

2023

ANNUAL REPORT on the work of the
Association of Roma women
"Bolja budućnost" Tuzla



Impressum

Publisher:

Association of Roma women „Bolja budućnost“ Tuzla

For the publisher:

Indira Bajramović

Prepared and edited:

Larisa Kovačević

Printing:

„OFF-SET“ Tuzla

Print:

Association of Roma women „Bolja budućnost“ Tuzla, 2023.

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Contact:

Hadži Hasan age Pašića bb, 75000 Tuzla, B&H

Telephone /fax: +387 35 298 001

E-mail: info@bolja-buducnost.org

Facebook: [boljabuducnost.1](https://www.facebook.com/boljabuducnost.1)

Instagram: [bolja_buducnost](https://www.instagram.com/bolja_buducnost)

Twitter: [Boljabuducnost1](https://twitter.com/Boljabuducnost1)

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Content

Director's message.....3
2023 in numbers.....4
Projects.....5
Institutional support for the Association of Roma women "Bolja budućnost" Tuzla.....6
Support to the informal Roma women's network „Uspjeh“.....7
Progress through the green transition: Strengthening the capacity of the network“Uspjeh”.....9
We use available mechanisms to protect ourselves from violence and discrimination.....10
For general support for advocacy activities aimed at achieving a better position for Roma women.....11
Progress in the integration of Roma as the progress of B&H on its way to the EU.....12
Promotion and realization of rights for socially vulnerable categories.....13
"Fight for life" - 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.....14
Promotion of Roma culture in Kiseljak and celebration of the Roma holiday Aliđun.....15
Overview of activities marking important Roma holidays and dates.....16
Card for education.....20
Initiatives, participation, and contributions of the Association in the development of policies, strategies and actions to protect human rights.....21
General women's cooperative „Bolja budućnost“.....25
The power of cooperation: donors, partners, networks, institutions and media.....26

Director's message

Dear friends, dear donors and partners, dear citizens,

We are proud to present the annual report on the work of the Association of Roma Women "Bolja budućnost" for 2023. This year was filled with challenges, but together we achieved significant results. Our commitment to preserving culture, strengthening the community, and improving the quality of life of Roma women has remained unwavering.

In 2023, we successfully implemented several projects focused on education, protection from violence and discrimination, economic empowerment, health, social protection and inclusion, and green transitions. Through our activities, we create bridges between different communities, building a better understanding and respect for diversity.

I especially want to highlight the dedication of our members and employees whose efforts, work, and enthusiasm are key to achieving our goals. On this occasion, gratitude goes to our donors who allocated funds to contribute to the creation of a better and equal society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We carefully use your resources to ensure adequate help and support for Roma women, Roma children, and the entire Roma community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the support of everyone involved, we achieved significant progress in exercising rights and improving the position of Roma women in all spheres of Bosnian society.

We continue to stand for equality, justice, and a better future for all. I would like to thank everyone who supported us and joined our journey. The collective of our association is looking forward to the new challenges and opportunities that 2024 will bring.

Thank you for your cooperation and contribution.



Indira Bajramović
Director of the association

2023 IN NUMBERS



Total number of beneficiaries

2972



Women

2085

887

Men



Number of implemented projects

11



90%

funds for work from international organizations

10%

funds for work from government institutions

Hired external collaborators

30



67

Total number of media appearances



Total number of events held

47

Total number of posts on the web and social networks

341

Reach of posts on the web and social networks

18.167



Projects

The role of the Roma women's association "Bolja budućnost" Tuzla within the non-governmental sector is of exceptional importance in the process of developing a democratic society. Through consultations between the governmental and non-governmental sectors, we create fertile ground for the exchange of useful information and ideas that are key to achieving positive changes in the community. We focus on providing a specific voice of the civil sector, with a special emphasis on the Roma community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Our role brings concrete results in the decision-making process related to improving the position of Roma men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By advocating respect for the rights of minority and marginalized communities, our projects contribute to the creation of a society based on the values of equality and justice.

At the same time, through our projects, we act as a service that provides support to Roma men and women in exercising their rights and solving status issues. Our goal is to ensure that they can fully enjoy all the rights guaranteed to them by the domestic and international legislative framework.

