

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

OUR WORK IN BOSNIA

STATUS OF WOMEN IN BOSNIA

SOCIALLY-EXCLUDED WOMEN IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BIH) FACE LARGE OBSTACLES TO GENERATING AN INCOME, IMPROVING THEIR LIVES, AND BECOMING ACTIVE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Access to resources varies vastly across regions, and women in remote areas are particularly vulnerable to exclusion. Most women must also contend with strong traditions and deeply ingrained perceptions that women belong in the home. They struggle against traditional attitudes and other barriers that limit active involvement in their communities. In addition to lacking education, access to resources, social networks, and basic business and vocational skills, many of them have been deeply affected by the war.

There are few market opportunities in BiH, and women, in particular, struggle with market connections, either due to geographic distance or lack of knowledge about the market. Women also have limitations to land ownership due to traditional inheritance practices that prioritize familial land distribution among sons. In addition, the government institutes heavy rules and regulations (registration, taxes, etc.) towards the development of small businesses. All of these factors lead to increased poverty for socially-excluded women, a disproportion of power held by men in the household, financial dependence of women on their husbands or families, and a general apathy when it comes to making change in the community.

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL IN BOSNIA

Women for Women International came into being in 1993 to offer financial and emotional support to women displaced by the Bosnian War. Since then, Žene za Žene (“Women for Women” in Bosnian) has directly served nearly 62,000 women with programmatic and financial support in more than 50 communities of various ethnic and religious compositions throughout BiH. The office headquarters is located in Sarajevo, and the organization currently works in Zenicko-dobojski, Bosansko-podrinjski, Srednjobosanski, Hercegovačko-neretvanski, Sarajevski, and part of Republika Srpska.

STRONGER
WOMEN,
STRONGER
NATIONS

OUR MISSION

In countries affected by conflict and war, Women for Women International supports the most marginalized women to earn and save money, improve health and well-being, influence decisions in their home and community, and connect to networks for support. By utilizing skills, knowledge, and resources, she is able to create sustainable change for herself, her family, and community.

WHAT WE DO

AS ŽENE ZA ŽENE'S INTERVENTIONS HAVE EVOLVED TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC REALITIES OF BOSNIAN WOMEN, NEW INITIATIVES HAVE TAKEN SHAPE THAT BUILD UPON THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND RESOURCES THAT GRADUATES OF THE 12-MONTH CORE PROGRAM HAVE RECEIVED. THESE INNOVATIONS INCLUDE:

- Advanced vocational training and support to graduates from the 12-month program in fashion and handicrafts development, medicinal and aromatic plant production, etc.
- Advanced business skills training for burgeoning women entrepreneurs
- Advanced leadership training for rural women in human rights and civic engagement
- Additional support to particularly vulnerable populations, including demobilized women soldiers and human trafficking victims, for reintegration and sustainable income generation.
- Support to develop and strengthen women's associations comprised of graduates of the 12-month program.

The success of these evolving interventions has resulted in two new program initiatives that have the mutually reinforcing goals of empowering women's civic and economic engagement in their communities.

BOSNIA

COUNTRY OFFICE

STARTED: 1993

HEADQUARTERS: Sarajevo

PROGRAMS IN: Zenicko-dobojski, Bosansko-podrinjski, Sarajevski, Srednjobosanski, Hercegovačko-neretvanski, and Republika Srpska

ABOUT WOMEN IN BOSNIA

WOMEN'S UNEMPLOYMENT:
31 percent

PARLIAMENTARY SEATS HELD BY WOMEN: 21 percent

LITERATE: 97 percent

VOCATIONAL

SKILLS & TRAINING

Agricultural Production

Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Production

Handicraft and Fashion

Accessories Production

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF ŽENE ZA ŽENE'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM IS TO INCREASE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR AND ENCOURAGE THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION MEMBERS AND OTHER ŽENE ZA ŽENE CORE PROGRAM GRADUATES SO THAT THEY MAY BETTER GENERATE INCOME AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROSPERITY OF THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.

Women who participate in Žene za Žene's 12-month core program receive training in basic business management skills and a vocational skill with earning power in their local markets. They are encouraged to begin to save, and receive support as they establish groups and cooperatives to generate income. Recent Žene za Žene program graduates have received vocational skill training in the following areas:

Medicinal and Aromatic Plant (MAP) production: training women to harvest mushrooms, leaves, berries, roots, and flowers growing in the areas where they live, to be used for natural medicines, aromatherapy, and in cosmetics

Agricultural Production: training women to engage in small-scale farming and crop production, such as greenhouse crop cultivation, berry cultivation, and beekeeping

Handicrafts and Fashion Accessories Production: training women to produce traditional and popular handicrafts and fashion accessories using sewing, knitting, crocheting, and other techniques

The focus of the income generation program is to build upon the business and vocational skills training received in the core program, and develop and expand those skills to increase their productivity, improve their products, increase sales, and further develop their business skills.

Žene za Žene also plans to establish a social enterprise for the production and sale of medicinal and aromatic plants. This enterprise will create a new market for women to sell their products. The Žene za Žene NGO will remain education-focused and support women to be catalysts for change, while the social enterprise will support women's employment. The Žene za Žene NGO and its social enterprise/for-profit company will operate independently, but together will support each other to change the status of women in BiH. The long-term goal is for the profits from the social enterprise to be used to support operational costs for the local NGO. The social enterprise will also have a dedicated and separate management team.

WOMEN'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF ŽENE ZA ŽENE'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM IS TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF CORE PROGRAM GRADUATES IN THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND IN GRASSROOTS, ISSUES-BASED ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZATION, BY SUPPORTING THE LOCAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS FORMED BY THOSE GRADUATES.

