija Zivanovic, recipients of the Charter in 2009 were Ivan Cenov, former mayor of Vidin from Bulgaria, Alija Behmen, City Major of Sarajevo, and Petra Kovac from Hungary.

INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION TOWARDS ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

At the end of 2008, Human Rights Office Tuzla and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka initiated implementation of two-year partnership project "Integration and Social Inclusion Towards Active Citizenship," financially supported by the Delegation of the European Commission in BiH through EIDHR Program. Objective of this project is to contribute to better implementation of the international legislative mechanisms for human rights protection of socially excluded groups, which will ensure reform of existing policies and practices on social protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Issue of the social protection is regulated on different way at the entity level in BiH, which does not provide common point for enjoying these rights for all citizens of BiH without discrimination, and does not provide social security. Intention of the project is to determine level of social exclusion of marginalized groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina and increase public understanding of marginalization and its causes, to clarify complexity of discriminatory legislation toward socially excluded groups in entity laws related to the area of social and health protection, and to encourage and promote social partnership and dialogue, as well as multi-sectoral approach on the local level through common planning and development in the area of social protection.

ACTIVITIES

At the beginning of the project, we conducted the field research on situation of social exclusion of seven (7) marginalized categories of population in five local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Banja Luka, Dobo, Brčko, Gračanica and Tuzla), in order to collect precise data that will be used during further implementation of the project activities. After the field research part, we published the analysis of situation of social exclusion, with title "Socially Excluded Today, and Tomorrow?" The analysis of collected data showed that social conditions that are creating exclusion are persistent, and they even intensify. The situation of social exclusion is becoming permanent condition, and it is structured as a model of relations in BiH society. The field research showed that BiH society kept its humanistic orientation and social sensitivity largely, regardless of negative trends. To use the example – large number of interviewed returnees (62%), Roma people (61,5%), and displaced persons (55%) claim that other citizens that do not fit into above presented categories are inviting them to participate in their activities, very often or occasionally. This shows that tradition and social sensibility that are characteristic for our former SFRY system are still preserved, and are resisting to social conditions that are creating social isolation.

We also conducted the analysis of entity laws and their harmonization with the European Social Charter. Results of this analysis are published in the publication "European Social Charter in Our Legislation."

Both publications were presented in Banja Luka and Sarajevo at the round tables with representatives of entity ministries, nongovernmental organizations, associations working on protection of rights of marginalized groups, representatives of the People's Assembly of RS and media.

During the field research, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka identified the issue of unclear legal status of single parents, as one of the issues that deserve our full attention. Lack of term and clear definition of single parent in the Family Law of Republika Srpska prevents implementation of rights on social assistance and benefits for those single parents whose former spouse is alive, and does not respect the obligation of paying alimony defined by the court decision. In order to solve this legislative shortage, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka gathered twelve (12) nongovernmental organizations that supported this initiative and planned the campaign during the workshop for planning the campaign for changes and amendments of the Family Law of Republika Srpska. Title of the Campaign is "The Missing Article." Ombudsman for Children of Republika Srpska joined the initiative with its proposals for changes of the Family Law in RS in segments related to children.

After this workshop, we started with active public advocacy for initiating changes and amendments of the Family Law of Republika Srpska through five (5) meetings that were held with Nada Tesanovic, Vice President of the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, representatives of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka, Nada Grahovac, Ombudsperson for Children of Republika Srpska, Ivka Ristić, President of the Board for Equal Opportunities in the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska, and representative of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of Republika Srpska.

RESULTS

- Four hundred and forty (440) women and men citizens of Banja Luka and Doboj, presented their views, and were encouraged to think more about their current situation, in the context of social policies and practices, during discussions in the focus groups.
- We printed hundred (100) copies of the analysis of social exclusion in BiH – “Socially Excluded in BiH Today, And Tomorrow?” and three hundred (300) copies of the analysis “European Social Charter in our Legislation.” Both publications were distributed to relevant actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The analysis showed that existing model of social policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in function of social justice and keeping the authority power, and not increasing activism of citizens and social development. Due to that, it is necessary to conduct fundamental reform of social policy, and radical change of a “social” concept.
- More than fifty (50) representatives of governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Republika Srpska learned about results of the research on situation of social exclusion in BiH, and harmonization of the domestic legislative with the European Social Charter.
- Initiated changes and amendments of the Family Law of Republika Srpska
- Designed campaign for changes of the Family Law of RS with title „The Missing Article,” with support of twelve (12) civil society organizations in Republika Srpska.
- Ensured support of authorized public institutions for initiating changes and amendments of Family Law of Republika Srpska.

PLAN FOR 2010

We planned numerous activities as a part of the project “With Integration and Social Inclusion Toward Active Citizenship,” which continues in 2010.