Our association implements a wide range of projects and activities, at the local, as well as at the national, and regional level. These programs are structured in three key areas: human rights, socio-economic programs, and advocacy programs. During 2023, we successfully implemented 11 projects as well as numerous activities. We bring you more information in this report about all of our projects and activities.

We are proud to point out that through the implementation of projects, we have contributed to the creation of a more inclusive society that respects diversity and ensures justice for all members of the Roma community. We continue with dedication to achieve positive changes and work to improve the quality of life of Roma men and women in our society.



Institutional support for the Association of Roma women "Bolja budućnost" Tuzla

The institutional development of the Association of Roma women "Bolja budućnost" Tuzla represents a key step towards strengthening our organization and advocating for the rights of Roma women who face difficulties in exercising their rights while simultaneously increasing the visibility of the female Roma activist movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This transformation was made possible through the strong support of the OAK Foundation, which provided us with resources to strengthen organizational capacities and implement the following programs within the support grant.

1. Human rights program with a focus on the rights of Roma women:

1.1. Our management structure and membership are regularly informed about the activities and projects of the association, with a continuous exchange of opinions on the existing program objectives and their alignment with the needs of the beneficiaries.

1.2. We achieved greater involvement of the membership in the implementation of the association's activities and the creation of projects, creating a dynamic exchange of information.

1.3. We actively inform the wider social community about the cultural heritage of the Roma population in our area, contributing to increasing tolerance reducing prejudices towards Roma, and promoting respect for their human rights.

2. Socio-economic program:

2.1. We provided targeted assistance at the community and individual level to Roma women, women, and girls, empowering them to realize their rights to education, health, a life free of violence, and gender equality.

2.2. We have achieved increased employability of Roma women through the work of a women's cooperative, placing services and goods on the market and achieving a certain degree of self-sustainability.

3. Advocacy and political participation:

3.1. We achieved an increased level of networking of our association at the national and regional levels, establishing cooperation with the same or related organizations, associations, foundations, and institutions.

3.2. We increased the representation of Roma women's issues through attendance at regional and national events of importance for women and national minorities, thereby actively contributing to political participation and affirmation of their interests.



Support to the informal Roma women's network „Uspjeh“

During 2023, our association paid special attention to connecting female Roma activists in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska to strengthen the female Roma sector in the country. In this sense, we provided support to the first female Roma women network in Bosnia and Herzegovina by mobilizing funds for the implementation of lobbying and advocacy activities and launching initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of Roma women in public and political life. The network has maintained its distinctive position, becoming a model of a successful and efficient network with strong Roma women's organizations.

Our primary goal was to improve the quality of the work of Roma women's organizations, both in their work with the beneficiaries population and in their relations with the authorities. We achieved this through mutual learning, support, exchange of knowledge and ideas, and implementation of joint activities on various projects. Using the knowledge, experience, and capacities within the network, we conducted a series of analyses, research, and creation of other documents, and together conducted advocacy campaigns to draw attention to the position and status of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the traditional spirit, during 2023 we organized the "Month of Roma Women's Activism" campaign in partnership with members of the informal Roma women's network "Uspjeh" in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The campaign started on March 8, International Women's Day, and lasted until April 8, World Roma Day.



With the campaign, we demanded:

Zero tolerance for all forms of violence against Roma women
Zero tolerance for underage/arranged marriages
Zero tolerance for all forms of racial discrimination
Zero tolerance for the invisibility of Roma children in education
Zero tolerance for all forms of exclusion of Roma women

During the campaign in Tuzla, Kakanj, Visoko, and Prnjavor, we sent a message that violence, underage/arranged marriages, racial discrimination, the invisibility of Roma children in education, and social exclusion must not be tolerated or correlated with Roma tradition, culture, and customs because it is exclusively about the gross violation of human rights.



Progress through the green transition: Strengthening the capacity of the network "Uspjeh"

By implementing the project "Progress through the green transition: Strengthening the capacity of the women's network "Uspjeh" with the support of the Open Society Fund, we contributed to sustainable development, environmental protection, and economic prosperity through the active participation of women in the implementation of the Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans.

The focus of the project was primarily aimed at building capacity and increasing the knowledge of members of the women's network "Uspjeh" about renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, waste management, and sustainable agriculture. Through this aspect of the capacity-building project, the members acquired the relevant skills and knowledge necessary for active participation in the green transition.



