

2022

REPORT on work of Association of Roma women “Bolja budućnost” Tuzla



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Our results in numbers -2022

13 implemented projects

Total number of engaged volunteers **60.**

Total number of hired external associates **7.**

The total number of events held was **84.**

For **120** people in a state of social need, humanitarian assistance was provided (procurement of medicines, food and hygiene supplies, payment of fees for medical examination and obtaining personal and other documents)

70 women had preventive specialist examinations that included gynecological examinations (colposcopy, PA smear, ultrasound examination and counseling) and breast examinations (breast ultrasound and mammography).

14 men had preventive medical examinations of the prostate

Total number of beneficiaries 4.643

woman 3.040, man 1.603

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear friends, dear donors and partners, dear citizens,

Association of Roma women „Bolja budućnost“ Tuzla brings you another annual work report for 2022.

Multiple discrimination is the most common fact related to Roma women. In addition, the low level of education and social exclusion make Roma women the most vulnerable group within the Roma community. That is why it is necessary to encourage the networking of Roma women, intending to strengthen their activities and greater visibility in the local community and society.

We want to acknowledge and thank our employees, volunteers, and activists, as well as representatives of institutions, for being ready despite all the challenges to realize together more than what we planned for 2022.

On this occasion, we would like to thank our donors who allocated funds or invested their time and knowledge to contribute to 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 our country. You represent an important part of achieving our mission and without your link in the chain our mission would not be achievable; Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country of equal citizens in which Roma women fully exercise all rights, and actively and equally participate in all spheres of Bosnian society.

Management of the Association of Roma Women „Bolja budućnost“ Tuzla

DEDICATION, PERSEVERANCE , PERSISTENCE

A BETTER FUTURE FOR A BETTER LIFE



Projects

Association of Roma women „Bolja buducnost“ Tuzla as part of the non-governmental sector, plays an important role in the development of a democratic society. Consultations between governmental and non-governmental sectors produce useful information and ideas, which lead to positive changes. As a female Roma non-governmental organization, we provide an important voice in the civil sector with a special emphasis on the Roma community in B&H. Our involvement results in making better and more legitimate decisions when it comes to Roma and Roma women, but also in the general development of society based on respect for human rights. On the other hand, we serve as a service that helps Roma men and women exercise their rights and resolve status issues so that they can fully enjoy all the rights guaranteed to them by domestic and international legislative frameworks. The projects and activities carried out by our association at the local, national, and regional levels fall into human rights programs, socio-economic programs, and advocacy programs. In 2022, we implemented 13 projects, which are presented below in this report.

Support for the work of the Roma women's network „Uspjeh “

In 2022, our work focused on connecting female Roma activists in the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska, to strengthen the female Roma sector in BiH. In this regard, we supported the work of the first Roma women's network in Bosnia and Herzegovina by finding means to carry out lobbying and advocacy activities and launching initiatives to increase the participation of Roma women in public and political life. In 2019, the Network received separate support for joint activities from the OAK Foundation, which continued in 2022. The Network maintains its current position, becoming an example of a successful and effective Network with strong Roma women's organizations.



Our goal is to improve the quality of work of Roma women's organizations through mutual learning and support, exchange of knowledge and ideas, and implementation of joint activities on various projects. Using the knowledge, experience, and capacities of the network, we did a series of analyses, research, and other documents, and together we conducted advocacy campaigns to draw attention and talk more about the position and status of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina

A month of Roma women activism

In the period from March 8 to April 8, 2022, in cooperation with the Roma women's network, we conducted the traditional campaign of a month of Roma women's activism "It is my Right, not a Privilege". Through the campaign, we sent a message that we are not equal, our needs and position are not visible in public policies, we do not feel safe, we are not included, and we live a life that does not ensure our dignity. We are discriminated against every day both as women and as members of the Roma ethnic group, which is further complicated by the fact that we are exposed to social exclusion, which is reflected in very low access to education, employment, and health care, which makes us particularly vulnerable to various forms of gender-based violence. On International Women's Day, we also sent messages that violence must not be tolerated and that everyone has equal rights to protection from violence.

