



# WOMEN AND MEN IN SERBIA: AT A GLANCE

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN SERBIA

Serbia has made an increase of 5.6 points compared to 2016, according to the third [Gender Equality Index in the Republic of Serbia](#), which was presented in October 2021. The Index covers the domains of work, money, knowledge, time, power and health, while this year's thematic focus was on digitalisation and the future of labour. The results of the Index also show that if we continue at the current pace, we may achieve full gender equality in 59 years.

Meanwhile, tobacco manufacturing company Philip Morris in Serbia together with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality conducted another survey, which focused on women in business and the effects of the so-called "glass ceiling". The survey showed that 54 per cent of women have lower incomes than their partners, and 56 per cent have lower incomes than their male counterparts. In addition, 78 per cent of respondents claimed that women and men are not treated equally in the workplace.

Following the adoption of new laws and strategies in the field of gender equality, Serbia is still awaiting the Action plan for National Strategy for Combating Gender Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2021-2025). New National Action Plan (NAP), the latest one being in force for period 2017-2020, has also yet to be adopted.

For the first time, Serbia will be marking 11 June every year as Day of Gender Equality. This comes following the initiative of the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, Zorana Mihajlovic.

With an aim to foster a common understanding of gender equality terms in the country and promote gender-fair and inclusive language to improve equality between women and men, Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus of the European Institute for Gender Equality with its over 400 terms has been translated into Serbian.

Violence against women and girls remained one of the most challenging issues in regard to gender equality. The outburst of more than 20,000 stories about how women suffered violence and didn't report it marked the end of the 2021 in Serbia. The testimonials were published on Twitter under the hashtag #Ididnotreport initiated by the experience of a woman who reported violent partner but faced ignorance and lack of support from authorities.

In addition, the participation and leadership of women is becoming more and more recognized globally and in Serbia as critical for making climate, environment and disaster prevention and recovery more effective. This year's Climate change conference, held from 31 October to 6 November 2021 in Glasgow, put in focus recognizing and celebrating gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in climate policy and action. The conference conveyed a strong message that all climate actions must recognize the differentiated impact of climate change by factors such as age, gender, disability and location, and ensure women's and girls' voice and agency and their full and effective participation and leadership in policy and decision-making at community, national and international levels, and increase ambition in all sectors.





## COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Under the project ‘**Improved Safety of Women in Serbia**’, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN Women continued its support in building Serbian society free from gender-based discrimination and violence.

With the aim of eliminating violence against women and building strong links with women’s civil society organizations (CSOs) and other key relevant stakeholders in the country that strive for gender equality and eliminating violence against women, additional seven partner agreements were signed. **Seven women CSOs** have received grants to deliver a comprehensive multi-sectoral set of activities aimed at increasing the knowledge of rural women to recognize and report cases of violence against women and girls and/ or gender-based discrimination.

Brochures and leaflets for women victims of domestic violence were prepared, designed, and printed. Brochures and leaflets are guides through three court proceedings: criminal, civil, and proceeding for urgent protection from domestic violence. Thanks to these guides, women will have information on how to initiate proceedings, how to collect evidence, participate in the proceedings, and what their rights and obligations are. Brochures and leaflets will be delivered to 66 basic courts in Serbia for placement on court Information Desks to ensure their availability to women who need this information.

Three additional two-day trainings for journalists were organized in Sokobanja, Zlatibor and Kopaonik aimed at raising awareness and knowledge of journalists and editors about safe, ethical, and professional reporting on VAWG and femicide.

In addition, Ms. Ivana Jasnic, a prominent media professional, gave an online lecture to more than **150 students of journalism** studying at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade (BA, MA, Ph.D.) about the cases “Jutka” and “Mika Aleksic”. The lecture was very well received by the students, they were very interested in these stories, addressing many important issues and questions.

As many as **25 young women and men** have been chosen for leaders of change within “Youth Against Violence” Coalition. Activities are foreseen to commence as of March 2022.

Within Phase II of the Regional Programme on Ending Violence against Women in the Western Balkans and Turkey “**Implementing Norms, Changing Minds**” an estimated 3.5 million people have seen 23 appearances on TV stations with national coverage within media campaign “0 per cent tolerance for partner violence against women” implemented by Association Fenomena, while posts on social media (Facebook and Instagram) gathered 601.917 impressions. In addition, 68 girls and 8 boys from 12 different local communities across Serbia have increased their knowledge and understanding on VAWG through attending 3 online workshops using the Power to Change methodology.

In total 24 journalists from 23 media houses have increased their knowledge and skills on standards in media reporting about VAWG, through participation in the mentoring programme. Moreover, the analysis of published articles written by the mentees showed that 86.4 per cent of monitored articles respected at least three agreed reporting standards, i.e. out of 138 analysed articles, 124 respect the agreed standards.

The programme partnered with **NGO Atina – Citizen’s Association for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and All Forms of Violence against Women (i.e. NGO Atina)** on the implementation of “Improving Support to VAWG Victims in Serbia” initiative in the period September 1, 2021 – February 28, 2023. During these 18 months the project aims to build the awareness of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the newly developed quality standards proposal to ensure a victim-centered and integrated approach; increase the capacities of shelters to implement the quality standards; and enhance the awareness of the general public and government stakeholders of the importance of implementing the quality standards, including those tailored to marginalized group, within shelters. Partnership with the line Ministry of Labour, Employment, Social and Veteran Affairs has been forged in the reporting period and access to shelters with the aim of gathering relevant data and assessing their existing policies and procedures has been granted.





