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Together We Develop Resources for the Future

Publication on Building Trauma-Sensitive Society



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**Together We Develop
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Introduction

Trauma-oriented peace work in BiH, as the educational program for professionals in the field of education and helping professions, as well as for the representatives of youth organizations and organizations that work with the young, is a form of informal education in which all the participants represent a resource for joint work on dealing with trauma and for trauma-sensitive approach to making peace.

Through psychoeducation we wish to clarify, uncover and objectivize the term trauma that is oftentimes connected to taboo. We will bravely dislocate it from mental health experts' circles in order to make it more familiar to broader population, individuals involved in everyday interpersonal contact.

The experience we gained from implementing TOMR in BiH¹ project confirms that there are individuals in many local communities across our country who are devoted to working hard, and that they represent immeasurable resources of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. Introducing the program and work methodology in the shape of this publication containing the matter that we advocate and support, we strive towards multiplication of good practice in civil society organizations tackling this matter, as well as in classrooms all over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Authors' Preface

We are very happy that all the partners working on *Trauma-Oriented Peace Work in BiH* project share one common goal – to breed educated and qualified experts and activists who work with the young; to have safe, conscious and trauma-sensitive organizations and institutions; to strive towards accomplishing this goal despite the regular obligations and often even obstacles.

We have always been the first address they can come to when they need assistance or some answers regarding the concept of trauma-oriented and trauma-sensitive approach to work in the institutions and civil society organizations.

Motivation for participation in the program comes from their personal need and is reflected in trying to awake and understand their own boundaries in contact with others, the community, and society as a whole. Thereby personal boundary is defined as a safe place from which the individual can share his or her own insights and at the same time show their willingness and sensibility towards basic needs of other human beings.

Through integrative approach towards educating and empowering TOMR students' resources, we secure insights that help in recognizing and understanding trauma as a risk factor in personal development, as well as an obstacle for creating the atmosphere of peace and trust in collective society. Furthermore we contribute to creating trauma-sensitive social atmosphere and environment – the one in which we all have the opportunity to work on traumatic experience integration.

It is our utmost priority and biggest resource to preserve and strengthen the network built by our Association's team in the process of bringing to life the idea to create trauma-sensitive schools and civil society organizations in Bosnia. Therefore in you – our readers – we strive to find interlocutors to further understand the needs, challenges, possibilities, and next steps in the process of making trauma-sensitive culture within different parts of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society.

¹ Acronym for *Trauma-Oriented Peace Work in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (trauma-orijentisani mirovni rad u BiH) used in this publication.



Trauma in Post-Conflict Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The presence of trauma in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society can and should exclusively be observed as cumulative collective trauma. To scrutinize collective trauma means to scrutinize the events that led to it. Trauma as such is undoubtedly connected to the process of confronting the past. Prerequisites that enable and contribute to making and preserving peace are: work on traumatic experience integration, and process of confronting the past. Being familiar with this relation, it is clear that making peace requires psychoeducation for each and every individual. Ultimately, peace education belongs to classrooms, concerning both sides of a teacher's desk.

Hence it is necessary to develop sensibility in regards to the type, presence and consequences of acute, cumulative, collective, individual, and transgenerational trauma in all groups that make up the society. It is particularly important to provide adequate support and education for children and youth, as well as for the professionals in the field of formal and informal education that are everyday witnesses of different kinds of traumatic experience consequences that are manifested by children, the young, parents, and colleagues.

Should we wish to provide support, it is relevant to work on confronting the consequences of traumatic experiences. It is important to understand the trauma triggers and impact they have on individual's emotional, mental, and behavioral capacity, as well as the way that each person can react. We all have a responsibility towards ourselves and the society as a whole.



Progres & Wings of Hope: Commitment to Work in the Field of Traumatology

Trauma-oriented peace work in BiH is a form of informal education in the field of dealing with trauma through trauma-sensitive approach of making peace. Its goal is to create the trauma-sensitive environment through two programs:

- Educational program for professionals in the field of education and helping professions (teachers, professors, social workers, pedagogues, psychologists);
- Educational program for youth, representatives of youth organizations and organizations that work with the young.

The educational programs have been jointly implemented by Progres Association for Psychosocial Support and Better Future, focused on building capacities and support towards citizens in post-conflict Bosnian-Herzegovinian society that is exposed to cumulative traumatic experiences, and Wings of Hope Foundation, Germany, focused on educating and empowering children, youth, and adults in post-conflict environment by processing traumatic experiences and transforming the conflict. Both programs, consisting of seven units, are a part of Trauma-curriculum of Wings of Hope Foundation, Germany. Trauma-curriculum methodology is a model implemented by Wings of Hope Foundation in cooperation with partner organizations in post-conflict communities all over the world.

In such manner, Progres Association and Wings of Hope Foundation work on building and strengthening the community of professionals in the field of trauma-related work in creating trauma-sensitive environment worldwide.



Martina Bock: On Work in the Field of Traumatology and Its Relevance



Martina Bock

When I participated in Youth Peace Camp, it was 2016 as I can recall, and we were on one of the Olympic mountains surrounding Sarajevo, I had a conversation with a young volunteer from Progres Association. At the time, I had been working for Wings of Hope Foundation for a year and I shared with him that I had lived in Bosnia for a year, in the town of Jajce to be more precise, immediately after the war.

‘The situation was much better at that time’, he said. ‘At that time we had hope that the situation would get better. That hope is now lost.’, he concluded.

And that was the moment in which I clearly understood how impactful the effect of traumatic events on the society as a whole is. Trauma-related work doesn’t imply only the immediate intervention and therapy. On the contrary, the long-term process for rebuilding societies after the war conflicts is absolutely necessary. Trauma-related work implies stabilization above all. People need safety, community, empowerment, and self-sufficient experiences as hope for a better life.

This is confirmed by the individuals and society, which for us represents the guidelines for our overall work, whether we are working with our partners in Kurdistan Region, Iraq, or Latin America, Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or with our clients during the therapy, or within other projects.

It is not possible to work with each and every individual when we work immediately after war conflicts, which is why our approach in these kinds of working conditions is directed towards working with groups and social multipliers.

The foundation enables trainings for the professionals from various social professions, such as: social workers, teachers, and psychologists. During the qualified trainings, we teach our students how to support and guide people who suffer from consequences of trauma and violence. For many people this represents the process of working on their own past and personal experiences.

‘For me, this training has been an important step in the self-healing process. Now I can share my experience with others.’, said a colleague from El Salvador at the end of the training.

Through our work with youth networks we tend to encourage the young in their work on making peace, promoting dialogue, and achieving reconciliation in their societies. Trauma-sensitive dialogue must be established in a safe place where people can share their stories with a goal to be heard in the diversity systems, in order to create the atmosphere of trust and ideas of building a common future. A young lady from Kurdistan Region, Iraq, after participating in trauma-related work workshop said: ‘I wondered why we simply cannot turn to future and forget what happened in the past. Now I understand that we have to deal with the past in order to build our future.’

Courage and strength of the many who survived violence and war give hope and belief to me personally, and to the whole team of Wings of Hope Foundation that trauma can be healed and peace and reconciliation are a possibility.