One of the project activities was the implementation of an awareness-raising campaign through various digital communication tools, with which we informed members of the wider social community about the Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and the importance of environmental protection, sustainable development and the role of women in the green transition.

We use available mechanisms to protect ourselves from violence and discrimination

In the second phase of the project "We use available mechanisms to protect ourselves from violence and discrimination" during 2023, our association in partnership with the associations "Romani ćej - Roma girl" from Prnjavor and the Association of Romani Women Center for Mothers "Nada" from Kakanj conducted a significant series of activities. The focus of the activities was on building the capacity of both state and non-state service providers, with a special emphasis on dealing with prejudice and stigma accompanying the provision of support to women from marginalized communities.

Through the implementation of these activities, the project team aimed not only to raise awareness about the problems of violence and discrimination but also to provide concrete tools and knowledge to the relevant participants. These activities had a double approach - on the one hand, we worked to empower service providers to better deal with the needs of women from the Roma community, and on the other hand, we sought to reduce prejudice and stigma among service providers and the wider community.



This phase of the project played a key role in establishing cooperation between partner associations and relevant institutions, creating space for dialogue and exchange of experiences. Through these activities, the Association of Roma women "Bolja Budućnost" built bridges in the project locations of Kakanja, Prnjavor, and Vukosavlja between different sectors of society to work together to create a more inclusive and empowered environment for women from the Roma community.

For general support for advocacy activities aimed at achieving a better position for Roma women

Our association contributes to the improvement of the living conditions and rights of Roma men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina through a grant of support provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF) with various activities. Through successful cooperation with various organizations and institutions at the local, national, and European levels, we contribute to expanding awareness and support for key issues concerning national minorities, especially with an emphasis on Roma women.

Our support through the granted grant is directly aimed at Roma men and women in solving various status issues, such as health insurance, and social protection, and providing information and assistance both in the community and within our area. Given that many are insufficiently informed, some are semi-educated, and some have not attended school, our support directly affects their everyday life and contributes to improving their quality of life.



This support focuses in particular on assistance in filling out certain forms and documents that are crucial for the realization of basic rights. We understand that this form of assistance is essential given the specific challenges faced by the Roma population, including lack of information, different educational levels, and other specificities. Through this grant, we can be a support and resource for everything we can do to improve their everyday life and contribute to achieving a better quality of life.

Progress in the integration of Roma as the progress of B&H on its way to the EU

As part of the regional program that uses advocacy as its main means to achieve the aspect of gender equality in the pre-accession process of our country to the EU, in cooperation with the Roma women's network, we strive to improve the integration of Roma women and issues of importance for Roma women from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the negotiation process of joining the EU.

Project activities are focused on capacity building and strengthening of the Roma women's network, research activities, policy-making, regular exchange of experiences, planning, and monitoring of national policies at the local and national level, as well as at the EU level.

During the duration of the project, the regional partner network of women's organizations, which includes our association, participated in a week of consultation and advocacy in Brussels with the institutions of the European Union.



In 2023, as part of this project, we published the first report on the state of rights and the position of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thanks to this support, we got an extraordinary opportunity to encourage Roma women to make a personal contribution and express their views on how they see their position in the community and Bosnia and Herzegovina society and the opportunity to indicate the key problems they face every day. We researched the rights and position of Roma women, verifying and confirming the thesis from our earlier research reports, which

state that Roma women are double discriminated because they are Roma women and because they are women. Recommendations are a tool that will help us to better design advocacy actions towards domestic institutions and international organizations and all other interested women's groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from whom we seek better and more direct support and concrete cooperation.



These recommendations contain key guidelines intended for domestic government institutions, European Union institutions, and all other interested parties involved in shaping public policies, strategies, and support programs. Their focus is on properly addressing the needs and priorities of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ensuring that these key issues are taken into account and integrated into decision-making and the implementation of relevant initiatives. Report in local and English language on the website of our association (www.bolja-buducnost.org).

Promotion and realization of rights for socially vulnerable categories

The implementation of the project entitled "Promotion and realization of rights for socially vulnerable categories" with the support of the city administration of Tuzla through its continuity brought significant results in the realization of rights to social and health care, especially for Roma and other marginalized groups.

