

Institute for
Population and
Development

2025

INSTITUTE FOR POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT



Future4Youth



DONOR: CARE International Balkans, MES

Project duration: 01 August 2024 – 31 January 2026

Project information

For more than ten years, IPD has maintained strategic regional cooperation with CARE International Balkans, which continued in 2024 together with partners Perpetuum Mobile (Banja Luka) and Centar E8 (Belgrade). Within this partnership, Program Y (Young Men Initiative) is being implemented—an internationally awarded, gender-synchronized youth programme. The “Future for Youth” project focuses on introducing life-skills education into school and out-of-school settings, with the aim of strengthening gender equality, healthy relationships, and the mental and physical health of young people, as well as preventing violence. Through a systemic approach, the project contributes to the development of critical thinking, functional literacy, and active youth participation in society.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS IN 2025

Budi Muško and Fakat Cure club: youth for equality, mental health, and non-violence

During 2025, Budi Muško i Fakat Cure club (Be a Man Club Sarajevo) operated as active platform for engaging young people in the promotion of gender equality, mental health, and violence prevention. Through regular meetings and educational and creative activities, young people actively participated in designing campaigns and innovative formats of engagement, developing communication and organisational skills while contributing to positive social change.

Health literacy and healthy lifestyle promotion workshops in schools

In cooperation with the Secondary Medical School, Secondary Dental School, Secondary School of Applied Arts, and Primary School ŠIP in Sarajevo, a large number of workshops were conducted throughout the year focusing on mental health, emotional intelligence, prevention

of peer and gender-based violence, and the development of healthy lifestyle habits, reaching more than 700 students.

The workshops were implemented within Program Y and Program E, with the active participation of school pedagogues, psychologists, and trained peer educators. Through interactive methods, discussions, and practical exercises, students developed skills in recognising and expressing emotions, assertive communication, decision-making, and seeking support. Special attention was given to topics such as digital violence, mental health challenges among youth, gender stereotypes, and healthy relationships. The high level of participation and positive feedback confirmed the strong need for such content within the formal education system.

Workshops to improve youth mental health and socio-emotional skills

More than 200 students from the Secondary School of Applied Arts attended ten “Conversation with a Psychologist” workshops, which provided young people with a safe space to discuss mental health and personal development. The workshops covered topics such as emotional

intelligence, communication and socio-emotional skills, decision-making, digital violence, substance abuse, eating disorders, and the recognition and destigmatisation of depression, anxiety, and other psychological challenges.



Training of peer educators (TOT) and strengthening youth leadership capacities

Throughout 2025, a series of peer educator trainings was implemented, including multi-day trainings for high school students, members of Budi Muško i Fakat Cure club, and young people from social welfare institutions. The trainings focused on strengthening facilitation skills, understanding gender equality, violence prevention, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health. Through these trainings, young people gained practical knowledge and confidence to lead workshops in their schools and communities. A particularly significant result was the empowerment of youth from vulnerable groups, including young people from the HUM Institute, further confirming the inclusiveness and adaptability of the Program Y methodology.

Strengthening the capacities of school staff for violence prevention and support to children’s and youth mental health

Two two-day trainings were delivered for teaching and professional staff of the Secondary Medical School Sarajevo and Primary School “ŠIP” Sarajevo, aiming to strengthen school capacities for systemic violence prevention, mental health promotion, and gender equality. A total of 37 teachers and professional associates were trained.

The trainings addressed key topics such as contemporary challenges in child and adolescent

development, the influence of social norms on violence, the local context of violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, mental health of children and youth, and the role of peer support. Special focus was placed on presenting Program Y, Program E, and Be a Man Clubs as concrete, structured tools for work in school settings. Through an interactive and reflective approach, participants gained practical knowledge and tools to strengthen a supportive school climate, improve students' trust in school support mechanisms, and contribute to the long-term creation of a safe, non-violent, and inclusive educational environment.

Youth voices against violence: art as a space for expression and empowerment

A mentored art programme for youth was implemented, involving 33 children and young people from the Institution for Social Care, Upbringing and Education HUM, Secondary Dental School Sarajevo and the Secondary Medical School in Sarajevo, who participated in 12 creative workshops dedicated to violence prevention. Using various visual art techniques, participants expressed emotions, personal experiences, and attitudes about violence, with a particular focus on working with youth from vulnerable groups and creating a safe and supportive environment. The programme concluded with a public exhibition at Europe House Sarajevo, confirming the power of art as a tool for youth empowerment, emotional literacy development, and the promotion of non-violent values in the community.