Martina Bock,
social pedagogue, mediator, trauma pedagogue
and counselor – German-speaking Society for
Psychotraumatology

Educational Program for Professionals in the Field of Education and Helping Professions

Reactions of Formal Education Professionals

Eighteen professionals in the field of formal education took part in the trauma educational program. With the support of experts and by engaging in an interdisciplinary approach to studying and working on trauma, they worked on strengthening their skills and acquiring knowledge in order to expand their resources and create trauma-sensitive environment in their classrooms and schools. The stories created based on their impressions and evaluations contain important lessons and resources that help in the process of creating that kind of environment.

A story by a teacher

To recognize a child with post-traumatic symptoms, to learn what is the correct way to react in that kind of situation, to know how to help that child.

As a teacher, I tend to support the children and the young in my classroom to overcome dysfunctionalities resulted from traumatic experience. Nevertheless, since I had not had the experience of education in the field of trauma, I was not sure if I am truly able to recognize a child with post-traumatic symptoms. During the education I realized that the most important thing is to recognize a child's behavior, such as: inability to remember, aloofness, or difficulties in articulating their own needs. Now I am aware that I am not alone, and that I have the freedom and responsibility to ask for support of interdisciplinary team in school when I reckon I need it. I feel that I clearly know the steps and that I am ready to help a child in need.



A story by a psychologist

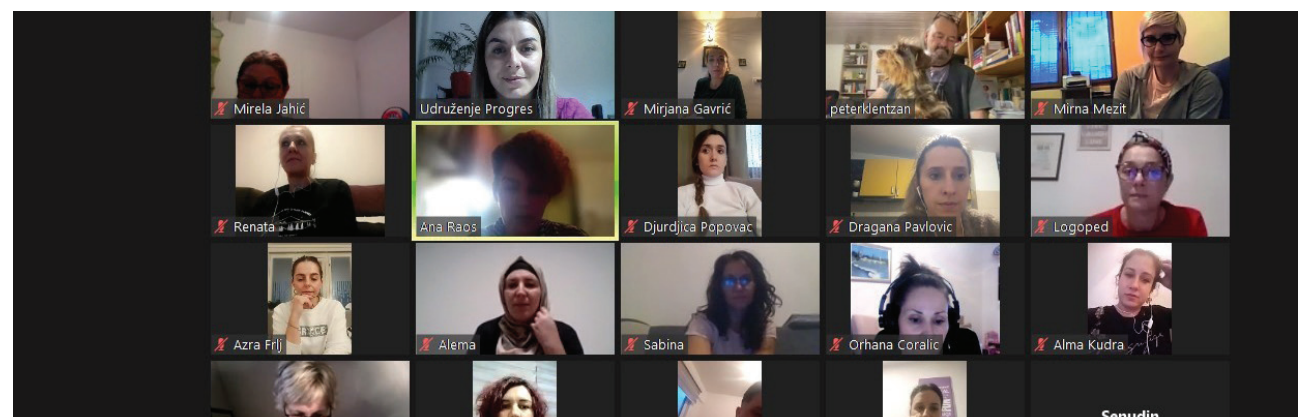
I am the one who can create a safe environment, provide support in minimizing the sense of anxiety, and help in bringing back the usual predictable routine.

Children that come to my office on suspicion of manifesting unusual behaviors are directed there by their teachers who are often insecure in recognizing the symptoms of acute trauma in children. The most important task for me is working on stabilization of behaviors and emotional reactions of children who went through or are going through various traumatic experiences, and cooperating with a social pedagogue in order to establish contact with the family and competent services so we can strengthen the system of support for a child in need. Module 1 has given me the opportunity to adopt a theory and techniques according to which it is possible to offer this type of support to a child in a customized manner.

A story by a social pedagogue

To work on the trauma-related field means readiness to work on yourself.

I am a part of qualified school personnel. My role is to make my colleagues aware of the presence of trauma in the class and school, but also to establish contact with parents and guardians and to encompass family history. During this education I realized that by working on the trauma-related field and through various processes I also expose myself to change and, accordingly, to integration of new experiences.



Trauma-Sensitive Classroom – A Safe Place to Learn

Preschoolers and schoolchildren are often exposed to endangering factors that can represent risks which enable events that have traumatic background, which is why it is necessary that children are provided with adequate support.

Besides their parents, those who most often notice the change in child's behavior are their teachers and other expert associates. Their reactions are crucial in the process of overcoming traumatic experiences. Thus it is utterly important to give them support and further education in trauma-related work field, so they can be the ones who make a difference regarding sense of security in their classrooms.

Sometimes the experiences that children bring into a classroom can represent traumatic experiences for teachers as well by creating a sense of helplessness in them while they are confronting their own subjects and experiences. The fundamental condition for adequate child's support and safe classrooms and schools creation is the education of professionals in the field of education and helping professions about trauma-related work which implies the integration of their own experiences.

As an answer to this condition, trauma-related educational program for professionals in the field of education and helping professions provides tools on how to face with the consequences of traumatic experience and create trauma-sensitive environment in the classroom through six thematic units.

Trauma and work on trauma integration have to be approached systematically; therefore, besides understanding the basics of trauma, the program offers a hystorical approach towards studying trauma, understanding its neurobiological background, and acquiring of different techniques on how to provide help for children and youth with traumatic experiences.

In this way, children and youth have the opportunity to integrate their traumatic experiences and continue to develop themselves starting from the place where they managed to heal their painful experiences.

It is essential that the aproach towards studying and working on trauma is cautious and systematic. Program that is introduced hereafter is developed within six educational modules, explained in details below:



- **Foundations of Psychotraumatology**
- **Attachment, Resource Mobilization**
- **Stabilization and Pedagogy**
- **Acute Trauma**
- **Plurality of a Human Being and Complex Trauma**
- **Trauma-Informed Pedagogy**

*“Sometimes our task is not
the future, but only the day
today.”*

Janez Kočak



I - Foundations of Psychotraumatology

This educational module has a goal to introduce historical background and scientific approaches that had developed in regards to trauma, and represents the most efficient model when it comes to providing support.

- History of psychotraumatology gives the most detailed insight into examining trauma that is connected to historical events and its consequences, and individual traumatic experiences that came out of it on microlevel.
- KREST model, focused of individual resources, offers clear steps on how to work with traumatized person.
- Introduction to neurobiology and neuroplasticity gives specific approach to understanding the background functions in the human brain as well as the processes that take place in the brain as a reaction to the traumatic experiences.

By using trauma-pedagogy approach in education we make space for recognizing and understanding bodily reactions to unusual situations, i.e. to the life- and integrity-threatening situations. Understanding those kinds of processes on a neurobiological level enables applying work and techniques that contribute to the traumatic reactions flow awareness, as well as to working on individual's stabilization.

With a purpose to make the work more vivid and effective, it is desirable to use a creative approach that is adjusted to an individual who is given the explanation on the processes that arose after the traumatic experience. Methodology used during the education – neurobiological representation through Klentzan model symbols, shown on the photo below.