We will lobby actively for initiating changes and amendments of the Family Law of Republika Srpska. As a part of this initiative, we will organize several meetings with relevant institutions and persons that can support this action. We will organize five (5) meetings with representatives of local authorities in five local communities in BiH, with objective of their active participation in process of improving position and rights of socially excluded groups in these municipalities. We will organize the education for social workers in five local communities in BiH, in order to improve their approach toward socially excluded groups, as well as the education of the associations of socially excluded groups in order to enhance their participation in social reforms. We will also organize educations for representatives of trade chambers and social and economic councils through which we will promote inclusive economic development for socially excluded groups. We will work on establishing Council for Social Issues as a part of local self-governance institutions in those municipalities where these councils do not exist. Objective of this activity is to improve quality of development of public policies of social protection on local level of governance

PEACE ACTIVISM – CROSSROADS

Project "Peace Activism – Crossroads" was initiated at the end of 2007, and it was completed in April 2009. Project activities were focusing on summing up and evaluation of the civil society organizations involved in peace building in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and change of the public opinion about peace building nongovernmental organizations. After the researches, collected data were presented in the first peace study with title "Study on Peace Activism of Nongovernmental Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina," which was presented in several cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Nongovernmental organization "Women to Women" Sarajevo was our partner in this project, and the European Union and Friedrich Ebert Foundation financially supported it.

ACTIVITIES

The most important activities implemented in the period from January to April 2009 were following:

- Distribution of the study „Peace Activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina“ to nongovernmental organizations, governmental institutions, and international organizations;
- Organization of ten (10) „Peace Classes“ in eight cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar, Modriča, Bihać, Bratunac, Trebinje, and Livno), with participation of more than three hundred (300) participants, mostly secondary school and university students, but also representatives of governmental institutions, NGOs, and media.
During „Peace Classes,“ we presented the Study and research results, and peace activists talked about their own experiences in peace building in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Meetings with university professors and experts of the Pedagogical Institute of Republika Srpska during which we talked about possibility of introducing peace classes in the formal system of education
- Developing methodology for "Peace Class"

RESULTS

- Governmental institutions, international, and local nongovernmental organizations introduced with the data on work of nongovernmental sector on peace building in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Study „Peace Activism in BiH“;
- Secondary school and university students in eight cities of BiH informed about meanings of peace, tolerance, and coexistence;
- We sent proposal for introducing peace classes in schools, with developed methodology of the "Peace Class" to the authorized ministries and pedagogical institutes at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

VIVISECTfest – Traveling Festival on Human Rights

Helsinki Citizens Assembly participated in the organization of VIVISECT fest –Traveling Festival on Human Rights in Banja Luka. This time, the Festival was dedicated to the issue of totalitarianism.

As a part of Festival' program that was organized in several cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kosovo, photo exhibitions "Fallen Angels of Communist Ideology" and "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" were shown, as well as more than dozen films on communist regimes from different perspectives, prepared by various authors from the Europe and Russia.

During the Festival, documentary film on Ernesto Che Guevara was broadcasted. It reveals his last hours, reasons behind disappearance and later rediscovery of his remainings, and the role that his missing body with amputated wrists had in creation of legend "Che." Film "La Paloma" about the most played song at the world was broadcasted. Two thousands (2000) versions of this song are known, and some people say there are more versions of it. This song is played at the end of weddings in Zanzibar, and at the end of funerals in Romania. This was the most favorite song of tragic czar Maximilian of Mexico. Legend says his last wish was to hear La Paloma before he was shoot. In Ausvitz, Coco Schumann, German master of swing was forced to play this song on the ramp of gas chambers.

Festival VIVESECT was held in Youth Center of Banja Luka from 2 to 6 March 2009. Several hundreds of women and men citizens of Banja Luka visited the Festival, to see the exhibitions and films. The programs organized as a part of VIVISECT Festival are developed to encourage people on critical thinking and asking questions, rather than accepting already given answers.



Program Area/ Advocacy for Gender Equality

General aim of the program area is decreasing all forms of gender-based discrimination, and creating environment in which women and men have equal possibilities. We are implementing it through networking and support to the initiatives related to gender issues, empowering women, as currently the largest marginalized group, for participation in public and political life, education of women and men about gender equality issues, trainings for women in developing various skills, campaigns, researches, and public policy analysis.

In 2009, we implemented following projects as a part of this program area: "Woman Today 13", „Contribution to Gender Sensitive Peace and Development Policies in the Western Balkans“, „Partnership for Change – Support for Implementation of the Law on Gender Equality in BiH“, „Through Women’s Labor Rights“, and we continued to provide partnership support in implementation of the project „Woman and Law,“ which we implement together with United Women Banja Luka.

WOMAN TODAY – Phase 13

We ended thirteen year of joint work on the project "Woman Today" with continuous work and advocacy for diminishing all forms of discrimination against women, and creating environment in which women and men have equal possibilities. We are implementing this project together with partner organization "United Women" Banja Luka, with support of "Kvinna till Kvinna" Foundation from Sweden.

Specific project objective in 2009 was contributing to establishing gender sensitive and responsible public policies on local level through increasing number of women and their influence in local governance institutions after the 2008 local elections.