Youth activism: art as a tool for violence prevention and equality advocacy

Creative activities played an important role in youth engagement throughout the year. Through activism activities, young people used art as a tool to express emotions, personal experiences, and attitudes towards violence, identity, and mental health. Various creative workshops and online campaigns enabled young people to share their messages with the wider community, contributing to the destigmatisation of mental health and raising awareness of the importance of non-violent and equal relationships.

In this context, a creative workshop was organised with members of the Budi Muško i Fakat Cure Club Sarajevo, during which young people actively expressed their views on gender equality, labour rights, and social justice through the creation of banners and messages, and participated in marking International Women's Day through a public protest march.

Development and validation of the "Future for Youth" Advocacy Strategy

During 2025, young members of the Budi Muško i Fakat Cure club, with expert guidance from an advocacy specialist, developed the "IPD – Future for Youth" advocacy strategy, which was formally presented and validated in June. Nineteen young people participated in the process, and the participatory approach ensured that the strategy reflects the real needs and experiences of young people while setting clear advocacy priorities and mechanisms for action.



Regional and public campaigns: active advocacy and visibility of youth messages

Throughout 2025, numerous campaigns and public actions were implemented, including the marking of International Women's Day, World Mental Health Day, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, as well as summer and online campaigns focused on healthy lifestyles for young people. The campaigns combined online and offline approaches, with strong contributions from young people in creating content, messages, and visuals. Through social media, exhibitions, performances, media appearances, and public events, messages on gender equality, mental health, and violence prevention reached tens of thousands of people, confirming the importance of youth as credible voices of change in society.

"The person I am now and the person I was four years ago could not even pass each other on the street. Four years ago, I was someone who did not understand others, who did not express her feelings and who was afraid to meet new people. Now, as an educator at the camp, I openly talk about my feelings, express all my emotions, and share my knowledge with others. The different kinds of people I met through the Be a Man Club and the projects taught me not to judge a book by its cover—to not judge people I don't know—and that is one of the biggest changes in my life."

Emina Hajro, 20



ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT - DOYOU(th) 2025.



Empowering Youth for Change: Health, Creativity, and Sustainable Well-being through DoYou(th)

Project title: DoYou(th)

Donor: European Union (Erasmus+)

Project duration: 1 December 2024 – 30 November 2026

The DoYou(th) project responds to increasingly complex challenges faced by young people today, including issues related to mental and physical health, social exclusion, economic insecurity, and limited opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Built on the belief that young people are key drivers of social change, DoYou(th) connects innovative youth work approaches, creative expression, and social responsibility to strengthen personal capacities, resilience, and active citizenship. Through regional cooperation and the application of contemporary methodologies, the project contributes to the development of healthier, more inclusive, and more sustainable communities in which young people are empowered with the knowledge, tools, and space to shape their own futures.

The DoYou(th) project aims to empower young people and youth workers through innovative youth work approaches that connect personal values, social responsibility, and creative methodologies with broader issues of health, economic stability, and social well-being. The project builds on contemporary concepts such as activism, the doughnut economy, and social entrepreneurship, promoting active citizenship and long-term youth engagement across the region.



During 2025, project activities focused on several interconnected areas: strengthening the capacities of partner organisations and youth workers, adapting and localising innovative methodologies, engaging young people through public and participatory events, and ensuring

strong communication and dissemination of project values and results. IPD placed particular emphasis on strengthening partners' communication capacities, supporting strategic social media planning, and facilitating coordinated communication processes within the partnership.

In the field of capacity building, IPD actively participated in regional trainings and online learning activities and delivered its own training sessions for youth workers. A key activity was the online training "Social Responsibility and Perseverance", held on 31 October 2025. The training provided an interactive and reflective learning space where participants explored personal values, character strengths, and ethical decision-making, while developing small, realistic action plans for community engagement. As a result, youth workers enhanced their understanding of social responsibility and perseverance as essential life competences.

