



Annual Report

2023

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The Annual report was created with the support of The Sigrid Rausing Trust. United Women Foundation is responsible for the opinions and data presented in the report.

We worked on important issues in 2023

We organized a two-day training on available mechanisms of aid and support for individuals who have survived sexual violence and harassment for representatives of eight non-governmental organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We conducted training for employees of the District Court in Banja Luka on gender equality, stereotypes, prejudices, and gender-based harassment and violence, as part of the collaboration between the District Court and the Foundation United Women, aimed at implementing activities that can contribute to the implementation of the Strategy for the Advancement of Gender Equality in the Judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We have launched the campaign 'FROM WOMEN TO WOMEN,' a collection drive for hygiene kits intended for the specific needs of women affected by the earthquake in Syria and Turkey.

We organized training for 40 representatives from the judiciary, police, and social welfare centers in collaboration with the Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Center of Republic of Srpska on the topic 'State Obligations in Protecting Victims of Violence'.

We organized a workshop for women in politics with the aim of contributing to gender equality in the public and political life of Republic of Srpska. Representatives from various political parties joined us, and with the support of experts in law, gender equality, and psychology, we discussed the position and challenges that women encounter through political engagement and involvement in public life.

Training for employees at the Public Institution 'Rada Vranješević' Home in Banja Luka on sexual violence and harassment and principles of working with sensitive clients. The education placed special focus on criminal offenses related to the protection of the sexual integrity of minors and working with traumatized individuals. It involved two groups of 20 caregivers and healthcare workers.

An exhibition of artworks by residents of the Safe House titled 'Hands Create a Life Without Violence,' held on the occasion of International Women's Day.

In the humanitarian campaign 'FROM WOMEN TO WOMEN,' we collected 892 hygiene kits that were delivered to East Sarajevo and subsequently transported to Turkey.

We organized an Interactive Job Fair for Women in collaboration with the Entrepreneurship Center Banja Luka, with the support of the City of Banja Luka, as part of the #forwomen'slife campaign.

We organized a panel discussion on violence against women from the perspective of religious communities and non-governmental organizations, aiming to identify additional areas for collaboration and prevention of all forms of violence, including wartime sexual violence, which can affect anyone regardless of social status, religious affiliation, or other identity.

We participated in the regional conference 'Feminist Peace' in Skopje.

We organized a workshop for legal advisors where we discussed the rights of victims of violence according to the Criminal Procedure Code, the position of the victim and the suspect during the investigation, options for assistance and support to the victim, property claims, strategies, and tactics for achieving legal goals, and highlighted examples of best practices.

Educating Judges and Prosecutors - Effective Approach and Work with Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Witness Support Units in the Judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We held two workshops with 47 students at Borisav Stanković Elementary School with the intention of transferring their messages onto a mural to be placed on the school wall in Banja Luka.

Montenegrin artist Andrijana Vešović, a.k.a. Zobijana Bones, sold her artwork at an auction in Banja Luka, and all proceeds were donated to our Safe House.

We exchanged experiences through a study visit - members of our team visited the non-governmental organization SOS Nikšić, a helpline for women and children Victims of violence, and the Center for Women's Rights in Podgorica.

We established cooperation with the Center for Preschool Education and Training in Banja Luka and signed a Cooperation Agreement that will serve as the basis for implementing joint activities aimed at providing assistance and support to children exposed to domestic violence.

At the "Dermal R" shoe factory in Kotor Varoš, we held information sessions for about 750 workers and 360 workers from the same factory in Kneževo, informing them about the SOS hotline, support services, reporting methods, and the rights of victims of family violence.

We held a promotion event for the campaign SPEAK UP! at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Banja Luka.

We held a training for 453 cadets at the Police Academy in Banja Luka.

With our support, a mural with a powerful message against violence and harassment was painted on the external wall of the Borisav Stanković Elementary School in the Lazarevo neighborhood, Banja Luka, covering an area of 115 m².

We hosted representatives from institutions and non-governmental organizations from Tajikistan, exchanging experiences on systemic responses to domestic violence and violence against women. The special focus was on support services for women and experiences in the field of economic empowerment.

We worked on important issues in 2023

The round table discussion titled 'From Formal Obligation to Real Progress' was held in Banja Luka, attended by 40 representatives from system institutions, the international community, executive and legislative authorities from Republic of Srpska. They had the opportunity to listen to and discuss key recommendations from international bodies for enhancing responses to domestic violence and violence against women.

In cooperation with the Municipality of Kostajnica, we held a seminar on the topic of domestic violence for representatives of local-level institutions who are familiar with the content of the Protocol on Handling Cases of Violence, which was recently signed in this local community.

We participated in a protest march in Banja Luka following a brutal femicide that occurred in Gradačac.

The Mayor of Sarajevo, Benjamina Karić (née Londrc), visited us with the aim of assisting in providing comprehensive support to women and children victims of violence and providing specialized support and assistance to victims of violence.

In order to have the capacity to respond to the challenges and obligations ahead of us, we held a workshop where 10 team members had the opportunity to work on effective communication strategies, crisis management, and problem-solving.

We organized training for representatives of non-governmental organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina that deal with women's rights and monitor the implementation of international laws ensuring women's rights and democracy.

We participated in the organization of the protest against femicide in Banja Luka, and on that occasion sent requests for timely protection of victims of violence to institutions, the judiciary and authorities at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We held a two-day seminar for judges and prosecutors "Domestic violence and violence against women - Experiences and challenges of prosecution in Bosnia and Herzegovina with reference to the regional and international legal response"

We organized a two-day workshop with 15 women active in politics and the non-governmental sector who agreed to continue their joint efforts to improve this position of women with experience of violence, establish an Alimony Fund, enhance the position of victims of war torture, contribute to women's participation in local elections, and contribute to media representation of women in public and political life.

Guidelines for the prevention of sexual and gender-based harassment have been adopted, representing an internal regulation of the City of Banja Luka, defining procedures and actions in case of sexual and gender-based harassment in the workplace.

With the support of UN Women BiH, we painted a mural symbolizing the importance of safe movement for women and girls throughout all parts of the city and provided support for additional lighting in dark underpasses.

During November, we were joined by Jelena Jovanović, an activist from Montenegro, who was one of 7 young women given the opportunity to spend a month in an organization in one of the countries in the region through the support of the Young Feminists of Trag Foundation.

We held training for members of local coordination and cooperation bodies in case of domestic violence and violence against women, with representatives from protection entities from Prijedor, Novi Grad, Kostajnica and Kozarska Dubica participating.

Together with members of the Coordination Body in Cases of Domestic Violence in Srbac, we held a meeting, summarized normative changes and discussed the state of violence in this municipality.

Upon the invitation of the Women's Activist Group of the SNSD Banja Luka, representatives of the United Women's Foundation held a lecture on gender-based violence and domestic violence. Through dialogue, questions regarding the actions of protection entities in cases of reported violence and various forms of violation of labor rights were raised. We are particularly pleased that the participants shared their personal experiences of violence they have endured, which will encourage other women to seek help and break the cycle of violence.

As part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, we presented key achievements within the program "Banja Luka - A City with Zero Tolerance for Sexual Violence and Harassment," which we have been implementing with the support of UN Women BiH over the past three years. Special emphasis was placed on actions aimed at improving the protection and support for individuals who have experienced sexual harassment through the enhancement of the normative framework, training of professionals, and awareness-raising campaigns in this area.

We participated in the Global Safe Cities and Public Spaces Forum, an international event focused on initiatives contributing to making public spaces safe for women and girls. The Forum, held in Ecuador, brought together over 200 leaders and activists from more than 25 countries. During one of the sessions, a representative of the "United Women" Foundation presented the key results and challenges through the implementation of the program "Banja Luka - A City with Zero Tolerance for Sexual Violence and Harassment."

We held a training session for activists from Bosnia and Herzegovina on the topic of Responding to Violence during Conflict and in Post-Conflict Settings. Through theoretical presentations and practical exercises, participants had the opportunity to discuss, share their experiences, and address dilemmas in this field.

Context Analysis

2023. was characterized by the narrowing of the space for the activities of civil society organizations and independent media.

In March 2023. The Government of the Republic of Srpska has publicly presented the draft of the Law on the Special Register and Transparency of the Work of Non-Profit Organizations in the Republic of Srpska, which was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska in the first reading at the end of September 2023. This law designates that, non-profit organizations that fully or partially receive international donations are considered as 'agents of foreign influence'. It introduces their registration into a special register, as well as additional financial and work inspections. This Law recognizes and prohibits the political activities of non-profit organizations, with the exception of activities in the fields of science, culture, social and health care, sports, consumer protection, protection of the rights of national minorities and persons with disabilities, environmental protection, fight against corruption, philanthropy, volunteerism and information sharing. In July 2023. Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Srpska were adopted which, among other things, introduced defamation and disclosure of personal and family circumstances as criminal offences. These processes significantly limit the freedom of speech and work of civil society organizations and independent media in the Republic of Srpska.

According to the data compiled by following media reports, 10 women were murdered, and 7 survived a murder attempt during 2023 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the 8 safe houses for women and children Victims of violence across Bosnia and Herzegovina, 496 victims of gender-based and domestic violence received emergency security protection and support in recovery from violence, which is an increase of 35 persons, or 7.5%, compared to 2022. In 2023, 6.285 calls were made to the emergency SOS phone lines 1264 (Republic of Srpska) 1265 (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

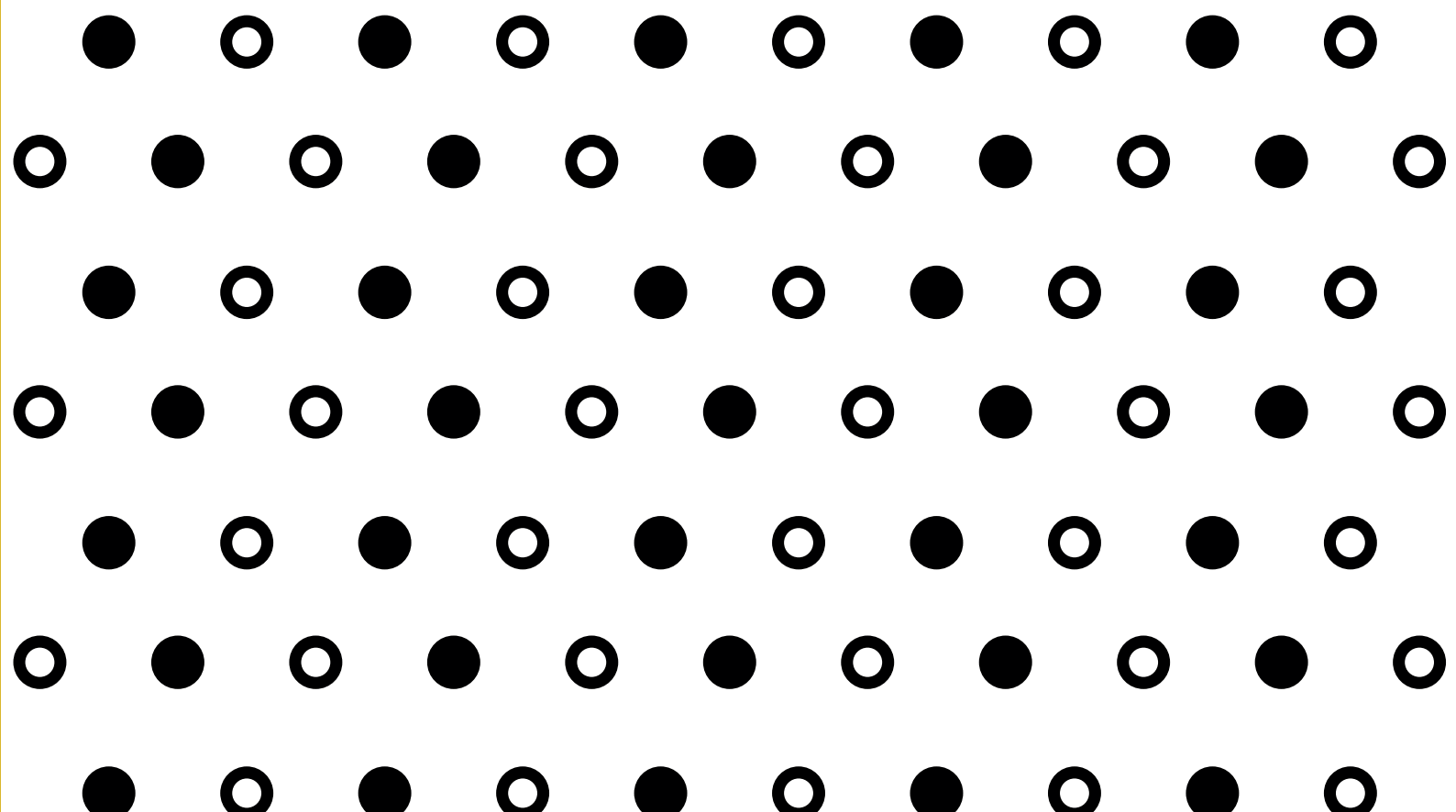
In August 2023, after the grave murder of N.H. in Gradačac, which the perpetrator streamed through social media networks and the following public protests by female activists and citizens throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, the processes of amending laws in the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of BiH started in the direction of protecting the safety of victims of violence, recognizing different forms of violence against women and more effective institutional protection and support. In October 2023. The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska unanimously adopted the Draft Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women, which, among other things, defines femicide – the taking of a woman's life and violence against women, in the context of their prevention. Ensures free access to safe houses for victims of violence at their own request, improves the procedures for issuing emergency protection measures, and ensures support for specialized services to support and help victims of violence – SOS telephone lines and safe houses.

The Report of the European Commission for Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023, Chapter 23: Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, addresses the issues of gender-based violence and domestic violence. A clear recommendation was made to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to "harmonize and improve the legislation against domestic violence and gender-based violence in order to bring it into line with international standards, as well as harmonize laws throughout the country with the Law on Gender Equality in the direction of increasing the participation of women in public and political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina." within the next year. Systemic problems were noticed within the institutional response to gender-based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The report calls on the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to urgently change the legislation in order to harmonize it with the Istanbul Convention.

To make changes in the entity legislation that addresses gender-based violence and domestic violence, the establishment of an effective monitoring and accountability mechanism, the improvement of data collection in this area in order to use in the development of public policies. The need for improvement in the prosecution of criminal acts of sexual violence and the provision of access to compensation for war crimes victims, as well as the provision of witness protection, was emphasized again.

These suggestions are a result of continuous efforts made by the women's organizations in BiH for recognizing, preventing and stopping violence towards women and domestic violence as a priority in the process of BiH joining the European Union.

Program action





Specialised services for supporting women and children victims of domestic and gender based violence

SAFE HOUSE BANJA LUKA

The Safe house for women and children Victims of domestic and other types of gender-based violence has been operating as a part of the United Woman Foundation for 17 years, and in that period it took in a total of 963 people, or:

418 women

545 children

The main goal of the Safe house is the realization of special support measures towards women and children in moments of acute violence in the transition period from leaving the violent surrounding to starting a new independent life. In the Safe house the victims of abuse get professional help and support which is provided by the staff in form of psychosocial help and support, legal advice and help, healthcare and accompaniment and support in finding an exit strategy and support after leaving the Safe house.

The taking care of domestic violence victims in the Safe house is realized through the decision of the competent Center for Social Services or Social Protection Services on the recognition of the rights to use the special measures of support, and with the previous consent of the victim. Women with domestic violence experience have the right to independently file the claim to use the special support measures – temporary care in the Safe house - from the social center (clause 15, state 2 of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of the Republic of Srpska, official gazette 102/2012, 180/2013, 82/2015 and 84/2019).

