



**INCLUSIVE
SECURITY**

**AGENCY FOR GENDER EQUALITY
Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees
Bosnia and Herzegovina**



Localization of Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

Case Study of Six Local Governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Contents

- Introduction..... 2**
- Human Security from a Gender Lens..... 3**
- Integrating Human Security into the WPS Agenda Including NAPs 3**
- Bosnia and Herzegovina Case Study..... 6**
 - Examples..... 9**
 - East Ilidza 9
 - Vlasenica 9
 - Current initiatives 10
 - Regional cooperation..... 10
 - Challenges in implementation 10
- New Security Threats and Challenges 10**
 - Floods.....10**
 - Migrations11**
 - Conclusion11**

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“Human security is first and foremost about people feeling safe, secure and able to live to their full potential. Freedom from fear, a life without fear from violence or any sort of threat is the cardinal condition for human development second only to the right to live”.
President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia

Introduction

Human security moves away from traditional military strength and focuses on a people-centered view of security, specifically by addressing the everyday safety of populations. In the 1990s, the evolving concept of human security shifted the emphasis from security of states to security of individuals, emphasized the obligations of states, and recognized that security issues cross national boundaries and involve non-state actors. It required accountability for human rights violations and a multidimensional response in conflict and its aftermath.

Today’s pressing security threats are varied and include a number of interstate issues including insurgency, terrorism, and civil warfare. To effectively protect citizens in this complex environment, countries must prioritize new and evolving threat origins and focus more on safety of individuals.

Sixteen years after the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 1325, it is high time the international community leverage human security to promote gender equality and empower women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Using a human-centric framework has real potential for strengthening the critical links between development, equality, and security. It provides a comprehensive, realistic picture of security, one that recognizes that access to health, education, shelter, economic opportunity, transparent governance, and justice are all essential to individual’s wellbeing and prosperity¹.

¹ Human Security in Theory and Practice; Human Security Unit, United Nations

Human Security from a Gender Lens

Gender-sensitive implementation of human security, particularly in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, can improve the lives of women and girls by ensuring access to resources and opportunities, securing agency and empowerment, and protecting human rights. A lack of understanding of the differences between men and women's security needs has resulted in women's exclusion from decision-making and in the neglect of their needs and priorities in peace building and reconstruction efforts. Ensuring gender equality through human security is critical if issues of violence against women are to be recognized and effectively addressed. In addition, research points out to the clear link between women's increased participation in peace and security decision-making and sustainability of peace accords.²

Security issues that affect women and other vulnerable groups in local communities are rarely taken into account in the formulation of local security policies and programs. There are several reasons why this occurs. First, women are not sufficiently informed of their security needs and how they differ from their male counterparts. Local government officials and security sector representatives rarely perceive security problems from a gender perspective, exacerbating this challenge.

Second, women are chronically under-represented in local governance structures, and therefore are rarely in a position to make decisions on security issues. Women are vastly underrepresented in major municipal institutions, and rarely chair or participate in

² Use Human Security To Promote Gender Equality, by Carolyn Hannan, Former Director of the United Nations' Division for the Advancement of Women, Associate Professor, University of Lund

relevant Commissions in local legislatures. The exceptions are municipal commissions for gender equality; while women constitute a majority of seats on these commissions, they are often unaware of the link between gender and security issues unless the focus is exclusively on domestic violence.

Genuine communal safety can be achieved only if women have a meaningful role in local decision-making bodies. Women's needs and perspectives also should be included when identifying local security priorities. Consultations should be organized to engage women from marginalized communities as well as victims of violence and discrimination to ensure their priorities are integrated into relevant policy formulation. These actions will empower women to exercise their agency articulating their security interests and to mobilizing resources to address their priorities and needs.

Integrating Human Security into the WPS Agenda Including NAPs

High-impact National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security (NAPs) require a clear, holistic understanding of how different societies define peace and security. Inclusive Security has pioneered a high-impact framework aimed to insure all citizens benefit from participation in peace and security agenda; it emphasizes political will, accountability, coordination, and resourcing as four components of an effective NAP³.