II - Attachment, Resource Mobilization

Educational module called Attachment, Resource Mobilization is created to introduce affective attachment and resource orientation theory to our trainees. This theory, through explaining their own developmental role, can contribute to understanding the foundations of human psychological development and enable better-quality and more effective way to face stressful situations.

Raising awareness about affective attachment is exactly what contributes to understanding the fact that the cause of traumatic response to loss, danger, and abuse is not the sole event, but also the way the event is processed with the primary figures of affective attachment. The support that emerges as a result of understanding the aforementioned system is the key to developing future strategies on stressful situations management, especially when working with children.

„Attachment is an invisible emotional string that connects one person to another across time and space.”

John Bowlby

Affective attachment system is directly connected to creation of mentalization capacity, as well as to emotional regulation learning which is primarily activated in stressful situations. As opposed to adults, children and youth have more internal freedom to reactivate functional resources when needed.

“Teacher trainers are good teachers. A good trainer is the one who chooses a good captain who will help in supporting the weaker team members. A good trainer will always allow others to be great and will never strive to be in the foreground.”

Lutz Ulrich Besser

III - Stabilization and Pedagogy

Stabilization and Pedagogy educational module is focused on working with techniques that contribute and lead towards stabilization of individuals who went or are going through different traumatic experiences.

Human ability to imagine is an invaluable resource that enables working on stabilization. Children's ability to imagine is especially striking, which makes connection to the above-mentioned techniques introduced by teachers much more easily accomplished.

The process of healing and confrontation, and further work on traumatic experience primarily requires safe environment.

Carefully established work on stabilization can help a child or young person to feel stronger on the inside and due to that they can distance themselves from negative people and bad influence. That process requires treatment of different elements that enable psychological trauma integration.

At this point, BASK model is introduced as a part of the program. The model provides a simple and useful trauma confrontation orientation.

B = Behavior

A = Affect (emotions involved)

S = Sensation (bodily sensations)

K = Knowledge (thoughts, evaluations, and knowledge on traumatic events)

BASK model teaches us why it is not enough only to talk about the traumatic experiences, only to reflect on the feelings, or be oriented only towards body. The complete efficiency of working, overcoming, and integrating psychological trauma is accomplished only if all those trauma-disintegrated pieces are put back together.



“If you do not confront your past, you cannot have neither present, nor future.”

Dachau Memorial Site

IV - Acute Trauma

The main theme of Acute Trauma educational module is the work on unpredictable stressful situations and events that can cause acute stress reactions in children and youth. These reactions have painful trauma-related feelings in the background; a person is afraid, he/she has an increased need to be in motion, cries, yells, etc.

Acute stress reaction sets a usual reaction to an unusual situation to which a human being is exposed, usually without any greater consequences.

Acute stress disorder is defined as exposure to direct or witnessed trauma that includes intense negative emotions, at least three symptoms (depersonalization, indecisiveness, and amnesia), re-experiencing the painful event, significant avoiding of trauma-related sensations, anxiety, substantial clinical loss of will, and symptoms that last from at least two days to maximum of four weeks.

It is normally limited by time, varying from several hours to several days, and the symptoms of stress reaction usually subside and disappear over time with most people.

This educational module introduces standards and guidelines for psychosocial support directly after the disaster occurs, i.e. after the occurrence of extreme shock followed by disorientation and dysregulation. In that case it is necessary:

- to help with mastering self-regulation whereby the main goals of the conversation should not be insight, catharsis, nor symptoms interpretation, but bringing back orientation (eating, sleeping, motion), peace, distance from the event, safety, and daily routine;
- to offer advice in the state of stress (e.g. *Let's talk about it*), without being invasive and intrusive;
- to be willing to accept anger, sadness, and fear as normal reactions to threatening or devastating events, state of fear and emotional numbness.

People who have personally experienced traumatic events suffer, temporarily or in the long term, from common mental, emotional, and physical reactions to abnormal experiences.

To prevent long-term consequences, i.e. psychological disfunctionalities that require clinical treatment, such as: PTSD², subsyndromal PTSD, and secondary disorders that occur as trauma-related consequences, acute-trauma counseling, treatment, and therapy primarily include interventions to activate and strengthen personal and social resources and abilities to start the process of self-healing in order to re-establish and maintain the ability to overcome everyday life and mitigate acute suffering and symptoms.

² Acute stress disorder (ASD) describes initial post-traumatic stress reactions that predict post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Plurality of a Human Being and Complex Trauma

Educational module presented below offers insights and techniques into children- and youth-related work, based on understanding of individual ego states which are always carriers of different unconscious and conscious resources; thus it represents great practice in traumatic experience stabilization and integration empowerment.

Hurt ego states encompass ego states related to the symptoms and ego states related to the trauma. Hurting ego states are associated with inner critics, followed by ego states that are even more destructive than inner critics, and finally ego states that are close to the perpetrator, i.e. ego states that identify with the perpetrator.

In addition to the above, this module also gives insight into diagnostic and therapy for complex dissociative personality disorders that emerge from sequential traumatization; furthermore it offers more detailed insight into techniques that are applied in work with affected persons.

Each human being's personality is developed on the basis of different stimuli, both positive and negative. Circumstances that shape us are responsible for creating different parts within, different ego states, and bringing them to consciousness means to be one step closer to better understanding certain behaviors, reactions, emotions and actions in space.

All ego states have their own function and can make it easier or harder to face daily or occasional experiences.

Ego states that are rich in resources are related to the inner strength of the individual.

After going through traumatic experience, it is necessary to work on parts of identity, primarily to become aware of their role and then to be able to use them in trauma-experience overcoming and integration. Ego states can, and most often do, appear in persons who went through traumatic experiences.

In this respect, it is necessary to make a difference among different ego states (parts of identity) which encompass: ego states rich in resources, hurt ego states, and hurting ego states.

VI - Trauma-Informed Pedagogy

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy educational module emphasizes the importance of a family system in which a person has grown up and which has a great impact on further development and creation of interpersonal relations – friendships, relationships, collegial relations etc.

Family affects the development of each of its member individually, and each individual member affects the family structure and function with his/her actions. On the other hand, changes that happen in any part of the family system affect all of its members and their mental health by either improving or distorting it. That means that if one member of the family is unhappy, none of the other family members can feel good. It is impossible to understand an individual when we single him/her out, nor it is possible to understand family if we abstract its members from the context in which their individual memory of past and present has arisen.

Child development depends on the quality of the relationship between the child and his/her close ones. Child that grows up in a loving and nourishing environment can gain new experiences in a safe environment, and in that way he/she can easily overcome and mitigate the risks of traumatic experiences that may occur.

Through the analysis of family context, this program also tackles the subject of trauma and grief. Loss due to death is considered to be the most difficult of all losses because it is inalterable, irrecoverable, and followed by a complex grieving process if a deceased person was close and important one. Understanding all phases of traumatic grief enables helpers and teachers to be present and supportive and not to make any unintentionally wrong steps in regards to the bereaved person.



Understanding the grieving process is necessary for the person to have adequate support, therefore this educational module focuses on providing grieving process guidelines.