IPD also made a significant contribution to the localisation of project methodologies by translating the Artivism, Doughnut Economy, and Social Entrepreneurship handbooks into Bosnian and producing accompanying explanatory video materials. This ensured greater accessibility and practical use of the methodologies by youth workers and civil society organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A key public outreach activity was organised on 5 September 2025 in the city of Trebinje, gathering 79 representatives of umbrella youth organisations from across Bosnia and Herzegovina. While youth health was the central theme of the event, it also served as a platform to present the core approaches of the DoYou(th) project and their connection to health, as well as economic and social well-being. As a concrete outcome, the Declaration on the Improvement of Youth Health was signed and jointly adopted by youth councils from the Republika Srpska, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Brčko District, marking an important step towards cross-entity cooperation and joint advocacy.

Throughout the year, IPD played a leading role in project communication and dissemination. A common visual identity, communication guidelines, and monitoring tools were developed to support consistent visibility and messaging across the partnership. Through a total of 65 dissemination and communication activities, the project reached more than 60,000 people, primarily through social media, media coverage, and video content. These efforts significantly increased the visibility of the project and its key messages among youth workers, civil society organisations, and the wider public.

The results achieved in 2025 demonstrate that combining innovative methodologies, strong-communication strategies, and regional cooperation is an effective approach to youth empowerment. The DoYou(th) project has established a solid foundation for further pilot activities and long-term impact, contributing to healthier, more inclusive, and more resilient communities driven by young people.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PROGRAM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The institutionalization and sustainable functioning of Centers for Promotion and Prevention (CPPs) in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska has been ensured.

A comprehensive package of normative, strategic and operational documents has been developed to enable the institutionalization and sustainable functioning of Centers for Promotion and Prevention (CPPs) in both entities.

The package includes two key documents ready for adoption, necessary for the establishment and standardized functioning of the Centers. These include amendments to relevant rulebooks and decrees integrating CPPs into the primary healthcare system in the Federation of BiH, as well as a draft rulebook defining the minimum requirements for the establishment of healthcare institutions in the Republic of Srpska, in the section relevant to CPPs.

Furthermore, a set of documents has been prepared to ensure oversight and quality of CPP operations, including:

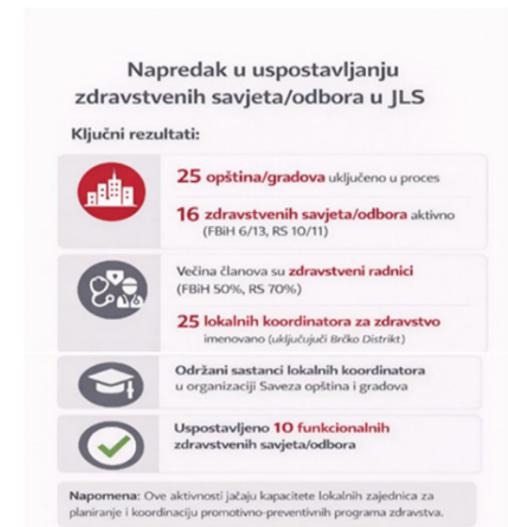
- ◆ Standards and norms for the operation of CPPs, including safety and quality standards, applicable to both entities;
- ◆ Standardized aggregated reporting templates aligned with existing regulations;
- ◆ Three financing models for CPPs in the Federation of BiH and two financing models for CPPs in the Republic of Srpska, ensuring sustainable financing;
- ◆ A Roadmap and Mid-term Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in the Federation of BiH;
- ◆ Mental health protection and promotion programmes for the Federation of BiH and the Republic of Srpska for the period 2025–2027, with accompanying action plans.

These documents establish a clear normative framework for CPP operations, financing, reporting, quality assurance and long-term sustainability.

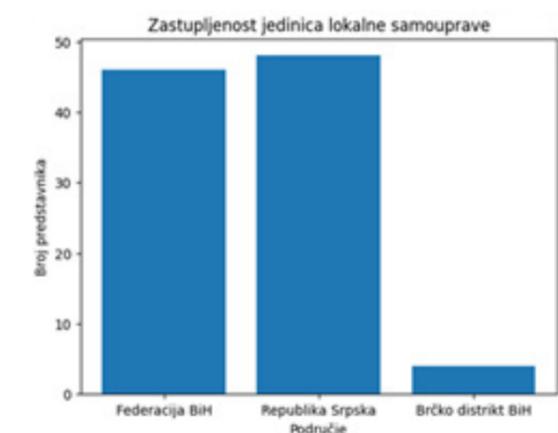
Ensuring precise identification of local population health needs

In order to strengthen cooperation within local communities in the field of health, the functionality of health councils/boards in both entities was analysed, and model rules of procedure for health boards were developed in the Federation of BiH and the Republic of Srpska. These serve as a basis for the systematic inclusion of local communities in planning, monitoring and supporting the work of CPPs.