By emphasizing human security, the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has used the NAP as a platform to achieve meaningful change at the community level. The Plan has facilitated a

³ Inclusive Security supported the Agency for Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to design second NAP – first in the world that introduced Human Security as one of key pillars.

move away from a traditional, militarized concept of national security to focus on civilian safety and protection from all forms of daily intimidation and threats. Specifically, the Agency for Gender Equality of B&H worked with local government and civil society actors to develop Local Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security (LAPs) in six pilot municipalities. These strategies address women's daily security concerns; these include protection from gender-based violence and human trafficking, access to legal protection, education, healthcare, natural and economic resources, as well as implications of environmental and infrastructure concerns such as recent floods, landmines, street lighting, and public transportation.

These initiatives are defining local priorities for women and addressing critical challenges to their broader societal participation. This is an exciting innovation in the field, demonstrating that UN Resolution 1325 can positively impact women and girls in communities. It is too early to ascertain the exact depth and breadth of impact. Still, there are already strong qualitative examples of the difference Local Action Plans can make.

One such example centers around Ms. Vinka Berjan, President of the Gender Committee in the Istocna Ilidza municipality. As a dedicated champion of gender equality she has cultivated support for these issues at the highest levels of local governance, including the local mayor. Such officials are critical allies in advancing this agenda as they often dictate program and funding priorities. In Ms. Berjan's community, many rural women struggle with overwhelming economic and social challenges and requested assistance from local authorities. Municipal representatives struggled to respond; they had no framework to help individuals, but only organized NGOs and similar associations. The women were advised to and supported in

establishing an association called "Wake Up!" They started to sell their homemade food products, gaining a glimpse of so much needed economic sustenance. Still, they were constantly afraid of being punished or driven away by the municipal inspection or police. Ms. Berjan advocated tirelessly to these officials, requesting that they allow the women to continue with their sales until they could find a more suitable space for their business. Municipal authorities ultimately provided the women with a permanent sales area.



Sales area provided for homemade products of women association "Wake Up!"

Furthermore, revisions in certain eligibility criteria were made to enable these women to take advantage of agricultural development incentives in the annual budget. Previously, individuals who wished to take advantage of the aforementioned criteria had to demonstrate proof of property ownership. This is often difficult for local women and deterred many from applying. Due to the LAP development process and Ms. Berjan's strategic advocacy, these requirements were changed; if women could prove they lived in a local household, they were eligible for the incentive. The local women of "Wake Up!" submitted an application for the grant and won best proposal. They were given resources that enabled them to exhibit and sell their handmade products. Eventually, the group was also able to purchase greenhouses which currently employ 30 women.

The existence of a LAP has had similar impact in Rogatica, a small, rural community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Women often live below the poverty line with limited access to food in the surrounding villages. Through support from CARE International, approximately 20 of the most vulnerable women in the area received resources to design and implement business plans, as was outlined in the LAP.