In regards to that, there are primary interventions that can be useful with the state of traumatic grief, and they are: social support system activation, support therapy, self-help groups.

Educational Program for Youth Organizations Representatives and Representatives of Organizations that Work with the Young

Reactions of Youth Organizations Representatives and Representatives of Organizations that Work with the Young

Sixteen young people, youth organizations representatives who work with the young, took part in the educational program focused on youth peace work through understanding of trauma. Supported by trauma-related field experts, they worked on strengthening their skills by using adapted approach to understanding trauma in order to empower their resources, and they practiced trauma-sensitive approach in the contact with the young, after which they worked on establishing safe trauma-sensitive environment for the young within the organizations they represent. Stories inspired by their impressions and evaluations contain valuable lessons and resources that help in creating safe trauma-sensitive environment.

A story by a young person

What I learned about myself is that I do not have to be familiar with a person or a group in order to develop empathy or feel their pain and suffering. I realized that I want to know more about the narratives of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society.

Other people's personal stories had seemed very far before I enrolled in this program. I have to say in all honesty that I had not been particularly interested in different narratives. This program has, above all, empowered my resources, taught me to awaken my personal processes and look upon them as small successes. I think they enable a more objective approach towards observing the events and different narratives. Now I feel how much easier it is when someone shows understanding. And that is what I wish as well – to understand others and make them feel better.



A story by a youth educator

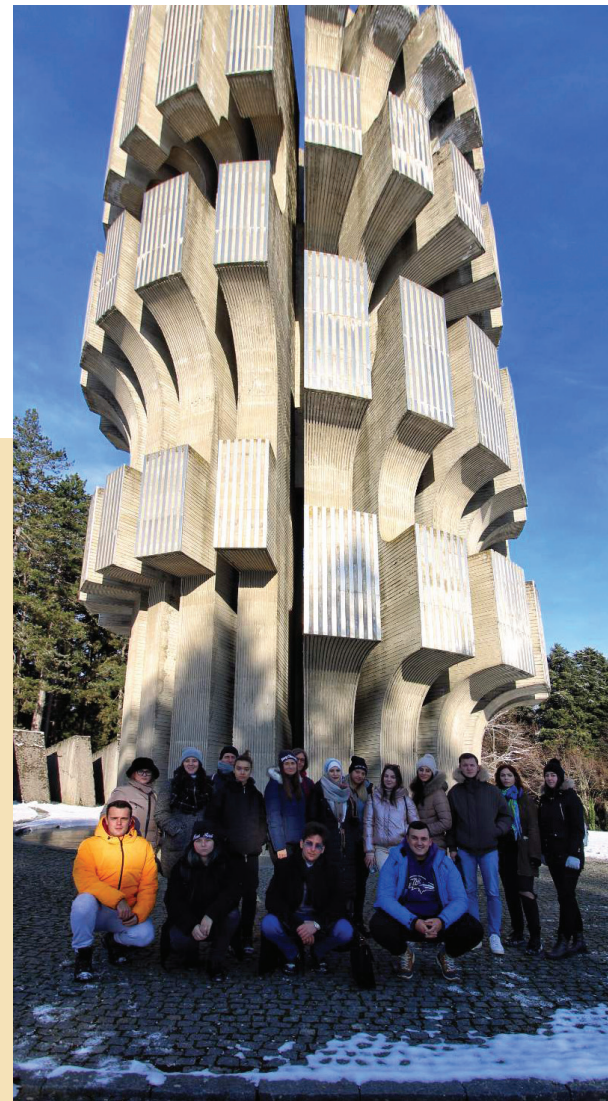
I want to say I feel prepared to be there for someone who is going through a hard time and I want to support them. However, I am still concerned whether I am actually helping at that moment or only making a bigger problem. What motivates me to be a person who is seen as supportive, but also to think about the effects of my presence, is the sense of responsibility.

You can have an opportunity to work with the young on different topics, but if you really want to connect with them and be their safe place, you have to listen and actually hear everything they are going through on a daily basis. It often happens that some individuals from the group speak openly about different experiences. The sense of inability to entirely grasp everything they talk about and apprehension about making a mistake while intervening make you reconsider how useful your work actually is. This program offered me the necessary knowledge and interesting techniques that are entirely applicable while working with youth, which as a result gave me the confidence I need to be an adequate support when necessary.

A story by a youth support worker

I had never had an opportunity to apply for a youth education that offers working on understanding trauma, be it personal or collective, within its program. Young people do not know much about the origin of trauma, nor consequences of transgenerational trauma.

I have been working with youth for ten years and until now I had not had the opportunity to participate in an educational program like this one. Learning what trauma actually is, how it is manifested and how to recognize it while working with youth is very valuable to me. In my opinion, a truly important element of this education was raising awareness on the importance of young people's role in creating trauma-sensitive atmosphere in the local communities. All insights we shared have left a deep impression and I feel that they are permanently imprinted in me.



Trauma-Sensitive and Safe Space to Work with the Young

Narratives in society have a large impact on young person's value formation, beginning with the family and school as primary socialization factors.

To listen to and hear a person in the surrounding of different and most usually opposed narratives is often hard and painful, thus it requires building of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Being aware of the fact that conflict as a constituent part of interpersonal interaction gives a chance for dialogue through trauma-sensitive approach is the basis of educational program for youth, youth organizations representatives, and organizations that work with the young.

Unfortunately, social atmosphere in which young people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are growing up, getting educated, learning about themselves and others is often shaped by the influence of current politics, ethnicity, and uppermost narrative determined by their surroundings. That is how social atmosphere gets misused with purpose of manipulating emotions that form attitudes and behaviors towards the others, the minority and marginalized social groups.

The relation and contact with others is quite often the space where conflict takes place. Our firm beliefs and values, our traumatic experiences, our culture and tradition we cherish are reflected in the way we respond to the conflict.

Throughout seven thematic modules, the program presents the participants with a challenge of integration of new insights and their adjustment to all contents and interethnic differences in post-conflict narrative, and it also encourages dialogue among the participants, as well as the inner dialogue inspired by different experiences.

The program composed of seven educational modules is explained in details below:

- Work on Identities; Trauma and Resilience
- Trauma Triggers and Confronting the Past through Working on Narratives
- Collective Memory and Repression Mechanisms
- Working on Resources and Civil Responsibility Regarding Trauma-Oriented Youth Work
- Facing with the Past and Memorialization
- Memorialization through Visiting (Un)Marked Sites of Suffering
- Role of the Young in Creating Trauma-Sensitive Approach



I – Work on Identities; Trauma and Resilience

Work on Identities; Trauma and Resilience educational module points out how significant it is to work on awareness and identity building; it contributes to understanding of how an individual, collective, and transgenerational trauma comes into being, and it points out the potential of resilience strengthening. Besides encouraging constant reconsideration of one's own beliefs, values and choices that form an identity, one of the imperatives of this program is to equally represent various youth identities in order to avoid representation of only one dominant group against those who are perceived as different and therefore are often underprivileged.