Local Health Profiles: The path to healthier communities
A unified methodology for 25 local communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Through the project “Healthy Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, IPD, in cooperation with partners, developed and initiated the implementation of a unified, multisectoral health profile methodology in 25 local self-government units (LSGs), serving as a key tool for planning health promotion and disease prevention at the local level.



Trainings as the foundation of quality health profiles

Two training cycles on methodology application and data analysis were conducted within the project, training more than 200 participants. The collected data are already being used to develop local health profiles and plan health improvement measures in LSGs.

Comparative overview of training cycles

	PRVI CIKLUS OBUKE	DRUGI CIKLUS OBUKE
Vrijeme i mjesto	Septembar 2025 - Teslić	Decembar 2025 - Sarajevo
Broj učesnika	99	116 (98 iz 25 JLS)
Struktura učesnika	48% zdravstveni 52% nezdravstveni	51% zdravstveni 49% nezdravstveni
Spolna zastupljenost	65,6% žene 34,4% muškarci	78% žene 22% muškarci
Fokus obuke	Metodologija, indikatori, ankete, fokus grupe	Analiza podataka, prioriteta, preporuke
Rezultat	Pokrenut istraživački proces u JLS	Osnaženi timovi za finalizaciju profila

The development of local health profiles represents a significant step towards evidence-based decision-making, strengthening local capacities and sustainably improving community health across Bosnia and Herzegovina. IPD will continue to provide expert and technical support to LSGs in finalizing profiles and ensuring their practical application.

Roadmaps for the advancement of primary healthcare in the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina have been prepared, accompanied by a long-term programmatic and operational implementation plan based on key health system pillars (governance, resources, services and financing). These serve as key documents for strengthening primary healthcare in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aligned with contemporary system needs and the integration of Centers for Promotion and Prevention within primary healthcare.



As part of strengthening primary healthcare capacities, 545 healthcare professionals were trained in the early detection and treatment of depression (487 women and 58 men). In the Republic of Srpska, the early detection of depression programme has been implemented in 11 primary healthcare centres, where 190 family medicine teams are conducting screening of the adult population. Within the first six months, 4,805 individuals were screened, approximately 1,000 of whom were referred for further professional support in mental health centres. In parallel, in the Federation of BiH, training was delivered to 40 healthcare professionals from 12 primary healthcare centres, while the programme has been prepared for 210 family medicine teams in 13 local self-government units, creating the conditions for uniform implementation across the country.

Additionally, the Package of Essential Non-Communicable Disease Interventions in Primary-Health Care (PEN protocol) was adapted, providing a structured and standardized approach to early detection, monitoring and treatment of leading chronic non-communicable diseases. The protocol emphasizes preventive measures and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and encourages an active role of family medicine teams and Centers for Promotion and Prevention. The overall approach is based on international standards of the World Health Organization.

Bosnia and Herzegovina joins countries with modern tobacco control legislation!

In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Law on Control and Limited Use of Tobacco, Tobacco and Other Smoking Products was adopted in March 2022, entered into force on 18 May 2022, and full implementation began in May 2023. For the operational implementation of the Law, a Rulebook on conditions for designating special smoking rooms was adopted, precisely defining conditions, marking and organization of spaces where smoking is exceptionally permitted.

In the Republic of Srpska, the National Assembly adopted the Law on Protection of the Population from Tobacco and Other Smoking Products on 24 December 2025. The Law has been published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska and will enter into force on 1 August 2026, with a one-year transition period before full implementation of bans and restrictions, including the ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces and the regulation of the sale and advertising of smoking products.

Key meetings with decision-makers

One of the most significant achievements is the establishment of a coordinated, intersectoral response between the health and education sectors, formalized during a two-day meeting held in Neum on 8–9 October 2025. For the first time in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, almost all cantonal ministers of health and education attended, ensuring political and institutional legitimacy for joint action.

A set of concrete joint activities was agreed, initiating a paradigm shift in intersectoral cooperation, moving from ad hoc and fragmented initiatives towards a planned, coordinated and prevention-oriented approach. This event represents one of the most important advancements in the field of health promotion and prevention of non-communicable diseases involving both sectors simultaneously.