ACTIVITIES

During 2009, we implemented following activities as a part of the project:

- Six (6) meetings of the Advisory Board, during which we worked together with women from different sectors on reviewing actuality of project activities, identifying topics of public discussions, and planning public advocacy activities.
- As a part of the cycle „Actual Moment,” we organized three (3) public discussions in Banja Luka, on the topics „Women, Poverty, and World Economic Crisis,” „Consequences of the Economic Crisis on Women and Children Victims of Domestic Violence,” „Stereotypes as a Cause of Violence Against Women and Girls.”
- Four (4) public discussions (Prijedor, Gradiška, Novi Grad, and Kozarska Dubica) on the topic “BiH Legislative Framework for Accomplishing Gender Equality,” with the objective of introducing newly elected women and men representatives in the municipal assemblies/local councils, gender equality commissions, and employees of targeted municipal administrations with available mechanisms, legislation, and obligations for reaching gender equality.
- Four (4) workshops with municipal gender equality commissions and women and men employees of the municipal administrations of Prijedor, Gradiška, Novi Grad, and Kozarska Dubica. Title of the workshops was “Planning of the Gender Sensitive Policies at the Municipal Level.” During the workshops, women and men participants were determining priorities and developing plans for future work of the municipal gender equality commissions.
- One workshop at Kozara, for women and men representatives of local communities of Prijedor, Gradiška, Novi Grad, Kozarska Dubica and Banja Luka, on the topic “Strengthening Capacities of Women and Men Representatives of Municipal Assemblies/Local Communities” with objective of improving their negotiation skills, public advocacy for social changes, and strategic planning.
- Two press conferences – the first press conference was organized on the occasion of 8 March, and the second press conference was organized in November, when we announced the Campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the motto “Commit, Act, Demand: We Can End Violence Against Women.”
- Regional round table on the topic „From Local to Global Dialogue with the EU,” during which women participants exchanged experiences on how they are working on increasing awareness on gender equality, solving the issue of domestic violence, participation of women in public life, and other issues that need improvement through regional cooperation. Women participants also analyzed and compared established mechanisms for gender equality. Result of the conference was initiative for establishing regional women’s peace network.
- Five (5) TV programs on the public broadcasting service of Republika Srpska – RTRS, with the objective of introducing public with the project activities.
- Preparation and printing of the final project brochure “Woman Today XIII” with overview of all implemented activities.

RESULTS

- Eighty-seven (87) women and men citizens of Banja Luka actively participated at the public discussions, and presented their views on actual events we presented on the public discussions
- Hundred and eighteen (118) newly elected women and men representatives in the municipal assemblies/local councils, members of municipal gender equality commissions, and employees in municipal administrations of Gradiška, Kozarska Dubica, Novi Grad and Prijedor introduced with the available mechanisms, legislation, and obligations for accomplishing gender equality
- Ninety-eight (98) women and men members of local gender equality commissions, representatives in municipal assemblies/local councils, and employees of municipal administrations in Gradiška, Kozarska Dubica, Novi Grad and Prijedor gained the basic knowledge on gender sensitive policies and determined priorities of future work of the municipal gender equality commissions
- Twenty-five (25) women and men representatives of local communities of Prijedor, Gradiška, Novi Grad, Kozarska Dubica and Banja Luka improved skills of negotiation, public advocacy for social changes, and strategic planning
- Thirty-two (32) women participants of the regional round table from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia, and Macedonia started the initiative for founding of the regional women's peace network, and sent the protest letter to the initiators of Butmir process, to express their concern about exclusion of women from the negotiations
- City Major of Banja Luka and Municipal Major of Novi Grad signed proclamations of support to the Campaign 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, and accounted the period from 25 November until 10 December as 16 days of activism against gender violence in these cities
- Cooperation with Radio Television of Republika Srpska resulted with initiating weekly TV program "In Focus"
- We contributed to establishing of the Women's Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



PLAN FOR 2010

We will continue to work on the project „Woman Today“ in 2010. Since general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina are planned for October 2010, in cooperation with other women's nongovernmental organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we will organize the campaigns for increasing visibility of women in the election process. Our objective is to contribute to increasing number of elected female candidates at all levels of governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We will organize educational programs for female candidates in order to build their skills for public presentations and conducting campaigns. After the elections in October 2010, we will organize the round table to analyze accomplished results.

We are planning to continue with organization of the public discussions on actual topics, and monitoring work of the municipal gender equality commissions in Prijedor, Gradiška, Novi Grad, and Kozarska Dubica.

We will continue with organization of advisory meetings with women politicians and NGO activists from Banja Luka and targeted local communities, and together with them, we will plan and evaluate project activities.

Participation in work and activities of the Women's Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to be one of our priorities.



For the initiators of Butmir talks:

Banja Luka, 27 October 2009

Carl Bildt, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden
James Steinberg, Deputy State Secretary of USA
Valentin Inzko, High Representative in BiH

PROTEST

Being concerned with the progress of Butmir talks so far, and recalling that true democracy cannot exist without equal participation of women, Udruzene Zene and Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, together with the participants at the round table which resulted in the forming of the Regional Women's Network in Banja Luka on 23rd October, we request that the international representatives and local leaders include women in the continuation of talks on constitutional changes in BiH.

Women were excluded from all negotiating teams, which have been deciding about the BiH destiny, starting from the time of the Dayton Peace Agreement signing onwards. Butmir talks are no exception to this, while the results of these talks will have an impact on all BiH male and female citizens equally.

Participants at the round table held in Banja Luka who arrived from BiH, Croatia, Serbia Montenegro and Macedonia, are surprised with the behavior of Butmir talks' initiators, especially Carl Bildt, Foreign Minister of Sweden, the country which is currently presiding over the EU. The EU countries are obliged to show appreciation towards the gender balance, pursuant to resolutions, declarations, rulebooks, and road maps, when adopting any decision on the EU level. Contrary to the expectations of the BiH women, but also of the women from the region, Butmir talks initiators ignored all above mentioned, and proceeded with the practice of ignoring and excluding women, although they were in position to decide about who was to sit at the negotiating table.