Getting acquainted with and understanding neurobiology behind the origin of the reactions that arise as a response to traumatic events through *working with symbols* methodology which is one of the most innovative approaches regarding this subject, was for a reason one of the first topics our participants could learn about. In this way, the participants can, through psychoeducation, clearly reflect themselves and their own experiences.

„On the one hand, there are no different identities, while on the other all identities are unique and cannot be common. My identity is acceptable to me to the extend it can be foreign to you, and vice versa.”

Walter Frienderg,
Education: Cultural Diversity and National Identity

Introduction to understanding attachment theory, that was brought in later in the program, represented the foundation for the process of independent research and resource building of the individuals within the group.

Some identity parts can be threatening and constraining for an individual or his/her environment. Thus it not enough to merely accept the identity, it is necessary to build the identity. Personal identification of the participants as youth peace activists and their mutual identification is what endorses the sense of belonging and mutual support they secure for each other simply as being members of the same group.

Psychological resilience³ is defined as a process of being able to adjust well to difficult circumstances, traumatic events, tragedies, threats, and significant stress sources such as: family issues with interpersonal relations, serious health issues, problems at work, or financial stressors. Hence, psychological resilience is not observed as limited, but on the contrary, as an ongoing process.

³ Resilience has as a construct appeared in almost all thematic units of the program, giving insight into flexibility and upgrade potential to all the participants in order to strengthen their path towards psychological resilience through continuous work on personal experience processing (American Psychological Association - APA).

Through the program every participant becomes aware that they all have an equal opportunity to learn and to grow, bearing in mind that resilience does not mean the absence of personal experience of emotional pain.

The participants defined and named together all the elements that in their opinion represent supporting factors in the process of resilience building. Our common goal was to map all the factors that contribute to strengthening the resilient youth capacity in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to prevent long-term consequences of transgenerational trauma transfer.

The subject of resilience finds its significance and acknowledgement in numerous researches that witness the consequences of war on directly-exposed children and youth, but also in transgenerational transfer of trauma in the form of development of various maladaptive behavior types, depressive and anxious moods, social isolation, and violent behaviors. Aforementioned forms of behavior are rarely manifested in societies in which exposure to traumatic experiences has not been a part of growing up.

„As a guest during Module 1 I met some wonderful young people that showed readiness to build empathy, understanding, and acceptance. With this innovative approach to working with young people, Progres Association significantly contributes to the development of solidarity and safety of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society for all of us now and for all future generations.“

Ajna Jusić, Präsidentin des Vereins
Vergessene Kriegskinder



II – Trauma Triggers and Confronting the Past through Working on Narratives

Trauma Triggers and Confronting the Past through Working on Narratives educational module enabled the participants to work on recognizing the trauma triggers in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society that appear almost on a daily basis as a part of political discourse and socio-economic atmosphere. The goal was to encourage the participants to map the resources and then to acquire the techniques that can be used to adequately deal with the situations that represent triggers.

Group process continued in the direction of confronting the past, interpersonal relations, and impact of dominant national narratives. During the research process of opposed national narratives of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, the participants were working on a joint analysis and comparison of textbooks, i.e. textbook narratives, and on deconstruction of dominant narratives and their confrontation to authentic, personal and family experiences of the participants.

Being aware of the role of different and often unexpected triggers, of their activation as a consequence of memory fragmentation when traumatic experience occurs, as well as of the symptoms expressed by general population is utterly important in order to understand the dynamics of transfer of traumatic experience onto generations that had not been directly exposed to it and the symptoms they manifest.

Intense work on this process challenges the participants to step out of the narratives the society considers them to be a part of, and gives them freedom to observe the narratives from a different, new, non-hateful, humane, and civil perspective.

In this way the participants can recognize and reshape their own complex reactions that appear as a response to memory fragments that carry traumatic prefix. Understanding the nature of trauma triggers and their influence is also significant for recognizing the reactions we detect in general population in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society.

A pivotal moment for reconsidering yourself is to reconcile personal and deep-rooted beliefs with newly acquired insights. The atmosphere of trust, appreciation, and empathy is the first condition and crucial factor for the flow of individual and group process of dealing with the past and therefore it is the biggest task for the trainers team.

The participants visited Kozara National Park, that is a part of remembrance and memorialization culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then they created a short film named *Remembrance Works Only if YOUth Do* which represents a joint effort and idea to create different narratives, plus the responsibility and role of the young in that process.

III – Collective Memory and Repression Mechanisms

Collective Memory and Repression Mechanisms educational module brings out the importance of breakdown and questioning of the emergence and purpose of collective memory in its present form. The participants worked on understanding repression mechanisms and their recognition in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society.

„I perceived the group as very cautious and tense, but also warm and determined at the same time. The process they were going through seemed immediate and dense, as if it could have been physically touched. Some of the participants showed distinct readiness to engage in a direct confrontation, while the choice of the few was restraint and internal dialogue. The overall impression is that this group of participants leaves space for individual ways of confrontation with the subjects of high-intensity experiences.”

Philipp Sieg, trainer

Is the main purpose of collective memory whose version will prevail, and is there any potential for forgiveness and reconciliation within it? Can we recognize the risk factors for collective memory misuse and manipulation of the communities gathered around similar and often painful experiences? What kind of practices are present in local communities all over Bosnia and Herzegovina in regards to collective memory? – These are the questions that were in focus during the participants' dialogue.

Accenting the social atmosphere in which each and every individual had been exposed to the impact of the environment, and through which they get into contact with the past that afterwards shapes her/his memory, is an important step in deconstructing the term *collective memory*. Consulting history is one of the guidelines that leads towards questioning collective memory and can serve as a complement, but also as a verification of authenticity of collective memory.

If we observe collective memory as an accumulation of similar individual experiences, then it lives within a particular social group and is therefore limited in space and time. It survives and upgrades upon similar experiences and leaves very little, or no space for change, and this is the exact model one can find in collective memory of Bosnian-Herzegovinian national narratives.

The participants are questioning the perception of memory as inherited obligation, and its real purpose in the process of making peace.

Having these insights at their disposal, the participants of the program reflected on the purpose of collective memory in the making and maintaining the atmosphere of national tensions in BiH. They also contemplated on the way they had been previously taught about remembrance.

“...although forgetting does an injustice to the past, remembering does an injustice to the present.”

The Guardian, 2016.

It is clear that life and growth without remembrance and memory are not possible. The task is to assign a purpose to the memory. The participants of the program constructed a dilemma that gives space for further consideration: *When is collective memory an ally to justice and peace?*

Collective memory as a result of trauma teaches about this dilemma and once again points out the importance of adequate processing and integration of traumatic experiences.



By understanding the mechanisms of repressions that shape an active relation towards forgetting, the participants of the program have observed social communities in which denial and oblivion cultures prevail.

What specifically stands out are repression mechanisms in confronted, homogenous, national narratives of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, as well as systematic repression in the center of political community which entices the affirmation of social and legal values that enable its acceptance.

IV - Working on Resources and Civil Responsibility Regarding Trauma-Oriented Youth Work

Working on Resources and Civil Responsibility Regarding Trauma-Oriented Youth Work educational module has through various techniques of art-therapy and imagination exercises enabled the participants to reveal their own resources and support systems.