- The implementation brought the following results:
- Increased awareness through educational workshops and campaigns aimed at Roma, which resulted in an increased level of awareness of their rights.
- Successful cooperation was achieved with representatives of the City of Tuzla and local institutions.

- A direct consultation was conducted with 40 adults and children from the Roma community and 15 other citizens, a total of 55 direct beneficiaries who were provided with support in exercising their rights.
- For 6 beneficiaries, taxes were paid for starting the procedure of medical expertise and obtaining personal documents.

"Fight for life" - 16 days of activism against gender-based violence

Association of Roma women "Bolja budućnost" Tuzla, in partnership with the Roma women's network "Uspjeh" in Bosnia and Herzegovina, participated in various activities in the International campaign of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence. The campaign started on November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and lasted until December 10 (International Human Rights Day).

"STOP FEMICIDE" is the slogan of the campaign in 2023 by which civil society organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina demanded changes instead of those who were killed just because they were women. As part of the celebration of 16 days of activism, in cooperation with citizens, requests were sent to competent institutions for changes to the legal framework, tougher sanctions, and work on prevention and education.



Members of the Roma women's network "Uspjeh" from Tuzla, Visoko, Kakanj, and Prnjavor carried out street actions on significant dates as part of the campaign, namely: the International Day against Violence against Women (November 25), the International Day of Women's Human Rights Defenders (29 November), International Day of the Struggle for the Abolition of Slavery (2 December), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December), Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre (6 December) and International Human Rights Day (10 December).

During the campaign, two capacity-building and trust-building workshops were held between representatives of local institutions and the Roma community on the topic of recognizing and preventing violence with an emphasis on femicide.

Activities within this year's campaign are supported by the Women's Network of B&H and the OAK Foundation.

Promotion of Roma culture in Kiseljak and celebration of the Roma holiday Aliđun

The project "Promotion of Roma culture in Kiseljak and celebration of the Roma holiday Aliđun" was implemented in the area of the local community of Kiseljak (Tuzla) the period from July 1. until September 30, 2023, with the support of the Tuzla Community Foundation. Through the project, we held 3 workshops on the topics of prevention of discrimination, tradition, culture, and customs of Roma and the importance of preserving the Roma language.



As part of the project, we marked one of the biggest Roma holidays, Aliđun, near the Kiseljak Spring, where both Roma and non-Roma residents of the local community of Kiseljak gathered, and through a joint gathering on this great Roma holiday, we contributed to the creation of a bond between the Roma community and the wider community thereby promoting understanding and acceptance.

At the same time, we created appropriate educational and promotional material about Roma holidays and important dates, which we distributed to the wider community. The project also had an ecological component, and before the commemoration of Aliđun itself, we had a cleaning action.

Overview of activities marking important Roma holidays and dates

Association of Roma women "Bolja Budućnost" continuously pays attention to celebrating Roma holidays and significant dates, thus contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage within the Roma community. In addition, the celebration of Roma holidays and important dates has a wide social significance as it contributes to understanding, respect for diversity and building an inclusive society.

In this report, we have already mentioned the celebration of the Roma holiday of Aliđun, and below we provide information on the other holidays and important dates for Roma during 2023.

On August 2, 2023, our association, in cooperation with the Roma women's network, "Uspjeh" in Bosnia and Herzegovina, visited the Donja Gradina memorial area. The memorial area of Donja Gradina was visited by over 120 young people and adults from different cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By marking this date, we paid tribute and memorial to the Roma men and women who died in World War II, as well as other innocent victims.



The second of August is marked as the International Day of Remembrance of the Roma Victims of the Holocaust. On that day in 1944, the Nazis sent 2,897 Roma to the gas chambers in the Auschwitz camp. In commemoration of that event, the Council of Europe, on the initiative of numerous Roma organizations, declared the second of August the International Day of Remembrance of the Roma Victims of the Holocaust. At the place of suffering of

Jews, Serbs, anti-fascists and others, in Donja Gradina, there is a mass grave where the then NDH buried about 40,000 Roma, killed with sledgehammers, daggers, axes, hammers, cables and other means. Of the 40,000 Roma who were brutally executed, most were children, women and the elderly.

