

**2023**

# ANNUAL REPORT

**INSTITUTE FOR  
POPULATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

IPD is a full and accredited member of the international organization IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation)



Dear readers,

I am proud and delighted to present to you our achievements over the past year within the framework of the 22nd annual report of the Institute for Population and Development. The previous year was marked by exciting moments and exceptional productivity, resulting in numerous significant successes. We are pleased to have the opportunity to share with you some of the key accomplishments that have contributed to building a healthier, fairer, and safer Bosnia and Herzegovina.



One of the central priorities of the Institute was the promotion of a tolerant and inclusive society based on equality and justice, where every individual has the opportunity to fulfill their full potential. Therefore, we proudly highlight a significant increase in the gender equality index in our society as a result of our direct actions. Our commitment to promoting equal rights and opportunities for all, regardless of gender, yields tangible results crucial for sustainable development and prosperity across communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We want to emphasize the significant efforts invested in strengthening the capacities of local institutions and schools to ensure their active involvement in comprehensive, scientifically grounded violence prevention programs. For a full 22 years, our research and program interventions have been focused on preventing violence at all levels, from familial to societal. We are proud of the progress made in this critical sphere, particularly the substantial reduction in violence in local communities resulting from collaboration with municipalities, local institutions, educational institutions, and our civil society partners.

In the field of healthcare, we have made significant progress in ensuring access to quality healthcare services for all citizens, regardless of their social or economic status. Special attention has been given to marginalized populations facing various health preservation challenges and access to specific health services.

Furthermore, we have achieved great success in improving access to services for rare diseases. Considering that rare diseases are often neglected or insufficiently researched, we have invested considerable effort in raising awareness and mobilizing resources to ensure access to adequate care for all affected by these conditions. We have also strengthened alliances for rare diseases to join forces in achieving a higher quality of life and healthcare for individuals with rare diseases.

We continue to nurture existing partnerships and build new ones, both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and internationally. We are particularly pleased with our collaboration with the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the new opportunities to enhance and expand this collaboration, all aimed at building a society that practices healthy and nonviolent behaviors.

We have achieved much in empowering youth, enhanced the knowledge and skills of young people in many areas crucial for health. Through targeted evaluation measures, we are particularly pleased to say that we have proven the effectiveness of our two major preventive programs. Learning from previous phases of work and continuous measurements of our work and results, we are building capacities for future effective health interventions based on scientific principles and evidence of success.

We have achieved significant results in strengthening the capacity of communities to provide a socially responsible approach, grounded in evidence, to assist in the reintegration of foreign fighters and their families into the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In collaboration with our international and local partners, we have actively contributed to improving the situation of convicted individuals and enhancing mechanisms to protect their rights.

Last year, we shaped a series of exceptional outcomes and achieved significant milestones, adding depth and strength to our accomplishments, but we are aware that there is much work ahead of us. We will continue to work diligently to achieve our vision of a society based on the principles of equality, solidarity, and justice, confident that with your support, we can bring about even greater change and progress.

Thank you for your trust and support.

Emina Osmanagić

Manager

## IPD's Youth Friendly Health Centre

Donor: IPPF EN

Project duration: 2004 - ongoing

### ABOUT THE YOUTH FRIENDLY CENTRE

The Institute for Population and Development's Friendly Center for Health was created in response to the lack of services adapted to the specific needs of young and vulnerable groups. FCH was established in 2004 with the opening of the first Counselling Center on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, two years later, it was completed by the opening of medical ordination, focusing on gynaecological services.

FCH is an unique place where young people, especially the most vulnerable ones, get answers to their questions and the support they need in a friendly environment.

Professionals working in FCH use a non-judgmental, friendly approach in working with young and vulnerable people, they are sensitized to recognize and respond to the specific needs of young people, respecting the principles of privacy, confidentiality and diversity.

In 2022, our team of experts provided high-quality services in the field of health, reproductive health, growing up and healthy lifestyles for **5,200 people**. The largest number of people who received some of the center's services are young people, including young people from vulnerable and marginalized groups, as well as parents. Thanks to the support of the parent organization, IPPF EN, all services for our clients are **free of charge**.

**The most popular service within IPD FCH, the gynecological ordination** is adjusted to the specific needs of girls up to 26 years with the team of professionals consisting of female and male gynaecologists and nurse who uses a friendly approach that clients have recognized as a key feature of our Centre.


In 2023, IPD counseling has seen an increase in number of clients that seek psychological support. In addition to a large number of young people (most clients range from 16-30 years), parents of young children and adolescents as well as people from vulnerable and socially excluded groups and people without health insurance, also seek support.

Over the past few years, mental health care has been increasingly prevalent among younger and older members of the youth population, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for psychological support has increased enormously.

The problems that children and young people need support with, are diverse, but most often they include problems with anxiety, depression, eating disorders, abuse of narcotics and alcohol, adolescent crisis, difficulties in psychosocial functioning, externalizing problem behaviors, problems with emotional regulation, hypochondria, low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence, loss / death of a close person, mourning processes, long-term illness of a family member or close person.

What has been noticed is an increase of self-harm behaviour in young people, often with suicidal ideas, so support provided to them was often done in cooperation with the psychiatrist of the associated clinic.

Regarding **parents** that contact us in need for support, in addition to the challenges of raising up children that put various obstacles in front of them, adults also seek support for difficulties in a wider family context, divorce, violence in partnership, job loss or difficult socioeconomic situation.



Adults, as well as children, show various psychological difficulties, most often eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, depressive and anxiety states as well as a number of psychosomatic symptoms.

In addition to these services, IPD Psychological Counseling Has organized a series of workshops with high school students over the past year, where various topics in the field of mental health were presented, as well as techniques and tools by which they can cope with the difficulties they face.

We notice the increasing need for this way of working among young people, especially if we look at the occurrence of a large number of cases of juvenile delinquency and serious criminal offenses, both in BiH and in the region.

In order to enable greater availability of information and respond to parents who need counseling, IPD continuously improves the services of the Facebook page "IPD Parental Counselor". Thematic articles and video content are regularly published through the site, tailored to the specific needs of parents. Everyone who needs support contacts us via e-mail message, Facebook page, clinic number and viber number.

In addition to live counseling, there is also an online counseling service that is especially used by young people who are now abroad for study or employment.

We must emphasize that the positive comments of our users further motivate us in the direction of improving the service and adapting them to their specific needs.

IPD supports and empowers girls, young men, women and men to regularly take care of themselves and their mental and physical health and well-being.



# Building the capacity of communities to provide an evidence-based social response to assist in the reintegration of foreign fighters and their families in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina



Donor: Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Project duration: September 2021 – September 2023

Total project funds: 503.727,88 BAM

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project interventions are designed to respond to the immediate need and support cantonal and local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to respond to citizens returning from foreign conflicts, focusing primarily on supporting governments in providing specialized reintegration assistance tailored to these men's needs, their women and children. The locations of the project were selected based on a national assessment of the most common places where fighters return from foreign battlefields.

The program directly contributes to the implementation of the Action Plan of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2020-2025), as a direct social response.

The purpose of the project is to improve the competence of experts in the field of health, social protection and security to provide sensitized services and to better understand their role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from foreign battlefields, especially their families.

Project is being implemented by IPD in partnership with the organisation Atlantic Initiative and with expert support of Cross-sectoral working group for prevention and combatting extremism of the Federal Government.

## MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

### STRENGTHENING THE RESPONSE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF RETURNEES AND THEIR FAMILIES FROM FOREIGN BATTLEFIELDS

During 2023, another two trainings were delivered to professionals from 14 local communities in the Federation of BiH, who were appointed by the ministries of health, social protection, internal affairs, education, and municipalities and cities. They are gathered in multidisciplinary and readmission teams at the levels of their local communities, namely: Sarajevo, Ilidža, Zenica, Zavidovići, Tešanj, Tuzla, Gradačac, Bihać, Bužim, Cazin, Velika Kladuša, Bosanska Krupa, Gornji Vakuf and Donji Vakuf. More than 400 professionals increased their knowledge and competences in handling the process of acceptance and reintegration of children and women returning from foreign battlefields. The educational training program covered a wide range of topics on safety, psychosocial support, social care and protection, and work with children and families at risk. The education process combined professional sessions of more than 15 experts from the mentioned fields and practical work, including work on case studies.