**SOS Network of Vojvodina** continued strengthening capacities of CSO professionals to provide SOS services through Sound of Soul – SOS mobile app. In total, 371 women have reported violence to 13 partner's organizations in the period June – December 2021 through 839 calls in total, with 152 of them coming through the mobile app. Moreover, the SOS app has been upgraded, so now the app has a chat tool for psychological support to beneficiaries. Also, from July to December 2021, there have been 168 downloading of Sound of Soul Application through both application stores – 95 Google store and 73 iOS store. The mobile app V2, for **Android** and **iOS** mobile platforms are prepared and available on Google and iOS store.

The programme partnered with **Association Fenomena** to implement the project “Maximizing availability of free legal aid for gender-based violence survivors in Serbia” in the period August 27, 2021 – December 31, 2022. In the reporting period, partnership with the Law Faculty of University of Kragujevac has been established. The Law Faculty has initiated work on conducting research on the implementation of the LFLA, which will fall under the scope of the needs of the project and GREVIO recommendations – the implementation of the Law on Free Legal Aid with regards to VAWG survivors and their access to free legal aid.

**CSO Victimology Society of Serbia VDS** has been implementing project “Evidence-based capacity building and support to the Groups for Coordination and Cooperation in response to domestic and other forms of gender-based violence” in the period June 23, 2021 - November 21, 2022. In total, 63 members of

GCCs (43 representatives of CSWs and NGOs (40 females and 3 males) and 20 representatives of basic public prosecutors' offices BPP0 (16 females and 4 males)) increased their knowledge and skills for working with victims of gender-based violence and implementing international standards on victim support and protection particularly focusing on working with victims in crises through a series of 4-day training sessions organised in November and December 2021. In order to further support GCCs in developing and making individual plans of support and protection for victims, 20 tablet computers were delivered to 18 BPP0s.

In addition, 82 victims received assistance and support in the VDS victim support service in the reporting period, and out of that number 67 were women. Out of 67 women, 25 were victims of domestic violence.

The programme partnered with **CSO Roma Women Center Bibija**, which will implement project “Providing with economic reintegration opportunities for Roma women, survivors of violence” in the period June 22, 2021 – September 21, 2022. **Research about successful models of integration of women survivors of violence from marginalized groups** has been drafted in the reporting period, with a selected best-fit model to be implemented in five Roma settlements in Serbia being prepared as well. Moreover, 100 Roma women survivors of violence from targeted municipalities received appropriate psycho-social support, through more than 100 individual workshops covering various topics of women's health and women's mental health, what is violence and how to recognize it, alcohol and violence, why a woman stays with a

bully, cycle of domestic violence and health consequences of violence. Finally, 50 Roma women survivors of violence have started attending training courses for professional development and creating new employment opportunities and economic reintegration, with the aim of improving their qualifications and skills in the labor market. Each woman has been assigned a personal mentor, who is supporting her and jointly preparing an individual support plan with her.

On 21 October 2021, UN Women started the implementation of project **Safeguarding of Women and Girls in Serbia** in partnership with The Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE), and The Ministry of labour, employment, veteran, and social affairs funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). The main goal is to transform national and local-level authorities and stakeholders to be more responsive to violence against women and girls, including in public spaces, and to apply internationally validated tools and practices to better address violence against women and girls. Project focuses its activities around three main outcomes: 1) National-level authorities adopt measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence against women and girls, in public and private space, 2) Local-level authorities and stakeholders use this action to apply internationally validated tools and practices to better address violence against women and girls, including in public spaces, 3) Shelters for survivors of domestic and GBV equal accessibility to all women and girls exposed to violence, improved performance and work with increased capacity is facilitated.

In December, local WSCO **FemPlatz** was selected to prepare National survey on violence against women and girls in public spaces which is first of its kind to be developed in Serbia on national scale. Survey will provide insight into the degree of insecurity of women and girls in public spaces in the country. The results of the research will serve as the basis for creating recommendations for the development of comprehensive and evidence-based policies for the prevention of violence against women and girls in public space by state and local public authorities.

Moreover, adaptation of globally validated **Women's Safety Audit tool (WSAT)** for the concrete Serbian conditions started in January thus making possible replication of international experiences and enabling a critical evaluation of the urban environment from the perspective of safety of women and girls. In addition, preparations started for Cost analysis for nationwide network of shelters looking closely at unmet needs, capacity gaps and amounts of funds required to meet the international standards and assume Istanbul convention obligation and develop proposals for earmarking and ring-fencing funds required for stable, long term and non-disrupted functioning of shelters.

## GENDER RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

Under the EU funded project ‘**Support To Priority Actions For Gender Equality In Serbia II**’, UN Women continued to support integration and implementation of the EU and national gender equality commitments in Serbia



through improving legal and strategic framework for gender equality and capacities of the national gender machinery, integration of the gender perspective and principles into the national policies, EU funds programming and monitoring and support to CSOs to implement gender transformative initiatives. Technical guidance and expert support were provided to the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue (MHMRSD) in drafting the new **National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030**, in line with the Law on Planning System. The Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021-2030 was adopted by the Government of Serbia on 14 October 2021. After the adoption of the Strategy, drafting of the **National Action Plan for 2021-2023** was supported and its adoption is expected in 2022, first quarter.