Self-efficacy – an important developmental task that represents the result of an individual's needs being met or not. There are two needs that represent the foundation of resource building during the individual's lifetime. The first one is the need for emotional attachment with significant other, ever since birth, which later builds on the existence of social support system. The other, parallel to the first one, is the need to explore the environment and one's own capabilities. The balance between these parallel needs is the precondition for the ability to create one's own creative resources that have potential to be in the service of civil liability.

Their personal choices that can be shaped and directed toward specific activities were encouraged with the end goal of ensuring values of equality, non-discrimination, and non-violence for all members of the society. Special attention was given to the concept of self-efficacy.

The subject of civil liability is incorporated in the curriculum when working with youth and its task is to strengthen each individual's evaluation of all factors and circumstances that maintain or threaten his/her freedom, safety and rights, as well as safety, freedom and rights of others.

Mapping of resources and personal assets, as well as exercising neural network through imagination exercises that can be used as a self-support tool by every individual, are very important for the establishment of personal stabilization when it comes to potentially discriminating and retraumatizing situations. This process helps in creation of imaginary experiences that support body and its functions in reacting to the given context. Awareness exercises, and mapping and naming one's own resources that participants mutually exchange, become resources of the whole group and strengthen the atmosphere of trust and safety, as well as the awareness on personal, civil liability and the role of the community and society we live in.

In regards to thematic units, it was important to give the participants the opportunity to recognize the group as an internally and physically safe place that gathers adequate and available resources and support that are often left out in the wider context of local communities when it comes to confronting past and collective trauma of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society.

V - Facing with the Past and Memorialization

Facing with the Past and Memorialization educational module is focused on remembrance and memorialization culture and accompanied by training's team imagination exercise named Do you know where you are going? which prepared the participants for the visits to (un)marked memorial sites of suffering. This is how the participants reached the ways of thinking and feelings that appear during the visit to an emotionally important place.

This process represents personal effort of the participants on a joint research about the purpose and role of the memorial, and universal pain and respect towards the victims, no matter their name and origin.

Remembrance culture is directed towards building peace and as such it represents counterbalance to manipulation of the past and leaves space for a different remembrance culture.

In order to consciously step away from one-sided remembrance culture, it is necessary to awaken the ways we feel, interpret, and give purpose to various forms of remembrance and memorialization – places, objects, commemorative plaques, memorial rooms, cemeteries, dates, and commemorative events. To recognize and admit the suffering of others is very painful because it implies self-perception and overview of one's own contributions to the process of building a different remembrance culture. It is necessary to think over the ways we remember from a humane, civil perspective in order to detach ourselves from injustice and discrimination that we used to unknowingly approve or deny. Integrity in equality of victim acknowledgement implies accepting one's own responsibility in creating such a social atmosphere that encourages reconciliation process.



VI – Memorialization through Visiting (Un)Marked Sites of Suffering

During the implementation of *Memorialization through Visiting (Un)Marked Sites of Suffering* educational module, the participants visited some sites of suffering. It is doubtless that during that process they went through overwhelming and painful analysis of personal subjects and were faced with core and background of the omnipresent atmosphere of tensions and fear in all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By visiting the memorial sites, they made their voice and attitude heard –denial and glorification of a crime cannot be a path towards building peace and trust; only joint and continuous work can diminish the risks of transgenerational trauma transfer and prevent new trauma from happening.

The participants visited Ahimići, Bugojno, Kazani memorial site, Sarajevo, and Istočno Sarajevo and they honored the innocent victims. They talked to locals and witnesses of the unfortunate sufferings with the aim of recognizing the narratives that are present in these local communities. These sites, both unmarked and marked, speak a lot about the society they belong to.

By learning more about these sites and visiting them together, this group of young people has tried to bring back dignity and show respect to the victims of war crimes, wanting to stop victim discrimination and segregation that often take place on behalf of the innocent victims.

Bearing in mind that dealing with the past, and young people's attitude towards building or denying remembrance culture are some of the biggest opportunities or obstacles when it comes to conflict transformation; young people – the participants of the program – express their attitude and send a clear message by visiting the (un)marked sites of suffering. This is how they showed courage and mutual understanding at the same time. As a group, they demonstrate joint resistance to manipulation and instrumentalization of the crime and civil casualties.

“By admitting and remembering the suffering of the others, they stop being the others; they are given back their dignity by having back their human shape again.”

WAR OF THE MEMORY: Research on War Suffering and Memorial Sites in BiH, Centre for Nonviolent Action Sarajevo
– Belgrade, 2016



VII – Role of the Young in Creating Trauma Sensitive Approach

The final educational module emphasized the importance of reflection of each individual's role and responsibility in the process of shaping youth work as trauma-sensitive and supportive.

Practicing the acquired knowledge about trauma-sensitive approach in working with other young people was perceived a personal task by the participants in their contribution to building trauma-sensitive atmosphere in local communities all over BiH. They have created a safe place for themselves thanks to their devotion and hard work, and formed a group that represents their most important resource in personal processes and in multiplying and transferring acquired insights and knowledge to young people within the civil society organizations.



Young people in BiH have the potential to be active participants in social processes, capable of developing personal capacities in order to cope with risk factors, to strengthen their own resources, as well as the resources of the community. Educated young people have the opportunity and responsibility to stand against further transfer of transgenerational trauma deeply seeded in Bosnian-Herzegovinian society for much longer than these last 30 years. Trauma is a part of all the systems the young in Bosnia and Herzegovina have grown up, educated themselves, and lived in. Changes cannot be expected, nor commenced, without the existence and development of support system, and of adequate and adjusted trauma-sensitive programs in formal and informal education.

The program's evaluation has shown that there are no programs oriented towards building trauma-sensitive approach while working with the young.

The evaluation has proportionally also shown that there is no any significant support, nor adjusted education that could, through basic trauma-related work, enable the dialogue of the young, which would represent an opportunity to comprehend, integrate, and give new meaning to past experiences by encompassing and using all the diversities that the young usually bring into the program.

Conclusion: Trauma-Oriented Peace Work in BiH

Developing sensibility in regards to existence and consequences of collective, individual, and transgenerational trauma is necessary in post-conflict society, in all its social groups. Significant improvement in building trauma-sensitive environment is made by providing additional support to children and youth through education of professionals in the field of formal and informal education. This is how we can contribute to understanding *trauma* as a risk factor in personal growth and society's obstacle in building the atmosphere of trust and peace, unless it is processed and the experiences related to it are integrated.

Together We Develop Resources for the Future – Publication on Building Trauma-Sensitive Society is a product of the program implemented by Progres Association for Psychosocial Support and Better Future, Bosnia and Herzegovina in partnership with Wings of Hope Foundation, Germany, financed by *The Federal Foreign Office*, the foreign ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany, with a goal to gather all the participants' experiences and learned lessons when it comes to pioneering in the field of trauma-sensitive society building. We hope that this publication will find its use value and provide support to numerous teachers and youth workers in their effort to enrich and establish the principles of trauma-sensitive approach while working with the young.



