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## **Women's Network Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with TACSO (Technical Assistance for Civil Society) project in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

### **Report on Partnership Event / Conference**

#### **Process of strategic dialogue "Together we are stronger"**

Hotel Hollywood, Sarajevo

21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2012.

### **Introduction**

Women's Network Bosnia and Herzegovina is an informal network of 112 CSO's, women's groups, individuals who declare themselves as part of civil society organizations in the field of promoting and protecting women's human rights, in order to support and assist all those women regardless of their political affiliation, religion, age, education level, sexual orientation and abilities, and through partnership action, dialogue and cooperation, in order to inform, educate and represent all citizens of B&H. The main goal of Women's network empowerment is the exchange of information, not limiting itself to act as a part of joint action in cases where it is needed, and the implementation of other activists of "female scene" in Bosnia, referring to: women's human rights and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, peace, security, women and economy, women in power and decision making, violence against women, women and armed conflicts, women and the media, female children, LGBTIQ activism, feminist activism, feminist theory.

Women's Network Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with TACSO B&H (Technical Support to Civil Society Organizations) project implemented Conference on process of strategic dialogue „Together we are stronger“ held on 21st and 22nd June 2012 in Sarajevo. This partnership event/conference was attended by 56 participants from 43 women's organizations coming from 20 different municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



## Aim of the partnership event/conference

*General aim of the conference „Together we are stronger“ was to focus on developing a joint plan of action in order to make the Women’s Network members’ activity more effective and more visible in public.*

Conference served as an opportunity to find ways on how to improve the process of exchange of experiences and responsibilities between all members of the B&H Women’s Network. Additionally, objective was to enhance area of motivation of membership organizations in active participation in the work of the Network.



## Conference programme and methodology used

To ensure maximum productivity and creative atmosphere for active dialogue between participants related to the key issues for the strategic development of Women's Groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina in future, Conference was designed on methodology of participatory practices:

### *World Café and Open Space Technology*

These forms of work are core aspect of the new work of leadership that involves convening and hosting gatherings to engage productive dialogue around challenging questions.

Conference agenda was divided in two parts:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> day

Work was focused on key challenges of the B&H Women's Network related to both content and management issues in the form of World Café.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> day

Was reserved for Open Space Technology workshop for members of the B&H Women's Network where they were exploring the questions of main principles and values that are common to all members of the B&H Women's Network.





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## Methodology outcome

Conference participants defined what kind of network they want to be and explored many different topics that bind them.

Some of the topics came out of dialogue are: anti-nationalism and confrontation with the past; is Network "homophobic" or not, violence against women and girls and not "gender-based violence"; secularism in education in public schools; the right to choose: abortion, adoption, artificial insemination, a consensus about constitutional change, talking about violence against women, not only gender-based violence.

General agreement was that concrete actions and initiatives in the field of action LGBT rights media campaign on behalf of the network should be coordinated by some organizations, and online activities like website and Facebook Group Network (listing all members with links, lists of activities - prior, joint, future); joint advocacy actions network name, and not on behalf of an organization or group of organizations, the education of young local associations essential for existence of women, female entrepreneurship, cultural events.

Second day of the conference participants found two focal points for the actions in the future.

**Devote more attention to common views and principles on which all participants agree**

**How to encourage women's organizations in the rural areas, to benefit from the Network, and to stimulate "big" women's organizations to help "small" organizations stay active?**

## Concrete action outcome

Participants provided concrete actions for inclusion of organizations from rural areas:

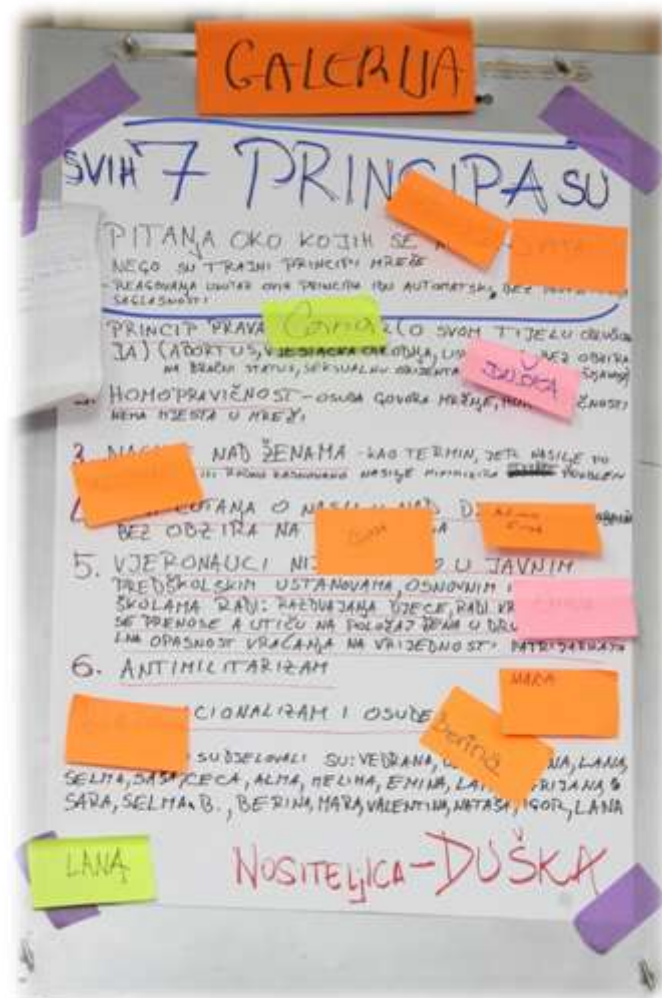
- **Provide space for the participation of representatives of the organizations from rural areas to actively engage in work of Network's coordinating bodies;**
- **Sign a memorandum on cooperation between large organizations with organizations from rural areas for development and implementation of joint projects.**
- **Ensure exchange of positive experiences through study visits, organizing thematic meetings, and lobbying by the network at all levels (chain mails, public debates, round tables).**

## Expected Results

Organizing committee fulfilled plan to have "50 members of Women's Network in B&H actively participating in exchange of experience and evaluation of today's networks activity". There were 56 members of Women's Network of B&H taking active role in dialogue and programme of the conference.

50 members of Women's Network of B&H are committed to actively exchange experiences and to act together more effectively to the public in accordance with the mission of the network. This was accomplished due to the successful communication and evaluation, where most participants highlighted that it is very important to amend the code and the platform of Women's Network of B&H, in order to ensure that indeed all members agree on the core principles of the Network.

Additionally, conference resulted in agreement on the basic 7 principles on which Network membership is based on.





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## Evaluation

Partnership event served as a starting point for process of strategic dialogue of women groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Aim of the event was to bring as much as possible women oriented organizations and share vision and principles of Women's Network BiH and search for modalities for future work of the Network. All representatives shared common opinion that they need this kind of Network as it can contribute to changes in local communities focusing on issues like: education, healthcare, participation in public and political life, fighting violence against girls and women, trafficking, economic empowerment of women.

Participant's quotes:

***Finally, we started to talk about Women's Network BiH;***

***It is crucial to continue planning together;***

***We need to promote work of the Network and our basic principles to other like-minded, so they can also join the Network;***

## Media coverage

Conference was covered by influenced media houses in BiH like: Federation BiH TV and Hayat TV, radio stations BiH Radio 1 and Radio Herceg Bosna. Additionally, news agencies (FENA and SRNA) advertised info on Conference and web portals shared Conference programme and outcome (<http://manjine.ba/?p=3989>, <http://www.radiosarajevo.ba/novost/84042/zenska-mreza-bih-zajedno-smo-jace>, <http://www.oslobodjenje.ba/vijesti/bih/zajedno-smo-jace>).