This has only encouraged local politicians to pursue with the practice of women discrimination, violation of domestic legal regulations, first of all BiH Law on Gender Equality, and to ignore obligations that were taken over by the signing of the international and regional relevant contracts.

Negotiating table should host women as well who could give a different contribution to the talks and direct them towards the needs and interests of ordinary citizens of this country, who cannot live on the "principle of constitutionality."

Thus, we request that the international representatives consider our protest and prevent that only men decide upon the destiny of BiH male and female citizens!

Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka

United Women Banja Luka



your organizations on a note women's would also be happy to of interest to your assy in Sarajevo to nt Secretary pean and Eurasian Affair

GENDER SENSITIVE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Objective of the three-year project (2007- 2010) was to support adoption of gender sensitive peace and development policies in the Western Balkan Region through regional exchange of experiences, knowledge, and examples of good practice.

As response on the needs identified during past two years, during 2009 we initiated activities on the local level of regions Bratunac, Sanski Most and Foča, with objective to improve knowledge and skills of newly elected women politicians (local elections in 2008) from various political parties, and improve their cooperation with non-governmental organizations, in order to work more easily together on solving issues of their local communities, regardless of political and ethnic differences.

IKV PAX Christi from the Netherlands as our long-term partner financially supported the project.

ACTIVITIES

- The first cycle of two-day workshops in Bratunac, Sanski Most and Foča, on the topic „Building Capacities of Women Politicians in the Local Community,” was held in the period from April to June 2009, with objective of offering knowledge and skills needed for successful work and implementation of ideas in public governance institutions to women politicians that are elected in local governance bodies, as well as those women politicians that are planning to candidate for public functions in the future. These workshops gathered multi-ethnic group of women from eight (8) political parties from twelve (12) local communities.
- The second cycle of two-day workshops on the topic „Public Speech and Media, “was held with the same objective, at the same locations, in the period from June to October 2009.
- The round table with title „Women’s Multi-sector Cooperation on the Local Level” was held on 4 and 5 December 2009 in Banja Luka, with participation of women representatives in the municipal assemblies/local councils, employees of the municipal administrations, and representatives of women’s nongovernmental organizations from Bratunac, Sanski Most, Foča, Goražde, Srebrenica, Čajniče, Ključ, Milići, Zvornik and Banja Luka. Objective of the round table was exchange of experiences and concretization of cooperation between nongovernmental and governmental sector on the local level. Guests of the round table were Jolanda Brunnekeef (IKV Pax Christi) and Frieda Brand (representative in the local assembly Nijmegen) from the Netherlands, and they shared experiences with women participants. When it comes to position and representation of women in the Netherlands, our guests emphasized that situation is only slightly better than in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

RESULTS

- Improved knowledge and communication, negotiation, and decision making skills of fifty-one (51) women politicians, including thirty-three (33) women representatives in the municipal assemblies/local councils, employees of the municipal administrations from the regions of Bratunac, Foča and Sanski Most, in order to make easier their work in the municipal assemblies/local councils.
- Improved knowledge and public speech and media presentation skills of thirty-seven (37) women politicians, including seventeen (17) women representatives in the municipal assemblies/local councils.
- Women representatives of various political parties, representatives in municipal assemblies/local councils, and employees of municipal administrations networked, established cooperation, and better communication.
- Thirty-two (32) women politicians and representatives of local nongovernmental organizations from Bratunac, Sanski Most, Foča, Goražde, Srebrenica, Čajniče, Ključ, Milići, Zvornik, and Banja Luke



exchanged experiences and examples of good practices, and learned about experiences from the Netherland about inter-sector cooperation on the local level.

- Initiative sent to the institutional mechanisms for gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina to identify solutions for ensuring continuity in work of the local gender equality commissions.
- Several initiatives on the local level by women involved in the project implementation, such are small „health project” in Sanski Most and establishing women’s nongovernmental organization in Vlasenica.

Banja Luka, 8 December 2009

For: Gender Center of Republika Srpska Government
Gender Center of Federation of BiH Government
Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina

INITIATIVE

Dear Ms./Mr,

At the round table with title „Women’s Multi-Sector Cooperation on Local Level” held in Banja Luka on 4 and 5 December 2009, which gathered thirty-two (32) women representatives of nongovernmental organizations and municipal authorities from Bratunac, Sanski Most, Foča, Goražde, Srebrenica, Čajniče, Ključ, Milići, Zvornik and Banja Luka, women participants adopted the conclusions it is necessary to activate local gender equality commissions, as the key mechanisms at the local level for implementation of gender policies and practices. In that direction, women participants adopted the conclusion to send the initiative to the entity Gender Centers to examine following suggestions aimed to contribute to increasing working efficiency of the local commissions.

Having in mind that local governance institutions are responsible for respecting and fill implementation of the provisions of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, and that entity Gender Centers are obliged to monitor and supervise implementation of the Law at all levels of governance, women participants of the round table are recommending following:

- Entity Gender Centers should request from the local gender equality commissions to submit reports about their work at least once a year,
- Entity Gender Centers should suggest to the local governance institutions a model that would secure continuity in work of the local commissions, in order to prevent situations where women and men new members local gender equality commissions are elected/change every four years, and therefore lose continuity in their work,
- To examine methods of imposing sanctions against local commissions that are not having meetings and are inactive,
- In cooperation in nongovernmental organizations, to initiate annual meetings of women and men members of the local commissions in order to provide space for exchange of good and bad practices.