Women and children from all local communities of Republic of Srpska can be admitted into our Safe house, and the nonexistence of the shelter in victim`s place of residence is not and cannot be the obstacle for exercising the right to secure shelter and appropriate help and support for violence victims with the goal of their rehabilitation and reintegration in the society.

Women and children in the Safe House can receive:

- Psychosocial assistance and support through counseling and therapeutic work,
- Health services through monitoring of health status, its and support in providing specialist services,
- Psychotherapeutic treatment
- Real counseling, assistance and support,
- Support in the educational development of children,
- Participation in occupational therapy, acquisition of skills in working with wood and glass objects,
- Support in implementing procedures in institutions
- Support from a trusted person

- Support in finding an adequate exit strategy,
- Assistance in economic empowerment and independence,
- Extended support after leaving the Safe House for a period of 18 months.

During 2023 special measures of support in the Safe house were provided to 26 women and 21 children from 11 local communities: Banja Luka, Laktaši, Prnjavor, Srbac, Gradiška, Istočno Sarajevo, Doboј, Kotor Varoš, Kozarska Dubica, Prijedor i Šipovo. In one case a person who had stayed in the safe house relapsed. Out of the total number of people admitted, 3 women returned to the violent community, while 23 women and 21 children started a new life without violence, which has already been realized or is in the final phase of realization.

Taking into account the socio-anamnestic data, the largest number of women belong to the age group between 31 and 55 years old, have graduated high school and are unemployed. A total of 22 women survived partner violence by a marital or extramarital partner, while in three cases it was violence by a father against daughters and in one case violence by a son. Comparing with the number of women and children from the previous year, one can notice a growing trend of the period of stay in the Safe House. The total number of days, that women and children spent in the Safe House during 2023 is 5,519, which means that the average of 15 people stayed in the safe house, in comparison to 2022 when that number was 9 people, calculated on the basis of a total of 3,449 days spent.

During the second half of the year the capacity of the shelter has been filled as opposed to the first half, which can be connected to a large number of femicide that occurred during the year. During 2023 we have had 6 requests for shelter from the Center for Social Services for victims for who we had no means to admit.

Service	Number of services
Health support	2.820
Psychosocial support	5.261
Psychotherapy treatment	341
Legal advice	139
Total:	8.561

Overview of services provided to women and children in the Safe House during 2023

LEGAL COUNSELLING

The Legal UWF Counselling has been operating from 01.05.1997 and has the goal to provide support and counselling towards women who are suffering or who have survived violence, in order to protect their rights and interests in different procedures in front of institutions. In 2023 UWF legal counsellors provided support for:

**247 women through
648 different services**

Direct support services enable women to better understand their rights in the context of violence. Lawyers help them identify the legal frames which protect them and give them directions about how to achieve their rights. During 2023 the law team of UWBL has given, in the name of our Survivors, 5 suggestions for imposing emergency and protective measures to the Main Court in Banja Luka, all five measures were imposed, and on behalf of the feedback from violence victims the measures were fulfilling their purpose and the violence wasn't repeated during the duration of measures. Previously created tools (forms for submitting proposals for the imposition of measures) are efficiently being used through the measure proposing process.

Assistance in accessing other resources for victims of violence was achieved through the inclusion of centers for social work, the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights, resources for material assistance, government centers for

free legal assistance. Lawyers have sent more than 50 different letters to the mentioned institutions in order for the victims to realize their rights.

Continuous monitoring of court decisions related to violence by legal advisers in connection with the protection of victims contributes to an increased level of protection and helps victims to react in case of non-compliance with these measures. Familiarizing victims in detail with the procedures and rights related to processing violence, divorce, division of property and custody of children provides them with the necessary knowledge and enables them to make informed decisions.

PERSON OF TRUST

As of 2020, in the Republic of Srpska, the right of victims of domestic violence to a Person of trust has been defined within the framework of the Law on protection against domestic violence. A person of trust can be any person of the victim's choice, older than 18 years, except the perpetrator of violence. Person of trust provides the victim with emotional and moral support in one or more procedures in relation to the domestic violence.

During 2023, UW activists were engaged as a Persons of trust. This form of support is available to the victims through the engagement of activists with different profiles: lawyers, psychologists, social workers and nurses (2). The support is given through different procedures in front of different institutions, including the police stations, the Social Centre, and the centers who provide free legal aid, prosecution, basic and district court.

A total of 64 procedures within which support was provided during the reporting period indicate the organization's involvement in supporting survivors. Those procedures include different aspects, such as taking statements from victims, children's custody procedures, testimony about domestic violence, marital property division procedures, reconciliation procedures and divorce procedures.

Special attention is given to the emotional support of victims, with the goal to stabilize their emotional wellbeing in order to reduce the retraumatizing respond during the process of giving details about the violent experience.

One of the challenges is applied to the situations in which the activists can be present as witnesses in certain cases. This situation is not specified by law, which may lead to the need to disqualify a Person of trust as a witness in order to ensure the smooth conduct of further legal proceedings.

The advancement of support for victims of violence through the Person of trust included the promotion of the right to a Person of trust through the social media networks, distribution of the promotion material¹, and education of the protection subjects, as well as the representative of non-governmental organizations that come into contact with women victims of violence.



November 17, Banja Luka, education on the topic "A person of trust"

1 <https://udruzene-zene.org/publikacije/rodno-zasnovano-nasilje/lice-od-povjerenja-podrska-zrtvama-nasilja-u-porodici/>

SOS TELEPHONE

SOS telephone is an integral part of the fund's specialized services and beside us, the Lara foundation from Bijeljina and UG Buducnost from Modrica. are included in this initiative. SOS telephone is reachable on the entire territory of Republic of Srpska, and the calls are redirected to the organization which is the closest to the location of the person calling. The calls are free of charge for all callers and are available 24 hours. For users of the network operator MTEL, the short number is 1264, while for the other network operators such as ERONET, BLIC, BH TELEKOM etc. the number is 051 427 464 and the calls to this number are not free of charge.

During year 2023 the SOS telephone was used by **1.226** persons who reported violence. All persons who survived violence were women. The highest percentage are women between the ages of 30 and 40. Violence against children was reported in 59 cases. Violence against girls and women ages from 18 to 70 was reported through 112 calls.

The largest percent of 82% women are in a marital or in 10% of cases in an extramarital union.

Relatable to the level of education in 29% of cases, women had a secondary vocational education in relation to the total number of applicants. 11% of women had higher or high education. In 38%, it was not possible to obtain data on the level of education.

From the total number of women, 28% of them were in some form of employment, permanent, occasional or temporary employment. In 43% of the cases, the women were unemployed, while in 21% of the calls, this information could not be obtained. The remaining number of women are in the category of retired women.

In relation to the violence they experienced, the largest percentage are victims who were exposed to multiple forms of violence over a period of several years.

The largest percentage of reported cases of violence refer to violence committed by a partner in more than 80% of cases, while violence committed by a former partner was reported in 8% of cases. The rest of women reported violence committed by their father, brother, children or other persons.

Data analysis confirms that in 23% of cases the perpetrators of violence do not suffer any forms of addiction. Alcoholism is present in 29% of cases, and drug addiction or gambling addiction in 8% of cases. Out of the total number, 5% of the perpetrators have some form of mental disorders.

The largest percentage, 43% of the reported cases of violence has never turned to any of the institutions for help. The institutions most often addressed by the victims were centers for social work, the police and non-governmental organizations.

During the year, four women who reported violence through the SOS telephone, were taken care of.

SELF-HELP GROUPS FOR WOMEN WITH EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE

UWBL has organized 24 workshops with more than 140 women from self-help groups, during 2023. We worked with women continuously, twice a month, to provide help and support, and to empower them to face other everyday problems. Women were also regularly informed about their rights, which they have in accordance with the Law on Social Protection, Family Law, and the Law on Protection from domestic violence.

Alongside that, as part of OSCE activities, a focus group was organized with women victims of domestic violence, related to the support of witnesses in the Court and Prosecutor's Office of BiH. The goal of this focus

group was a deeper understanding and improving the experience of witnesses in judicial proceedings, and developing recommendations for improving support before, during and after testifying in the future. In 2023, a trip to Banj Brdo was also organized, where the women relaxed, supported each other, socialized and talked about everyday life.

Women from the self-help groups were also active during the “16 days of activism” campaign, and they also participated in a panel discussion, distribution of leaflets, a sales exhibition of the works of Safe House beneficiaries, and during 2023, some of them also gave statements to the media.



December 5, Banja Luka, panel discussion “You can do anything if you believe you can”

PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC SUPPORT

Psychotherapeutic support is realized through the individual work of a psychotherapist with women victims of domestic violence, through psychological treatments aimed at empowering women and overcoming crisis situations, preventing more serious consequences for mental and physical health, as well as improving skills for a more functional life. **In 2023, 25 women received psychotherapeutic support in recovery from violence through 180 counseling sessions.**

The therapeutic process was implemented with the goal of:

- ~ **Overcoming Trauma:** Helping a woman to process and overcome the traumatic experiences she has experienced due to violence. Development of coping mechanism strategies with traumatic memories and reducing their impact on the everyday life.
- ~ **Strengthening of the emotional stability:** Work on developing an emotional resilience and self-confidence. Recognizing and managing emotions and developing healthy ways of expressing and processing emotions.
- ~ **Building self-awareness:** Encouraging women toward a deeper understanding of their own needs, values and goals. Development of positive self-acceptance and self-esteem.
- ~ **Understanding of psychological aspects:** support in researching and understanding one’s own spiritual or religious beliefs. Work on promoting of the inner balance and connection.
- ~ **Development and building of healthy interpersonal relationships:** Working on the building and maintaining of healthy interpersonal relationships. Understanding and setting boundaries in interpersonal relationships.
- ~ **Improving of self-help and self-regulation:** Learning self-regulation skills to better manage stress and anxiety. Encouraging the development of self-help strategies that support emotional well-being.

Encouraging the development of self-help strategies that support emotional well-being. Connecting with other women, who have survived violence, through self-help groups that function within the work of the “United Women” Foundation.

~ **Changing destructive behavior patterns:** Identification and changing of destructive behavior patterns that result from the violent experiences. Development of the new and healthier ways of facing challenges.

~ **Providing Education and Information:** Education about trauma, violence, and their effects on one’s mental health. Providing information on resources and support available to victims of violence, such as economic support, social assistance, legal assistance, employment and self-employment support.

All survivors are victims of violence, most often physical and emotional abuse that occurs in current partner relationships or that continues after the termination of a violent relationship. With 20 women, the counseling or psychotherapeutic support process was successfully completed in 2023. Through the psychotherapy service, the women received the experience of self-efficacy (instead of powerlessness), the experience of adequacy (instead of justification), then they gained a sense of responsibility and care for themselves (instead of neglecting themselves and their health).

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The socio-economic empowerment of women victims of violence is a key element in the fight against gender-based violence. Violence against women often has profound socio-economic consequences, which can include loss of employment, financial dependence on the perpetrator, poverty, restricted access to education and healthcare, and other forms of social marginalization.

The “United Women” Foundation provides support to users of specialized services through:

Employment Support: Providing support in finding employment or acquiring skills needed for the labor market, connecting with employers through ongoing collaboration, assisting in CV preparation, or providing information about job opportunities can help women gain confidence and independence. The foundation has established contact with over 20 different companies that have expressed interest and the need to employ a woman who has survived violence. Through the public campaign “Breaking the Cycle of Violence through Employment,” a total of 20 employers have expressed readiness to be resources and employ victims of violence in the current year. In 2023, with the support of the Foundation, 11 women who survived violence found employment.

The Interactive Employment Fair FUW was held at the Youth Center on March 11, 2023, in cooperation with the Entrepreneurship Center with the support of the City of Banja Luka, as part of the #forwomenforlife campaign. Within the fair, the Interactive Employment Fair for Women was held. Employers presented their companies and open job positions, while interested women had the opportunity to ask questions and connect with employers to find new employment.

The fair was accompanied by a panel discussion on “Women’s Rights in the Field of Labor and Employment” led by Dijana Tepšić. Speakers included Lana Jajčević representing the “United Women” Foundation, Milorad Mitrović representing the Ministry of Labor and Veterans’ Affairs of Republika Srpska, Mladen Vrećo representing the Employment Bureau, and Petar Radulović representing the Entrepreneurship Center Banja Luka.

Rights in the field of social protection: Victims of domestic violence in Republika Srpska are recognized as beneficiaries of rights in the field of social protection. Activists from FUW who provide direct assistance and support ensure that all women are thoroughly informed about the rights they can claim, including the right to financial assistance, the right to care and assistance, subsidies, support for health services and treatment, and all other rights prescribed by the Law on Social Protection of Republika Srpska.

Support for users of specialized support services: During 2023, the Foundation received donations in the form of food and hygiene products, as well as gifts for women and children in the form of children’s New Year and Christmas packages, toys, gifts for International Women’s Day, and Easter holidays.

Support for independent living free from violence: The Foundation has been recognized by the local community as an organization that directly supports women who have survived violence. Individuals, both men and women, in 2023, showed solidarity and supported victims starting independent lives by donating basic necessities such as furniture, household appliances, hygiene products, and clothing, helping women feel safe and providing a sense of belonging and support.



March 11th, Youth Center, Banja Luka, Interactive Women's Employment Fair

Fund for the socio-economic empowerment of women: The “United Women” Foundation established the Fund in 2016 to address the identified needs of women who have survived violence with the aim of socio-economic empowerment, contributing to their financial independence and ensuring their future.

Objectives of the Fund:

- ~ Contribution to financial independence: Provide women who have survived violence with means and resources to achieve financial independence and ensure their economic security.
- ~ Socio-economic empowerment: Provide financial support to women who have survived violence to build necessary skills, knowledge, and tools to overcome the consequences of violence, establish control over their lives, and achieve independence.
- ~ Employment and entrepreneurship: Financially support women who have survived violence to enter the labor market through employment or starting their own businesses to create stable sources of income.
- ~ Education and training: Financially support educational programs and training to enable women who have survived violence to acquire the necessary skills for employment or entrepreneurship.

In 2023, a total of **14,017.07 BAM** was deposited into the Fund for socio-economic empowerment. The balance of the Fund as of December 31, 2023, amounts to **33,385.39 BAM**. Donations were made by the following legal entities:

1. UniCredit bank – 1.000,00 BAM
2. ASSECO SEE DOO Sarajevo – 977,92 BAM
3. NLB Bank - 9.779,15 BAM
4. INNER WHEEL CLUB – 1.000,00 BAM
5. Donations from individuals – 1.260,00 BAM

During 2023, a total of 9 monetary donations were disbursed, totaling 4,154.00 BAM, to assist and support women in purchasing seeds, seedlings, repairing chicken coops, travel expenses, etc.

Legal system

Since 2011 “United Women” Foundation implements activities aimed at improving the judiciary’s response to domestic violence and violence against women and children. We follow the work of the judiciary through the monitoring of court proceedings, which we realize actively by going to hearings and passively by collecting verdicts for criminal acts of violence in which women and children appear as injured parties/witnesses.

The main goals of monitoring court proceedings are:

Monitoring the effectiveness of the justice system: Monitoring of court proceedings enables assessment of how effectively the judicial system reacts to cases of gender-based violence. This includes an analysis of the pace of the proceedings, access to justice for victims, the quality of investigative processes, as well as sentencing of perpetrators. Identification of faults in the system: **Monitoring the court proceedings helps to identify omissions or deficiencies in the justice system** related to the response to gender-based violence. These may include the lack of training of judges and prosecutors, lack of resources, or lack of adequate laws or policies. **Adopting initiatives and proposals for changing laws and policies in the area of gender-based violence:** “United Women” Foundation uses the information from monitoring the court proceedings as a basis for making decisions related to the creation of initiatives to change laws and policies. Beside that the results of monitoring are used for the improvement of training for judges, prosecutors and other subjects of protection who act in cases of violence.