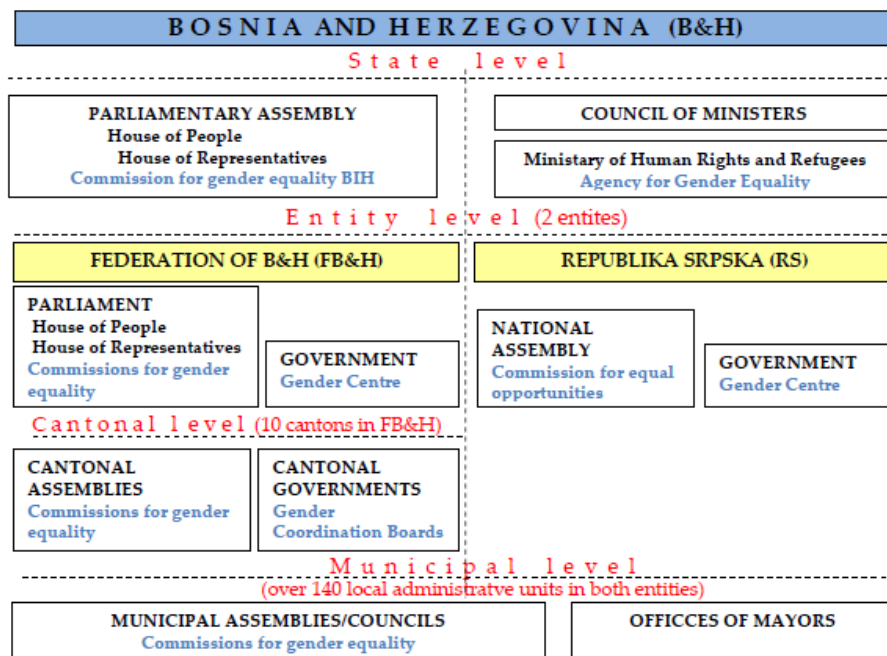
In rural areas, LAPs have drawn attention to economic insecurity as a major security threat for women. Other types of insecurity (physical violence, inadequate street lighting or public transport, lack of participation of women in decision-making positions, etc) have also been identified through designing and implementing these Plans. However, additional research and analysis needs to occur to determine how LAPs are impacting these issues.

Three new LAPs are currently being developed in the following municipalities: Maglaj, Prnjavor and Ljubuski. Maglaj is an area badly affected by catastrophic floods in 2015 whose

consequences are still felt. In addition, the municipality is home to a number of different ethnic and religious communities. Prnjavor is municipality with 15 national minorities.

These realities include a number of overlapping security concerns that will need to be addressed through the LAPs. The Agency for Gender Equality will continue to play an important role in monitoring and supporting LAP implementation as municipalities have limited financial resources and human capacity.

Bosnia and Herzegovina’s governance structure is multi-tiered and incredibly complicated. As a result, activities that vertically connect the different levels of government, from the national to the local, are crucial. Without these connections, state-level policy makers can create policies without direct contact with and input from end-users and key beneficiaries. This scenario reduces the likelihood of impact. LAPs can bridge this gap and help policymakers create measurable, well-informed strategies for change across the country.



Governance structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina Case Study

The first Bosnian NAP produced several qualitative examples of impact. However, stakeholder analysis of the Plan emphasized one key question: How has the structure and design of the National Action Plan, and its implementation, benefiting citizens in local communities across the county?

The NAP was a national-level strategy that established goals, output, and indicators in a manner that was far removed from the actual beneficiaries. The gap was clear and in 2012 policymakers explored how to better use the NAP to achieve local impact. During this time period, the UN system was simultaneously emphasizing the concept of human security as a tool for stability. The Agency for Gender Equality and NAP Coordination Board agreed to use a human security framework to strengthen NAP implementation. The UN Women country office had funding to implement a UNSCR 1325-related project in cooperation with the Agency and a NGO called “Zena BiH (B&H Women)” from Mostar. Together, the three stakeholders designed a modality for realizing the NAP at the community level: Local Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security (LAPs).

This process was happening in parallel to efforts focused on integrating human security into the country’s second NAP. By 2014 the revised NAP included a pillar exclusively focused on achieving human security for all citizens. With funding available for FIGAP programme⁴, the Agency for Gender Equality decided to support realization of the new NAP by supporting NGOs and helping localization of women, peace and security agenda. Many of these efforts resulted

in LAPs or set the precondition for LAPs to develop. Examples include: organizing trainings on UN Resolution 1325 and the NAP for local government authorities, supporting associations of the police women, facilitating cooperation between local stakeholders (police, centers for social work, schools, local governments and NGOs), and advocating for the integration of security issues into local gender action plans. Some municipalities have adopted or planned to develop local gender action plan, as a broader local policy for equality between women and men in all areas of public and private life; integration of security issues into these plans was more appropriate solution than designing new LAPs that specifically address women and security issues.