As part of the efforts to support gender responsive planning, government institutions were supported, in cooperation with the Public Policy Secretariat, to implement gender equality assessments and **Gender Equality Test** in drafting new regulations. In partnership with the Ministry of Economy, UN Women is currently conducting a follow-up **Study on women entrepreneurship** (baseline study is from 2012) to assess the current position of women entrepreneurs in Serbia and provide insight into the impact of policy and strategic changes and initiatives and programs implemented by the Serbian Government. In addition, **Gender Equality Index for Serbia 2021** was developed jointly with the Statistical Of-

fice, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, and the Coordination Body for Gender Equality. **Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE)** is continuously supported to strengthen its administrative structures and capacities to lead the implementation of the international and national obligations in the field of gender equality. For the first time training on gender equality was organized for the **National Minority Councils** in cooperation with the MHMRSD. A **Network of Women National Minority Councils** was established as a follow up activity.

**Annual Conference of Local Gender Equality Mechanisms was organized** gathering 122 participants (115 women and 7 men) from 61 local self-governments from Serbia to promote best practice examples in the work of local mechanisms for gender equality and to exchange experience, lessons learned and the ways of overcoming obstacles. Conference gathered **LSGs** (Tutin, Crna Trava, City of Novi Sad, Knic and City of Kragujevac) **that received CBGE Annual awards for their active engagement in fulfilling gender equality in five different categories**. UN Women has been supporting the **Ministry of EU Integration and national IPA Units in gender mainstreaming of the annual IPA programs**. Gender related inputs were provided for the five sector action documents that will be financed by EU and 50 representatives coming from more than 15 different institutions were trained for gender mainstreaming of programming, implementation and monitoring of annual IPA programs. **Five CSOs** se-

lected through an open call in July 2021 are implementing projects contributing to **improving women participation in the labour market**: Zrenjanin Educational Center; Handcrafts of Luznica – Women Ethno Center; Citizens Association Laris; Association for Development of Creativity; and Ethno Network. As a result of the assistance, until January 2022 more than 600 women directly benefited through increasing their capacities and skills in different areas (e.g. entrepreneurship, innovation and development of business, agricultural practices in organic production, sewing, weaving and cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants) and through direct support for the development of their businesses. **Six additional CSOs<sup>1</sup> were selected in January 2022** to implement measures contributing to elimination of gender stereotypes in areas such as: heritage, labour market, unpaid care work, and energy.

To support **dialogue and exchange of information between women's CSOs and representatives of the national, provincial and local authorities** on the role of rural women and mechanisms for their economic empowerment, UN Women supported Commissioner for Protection of Equality and Provincial Ombudsman in organization of a **conference on the occasion of International Day of Rural Women**. The discussion opened several important topics such as contribution of rural women's associations to the development of local economy, the challenges they are facing in their work, financing opportunities, sustainability of the associations and mea-

asures to support their activities in the long run.

Finally, the exhibition **"When the world stopped, they didn't"** (Kada je svet stao one nisu) featuring photos of 10 Serbian women, from all walks of life, who have led by example and contributed to the betterment of our society during the COVID-19 epidemic, after Belgrade continued its life travelling across the country and was set up in 16 local self-governments until the year's end.

Under the programme **"Transformative Financing for Gender Equality: towards more Transparent, Inclusive and Accountable Governance in the Western Balkans"**, UN Women continuous support to the Ministry of Finance, Provincial Secretariat of Finance and the Coordination Body for Gender Equality in GRB implementation resulted in further increase of number of budget objectives that reflect different needs and priorities of women and men and multi-discriminated groups. In total, 71 institutions at national and provincial level have included gender perspective in **104 budget programmes** (62 per cent of the total number of budget programmes), **369 budget objectives and 710 indicators of their 2022 budgets**. In the course of 2021, more than **400 civil servants**, members of academia and women's CSOs learned more about GRB and impact of its implementation on the quality of everyday life of all citizens in Serbia.

To create synergies between climate change related actions and GRB in order to accelerate both gender equality and climate



change mitigation and adaptation, UN Women Serbia embarked on a mission to ensure climate change related measures and initiatives include gender perspective and have secured funding. This is done through the first of a kind piloting of synchronous application of GRB and climate finance tracking that brings these two cross-cutting priorities closer and helps mapping of missing gender data in this sector.

To better inform citizens on impact of financing on gender equality through high quality GRB media reporting, UN Women partnered with the Novi Sad School of Journalism and various media outlets. More than 30 journalists coming from different media outlets across Serbia increased knowledge and skills to report on GRB, while six chosen human-interest stories written by these journalists highlighted the position of women victims of violence and the highly qualified unemployed women, but also spoke about GRB implementation in the Serbian defense system, diplomacy and its contribution to the improvement of economic position of rural women. By the end of 2021, these stories reached more than 18,600 readers across the country.

In order to highlight the transformative aspects of GRB application and its potential for closing gender gaps, UN Women Serbia initiated the piloting of GRB as a tool to improve the economic position of rural women and ensure that key challenges rural women face are addressed through targeted financing. Representatives of 22 women's CSOs, coming from 11 municipalities across Serbia and 11 relevant ministries and institutions came together to discuss key issues that require

a cross-sectoral approach and defined GRB objectives and indicators. Based on these consultations, UN Women produced a set of recommendations and indicators that would contribute to the closing of gender gap in the economic position of rural women, along with the information on needed resources to be allocated through the budget.