During 2023. UW Foundation activists and partner NGOs (UG “Budućnost” Modriča, Foundation “Lara” Bijeljina and UZ “Most” Višegrad) and independent activists **followed 119 court proceedings in which women and children Victims of violence appear as injured parties/witnesses.** The monitoring of the proceedings resulted in individual reports indicating the position of the victims of violence during the proceedings. We also collected **62 verdicts** from Basic and District courts in Republic of Srpska for cases of gender-based violence.

The total number of cases that will be included in the final analysis is **157** with **82** judgments.

In order to collect comprehensive data on the effectiveness of the judicial system in the area of gender-based discrimination from all Basic and District Courts in the Republic of Srpska, we collected data on the average duration of court proceedings for the criminal offense of domestic violence from the indictment to the final verdict.

Different practices were observed, with a minimum duration of the procedure from 67 days on average in the Basic Court of Bijeljina to 400 days on average in the Basic Court of Banja Luka.

The collected data indicates the need to initiate a mandatory emergency procedure for criminal acts of domestic violence, despite the legal requirement for urgency in the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. This is particularly important considering the length of the proceedings and the exposure of victims to additional victimization.

Monitoring the application of International standards in the field of women's rights

"United Women" Foundation spends continuously and independent tracking the state of affairs in the field of prevention and suppression of gender-based violence against women, with the goal of establishing priorities for public advocacy for the fulfillment of binding international standards from the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)**. Monitoring also points to aspects of the European Union's determination to regulate the area of gender-based violence against women, which are important and relevant for Bosnia and Herzegovina in the process of joining the European Union.

In 2023, the **BiH Gender Action Plan for the period 2023-2027** was adopted, which recognizes the prevention and suppression of gender-based violence, including domestic violence and human trafficking, as a priority area. **Criminal law protection against sexual harassment and protection against misuse of photos and videos of sexually explicit content in the Republic of Srpska have been improved**, which further aligns the provisions of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Srpska with the binding standards of the Istanbul Convention. Republic of Srpska initiated the drafting of a **new Law on protection against domestic violence and violence against women**, which, among other things, seeks to define femicide as a serious violation of women's human rights in terms of its prevention, introduces the definition of violence against women and regulates in detail the rights of victims to protection and support.

Bosnia and Herzegovina still does not have an established common database on all forms of violence against women and domestic violence at the state level. The lack of a clear methodology, as well as legal, administrative and political obstacles to the establishment of a unified system for data collection and analysis, was noticed. **No changes were noticed in the approach and determination of public institutions in the context of preventing all forms of gender-based violence against women.** Information about available general services and procedures related to support and protection measures are limited and, as a rule, without clearly presented steps that enable women exposed to violence to seek help and protection.

Throughout public protests of the organization for Civil rights, as well as citizens throughout BiH sent requests to the police, prosecutor's offices and courts in the direction of ensuring the protection of victims of violence and the urgency of action, initiating disciplinary proceedings against responsible persons in case of failure to provide the necessary protection, enabling the necessary support for victims of violence in criminal proceedings against perpetrators, access to support and protection services for victims of violence and stricter punishments for perpetrators of violence.

Continuity in the implementation of institutionally integrated training of professionals in the system of protection against violence was observed. However, there is still a lack of a structured assessment of the impact of training professionals in public institutions that are recognized as subjects of protection against violence against women on their actions in providing support to victims of violence, with clear indicators of progress.

No changes have been noticed in the direction of **the introduction of the legal obligation of all law enforcement officers and professionals who provide general support services** to inform women who have survived various forms of gender-based violence about their rights and available services within protection entities.

Institution in BiH apply different models of financing the care of victims of domestic violence in Safe houses,

while specialized services to women victims of violence who do not stay in Safe houses are provided based on the support of international donors, including the support to women victims of other forms of gender-based violence.

Sustainable exit strategies and the support to women which survived violence through economic empowerment, financial support, support by employment and social housing depend almost entirely on programs implemented by non-governmental organizations, with very limited support from government institutions/public budget funds.

Non-governmental organizations continue to develop specialized support and assistance services, including addressing access to these services by women belonging to marginalized groups. Available services include support in care and recovery from violence through Safe houses, free legal aid and counselling, psychosocial support, escort and support from a Person of trust, economic empowerment activities and support in exit strategies from violence. Most organizations do not have the possibility of free representation in court and only one organization implements continuous work programs with perpetrators of gender-based violence.

Improving of services can be seen through establishment and development of new models of support - support from a Person of trust, self-help groups, establishment of a network of women helpers - 4P, establishment of SOS application and offering of free online legal support for victims of violence, as well as continuity in the development of tools and resources for informing victims of violence about their rights and available support.

Access to the Safe houses and counseling centers of organizations for women with disabilities remains limited due to lack of technical equipment, architectural barriers and limited staff training to provide support to people with hearing or speech impairment due to lack of knowledge of the sign language. Organizations are making efforts to make access to specialized services available for Roma and rural women through the engagement of support persons and field visits.

The development of specialized services for victims of sexual violence includes the cooperation of organizations through the preparation of resource materials and staff training for working with women and children who have survived violence.

Examples of a good praxis were noticed on a local and cantonal level in direction to empower coordination and cooperation of institutions and civil society organizations through capacity building, cooperation on institutionalizing training modules and providing services to women who have survived violence.

Activities to establish support mechanisms for victims of sexual violence continued through the development of protocols and tools that serve professionals in public institutions and civil society organizations that provide support to victims of sexual violence. Alongside already established crisis center for victims of sexual violence within the health institution in Federation of BiH, and the initial training of health workers in these institutions. However, the additional crisis centers for victims of sexual violence have not been established in other parts of BiH, which limits the availability of specialized support and assistance to women exposed to sexual violence throughout the country.

Key initiatives in 2023

Iz Amendment to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Srpska² - The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska in August 2023 adopted amendments to the Criminal Code relating to the criminal offense of sexual harassment. At the initiative of the Foundation "United Women," this criminal offense has been aligned with the standards prescribed by the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Aligning this criminal offense is a significant step forward in improving the protection of the integrity of victims, who are most often women and girls.

2 <https://www.paragraf.ba/dnevne-vijesti/20072023/20072023-vijest1.html>

Modification of the provision of the Family Law of the Republic of Srpska

At the initiative of the Foundation, an amendment was made to the article of the Family Law of the Republic of Srpska relating to scheduling hearings for the reconciliation of married spouses - An additional provision has been added exempting the obligation to schedule hearings in cases where the plaintiff has initiated an investigation due to domestic violence. The provision prohibiting physical punishment of children has been retained. The initiative to abolish exceptions allowing underage marriages, in line with recommendations to institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, was not accepted by the court's decision.

The Family Law of the Republic of Srpska came into force in September 2023.

The Initiative for the Inclusion of the Law on Interim Child Support in the Republic of Srpska (Alimony Fund) in the Work Program of the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska for the Year 2023³. The initiative was addressed to the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, the heads of all parliamentary clubs, and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska with the aim of returning the law to formal procedures for its adoption. Representatives of the Foundation "United Women" regularly monitored the process of adopting the law, including public discussions during 2022 when it was concluded that the alimony fund should fall under the jurisdiction of the Public Fund for Child Protection of the Republic of Srpska. The initiative resulted in parliamentary questions regarding the Fund, but the Law has not yet been included in the work program of the National Assembly.

Initiative for the Improvement of Work and Financing of Safe Houses in the Republic of Srpska

During 2023, the Government of the Republic of Srpska drafted the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women of the Republic of Srpska, whose primary goal is to protect victims of domestic violence and violence against women by preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women, as well as protecting the lives and psychophysical integrity of female individuals, particularly by preventing femicide as the most severe form and consequence of violence against women. The draft of this law aims to make available an effective system of assistance, support, and protection measures to victims of violence against women, all with the goal of stopping the current violence they suffer, preventing its repetition, and particularly eliminating the possibility of a fatal outcome. The Foundation "United Women" continuously monitors the process of drafting the law.

Together with the Lara Foundation and the NGO Future, we submitted an initiative to improve the financing of safe houses and ensure free access to protection and support provided by safe houses to victims of violence. The improvement entails that the accommodation of women and children be fully funded by the ministry, as adopted in the Draft. Additionally, a provision was included that allows victims of violence to be accommodated in a safe house at their own initiative, without the requirement of a social work decision, which is one of the key recommendations to authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina by GREVIO, monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The Foundation supported the initiative of the Lara Foundation from Bijeljina to recognize support and protection services for victims of sexual violence through the mentioned law. The initiative was not adopted in the Draft Law on Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence against Women.

PUBLIC ADVOCACY EVENTS FOR LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

In Doboј, in collaboration with "TRIAL International" and the "Lara" Foundation, we organized a roundtable in September titled "Challenges in the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of Victims of War Torture in Republika Srpska." This addressed issues related to the time limit prescribed by the Law, which sets a deadline of five years for filing applications to acquire the status of a victim of war torture and the right to spa reha-

³ <https://udruzene-zene.org/dokumenti/inicijative/inicijativa-za-uvrstavanje-zakona-o-privremenom-izdrzavanju-djece-u-republici-srpskoj-alimentacioni-fond-u-program-rada-narodne-skupstine-republike-srpske-za-2023-godinu/>

bilitation, which victims have been unable to obtain because no public call has been issued for victims of war torture, only for the veteran population in Republika Srpska.



September 28th, Doboј, roundtable “Challenges in the Implementation of the Law on the Protection of Victims of War Torture in Republika Srpska”



August 9th, Banja Luka, “From Formal Obligation to Real Progress”

“From Formal Obligation to Real Progress” was the title of the roundtable we held in August in Banja Luka, attended by 40 representatives from institutional systems, the international community, executive and legislative authorities from Republika Srpska. They had the opportunity to listen to and discuss key recommendations from international bodies for enhancing responses to domestic violence and violence against women. We paid particular attention to safe houses and recommendations to ensure their unhindered operation.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

STRENGTHENING THE JUDICIARY’S RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In 2023, over 110 judges, prosecutors, and expert associates participated in four training sessions organized by FUW in collaboration with the Center for Education of Judges and Prosecutors of Republika Srpska through-

out the year. This is a significantly higher number compared to the previous year, where around 80 participants attended. The training sessions focused on key areas in the prosecution of gender-based crimes and covered various crucial aspects related to gender-based violence, including approaches to and working with victims, defining domestic violence, victims' rights in accordance with the Istanbul Convention, and the state's obligations in protecting victims, providing a comprehensive understanding of the issues and relevant legal and societal contexts.

Engagement of experts from various sectors: Through the involvement of domestic, regional, and international experts, the training sessions ensured diverse perspectives and experiences, which are significant for effective discussion and exchange of best practices.

The “United Women” Foundation aimed to provide a comprehensive perspective on the importance of criminal justice prosecution through the selection of educators. In addition to domestic educators from the NGO sector, judiciary, and academic community, we engaged regional and international experts who could offer different perspectives, work models, and promising practices.

At the initiative of the District Court in Banja Luka, the “United Women” Foundation conducted training sessions contributing to the implementation of the **Strategy for the Advancement of Gender Equality in the Judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina**. The goal of the training was to enhance knowledge and awareness of the concept of gender, gender norms, gender equality, and equal access to justice. Through the training sessions, all court employees had the opportunity to discuss and learn about victims of gender-based crimes, including children as victims of domestic violence, judicial practice, and secondary victimization during the prosecution process. Based on the addressed challenges, representatives of the judiciary were selected, where positive examples from practice in proving criminal offenses and sentencing were identified, offering victims a sense of access to justice and potentially having a positive impact on both specific and general prevention in the field of violence against women.



April 25th, Jahorina, training session “Effective Approach and Work with Victims of Gender-Based Violence in Witness Support Units in the Judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina”

Training of Cadets on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women: In collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska, FUW conducted training sessions from April to July 2023 for **453 cadets of the Police Academy and Special Anti-Terrorist Unit** on the topic of sensitive intervention in cases of domestic violence and violence against women. The training was delivered by a team of lecturers consisting of police officers and educators from the Foundation, focusing on topics such as the phenomenon and forms of violence, sensitized approach and conduct of police officers, rights of victims, multi-sectoral cooperation, and the significance and role of specialized support services for women and children victims of violence.

The cadets who participated in the training are future police officers who will operate throughout the territory of Republika Srpska.



1 June 15th, Police Academy Banja Luka, Cadet Training

STRENGTHENING MULTISECTORAL RESPONSE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Supporting multisectoral bodies at the local level is crucial in strengthening the response to violence against women and domestic violence. In 2023, the “United Women” Foundation was particularly active in the following local communities: **Banja Luka, Prijedor, Laktaši, Kozarska Dubica, Gradška, Srbac, and Novi Grad**. Support for the work of institutions at the local level included meetings in local government units (10 meetings) and capacity-building training for field professionals (2 trainings), a joint billboard and video campaign for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

All activities were aimed at: strengthening an integrated approach because the response to violence requires the involvement of various local actors; better identification and recognition of cases of domestic violence and violence against women; more efficient intervention by professionals; reducing the risk of re-victimization; increasing awareness of prejudices and stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men; and strengthening support for victims. Over 80 representatives from the police, prosecution, healthcare institutions, social institutions, educational institutions, legal aid centers, educational institutions, and civil society organizations participated in the activities.

During the reporting period, there was an increase in the number of reports of domestic violence. The number of reports of domestic violence in the municipality of Srbac increased by 80% in 2023 compared to 2022. Prijedor also saw an increase in reports in 2023; the Prijedor Center for Social Work registered 125 reports⁴ of domestic violence in the first ten months of 2023, compared to a total of 132 reports in the previous year.

⁴ <https://www.gradprijedor.com/drustvo/za-10-mjeseci-u-prijedoru-125-prijava-za-nasilje-u-porodici>



*Left: November 23, Srbac
Right: November 8, Banja Luka*

STRENGTHENING RESPONSE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

During 2023, the “United Women” Foundation implemented a series of activities aimed at strengthening the response to sexual violence in society.

Collaboration with the Public Institution “Home for Children and Youth without Parental Care Rada Vranješević” in Banja Luka represents a contribution to strengthening the response to sexual harassment in institutions working with particularly vulnerable beneficiaries.

30 employees of the Public Institution “Home for Children and Youth without Parental Care Rada Vranješević” in Banja Luka improved their knowledge about the issue of sexual violence and harassment, as well as understanding of various forms of this violence. The training sessions were held on February 27th and 28th in Banja Luka.

The goal of the training was to enhance the capacity of staff members who are in direct contact with minors to recognize potential signs of sexual harassment and provide support to victims. The education also covered principles of working with vulnerable beneficiaries, including empathetic approach, respect for privacy and dignity, as well as adaptability in providing support.

A particular focus was on **criminal offenses related to the protection of the sexual integrity of minors** given the importance of protecting minors from sexual violence and abuse. The education provided participants with tools and strategies for working with traumatized individuals, including understanding trauma, providing emotional support, and techniques for working with minors who have experienced emotional or physical injuries.

Twenty young people from the Public Institution “Home for Children and Youth without Parental Care Rada Vranješević” in Banja Luka participated in eight workshops organized by the “United Women” Foundation aimed at **preventing and recognizing** various forms of behavior that may lead to sexual harassment. The youth learned from trained professionals about boundaries in relationships, the concept of consent to sexual intercourse, safety, and rights.



