

## ZISVAW PROGRAM 2006-2008

### Regional Anti-trafficking Mobilization for Prevention (RAMP) STAR Network of World Learning US\$100,000

#### Report Summary August 2006 - February 2007

**PROJECT GOAL:** On 1 August 2006, the STAR Network of World Learning launched the Regional Anti-Trafficking Mobilization for Prevention (RAMP) Project. RAMP is designed to strengthen regional community-level linkages focused on trafficking prevention. The project targets trafficking along the busy Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia cross-border routes through which victims from those three countries as well as others in the region regularly pass. In doing so, World Learning/STAR draws upon its experience organizing community-level anti-trafficking forums in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) and Croatia, as well as its 13-year history of supporting regional networking for women's political and economic empowerment in the Yugoslav Successor States.

#### PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On September 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, RAMP issued a call for applications for its small grant program. The call was widely published through various human rights networks across the Balkan region. The call for applications encouraged local women's organizations to submit proposals for innovative cross-border community mobilization projects on awareness raising and prevention of trafficking in human beings. By the closing date, 17 organizations submitted proposals. Some applicants had worked with STAR's earlier anti-trafficking projects, BATCOM and CTPA, but many were new. The Review Board recommended awarding grants to five of the 17 applicants. RAMP's grantees are:

**Women's Safe House, Podgorica, Montenegro, Grant amount: \$5,000**

Women's Safe House (WSH) Director, Ms. Ljiljana Raičević, has garnered international recognition for her anti-trafficking efforts, especially after speaking out publicly about the involvement of Montenegrin public officials in trafficking women for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Amnesty International USA honored her with its 2006 Ginetta Sagan Award, whose

purpose is “to recognize and assist women who are working to protect the liberty and lives of women and children in areas where human rights violations are widespread.”

WSH will support a seminar on trafficking for representatives of employment agencies and bureaus, labor inspectors and police officers from Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia and BiH. The seminars aim to bring together representatives from these different state agencies and different countries in order to focus attention on the problem of trafficking women for sexual exploitation. The specific goal of the project is to raise awareness of trafficking among government representatives with tourism-related responsibilities, especially in regions where tourism is a main economic driver.

**Women’s Association MAJA, Bratunac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Grant amount: \$4,999**



MAJA will reach out to Serbian communities on the other side of the Drina River – the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Their aim is to replicate the success of earlier awareness-raising activities supported by STAR’s BATCOM project. This new RAMP-supported activity will connect MAJA with small communities in Serbia, specifically Bajina Bašta and Ljubovija. For that purpose, MAJA signed a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with local NGOs “Drina” in Bajina Bašta and Women’s Association “Vila” in Ljubovija. The goal of the MoU between MAJA and its partners is to organize two-day anti-

trafficking awareness seminars for representatives of local communities and authorities.

During December 2006, the first seminar took place in Bajina Bašta. Community participants issued an invitation for MAJA’s representatives to conduct an on-the-spot anti-trafficking workshop for youth at the local primary and secondary schools. So, immediately following their seminar with local leaders and without advance notice, MAJA went to the schools to speak about trafficking. The importance of the workshops is demonstrated by the fact that more than 30 pupils participated at the impromptu workshops, after school hours. Educators from both schools requested additional trafficking-related materials as well as copies of movies with trafficking-related themes that MAJA had shown them.



MAJA’s second seminar, held in Ljubovija, had higher attendance, with 23 representatives of various local institutions present. Reports of numerous cases of illegal immigration and smuggling of people were offered “officially” by a representative of a local police. The officer specifically named an official border crossing at Mali Zvornik as a place used by smugglers.

**Women's Association Vukovar, Vukovar, Croatia, Grant amount: \$4,640**

The grant awarded grows out of a cross-border workshop held by Women's Association Vukovar (WAV) in 2006 and involves cross-border cooperation with the NGOs "LARA" from Bijeljina (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and "ESPERANCA" from Novi Sad (Vojvodina, Serbia). WAV's current project, titled "Anti-trafficking Campaign on the Balkans Route," is a public information effort that specifically aims at raising awareness of the local population in the three countries, with an additional focus on calls for action. The message of the campaign will be: "Recognize the victim – we can all help." It calls on the local population to open their eyes, to recognize victims of trafficking and to report what they see to authorities. In addition to identifying victims, such messages also pose a challenge to traffickers' common practice of using (and therefore abusing) the local popas "shelter providers" for overnight accommodation of victims. Their project also seeks to support local informal women's groups in border areas.