## MORE THAN 50 EXPERTS ENRICHED THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC TECHNIQUES AND INTERVENTIONS IN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND WOMEN RETURNING FROM FOREIGN BATTLEFIELDS

Two workshops were also held for professionals providing psychosocial services, where more than 50 psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists from 14 local communities actively participated in learning and applying creative techniques and psychotherapeutic interventions. The participants had the opportunity to learn about the innovative projective technique, which is extremely useful and applicable in working with women and children returning from foreign battlefields.

The participants were given a detailed insight into individual psychotherapeutic interventions applicable in working with this sensitive group of children and were presented with a variety of work methods and approaches, as well as a wide range of occupational therapy tools and assessments, including the KAWA model. In addition, the workshop covered important concepts of systemic family therapy, and participants were introduced to techniques that were recommended as practical and easy to apply and can significantly improve work with children and women returning from foreign battlefields.



## MULTISECTORAL APPROACH OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN PLANNING THE PROCESS OF ACCEPTANCE AND REINTEGRATION OF FAMILIES OF RETURNEES FROM CONFLICT ZONES

With the successful conclusion of the training cycle intended for local professionals, focused on strengthening the multi-sector approach in the process of accepting returnees and their families, the project expert team carried out the process of creating local operational plans as a key step in the implementation of the Program for the reintegration, rehabilitation and resocialization of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and returnees from the zone conflicts in Syria and Iraq. A series of workshops were held with representatives of local multi-sector teams and **14 local operational plans** were created, which defined precise guidelines for the implementation of the Action Plan of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the prevention and fight against terrorism. Each of these plans has a key role in providing strategic guidelines for the process of accepting women and children returnees from foreign battlefields in the areas of 14 local communities and represents a concrete contribution of local communities in the process of integration and support for returnees. The implementation of the created operational plans will be of key importance for achieving the goals of the Program, and the active participation of all participants contributed to the creation of an effective framework for successfully dealing with the challenges of accepting families of returnees from foreign battlefields.



## SENSITIZED LOCAL MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES HAVE A KEY ROLE IN REDUCING STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

A workshop was held with local media representatives from 14 local communities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with an emphasis on reducing stigma, discrimination and social exclusion of returnee women and children, and encouraging their reintegration into local communities. The topics covered during the two-day workshop met their goal, which is to increase the understanding of local media representatives about the topics of violent extremism, and the modalities of intersectoral cooperation in ensuring social inclusion, strengthening local communities and resistance to violent extremism. Sensitized local media play a key role in reducing stigma and discrimination and contribute to greater acceptance of returnee women and children within local communities.



## DEVELOPED EDUCATIONAL TOOLS FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS



Two key documents were created by multi-sector expert working groups that created a Curriculum with a training package for the advanced education of professionals engaged in providing psychosocial assistance services in the process of reintegration of returnees and their wives and children from foreign battlefields. The material consists of five thematic modules and a case study module. A standardized assessment set was also created for quality provision of psychosocial services for professionals involved in the process of resocialization of women and children from foreign battlefields.



## CONDUCTED ON-SITE SUPERVISION WORKSHOPS FOR 14 LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN FBIH

As a result of on-site supervision sessions conducted by an expert supervision team, psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists from health and social institutions have improved knowledge, skills and competences in providing specific services of psychosocial rehabilitation and resocialization of women and children returning from the battlefield. In addition, their connection and intersectoral cooperation with representatives of other sectors at the levels of local communities was strengthened.



## FINAL PRESENTATION OF PROJECT RESULTS



The two-year project of great importance for IPD ended with the final presentation of the project's results, in which key subjects from 14 local communities participated, and they were presented with a summary of the process through which professionals from the security, health, mental health, social work, education and local self-government in the preparation of the process of accepting returnees and their families from foreign battlefields. As a result of the project, a better and unified record of resocialization cases of returnees and children from 14 local communities was established, as well as foundations for new practices that are based on the previous ones and include joint first assessments of families, creation

of mixed groups from local communities, regular holding of team meetings of all actors from the local community for the purpose of monitoring and coordinating a joint response, and establishing referral mechanisms at the community level. At the meeting, created local operational plans were presented, emphasizing the importance of joint action of local communities in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration, and significant attention was paid to ethical reporting and the role of the media in the prevention of violent extremism. The comprehensive presentation of the results and the engagement of experts from different sectors contributed to the successful conclusion of the project, creating a solid foundation for further steps in supporting families of returnees in 14 local FBIH communities.

# Contribution of CSO networks to improving the everyday life of people living with rare diseases



## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Donor: European Union

Project duration: 1.1.2021. - 31.12.2023.

Total project funds: 1,087.441.00 BAM

The project is implemented by the Institute for Population and Development in partnership with the Alliance for Rare Diseases of the Republic of Srpska. The goal of the project is to strengthen the networks of civil society organizations in ensuring quality health care for people with rare diseases, based on cooperation, exchange of expertise and knowledge, and dialogue with government representatives.



## MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVED RESULTS

At the beginning of 2023, the first Center for Rare Diseases in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was established, at the University Clinical Center Tuzla, which is of great importance for improving the legal and institutional framework of health care for people with rare diseases.

The tasks of the Center for Rare Diseases are the identification of diagnosed patients with rare diseases and the creation of a register, education about rare diseases, diagnosis of new patients and improved access to innovative drugs, participation in charitable programs and clinical studies as a way of obtaining therapy and cooperation with other health and legislative institutions, and to representatives of patient organizations and connecting them around common problems and coming up with solutions.

To better connect the Center with patients, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed in December 2023 between the Alliance for Rare Diseases and the University Clinical Center Tuzla, which regulates cooperation in activities to improve the health and quality of life of people living with rare diseases in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

By the end of 2023, the Center had 200 different diagnoses of rare diseases and about 700 patients with rare diseases. The beginning of the work of the Center for Rare Diseases was also marked by the holding of two trainings on rare diseases for health workers from Tuzla and Sarajevo Cantons, gathering a total of 66 participants, as well as the creation of a Guide on Rare Diseases for health workers in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Public consultations on the content of the Program for Rare Diseases in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023-2025 continued. Representatives of healthcare institutions and civil society organizations, beneficiary associations, are familiar with the goals and method of implementing the activities of the Program for Rare Diseases, the impact that the activities of the program have on people living with rare diseases, and the strategy, mechanisms, and way of implementing the activities presented in the Program for Rare Diseases.

Promotion of the Program for Rare Diseases in the Republic of Srpska 2022-2024 was carried out in 10 cities, Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Sokolac, East Sarajevo, Trebinje, Nevesinje, Prijedor, Dobo, Mrkonjic Grad and Zvornik. Participants at the events consider the organization of public consultations to be very important because, through promotions, representatives of health institutions and beneficiary associations are enabled to better understand the plan of activities outlined in the Program for Rare Diseases.

The engagement of entity alliances for rare diseases was, as with most earlier project activities, ensured through the implementation of a set of activities within advocacy campaigns, organized to promote and adopt strategic documents in the field of rare diseases, as well as improving the health care of people living with rare diseases in Bosnia and Herzegovina (talk shows, round tables, legal initiatives, etc.).

Due to the visibility of project activities, services and results, continuous cooperation with the media and other key publics was ensured.



Round table "Rare diseases - opportunities and challenges", Sarajevo, October 2023.

Panel discussion within the Conference on Rare Diseases, Sarajevo, December 2023.






Dr. Mensuda Hasanhodžić, lecturer at training on rare diseases for healthcare workers, Tuzla, November 2023.



Promotion of the Program for Rare Diseases in the Republic of Srpska 2022-2024, Government of the Republic of Srpska, Banja Luka, July 2023.





*„There are many problems. First of all, insufficient recognition from the system and the community in general. We are all still dealing with medicine and the health part. However, life is not just medicines. The social status of these families should also be taken care of. The fact is that not only the ill member is affected, but the whole family, often the healthy child and the parents. The disease requires a completely different way of life. There are numerous problems, especially when we realize that diseases are completely different, and even within one diagnosis there are different manifestations of the diseases“.*

**Biljana Kotur, Alliance for Rare Diseases of the Republic of Srpska**

*„Projects on paper will not and must not remain in drawers or to be flaunted, they must come to life, and our citizens must be cared for in the highest quality. Bosnia and Herzegovina, like all countries with a small population, is faced with numerous challenges regarding organization, financing, diagnostics, and treatment for a large number of rare diseases. Not infrequently, the public, even medical circles, are characterized by a low level of knowledge about rare diseases, which affects the organization of health care for that category of patients.“*

**Zoran Šantić, Federal Ministry of Health**



# Youth Initiative - Promoting Healthier Lifestyles among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Challenging Gender Stereotypes III

Donor: Government of Switzerland and CARE Germany

Project duration: 1.1.2021 – 31.12.2023.