February 27th and 28th, Banja Luka, Training for Employees of the Public Institution “Home for Children and Youth” Rada Vranješević”

TRAININGS FOR LOCAL PROTECTION SUBJECTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS DEALING WITH CASES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE

Twenty-four representatives from the police, prosecution, healthcare institutions, social welfare, and NGOs from Banja Luka, Prijedor, and Kozarska Dubica, and seventeen representatives from NGOs “Vive žene” from Tuzla, “Budućnost” from Modriča, “Vaša prava” Banja Luka, “Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly” Banja Luka, “Horizonti” Tuzla, Foundation “Lara” Bijeljina, and “Women’s Interactive Center” East Sarajevo participated in training on sexual harassment and abuse.

Two two-day trainings, held on January 26th and 27th in Banja Luka and on June 13th and 14th in Kozarska Dubica, covered basic knowledge of the legal framework and the rights of victims of sexual violence, including national laws and international instruments for the protection of victims of sexual violence. The rights of victims were emphasized, including the right to safety, justice, support, and protection. Experts in psychotherapy worked with participants to understand the concept of sexual violence, including different forms, risk factors, and consequences of such behavior. The training covered various aspects of responding to sexual violence, including supporting victims, reporting violence to relevant institutions, and prosecuting criminal offenses.



June 13th, Kozarska Dubica, Training for Protection Subjects from Banja Luka, Prijedor, and Kozarska Dubica

CREATION OF TOOLS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Foundation, together with representatives of the municipal authorities of the City of Banja Luka, has created Guidelines for the prevention of sexual and gender-based harassment. This document, initiated by the Foundation, was adopted by the mayor and represents an internal regulation of the City of Banja Luka that defines procedures in cases of sexual and gender-based harassment in the workplace.

The Guidelines on the prevention of sexual and gender-based harassment further specify the concepts of sexual and gender-based harassment, prohibit such behavior, and outline measures for prevention and procedures for the protection of individuals from sexual and gender-based harassment.



September 22nd, City Administration Banja Luka, Meeting Regarding the Development of Internal Mechanisms for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the City

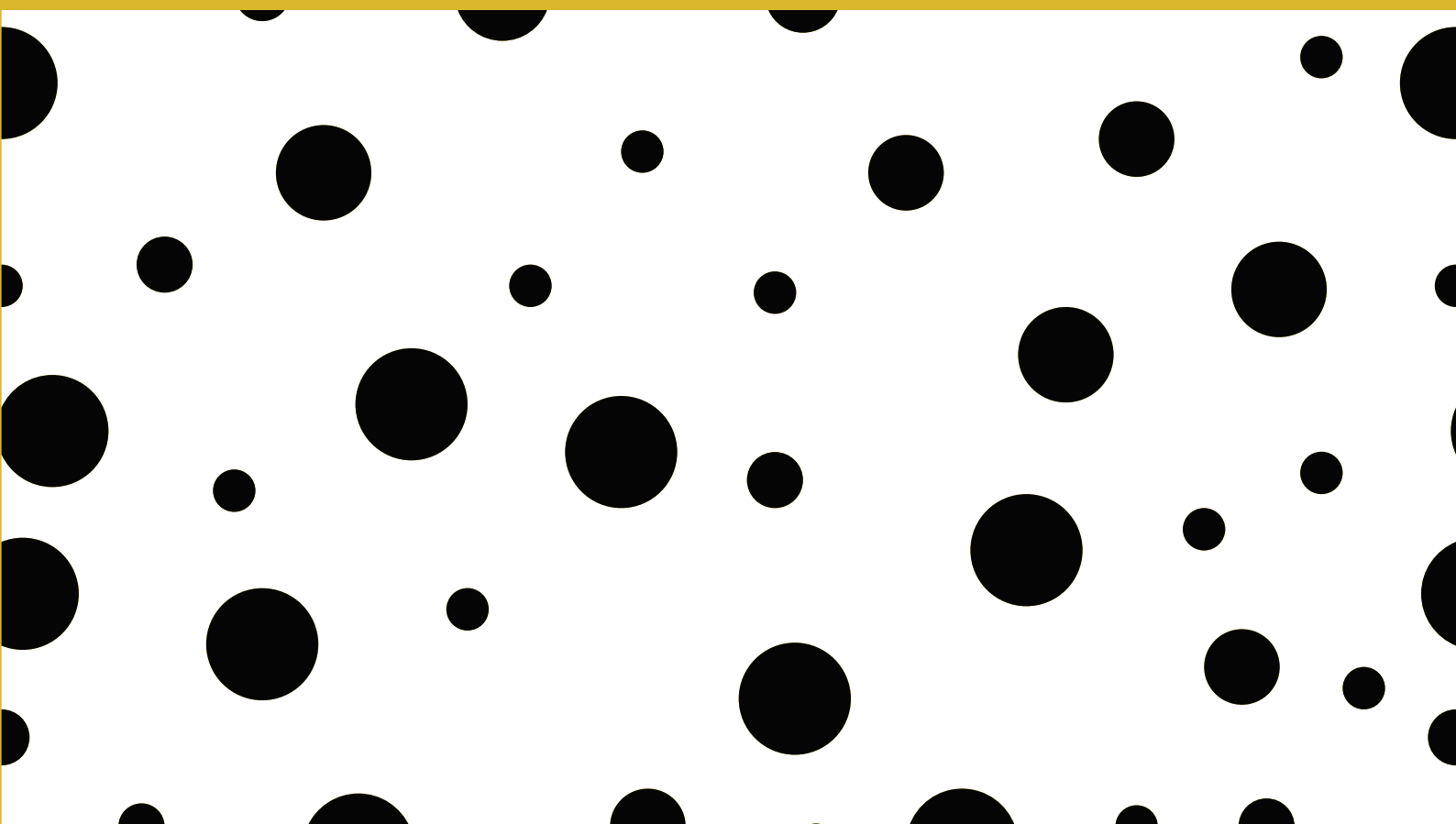
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE⁵

The “United Women” Foundation, in collaboration with the District Public Prosecutor’s Office in Prijedor, has created a document containing standardized and concise steps in handling victims of sexual violence that all protection subjects of sexual violence victims should adhere to. The objectives of the procedures are to: Strengthen intersectoral cooperation at the local level to improve the identification, protection, and assistance of victims of sexual violence; Ensure compliance with relevant national laws, strategies, and procedures, as well as respect for internationally agreed human rights standards; Ensure timely, compassionate, and victim-centered protection and reduce the risk of developing traumatic disorders in victims; Ensure adequate collection of physical evidence leading to more likely identification, prosecution, and conviction of perpetrators of sexual violence; Ensure adequate medical assistance to victims of sexual violence (examination, treatment, and monitoring of the victim’s health); Ensure data confidentiality.

The “United Women” Foundation participated in the drafting of the document as part of collaboration with the Safe Network Bosnia and Herzegovina within the project “Improving specialized support services for victims of sexual violence in BiH,” coordinated by the “Lara” Foundation in collaboration with the UN Women Office in BiH and with financial support from Sweden.

5 <https://udruzene-zene.org/publikacije/rodno-zasnovano-nasilje/standardne-operativne-procedure/>

*Contribution to
gender equality
in public and political life*



Although affirmative measures aimed at promoting greater gender equality are established by the Law on Gender Equality and the Election Law in BiH, women are still a minority in decision-making processes in politics, and consequently, in social and economic spheres of life.

The “United Women” Foundation has remained committed to its strategic direction aimed at contributing to gender equality in public and political life. Throughout 2023, we have continuously worked on:

Educating and raising awareness among women active in politics

Over 400 women members of various political parties participated in training sessions providing basic knowledge about women’s rights, domestic violence, and the international and domestic normative framework significant for the protection of women’s human and political rights.



November 16th, Banja Luka, Lecture as part of the 16 Days of Activism

The Priority Platform for the Period from 2022 to 2026, defined jointly by activists from civil society organizations working on women’s rights and women active in politics, focuses on five key directions:

Improving legal regulations in the field of violence against women - enhancing legal frameworks related to the prevention, protection, and support of women who are victims of violence. This includes strengthening legal measures to protect victims, improving access to justice and support for victims, and ensuring an effective prosecution process for perpetrators of violence.

Advocating for the establishment of the “Alimony Fund” - Support from the Republika Srpska in enforcement procedures of child support determined by final court decisions - establishing a mechanism that will enable the enforcement of child support payments to ensure that children receive the adequate financial support they need for their livelihood and development.

Empowering women candidates in local elections - supporting and empowering women who wish to engage in politics as candidates in local elections. This includes providing training, mentorship, resources, and support to women to increase their presence in the political arena and ensure their successful participation.

Media attitudes towards women - promoting gender-sensitive reporting and media work to ensure equality and respect for the dignity of women in the media space. This includes raising awareness of gender equality among journalists and editors, promoting positive examples of reporting on women, and condemning sexist and discriminatory media content.

Establishment of the Women’s Club in the National Assembly of Republika Srpska - establishing an organized body within the National Assembly of Republika Srpska that will address issues and interests of women and promote their participation and influence in the political process. The Women’s Club will serve as a platform for advocating gender equality and enhancing women’s rights at the political level.

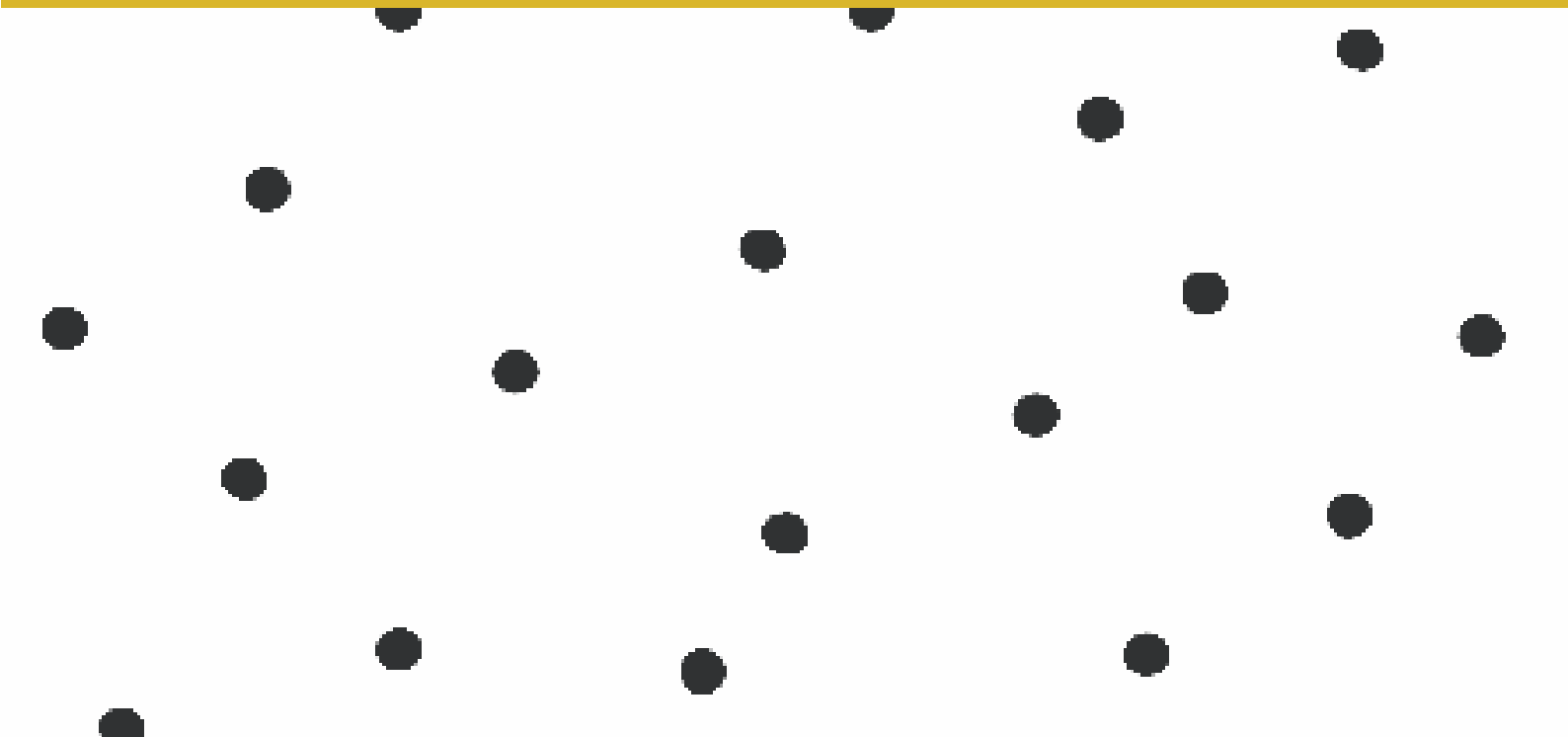
TRAININGS FOR WOMEN ACTIVE IN POLITICS

The “United Women” Foundation organized **two workshops** aimed at training women on political skills, campaigning, communication, and leadership to empower them for active engagement in politics and effective advocacy for their interests. Over 40 activists, parliamentarians, and women involved in various political activities participated in the workshops. The first workshop was held from February 25th to 27th, 2023, in Kozara, while the second workshop took place from October 26th to 28th, 2023, in Teslić. During the workshops, participants had the opportunity to acquire practical knowledge and skills through interactive sessions, lectures, group discussions, and exercises. Topics covered included campaign strategies, communication techniques, leadership development, lobbying, and advocating for women’s rights within political engagement.



February 26th, Kozara, Educational Workshop

***Contribution to EU
integration in the
Field of Violence against
Women and Gender
Equality***



During 2023, the “United Women” Foundation participated in the preparation of a joint submission by the Women’s Advocacy Group to the European Commission’s Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023. The Women’s Advocacy Group consists of 16 organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina advocating for the recognition of gender equality issues and women’s human rights in the context of EU integration, and its work is coordinated by the Association “Rights for All” from Sarajevo.

We participated in consultative meetings with civil society organizations regarding the EU enlargement package and the Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized in April by the Delegation of the European Union in Sarajevo and the EU DG NEAR from Brussels, contributing to narrowing the space for the work of civil society organizations and independent media. We advocated for the harmonization of laws and public policies in the field of preventing violence against women and domestic violence with binding international standards, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Additionally, we worked on enhancing general support services for women and girls who have survived violence and improving funding for specialized forms of support and assistance for victims of violence provided by civil society organizations.

a.