Many core program graduates have taken the initiative to form local women's associations to carry on with activities begun during their time in the core program. Since 2004, graduates have formed over 30 associations in their communities with a variety of goals, including the promotion of women's rights, inclusion of women in local governance structures, and local community development. Each association has between 30 and 140 members, and includes both graduates of Žene za Žene's training program as well as other women in each community.

The planned activities seek to provide women at each level of association development with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to understand their roles as citizens in a young and complex democratic government, effectively engage in projects to create change in their communities, and build the organizational capacity that will allow them to eventually become strong, effective, and independent associations.

In most cases, these associations represent the first initiatives undertaken by women in the communities they represent. This in itself is a significant achievement.

Providing technical assistance, training, support, and mentorship to the associations formed by graduates is a critical step in building the sustainability of Žene za Žene's programs, and the strength of Bosnian women within a burgeoning democracy. Žene za Žene seeks to promote women as citizens who are economically and civically active and prepared to create meaningful change in their communities. The 12-month core program provided a strong foundation for transforming the lives of individual women, but they need additional training and support to create strong, sustainable networks to continue to grow in experience and confidence. The initiatives of a number of Žene za Žene graduates in forming associations and launching civic activities is an important first step in creating these networks. The support of Žene za Žene's women's civic engagement program will provide the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to become powerful forces for creating change in their families, communities, and country.

MAKING STRIDES TO PROMOTE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

ACROSS BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA, WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATIONS ARE:

Encouraging members to run
for local leadership positions

Educating women about a
law for gender equality

Discussing the role of women
in society on radio shows

Holding workshops on
violence against women

Organizing public fora about
women's decision-making
and civic action

Collaborating on income
generating activities, such as
weekly markets

OUR IMPACT

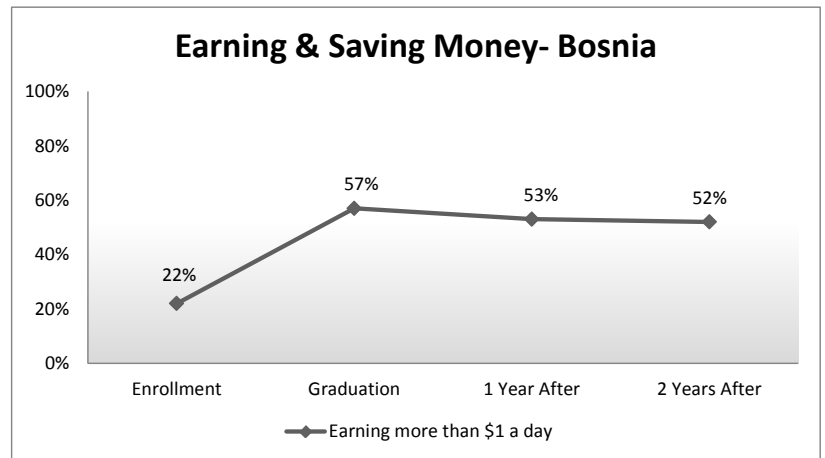
OUR PROGRAM IS FOCUSED ON HELPING WOMEN ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING FOUR KEY OUTCOMES:

1 WOMEN EARN AND SAVE MONEY

When women earn an income, they reinvest a much higher portion in their families and communities, compared to men.

In Bosnia, women demonstrate the ability to increase their daily income even two years after graduating from our program, earning an average of \$2.73 per day two years after graduation, compared to \$0.98 at enrollment.

(See footnote 1)

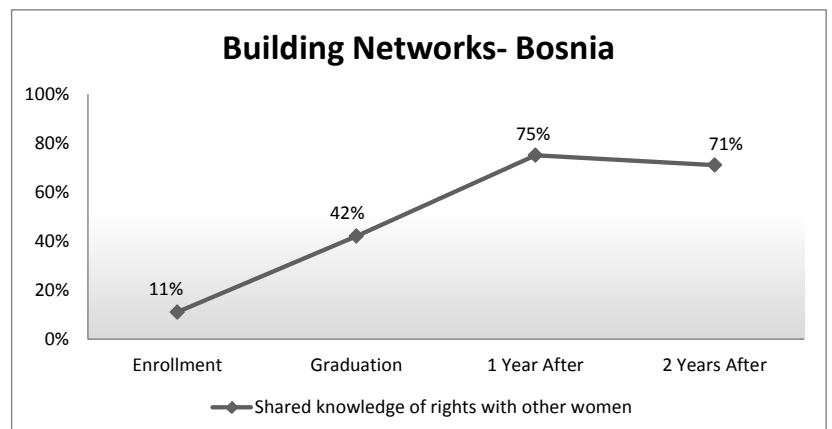


2 WOMEN CREATE AND CONNECT TO NETWORKS FOR SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

As program participants, women learn the importance of working together. By working in groups, they also benefit from a support system and social networks.

Women share what they learn about their rights with other women in their communities. 71 percent of women reported educating another woman on her rights at graduation, one and two years after graduation, compared to 11 percent at enrollment. Educating a woman yields dividends not only for herself, but for others in her community.

(See footnote 1)



FACTS ABOUT WOMEN IN BOSNIA

In 2012, only 21 percent of parliamentary seats in Bosnia and Herzegovina were held by women.²

In 2012, 31 percent of women in the Bosnian labor force were unemployed.³

FOOTNOTES

¹ Data represents women who graduated from our program in Bosnia between 2010 and 2011.

² "Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments (%)." The World Bank Data. Accessed 10 June 2014. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS>.

³ "Unemployment, female (% of female unemployment)." The World Bank. Accessed 7 August 2014. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.FE.ZS/countries> .
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>

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