The publication is directed towards empowering each individual's resources. It represents a tool that can be used while working with children and youth, but also adults. The data represented as results of the program affirm that acquired skills and knowledge can be practically applied. The participants of educational program in the field of education and helping professions have, during the past period, worked with more than 1000 users – children, youth, and colleagues – using the tools presented in the publication, while the participants of the program for representatives of youth organizations and organizations that work with the young have worked with nearly 500 young people all over BiH, using this program's methodology.

Trauma-oriented peace work in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be supported by learning about trauma and the impact it can have on a person, or whole society, if it is not processed. Working on integration and assigning new meaning to traumatic experiences contributes to building trauma-sensitive society.



Teacher Trainers of Educational Programs

Educational program for professionals in the field of education and helping professions



Ulrike Held, psychotherapist, trauma therapist, educator in the field of psych traumatology, trauma therapy and trauma pedagogy (zptn). She perfected herself by attending several educational programs (PITT with Luise Reddemann, EMDR, KreST model with Lutz Besser, structural dissociation with Ellert Nijenhuis). Ulrike has long-term experience in counseling and therapy for young people, as well as in conducting educational programs for teachers in schools in order to support lifelong learning in helping professions. She does individual treatments and leads support groups in her own private practice.



Regina Miehling has a degree in social pedagogy (FH) and trauma pedagogy (DeGPT), furthermore she practices alternative approaches to psychotherapy, teaches Psychotraumatology and supervises trauma-education (zptn); she has many years of experience in education and trauma-pedagogy. She works mostly in Germany for *Wings of Hope* Foundation, Deutschland, and focuses on seminars, training programs, and trauma-therapy. In addition to the above mentioned, she contributes to trauma-trainings in other countries as well, mostly in Iraq and Central America.



Anne van den Ouwelant is a freelance trainer for art-therapy and trauma-informed specialist in that area, and a cultural anthropologist. She is from the Netherlands. She cooperates with *Wings of Hope* Foundation and other partners from Europe and all over the world (Brazil, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina). She provides art-therapy and trauma-oriented support trainings, especially for teachers in the Netherlands. Current projects can be seen at www.annes.eu.



Lucija Lukić Holjan has a degree in psychology (Sarajevo), she is a psychotherapist of cognitive-behavioral orientation in supervision, teacher in the field of psychotraumatology, trauma-therapy, and trauma-pedagogy (ztpn); she has many years of experience in working with traumatized persons, and in a psychosomatic disorder treatment clinic. She also works for *Wings of Hope* Foundation, focusing mainly on seminars and trainings for psychotraumatology in Germany.



Peter Klentzan is a retired deacon, trauma counselor, trauma pedagogue (DeGT – German-speaking Society for Psychotraumatology), trauma therapist, therapy teacher and supervisor (zptn). He is a cofounder of *Wings of Hope* Foundation, longtime leader of Foundation's projects and trauma-center in Labenbachhof, Ruppolding; he is currently the head of Praxisinstitut Klentzan in Röhrmoos, Munich.



Jelena Kragulj is a graduate psychologist (University of Sarajevo) and an alternative practitioner for psychotherapy. She is trained in reality therapy and system constellation (DGfS). She has been working full-time in psychosomatic rehabilitation and acute clinics for ten years.



Educational program for representatives of youth organizations and organizations that work with the young



Ognjen Tadić has a degree in psychology and is being educated for psychotherapy (Transactional Analysis). He is a CEO of *Obrazovna Inicijativa* Association that provides mental health protection and services in the field of informal education. He is a certified assertive communication skills and emotional literacy trainer (*Psihopolis* Institute). He has many years of experience in non-governmental sector, especially in the area of social protection of children and youth, youth work, and community work, primarily as a volunteer and activist, but also as a facilitator, teacher-trainer, mentor, supervisor (of the counselors for those engaged in the Blue Phone in Bosnia and Herzegovina - online and telephone counselling for children and youth), and project coordinator/manager. Additionally, he is a trainer of critical thinking who participated in the creation of a program for encouragement and development of critical thinking in children and youth.



Mirjana Gavrić is a licensed Gestalt therapist, an integrative therapist for children and adolescents, and supervisor who graduated with a degree in Community Youth Work from Jonköping University (Universitet Jönköping), Sweden. She is currently at master's studies at Social Work Department, The Faculty of Political Science in Sarajevo. She participated in educations focused on impact of adolescent trauma. She has worked directly with children and youth in various programs for personal and experiential development within local communities ever since 2001, and has been actively engaged in psychotherapy since 2013. She was a part of the teams who participated in crisis intervention with children and families.



Martina Bock is a social pedagogue, mediator, trauma-pedagogue, counselor (German-Speaking Society for Psychotraumatology), psychotraumatology trainer, and trauma-related education supervisor (zptn - The Center for Psychotraumatology and Trauma Therapy Lower Saxony). Martina has many years of experience in working with the young and adults. She has worked as a project manager for foreign projects ever since 2011, and since 2017 she has been the executive director of *Wings of Hope* Foundation.



Azra Frlić was born in Sarajevo in 1987. In 2011 she earned her master's degree in psychology at Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo. After finishing her studies, she continued to expand her education with Gestalt psychotherapy program. She emphasizes how important informal education, dialogue, and dealing with the past are when working with the young. During 2019 she completed her participation in the training program for youth work expert associates organized by KULT Institute for Youth Development. She reckons youth work in BiH as a long-term goal that requires sensibility to youth needs, as well as dedication, and persistence. She has been a team member of *Progres* Association since 2012 and she is currently at the position of President of the Association.



Philip Sieg graduated from Theology Department at Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Germany, and finalized his master's studies with a thesis *Philosophy of Religions* at Cambridge University, UK. He started his doctoral thesis *Political Theories in Collective Memory and Conflict Transformation* in 2021 at Bundeswehr University. He has been a trainer in the field of peace education, mediation, and conflict transformation since 2011.

First-Generation Students who Successfully Passed the Education for Trauma Counselors and Educators

1. Alema Hodžić
2. Mateo Vukoja
3. Orhana Ćoralić
4. Alma Osmabegović
5. Marica Perišić
6. Dragana Pavlović
7. Alma Kudra
8. Mirjana Trifković
9. Senad Saračević
10. Sabina Arnaut Jahić
11. Ermina Pezerović
12. Azra Frlj
13. Renata Tešić
14. Đurđica Popovac
15. Mirjana Gavrić
16. Maja Zorić
17. Mirna Mežit
18. Mirela Jahić

First-Generation Participants of Educational Program for the Representatives of Youth Organizations Involving the Young

1. Kenan Kečanović
2. Anel Hotić
3. Emina Grošić
4. Anđela Čolić
5. Vladimir Dakić
6. Tijana Veselinović
7. Amila Tursunović
8. Hana Bulbulušić
9. Dejan Vukajlović
10. Milena Tomić
11. Senida Hasečić
12. Azra Mešković
13. Adna Kepeš
14. Emina Muranjковиć
15. Monika Bazina