We sincerely hope you will consider and accept these recommendations. Women participants of the round table are ready to provide additional suggestions and offer cooperation.

Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka

Annex: List of women participants

PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Formally, Bosnia and Herzegovina represents the country of gender equality. It ratified the international documents in this area, adopted the Law on Gender Equality of BiH in 2003, and accompanying. However, in the practice, women are discriminated in all fields of life. Violence against women in a family persists, men are creating and leading politics, and there are no women in the highest bodies of executive governance. In average, only 18% of women participate in the local assemblies, while there are still local communities in BiH with no women in the local legislative governance. Women are also invisible in BiH media, whose language is often gender insensitive. In printer media of BiH, women are represented in only 22% of content, while only 14% content in electronic media focuses on women. There is general lack of implementation of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, which was adopted almost seven years ago. One of the key objectives of the project "Partnership for Change – Support to Implementation of the Law on Gender Equality in BiH" is to change this situation, and contribute to elimination of discrimination against women.

This initiative is continuation of the project "Gender Equality and Judicial Practice in BiH," and we started with its implementation in January 2009. Project activities are directed toward implementation of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH through initiatives of networked women NGO activists, politicians and students, education of judges and prosecutors, elected officials, and journalists about gender equality issues, as well as encouraging official institutions to implement the Law on Gender Equality in BiH and other relevant domestic and international laws and standards.

One of the project objectives is also to support collecting data from various sources needed for submitting BiH Report to the CEDAW Committee in 2010, and increasing sensibility of media and general public for implementing principles of gender equality that include development of politically correct and gender sensitive language, decreasing stereotypical portrayal of women, and their roles in BiH society.

We are fully aware that there is no quantitative and qualitative progress in improving position and role of women in BiH without joint actions and initiatives of various social actors. We are making efforts to accomplish the project objectives together with partners from the civil society, institutional mechanisms for gender equality, universities and schools, institutions, and media.

Fund Open Society Institute is financially supporting this project.

ACTIVITIES:

- The focus of the first project year was on activities related to process of development and adoption of the Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, as the ground for implementation of gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These activities were including following: round table with title "Law on Gender Equality of BiH – How to Make it Applicable in the Practice", which gathered women and men representatives of governmental and nongovernmental sector with objective to develop proposals and recommendations for changes and amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH; meeting of the nongovernmental organizations on the topic „Analysis of the Public Discussion on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH" where women's NGOs in BiH took a common stand on proposed changes and amendments and, acting as a NGO coalition, submitted it to the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH; thematic meeting with official institutions on the topic „Harmonization of the Election Law with the Law on Gender Equality of BiH", where women and men representatives of governmental institutions and nongovernmental organizations jointly analyzed issues related to harmonization of the Election Law of BiH with the Article 15 of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, related to increased representation of "less represented sex" in the governance.
- We organized six (6) thematic meetings on the topic of discrimination of women in different segments of life; such are discrimination of women in sport, female worker, and women victims of domestic violence, single mothers, women with disability, and Roma women.
- With objective of empowering local women's organizations, we organized the workshop "Writing Mini Project



Proposals and Budgeting,” on which we trained twenty (20) women and men activists, and granted small donations for supporting the best projects developed during this two-day workshop. Beside that, we determined that large number of women’s non-governmental organizations needs training in writing project proposals and budgeting, we organized additional mini-workshop on the same topic for twenty-three (23) women representatives of non-governmental sector from the region of Prijedor and Sanski Most.

- Two lectures on the Department for Pedagogy of the Faculty of Philosophy in Banja Luka, and Department for Journalism of the Faculty of Philosophy in East Sarajevo served for introducing of women and men students with the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and usage of gender sensitive language.
- We prepared brochure with detailed description of the all activities implemented during the first year of project implementation, with the title “Partnership for Change – Support for the Implementation of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH: Progress Report for 2009.”
(<http://www.hcabl.org/images/stories/pdf/partnerstvo.pdf>)

RESULTS:

- During the first year of the project, we implemented in total sixteen (16) activities, with participation of three hundred and ninety (390) of women and men representatives of the state, entity, and municipal institutions, nongovernmental organizations, representatives of academia, media, and target groups. Cooperation between different actors established as a part of this project will serve as “partnership for change” in continuous process of improving implementation of the gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Part of the amendments developed jointly by the women’s nongovernmental organizations in BiH was integrated in the final text of the Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH. Part of the amendments is especially important as it defines that bodies at all levels of organization of the governance must include at least 40% of women/less-represented sex.
- We assisted in the process of founding of the association of single parents, and participated in initiating of the changes of the Family Law of Republika Srpska, in order to ensure introducing the term “single parent” in the legislative text.
- We initiated several projects in smaller local communities, such are Rogatica and Grahovo, where women often lack access to financial and other resources needed for work.

