



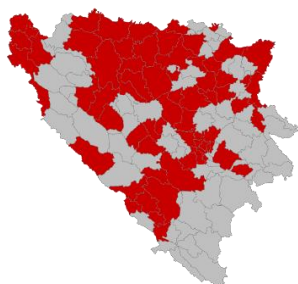
**WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN ACTION:
EMANCIPATION IN SERVICE OF HUMANITARIAN AND EMERGENCY
PRACTICES IN THE TIMES OF PANDEMIC CRISIS**

(as part of the Women in Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina Project financed
by the Government of Sweden)

Date: 14 April 2020

1. BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina



On March 11, 2020 the [World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic](#). While the disease was slow to spread to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkan countries at first, since February 2020 the number of confirmed cases is climbing rapidly. A state of emergency was declared in Bosnia and Herzegovina by both entity governments on 16 March 2020¹ and at the state level – on 17 March 2020². To date³, Bosnia and Herzegovina has reported **1083 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within its borders and 24 deaths**.

UNDP's capability to provide support in the crisis

In March 2020 both the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and subsequently - the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina – in its role as the chair-institution of the Civil Protection and Rescue Coordination Body, addressed UNDP with requests for (i) support in regard to procurement of medical supplies and equipment, (ii) information management and coordination of the overall emergency response assistance, as well as (iii) conducting assessments of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and early recovery efforts. UNDP, as part of the UN Country Team, and in collaboration with authorities at all government levels, the international community, civil society, the private sector and media, is well positioned and prepared to support fast and people-centred COVID-19 disaster response and early recovery. In doing so, UNDP is capitalising on its previous knowledge and experiences accumulated during the 2014 floods response and recovery, on its large presence at the grass-roots level, and on its global expertise in crisis response and expertise in the sectors affected by COVID-19.

In this particular case, UNDP will utilise the Women in Elections Project financed by the Government of Sweden and some of its existing networks and resources to effectively support the COVID-19 crisis from viewpoint of gender equality.

The specific challenge we address

Numerous studies and articles⁴ show and warn that crisis situations in principle create the conditions for set-backs of achievements of women leadership, through unselective and forced reattribution of traditional roles due to suspension of social services and opportunities to take part in decision making processes, now moved to semi-transparent and semi-formal gatherings. These are very tangible prospects for Bosnia and Herzegovina in the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. In the absence of social services attention of women in times of crisis is shifted primarily on care, homeschooling and babysitting within their family, even if they professionally perform important emergency related and other duties. External pandemics related pressure pushes for rapid shifts of focus away, allowing that more inequalities and unjust practices have in these situations better chances to go below the radar.

THE PROPOSED INTERVENTION

Reconfiguring the Project efforts to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis

The Project has developed a digital platform offering collaborative space for more than 1,100 female leaders across the country (Liderke za razvoj). This digital tool has been deployed to give a voice to

¹ Sources: [Government of Republika Srpska](#), [Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#).

² Source: [Decision of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#).

³ 14 April 2020.

⁴ https://www.ey.com/en_gl/diversity-inclusiveness/which-is-the-bigger-issue-for-women-leaders-the-glass-ceiling-or-the-glass-cliff, <https://www.ft.com/content/ce4a825e-6942-11ea-a6ac-9122541af204>, <https://actionaid.org.au/womens-leadership-will-again-be-crucial-in-current-global-health-crisis/>, <http://www.broadagenda.com.au/home/faces-of-leadership-during-crisis-must-be-5050/>

women particularly in times of crisis. In the last week of February 2020, the project organised a leadership conference, gathering some 50 women leaders from all spheres of social, political and economic to inspire networking, strengthen the community and boost their potential for mutual action, particularly action born within the Women Forum for Development. So far, the project has generated a verified database of more than 500 women based on a specific selection methodology and conducted leadership seminars for 130 of them. In the ten municipalities⁵, the project has established very tight cooperation with administrations, specially structured focus groups and, through minor infrastructural improvements, capacity building, consultations on improvement of local social services and activities related to development of local gender action plans.

Additional actions

Quick and targeted interventions, which will enhance strength and credibility of women leadership in the country, inspire and support activism and social cohesion and, where possible, address burning local social and humanitarian needs. These interventions will not require any additional funds and can be funded from current project budget.