To further engrain support for LAP development, the Agency for Gender Equality explicitly used the European Charter for Gender Equality at the Local Level. The policy has one article focused on security in the local community, and directly linked the differing security needs of men and women to communal stability. The Charter itself raised awareness among Agency staff and other relevant stakeholders around the concrete connections between gender and security, especially at the ground level. Important examples include economic security and infrastructure development. The Charter also addresses the issue of refugee camps, which has become a timely issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Agency for Gender Equality took the lead in developing the methodology to design LAP. They were well-positioned for the task as they possessed strong connections with local NGOs and civil society leaders. NGO partners used their experiences and links to the local communities – including Offices of the mayor and local assemblies, other local authorities, and rest of civil society; combined with the

⁴ FIGAP programme - Financial Mechanism for Implementation of Gender Action Plan in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010-2016) supported by group of donors

Agency's national-level authority and prestige, municipal actors began to see of LAPs as a joint initiative of government and non-government actors that would benefit broader community. The Agency proposed a mechanism of an official MOU that was signed between the Mayor, the Agency and NGO.

In each LAP municipality, the Agency first sent a letter on behalf of the B&H Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees to emphasize high-level political support for the Plan's development. Each mayor then appointed a contact person from his/her office. A baseline study of security, from gender perspective, was undertaken in each community, with significant technical support from the Agency in development of the baseline methodology.

Baseline studies, as a first step in preparation for a LAP often have the following components:

1. General data about the municipality (economic, territory, ethnic and other population data);
2. Desk review with gender analyses of existing legal and strategic documents in a municipality, and existing programs, projects, and activities undertaken by local civil society includes
3. Interviews with representatives of local government, social services, primary and secondary schools, police, and NGOs. In some cases focus groups with citizens were organized in order to discuss and assess their ordinary security issues and needs, and
4. Recommendations on how to develop LAP objectives and goals to improve security of the community

The baseline helped policy makers identify relevant information around access to the police, social services, and educational institutions. Local stakeholders including NGOs were given

specific questionnaires to fill out. These entities were often well-connected to the local government and had a more comprehensive picture of gender issues at the local level. They were fierce advocates for LAP design, and used their influence to build support for these Plans in a way that the Agency, as a state level institution simply couldn't.

LAPs are considerably easier to adopt when the municipality is home to an active Gender Equality Commission. Not surprisingly, the most effective Gender Equality Commissions are located in areas with a robust civil society presence and particularly active women's organizations. It facilitated collaboration and synergy among relevant actors and entities.

Baseline studies identified and proved a number of differences between men and women's security needs in local communities. Typically, the baseline study was led by the local organizations and individuals, and on occasion when the resources were not available, staff of the Agency led the effort.

Following the baseline, the Agency helped organize trainings/workshops for all the actors who were included in the process. Training participants consistently included both municipal officers and civil society representatives. The workshop theme was "What is gender-sensitive security?" The first training module introduced participants to the concept of gender and gender mainstreaming followed by a comprehensive overview of the institutional and legal framework for gender equality in BiH. Participants then delved deeper into the connection between gender and security at the local level. Finally, participants were introduced to UNSCR 1325 and the NAP and discussed how their baseline study informed both frameworks. Participants discussed these in small groups and were encouraged to share as

many concrete examples as possible to demystify the aforementioned concepts and better understand their use in daily life. From these small groups, at least three persons were selected to draft a LAP (one representative of local police, one from the center for social work, and one municipal official). The three appointees worked closely with an NGO representative and the Agency for Gender Equality to develop the draft LAP.

The Agency provided a range of technical services to help identify impact- level goals and corresponding outcomes and activities as well as develop measurable metrics to gauge progress. This process represented a water-shed moment; for many of these policy makers and shapers, it was the first time they developed a local policy with specific solutions to community based problems, rather than being handed a donor directive. This is an important point – the process of creation of LAPs itself, consultative and inclusive of so many local voices, brought innovation and inspiration to all involved.