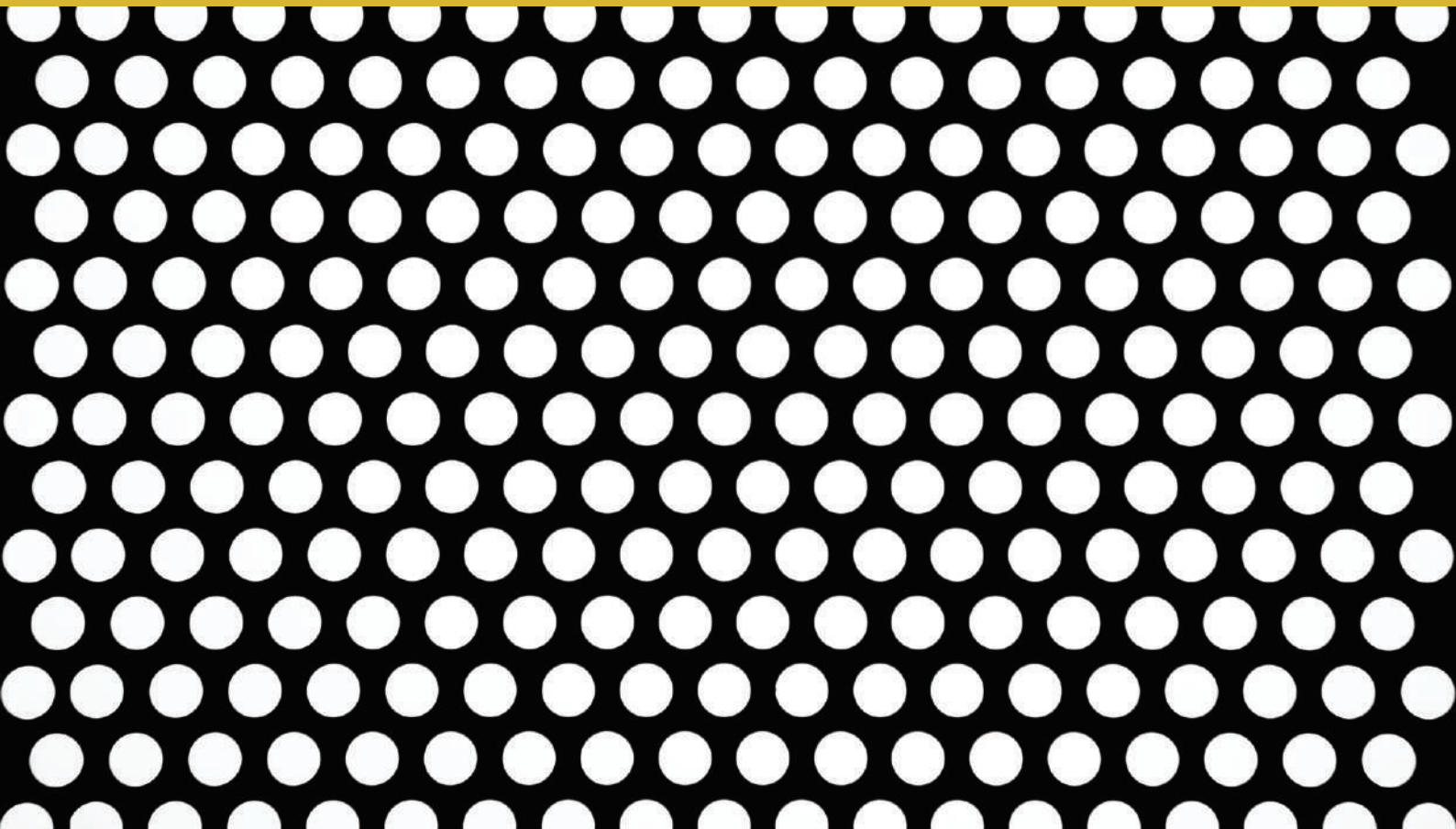
*Visit to EU institutions in Brussels, 2023
Photo: Johanna de Tessires*

In collaboration with partner organizations, we contributed to the preparation of a document used to advocate for the advancement of women's human rights and gender equality during a visit to EU institutions in Brussels in November 2023. A representative of the Foundation participated in an advocacy visit of women's organizations from Western Balkan countries to institutions and civil society organizations in Berlin in September 2023, during which we enhanced our knowledge of Germany's feminist foreign policy and contributed to advocating for establishing priorities in improving the legislative framework for the protection of women's human rights and its implementation in the EU integration processes of Western Balkan countries. The Foundation, in collaboration with a coalition of civil society organizations, coordinated by the Association "Rights for All" from Sarajevo and the "Helsinki Citizens' Assembly" from Banja Luka, contributed to the preparation of an alternative report on the implementation of the CEDAW Convention in BiH for the period 2019-2023⁶, particularly focusing on gender-based violence against women, and its presentation in Sarajevo in November 2023.

The European Commission's Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023, for the first time, emphasizes recommendations to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure the harmonization of legislation in the field of gender-based violence with international standards during the next year. Visible progress has been noted by the European Commission in integrating gender equality issues and women's human rights through the Report, including a focus on gender-based violence. The advocacy visits to Berlin and Brussels enabled us to contribute to advocating for the enhancement of the discourse on women's human rights in the European Union enlargement processes, as well as the commitment of officials from German and European Union institutions to support ongoing consultations with human rights defenders in the Western Balkans region in the EU integration processes by local government institutions.

6 <https://udruzene-zene.org/publikacije/rodno-zasnovano-nasilje/izvjestaj-organizacija-civilnog-drustva-o-provedbi-konvecije-o-eliminaciji-svih-oblika-diskriminacije-zena-u-bih-2019-2023/>

Peace activism



We were part of the team that created the handbook “Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence during War and in Post-War Environments - Experiences and Recommendations of Women’s NGOs⁷” which represents a significant contribution to the fight against gender-based violence in the context of wartime and post-war environments. This handbook, along with the developed educational module, is an important resource for organizations and institutions that provide support to survivors of violence, as well as for capacity building in this area. The project, initiated by the WAVE Network (Women Against Violence Europe) in collaboration with the OSCE, aimed to enhance support for survivors of violence and civil society organizations in conflict and post-conflict areas. This initiative facilitated the exchange of experiences and best practices among organizations from different countries, contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and strengthening cooperation in the fight against gender-based violence at the global level. In addition to the “United Women” Foundation, representatives of the Crisis Center for Sexual Assault in Yerevan, Armenia, the Women’s Fund Sukhumi in Kutaisi and Tbilisi, Georgia, and the Center “Women’s Perspective” in Lviv, Ukraine, also shared their experiences.



Sprečavanje i odgovor na rodno zasnovano nasilje tokom rata i u poslijeratnom okruženju
Iskustva i preporuke ženskih nevladinih organizacija
PRIRUČNIK



We organized a two-day training for civil society organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina titled “Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence during War and in Post-War Environments - Experiences and Recommendations of Women’s NGOs” with the aim of raising awareness and building the capacity of civil society organizations in combating gender-based violence in the context of wartime and post-war circumstances.

During this training, participants had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the experiences and recommendations of women’s non-governmental organizations involved in victim protection. The training facilitated the exchange of knowledge, understanding of the specific challenges faced by women in situations of armed conflict and post-conflict, and the consideration of the most effective strategies for preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

7 <https://udruzene-zene.org/publikacije/rodno-zasnovano-nasilje/>



December 12-13, Banja Luka, two-day training for civil society organizations

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE FROM WAR THROUGH COLLABORATION WITH RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

“The Safe Together: Strengthening Non-Traditional Partnerships at the Local Level between Safe Houses and Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to Enhance the Rights of Survivors of Sexual Violence in War in BiH” represents an initiative that is a significant step towards improving support for victims of sexual violence, particularly in the context of wartime conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The partnership between the Foundation “United Women” and the association “Medica” Zenica, along with five other non-governmental organizations running safe houses, enabled joint action and coordination efforts to provide support to victims of sexual violence and promote their rights. This initiative is specifically aimed at enhancing cooperation between safe houses and religious communities at the local level, which is an additional step towards creating support and a safe environment for women who have survived sexual violence.

The project involved various activities, including street actions on International Women’s Day on March 8th, continuous communication, and collaboration with religious leaders.



On March 17th, in Banja Luka, a panel discussion titled “Violence against Women from the Perspective of Religious Communities and Non-Governmental Organizations” took place

Improving the situation of victims of war torture in Republika Srpska, the Foundation “Udružene žene,” as part of a coalition of civil society organizations dedicated to improving the situation of victims of war torture. Together with organizations like TRIAL International in BiH and the Lara Foundation from Bijeljina, we carried out actions aimed at:

Raising awareness about the situation of victims of war torture in Republika Srpska: Distribution of informational leaflets⁸ (to over 100 institutions and organizations in Republika Srpska) and informative content on social media to inform the public about the situation and needs of victims of war torture.

Legal and psychological support for survivors of sexual violence in war: Providing legal and psychological support to women who have survived sexual violence in war is vital for their recovery. Support aims to help victims cope with trauma and regain control over their lives.

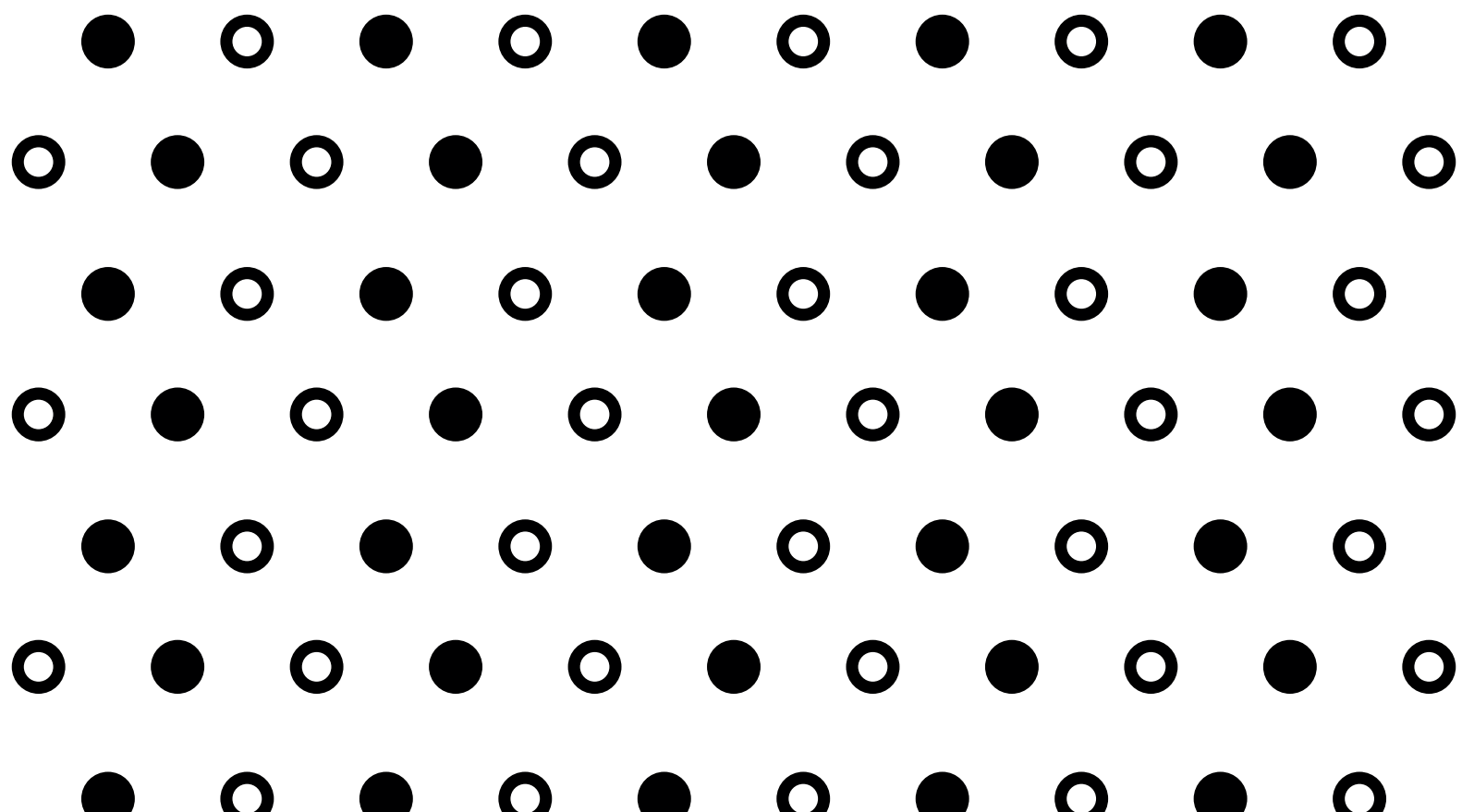
Continuous consultations with key decision-makers at the level of local self-government units, city departments for victims’ issues, human rights protection institutions, to ensure that the needs of victims are taken into account in policymaking and lawmaking. Consultations aimed to extend the deadline for submitting proposals to obtain victim status and ensure access to medical rehabilitation for victims of torture in Republika Srpska, thereby creating conditions for recovery from the consequences of war torture.



August 16th, a meeting was held at the Ombudsman’s Office in Banja Luka regarding the Law on the Protection of Victims of War Torture in Republika Srpska and the rights of victims to spa rehabilitation

8 <https://udruzene-zene.org/publikacije/promo-materijal/izazovi-u-provodjenju-zakona-o-zastiti-zrtava-ratne-torture-republike-srpske/>

*Exchange of
experiences and
study visits*



The exchange of experiences, knowledge, and challenges through a study visit to organizations and institutions providing support to victims of violence in Zagreb was a collaborative effort involving activists from the Lara Foundation, the Center for Women’s Rights, TRIAL International, Vive Women, and myself. Together, we visited the Victim Support Association, which operates in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice of Croatia, the Center for Women Victims of War “Rosa,” and the “Women’s Room,” which provides support to victims of sexual violence. We toured the Dotrščina location and had the opportunity to learn about Saša Šimpraga’s project “Virtual Museum of Dotrščina,” which is part of the Documenta program on the culture of remembrance – the Center for Dealing with the Past. The study visit took place from October 30th to November 2nd with the support of the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation.



November 1, Zagreb, study visit

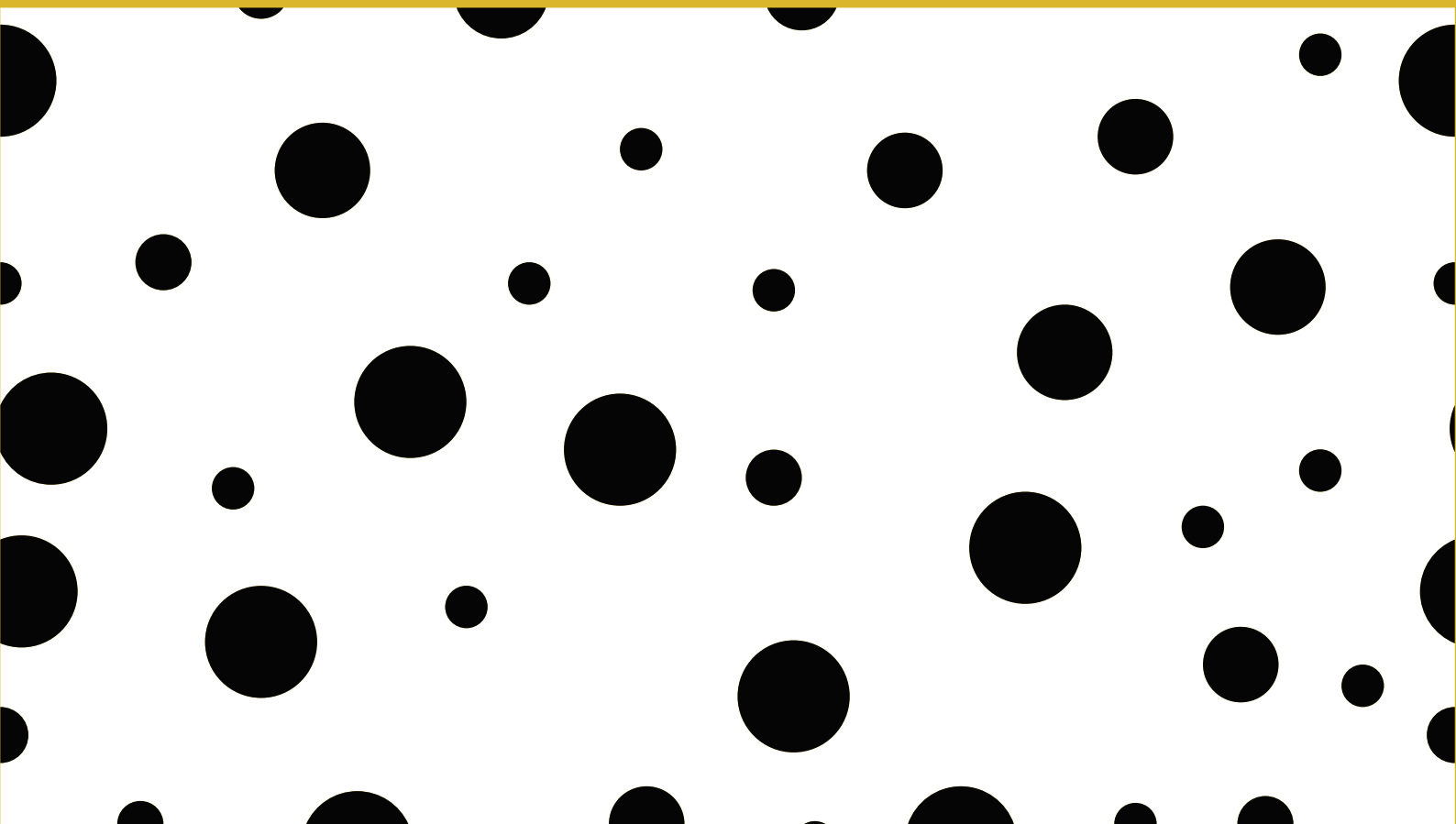
PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL FORUM ON SAFE CITIES AND PUBLIC SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

The Global Forum on Safe Cities and Public Spaces is an international event focused on the safety and inclusion of women and girls. At the event, we presented the results and experiences of the “United Woman” Foundation in implementing the program “Banja Luka – City with Zero Tolerance for Sexual Violence and Harassment.” We learned about various strategies for preventing and responding to sexual harassment and other forms of violence in urban and rural areas.