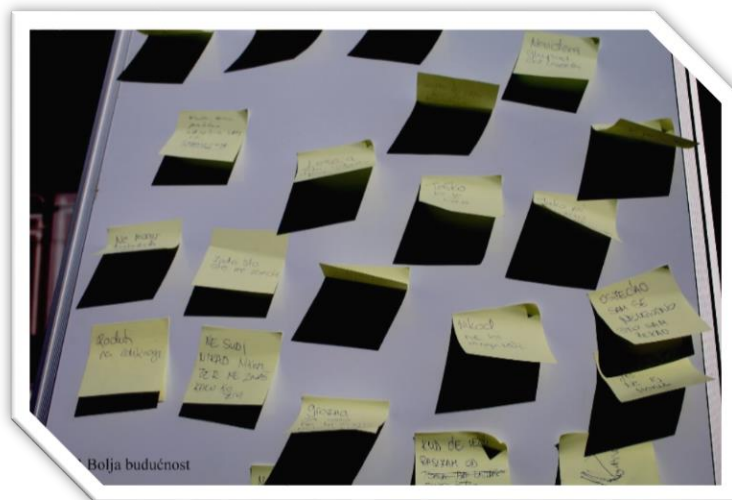


During the campaign, we also marked March 21, the International Day against Racial Discrimination. Racial discrimination against Roma in BiH is unfortunately still widespread and it is a phenomenon that represents a

critical obstacle to the inclusion of Roma in the wider society and acts in such a way that it prevents them from enjoying equal rights, opportunities, and useful social and economic participation. Many examples illustrate racial discrimination against the Roma population.



The street action on March 21 was conceived interactively and included the engagement of passers-by. The team of our association and our activists have selected messages of offensive content with elements of hate speech and racism that we very often can read on social networks and various Internet sites intended for Roma. We put the messages in the form of slips in a box and at the street action we asked passers-by to choose a message at random, read it, and say the same to our Roma activist. Passers-by received information that the contents of the messages were offensive, racist, and that is hate speech. Some of the passers-by agreed, some refused to read the message they chose, and we asked them to share with us how they felt. There were feelings of anger, disgust, there were tears, but unfortunately, there was also the approval of some of the messages.



Fighting racism through legislation and education is key. It is also necessary to systematically fight hate speech and racist crimes. The next crucial area of intervention is the police. States must eliminate racism and impunity for racist crimes committed by those in charge of law enforcement. Law and practice must also be strengthened to ensure equality of access to education, employment, housing, and health care. However, change is not achieved by legislation alone. Efforts in the field of education are crucial. School curricula should better reflect the history and cultural heritage of people of African descent and their contribution to the development of our societies.

Promotion and realization of rights for socially vulnerable categories - phase III

With the support of the Tuzla City Administration, the Service for Culture, Sports, Youth, and Social Protection, we implemented the project "Promotion and realization of rights for socially vulnerable categories - phase III", as part of which we: held 4 workshops for Roma women and men from Tuzla from the local communities of Kiseljak, Krojčica, Crvene njive, Solina, Pasci and Ljubače on the topic of initiating procedures for exercising rights from social and health care at the competent institutions and on the topic of preserving the reproductive health of women as well as men.

As part of the project, we paid fees for medical expertise, obtained personal and other documents for 6 beneficiaries, procured medicines for 24 beneficiaries, provided free gynecological examinations that included colposcopy, PAPA test, ultrasound, counseling for 24 women and preventive prostate examinations for 14 men.

Let's use available mechanisms to protect ourselves from violence and discrimination.