*Cantonal Ministers of Health and Education,
Federation of BiH*

In April 2024, organized by the Project and at the invitation of the Federal Minister of Health, a joint meeting of all 10 cantonal ministers of health was held for the first time in ten years. The meeting gathered 46 participants, including federal and cantonal ministers of health, directors of cantonal public health institutes and health insurance funds, as well as representatives of the Embassy. The aim was the institutional positioning of Centers for Promotion and Prevention within the health system of the Federation of BiH, with a focus on presenting and endorsing CPP financing models.



*Meeting of Cantonal Ministers of Health,
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Key results in strengthening cooperation between the education and health sectors

- ✓ Comprehensive, methodologically grounded instruments were developed and applied for precise analysis of educational content and learning approaches related to the prevention of non-communicable diseases in preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools;
- ✓ Systematic and comparable analyses of the presence of NCD-related content and learning approaches were conducted across all 10 cantons of the Federation of BiH, the Republic of Srpska and Brčko District, providing for the first time a comprehensive country-level overview;
- ✓ Expert and intersectoral consultations on future investment directions in NCD prevention were conducted through panel discussions held in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, with participation of representatives from the education and health sectors;
- ✓ A set of concrete, evidence-based recommendations was developed for improving educational content and strengthening intersectoral cooperation in NCD prevention across all 10 cantons of the Federation of BiH, the Republic of Srpska and Brčko District.

Strengthening civil society capacities and advancing public health across Bosnia and Herzegovina

A key focus was placed on assessing the capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs) in 25 local self-government units, which served as a basis for identifying partners for implementing preventive and promotional programmes. Direct contact was established with 30 CSOs from 25 LSGs, and through three targeted meetings, their motivation and readiness for active participation in the project were assessed in detail. IPD subsequently organized the first in a series of four expert trainings titled “Public Health and CSOs”, intended for representatives of organizations from partner LSGs. The training was successfully completed by 52 CSO representatives. In addition to strengthening the CSO sector, IPD significantly contributed to professional discourse by supporting the organization of the conference “Comorbidity of Mental Disorders and Physical Diseases among the Population of the Federation of BiH” on the occasion of World Mental Health Day.

Through promotional and preventive activities within the Health Festival marking World Health Day, IPD supported the implementation of the project “Let’s Grow Together” in Dobo, which gathered around 300 citizens. During the Youth of the Republic of Srpska Gathering, IPD co-facilitated the event “Youth and Health”, bringing together more than 90 young people from across Bosnia and Herzegovina. The result of this initiative was the signing of the Declaration on Commitment to Improving Youth Health in Bosnia and Herzegovina by umbrella youth organizations, preceded by a panel discussion on key health challenges faced by young people.

Better Emergency Medical Services through Cooperation between Civil Society and Local Authorities



Contribution of Civil Society Organisations to Strategic Health Care Planning in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Line with EU Standards

Donor: European Union

Project duration: 1 February 2024 – 1 February 2027

The project aims to strengthen civil society organisations to contribute, through knowledge-exchange and constructive dialogue with different levels of government, to the improvement of healthcare and emergency medical services in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Project activities in 2025 focused on two interconnected areas of action: strengthening the capacities of civil society organisations to participate in decision-making processes, and improving the emergency medical services system through advocacy for systemic solutions and strengthening professional capacities. Special emphasis was placed on enhancing local health governance through the analysis of strategic documents and the development of recommendations for local self-government units.



Meeting of directors of health centres, heads of emergency medical services, and local health coordinators from Republika Srpska, Banja

Luka, June 2025

To enable civil society organisations to actively and effectively participate in decision-making processes, the project organised two workshops in 2025 on public advocacy and public consultations. The workshops were implemented in cooperation with organisations gathered around the SALUS Health Coalition. A total of nine member organisations of the Coalition were strengthened, while more than forty representatives gained practical knowledge on advocacy tools, preparation of initiatives, participation in public hearings, and monitoring and analysis of public policies. This has empowered them for continued joint action within their local com-

At the same time, the project contributed to strengthening the professional capacities of emergency medical service teams. Across 11 project locations, 96 emergency medical professionals were trained through internationally recognised basic and advanced life support and pre-hospital trauma care programmes, laying the foundation for the long-term improvement of this essential health service.