(i) Conducting a quick survey on the situation and key challenges for women in general and women leaders and proposed course of actions

The survey targets gender biases in leadership under living and functioning conditions dictated by COVID 19 pandemics and preferred course of action. The survey is to cover 1.) impact of changed daily routines and reorganisation of and responsibility for daily life tasks for women and women leadership, 2.) good practices and strategies for overcoming the daily challenges of carework, 3.) mapping of challenges and opportunities for reaffirmation of feminism and women emancipation through support to and promotion of concrete actions of women leader in the time of crisis. This will include the following (not limited to):

- Unavailability of social services (elderly care, limited health care, services work, mental health care facilities, kindergartens, schools, recreation, culture);
- Limitations imposed by social distancing imperative during the pandemics to conducting concrete activities on the field, directly with people
- Identification of fields and ways of concrete action of women leaders in local communities
- Mapping of concrete threats and difficulties for women leadership in crisis situations („glass cliff“ phenomenon⁶, strenghtening of informal decision-making, lack of supportive safety nets for their social and political engagement etc.)

The survey is to be open for first two weeks of the intervention and boosted through social media. It will be conducted in coordination with local, particularly municipal authorities. Analysis will take up to a week. Promotion of findings will be done throughtout. Findings can potentially contribute to the Social Impact Assessment and Rapid Response Assessment, as needed and appropriate.

(survey to be developed within the project and brief analysis produced – no additional funds needed)

(ii) Support to initiatives of women leaders, in response to detected social needs in the state of emergency

In order to support and reaffirm women leadership on the field, a public call will be launched to support logistically and financially local initiatives led by women leaders:

⁵ Tesanj, Nevesinje, Sarajevo Old Town, Bijeljina, Ljubuski, Zenica, Olovo, Gracanica, Banja Luka, Laktasi.

⁶ <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/149c/91fb4813553c4fe44d03874b45b18f3d9e31.pdf>

- Local initiatives for initiation of agricultural cooperatives with existing small women producers in ten WiE municipalities; (up to ten initiatives to be selected per up to 3,500 USD)
- Support to tailors and micro textile companies, small businesses and individuals capabilities for producing medical visors to readjust their production to current needs related to compliance with medical requirements for individual protection (masks, suits) in ten WiE municipalities; (up to ten initiatives to be selected per up to 3,500 USD)
- Social innovations and small initiatives that relieve the pressure of inaccessibility or limited of public services for children, adolescents and elderly in the field of pre-school education, care, new on-line educational contents complementary to those already existing in public media services. (up to fifteen initiatives to be selected per up to 2,500 USD)

Selection criteria to comply with findings of the Rapid Response Assessment.

(iii) Support start-up of authentic women-centered media initiatives for much-needed new media ways in COVID situation through two public calls:

A) Start-up of authentic women-centered media initiatives

Phase I

- note new and viable successes of women leaders,
- identify and affirm good examples and role models in the times when primary challenge is related to relief of effects of the crisis,
- serve as inspiration for popularisation of concept of women leadership, and help prove it sustainable event during a state of crisis,
- affirm on concrete examples that engagement of women during and right after a crisis that goes beyond traditional roles attributed to women is beneficial for the entire community,

Up to 20 start-up initiatives to be granted up to 1,000 USD

Phase 2

- completion of activities will be marked by promotion of activities and selection of most efficient ones with symbolic rewards, after a thorough evaluation of activities conducted,

Up to 1000 USD reward will be granted based on standard UNDP practices and procedures.

B) Stories from WiE municipalities

- would report success stories from the above-listed actions that will be delivered in the ten WiE municipalities. (three journalists to be hired /per 1,000 USD)

Compendium of successes to be compiled and published online – budget 1,500 USD (proofreading and design)

Linkage to the SDGs

In the context of the new **2030** agenda and its **Sustainable Development Goals** represent a new global consensus in a triple bottom line approach to human wellbeing combining the economic development and social inclusion - gender equality and empowerment of women are brought to the fore. Through its support to improved access to decision making roles in politics for women, as well as enhanced women's engagement in public life the project will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" in particular the target 5.5: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life." Fifth goal focuses exclusively on

gender with 9⁷ gender equality targets, while gender is also a cross-cutting issue across board, with 24 gender targets across 11 SDGs clustered for high impact.

How we plan to do that – partners, resources, methodology

The project will be implemented using the existing infrastructure of Women in Elections in BiH project, in synergy with MZ project wherever needed and appropriate.