The association of Roma women "Bolja budućnost" Tuzla, together with the partner associations "Romani ćej - Romani girl" from Prnjavor and the association of Roma women, the center for mothers "Nada" Kakanj, implemented a series of activities in the second phase of the project in 2022 under the name "Let's use available mechanisms to protect ourselves from violence and discrimination". The project's activities aimed to build the capacity of state and non-state service providers to address stigma and prejudice related to the provision of services to women from marginalized communities.



In addition to building the capacities of state and non-state service providers, the project's activities are also aimed at strengthening the capacity of members of the Roma women network in advocacy processes and conducting joint activities as part of the global campaign of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.



During the campaign, in addition to street actions that were held on important dates: the International Day against Violence against Women, the International Day of Human Rights, the International Day of Women Human Rights Defenders, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and the Abolition of Slavery, the commemoration of the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, we also recorded broadcast 3 thematic TV shows on the following media houses: Face TV and RTV TK. You can watch the shows on the official YouTube channel of our association.

Progress towards the integration of Roma men and women as the progress of B&H on the 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 aimed at capacity building and strengthening of the Roma women's network, research activities, policy-making, regular exchange of experiences, planning, and monitoring of national policies through support for meetings of the Roma women's network, advocacy meetings at the national and local 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 study visit to Berlin and an advocacy week in Brussels.

Study visit – Berlin

In the period from 19 to 23 September 2022, a representative of our association attended a study visit to institutions and donor foundations in Berlin. In 2019, Germany spent 7.0 billion US dollars or 46% of its total bilateral ODA allocated on development activities aimed at gender equality in a principled or significant way, according to the OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy Indicator, placing Germany slightly below the DAC average of 47%. Only 2% of Germany's bilateral ODA allocation went to projects and programs that focus on gender equality as a main objective. The purpose of the study visit is to get more information about the availability of funds in Germany through support for women's organizations, but also to present the activities that the regional partners of the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation carry out in their countries.



Advocacy week in Brussels

The representative of our association participated in consultation meetings in Brussels in November 2022. The week started with appropriate training and preparations, and consultation meetings included meetings with the EEAS, representatives of the European Parliament, EC / DG NEAR, and others who aim to contribute to women's rights and gender equality in the EU accession processes. For many years, Kvinna till Kvinna has been implementing a regional advocacy program towards the EU, which includes all countries of the Western Balkans. The goal of this program is to provide women's organizations with greater visibility in the process of EU

integration, stronger participation of women in all relevant processes, and to ensure respect for women's human rights. This certainly also applies to Roma women's organizations, because in the past two years ago, this program also includes Roma women.

At this year's consultation week, through the participation of representatives of Roma women's organizations, the problems faced by Roma women in various areas were addressed, and recommendations were proposed for improving the rights and position of Roma women.



The development of the framework for the first BH report on the legal status and position of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an activity of this project. The implementation of this activity started in 2022 and collected key information and indicators on the condition and position of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finalization of the document is expected in the middle of 2023.

Institutional support for the Roma women's association "Bolja budućnost" Tuzla

The institutional development of our association to become a stronghold and advocate for Roma women who have difficulties in exercising their rights was helped by the support of the OAK Foundation Through the strengthening of organizational capacities but also the implementation of activities we aimed to change to become a strong organization and a strong movement for improving women's rights and economic empowerment with a special focus on the rights and empowerment of Roma women as members of the largest national minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We achieved this through the implementation of the following programs.

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

1.1. The management structure of the association and the membership are regularly informed about the activities and projects of the association. The exchange of opinions on the existing program goals and their harmonization with the needs of the beneficiaries has been carried out.

1.2. Greater involvement of the membership in the implementation of the association's activities and the creation of projects and the exchange of information.

1.3. The wider community is informed about the cultural heritage of the Roma population. We contribute to the increase of tolerance and reduction of prejudices towards the Roma and respect for their human rights.

2. Socio-economic program

- 2.1. Through targeted assistance at the community level as well as at the individual level, Roma women and girls are empowered to realize their rights to education, health, life without violence, and gender equality.
- 2.2. Increased employability of Roma women and men through the cooperative, placing services and goods on the market.