PLANS FOR 2010

At the end of the first project year, we can conclude that we made a firm ground for implementation of the second project year, with all collected information, established contacts, and networks. As the Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH is finally adopted, we can continue with work on accomplishing of the final project objective – improving status of the gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Second project year includes continuation of work on promotion of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, strengthening capacities of women’s nongovernmental organizations, and collecting data for CEDAW Report. Special activity in 2010 will be preparation of the Dictionary of Gender Sensitive Language. We will also continue with organizing lectures on gender equality at universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as meetings with official institutions, on which we will promote changes and amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

THROUGH WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

At the end of February 2009, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka finalized implementation of the project "Through Women's Human Rights." Implementation of this project started in January 2008, with objective of increasing efficiency of institutions authorized to work on protection of labor and employment rights, with special emphasis on protection of women's labor rights.

Project contributors were women and men representatives of the Gender Center of Republika Srpska Government, Trade Union of Republika Srpska, Association of Mediators of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ngo "Vasa Prava" Banja Luka. During 2009, as a part of this project we printed brochure "Through Women's Human Rights", with overview of the most important international and domestic legislation related to labor and employment, with concrete examples from the local judicial practice, and contacts of all relevant public institutions and organizations to which women and men workers can approach in case of violation of their legally protected rights.

United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) supported this project.

ACTIVITIES:

During the first two months in 2009, we implemented following activities:

- Meetings with representatives of the Center for Education of Judges and Prosecutors of Republika Srpska, Association of Mediators of BiH, Ministry of Labor, and Protection of Soldiers and Invalids of RS, and Union of Associations of Employers of Republika Srpska. Objective of these meetings was to identify possibilities what should and can be done on improving protection of labor rights, especially women's labor rights, as well as examining possibilities of joint work on the similar projects. These meetings showed that private employers are not ready to work together with representatives of women and men workers and authorized governmental institutions on improving labor rights, but also that lack of financial resources represent obstacle for implementation of some of the solutions related to protection of labor rights offered by the project. Mediation as one of the ways for conflict resolution could significantly fasten finalization of the judicial procedures. However, women and men workers that approach to the courts in order to protect their rights usually do not have money for covering expenses of the mediation procedure, and governmental institutions do not want to cover these costs as well.
- Workshop in East Sarajevo that gathered women and men workers, representatives of trade unions, nongovernmental organizations, municipality administration and medical institutions, and enabled them to exchange experiences and identify problems and recommendations for improving position of women on labor market.
- Press conference on the occasion of 8 March, the International Women's Day, which marked end of the project activities, but not also the work on improving position of women workers.

RESULTS:

- Improved cooperation between official institutions and nongovernmental organizations that are working on protection of labor rights
- Women and men representatives in the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska introduced with situation of women's labor rights in Republika Srpska, and recommendations for their improvement
- Defined additional recommendation, which together with already defined twenty three (23) recommendations should contribute to promotion and protection of worker's rights, and especially women's labor rights.

WOMAN AND LAW - PHASE 13 - 2009

PROVIDING FREE LEGAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Overall project objective is strengthening and improving position of women within BiH society - in family as well as in the public life through elimination of all forms of violence against women and reaching equality between women and men. United Women Banja Luka and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka are implementing this project since 1997.

Results in 2009:

- **Increased legal security of women victims of violence in wide Banja Luka region and increased free access to legal advices and information about their rights of women victims of violence and domestic violence all ages and social status from Banja Luka region**

During 2009, United Women Banja Luka professional team (Practicing Lawyer/Attorney and Lawyer) was providing continuous legal assistance to women victims of violence in wider Banja Luka region. Women victims of violence had assistance of SOS volunteers provided through SOS telephone. In the period from 1 January to 31 December 2009, we provided free legal advice and information for two hundred and fourteen (214) women, and legal assistance for seventy (70) women that contacted our office. SOS volunteers provided psychological support and information to 688 women that called SOS telephone. Lawyer Advisor and Lawyer Attorney also provided continuous free legal advices and assistance to women beneficiaries of the Safe House Banja Luka.

- Visible progress in implementation of BiH laws aimed for prevention and treatment of violence against women on local level, and BiH as the whole, and improved response of women and men professionals in providing protection for women victims

Through providing legal assistance to women victims of violence, we were able to identify challenges and obstacles in implementation of laws and public policies aimed for protection of women victims of violence. We used these experiences to lobby for legislative and policy changes at the state and entity level.

During 2009, Natalija Petric, Practicing Lawyer/Attorney of the Woman and Law project participated in two state level working groups aimed for development of BiH Strategy for Fighting Domestic Violence and preparation of the Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH.

BiH Strategy for Fighting Domestic Violence was adopted in March 2009, and incorporated actions aimed to improve protection of women victims of violence, as well as recognized role of women's NGOs in this process.

Law on Changes and Amendments of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH was adopted by Parliamentary Assembly of BiH in November 2009, and entered into force in December 2009. Two important changes for which we lobbied are that gender based violence is defined in the Law in accordance with the international norms and standards, and quota of at least 40% was introduced in relation to equal participation of women in political decision making and governance.

- Improved knowledge of women and men professionals in local official institutions about all aspects of violence against women

Seventy three (73) participants – thirty one (31) men and forty two (42) women representatives of police, centers for social work, municipal administrations, and NGOs from Banja Luka, Doboje, Šamac, Teslić, Pelagićevo, Derventa, Bosanski Brod, Modriča, Petrovo, Brčko District, Bijeljina, Lopare, Zvornik, Ugljevik, Bratunac, Gradiška, Novi Grad, Kozarska Dubica and Kostajnica participated in four one – day workshops about domestic violence. Workshops were aimed to increase awareness about violence against women and knowledge about the most efficient ways to assist women victims, and share experiences about efficient models for work on providing assistance and support for women and children victims of violence through mobile teams and safe house.