## INNOVATING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Under the EU funded project 'Support To Priority Actions For Gender Equality In Serbia II', UN Women continued

### 1) Gender responsive financing innovations

In order to highlight the transformative aspects of GRB application and its potential for closing the gender gaps, UN Women Serbia initiated the **piloting of GRB as a tool to improve the economic position of rural women and ensure that key challenges rural women face** are addressed through targeted financing. As part of the initiative, UN Women together with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality organized consultations with representatives of 22 women's CSOs, coming from 11 municipalities across Serbia, and 11 relevant ministries and institutions, to discuss about the key issues that require a cross-sectoral approach and defined GRB objectives and indicators. Based on these consultations and desk review of relevant budgets and legal documents, UN Women produced a set of recommendations and indicators that would contribute to the closing of the gender gap in the economic position of rural women, along

with the information of needed resources to be allocated through the budget.

Climate change related actions are important potential accelerators of gender equality and women's empowerment, offering an opportunity for their systematic involvement in both planning and implementation of climate mitigation and adaptation measures. On the other hand, GRB can contribute to implementation of national and international commitments related to climate change. Therefore, UN Women Serbia embarked on a mission to ensure climate change related measures and initiatives are including gender perspective and being funded. This is being done through the first of its kind **piloting on synchronous application of GRB and climate finance tracking**, to ensure synergies between these two cross-cutting priorities. In addition, to ensure that policies and measures are defined based on data and evidences, in partnership with the Ministry of Environmental Protection, UN Women conducted **mapping of missing gender data** in this sector, as a first step in improvement of gender data production and usage in budgetary processes aimed at alleviating effects on climate change while improving gender equality.

### 2) LNOB innovations

Existence of **discrimination against elderly women, Roma women and women with disabilities** was tested through six situational tests conducted by three selected CSOs within the project "Test it if you tasted it". As result recommendations were made to use mechanisms for protection against discrimination more diligently and improve existing capacities of women CSOs to use experimen-

tal methods, prescribed by Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, to prove discrimination in cases where discrimination is hard to be proven.

22 women and girls with disabilities from 16 cities across the country graduated from the first of a kind **Leadership Academy for Women with Disabilities**. Participants increased their knowledge on disability- and gender-based discrimination, management skills including general management, strategizing, planning, human resources and fundraising, enhanced public speaking skills and assertiveness. The Leadership Academy was run by Network 'Out of Circle Serbia with the support of UN Women.

In cooperation with the **Ministry of Justice**, two innovations were introduced to improve access to justice for women and girls, survivors of violence. All 66 basic courts in Serbia were provided with tablets enabling **access to justice to women survivors of violence with hearing impairment**. 4000 leaflets and 2700 brochures with simplified yet comprehensive information on criminal law, litigation, executive and misdemeanor procedures to women survivors of gender-based violence were developed and distributed.

As many as **22 National Minority Councils** and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue enhanced their knowledge on systematic introduction of gender perspective in their work.

### 3) Women Peace and Security innovation

Jointly with the **Ministry of Defense**, UN Women strengthened gender mainstreaming and the women's empowerment in the security sector in line with the UNSCR1325.



## SRH

- UNFPA CO, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Institute of Public Health UNFPA completed national level ISHARE Research on impact of COVID-19 and measures on the access to sexual and reproductive health services, family structures, relationships, sexual behavior. Research is a part of the Global study I-SHARE, led by University of Ghent, and Academic Network on Sexual and Reproductive Health (ANSER) and coordinated by RO. Regional level report written by ANSER should be available in 2022.
- UNFPA CO supported national counterparts the Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanovic Batut”, and the Ministry of Health to participate in Assessment of Capacity for Cervical Cancer prevention and control, and became the member country of the EECA Regional Cervical Cancer Prevention Alliance (the Alliance), a voluntary alliance of policy makers, technical institutions, experts and clinicians from all countries in the region.
- The Alliance will work to harmonize strategic approaches for the prevention, treatment and palliative care of cervical cancer across the region and will support countries to develop coordinated, evidence-based mid- and long-term visions that will maximize effectiveness and avoid gaps and fragmentation in service delivery.
- As a part of the 2022 European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week, UNFPA, with the partners (the Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanovic Batut”, the

Ministry of Health and volunteers of the Committee for International Cooperation of Medical Students (IFMSA-Serbia)) conducted health-promotional activities related cervical cancer prevention and importance of regular check-ups in Belgrade, Kragujevac, Nis and Kosovska Mitrovica.

## YOUTH

- In 2021, UNFPA Serbia and UNFPA BiH in partnership with the private sector and CSOs implemented the Girls Advanced Lab, an initiative that aims to empower adolescent girls, by supporting their innovative ideas to improve access to education, gender equality and raise awareness of healthy lifestyles to come to reality. In 2021, UNFPA in partnership with the IP Belgrade Center for Human Rights supported implementation of 4 local projects (Belgrade, Jagodina, Novi Pazar). Projects had an aim to draw attention to the challenges and needs that young people/particularly girl are facing in everyday life, from mental to reproductive health, healthy life habits, sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Girls involved in the Lab also had opportunity to discuss their achievements at the final event, “At the Women’s Table”, that has been organized as a part of 16 Days of Activism against violence against women. Women and girls of different generations discussed topics related to women’s rights, daily challenges, victo-

ries they have won and contributions to their communities.