Total project funds: 326.019,00 BAM

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Cooperation on a long-term project with the organization CARE International Balkans has started more than a decade ago, and, beside Bosnia and Herzegovina, activities are carried out in the Region as well. Together with partners from Mostar - Youth Power and Banja Luka - Institut Perpetuum Mobile, IPD is committed to the joint mission of contributing to the creation of a **positive and peaceful society for young people** in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which **promotes gender equality, improves health and reduces interpersonal violence**.

Partnership with youth organizations - Otaharin from Bijeljina, Forum theater from East Sarajevo and Nova vizia from Travnik gives IPD additional strength in the implementation of the project.

Young members of the Young Men's Initiative and Be a Man Clubs (BMC) regularly create and implement activities among their peers in order to continue to support their peers in improving their knowledge and attitudes about gender equality, violence and healthy lifestyles and thus facilitate their transition from adolescence to adulthood.

In addition to young people and BMC as leaders in the promotion of positive changes, IPD continued to promote changes together with key partners in the country and region, through exceptional cooperation with schools, especially principals, teachers, pedagogues and psychologists, parents, educational institutions, the media and other stakeholders that works towards the improvement of gender-based educational programs in the field of healthy lifestyles.

## MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

### BE A MAN CLUBS ACTIVE IN THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Be a Man Clubs (BMK) in Sarajevo, East Sarajevo, Bijeljina, Travnik and Gracanica are still growing, gathering more young people who want to be a part of a positive change. BMCs implemented a large number of activities, including campaigns and various types of thematic workshops aiming to increase skills of young people. These events took place online and at different street location. More than 150 youth are current members of the BMCs who are making difference on daily basis at the level of their local communities. One of the largest campaigns created and implemented in 2023 was the online campaign "It's time for change" within the 16 days of activism implemented by the BMCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Region as well. The main focus of the campaign was on gender norms and how they are shaped in schools aiming to raise awareness of the importance of understanding and combating stereotypes and to encourage discussion on gender roles among young people. The results of the campaign were impressive, since it reached 6943 people through the Facebook and Instagram profiles of BMC Sarajevo. These numbers indicate success in spreading messages about violence prevention and the need for gender equality among young people in the local community.



Pictures: Images of the campaign

## WORKSHOPS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS STUDENTS

IPD peer educators continues to achieve successes in promotion of violence prevention and healthy life styles among their peers. In 2023, IPD and youth NGOs partners, together with Be a Man club Gracanica collaborated with more than 10 high schools where young BMC members conducted total of 100 workshops among 1980 students. Interactive life skills based workshops were implemented based on evidence-based and comprehensive Program Y methodology.



## WORKSHOPS FOR YOUTH IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Due to emerging needs to increase access to violence prevention program for the younger students in elementary schools, Program Y methodology was adapted into Program E, comprehensive violence prevention and healthy life styles promotion programs for elementary schools students. Using new methodology, trained peer educators conducted **25 workshops in elementary schools in Sarajevo, East Sarajevo, Bijeljina and Travnik attended by a total of 500 students.**

## ACTIVITIES WITH THE STUDENTS REALIZED IN A FORMAL SETTING WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO

In the summer semester of the academic year 2022/2023 in the framework of the subject Social Pedagogy, activities were realized according to the topics integrated from Program Y into the university curriculum of Pedagogy studies. During the teaching process, greater emphasis is placed on understanding complex phenomena such as various manifestations of violence and addiction, which are considered the most pronounced behavioral problems in children and young people. Students were motivated to question the phenomenon of violence starting from close ties and relationships in the primary environment to its global manifestation. In addition to the highlighted topics related to the phenomenon of violence in the syllabus of the Social Pedagogy course, a correction was made and the highlighted topic: Risky behaviors of children and young people - addictions in the school environment. This created the conditions for the continuous education of students in the following generations, when it comes to the mentioned topics.

### ADVOCACY STRATEGIC MEETING WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND YOUTH

IPD conducted final strategic meeting with representatives of schools, educational institutions, stakeholders from local communities, members of schools of excellence, partner organizations and members of Be a Men Clubs, to discuss and define strategic framework for continuation of activities but also to discuss on how to scale up good practices and to identify promising YMI strategies and intervention that can be part of new project phase. A number of recommendations were developed during the strategic advocacy meeting that would be addressed in order to seek for the continuation of the project that is proven to lead to a reduction in physical violence, an increase in gender equality, an increase in tolerance, a reduction in the incidence of digital violence, and an increase in the percentage of young people who would stop the violence they are witnessing.

### EXHIBITION OF STUDENT WORKS " FUTURE FOR YOUTH - A SCHOOL WITHOUT VIOLENCE"



As part of the cooperation between IPD and the High School of Applied Arts, an exhibition of student works was prepared and presented in line with the theme of the exhibition " Future for Youth - a school without violence". The exhibition was held as part of the "16 days of activism against gender-based violence" program and it represented the voice of young people expressed through drawing, sculpture, painting and design. This approach to young people, encouraging their preferences, interests, talents, visions, in addition to ensuring a safe upbringing, acceptance of authentic values and healthy lifestyles, guarantees the development of a healthy, responsible, self-sufficient and self-reliant personality, achieved at all levels of functioning. On that occasion, IPD delivered the Certificate of Appreciation to the Director of High School of Applied Arts for great collaboration in the program.

# Application of a comprehensive socio-ecological and model based on the active participation of communities in the elimination of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Donor: UN Women office in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project duration: 1. 7. 2021. – 31. 12. 2023

Total project funds: 352,625.69 BAM

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The prevention of violence has been a priority area of the Institute for Population and Development (hereinafter IPD) since 2006, which confirms 17 years of dedicated work on solving this important social phenomenon. In its efforts to contribute to the development of a society that actively opposes all forms of violence and inequality, IPD includes relevant institutions, civil society organizations, high schools, students, parents and media representatives in violence prevention programs. Partnership with leading organizations that actively work in the field of violence prevention contributes to the recognition of IPD and partners as leaders in the development of a society that shows zero tolerance towards all forms of violence.

As a leading organization in the field of prevention of gender-based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, IPD has an obligation and social responsibility to respond through its programs and approaches to the specific needs of individuals and socio - cultural requirements, which are a key factor in the occurrence of violence and gender inequality. Instead of a uniform approach to all communities, IPD is dedicated to developing innovative solutions that fit the local context of the communities where programs and projects are implemented. In this way, IPD ensures that the programs correspond to the specifics of the community and the needs of the people living in the target communities.

As in previous years, the Institute for Population and Development in 2023 continued activities on the prevention of all forms of violence with a focus on strengthening the capacity of local institutions to independently plan and implement scientifically based and proven effective preventive interventions in their communities. To achieve a higher level of effectiveness of preventive activities, special attention was paid to contextualizing and adapting the prevention model to the specifics of local communities included in the comprehensive preventive program.

**In 2023, preventive activities were carried out with active participation and cooperation with local and entity institutions, organizations, and media. The participation of representatives in programming activities and adapting strategies to the specifics of communities and the institutional environment are key prerequisites for the development and implementation of programs adapted to the needs of the communities and institutions in which they are implemented.**

The socio -ecological violence prevention program was implemented in cooperation with local partner organizations Forum Teatar from East Sarajevo, Nova Vizija from Novi Travnik, Otaharin from Bijeljina and the Peace Building Center from Sanski Most. Also, the program was implemented in cooperation with partner institutions Gender Center of the Government of Republika Srpska, Gender Center of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Education, Science, Youth, Culture and Sports of the Central Bosnian Canton and the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Srpska.



### STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES: IPD SUCCESS IN CTC'S COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Institute for Population and Development (IPD) has achieved notable results in the implementation of the violence prevention program based on the Community that Cares (CTC) model in six local communities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project included a total of 51 institutions that actively participated in the planning and implementation of CTC initiatives.

As a result of cooperation and involvement in CTC activities, five local communities formally adopted the program. Communities reinforced their commitment through signed cooperation agreements with partner organizations, outlining cooperation modalities for ongoing support during and after the project.