3. **Advocacy and political participation**

- 3.1. Increased level of networking of our association at the national and regional level with the same or related organizations, associations, foundations, and institutions.
- 3.2. Increased representation of Roma women's issues through attendance at regional and national events of importance for women and national minorities.

For a life without violence

The project aimed at preventive action when it comes to violence against marginalized groups. The expected results were created with clearly set indicators of their success, which are: a) service providers have a better understanding of the specifics and needs of Roma women to address the stigma and prejudices associated with the provision of protection services against gender-based violence to women from marginalized groups and b) increased awareness of Roma women about available protection mechanisms against violence in Roma communities in Tuzla and how to access them.



Through the project, we addressed the problem of violence in Roma communities in an acceptable way, which is most often caused by patriarchal patterns of behavior and values, toxic norms about masculinity, and which serves to keep women in a subordinate position. The activities were implemented as part of the project: "Development of a training program for members of municipal commissions/committees for gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (2021-2022), which is implemented by the Citizens' Association "Nešto Više" and Amica Educa in cooperation with the Gender Center of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Gender Center of the Government of RS. The project is supported by the European Union.

Support for the Roma women's network in advocating for the rights of minorities in the EU integration process

The project is supported by Reactor - Research in Action and their partners through the Action "Improving gender equality through the EU accession process". This action is financed by the European Union and co-financed by the Swedish Agency for International Development and Cooperation.

Through this project, we held 3 public debates in Tuzla, Sarajevo, and Kakanj on the topic of women's human rights and the prevention of human trafficking. Advocacy meetings were held with relevant institutions at the entity and state level to increase the representation of Roma women in bodies/councils/councils of importance for national minorities.

Through the project, we worked on strengthening the capacity of members of the Roma women network in B&H through 3 workshops, which enabled them to acquire new knowledge in the field of advocacy towards institutions in B&H and at the EU level. Program staff had the opportunity to strengthen their capacities through workshops on the principle of gender equality in the EU accession process.





Cooperation with the non-governmental sector for an effective response to reduce begging.

The project was implemented with the support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Science. The following activities were carried out through this project:

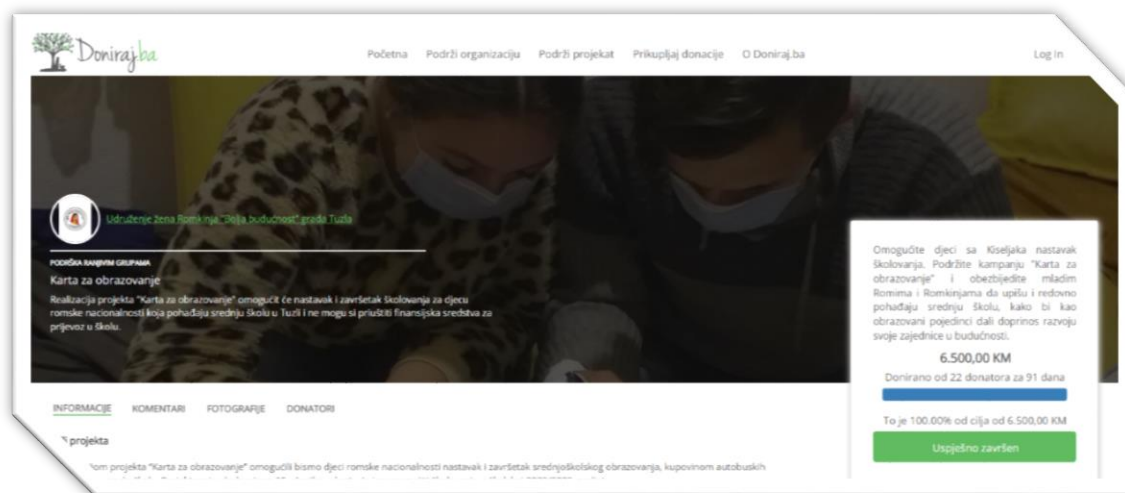
- Through the project, we worked on strengthening the capacity of members of the Roma women network in B&H through 3 workshops, which enabled them to acquire new knowledge in the field of advocacy towards institutions in B&H and at the EU level. Program staff had the opportunity to strengthen their capacities through workshops on the principle of gender equality in the EU accession process.
- With 30 Roma women, 30 adults, and children (20 Roma women and 10 Roma) from Tuzla, the mediator spoke and distributed promotional material in the community with information about human trafficking and how to prevent becoming a victim of human trafficking. 200 leaflets were printed and distributed, which means that we indirectly reached more than 200 beneficiaries in Roma communities.