Schools and Organizations, Partners in TOMR in BiH Project Realization

1. HO *International Forum of Solidarity – Emmaus*, Brijesnica Mala
2. *Saint Joseph Catholic School Center*, Sarajevo
3. *Mixed High School for Electrical Engineering and Woodworking*, Bihać
4. *Vladimir Nazor Education and Rehabilitation Center*, Sarajevo
5. *Tračak nade Children and Youth Developmental Disabilities Association*, Foča
6. *Secondary Hospitality, Trade and Tourism School*, Banja Luka
7. *DUGA Association*, Sarajevo
8. *Mehmed Handžić Elementary School*, Ilidža
9. *Obrazovna inicijativa Association*, Banja Luka
10. *The Bećirević Family*, Brčko
11. *28. Juni Secondary School*, Istočno Novo Sarajevo
12. *High School for Mechanical Engineering*, Prijedor
13. *Los Rosales Center for Children and Youth with Special Needs*, Mostar
14. *COR Center for Sustainable Development*, Bihać
15. *Dekameron Youth Development Center*, Ključ
16. *Nahla Center for Education & Research*, Bihać
17. *Zdravo da ste Association*, Banja Luka
18. *Pale Youth Council*, Pale
19. *Otaharin Centre for Integrative Inclusion of Roma Men and Women*, Bijeljina
20. *Jezero Ecological Association*, Šerići
21. *Desnek Youth Center*, Breza
22. *Informal Youth Organization*, Istočno Sarajevo
23. *Naša djeca (Our Children) Association for Children's Care and Rights Protection*, Zenica



About Progres Association for Psychosocial Support and Better Future

Progres (Eng. *Progress*) was, as a wordplay, founded as an initiative to support ideas that had been devotedly developed up to that moment by the participants, pioneers of the first peace activities in BiH.



Since the very beginning of its work, the Association has been directed towards building capacities to help and support youth and adults on the path of building their own opportunities and resources to improve life quality in BiH.

Azra Frlić, President of Progres Association

Over ten years ago, the idea of creating *Progres* Association, that would be serving society in need, was a common goal of the founders as the citizens of the country whose society had been directly exposed to war, and then helplessly and permanently continued to live with its consequences.

Being in contact with young people from all over the country, we witnessed that psychosocial needs of the society, and especially of the young, have been neglected, which has undoubtedly left severe consequences by impoverishing the quality of life for several generations. As it stands in the full name of our Association – Association for Psychosocial Support and a Better Future – support is indeed incorporated as our organization's and our work's fundamental value, both then when it was founded and equally today.

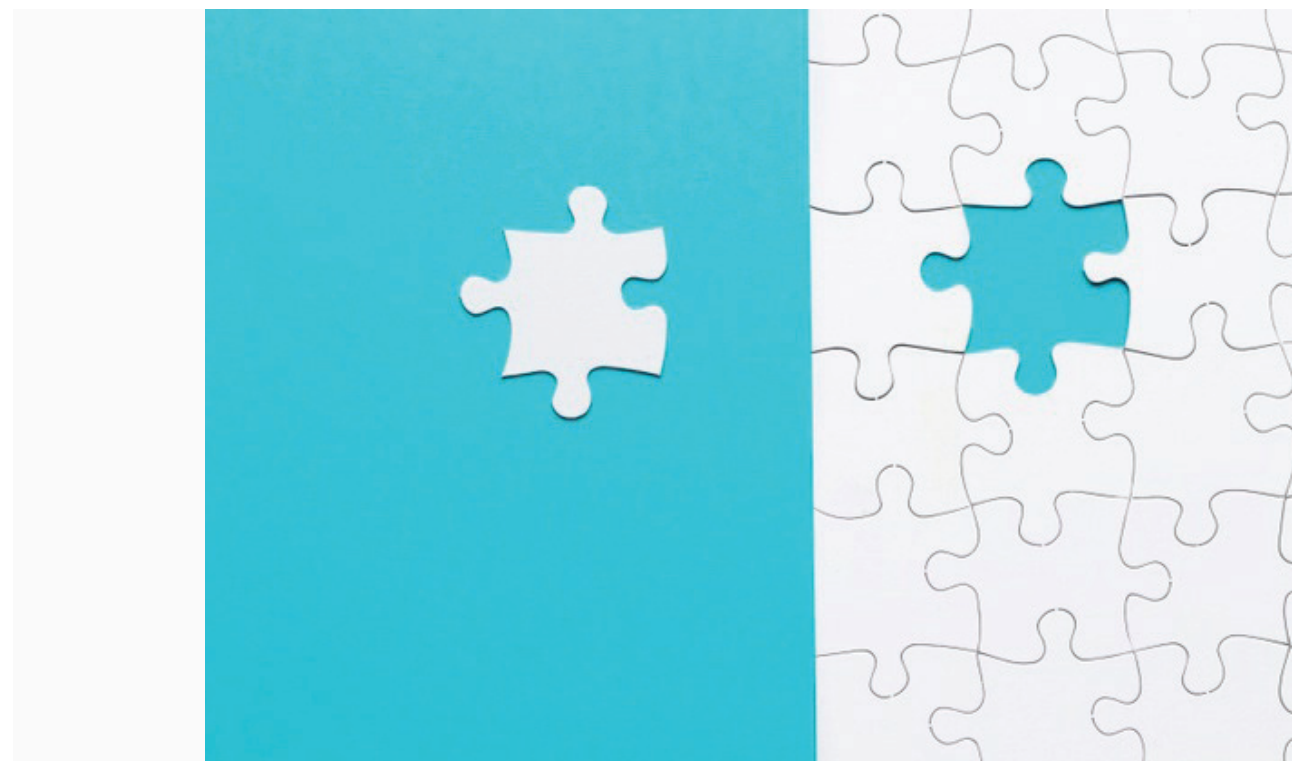
Support can be given by any one of us as individuals in many different ways, and it will represent a response to other individual's, group's, or community's needs. Every human being survives and lives by virtue of learning. We learn how to answer to our needs – fundamental, biological, social etc. – in order to grow and self-improve. Consequently, the society has its needs as well, and they also require learning. New needs of the society are being developed based on a situation.

The conclusion is that the precondition for society's development lies in lifelong learning. All the answers to society's needs arise from an individual's work and learning. In cooperation with Wings of Hope Foundation, Munich, we learn all over again how to offer adequate answers to Bosnian-Herzegovinian society's and primarily its youth's needs.

We look upon this process as our long-term assignment. Learning and growth can only be supported by life in a safe environment. This is why we believe that building social atmosphere of safety and sustainable peace has no alternative and represents our imperative.

Disclaimer

By contacting *Progres* Association at **info@progres-bh.ba** you become a part of the community that directs its resources towards applying trauma-sensitive approach while working with children and youth, and creating a safe, trauma-sensitive environment in civil society organizations and schools all over Bosnia and Herzegovina – the environment which contributes to building the atmosphere of trust and sustainable peace.



Progres

Udruženje za psiho-socijalnu
podršku i bolju budućnost



Sarajevo, december 2022.