The following achievements were achieved under the CTC-related outcome:

- **CTC frameworks and manual developed**

The project has successfully achieved an indicator for the creation of the Criteria and framework for the establishment and implementation of the CTC program. Two frameworks were established and used during the project, contributing to the finalization of a comprehensive CTC Methodology Manual. This significant achievement marks a solid foundation for CTC's current and future initiatives.

- **Strengthening CTC teams and expanding reach:**

The project exceeded expectations in establishing and strengthening capacity for all six CTC teams in the following local communities: Bijeljina, Dobož, Pale, East Sarajevo, Novi Travnik and Travnik. The mentoring groups, which consisted of experienced representatives of local communities from previous phases of the project, played a key role in supporting the newly established CTC teams. This collaboration has strengthened the network, fostering collaborative efforts between CTC teams in different locations, providing support to new communities and increasing overall efficiency.

- **Empowering adult men through gender transformative education:**

CTC teams extended gender transformative education to adult men, surpassing the planned participation of 60 men with a remarkable success of 91 participants. These workshops successfully corrected attitudes towards violence against women, children and gender-based violence, contributing to a more informed and gender-equal community.

- **Initiatives and impact on the community:**

As confirmation of the success of the CTC approach, 36 initiatives were implemented in all six locations, surpassing the planned goal of 35 initiatives. This community-led approach, with an emphasis on education and collaboration, has led to tangible positive changes and increased awareness of violence prevention and response. In conclusion, IPD's CTC program not only met but exceeded its goals, demonstrating the effectiveness of community-led initiatives in fostering safer, more informed and gender-equal communities.

## TRANSFORMATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS: IMPACT OF IPD ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION EDUCATION

In a transformative journey, the Institute for Population and Development (IPD) led a proven effective initiative to empower high schools in six local communities across Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement a comprehensive evidence-based violence prevention program. The primary goal was to equip educational institutions with the capacity to carry out standardized gender transformative education, with a focus on violence prevention through Program Y and the methodology of Budi muško clubs.

### **Strategic capacity increase:**

During the project, IPD worked tirelessly in cooperation with local partners to improve the abilities of secondary schools in Bijeljina, Dobož, Pale, Travnik, East Sarajevo and Novi Travnik. The goal was to establish the necessary operational and technical preconditions aligned with the criteria of excellence, which enable more efficient and effective violence prevention programs in schools.

### **Final evaluation check:**

The achievement of the second result of the project, "Secondary schools in 6 local communities in BiH have the capacity to implement standardized gender transformative education", was confirmed through a comprehensive final evaluation. This key evaluation serves as proof that the preventive interventions supported by UN Women, the office in BiH, were effective, which guarantees continued support in the future. Initial and final evaluations played a key role in measuring the effectiveness of the program, revealing significant changes in attitudes and awareness among young people.

### **Significant changes in consciousness:**

The data of the final study highlighted a significant change in the awareness of young people in all cities. There was a significant increase in willingness to openly discuss experiences with violence, accompanied by changes in attitudes of up to 24%. This shift underscored the growing understanding that violence is not a private matter and should be the subject of open dialogue. IPD successfully exceeded the project indicator of 10% increase, reaching an impressive 24%.

### **Positive influence on changes in attitudes:**

The results of the research showed that the participants of the program expressed their satisfaction with the activities, emphasizing particularly positive effects on changes in attitudes. The period after the program witnessed a more objective perception of violence among young people, reinforcing the idea that violence is a social concern that requires open dialogue.

### **Strategic cooperation and recognition:**

The strategic cooperation of IPD with the Ministries of Education of Republika Srpska and Central Bosnia Canton was a key determinant for the achieved successes. The collaboration was recognized as promising and relevant, with key representatives appointed for coordination and implementation. Both ministries appointed contact persons who actively participated in all phases of project planning and implementation. This cooperation contributed to the establishment of schools of excellence, and the cooperation memorandum formalized the support of local communities.

### **Empowering young people through Budi men clubs:**

Partner organizations continued to invest in improving the work of Budi muško clubs, involving young people in regular meetings, motivational activities and creative workshops. With more than 100 meetings held, these clubs played a key role in empowering young members, encouraging a sense of responsibility and leadership.

In conclusion, IPD's holistic approach to gender transformative education and violence prevention in secondary schools not only achieved but exceeded its goals. The long-term impact on attitudes and awareness among young people indicates a positive shift in social norms, reinforcing the necessity of continuous efforts in building a safer and more gender-just future.



## A STEP IN PREVENTION: THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Religious institutions play a key role in preventing violence against women by leveraging their moral authority and influence within communities to advocate for gender equality and condemn harmful social practices. Religious institutions often serve as important platforms for spreading messages of respect, empathy, and nonviolence, encouraging a cultural shift toward more egalitarian values. By integrating anti-violence initiatives into religious teachings and engaging religious leaders as advocates, religious institutions have contributed to shaping attitudes and behaviors that reject violence and promote a safer environment for women and girls.

### **Strengthening partnership and religious engagement in the fight against violence against women**

With the intention of contributing to the elimination of violence against women (VAW), the joint efforts of our partners marked significant developments during the reporting period.

Starting with a round table on the topic "Eradication of violence against women" on March 8, 2023 in Sanski Most, representatives of educational institutions, religious teachers and representatives of local institutions gathered. Recognizing violence against women as a public health and social problem, the participants emphasized the collective responsibility of individuals and institutions in preventing and eradicating it.

During 2023, the CIM partner organization engaged in strategic advocacy initiatives, including a meeting with the Ministry of Education and discussions with the president of the Multisector Team. As a result of these advocacy initiatives, the partner organization became a member of the Sanski Most Multisectoral Team.

### **Panel discussion: "Application of scientific and evidence-based methods of prevention and response to violence in the activities of religious communities"**

In 2023, a significant panel discussion "Application of scientific and evidence-based methods of prevention and response to violence in the activities of religious communities" was held. The panel attended by 24 participants emphasized the importance of the involvement of religious leaders in the prevention of violence against women and gender-based violence. The discussions emphasized the positive effect of UN Women's support in building capacity within religious communities for more comprehensive engagement.

### **Advocating for a more comprehensive involvement of religious institutions in the prevention and response to violence**

The partner organization CIM conducted a series of advocacy and consultation meetings, with the aim of gathering support for the use of the Framework for the Prevention of Violence against Women and Gender-Based Violence within Religious Communities. The success of the advocacy resulted in the approval of the IRC coordinator by the heads of all three religious communities to participate in the consultation process led by CIM and IPD.

Culminating in the establishment of an expert group for advocacy, the group analyzed and advocated the use of the Framework in future programs to prevent gender-based violence within religious communities. The inclusion of trained experts from all three religious communities marked a significant victory in advocacy. The expert team, which consisted of representatives from the Islamic community, the Catholic Church and the Jewish community, played a key role in revising the Framework and drafting a letter of recommendation for their use in current and future prevention initiatives.

During the last quarter of 2023, the expert group created an action plan for engagement of religious communities in the prevention of violence against women and gender-based violence. The expert group also submitted a letter of support for the use of the framework in planning future preventive activities. This joint effort demonstrates the commitment of religious institutions and communities to actively contribute to the prevention and response to violence, fostering a safer and more inclusive society.



# YOUTH VOICES, YOUTH CHOICES

Donor: IPPF EN

Project duration: 01.01.2021. – 30.06.2023.

Total project funds: 183,797.60 USD

## ABOUT THE PROJECT:

Youth mental health is essential for overall development, impacting cognitive, emotional, and social well-being. Addressing mental health concerns early fosters resilience and helps prevent long-term issues. Similarly, sexual and reproductive health education empowers young individuals to make informed choices, promoting overall well-being and reducing the risk of unintended consequences. Together, these aspects contribute to a holistic approach to youth well-being and a foundation for a healthy and fulfilling life.