**Ključki Biseri, Ključ, Bosnia and Herzegovina Grant amount: \$4,910**

The organization's name translates to "Pearls from Ključ." Recently, young people from the town of Ključ used STAR Network and Zonta support to create and perform plays that raise the theme of trafficking to a diverse audience in an accessible way. Their new project, called "Prevention Performance on Tour," aims to extend these efforts and raise awareness of the risks of trafficking in the border communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Due to the slow process of collecting parental approval, as well as other necessary travel documents for minor members of Ključki Biseri, the organization had to postpone its activities until spring 2007.

**Women's Association Derventa, Derventa, Bosnia and Herzegovina Grant amount: \$5,000**

The Women's Association Derventa new project, "*Partnership and Cross-border Cooperation for Combating Trafficking in BiH and Croatia*," builds on cooperation established during cross-border workshops implemented by the BATCOM project in 2005-2006. The project brings together women from Derventa, the NGO "Budućnost" in Modriča (BiH), women from Slavonski Brod (Croatia), law enforcement bodies, centers for social work and education institutions on both sides of the border. The project has just begun its implementation phase and has reported one small but important development: Mr. Atif Sirotanović, a high-ranking police officer from the BiH State Border Service, has created a small citizens' group in Breza (central BiH) to initiate awareness raising activities in that region.

**Roma Women's Association "Better Future," Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

"Better Future" also applied for RAMP funding. Unfortunately, due to limited resources in RAMP's small grant program, "Better Future" did not receive funding. However, the difficulties faced by the Roma community have received intensive public attention recently. Given this climate of public interest in Roma issues, the RAMP Coordinator presented "Better Future's" proposal to the US Embassy in Sarajevo with a recommendation for funding; the Embassy is considering the recommendation. If funded, this will mark the first time that a Roma women's association has taken an active role in the prevention and raising awareness of human trafficking in the Roma population. Representatives of "Better Future" will be invited to

participate in the RAMP Regional Anti-trafficking Conference in May 2007 and lead a special discussion on the problems of human trafficking among the Roma population.

### **Regional Conference Preparation**

RAMP's Regional conference will take place from 21-24 May 2007 on the island of Krk in Croatia. The STAR Network team is developing the agenda and participant list. The Conference will feature an opening speech by Carol Bellamy, President and CEO of World Learning and former Director of UNICEF. The Conference will also allow discussion between participants from all four countries in which RAMP works – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. Discussions will focus on lessons learned, innovative project models, obstacles and ways to further cross-border cooperation on prevention of human trafficking. The Regional Conference will also open the floor for a specific discussion aimed at the prevention of human trafficking among the Roma population.

The last day of the Regional Conference will allow time for the initial meeting of the Modules Working Group that will create the advocacy modules to be used by Zonta clubs worldwide to address trafficking issues in their own countries. These modules will offer approaches for clubs' service and advocacy that can guide local anti-trafficking action on legal reform and implementation, public awareness, and economic opportunities for trafficking victims. The initial meeting will define the goals, propose the content of the modules and will also result in a detailed work plan and timeline for completion.

### **Raising awareness on human trafficking and violence against women**

The first Women's Festival, organized by Foundation CURE, was held in Sarajevo from 14-17 September 2006. RAMP organized an anti-trafficking information desk, arranged the screening of several anti-trafficking movies and the distribution of trafficking-related informational materials produced by BATCOM and RAMP partner organizations. The "info desk," located at the entrance to the Museum hall where the festival was held, drew a great deal of attention from festival participants and visitors.

In December 2006, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Government, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), organized a roundtable where trafficking of *local* (i.e., Bosnian) victims was discussed. Acknowledgement of the problem of domestic trafficking victims is still relatively rare and was an important focus of the BATCOM project. The RAMP Coordinator (who is the first Bosnian to lead an anti-trafficking effort funded by an international donor) continued STAR's commitment to this important issue at the roundtable. The fact that the BiH government and IOM, which are implementing a major USAID-funded anti-trafficking program, devoted direct attention to this problem is a validation of the BATCOM and RAMP sustained advocacy and attention.

Participants divided into working groups on prevention, health and social protection and prosecution. The RAMP Coordinator, as well as BATCOM and RAMP local partner organization representatives, participated in the roundtable discussion and working groups and contributed their experiences, especially in the area of prevention. The discussion resulted in several documents that have been forwarded to State institutions for further development.

### **Conclusion**

During the past six months RAMP and its partners have begun their efforts to prevent trafficking in the region through awareness raising, advocacy and information exchange. RAMP works with partners from throughout the region, from all sectors (NGOs, government, law enforcement, diplomatic staff, social workers and others) at all levels (local, national, regional and international). RAMP reaches out to communities that other anti-trafficking initiatives often miss and helps link these communities with resources and partners.

### **ZISVAW PROGRAM**

The ZISVAW Program is a Zonta International program, funded by contributions to the Zonta International Foundation's **ZISVAW Fund**.