



557 West Randolph Street ■ Chicago, Illinois 60661-2206 USA  
T: (312) 930-5848 ■ F: (312) 930-0951 ■ www.zonta.org



## **INTERNATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM**

*A Zonta International program, funded by the Zonta International Foundation*

### **2004-2006 PROJECTS**

The International Service Program is a Zonta International program, funded by the Zonta International Foundation. Contributions to the Foundation's International Service Fund provide the monies necessary to support crucial projects to benefit women. In the 2004-2006 Biennium, three projects will be funded by your contributions to the Zonta International Foundation, International Service Fund. Continuing projects include Anti-Trafficking Community Mobilization Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (STAR Network), and Afghanistan: Improving the Lives of Women (Afghanistan Institute of Learning and UNICEF). A new project is Mata Masu Dubara, MicroCredit and Health Education for HIV/AIDS-Affected Women in Niger (CARE International).

### **The Bosnia and Herzegovina Anti-Trafficking Community Mobilization Project**

#### **FUNDING**

US\$300,000 to STAR Network of World Learning

#### **THE NEED**

It is estimated that in 2001 at least 700,000, and possibly as many as four million people worldwide were bought, sold, transported and held against their will in slave-like conditions. This modern form of slavery, or *trafficking* in persons, uses threats, intimidation and violence to force victims to engage in sex acts or to labor under conditions comparable to slavery for the traffickers' financial gain. The nature of this crime – underground, often under-acknowledged – contributes to the inability to pin down the number of people who are victimized by traffickers each year. The overwhelming majority of victims are women and children.

Trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation is a lucrative global industry involving millions of dollars and thousands of damaged lives. Trafficked women and girls report repeated violent rapes, unplanned pregnancies, beatings, torture and other sexual abuse by clients and traffickers as well as serious reproductive health illnesses. Addressing trafficking is an urgent human rights and public health priority.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) reports approximately 1,000 of its residents alone are trafficked annually, and many more individuals are transited across its borders, especially from neighboring Serbia, or brought in from neighboring countries such as Moldova, Ukraine, and Romania to work in its bars and brothels.

Despite political, social, and economic barriers, Bosnian authorities have established a national action plan. They are cooperating with international organizations and NGOs, and taking preliminary steps toward combating the problem. No law specifically prohibits trafficking; the state and local governments are preparing a new law under the national action plan, and with international assistance, an anti-trafficking strike force has recently been established. These actions give criminals more incentive to seek their victims within Bosnia; as a

result the trafficking of BH residents is expected to rise. Meanwhile, the international organizations and NGOs present in BH lead most of the anti-trafficking efforts, and increased numbers of domestic victims cannot be accommodated by the local NGOs.

## THE PROJECT

The STAR Network Bosnia and Herzegovina Anti-Trafficking Community Mobilization project (BATCOM) was launched in 2002 with funding from the Zonta International Foundation International Service Fund.

### Project Goal

The goal of the BATCOM Project is to strengthen the capacity of BH women to lead community mobilization campaigns to prevent trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation, and to generate maximum levels of local involvement from health officials, police, teachers, cultural workers, religious leaders, and youth groups. The project addresses both *policy advocacy* – for the education of public officials in designing enforceable laws and policies that stop trafficking, respond compassionately to victims, and punish offenders – and *local prevention* – through vigorous community education directed at young people, families, and schools.



### 2002-2004 Progress

In the 2002-2004 Biennium, BATCOM made significant progress in its efforts to address the issue of trafficking in BH by:

- ❑ Advocating for change
  - BATCOM staff contributed to a research report issued by Harvard University (USA) in April 2003. *Promoting Effective Prosecutions and Convictions of Traffickers in Persons: Assessment for the Legal and Political Challenges* indicates that the primary obstacle in combating trafficking is the lack of coordination and communication between all players in anti-trafficking activities.
  - BATCOM project staff is working to increase communication between organizations committed to preventing trafficking.
  - BATCOM staff advocated for two national policy initiatives related to trafficking, the National Plan for Action and Military and Police Code of Conduct. A National Action Plan has now been established.
- ❑ Supporting local efforts
  - As part of *local prevention* efforts, BATCOM provided nine grants to support local non-governmental women's organizations in the prevention of trafficking. The grants, ranging from US\$3,720 to US\$5,000, enable these NGOs to implement prevention and education projects on trafficking in their rural communities through workshops and a variety of other media.
- ❑ Conducting community education.
  - Conducted a seminar for journalists on trafficking, "Basic Media Training for the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings."
  - Began development of a training program for police academy cadets and students of criminology as a way of developing sustainable long-term communication and possible future practice. The program trains officers to identify and provide assistance to individual victims of trafficking.

For additional information on the progress of this Project, visit [www.zonta.org](http://www.zonta.org).

### 2004-2006 Project Objectives

Local prevention activities and public advocacy efforts are well underway and beginning to make an impact. Yet the process of change requires persistence. The STAR Network will build on their 2002-2004 efforts to develop

sustainable networks and effective policies to combat trafficking in the 2004-2006 Biennium. They will focus on efforts to:

- ❑ Expand public awareness of BH as a country of origin for trafficking, not only a country of transit, through research, additional partnerships with local non-governmental organizations to reach more rural communities and through better-educated local media and authorities (police and social service providers). They will award additional grants to local non-governmental organizations to support these activities.
- ❑ Target specific advocacy efforts toward the BH government and international bodies to make prevention of trafficking a priority.
- ❑ Develop specific prevention programs as an integral part of the National Plan for Action and link BH women's NGOs with economic development and education programs for the benefit of young rural women at risk for trafficking.
- ❑ Expand communication and information exchange among anti-trafficking NGOs in the region by developing a regional information network, initiating a Web site on trafficking for BH NGOs to promote their work, activities and plans, and creating a regular newsletter for distribution to those working on anti-trafficking in the region.

### **STAR NETWORK of WORLD LEARNING**

The STAR Network of World Learning provides encouragement, technical assistance and financial support to locally led initiatives that advance women's economic and political leadership in the post-Yugoslav region. STAR (Strategies, Training, Advocacy, Resources) brings to this project more than nine years of respected, effective work with women leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. STAR has supported over 150 women's organizations, combining crisis service with public policy advocacy and providing more than \$1.5 million in small grants. The STAR Network has significantly accelerated cross-border working relationships among women leaders in the region, resulting in development of a practical model that truly links local action with national policy change and regional collaboration.

The STAR Network operates within World Learning, founded in 1932 as The US Experiment in International Living. World Learning has built a reputation as one of the world's leading global education and development organizations, with programs in over 90 countries on six continents. It is the only international organization with both academic and project capabilities dedicated to promoting international education, social justice and world peace.

### **RATIONALE**

*Trafficking must be challenged worldwide. Although trafficking has received increasing international attention since 1994, and the leaders of BH have taken initial measures to combat the problem, many challenges still remain. The majority of international donor funding for anti-trafficking efforts in the country has been directed to non-BH women with only limited funding directed toward rural areas where BH women have been forced into trafficking through severe economic hardship and lack of alternatives.*

*The 2004-2006 BATCOM Project will strengthen the foundation established in 2002-2004 for a sustainable local initiative that will be a model to neighboring countries, the region and international networks. This project demonstrates the ability of local leadership to take positive action on a devastating global problem. In addition to the initiatives to prevent trafficking, the project empowers new women leaders by strengthening the capacity of Bosnian women to lead their own community mobilization campaigns.*

*This is an opportunity for Zonta International/Zonta International Foundation to solidify support for this new generation of Bosnian women, whose skills in leadership across ethnic and political borders are surely building a pathway to a more peaceful world.*