Young people and vulnerable groups in the Western Balkans face many obstacles in accessing services that are important for their mental health, violence and sexual and reproductive health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they bore the brunt of additional barriers in accessing information, support and care. COVID-19 has shown how fragile national health systems are and highlighted the unpreparedness of countries to deal with health emergencies. The new circumstances and realities faced by the world due to the crisis caused by the pandemic have stimulated the creativity of civil society and other actors to counter these obstacles, and digital outreach and digital support have played a key role that is expanding and becoming ubiquitous in many sectors, from education to health. Youth Voices, Youth Choices is a project dedicated to learning from the experience of COVID-19 in the Western Balkans to ensure that sexual and reproductive health services and information become more accessible and youth-friendly in the long term, especially for marginalized groups. Lasting from 2020 to 2023, it brings together members and partners of IPPF in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Kosovo, with the support of the Regional Office of IPPF EN. To bring about structural and long-term change, we will combine advocacy techniques with powerful new narratives and, under the leadership of youth, we plan to implement a comprehensive public awareness campaign and influence national and regional authorities to commit more actively to improving youth services. Multi-stakeholder partnerships will support communication and advocacy initiatives.

## MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

### DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

In the pursuit of fostering youth engagement and empowerment, IPPF successfully organized a regional three-day training event. The training, held from January 27th to 29th in the vibrant city of Skopje, North Macedonia, brought together members of national and regional youth expert groups. A key component of the training was the exploration of communication processes and the creation of moral frames in communication. Participants delved into the realms of public relations, campaign development, identification of key target groups, and the formulation of advocacy messages using reframing methodology. The training embraced a participatory learning approach, actively involving participants in the development of a social media campaign. Engaging in all phases of the development process, participants gained practical knowledge and skills that would prove invaluable in their future endeavors. The primary goal of the developed campaign was to bring attention to the results of the Regional Research conducted within the framework of the Youth Voices, Youth Choices project. The campaign aimed to reach not only the general public but also key stakeholders and decision-makers.

During the training, a resonant slogan was formulated for the campaign: "Healthy young people, a healthy future!" Action plans were meticulously drawn up for the five countries that serve as the standard bearers of the campaign. The campaign comprises seven impactful messages, each aligning with the seven days leading up to World Health Day.

Each material showcases one of the research-derived messages. The campaign materials will be presented in the languages of each participating country, as well as in English, ensuring a broad and inclusive reach.

IPD's commitment to empowering youth voices and fostering a sense of responsibility among the younger generation is evident in the success of the regional training and the subsequent campaign. By instilling knowledge and skills related to effective communication and advocacy, IPD is catalyzing positive change and contributing to the creation of a healthier future for all. The campaign stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, education, and proactive engagement in addressing pressing societal issues.

## **TRAINING OF PEER EDUCATORS: EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION**

In its ongoing commitment to fostering youth leadership and empowerment, IPD successfully conducted a three-day basic training for peer educators from April 13th to April 15th. This transformative training, a pivotal event in our annual agenda, was led by seasoned peer education trainers Najda Krilić and Timur Jukić, both esteemed members of the Youth Expert Group project.

Najda Krilić and Timur Jukić, leveraging their wealth of experience and insights gained from active involvement in various project activities, served as the guiding forces during the comprehensive training program.

The primary objectives of the training were to familiarize participants with the principles of peer education methodology, delve into various thematic topics, and enhance their facilitation and presentation skills. The overarching aim was to equip these future peer educators with the tools and knowledge necessary to make a meaningful impact within their communities.

Throughout the three days, participants were immersed in a dynamic learning environment, gaining not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills crucial for effective peer education. The training provided a platform for honing facilitation and presentation abilities, ensuring that these emerging peer educators are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

IPD's annual report proudly highlights the success of the Basic Training for Peer Educators, a cornerstone in our efforts to empower the next generation of leaders. The dedication of trainers Najda Krilić and Timur Jukić, coupled with the active participation of volunteers from partner organizations, exemplifies the collaborative spirit that defines our initiatives. As these newly equipped peer educators embark on their journeys, we anticipate a ripple effect of positive change within communities, driven by the knowledge, skills, and passion instilled during this transformative training. A total of 21 participants (13M, 8F) attended the training and become peer educators who will be involved in future educational activities that will be organized in Sarajevo, Travnik and Novi Travnik.

## **YOUTH EXPERT GROUP WORKSHOP: PODCASTS**

On 27th of June 2023. IPD Youth Expert Group organized training "Its time for YOU(th): Podcasts" As a part of Youth empowerment program, IPD conducted final workshop on Podcast production and implementation, with particular focus on how to use Podcasts as a communicational channel between services and youth.

Training was led by Youth Expert Group representative Azra Mehmedovi, member of Regional Youth Expert Group. This training was part of the cycle of a series of training courses on Podcast production, PR and Media. As a result of the training (including previous training), members gain the skills and knowledge relevant for their future involvement in podcasts production and publishing.

At the end of the training, the final podcast has been published.

## **BRIDGING GAPS BY USING ICTS: IPD'S IMPACTFUL OUTREACH ON YOUTH HEALTH SERVICES ACCESS**

In its steadfast commitment to advancing youth health and well-being, IPD strategically utilized social media platforms and its official website to disseminate crucial research findings, innovative practices, and recommendations aimed at improving access to health services for the youth demographic. The dissemination efforts reached a wide array of target groups, including the general population, youth, those living in marginalized or unfavorable conditions, stakeholders, decision-makers, professionals, teenagers, and parents. This multi-faceted approach ensured that the information reached diverse audiences with varying needs and interests.

Over the course of the project, IPD's social media channels in Bosnia and Herzegovina effectively reached more than 600,000 people. Through thoughtfully crafted posts, impactful messages, and engaging social media banners, the dissemination effort achieved widespread visibility and engagement.

The Youth Expert Group played a pivotal role in designing and implementing the dissemination activities. Their active participation included crafting social media banners, messages, posts, and podcasts. The Youth Expert Group, led by Regional member Azra Mehmedovic, ensured the authenticity and relevance of the messages by validating and approving all campaign-related content during the initial phase. In the project's second phase, the Youth Expert Group elevated their outreach strategy by designing a series of podcasts. Integrating key messages and recommendations, these podcasts served as an innovative medium to reach a broader audience, providing a dynamic and accessible format for information dissemination.

Over the six months of project implementation in 2023, the social media channels played a crucial role, reaching over 600,000 people and ensuring the widespread dissemination of key information related to the conducted research and developed recommendations. IPD's strategic and inclusive approach underscores its dedication to leaving a lasting positive impact on the health and well-being of the youth population.

## **EMPOWERING YOUTH ADVOCACY: IPD'S PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL ADVOCACY TIRANA MEETING**

In a dynamic three-day event from May 4th to 6th, 2023, IPD, alongside a Bosnian delegation, actively engaged in an advocacy meeting held in Tirana. Initiated by IPPF EN, the meeting's program and sessions were collaboratively designed by partner organizations and IPPF EN staff.

The advocacy meeting commenced with welcoming speeches, logistical briefings, and introductory speeches by decision makers and youth representatives. A roundtable discussion with decision-makers, partners, and field experts followed, addressing critical topics related to youth health.

The parliamentary session, facilitated by Elona Gjebrea, thanked the parliament for hosting discussions on youth needs and rights. The afternoon focused on plenary presentations on Program Practices by country coordinators.





The meeting concluded with a Q&A session moderated by IPPF EN, and notably, representatives from the Ministry of Education in Central Bosnia Canton expressed interest in introducing Comprehensive Sexuality Education within their canton. Initial steps were promptly taken in the week following the Tirana meeting, marking a positive outcome and a testament to the impactful advocacy efforts fostered by collaborative initiatives like these.

## **NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN**

In coordination with regional partners and IPPF EN, the Institute for Population and Development successfully implemented social media campaign within which key national priorities are highlighted with an emphasis on the needs of young and marginalized groups.