In the premises of the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the occasion of the International Day of Remembrance of the Roma Victims of the Holocaust, a 6-day exhibition of photographs depicting the life and suffering of Roma men and women during that period, as well as depictions of their strength, resilience and togetherness, was opened.



Our association, in cooperation with the Roma women's network "Uspjeh" in Bosnia and Herzegovina, celebrated World Roma Language Day on November 9, 2023 in Sarajevo in the ceremonial hall of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo.

The honorary speaker at the ceremony was Mr. Veljko Kajtazi, the winner of numerous awards and the initiator of several projects aimed at the development of Roma cultural identity in the Republic of Croatia: the initiator of the celebration of the World Roma Language Day in the Republic of Croatia, the International Day of Remembrance of the Roma Victims of Genocide in the Second World War - Samudaripen and World Roma Day.

The commemoration of the World Roma Language Day was financially supported by the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OAK Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation.



We traditionally carry out the campaign of a month of female Roma activism, about which we have provided information in the upper part of this report, and which ends on April 8, on World Roma Day, which we marked this year with the projection of the Roma flag on the Barok building on Slobode Square in Tuzla as well as organizing events in Sarajevo and Tuzla.

The projection of the Roma flag on the Barok building, as well as the event marking World Roma Day at the Ismet Mujezinović Studio in Tuzla, was realized with the support of the Tuzla City Administration and the OAK Foundation.

It is certainly important to point out that it was our initiative to project the Roma flag on World Roma Day on cultural and historical buildings in Dobož and Visoko.



An event was held in Tuzla called "To meet the World Day of Roma and Roma Women". The focus was on a retrospective of the position of Roma men and women and what was achieved to improve them, which was discussed by the mayor of the city of Tuzla, Ph.D. Zijad Lugavić, Samir Arnaut OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Indira Bajramović, director of our association and Nevresa Mujić, Roma mediator.

Also, in cooperation with the informal Roma women's network "Uspjeh" on April 5, 2023, we organized an event in Sarajevo on the occasion of World Roma Day. The event itself focused on the retrospective of the position of Roma men and women and what was achieved through the joint action and cooperation of the Roma community through Roma civil society organizations and government institutions. Those present also had the opportunity to watch a performance called "I don't want to, I don't have to and I won't" which talks about child-arranged marriages, with which our association and the Roma women's network "Uspjeh" raise their voices against this practice.



Card for education

Due to the poor financial situation, Roma children do not enroll in or complete secondary education. In addition, even those who have enrolled in secondary school very often drop out due to the distance of their community from the school, as Roma communities are located in rural areas of the city. To enable the purchase of monthly bus tickets for Roma students, we created and implemented in 2022 a fund-raising campaign called "Education Card" with the support of the Tuzla Community Foundation.

During the campaign, we collected funds and were able to provide monthly bus tickets for 14 Roma students attending high schools in Tuzla continuously for the 2022/2023 school year. Our association, with the support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, continued to support the mentioned Roma students during the year 2023, i.e. the school year 2023/2024.

Initiatives, participation, and contributions of the Association in the development of policies, strategies and actions to protect human rights

At the beginning of 2023, we held a meeting with the mayor Dr. Sc. Zijad Lugavic. During the working meeting, some of the successful projects carried out by our association were presented, and the importance of the Association for improving the living conditions of the Roma community in Tuzla was discussed, as well as the development of a new Action Plan for Roma in the City of Tuzla.



As part of the European Week of the Fight against Cervical Cancer, in cooperation with the Gynecology Polyclinic "Korak do života" Tuzla, we organized a series of information activities for Roma women intending to preserve reproductive health. The goal was also to motivate Roma women to perform some of the available preventive examinations that can detect early premalignant changes and prevent further development of the disease.



We had the honor of Mr. Emir Halilović visiting us and handing us a copy of his doctoral dissertation. His doctoral dissertation entitled: "Molecular-genetic structure and origin of the Roma population in Bosnia and Herzegovina" represents a significant work and it is a great pleasure that he shared his success with us.



On April 13, 2023, Lisa Curman, program manager and deputy head of the Department for Development Cooperation, together with her colleagues from the Swedish Embassy and the representative of UN Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, visited our association. The visit was aimed at assessing the projects that we have implemented so far in cooperation with UN Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the visit, beneficiaries of the program from the Roma community, as well as a representative of the Center for Social Work Tuzla, shared their experiences and knowledge gained by participating in the project.