Deciding on a LAP's priorities wasn't always easier. The Plan's authors would first examine the baseline study to note key security issues and/or trends. They then discussed how to concretize those priorities, propose news ones, and circle back to the original training group for additional inputs. This process identified the following communal issues;

1. Violence in the family
2. Peer violence
3. Economic insecurity
4. Infrastructure problems (street lighting; lack of public transportation; access to schools)
5. Issues with stray dogs
6. Special focus on de-mining, (though identified as a priority in only one municipality)

Police presence in local communities was another notable issue that arose. Many stakeholders felt that there were simply not enough police officers to effectively protect citizens in local communities, particularly women. For example, there were no female police officers in Police Agency in Vlasenica; while some women were employed as civil servants working in administration, there was no representation in decision making positions. Underrepresentation of women in security sector and managerial positions could be found in other local communities as well.

Many also thought that lack of political will inside the municipal authorities is a big obstacle for all local policies, particularly those related to gender issues, including LAPs. Stakeholders agreed that the best way was mainstreaming gender concepts into the documents and planning at the local government level, and activation of local gender commissions. However, lack of knowledge and understanding is a key problem as these were mostly new concepts. Therefore, education and capacity building of key municipal actors was seen as the most important starting point. This was a big opportunity for opening cooperation between municipal structures, especially police and social services and civil society – seeing a benefit of multi-sectoral approach and including of NGOs resources and capacities in local gender mainstreaming processes.

After verification and review of the final draft LAP, contact person from the Municipality was then charged with lobbying the mayor and building political support for the Plan's passage. On occasion, the mayor showed interest to participate in part of the workshop to learn more about the process and feel committed to the outcome from the outset. Occasionally, the Agency would leverage its political clout and

influence to push more for the Plan adoption when needed.

Following approval from the local mayor, the LAP was formally presented and adopted at the session of the respective Municipal Council. In East Ilidza, it was introduced by the contact person from Municipality, Ms. Vinka Berjan; in other municipalities the contact persons did not feel competent or were not at the position to present it themselves so they requested Agency officials to come to Vlasenica or Ilijas and introduce the LAP draft.

Where support for the LAP was low, Agency officials emphasized that the framework was an appealing tool to international donors looking to do more community-based work. The Plans were designed to be one to two-year strategies, and crafted in a way where they can continue to be guiding strategic documents over many more years.

The Agency used FIGAP programme funding to support LAPs design. UN Women and OSCE in B&H also provided support to the process.

Examples

East Ilidza

In this municipality, the overwhelming priority was economic empowerment of women, with a special focus on victims of violence. This was recognized as a critical precondition for larger-scale empowerment. The municipality funded the space and market stalls for the hand-made of food and souvenirs that local women produced jointly. Using the LAP, Ms. Vinka Berjan was able to mobilize political support to allow for this project to be implemented in a safe space. Prior to the project's launch, the very same women were making and selling these products but were forced to conduct business on dangerous roads. Moreover, as the women did

not have a concentrated place of business, they were under the constant surveillance of local police. By granting them a separate physical space that was safe and secured, some women were able to increase their income. Equally important, the move created the conditions for a safe and productive economic participation of a vulnerable group that also enhanced their own physical safety and mental well-being.



Women selling hand-made products in safe and secured space

Vlasenica

Here, a workshop was organized focusing on the specific steps required to address violations of Law on Protection from Domestic Violence.- The target group included officials in municipal institutions including the Center for Social Work, Gender Equality Commission, Police, as well as a sizeable contingent of local women. They developed a brochure with photos and pictures instructing the women with specific steps on how to report violence. Prior to this, many women had no knowledge of their rights or how to obtain legal recourse if their rights were violated. Trainers were the Agency staff, local staff from the Center for Social Work, and the local NGO who partook in the original training.