The forum brought together over 200 leaders and experts, representatives of local and national governments, civil society, and international professionals. The event took place in the city of Quito, Ecuador, from November 28th to 30th, 2023.

Quito was chosen as the venue due to its significant progress in implementing the UN Safe Cities program for women over the past 12 years.

*Actions to raise
public awareness
and media visibility*



FUW was very active in raising public awareness about violence against women in 2023 through various communication channels: media appearances, websites, social media, video and print materials, as well as targeted communication with specific target groups such as journalists, editors, decision-makers, professionals in social work centers, universities, students, and the general public through street campaigns and protests.

Special campaigns, often in collaboration with a larger number of civil society organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were organized in relation to International Women's Day (March 8th) and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

The visibility of FUW was further supported by activities on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube), which recorded positive reactions and increased the number of followers. The Facebook page has 7273 followers, which is a significant increase compared to 2020 when we had 3478 followers. Additionally, on Facebook, we have over 6.7 thousand posts that our followers have marked with "like."

The followers on the Facebook page are mainly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also from other countries, in the following order: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, the USA, North Macedonia, and Sweden.

The post with the highest reach reached over 120 thousand people in 2023 and was published on November 1st, 2023:



The mural we painted with the support of UN Women BIH symbolizes the importance of safe movement women and girls through all parts of the city

On the FUW Instagram profile, there are 1412 followers, which is also a significant increase compared to 2020 when we had 601 followers. On the Instagram profile, the video posted on October 12th, 2023, in the form of Reels, had the highest reach of 4,707 people, in collaboration with BHRT on the topic "Protest against femicide."

On our YouTube channel, we have posted over 20 videos in the past year, of which the video "**PROGOVORI**", posted on June 29th in collaboration with students from the University of Banja Luka, had the highest number of views (4008). The video is part of the "PROGOVORI" campaign aimed at speaking out about behaviors in public spaces that are uncomfortable and disturbing.

We participated in the “ŠTIT” campaign initiated by Ida Prester from Croatia, which is accompanied by a song and a video with the same name aimed at encouraging women to seek legal and psychological help.

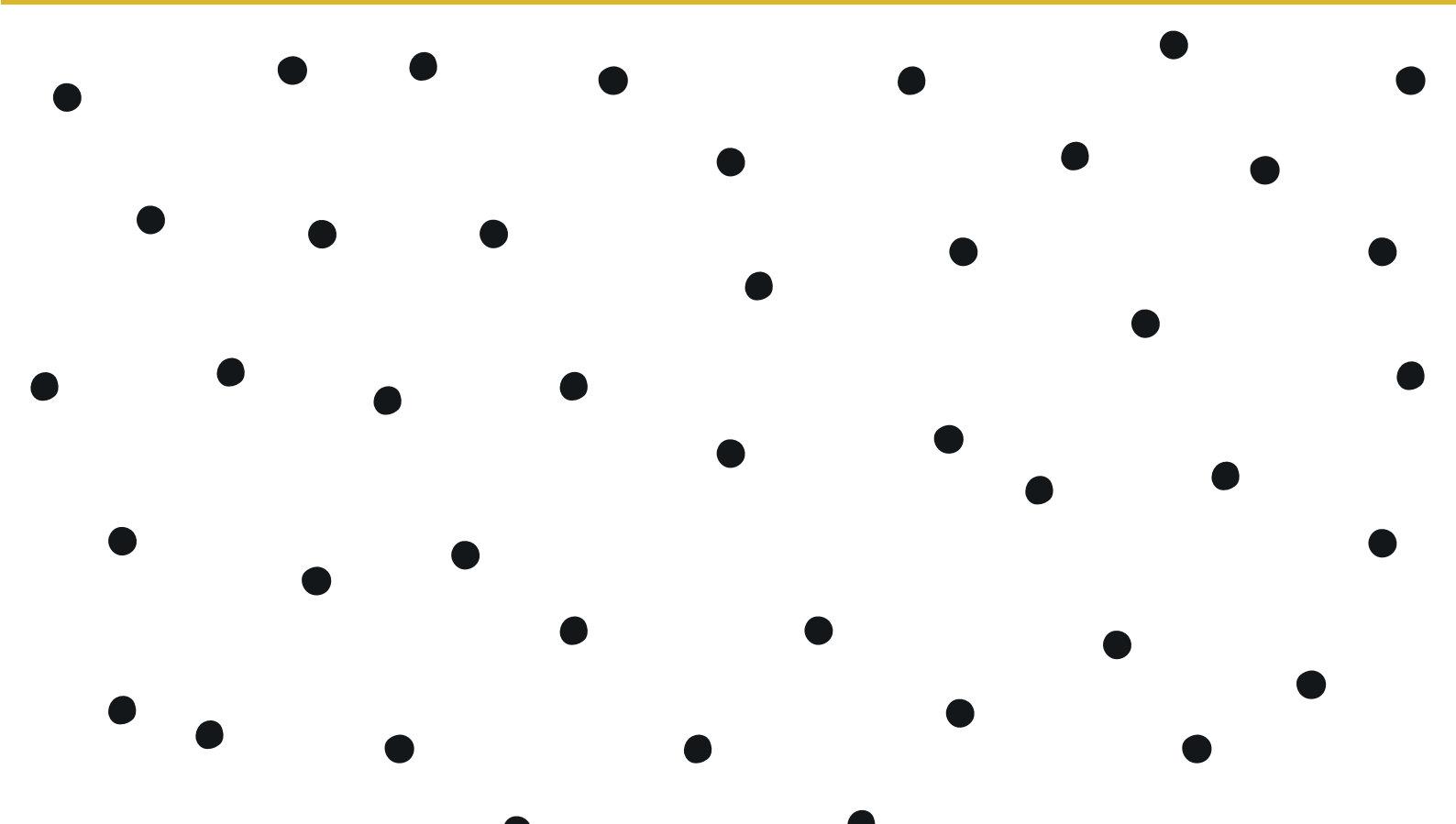


International campaign “SHIELD” within 16 days of activism

ONLINE VIOLENCE IS PUNISHABLE BY LAW, IT’S NOT A GAME!

We have reiterated our awareness campaign about online violence and its harmful consequences, which includes informative visuals specifically designed for social media. These visuals carry a strong message against online violence and provide concrete tips for recognizing different forms of violence on the Internet, as well as specific instructions for protection and reporting to the relevant authorities.”

*Together against
violence -
joint actions*



ACTION “FROM WOMAN TO WOMAN”

As a response to the crisis caused by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, together with the city of Banja Luka and the Red Cross of Republika Srpska, we launched the #FromWomanToWoman campaign and collected 892 hygiene packages under the initiative #FromWomanToWoman, representing support for women affected by this disaster. Here are some key aspects of our response:

The #FromWomanToWoman initiative demonstrates solidarity and support for women in crisis situations. Providing hygiene packages is essential humanitarian assistance in situations like these. These packages can be crucial for maintaining basic hygiene standards, especially in circumstances of destroyed life infrastructure and displaced communities.

The initiative also aimed to raise awareness of the importance of supporting women in crisis situations, which was reflected through public attention and media coverage, as well as the participation of numerous citizens in delivering hygiene packages.



Left: Sticker for donated boxes,

Right: March 5, Banja Luka, teams of the “Red Cross” and the “United Women” Foundation with aid packages

EXHIBITION – ZOMBIJANA

The “United Woman” Foundation welcomed visual artist Andrijana Vešović, better known on social media as Zombijana Bones, on May 25, 2023, in a packed hall at the Youth Center in Banja Luka. Her exhibition, titled “Revolution, while I smell really nice,” focused on women and women’s rights. During the exhibition, there was an auction of her artworks, raising 2,909 KM, which were donated to the needs of the Safe House.



May 25, Banja Luka, exhibition and auction of works by artist Andrijana Vešović

MURAL ON THE WALL OF “BORISAV STANKOVIĆ” ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In July 2023, in collaboration with the “Borisav Stanković” Elementary School in the Lazarevo neighborhood of Banja Luka, FUW supported, initiated, and realized the painting of a mural as a symbol of universal values that unite us, on one of the school walls. Artists Boris Domazet and Milan Stanivuković, along with students from the “Borisav Stanković” Elementary School, designed a mural covering an area of 115 m². The mural consists of two parts: a dark (covered) section depicting violence, hatred, humiliation, provocation, and a bright (uncovered) section featuring symbols of common values such as friendship, freedom, equality, sports, learning, music, painting, etc. In this way, the school sends a message of being a safe place where violence is not tolerated, and children have the freedom and support to confide if something bad happens to them.

The mural includes a plaque that reads “We all deserve a life without violence” as well as information about the donors who made these ideas and wishes come true. The mural was also supported by UN Women Bosnia and Herzegovina.



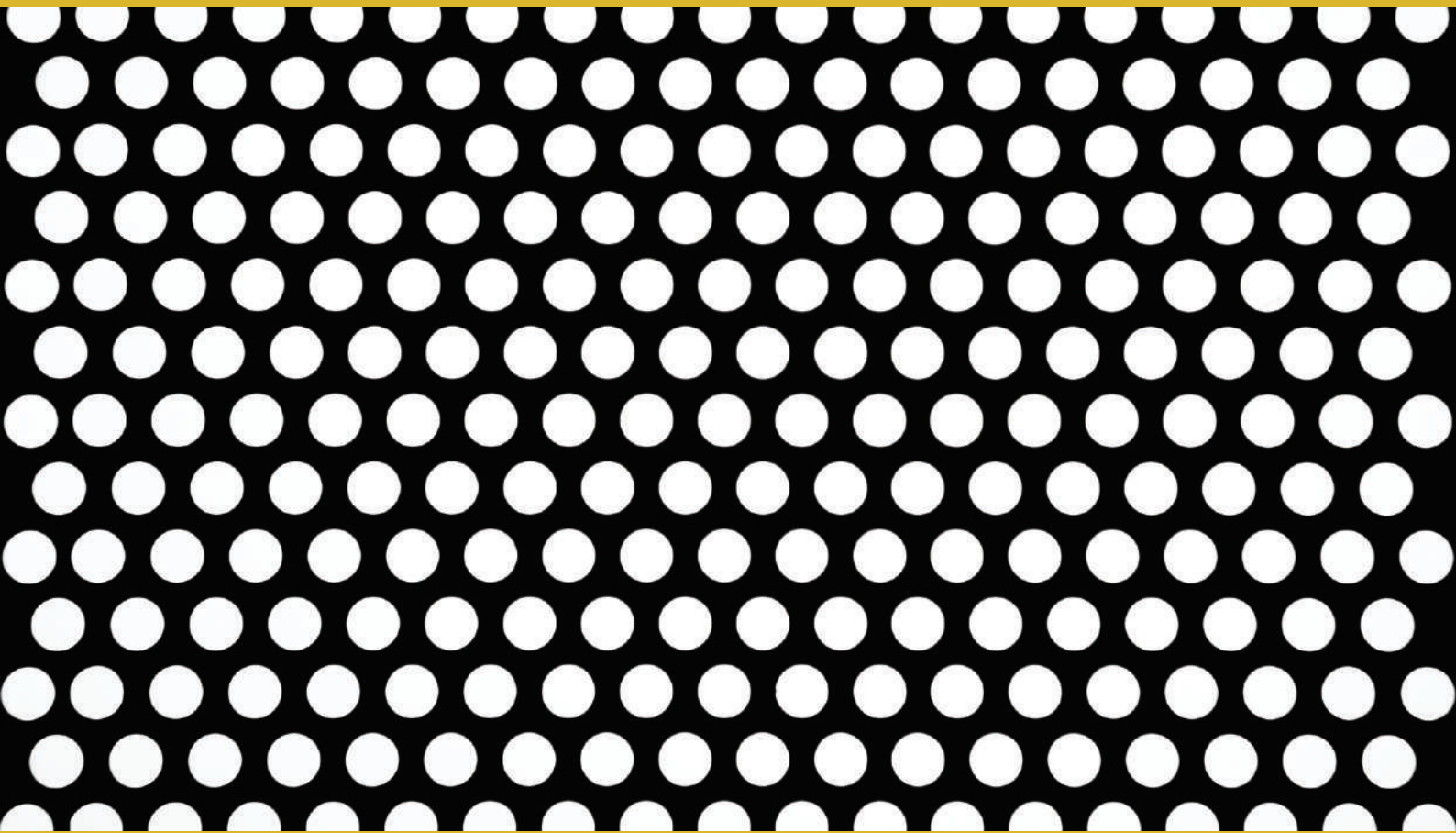
Mural on the wall of Elementary School “Borisav Stanković”, painted by artists Boris Domazet and Milan Stanivuković

The continuation of the “SPEAK OUT” campaign, which we created in collaboration with students from the University of Banja Luka, aimed to address behaviors in public spaces that are uncomfortable and disturbing. It involved installing 6 city lights in the city center, as well as a performance by students from the Academy of Arts in Banja Luka.



June/July, Banja Luka, Campaign “Speak” with the University of Banja Luka

Strategic networks and partnerships



Peace with a woman's face

The “United Women” Foundation makes a continuous contribution to the visibility of women who have contributed through social engagement in public spaces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. An initiative has been adopted to name one street in Banja Luka after Mira Kesić, and one street in Gradiška after Stanka Bošković, both as part of the campaign “100 Women, 100 Streets for Women”. The campaign was launched by the coalition “Peace with a Women’s Face”, which brings together 14 organizations and foundations from across BiH. Participation is manifested through actions to name streets after women in local communities, participation in the promotion of initiatives related to advocating for peacebuilding and women’s contributions, and participation in the implementation of Resolution 1325 - Women, Peace, and Security.

Citizens for constitutional changes

FUW contributes to the processes of constitutional changes through its membership in the Coordination Committee of the Initiative, which defines the strategic directions of the Initiative, and establishes cooperation with key stakeholders. We have participated in the regular activities of the Initiative, such as meetings with parliamentarians in the National Assembly of RS, as well as advocacy activities towards Swedish officials in BiH.