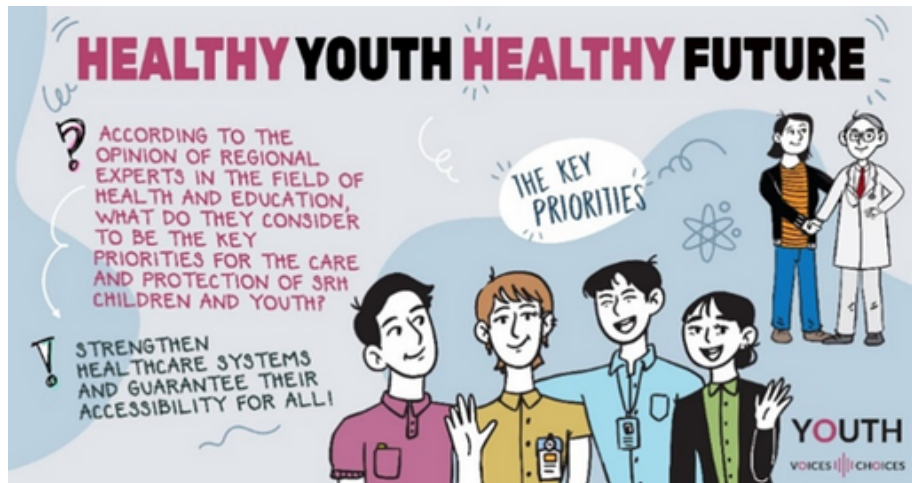
Key priorities for the advocacy and campaign were selected by the young people and key decision makers who worked together on validation of research data but also on defining key recommendations and later key advocacy priorities which were integral part of campaign. Also, decision makers and key advocates were previously involved in the design of Policy recommendations and these recommendations were also validated, corrected, and approved by members of Youth Expert Group. These recommendations were the baseline for design of the Social Media Campaign.

The campaign started on April 1, 2023, and it was completed on April 7th 2023. During the campaign, different target groups were exposed to selected advocacy and raising awareness messages that were published each day surfing the implementation of the campaign.

The total number of people who saw the campaign is 631,861

Total campaign results: 350,749 people saw the campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Engagement on the posts: 3.602.



## EMPOWERING TEACHERS: IPD'S IMPACTFUL TRAINING IN CENTRAL BOSNIA CANTON

In a significant stride towards fostering a supportive and informed educational environment, the Institute for Population and Development (IPD) successfully conducted a two-day training for the staff of Elementary School Bila in Central Bosnia Canton.

This training, held in Vitez from June 21st to 22nd, marked the beginning of an extended collaboration involving the Institute, the Ministry of Education, Elementary School Bila, and the Network of Pedagogues from Central Bosnia Canton.

Attended by 31 participants, including school teachers, pedagogues, and school management, the training aimed at introducing participants to the key findings of the Youth Voices, Youth Choices research. Additionally, it covered essential aspects of youth health from a socio-ecological perspective.

This initial training session served as the foundation for developing a group of future advocates within the network of teachers from Central Bosnia Canton. Participants deepened their understanding of crucial topics such as adolescent sexuality, mental health, and evidence-based practices for addressing diverse adolescent needs in both education and services.

The training acted as the baseline for a more advanced second training phase, where participants will acquire new skills through methodological tools developed by IPD and its partners, including Program Y, Program E, and Because of You – Because of Us. The third training will focus on enhancing teachers' abilities to respond to various adolescent needs, including health and violence, while improving access to relevant services. Expressing their appreciation, all school employees decided to send a letter of gratitude to Minister of Education Bojan Domic for ensuring IPD's involvement in their training. This gesture reflects the positive impact of the training on the school community.

IPD received accolades from Ministry representatives who congratulated them on the outstanding result of the conducted training. The school's letter of appreciation, endorsed by all staff members, further underscores the success of IPD's efforts in empowering educators and creating a more informed and supportive educational landscape in Central Bosnia Canton.





### **LESSONS LEARNED / RECOMMENDATIONS / CONTINUED**

- Digital tools can have practical applications in the provision of counseling services, including psychological counseling
- Young people and users of psychotherapy services during the pandemic emphasized that the provision of psychotherapy services through ICT opens up many opportunities for users and is recognized as an example of good practice
- In order to provide children and young people with unhindered access to psychological counseling services, it is very important to work with parents because young people state that parents are a key obstacle in accessing the aforementioned services.
- Young people, especially young people from marginalized groups, face challenges in accessing health and education services about sexuality, sexual health, violence and mental health.
- Health educational institutions do not have developed capacities to provide comprehensive services to young people in times of crisis

Donor: IPPF EN

Project duration: 01.11.2022. – 31.10.2023.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

Social and stereotypical gender norms are strong social determinants of health and behaviour, as these norms can discourage young people from taking care of their health. They are also discouraged from using relevant SRZ (sexual and reproductive health) and mental health services. The behavior, attitudes and values of boys and girls differ and are influenced by gender norms, where boys may consider asking for help a sign of weakness and risky behavior may be encouraged. Girls may feel uncomfortable accessing/using SRZ services or speaking freely with professionals about their SRZ needs/concerns.

The identification of key sociocultural factors is a prerequisite for the application of a socio-ecological and gender-sensitive approach, which creates equal and rights-based opportunities for boys and girls to live healthier lives.

By changing the paradigm of health education, it is possible to influence young people's seeking of help and their awareness of acting in the best interest of their health.

## MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTICIPATORY LEARNING AND ACTION (PLA) WORKSHOPS WITH 90 YOUNG PARTICIPANTS AGED 13-19 FROM BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA.**

As part of the project, six three-day Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) workshops were successfully organized with a total of 90 participants from the target age group. These workshops, held in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar, provided the participants with a platform for active involvement and provided a deep understanding of the social factors that shape the use of preventive measures for reproductive health (PRH) and mental health services among young people. Special attention is paid to working with girls and boys separately, improving the focus and adapting to the specifics of each gender.

This initiative encouraged the active participation of young people, contributing to a deeper understanding of the social norms that influence their perception and approach to PRZ and mental health. Through dialogue and cooperation, common challenges and needs between girls and boys were discovered, which resulted in the strengthening of their individual voices and contributed to a wider social understanding and support of the needs of young people in the community.

## ADAPTATION OF CSE, SRZ AND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS BASED ON PLA FINDINGS TO BETTER RESPOND TO IDENTIFIED NEEDS.

IPD has adopted its own educational approaches to respond to the identified needs of young people, following a socio-ecological perspective. Evidence-based educational responses are now better tailored to specific needs identified during participatory research.

This means that in the next step of working with young people, more attention will be paid to social networks, because they have proven to be a very important and influential aspect of young people's lives and well-being. As an important result of the PLA research, it was realized that young people spend the most time with their peers, from whom they seek information about the problems they face growing up. That is why it is important to strengthen the knowledge and skills of young people, as well as to expand the network of peer educators on these relevant topics. The research offered clear instructions on how to coordinate youth empowerment activities with identified peer mediation opportunities in order to achieve better health and increase the number of youth who use available services.

The research emphasizes the importance of integrating peer education into youth empowerment programs. The inclusion of trained peer educators in these programs is recommended in order to provide youth with access to relevant information on sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) and mental health. In addition, the research highlights the need to strengthen communication among young people, with a special emphasis on encouraging open discussions on SRHR issues. The goal is to reduce stigma and promote mutual understanding among young people.

As part of the research recommendations, the emphasis is on the importance of expanding the network of peer educators. These educators should be trained to provide support and information to their peers, thus creating sustainable support among young people.

The research recommends adapting the youth empowerment program to the specific sociocultural context. The goal is to ensure that programs reflect the real needs of young people and encourage their active participation in the community.

### THE PLA GUIDE DEVELOPED: KEY GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION

IPD has successfully completed the development of a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) guide designed to be easily used by MA members. This guide provides key guidelines covering the preparatory and operational steps essential for planning, implementing and finalizing PLA research. It contains detailed information and instructions for the effective use of collected and analyzed qualitative data.

The developed PLA Guidelines are a comprehensive resource, including step-by-step instructions for planning and implementing all phases of PLA research.

Specifically, the guide offers research tools tailored to the needs of all MA members, enabling them to contextualize their comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) programs, curricula, peer education, professional training, and other youth-relevant programs. strategies. This initiative provides (MA) members with the means to effectively tailor programs and practices, supporting their specific needs and goals in youth work.



# Mental health project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (MHP in Bosnia and Herzegovina)

**Donor: Government of Switzerland**

**Project duration: 01.03.2018. do 30.06.2023. (PHASE III)**

**Total project funds: 11.112.479,00 BAM**

The year 2023 is the last year of the Mental Health Project in BiH, which has implemented by IPD in its three phases since 2010. The project, originally scheduled to complete its third and final phase on February 1, 2023, was extended until the end of June 2023, when it was officially completed. In this period, the IPD also started the preparation of a new health project focused on health promotion and prevention of non-communicable diseases, along with the improvement of healthy lifestyles, mental health, sexual and reproductive health through continued direct cooperation with the SDC, the Federal Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska. This report provides a more detailed overview of the activities of both of these projects.