Training of emergency medical teams from the Federation of BiH, Sarajevo, October 2025

The project further contributed to improving local health governance through the analysis of strategic documents of 11 local self-government units. In 2025, individual analyses were completed and consolidated into the document Strategic Plans of Local Self-Government 2 Units in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on the findings, recommendations were formulated to strengthen strategic planning in the field of health and increase the accountability of local authorities for the health of citizens.

The achieved results demonstrate that connecting civil society, health institutions, and local authorities creates a strong mechanism for identifying citizens' needs and transforming them into concrete policies. Investment in healthcare proves to be an investment in overall social development and the well-being of citizens.



Training of emergency medical teams from Republika Srpska, Banja Luka, November 2025

Improving the Social Support System for Children and Youth at Risk in Central Bosnia Canton



Donor: Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, Republic of Croatia

Project duration: 12 April 2024 – 30 June 2025

Project information

Addressing the challenges faced by local communities and strengthening their capacities has been at the core of the work of the Institute for Population and Development for 23 years. Through partnership with local communities and institutions, IPD continuously analyses needs and develops sustainable, systemic solutions with long-term impact beyond the project lifecycle. The organisation places a particular focus on strengthening the capacities of health and social care institutions, working closely with educational, health, and social institutions in Central Bosnia Canton and continuously improving partnerships with relevant local stakeholders.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS IN 2025

Improved referral mechanisms and intersectoral support for children and youth at risk in Central Bosnia Canton

The project contributed to strengthening coordination between the education, social welfare, health, and security sectors in the municipalities of Vitez and Busovača through joint planning and the establishment of more concrete referral and cooperation mechanisms.

A roundtable and final conference brought together key stakeholders (schools, social welfare centres, mental health centres, police, and local authorities) and created space for agreements on more effective support for children and youth at risk, with particular emphasis on violence prevention and crisis situations.

Strengthened capacities of professionals in schools and the social and health protection system

Through two phases of training (basic and advanced), the project strengthened the competencies of teachers, professional associates (psychologists and pedagogues), as well as staff of social welfare centres and mental health centres to recognise, report, and respond to violence and to act in crisis situations. The trainings were experiential and workshop-based, providing practical intervention tools and resulting in visible improvements in knowledge, awareness, and readiness to act in the protection of children and youth.



Professional handbook developed and distributed as a sustainability tool

Within the project, a professional handbook titled “Wellbeing of Children and Youth: Tools for Support and Prevention” was developed and distributed in digital format. The publication provides practical guidance for teachers and school professional services, as well as professionals in social and health protection. It offers clear recommendations and concrete methods for creating a supportive school climate, strengthening children’s socio-emotional skills, preventing violence, and developing an integrated, multisectoral approach to protecting children at risk.

Strengthened cross-border cooperation and exchange of good practices

The project further institutionalised cooperation between IPD and partner organisation Društvo za psihološku pomoć (DPP), Zagreb through joint development of materials, methodological preparation of mentors, delivery of trainings, and organisation of public events. The involvement of Croatian experts ensured the exchange of experiences and the transfer of proven approaches in working with children and youth at risk, contributing to the improvement of local practices and strengthening of professional networks within the community.

High outreach and strong local impact

The project reached 110 professionals from the education, social, and health sectors in Central Bosnia Canton (Vitez and Busovača), strengthening the first line of support for children and youth at risk. Through the trainings delivered, professional capacities for timely recognition, prevention, and response to violence, as well as intersectoral cooperation, were significantly enhanced, contributing in the long term to a safer and more supportive environment for children and youth. As an additional result, a professional handbook was produced, providing teachers and professional associates with concrete, practical materials for strengthening students’ emotional and social skills, ensuring sustainability and continued application of project results in daily practice.

Continuation and sustainability: new project launched as a logical continuation of the intervention

Based on achieved results and clearly identified needs on the ground, the continuation of activities has been secured through a new project titled “Improving the Local Response in Crisis Situations through Strengthening the System of Social and Psychological Support for Children and Youth in Central Bosnia Canton,” funded by the same Ministry.

This ensures continuity in introducing crisis response protocols, strengthening school support mechanisms, supervision, and further development of intersectoral cooperation.