PRESS STATEMENT

Non governmental organization Helsinki Citizens' Assembly most severely condemns irresponsible behavior by the RS Government, which until today's date failed to provide a single convertible mark for the functioning of the Banja Luka Safe House, which seriously questions the continuation of this institution's work.

On that point, we find appalling the statement of Assistant Minister of Social Protection, Ljubo Lepir, who said, "the closure of the Safe House actually represents the abandonment by the non governmental sector from this endeavor."

Domestic violence has for some time stopped being private, becoming a socially recognized problem, with the state being responsible for its solving and prevention. The UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, which is a composing part of the Annex I of the BiH Constitution, clearly defines that the states signatories are obliged to ensure legal protection for women, victims of violence, through affirmative actions and programmes, including the opening of the SOS phone line and the shelter for domestic violence victims. It is indeed hypocritical to justify the absence of hard work and responsibility by the Government with the alleged "abandonment by the non governmental sector" which is actually a deserving party for initiating discussion about domestic violence and the fact that domestic violence against women and children has been recognized as a criminal act in the local legislation.

We also find inopportune the excuse by the Government, "there are procedures which need to be abided by," as we have witnessed how some other activities and events allow the procedures to be simplified.

We hope that the Government will in the end provide the first transfer of finances, needed for the functioning of the Banja Luka Safe House and that 18 women and children, who are currently accommodated in the Safe House, will not end up on the street or will not be sent back to houses or apartments which they have left due to beating and maltreatment.

Gender Equality in BiH in the Context of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace, and Security

During 2009, "Women to Women" Sarajevo, with support of EUPM, and Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka as the local partner, organized two workshops in Banja Luka on the topic "Gender Equality in BiH in the Context of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace, and Security."

During these workshops, forty-five (45) women and men participants learned about UNSCR 1325, gender terminology, role of women and men in peace building, and application of the Resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Workshops provided a space for representatives of local communities of Banja Luka, schools, Ministry of Interior Affairs of Republika Srpska, EUPM, and EUFOR, and students to present their views, and establish basis for common work.

Workshops were organized as a part of the Program "Public Participation in Human Security and Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Women, Peace, and Security)." "Women to Women" Sarajevo are implementing this program since 2005, with objective of increasing sensibility of security sector (police and army) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and EUFOR and EUPM missions in BiH about women's human rights issues and gender perspective, with aim to establish cooperation between nongovernmental organizations and security sector at all levels, in order to include gender equality policies in their internal structures.



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WE OFFER

CIVIL SOCIETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Basic Trainings

Title	Topics
Civil society and activism	Civil society, nongovernmental organizations, 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 media in modern society, stereotypes and prejudices in media, socially marginalized groups and their portrayal in the media, discrimination in the media (with possibility of focus on specific social groups)...
Gender sensitive reporting in media	Role of media in modern society, portrayal of women and men in media, legal and regulatory framework for media in BiH, gender analysis of media content (possibility of focus on specific topics)...

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Title	Topics
Management of nongovernmental organizations and fundraising	Nongovernmental organizations, legal framework for functioning of nongovernmental organizations, decision making, mission, vision, and program activities of nongovernmental organizations, fundraising ...
Strategic planning	Strategic planning, importance of planning process, mission and vision, problem analysis, program 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 organizations	Specifics in work of nongovernmental organizations, legal framework, financial obligations towards tax institutions and donors, harmonization of procedures to meet donors and tax institutions requests, organization of financial management within 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 news, press release, press conference, specifics of TV and radio program
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, option analysis, and defining of proposals...
Facilitation and decision making	Facilitation, decision making in a group, communication skills, compromise, and consensus, voting...
Train the trainers program with possibility of mentoring	Principles of adult education, defining training objectives, planning and designing the triaging program, 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

„Rights of National Minorities and Local Policies – A Study on Application of Standards for Protection of Rights of National Minorities in BiH, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia“

A Study on Application of Standards for Protection of Rights of National Minorities in BiH, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia represents the result of research implemented by the Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, in cooperation with the partner organizations – Association for Protection of Human Rights and Civil Liberties “Homo” from Pula, Center for Regionalism from Novi Sad, Union of National Minorities of Republika Srpska, and Helsinki Monitor for Human Rights from Ljubljana, as a part of the regional project „Neighborhood – Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Cooperation on the Local Level in Western Balkan Countries”, supported by the European Commission.