Safe network of Bosnia and Herzegovina

FUW continuously contributes to the work of the Safe Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the femicide in Gradačac in August 2023, an extraordinary meeting was held in the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH with the Minister for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH, Sevlid Hurtić, and representatives of the Safe Network of BiH, a network of NGOs that operate safe houses for victims of gender-based violence. Subsequently, a press conference was held. Conclusions from the organizations comprising the Safe Network of BiH and the Ministry for Refugees and Human Rights were forwarded to the Council of Ministers of BiH, urging urgent action and improvement in the protection of women victims of violence. The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH provided 100,000 BAM for eight safe houses in BiH, which were allocated by the end of the year.



August 17, Sarajevo, the executive director of FUW addressing the media after an extraordinary meeting with the Minister

Women's Network of BiH

Continuous participation in activities of the Women's Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Foundation "United Women", contributes to the public visibility of issues related to combating violence against women and empowering a feminist approach in peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have actively contributed to organizing two protests against femicide, coordinating activities with other members during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, exchanging experiences on feminist response mechanisms to violence, women's solidarity, and sharing resources and knowledge with other women's organizations in BiH.



August 16th, Sarajevo, thematic session on femicide of the International Working Group for Gender Equality, representative of the Safe Network and the Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

WAVE network

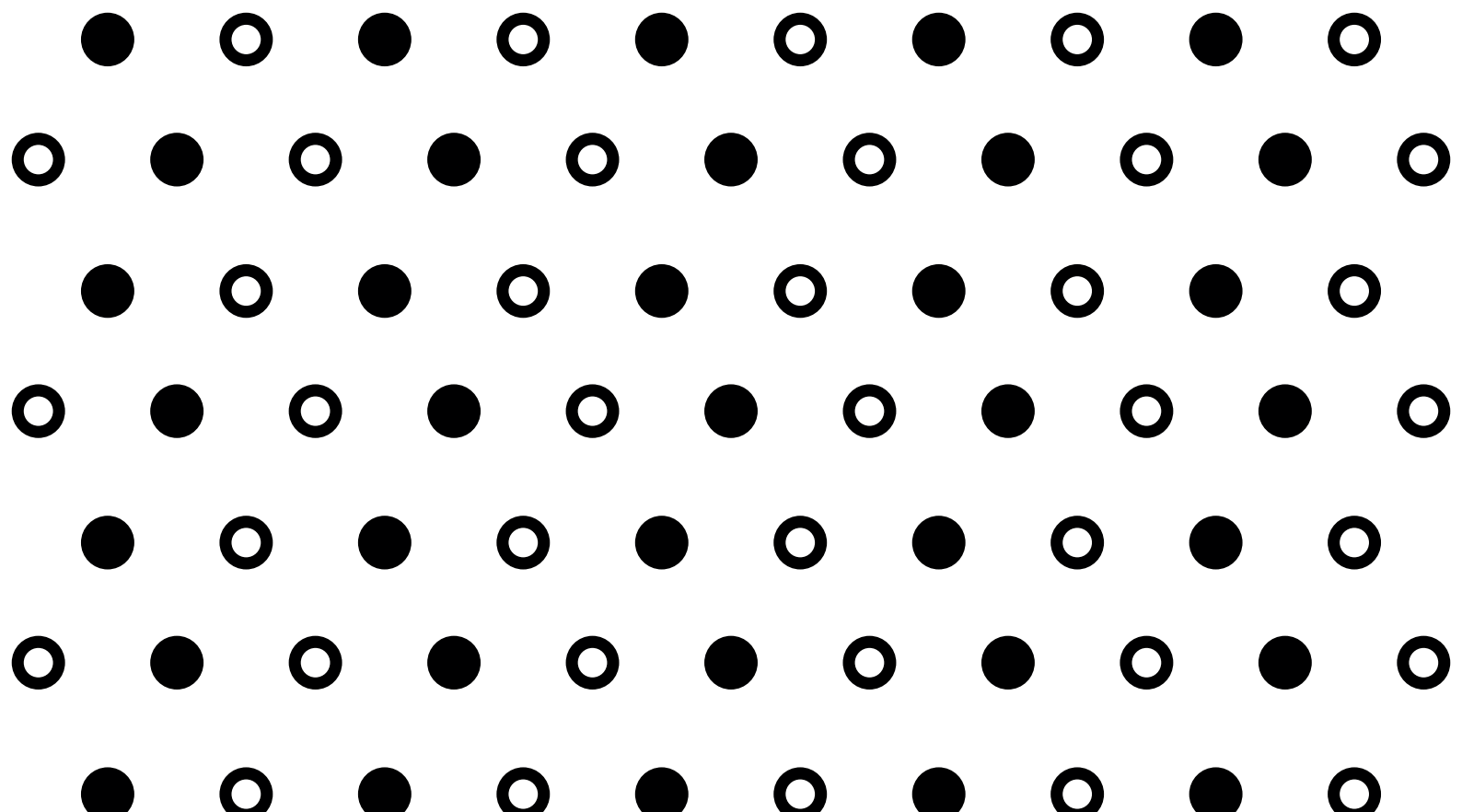
FUW is one of the two organizations from BiH participating in the WAVE network (European Network of Women Against Violence, bringing together members from 46 European countries), contributing to insights into practices, policies, and experiences in the field of gender-based violence of other European countries. The transfer of experiences and knowledge gained through participation in the network in the area of preventing and combating sexual violence is particularly significant, given that BiH lacks an adequate response and non-governmental organizations are striving to strengthen existing and establish new services in line with BiH's international obligations. Our representatives are part of the team that created a manual titled "Preventing and Responding to GBV during War and in Post-War Environments - Experiences and Recommendations of Women's NGOs", based on which we have developed an educational module for working with other interested organizations and institutions in this field. Gorica Ivić, Executive Director of the Foundation, was elected as a member of the WAVE network's Board of Directors in the elections for the new Board of Directors of the network in October.



Left: July 6th, Vienna, partnership meeting in the WAVE network

Right: Gorica Ivić, Executive Director, elected to the Board of Directors of the WAVE network

*Key institutional
partnerships/cooperations*





Cooperation with domestic violence protection entities at the local level

The formalization of collaboration with local communities through the signing of cooperation protocols in three new local communities (Kozarska Dubica, Kostajnica, Novi Grad) represents an important step. This collaboration involves key protection entities such as the police, social welfare centers, judiciary, health, and educational institutions. Intensive collaboration has also continued with protection entities in Gradiška and Prijedor. The results of this collaboration include training sessions for protocol signatories, joint awareness-raising campaigns at the local level, and informing victims about their rights.

In Banja Luka, the “United Women” Foundation (FUW) continues its ongoing collaboration through the coordination and cooperation group. An action plan for handling cases of family violence is currently being developed, indicating a proactive approach to addressing the issue of violence. A representative from FUW serves as the coordinator of the local group.

Collaboration with the Center for Education of Judges and Prosecutors of Republika Srpska continues

This ongoing collaboration, which involves integrating topics related to the judicial system’s response to all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, further strengthens the capacities of the judicial community in addressing and responding to violence. Four training programs annually are included and integrated into the annual plan and program.

Collaboration with the Ministry of Family, Youth, and Sports of the Government of Republika Srpska

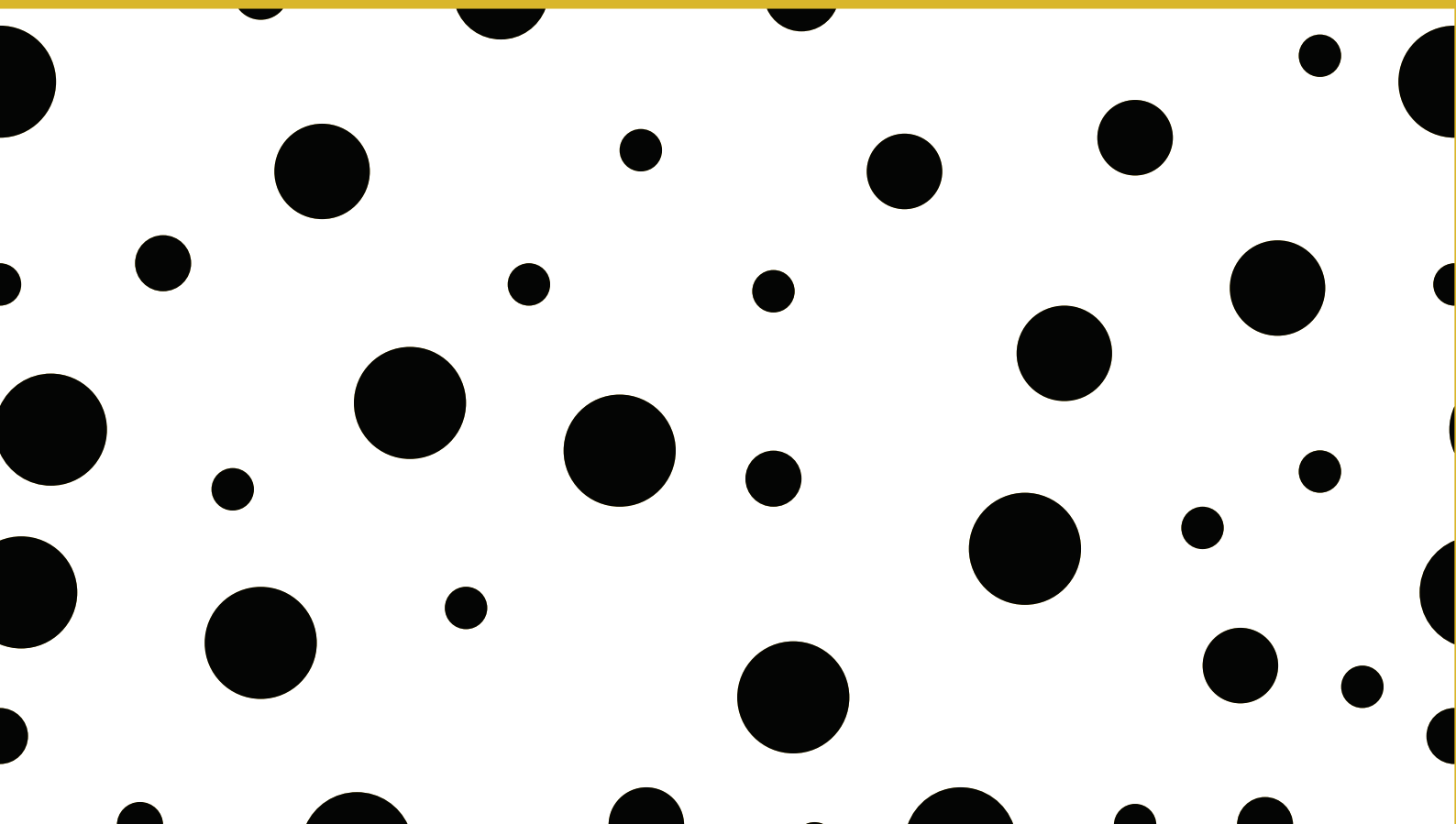
The Ministry of Family, Youth, and Sports of Republika Srpska has continued to provide support through occasional meetings aimed at monitoring the ongoing functioning of the Safe House and the implementation of legal solutions in cases of family violence. During 2023, the Minister for Family, Youth, and Sports, along with her team, visited the Safe House twice and spoke with the residents about their satisfaction with the support provided. The Ministry provides financial support for the care of victims of violence in the Safe House, covering 70% of the total cost of their stay.

Collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Republika Srpska

The integration of seminars on family violence into the curriculum for the year 2023 in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs represents a significant step. Training was conducted for over 400 cadets with the aim of raising awareness and understanding of family violence and violence against women.

The importance of the work of Safe Houses has been recognized by new institutional systems such as the City of Sarajevo. This highlights the importance of specialized services in providing support to victims of violence.

Organizational growth



Care of employees

THE POSSIBILITY OF USING REGULAR SUPERVISION

The “United Women” Foundation emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and professional development, preventing burnout at work, and improving the efficiency and quality of the services they provide. Through 40 individual supervision sessions utilized by team members, opportunities have been created for:

Enhanced emotional well-being: Regular supervision allows team members to process their emotional reactions to working with clients and traumatic situations they encounter. This can contribute to reducing stress and building emotional resilience.

Continuous professional development: Through supervision, team members have the opportunity to reflect on their work, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop their skills. Receiving feedback and guidance from supervisors enables them to constantly learn and improve their practice.

Maintenance of professional boundaries: Supervision provides space for considering situations where professional boundaries are compromised and provides guidance on how to maintain them. This is crucial in working with victims of violence to ensure their protection and well-being, as well as the organization’s integrity.

Prevention of burnout at work: Regular supervision can help recognize symptoms of burnout at work and provide strategies to overcome it. This is important for maintaining the long-term sustainability of team members in their roles.

Improvement of service efficiency and quality: Through supervision, team members can share experiences, exchange ideas, and develop new approaches to working with clients, which contributes to the efficiency and quality of the services provided by the “United Women” Foundation.

TEAM BUILDING

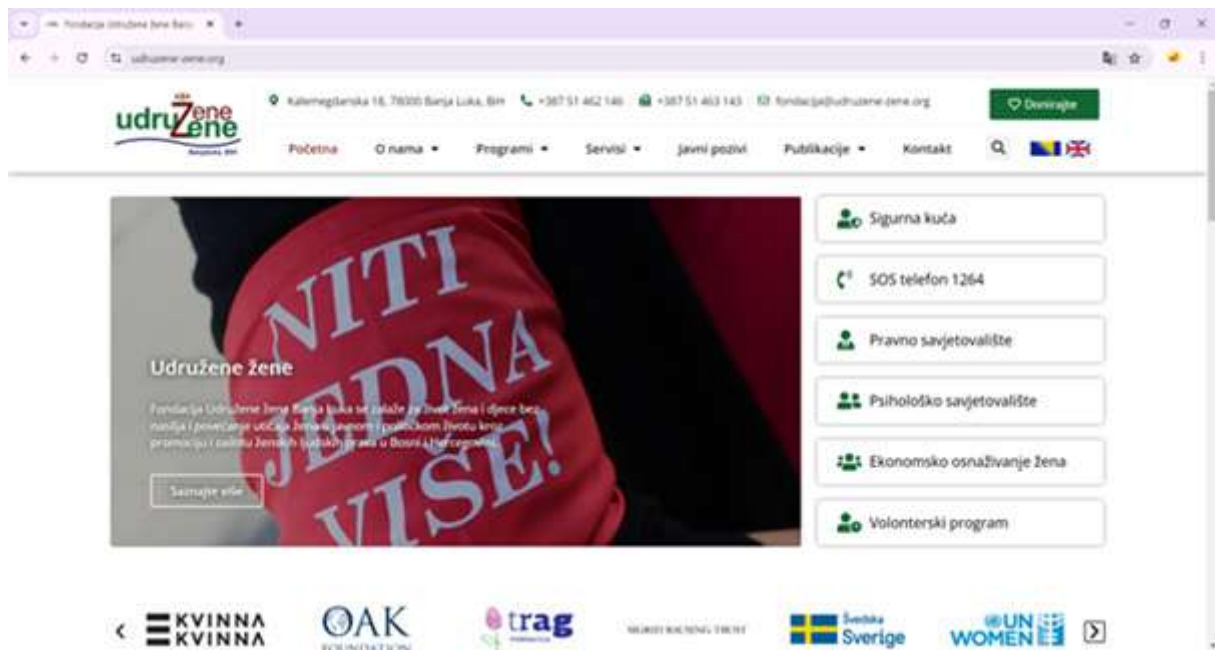
In order to have the capacity to respond to the challenges and obligations ahead of us, we strive to continuously strengthen our team. In September, we organized a team-building workshop in Split where our 10 members had the opportunity to work on effective communication strategies, crisis management, and problem-solving. Psychologist and psychotherapist Branislava Tanasković Popović helped us gain a clearer understanding of our strengths and responsibilities in our daily work.