MINDMATTERS: EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR MENTAL WELL-BEING

Donor: IPPF EN

Project duration: November 2024 – June 2025

Project information

During 2025, the Institute for Population and Development (IPD) implemented the project-MindMatters: Empowering Young People for Mental Well-being, with the aim of improving youth mental health through participatory, preventive, and educational interventions. The project responded to the growing need among young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina for accessible, understandable, and destigmatized approaches to mental health, with a strong focus on actively involving young people in the design and implementation of activities.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS IN 2025

The project's most significant result was the development and launch of the first Mental Health First Aid Kit for young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The manual was created through a direct co-creation process with young people, who were involved in needs assessment, content development, design, and testing, with professional support from mental health experts. The Kit provides practical self-help tools, breathing techniques, strategies for coping with stress and anxiety, as well as clear information on available professional support services, offering young people a concrete and practical resource for everyday mental health care.

In parallel with the development of the manual, the project implemented a series of educational activities, including workshops and online webinars on mental health, aimed at strengthening mental health literacy and young people's capacities to recognize and understand their own emotional states. Through these activities, young people gained basic knowledge about mental health, the importance of seeking support, and the role of peer solidarity, with a particular emphasis on creating safe spaces for open discussion of topics that are often burdened by stigma.

The project also contributed to the reduction of stigma related to youth mental health through a targeted communication campaign on social media and online public engagement activities. By amplifying messages created by young people and for young people, the project helped normalize conversations about mental health and raise awareness of the importance of timely support, achieving significant reach and visibility across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As an important step towards sustainability, the project laid the foundations for peer-to-peer support networks, aimed at strengthening local capacities for informal peer support in schools and communities. In addition, a clear vision was defined for the future use of the Mental Health First Aid Kit in schools, youth centers, and organizations working with young people, creating the basis for longer-term impact and integration of project results into existing youth-focused programs.

Through the MindMatters project, IPD further strengthened its position as a relevant actor in the field of youth mental health, confirming its capacity to design and implement innovative, participatory, and youth-centered interventions with clear social impact and potential for wider application.

WORLD HEALTH DAY HEALTHFEST 2025

7 April 2025 | Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Dobo



On the occasion of World Health Day, the Institute for Population and Development (IPD) organised HealthFest 2025, a multi-day, multi-location festival dedicated to promoting health, disease prevention, and strengthening shared responsibility for public health in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

HealthFest was implemented as a dynamic and inclusive platform bringing together representatives of institutions, health and education professionals, civil society organisations, media, children, youth, and the wider public, with the aim of strengthening a multidisciplinary and preventive approach to health.

The central part of the festival was held at Europe House in Sarajevo, while additional activities took place in Banja Luka and Dobo, giving HealthFest a strong national dimension.

HEALTH AS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Opening HealthFest, Emina Osmanagić, Director of the Institute for Population and Development, emphasised that health is not merely the absence of disease, but the right of every individual to information, support, a safe environment, and choice:

“Health is not just the absence of illness; it is also the right to a dignified life, community support, and a system that recognises people’s needs. HealthFest is a space where we come together to talk, learn, and build a healthier society.”

The importance of the festival was also recognised by public authorities. Srđan Mandić, Mayor of Centar Municipality Sarajevo, highlighted the importance of investing in prevention and education of children and youth, while Cantonal Minister of Health Enis Hasanović noted that such events contribute to raising awareness about health, nutrition, and physical activity as the foundations of a quality society.

Goran Čerkez, Assistant Minister for Public Health at the Federal Ministry of Health, emphasised the need for a systemic and long-term approach to combating non-communicable diseases:

“Prevention of non-communicable diseases must start much earlier, within the education system. Schools are not only places of learning but spaces where life habits are formed. If we provide young people with timely knowledge and skills about health, nutrition, physical activity, and mental resilience, we build a more resilient society and a more sustainable health system in the long run.”

SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

HealthFest 2025 was implemented with strong support from international partners.

European Union representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina Lizerot Karel highlighted the importance of cooperation with civil society in strengthening the health system in line with EU standards, recognising HealthFest as a valuable platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange.

Siroco Messerli, Director of Cooperation at the Embassy of Switzerland in Bosnia and Herzegovina, underlined the long-standing support of the Swiss Government to public health programmes, particularly the Healthy Communities programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which strengthens local capacities and community engagement in improving health.

KEY HEALTHFEST PROGRAMME CONTENT

Mental health and prevention

Special attention was dedicated to mental health through:

- an interactive student session “Mental Health as Support to Physical Health”
- activities in Banja Luka focused on early detection and prevention of depressive disorders in primary healthcare
- the signing of cooperation agreements with health centres from 11 local communities



Education and health

Panel discussions in Sarajevo and Banja Luka addressed the role of formal education in preventing non-communicable diseases, with participation from representatives of the education and health sectors, highlighting the need for systematic integration of health topics into educational programmes.