Current initiatives

Using the same methodology, three new LAPs are currently being developed in cooperation with Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Agency continues to play a crucial role in this process. Targeted municipalities are Maglaj, Prnjavor and Ljubuski, where OSCE has its field offices. OSCE can influence to adopt more LAPs in coming years without much money, using the expertise of the Agency staff, but also in cooperation with local OSCE offices, as they have direct link and respect in such local communities.

Regional cooperation

The Agency shared experience on UNSCR 1325 localization with other countries in the region. A result of this regional cooperation was adoption of LAP in the City of Nis (Serbia). This was part of the regional effort building on the “Balkan Region”⁵ work, where the Agency early on had signed an MOU with the City of Nis, as part of the “networking of the cities of gender equality” (cities in the region who have signed and adapted the European charter for equality of women and men in local life). The main contact person was Ms. Jelena Zaric, Deputy Secretary of the City Assembly with a connection to the mayor, and she led the effort to apply the methodology offered by the Agency to develop the LAP.

Agency kept in regular contact with Ms. Zaric and helped the work of “Balkan region” during the baseline study and LAP design, targeting the same actors as in B&H. The LAP was adopted at the City of Nis Assembly in 2015, and this was concrete example of the regional cooperation via expert assistance, sharing of

5 “Balkan region“- regional NGO network established in 2014 (NGOs from B&H, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Macedonia)

knowledge and experiences with very limited financial resources.

Challenges in implementation

One of main challenges is lack of implementation of LAPs due to the lack of capacity, knowledge and financial resources. Most people in responsible local governments and institutions do not know how to apply gender sensitive approach in achieving human security. Gender institutions, Agency and Entity Gender Centers, offer assistance to get some basic knowledge of how to integrate these concepts into institutional work (like use of gender sensitive language, gender statistics, etc.). Most activities are initiated by the gender institutions, but also there is now increased recognition and efforts by UN Women and OSCE to support it.

One advantage is that the Agency does focus on ensuring coordination among the donors as key international actors, so providing the continued effort to coordinate activities – not just to avoid the repetition and waste of resources, but also to ensure there is clear focus on gender advancement at the local level. It is critical that local municipal officials take this agenda seriously, which can only happen with the unified front from both the donors as well as national level institutions.

New Security Threats and Challenges

Floods

The severe floods in B&H provided a unique entry point for the Agency to emphasize link between gender and human security. Specifically, the Agency and Gender Centers leveraged FIGAP programme to assist three municipalities (Orasje, Zepce, and Modrica), the most affected by the flooding. To redirect funds, the Agency was required to provide

justification to FIGAP donors. Donors were eager to see a direct connection to existing national policy; Agency staff was able to do just that by invoking the human security pillar in the new NAP. The donors allowed this re-directing the funds of 30,000 KM (10,000 KM per each, around 5,000 euros). The Agency used these funds to purchase much-needed supplies. Additionally, they worked closely with municipal officials to ensure the aid was delivered to those in most dire need. The Agency used this example to push for broader policy change. Additional government funds were directed to deal with the very complex aftermath of the floods, especially affected women who lost their homes or businesses.

Migrations

The National Coordination Board (NCB) to monitor implementation of B&H NAP initiated, in their own capacity, an effort within all of the intuitions and agencies to collect clothes and other support and to deliver to the Syrian refugees/migrants to Belgrade (Serbia). As transporting food across the border was not allowed, the money was collected instead, so Director of the Agency and two NCB members traveled to Serbia and bought food and delivered it to a refugee camp. This initiative, as a great anecdote of addressing the migrant needs, was also justified by human security needs and concerns, thus directly linked to one of the NAP outcomes.

Conclusion

Introduction of the concepts of human security allows the answer to the many challenges of current safety threats (migrations, refugees – for example violence against women in refugee camps; terrorism, preventing efforts of the radicalization as prevention of all forms of extremism; climate change and associated disasters like floods in BIH and huge snow). This offers a new lens for government agencies and officials who are mostly dealing with traditional security to appreciate and address these new threats.