Education ticket

A monthly bus ticket from the largest Roma community, Kiseljak to Tuzla, costs 116 KM. Most Roma families have several members, educate several students at the same time, and are without permanent employment, so buying a monthly ticket for transportation is unattainable for most families, especially if we consider the duration of the school year.

Through the realization of the project through the fund-raising campaign "Education Card" in cooperation with the Tuzla Community Foundation, we enabled Roma children to continue and complete their high school education, by purchasing bus tickets for transportation to school. The project included 11 students, and the tickets enabled them to attend regular schooling in the 2022/2023 school year. A total of 6,500.00 KM was needed for the realization of the idea. The Tuzla Community Foundation provided the initial 2,400.00 KM from foreign donors. Through the "Education Card" campaign on the online platform www.doniraj.ba, we collected the remaining amount of KM 4,100.00.



Material care of persons of Roma nationality in a state of social need

With the support of the Ministry of Labor, Social Policy, and Return of Tuzla Canton, we implemented a project of a humanitarian nature, which aimed to prevent poverty and support materially disadvantaged Roma individuals and families. Through this project, we distributed food packages and hygiene items via vouchers to 30 Roma families.

Increased visibility of the female Roma activist movement

The project was implemented with the support of the BiH Open Society Fund in partnership with the Roma women's network "Uspjeh" in BiH. Through the project, we organized a study visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, which is located on the site of the Auschwitz concentration camp in Oświęcim, Poland. The goal of organizing the visit was to mark and pay tribute to the Roma who died in the Second World War, better known by the term Porajmos (destruction), which the Roma use to denote the genocide of their people.

Every year on August 2nd, which is marked as the International Day of Remembrance of Roma Victims in the Second World War, our association and the Roma women's network organized a tribute and a visit to the memorial area of Donja Gradina, and through these visits informed and worked on developing to the awareness of the youth, both Roma and non-Roma, about the horrors of the war to preserve the memory, but also as a kind of warning that it will never happen to any people again that they are brutally killed just because of a different skin color, language, ethnicity.



On November 7, 2022 in the Tuzla Youth Center we celebrated the World Roma Language Day in cooperation with the members of the female Roma network. The participants of this event had the opportunity to hear through the presentations of the panelists about the importance of preserving the Romani language and the process of introducing the Romani language with elements of Romani culture into the teaching process in schools in TK. In addition to the director of our association, the panelists were representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Tuzla Canton, the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and prominent Roma writer Šemso Avdić. Part of the program was in the Romani language. Support for our association and the Roma women's network was given by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to Bosnia and Herzegovina, María Teresa Lizaranzo Perinat, by attending this event.



Women's rights to health care and prevention

With the support of the Foundation for the Empowerment of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina through a project aimed at promoting the mechanisms for realizing the right to health care and organizing free gynecological examinations and breast examinations to preserve the reproductive health of women with a focus on Roma women.



During the duration of the project, the following activities were implemented:

- 3 workshops were held - a total of 26 beneficiaries from Roma communities increased their knowledge about the importance of preventive examinations and their regular performance.
- Realized examinations (gynecological and ultrasound breast examination and mammography) for 16 beneficiaries.