## OUTCOME 1 ROUTINE COLLECTION OF MENTAL HEALTH DATA

In Federation of BiH, as part of the Law on Records in the field of Health, all mental health centres submit six-monthly and annual summary report forms to the PHI (Public Health Institute) in the FBiH, a report on the work of the mental health centre and a report on illnesses in mental health centres and hospitals with psychiatric departments - through the patient statistical form. The sustainability and systematic arrangement of data collection in the field of mental health is ensured in such a way that the necessary forms are part of legal and by-laws (based on the Law on Records in the field of Health). The basis for collecting data on users has been created in such a way that numerous indicators can be reported by various bodies in the country abroad (including reporting according to the World Health Organisation Mental Health Atlas). The PHI prepares the report "Health status of the population of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" and "Health and statistical yearbook of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" for each calendar year. Reports prepared in this way are used for various purposes: data analysis, planning, creation of strategic directions and policies, amendments to legal solutions, etc.

## HOSPITALS PROVIDE CONTINUITY OF CARE THROUGH THE ADOPTED MODEL OF JOINT DISCHARGE PLANNING (PARTICIPATION OF FAMILIES OF BENEFICIARIES, MHCS, CSW, ASSOCIATIONS OF BENEFICIARIES AND OTHER SERVICES AS NECESSARY)

The model of joint discharge planning of patients is regulated by the new Law on Mental Health (in force in Republika Srpska and in the process of adoption in FBiH) and implementing regulations adopted in accordance with the laws. It was successfully piloted in 45% of communities with CMHCs.

Revised hospital standards were introduced in FBiH in July 2020, which provide for clearly regulated discharge of mental health patients in accordance with the model. Analyses of indicators show improved cooperation with the hospital sector. Prepared draft of the professional basis of the Rulebook on the discharge of a person with mental disorders from a health institution, which will be adopted on the basis of the new Act on the Protection of Mental Health. Subsection C2. Dismissal (Art. 64-68)

## OUTCOME 2

### SURVEY OF CMZS IN BIH - FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE APPLICATION OF COORDINATED CARE, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND WORK SERVICES WITH CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AND FAMILIES

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In its final phase, the Mental Health Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina was dedicated to activities aimed at advocating sustainability and promoting project results that were achieved through continuous joint work. For this purpose, data was collected from 73 CMHCs in BiH, which provided important information about the sustainability of coordinated care in the daily work of mental health centers. The processing of the survey showed that, at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina, out of the total number of currently employed 508 persons in mental health centers, 78 persons did not receive training in coordinated care (CC), namely: newly hired staff, residents and a very small number of persons who were from for justified reasons prevented from participating in previously organized education. Also, 68 MHCs or 93.15% answered that they will continue with the implementation of coordinated care even after the end of Mental Health Project support in BiH.

The report from the final conferences of the Mental Health Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the evaluation of the application of innovative services through questionnaires, show that the increase in the capacity of health forces was achieved through the implementation of formal and informal education, continuous learning, as well as the practical application of acquired knowledge and the exchange of experiences at the workplace, learning on examples of good practice and long-term supervisory monitoring of work in the field through field visits and supervisory/intervisional educational workshops.

The experts themselves believe that the education they have undergone in the past 13 years has, in most of their statements, influenced the change in the relationship with service users/patients. They also state that better cooperation has been achieved between CMHCs and psychiatric clinics, that they are very satisfied with the application of coordinated care, occupational therapy and preventive programs and that these services have influenced the improvement of the quality of life of service users, the discharge model has facilitated post-hospital follow-up and continuity of care ensured and all services led to an increase in the rights of patients.

### ONSITE VISITS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL PLAN OF RECOVERY OF THE INVOLVED BENEFICIARIES (IPR):

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In the period March-April 2023, 5 supervisory visits and 1 online meeting were conducted with the staff of all 8 involved institutions of social welfare or for long-term accommodation of users for the implementation of the Individual Plan of Recovery (IPR)[1]. What should be emphasized is that the Special Hospital for Psychiatry in Sokolac has reported that it has users included in the IPR, so we can state that all 8 social protection institutions have included users in the IPR, which now amounts to over 70 users. From the onsite visit, we were informed that all other institutions continue with the new inclusion of users in the IPR. The Home for Social and Health Care of Persons with Disabilities and Other People in Stolac should be highlighted, because their staff who completed the training from the IPO organized the internal education of the rest of the staff of the Stolac Home in the institution.

### MEASURING THE RECOVERY OF BENEFICIARIES INVOLVED IN IPO IN SOCIAL PROTECTION INSTITUTIONS

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After completing the full IPR training, the first measurement of the individual recovery plan, at the end of 2022, showed that 87.7% of the users included in the IPR are recovering well after 3 months of involvement in the IPR (N=49, F=31, M=18).

[1] Institutions where the IPR service has been introduced: Public Institution for the Care of Mentally Disabled Persons "Drin" Fojnica, Institution for the Care of Mentally Disabled Persons Bakovići, Public Institution for the Care of Mentally Disabled Children and Youth Pazarić (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina); Modriča Special Hospital for Chronic Psychiatry; Home for people with disabilities "Čirkin Polje" Prijedor, Home for people with disabilities Višegrad, Special Hospital for Psychiatry Sokolac.



## MEETINGS WERE HELD WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES REGARDING THE INITIATION OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AT FBIH

Meeting with the College "CEPS - Center for Business Studies" Kiseljak was held. The component 2B team monitored the process of opening of a Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Zenica, which was stopped until further notice due to lack of political will.

Participation in the meetings of the Working Group made up of representatives of the Federal Ministry of Health, the Institute for Public Health of the Federation of BiH, AKAZ and the Mental Health Project in BiH regarding the task of transitioning the relevant data collected through Mental Health Project in BiH into the system (software) at the disposal of the Institute was ensured.

The team of Outcome 2B submitted data on the methodology of data collection (SPSS database and questionnaires) with instructions for processing and interpretation, so that colleagues from the Institute's IT sector could continue monitoring data related to occupational therapy without interruption.

## 53 TRAINEES OF THE "INTENSIVE COURSE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN THE FIELD OF MENTAL HEALTH" IN SOCIAL WELFARE INSTITUTIONS COMPLETED EDUCATION

Certificates were awarded to 53 participants of the "Intensive course of occupational therapy in the field of mental health" modelled on the one-year program for additional education of nurses/technicians in occupational therapy in mental health in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, all the occupational therapists participated at the Regional Conference in the field of mental health is ensured for all three days.

In cooperation with the Institute for the Care of Mentally Disabled Persons Bakovići, aprons were sewed for the graduates and distributed them at the ceremony. In cooperation with Special Hospital for Chronic Psychiatry Modrica, soaps made by the users were distributed as gifts for the graduates.



*Ceremonial awarding of diplomas to educated occupational therapists at the Regional Mental Health Conference*

## A ROUND TABLE WAS HELD ON THE TOPIC "IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY SUPPORT IN THE CURRENT MOMENT IN BIH"

On May 9, 2023. On the eve of the start of the Regional Conference on Mental Health, a round table was held on the topic "The importance of family support at the current moment in BiH", which brought together systemic family counselors educated through PMZ in BiH, relevant representatives of systemic family therapy and representatives of entity ministries of health. At the round table, in addition to important conclusions about future steps in working with families in BiH (adaptation of services to digitization, improvement of family functioning, better emotional connection and care for families in crisis), several prevention programs in this area were proposed: parenting schools, partner selection, systems with a vulnerable member where the system puts stress on the caregivers, etc. An evaluation was also made on the continuity of the application of systemic family therapy by sending a questionnaire to all educated family counselors and the processing of the questionnaire, which is part of the final report of MHP in BiH.

## MANUAL AND PRACTICE FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN MENTAL ARE PUBLISHED HEALTH AS NOVELTIES IN PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE HEALTH/SOCIAL PROFESSIONALS

Due to its specificity and rarity in the region, we believe that the manual/practicum for occupational therapy education in mental health will become indispensable professional literature for occupational/occupational therapist departments of faculties/universities of medicine, as well as for non-governmental organizations, associations of users and professionals who deal with informal education in this area.

They were written by a number of authors prominent in the activity in this field. It is primarily intended for occupational/occupational therapists in mental health in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as working material in mental health centers, psychiatric departments in general hospitals, psychiatric clinics and social institutions on the application of occupational therapy.