This visit represents support for our efforts to improve the position of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UN Women and the Swedish Embassy recognize the importance of working with vulnerable communities and work to promote equal rights for all citizens of B&H.



On March 14, 2023, we had the honor to host the Delegation of the Embassy of the Slovak Republic. The representatives of the association presented to the delegation their activities and projects that contribute to improving the position of the Roma community in B&H and emphasized the importance of including all relevant actors in the process of improving the position of Roma and protecting their rights.



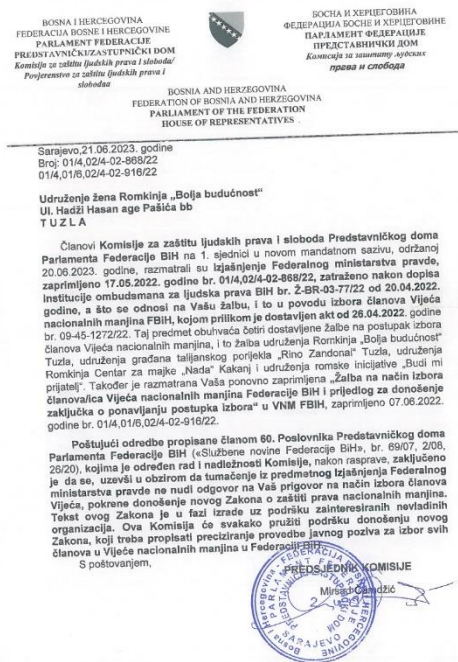
On May 4, 2023, the Center for Roma Initiatives Nikšić from Montenegro visited our association throughout the day. The visit aimed to exchange experience and knowledge on the topic of prevention of child-arranged marriages, protection of children's rights, work methods, and cooperation with government institutions. This exchange of experiences and knowledge represents a significant step in strengthening cooperation between organizations fighting for children's rights and Roma communities in the region.



In the Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Return of the Tuzla Canton, a meeting was held with the Minister of Labour, Social Policy and Return, Mr. Fadil Alić, and the Assistant Minister for Social and Child Protection, Mr. Edin Šestan. The main goal of holding this meeting is the exchange of information about the work of our association and the possibility of supporting the work and activities of the association by the Ministry.



The members of the Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina considered the Statement of the Federal Ministry of Justice, which was requested after the letter from the Institution of Ombudsman for Human Rights of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This letter referred to the appeal filed by four associations, which concerns the procedure for electing members of the Council of National Minorities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Association of Roma Women "Bolja budućnost" Tuzla, the Association of Roma Women Center for Mothers "Nada" from Kakanj, the Association of Citizens of Italian origin "Roni Zandonai" from Tuzla and Association ORI "Budi mi prijatelj" from Visoko launched this appeal in May 2022, expressing his dissatisfaction with the method of electing members of the Council of National Minorities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the appeal, they also submitted a proposal for concluding repeating the election procedure in the Council of National Minorities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. After careful consideration of the relevant Statement of the Federal Ministry of Justice, the Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms of the Parliament of the Federation of BiH concludes that the aforementioned interpretation does not provide satisfactory answers to objections related to the method of electing members of the Council of National Minorities. Therefore, the Commission concluded by initiating the drafting of a new Law on the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities.



Our association was visited by the representative of UN Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jo-Anne Bishop, and Mersiha Zulčić, the Coordinator for Protection against Violence against Women (EVAW) to discuss past activities and future cooperation. During the meeting, representatives of the association presented in detail their previous projects and activities, emphasizing their commitment to solving the problems faced by Roma women.



The City of Tuzla established a Citizens' Advisory Committee whose purpose is to be a partner to the local government in processes that will improve public planning, the quality of service provision, and the management of public finances through the greater and continuous engagement of all citizens in decision-making, public consultations, surveys, discussions, and other public gatherings. One of the members of this board is the director of our association, Indira Bajramović.



Activities and actions in providing support to women through the 4P network represent a unique type of support at the local community level. Aware of a wider range of problems, they are trained to provide adequate support and assistance. We believe that the 4P network is a significant resource that represents a step forward in facilitating access to rights and justice for women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of the helpers is the director of our association, Indira Bajramović.