Beside interviews with representatives of local authorities that are working with national minorities and representatives of associations of national minorities, the field research included analysis of harmonization of municipal documents with the international and domestic legislation and standards related to protection of rights of representatives of national minorities, in order to determine scope of practical application of local policies in relation to cooperation and improving position of national minorities

“Partnership for Change – Support for Implementation of the Law on Gender Equality in BiH: Report on Project Activities in 2009“

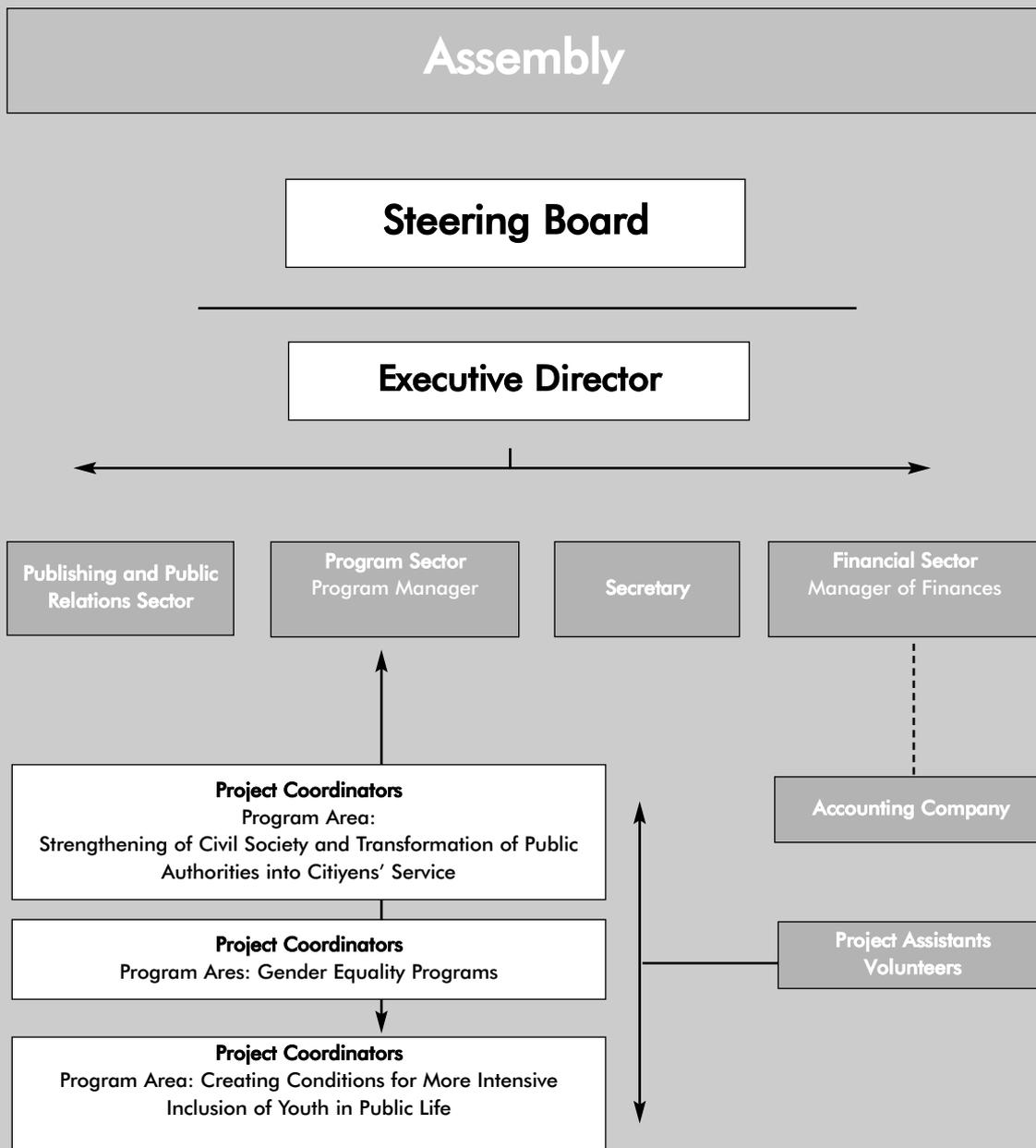
This brochure contains description of all activities implemented in order to reach the main project objective – support to elimination of discrimination against women through initiatives of networked women activists, politicians and students, oriented toward implementation of the Law on Gender Equality of BiH, and other related laws. Our intention was to make this brochure informative in relation to the project activities, but also to present topics covered within the project activities. Each activity is presented with the story from life of certain categories of women related to it. For those who want to get more insight into presented topics, we provided introductory presentations from all project activities.

Woman Today 13

Thirteenth edition of “Woman Today” provides overview of the project activities implemented as a part of “Woman Today” project. Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka and United Women Banja Luka are partner organizations in this project, which is supported by Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation from Sweden. In this publication, you will find reports from public discussions organized during 2009, report from the regional round table “From Local to Global Dialogue with the European Union,” on which we initiated women’s peace network, and reports from the workshops for planning of gender sensitive policies on the local level, campaigns, press conferences, and TV programs. Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina are factor that cannot and must not be ignored in process of democratization in our society — therefore we are continuing our fight and advocacy actions to improve position of a woman in BiH society. We are continuing to work through this and all other projects implemented by our association.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE HCA BANJA LUKA



FINANCES

INCOMES AND EXPENCES	AMMOUNT IN BAM
Unspent Funds from 2008	59661.91
INCOMES in 2009	
Donor contributions	616284.02
Refund for maternity leave	12360.19
Individual donations	2751.35
Interests	696.42
Positive exchange variances	1143.85
TOTAL	633235.83
AVAILABLE RESOURCES in 2009	692897.74
EXPENCES in 2009	
Salaries (net)	116953.37
Taxes and contributions	62662.99
Purchasing equipment and office costs	18243.20
Negative exchange variances	318.57
Costs of the activities	247741.82
TOTAL	445919.95
Rest of unspent resources	246977.79

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