The writing style is reviewed and clear. The manual is written in 8 (eight) chapters and in most segments they are expanded to the level of knowledge of all persons involved in the work of occupational therapists, as well as students and users of occupational therapy services. Standardized recommendations on therapies, procedures and techniques of occupational therapy, application and interventions within OT are clearly given. The practicum contains descriptions of exercises, case reports, and an assessment instrument, which were used during training, but are also mandatory during work with users of occupational therapy services in daily practice in mental health services. The data presented indicate significant elements that must be implemented in the work of occupational therapists.



*Handbook of OT*



*Practicum OT*



## OUTCOME 3

### PRESENTATION OF THE USER ASSOCIATIONS' RESULTS AND GOOD PRACTICES

During the month of March, all projects with associations and social institutions were completed as planned. In March and April, a questionnaire on the work of user associations was prepared and processed. The results of the questionnaire were presented at the Round Table with user associations as a kind of advocacy tool. This event was attended by nine user associations and representatives of three local communities (Odžak, Mrkonjić Grad and Trebinje), a total of 28 people (21 women and 7 men). The event was organised by UG Glasno s razlogom (Loud with a Reason) thanks to the grant received from the Project.

Some examples of good practices and achieved success are:

- TK Fenix from Tuzla provided funding from the City budget based on the association of persons with psychosocial disabilities, as well as participation in the Mayor's advisory body.
- UG Most from Vitez is in the process of getting space and financing from the Municipality, and the association has excellent capacity for implementing programs in the community.
- UG Zajedno, Banja Luka, provides a daily care service for users, in cooperation with the City and the Center for Social Work, and on that basis they are also provided with regular financial compensation.
- UG Eko Eho, Banja Luka, presented the path from the recognition of insufficient care for the mental health of pregnant women and mothers in labor to the introduction of a new service into the system - Screening for depression in the perinatal period in health centers in the Republic of Srpska.
- UG Neuron from Odžak has secured space from the Municipality of Odžak, there is an exceptional dedication to the education of users, and the organization of education for other associations when it comes to Human Rights in mental health.
- UG Djetelina from Gradačac, as the "youngest" association (registered at the end of 2022), presented their results achieved in this short period: they secured a space, formed support groups that they currently provide in CMZ and other associations while waiting to equip their own, and secured two grants from the City.

All user associations, both those founded 20 years ago and "younger" associations, are very aware of the process they went through, the investment and effort they put in to fight for their status, but they are also aware of the changes that have taken place in society, greater willingness of local partners and authorities to support them, openness of society and community to problems faced by users and/or their associations. The most common changes they mention concern easier cooperation with local partners from the government and civil sector (primarily educational institutions, sports organizations, etc.), and media interest in their work. A large number of users point out that through their work and commitment through associations, they have gained a better status in the local community, that they are therefore better integrated and much less often encounter difficult barriers caused by stigmatization and discrimination related to their health conditions.

## PUBLICATIONS ON WORK ENGAGEMENT MODELS AND ANTI-STIGMA PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES

In the last months of the Mental Health Project in BiH, the publication "Models of Work Engagement of Persons with Mental Disabilities" was revised, and it presents an analysis of the reports and results achieved by the Project with the partners in this area in the last two phases. This publication is available on the IPD web platform. Also, the "Guide for Antistigma Programs" written in the previous phase of the Project has been updated, supplemented and reviewed, and is also available on the web platform.

### FINAL CONFERENCES OF THE MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:

The Mental Health Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina closed following two large three-day conferences:

- The Regional conference "It's All about You" which was organized in cooperation with the South East European Health Network - SEEHN (Sarajevo, May 9 - 11, 2023).
- The End-of-project conference "For All of Us" (Sarajevo, June 8 – 10, 2023).

At the "It's about you" Regional Conference, in addition to the results achieved through the mental health project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an overview of the latest activities and announcement of future efforts in mental health in all nine member countries of the Network was given, i.e. Albania, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Israel, North Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, as well as Ukraine.

At the End-of-project Conference named "For All of Us", great results and achievements were repeated through panels, presentations, reviews of domestic and international professionals in mental health, and through the survey of participants. At this solemn and emotional gathering, it was once again confirmed that huge advances have been made in the reform of mental health in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They led to an improved and innovative person-centred services, respecting their gender, age, place of residence and other socio-economic characteristics, a greater focus on the prevention of mental disorders, also among children and young people, and to a stronger voice of users who through the non-governmental sector have become significant actors in their communities, but also through connections and joint activities in the entire country. At the end, in a "surprise" ceremony, IPD friend ribbons and certificates were awarded to all those who enabled the success of this great project and the Institute for Population and Development - IPD.





## A NEW HEALTH PROJECT DEVELOPED AND AWARDED - THE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IN BIH PROJECT

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of death, ill health, and disability in BiH. As globally, NCDs in BiH are influenced by well-defined behavioural risk factors: unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and alcohol misuse, whose elimination significantly reduces premature deaths and disability. Socially excluded populations are disproportionately affected by NCDs. An effective response to the high burden of NCDs, simultaneously addressing the social determinants of health, requires a systematic, comprehensive, and integrated approach. Well-coordinated and sustainable prevention programs, implemented through harmonized inter-sectoral approaches, have proven to be most effective. Relatively small investments in NCDs prevention and treatment have the potential to reduce the burden of disease for the population. Therefore, the health authorities in BiH, namely, the Federation Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska, took the initiative to develop, together with the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (SDC) and IPD, a long-term project that would reduce non-communicable disease risk factors by further improving preventive care at the primary healthcare level, increasing health literacy, and improving access to a state-guaranteed package of healthcare services.

**The overall goal of the project is to contribute to a reduced burden of disease and improved health status for women and men in BiH. This goal is to be achieved through the following outcomes:**

- **Health-literate women and men actively and meaningfully participate in and advocate for promotional and prevention activities and adopt healthier lifestyles (special focus on LNOB).**
- **Municipalities take actions for the improvement of health and well-being of citizens and engage in health promotion and disease prevention.**
- **Health and non-health authorities collaborate in the design and implementation of integrated and sustainable reforms for better health and wellbeing of citizens.**

For the development of the project and the preparation of the required documentation, an inception phase project was implemented between 1 February 2023 and 31 October 2023 (nine months), for which the Institute for Population and Development/IPD was mandated to organise, coordinate and implement the activities necessary for the project preparation.

In a highly participatory manner, praised by all participants, and over the course of nine months, the project was developed through a number of workshops and focus-group events facilitated by IPD and SDC, with an active participation of over 60 persons representing the health authorities and institutions, education institutions, local self-government units, Entity associations of cities and municipalities, OCDs, health professionals, health financial experts, health service associations, and others. Seven baseline studies were developed on the health status of citizens in pilot communities, the status and financing of health promotion and disease prevention programmes and services, their access by men and women in the communities, including those from socially excluded groups and other important issues, providing data for the project document development.

Following the successful credit proposal development and submission procedures, the project was approved by SDC in September 2023 and its implementation started on 1 November 2023, as planned.



# One and a half million people were informed about the work of the Institute for Population and Development through domestic and regional media

The Institute for Population and Development is positioned as a reliable and professional partner and collaborator in the field of health and healthy lifestyles on the media scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The flow of information and transparency in the past long-term work have been ensured through the support of domestic and regional media.

The media have been reliable partners of the Institute for many years, supporting programs and projects of general social interest, as well as information about everyday services, which they disseminate to the public through their channels.

**About the Institute for Population and Development and its project activities, 270 unpaid TV and radio reports, broadcasts and texts were published on web-portals in a positive and inspiring way, portraying the Institute and its activities, as well as donors, government institutions and partners.** The Institute for Population and Development was mostly reported by journalists from web portals and electronic media (82 percent of publications), but there was no lack of support from print media or news agencies. Interest in program areas and project activities of the Institute was shown by public RTV services and private and regional Media. Most of the announcements were registered on the web portals of the news agency FENA.ba and the Federal Public Service Federalna.ba.

**The total value of the announcements is BAM 195. 253,56 and the number of people who received information through the media in the past year is one and a half million.**

Current topics of general social interest, implemented by the Institute in the past year, were channeled through the website, and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Instagram) made a great contribution to daily communication with those who follow and actively participate through interaction. in our work. Useful and service information reached every home in our country.

**In the course of 2023, the number of people who have seen the contents of the Institute for Population and Development through these communication channels will reach 450,000 people. So far, the Institute for Population and Development has registered 26,000 followers and three million views on social networks.**