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, and UNFPA, with the support of the Institute for the Advancement of Education, implemented the initiative for improving interdisciplinary competence of students’ Responsible Attitude towards Health. Age appropriate teaching material were developed and made available Professional associates’ of 1505 schools in Serbia were trained to further support teachers to implement activities aimed at improving health literacy, preventing gender-based violence and promoting reproductive health among students of primary and secondary schools.
- Also, UNFPA supported promotion of Out of School CSE guidelines developed by UNFPA at the global level, with implementing partner Novi Sad Humanitarian Center. Workshops were organized for 70 participants, mainly youth workers, while indirectly Guidelines were presented to around 300 interested persons.
- To support promotion of COVID 19 immunization and complement work of other agencies, UNFPA in partnership with the CSO Belgrade Centre for Human rights and the Institute for Students’ Health, initiated social media campaign with the aim of raising awareness and empowering young people to better understand the importance of immunization in relation to the COVID19. The campaign #It’sUpToYou (#NaTebiJe) Over 10,000 young people were reached during the campaign.

The video #ChangeNumbers (#Menja-jBrojke had over 5,000 views, and hybrid events – discussions between youth and experts, that was organized in 3 different cities/municipalities (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš), had more than 3,000 views. All questions asked by young people during this campaign were collected in 3 leaflets with Frequently Asked Questions (Najčešće postavljena pitanja Leaflet 1, Leaflet 2 and Leaflet 3). The leaflets were promoted on social networks, and sent to more than 1000 addresses each, in order to give young people answers in a simple, direct and clear way. In addition, 5 educational posters (Links to posters: Poster 1, Poster 2, Poster 3, Poster 4 and Poster 5) aimed at pointing out the importance of health, but also the contribution that young people have in stabilizing the epidemiological situation were shared on social networks.

- In October 2021, UNFPA supported Institute for Students’ Health of Belgrade University to organize the International Congress of youth health, in Belgrade, titled “Investment in the youths’ health – future for any country”. Congress was organized to exchange knowledge, ideas, and experiences of professionals dealing with various areas of youth health protection, taking into consideration health needs and issues that young people face today, especially regarding sexual and reproductive health.



## PD

- In 2021, UNFPA implemented the gender-transformative project “Dad’s Hub on the wheels” that empowered men from 5 rural and urban communities, to understand the relation between the established gender hierarchies and norms, current parenthood models, and gender inequality, and what is their role in transforming society to become more gender-equal. Lessons learned from the project were shared at the final event which gathered professionals from the public and private sectors.
- In line with LNOB principle, particularly in the time of COVID 19, CO participate in the implementation of the EU Support to Social Housing and Active Inclusion (EU SHAI) program, which is designed to improve the implementation of social inclusion policies in Serbia and provide sustainable housing solutions accompanied by active inclusion measures for the most vulnerable populations. The program is funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). UNFPA is implementing part of the Program aimed at supporting the inclusion of vulnerable groups (Roma women and older people) and strengthening them by improving access to health, protection and social services by removing practical and institutional barriers during and after the health crisis caused by COVID 19. Within the component targeting Roma women, in 2021 UNFPA initiated a) mapping of safe housing solutions and other resources

available to Roma women and their children exposed to SGBV implemented in 33 selected municipalities, and b) research on the attitude of Roma women, older than 65 towards SGBV.

- UNFPA conducted research on violence against older women in Serbia and the Western Balkans region, Moldova, and Ukraine that was presented in December 2021. The research contributed to enhancing intersectional understanding of GBV against older women since evidence about gender-based violence (GBV) among women older than 65 is scarce.
- To increase understanding of loneliness and related risk factors in ageing in the EECA region, UNFPA RO and the University College of London conducted a survey on loneliness for older people (65-85 years) while looking at various intersecting aspects, such as gender. The survey was conducted in six selected countries and territories (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kosovo ) during the summer of 2021.
- In cooperation with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and WHO, UNFPA RO and CO organized the Regional launch of the UN Global Report on Ageism on 27 September 2021 in Belgrade. The main task of this regional event was to raise awareness on ageism and mobilize political support and national action to address ageism. The same day, 27 September 2021, right after the Regional launch of the UN Global Report on Ageism, the National Dialogue on Ageing and Ageism was organized by the UNFPA CO,

the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. The event brought together ministers, independent bodies, NGO, international organizations, media and all interested partners focusing on older people in Serbia. The Call to Action against Ageism in Serbia adopted at this event, calls for the collective action of partners in Serbia to address ageism, to work with local self-governments, media and educational activities that enhance empathy, and to dispel misconceptions to help decrease ageism. As follow up to the regional and national launch on the Report on Ageism, in cooperation with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality three workshops were organized in Smederevo, Cacak and Negotin in November/December 2021 with decision makers, young and old persons, and other relevant actors at the local level. The workshops encouraged intergenerational exchange and indicated the importance of creating an environment where every generation can grow old with dignity and continue to participate in social life with the enjoyment and exercise of their full rights.

- UNFPA supported thematic social dialogue on intergenerational solidarity that was organized on 8 December 2021 with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue. All participants at the social dialogue agreed that intergenerational solidarity must be included in all public policies to enable all generations to reach its full potential, and that special focus should be given to older women.