Findings of the survey that will be run through social media are to provide evidence for a brief analysis of the situation and to contribute to the impact assessments that are being developed, primarily to the Social Impact Assessment and Rapid Reaction Assessment. It will also support quality of decision-making for the next activities.

Most efficient, reative and innovative solutions are to be supported through public calls. Other criteria will depend on local context, but the fixed elements will also strongly take into account engagement of women who lost or would have otherwise lost their employment due to pandemics.

Who are the main target groups?

- Women leaders (500 women participating in the activities),
- women activists in the ten municipalities (at least 100 women activists),
- women in media (15 women in media).

Overall, the project anticipates to activate 500 local women leaders to participate in the activities with 30 women activists across 10 municipalities participating and 15 women in media.

Recovering better and sustainability

Explain how does the proposed initiative introduces positive changes in current practices and improves “business as usual” approach, offers innovative approaches, as well as how it will be sustained?

The initiative is to contribute to enhancement of social cohesion in local communities and reaffirm women leadership and enhance its credibility in a context dictated by *force majeure*. ICT based innovative approaches, use of social media communities and networks to facilitate actions and bypass current social distancing related limitations. Further strengthening of relations with media and women in media will help in shifting a part of the media focus on women leaders contributing to overcoming and softening of effects social and economic problems and providing the ground for active contribution to social and economic post-crisis recovery.

Risks

Risks	Mitigation Measures
Sudden social and economic tensions in relation to consequences of COVID 19 pandemics	Mapping causes and manifestations of these tensions and trying to act in a way that is to contribute to relief of tensions wherever possible

⁷ End discrimination and GBV; eliminate child marriage and FGM; ensure access to reproductive health care; eliminate gender disparities in education; expand economic opportunities, ICT and recognize rights to resources; and reduce the burdens of unpaid care work on women and girls.

Firm media focus almost exclusively on COVID 19 related developments	Support to production of media contents that would both reaffirm importance of women and women leaders and women journalists
Political and social tensions over possible delay in local elections	Actions to be done with strong criteria, as concretely as possible, with maximum transparency

2. FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The total financial framework for this intervention is US\$ 160,920 and the duration is six months.

In response to the current situation and the upcoming low activity period the project intends to use the WIE projects funds available for the proposed rapid response initiatives as they represent the opportunity for the project to continue the work on concrete affirmation of women leaders and their achievements in the community and support community as a whole, while further increasing the project visibility.

The main objective of the project is to strengthen women's leadership and the proposed activities are designed taking into account the project logic. This period of social distancing presents an opportunity to enable women leaders within local communities to constructively use different ICT solutions by implementing concrete community-based solutions. As a result, the IT literacy of women and a community would improve. Furthermore, the activities would increase the civic engagement by engaging the community in developing innovative hands-on solutions for improvement of social services within the local communities. The project would use the established relationships with media to promote the efforts and the achievement of women leaders thus creating the pathway for work with the local media on promotion of women leadership.

Therefore, the project proposes refocusing of the UNDP project activities budget funds to these activities, while considering the potentials for the replication and continuation of best practices/initiatives post-COVID 19 pandemic. The required funds would be derived from the following project activities:

USD 45,920.00 from activity 1.2. Enabling local communities to start crowdfunding activities, ICT solutions, including Local Online Bourse,

USD 45,000.00 from activity 1.3. Improve IT literacy among the local women, and

USD 70,000.00 from activity 1.4. Lobbying with LGUs to expand and improve the portfolio of public services offered by local governments and engage CSO for improvement of social services delivery.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

The main platform for the mentioned activities would be work through FB Community Liderke za razvoj, that would be the ground for conducting the research, collection of inputs and verification of findings of the study and power base for proposing concrete actions on the field. It will be supported by the project's current media network and FB Community for Media Coalition for Women Leadership, which has been initiated. All these activities will represent an impetus for moving the Women Forum for Development forward.

The actions will be targeting both humanitarian and social needs in local communities or wider, providing the community with additional sense of cohesion, relief and solidarity. Compendium of successes to be compiled and published.

During implementation, the project will strongly rely on all project partners and WiE infrastructure in its ten partner municipalities. The intervention will operate in synergy with MZ project in the ten municipalities that are common and contribute to Social Impact Assessments and Rapid Reaction Assessment as needed and appropriate.