Media panel – “Media Reporting on Health”

One of the central events of HealthFest was a media panel dedicated to responsible health reporting. Panellists discussed accuracy, ethics, and accessibility of health information. Federal News Agency FENA served as the festival’s media partner, further strengthening visibility and public dialogue on health.

Healthy lifestyles

The session “Active Living for Health” presented programmes of the Centre for Sport and Recreation FIS, emphasising physical activity as a key factor in preserving both physical and mental health.

Emergency care according to EU standards

In cooperation with the Centre for Emergency Medical Care Education “Prim. Dr. Silva Rizvanbegović,” a session was held on the modern organisation of emergency medical services in line with European standards.



Role of the innovative pharmaceutical industry

Participants were introduced to the work of the Association of Innovative Pharmaceutical Manufacturers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, its advocacy activities, and partnerships with institutions aimed at improving the healthcare system.

“SALUS” Health Coalition

The newly established SALUS Coalition was presented as a civil society platform advocating for higher-quality healthcare services in line with EU standards.

Health profiles of local communities

Through the session “The Path to a Healthy Community,” local coordinators from communities across Bosnia and Herzegovina were introduced to the methodology for developing health profiles as a tool for informed decision-making at the local level.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND THE CULTURE OF HEALTH

HealthFest also included:

- educational workshops for children on oral and general health (Maslačak Kindergarten, Sarajevo)



- the artistic programme “Voices of Youth: Art Against Violence”, using creative expression to strengthen emotional literacy, resilience, and non-violent communication



- a festival programme in Doboј, “Let’s Grow Together,” implemented in cooperation with local partners



HealthFest 2025 confirmed that health is a shared responsibility and that sustainable change can only be achieved through collaboration between institutions, civil society, media, and citizens.

Through education, dialogue, creative content, and concrete examples of good practice, HealthFest made a strong contribution to the promotion of healthy lifestyles, mental health, and disease prevention, leaving a clear message:

Health begins in the community — and together we can improve it.

More than Two and a Half Million People Informed About the Work of the Institute for Population and Development

The Annual Communications and Visibility Report of the Institute for Population and Development confirms a strong media and digital reach achieved over the past year, as well as the continuous strengthening of the Institute’s public recognition.

Media Reach

The Institute for Population and Development attracted significant attention from domestic and regional media, which recognized the importance of programs, projects, and activities aimed at improving health and quality of life in communities. During the reporting period, 350 unpaid media features were published on television, radio, web portals, and in print media. The largest share of publications was recorded on web portals and electronic media, accounting for 82% of the total media content.

Key Media Outlets

The highest number of publications was recorded on the platforms and channels of the Federal News Agency (FENA), Radio-Television of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (RTV FBiH), SRNA, BHRT, and Radio-Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS). In addition, numerous other public and private media outlets, including regional ones, showed interest, further expanding the reach of the Institute’s key messages.

Value of Media Coverage

The estimated market value of the media coverage achieved amounts to BAM 305,253.56, while approximately 1,550,000 people were informed about the Institute’s work through the media, representing a very strong indicator of trust and the relevance of the topics addressed by the Institute.

Social Media and Digital Channels

On social media platforms — Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram — the Institute reached 550,000 people, with a total of 76,000 followers. Digital content recorded 3,050,000 views, and these platforms played a key role in daily communication with audiences, enabling timely information sharing, two-way interaction, and strengthening public trust.

Consistent transparency, relevant content, and a high-quality flow of information have positioned the Institute for Population and Development as a reliable and credible partner in the field of health and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Through a combination of media and digital channels, key messages and public service information were successfully delivered to more than 2.5 million people, including 1,550,000 individuals through media and 550,000 through social media.

Total number of media publications:	Most represented media:	Estimated value of media coverage:	Number of people reached through media:	Social media reach:	Total number of followers:	Social media content views:	Most used social media platforms:
350 unpaid features (TV, radio, web portals, print media)	Web portals and electronic media (82% of publications), FENA, RTV FBiH, SRNA, BHRT, RTRS	BAM 305,253.56	1,550,000	550,000 people	76,000	3,050,000	Facebook, YouTube, Instagram



25 YEARS OF IMPACT

Twenty-five years of dedicated work have resulted in measurable achievements across multiple sectors.