**JUSTICE POUR LES  
SURVIVANTES DE VIOLENCES**

## UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS TEAM

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UN Human Rights Team in Serbia supported the FemPlatz organization in the development of the new **Report on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Serbia for 2020 – The first report**, in addition to the last year published **Zero report**. This report presents an overview of the position of women through discrimination, security, education, work, employment and economic empowerment, health and health care, violence against women, access to justice, family and property relations, as well as a brief overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the position of women in Serbia. The topic in focus is the participation of women in public and political life in Serbia. This report stresses that although women in Serbia have the same rights as men, their position is worse. Women are discriminated against based on their sex and gender, they are in a worse position than men both in public and in private spheres, and they are exposed to discriminatory gender stereotypes and violence. Moreover, the rates of their employment are lower than for men although they are bet-

ter educated, they have less paid jobs, they are burdened with household work and child care more than men and participate less in decision-making. Women from multiply marginalized groups are at risk of multiple discrimination, are exposed to specific forms of violence and are at a disadvantage both compared to women in the general population and compared to men belonging to the same groups.

As a continuation of facilitation of the process of National implementation of revised International Classification of Diseases (ICD11) which removes transgender identities from the list of mental illnesses, UN Human Rights Team in Serbia supported the ongoing dialogue between relevant State authorities, mainly the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government, and CSOs. As a result of this dialogue, Ministry initiated internal process with other Governmental counterparts aimed at unifying the national process related to the changes in the legal documents of transgender persons in the Republic of Serbia.





## SUPPORT TO THE MINISTRIES OF DEFENCE (MODS) AND ARMED FORCES (AFS) IN THE WESTERN BALKANS (WB) IN IMPLEMENTING UNSCR 1325 AND INCREASING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MILITARY

With funding from Norway and the Slovak Republic, SEESAC has been supporting the Ministries of Defence (MoDs) and Armed Forces from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia in advancing gender equality through a regional approach.

The most important highlight of activities implemented within **Phase II** of the project *Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans* relates to the Ministerial Conference titled **A Way Forward on Gender Equality in the Defence Sector in the Western Balkans**. The Conference took place on 7 December in Montenegro, and the Serbian **Minister of Defence took an active part in the Conference and signed the Ministerial Declaration on Support for Gender Equality in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans**. In his **keynote speech** Minister Stefanović emphasized that the MoD and Afs of Serbia strive towards genuine and not declarative gender equality and are committed to continuing regional cooperation focusing on this issue of key importance for the military in Serbia. The Conference also served as a platform to launch two landmark knowledge products:

- The 2nd regional **Study on the Position of Women in the Armed Forces in the Western Balkans**, which identifies progress related to gender equality in the military compared to data gathered in 2012, and includes jointly agreed recommenda-

tions for the MoDs and Afs. The 2nd regional Study includes a detailed set of data related to the position of women in the Serbian Armed Forces (AFs).

- The regional **Handbook on Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Abuse** was developed by MoDs to help prevent and respond to cases of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. It includes information on relevant policies and practices in the MoD and Afs of Serbia.

In Q2 2021, the Regional Working Group on the integration of a gender perspective in military education and training worked on the first draft of the regional Baseline Study, gathering information on the level of integration of gender perspective in the military curricula. The **2nd meeting of the Regional WG** was organized in September, followed by a two-day workshop organized by the MoD of Serbia with SEESAC support.

In November 2021 SEESAC supported the organization of the workshop with the MoD and Afs of Serbia to review the findings of The Regional Youth perception survey on values and attitudes while considering future professions with specific emphasis on gender-related aspects focusing on the career in the military, (the regional report and Serbia Country report completed in early 2021). The survey results were used to start working on recommendations on how to attract and retain a gender-diverse workforce.

On the request from the MoD of Serbia, SEESAC discussed ways to support the newly established Equal Opportunities Unit. To that end, IT equipment was provided and plans for gender training for the Analytic group agreed. Work on building capacities of the **internal complaints mechanism** in the MoD and Afs of Serbia continued.

### SUPPORT FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALW) CONTROL

#### New project launched

In September 2021 SEESAC **launched** a new 3-years long regional project funded by the EU Commission DG NEAR - **Support for Enhancing the Fight Against the Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Western Balkans**. The project aims to strengthen strategic and operational capacities of the Western Balkans authorities to conduct firearms investigations, to support the authorities of the region to better understand and increase the response to the factors fuelling demand and misuse of firearms in the Western Balkans, as well **to better integrate gender into SALW control**. In doing so, the project will provide comprehensive support to institutions in the region to **integrate the gender perspective into their operational level activities** – thus allowing for a tangible improvement of safety

for both women and men in the Western Balkans. The project will seek to develop practical tools for gender sensitive firearm license approval and procedures to adequately assess risks and prevent the use of firearms in domestic violence. To further enhance operational gender mainstreaming, guidelines for gender sensitive data collection and analysis for firearm focal points will be prepared and accompanied with due training. In addition, practical strategies for sustainable gender mainstreaming and participation of women in arms control will be further explored and discussed with policy and decision makers.