Facultative teaching of the Roma language will begin in Tuzla Canton in the next school year. The Tuzla Canton thus became the first in Bosnia and Herzegovina to systematically contribute to the creation of an educational environment without discrimination and the preservation of the rights of national minorities. As an association, we have worked a lot on this and we are overjoyed because this is a significant step not only for Tuzla Canton but also for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which shows its commitment to nurturing diversity and promoting intercultural understanding.



In the period from October 23 to 25, 2023, the team of our association paid a study visit to the organizations Astra - Anti-trafficking in Action and the Roma Women's Center in Bibija. The visit aimed to exchange experiences on the prevention and fight against human trafficking carried out by organizations in the Republic of Serbia, as well as the activities carried out by the Association of Roma Women "Bolja Budućnost" and the Roma Women's Network "Uspjeh" in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The visit was organized within the Fund for Study Visits, which is financially supported by the Trag Foundation.



General women's cooperative „Bolja budućnost“

In 2016, we founded and registered the first female Roma cooperative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The idea of its establishment arose more than 7 years ago when we were implementing a program of economic empowerment of Romani women, as part of which more than 50 Roma women started their small businesses in the places where they live. For us, economic empowerment was not just a project, but an increase in employment opportunities and a direct investment in strengthening the economic and social equality of Roma women. The cooperative leases land of 13.9 hectares, 8 greenhouses, and machines such as pumps for pumping water, tiller, power units, pumps for spraying vegetables and fruits, machines for drilling holes for miniatures, cargo motor vehicles, trailer vehicles.

As a great initiative of social entrepreneurship, the cooperative enables greenhouse production, which is not only a way of generating income but also an ecologically sustainable approach to agriculture. Currently, the cooperative has a flock of sheep and is engaged in raising eggs from existing free-range laying hens. By participating in fairs, the cooperative has the opportunity to highlight its products, share its sustainable business experience, and connect with potential partners and customers. One of the key elements of the Cooperative is social responsibility and empathy towards women in the community and their strengthening and capacity building. The cooperative not only supports economic initiatives but also builds community among women, providing them with support and encouragement. This integrative approach creates a strong foundation for a better future, where women play a role not only in economic development but also in strengthening social ties. In general, the general women's cooperative "Bolja Budućnost" represents an inspiring model that combines sustainability, education and social support.



The power of cooperation: donors, partners, networks, institutions and media

We believe that our association represents an important support in the local community, and our strength comes from fruitful cooperation with various actors. Donors, partners, networks, institutions, and media play a key role in supporting and developing the initiatives of our association, which focuses on improving the lives of Roma men and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Financial support for our projects in 2023 from the following donors: OAK Foundation, Kvinna till Kvinna, Open Society of B&H, UN Women, Tuzla City Administration, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and Tuzla Community Foundation enabled us to implement activities that directly affect the improvement of quality of life members of the Roma community with an emphasis on Roma women.

The cooperation with local and national authorities, educational institutions, institutions, networks, and civil society organizations that we had during 2023 made it easier for us to act in the preservation of basic human rights with a special focus on marginalized groups of citizens.

The media support we had contributed to raising awareness of the daily challenges and obstacles faced by the Roma population, with an emphasis on Roma women. Through traditional and online media, but also the official communication channels of our association, we called for solidarity and inclusion and shared positive stories and information about our work. During 2023, we had 67 contributions and guest appearances on traditional and online media at all levels. On our official communication channels, which include the website and social networks, we had 341 posts that directly reached 18,167 people.

This annual report on the work of our association represents a valuable insight into our joint year, filled with work, challenges, and achievements. Our mission is to empower, support, and build, and through these pages, we see how much we have achieved together. Not a single success was independent, but the result of dedication, cooperation, and belief in the positive impact we can achieve.

Thank you to all the donors who provided us with financial support, the partners with whom we shared resources and expertise, the networks that connected us with similar initiatives, the institutions that recognized us, and the media that spread our story.

Special thanks go to our community - Roma women, families, individuals who were pillars of support and initiators of positive changes. Your commitment and enthusiasm are the foundations of our growth. Thank you for your support, trust, and joint effort. Let's continue to build a better tomorrow for everyone together.

COMMITMENT, PERSEVERANCE, PERSISTENCE

A BETTER FUTURE FOR A BETTER LIFE