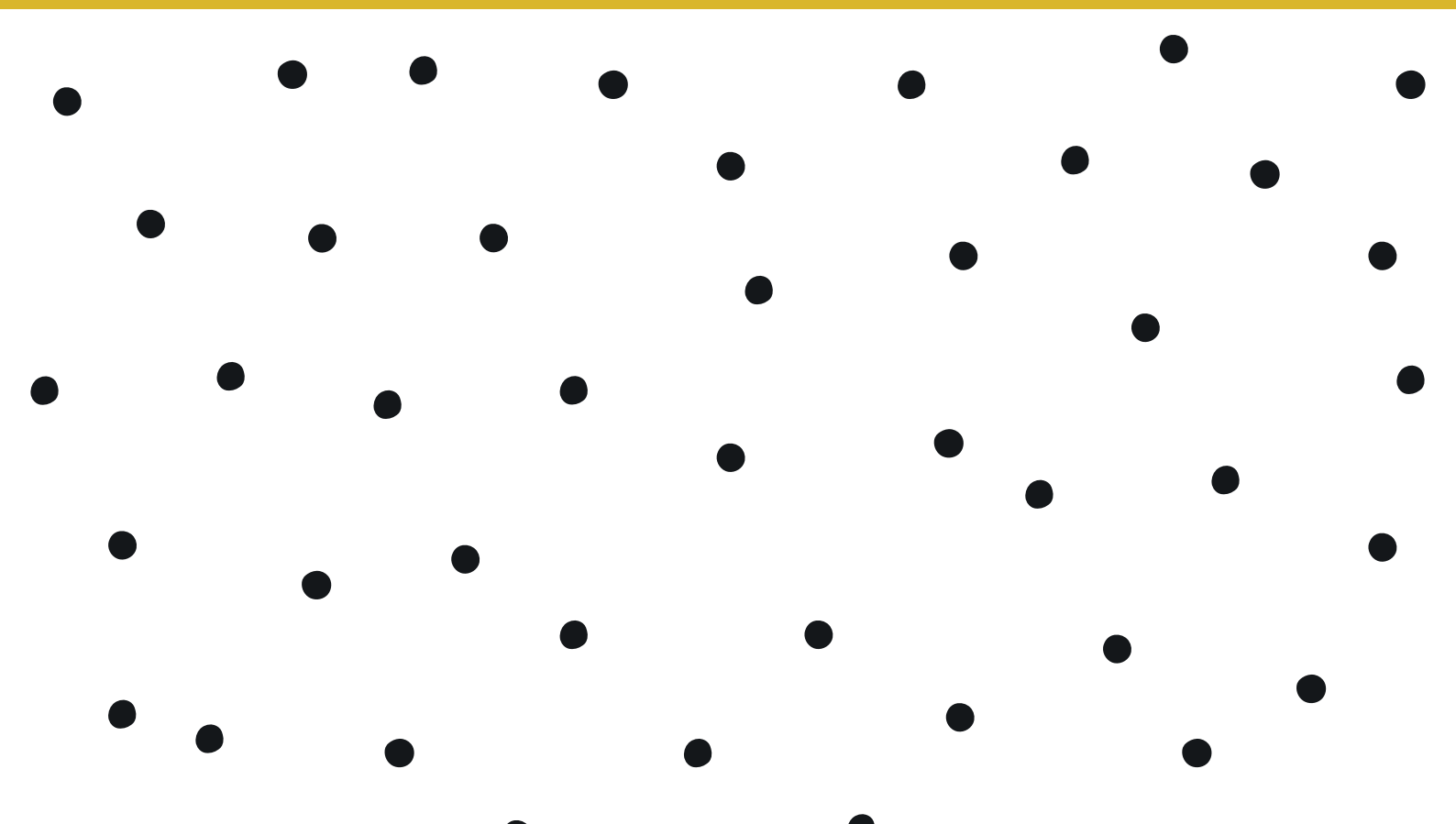
6th September, Split, team-building

REDESIGN OF THE “UNITED WOMEN” FOUNDATION WEBSITE

In 2023, the “United Women” Foundation redesigned its website and changed its official email address to make it easier for users to access, search for data, and find necessary information. Our new website is optimized for mobile devices, featuring a responsive design that ensures the website looks and functions well on various screen sizes. Contact information, scope of services, and support are also prominently displayed on the website, contributing to easier access to information related to assistance and support.

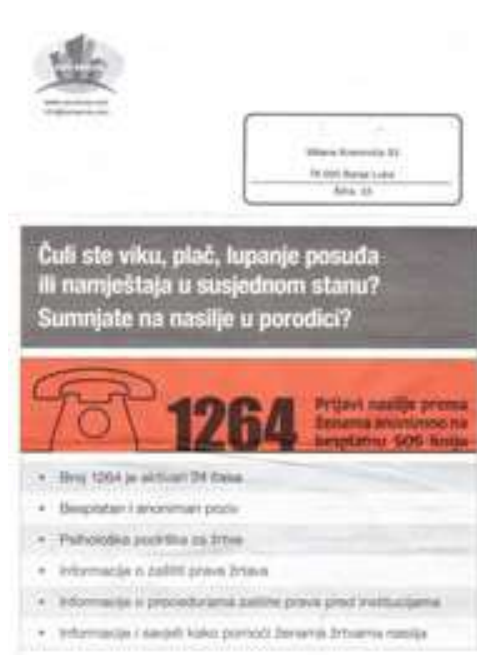


Volunteer program



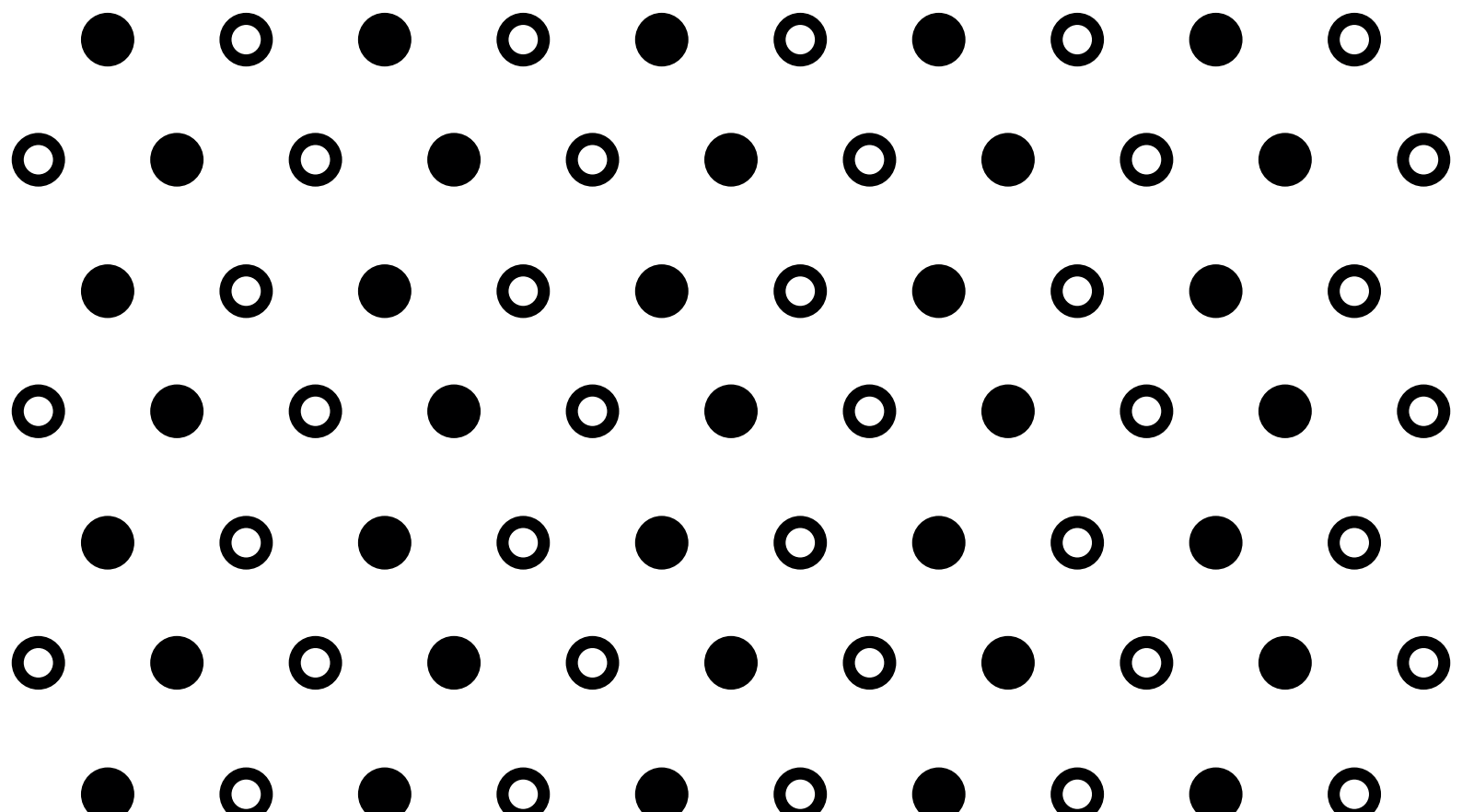
The volunteer program consists of 20 activists who have expressed interest in joining the work of the “United Women” Foundation and contributing to the organization’s strengthening through their actions. Members of the volunteer program are psychology, social work, sociology, law students, and women who have survived gender-based violence. Volunteers contribute to the work of the “United Women” Foundation through volunteer engagement in all activities we carry out, such as street actions, education, workshops, and promotional activities via social media. We provide interested volunteers with support in education on gender-based violence, peace activism, public advocacy, and collaboration with other organizations, aiming to strengthen their capacities for civic engagement through the non-governmental sector. Through their engagement, they have contributed to greater visibility of the organization and raising awareness about gender-based violence and the position of women among the younger population.

The “United Women” Foundation’s volunteer program is open for the exchange of volunteer experiences with volunteers coming from outside the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This year, during November, Jelena Jovanović, an activist from Montenegro, joined us and worked with us. She was one of 7 young women who had the opportunity to spend a month in an organization in one of the countries in the region through the support of the Trag Foundation’s Fund for Young Feminists.



As part of the “16 Days of Activism” campaign, our volunteers approached the agency that deals with the establishment and maintenance of condominium communities, “ZEV servis,” with the initiative to print the SOS hotline number 1264 on the back of the November bill. **Bills for “ZEV servis” services were delivered to 12,000 addresses in Banja Luka, Laktaši, Srbac, Mrkonjić Grad, and Prijedor, containing information on reporting domestic violence and providing support to women victims of violence on the back of the bill.**

Financial overview



No.	Donor/Project	Amount in BAM	Amount in EUR	Period
1	RS Government and local budgets / Safe House Banja Luka – Providing shelter services / supporting women/children survivors of violence	218.394,64	111.663,41	2023
2	WAVE/OSCE	10.504,55	5.370,89	2023
3	Queen Katarina Foundation – funds for Safe House	410,72	210,00	2023
4	City of Banja Luka – Economic empowerment of women	8.818,68	4.508,92	01/06/2023 - 31/12/2023
5	Kvinna till Kvinna – Prevention and fight against gender based violence in the EU accession process of BiH	47.935,00	24.508,78	2023
6	OAK – Institutional support	120.079,54	61.395,69	01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024
7	OAK – Institutional support	120.079,41	61.395,63	01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023
8	TRAG Foundation - funds for a study visit	3.531,07	1.805,41	2023
9	TRAG Foundation - means for self-care	5.293,95	2.706,75	2023
10	TRAG Foundation - Fund for young feminists	3.538,15	1.809,03	2023
11	Sigrid Rausing Trust – Institutional support	198.000,00	101.235,79	01/11/2023 - 31/10/2024
12	Sigrid Rausing Trust – Institutional support	198.000,00	101.235,79	01/11/2022 - 31/10/2023
13	UN Women – Initiative safe cities and safe public spaces in Banja Luka, Bosna and Herzegovina, phase II	146.760,00	75.037,20	01/06/2022 - 30/11/2023
14	Kvinna till Kvinna – Advancement of prevention and fight against gender based violence in BiH	124.123,50	63.463,34	2023
15	Medica Zenica - Sigurni zajedno (Safe Together: Strengthening non-traditional local level partnerships between safe houses and religious communities in BiH to further the rights of CRSV Survivors)	6.723,08	3.437,46	01/12/2022 - 31/03/2023
16	Medica Zenica - Sigurni zajedno (Safe Together: Strengthening non-traditional local level partnerships between safe houses and religious communities in BiH to further the rights of CRSV Survivors)	17.917,70	9.161,17	01/10/2023 - 31/03/2024

17	Foundation Lara/UN Women – Advancement of specialized support and help to victims of sexual violence in BiH	6.557,00	3.352,54	01/01/2023 - 30/10/2023
18	Foundation Lara – Marking the 8th of December, Women victims of war memorial day	283,60	145,00	2023
19	BiH Ministry for human rights and refugees– support for safe houses in BiH	12.500,00	6.391,15	01/12/2022 - 31/05/2023
20	BiH Ministry for human rights and refugees– support for safe houses in BiH	12.500,00	6.391,15	01/09/2023 - 29/02/2024
21	Local Democracy Foundation Sarajevo - Sustainable functioning of specialized support services for victims of domestic violence in crisis situations and after them	1.075,00	549,64	2023
22	Local Democracy Foundation Sarajevo - Defenders of human rights protected in practice and policies	2.196,75	1.123,18	2023
23	City of Sarajevo - payment for Safe House	30.000,00	15.338,76	2023
24	TRIAL International - Advocating for the improvement of the rights of victims of war torture according to the Law on Victims of War Torture in the Republic of Srpska	10412,55	5.323,85	24/06/2023 - 23/02/2024
25	Local Democracy Foundation Sarajevo / Secure network	3.000,00	1.533,88	2023
26	Local Democracy Foundation Sarajevo - payment for psychological support SH	1.200,00	613,55	15/11/2023 - 15/01/2024
27	Donation UniCredit bank	1.000,00	511,29	2023
28	ASSECO SEE DOO Sarajevo	977,92	500,00	2023
29	NLB Bank	9.779,15	5.000,00	2023
30	Donations from natural persons - Self-care	1.260,00	644,22	2023
31	Inner Wheel Club	1.000,00	511,29	2023
	TOTAL	1.323.851,96	676.874,75	

United Woman Foundation

team in 2023

MANAGEMENT BOARD

Nada Golubović, president
Dijana Pejić, member, Executive director of NGO „Genesis project“ Banja Luka
Brankica Glišić, former beneficiary of support services of the United Women Foundation
Tanja Mandić Đokić, activist for rights of woman with disabilities
Srđan Dušanić, professor at the Faculty of Philosophy – Psychology department

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Gorica Ivić, Executive director
Aleksandra Petrić, Program director
Helena Jokić, Financial manager
Jelena Jeličić, Office manager
Teodora Marjanović, Assistant
Lana Jajčević, Legal Advisor
Andrea Budzažija, Legal Advisor
Magdalena Prišić, Legal Advisor

PROFESSIONAL STAFF – SAFE HOUSE BANJA LUKA

Amela Bašić Tomić, Coordinator
Dragana Miljević Miljković, Social worker
Jasminka Pavić, Nurse
Gordana Vrbica, Nurse
Jelena Šućur Kajkut, Nurse
Aleksandra Štrbac, Nurse
Marija Kaurin, On-call professional associate
Nada Jeličić, Housekeeper/secretary

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