#### Gender analysis of SALW control legislation and policies

UNDP SEESAC in cooperation with SALW commissions in the region conducted a large-scale **gender analysis of small arms control legislation and policies**. In five Western Balkans jurisdictions, a total of 101 laws, 113 bylaws and 39 strategies and action plans were reviewed to assess their gender responsiveness and propose hands-on recommendations to adequately address risks women and men face with regard to firearms. The analysis documented significant progress achieved by the institutions in the Western Balkans in integrating the gender perspective into small arms control policies which has been particularly the case with recently adopted **strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Roadmap**. In addition, there have been noticeable efforts to ensure





that laws on weapons prevent the use of firearms in the context of domestic violence. The analysis resulted in a wide range of recommendations on how to strengthen the response to gendered aspects of firearms through legislative and policy actions.

### Building the knowledge base

In 2021 SEESAC launched a new series of analytical reports. **The In-Focus Armed Violence Monitor** provides an in-depth analysis of trends identified among firearms-related incidents across Southeast Europe captured by SEESAC's **Armed Violence Monitoring Platform**. In December 2021, special issue of the Monitor provided analysis of **firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence** in South East Europe. The Monitor presents an overview of firearm-related incidents committed by intimate partners and other close family members. It sheds light on firearm misuse in the domestic context and its disproportionate effects on women, particularly in the context of intimate partner violence. In 2020, 84 firearm incidents committed in the context of domestic violence were documented, of which 49 were committed by intimate partners and 35 by other family members. Compared to the situation in 2019, when 72 incidents were reported, a 16 per cent in-

crease in the number of domestic violence cases with firearms was observed in 2020. This may suggest that COVID-related lockdowns may have created an environment conducive to increased domestic violence. Twenty-four (92.3 per cent) out of 26 of all women killed with firearms in SEE were killed in the context of domestic violence, while the same holds true for 17 (15.6 per cent) men out of 109 all men killed with firearms. Within the context of domestic violence, women were most at risk of firearm use from their current or former intimate partners. Seventeen (65.4 per cent) of all women killed with firearms were killed by their intimate partners. In the same period, no men were killed with firearms by their partners. In addition, seven (26.9 per cent) women and 17 (15.6 per cent) of men killed with firearms, were killed by other family members, predominantly men.

**In addition, six other thematic reports** were published thus far taking a closer look at **incidents in the criminal context, celebratory shootings, weapons seizures, perpetrators of firearm incidents, firearm-related suicides** and **explosives-related incidents**. All data presented in the report are sex-disaggregated providing thus through insight into gender dimension of firearms misuse.





The Swiss PRO **support to strengthening of local gender equality mechanisms and local women's councillor networks, generated visible results in 44 LGs** that improved the operation of these mechanisms through adoption of local action plans, establishment of gender responsive budget, gender analysis, and launching local initiatives.

Through 26 grant projects, **5,578 beneficiaries (3,331 women) benefited from better access to public services**, capacity building and procurement of equipment. Furthermore, these projects contributed to employment, as a total of seven women were employed after the project completion.

Strengthening the capacities of women from rural areas to engage in rural tourism in **LG Zaječar** was achieved through an organised set of training sessions for 15 women in the field of entrepreneurship. After the project implementation, three participants started their own businesses related to rural tourism. The remaining 12 participants applied to the UN Women Call for Proposals for further support of their business ideas. Similarly, after successfully completing training in development of business plans within the Programme's support, five women from LG Ivanjica applied and received funds from the National Employ-

ment Service and founded their entrepreneurial businesses.

The Programme support contributed to increased interest and confidence of LGs representatives to advance the current gender equality framework and include civil society into the GEM activities, but also to applying gender equality standards and criteria into other areas of local administration work, such as health and social protection services. For example, the **LG Smederevska Palanka** developed a more responsive framework in the area of social inclusion through inclusion of gender equality standards into the social protection service 'Support to families with children' by collecting the sex disaggregated data, tailoring specific measure for economic empowerment of women beneficiaries as well as monitoring and evaluation of gender-related outcomes.

Through the Roma project "Immunisation for Inclusion" implemented by Association of Roma Coordinators as support in the immunisation process of Roma citizens living in informal settlements in 20 cities and municipalities, Roma women showed better awareness of vaccination benefits. So far, a total of 665 Roma women have been vaccinated.



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## INTEGRATED RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SERBIA III

Building on previous joint efforts, UN agencies and the Government of Serbia, supported by the Government of Sweden, are working to enable women and girls, especially those from vulnerable groups, to live lives free from violence. Efforts are aimed at ensuring that women and girls are encouraged to report violence and that they receive timely and effective protection.

In the period from August 2021 to end of January 2022, participating agencies UNICEF, UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP, in cooperation with national partners, CSOs and the media, contributed to comprehensive response to VAWG:

- To address challenges in response to cases of domestic and gender-based violence, **multisectoral trainings on the effective implementation of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence were implemented. A total of 95 professionals** from competent institutions participated from the Braničevo and Mačva counties.
- **Tackling violence through institutional cooperation, economic empowerment of survivors and integrated services for survivors of sexual violence**, have been identified as good practices established in the multi-ethnic province of Vojvodina. These are being strategically developed further by the Provincial Government, based on analysis of previously implemented measures.
- Unhindered **work of the four existing Centres for Survivors of Sexual Violence** in Serbia has been ensured. During 2021, these Centres provided help to 27 survivors of this severe form of violence.

- Supported by the project, **programmes for work with perpetrators have been established in Novi Sad, Užice, Niš and Leskovac**. Their aim is to ensure that men take responsibility for their violent behaviour and they work parallel with specialized services providing support to women who have suffered violence.
- **Research on capacity assessment of healthcare workers** in responding to GBV is in progress, aimed at mapping key factors of successful response, obstacles faced and possible solutions to overcoming them. The research focuses also on supervisory support to health care workers and on response in regular conditions, as well as those during the Covid-19 crisis.
- Bearing in mind the epidemiological situation, its significant impact on the health system and on access to continuous training, the **development of an on-line training program for healthcare workers and managers** is in progress. Intended to be a long-term national training resource, the program focuses on response to gender-based violence and addressing needs of survivors. An accredited test training has been developed so far, as well as 5 video lectures to be available through the platform of the Medical Faculty.
- Activist **girls in three biggest cities (Belgrade, Nis and Subotica) were trained and mentored to become leaders of gender equality among their peers**. In 2022, they will organize 9 public actions in their cities to raise awareness on gender inequality and its impact in society, as well

as on gender-based violence both in on-line space and offline. **Girls' activists marked International Youth Day** through **videos** and **posts** on social media, emphasizing the role of youth in promoting gender equality. The 6-day campaign reached nearly 39 000 people.

- The National Coalition to End Child Marriage submitted **recommendations for normative changes for a better prevention of child marriages**, proposing amendments **of the Family Law, Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Criminal Law**. Efforts of the Coalition were presented at the **national conference "Working together to end child marriage – for a right to a choice, education and a better future"** in December 2021. Over 70 participants discussed good practices in tackling this problem at local and national level and strengthening coordinated action in this field.
- The **program for advisory work with parents on positive disciplining of children was developed** and trainers have been prepared to work with professionals in the systems of social protection, education and health. The program aims to harmonize and improve professionals' advisory work with parents during their daily practice.
- A **photo and illustration database to support ethical media reporting** on violence against women was developed. The database is available through the recently launched website of the **group Journalists against Violence**.





## RAISING AWARENESS ON THE HARMS OF ONLINE VIOLENCE

As part of continuous awareness raising activities under the motto **#ItISMyBusiness** (#TičeMeSe), the theme of the 2021 „16 days of activism“ campaign was „**Online violence has real life consequences**“. To point to the harms of online violence against women and girls and to share information on how to report it and stand up to it, UNDP Serbia teamed up with **Balkan Top Star** youtubers and influencers, training them on the dangers of online violence and supporting them in **spreading the message** that **physical, digital**, sexual and other forms of violence were unacceptable. Social media **content** on the topic reached over 340 000 people.

As a follow-up to activities during the campaign, a **panel discussion** in cooperation with Ringier Axel Springer, was organized **to improve the understanding of online violence against women and girls and to strengthen support to those experiencing such violence**. The panel topics included the definition and recognition of online violence, the consequences it leaves, how to report it and to whom, as well as how to support women and girls exposed to it.

### INCREASING SAFETY FROM FIREARMS-ENABLED VIOLENCE

To contribute to ending firearms misuse for domestic and gender-based violence, UNDP Serbia worked on improving practices and procedures of the criminal justice system in responding to firearms misuse. Moreover, efforts were invested in setting up the ba-

sis for evidence-based policy making in this field and increasing public awareness on the dangers of misuse of firearms for committing gender-based violence.

To build institutional capacities and knowledge on consequences of firearms misuse for domestic violence, **guidelines for prosecutors, judges and multi-agency groups for cooperation and coordination were prepared. Focusing on evidence collection and adequate protection and prosecution of cases of domestic violence**, these guidelines should ensure that prosecution of cases does not rely solely on survivor's testimonies, who are often reluctant to participate in proceedings.

Key data on domestic violence, including firearms enabled violence and institutional response were also collected and analysed. The **analysis** covers the period of the implementation of the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and looks at existing data on domestic violence committed with firearms. Besides providing information on domestic violence, the analysis provides insight into data that should be collected by institutions to enable better knowledge on the phenomenon and tracking effectiveness of institutional response.

Through a **participatory process** involving the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, National Police Academy, Ministry of Health, National Institute for Public Health and the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, the project enabled discussions on the **improvement of the current system of data collection** regarding firearms misuse in domestic and intimate partner violence.

The project also explored the role of the healthcare system in the prevention of firearms misuse for domestic violence. A **policy paper was developed mapping the relationship between domestic violence, firearms misuse and public health**. Recommendations were prepared for gender-sensitive healthcare procedures regulating civilian and professional possession of firearms and on further actions related to the role of the healthcare system, with a view of preventing domestic and gender-based violence.

An **informative guide for firearms license applicants and their family members** was also published, **describing key facts on domestic violence and firearms misuse**. The guide intends to raise awareness on consequences and possible misuse of firearms and inform about referral pathways for survivors of domestic violence.

A social media **campaign was implemented on the dangers and consequences of firearms misuse**. With the participation of journalist Maja Nikolić, the campaign drew public attention to the dangers and lethality of firearms misuse for violence against women. The campaign video's reach on Facebook and Instagram was nearly 41000.

Bearing in mind the role and public influence of media, partnership with the group Journalists against violence was continued throughout the project implementation. It resulted in the development of **guidelines and training module for ethical and gender-sensitive media reporting on domestic violence committed with firearms**. In addition to this, **an analysis of media reporting on firearms**

**misuse and domestic violence for the first half of 2021** was developed to help monitor the quality of media reporting on this topic.

### PAVING TRAILS TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Through its “Beyond recovery towards economic resilience” initiative, UNDP's is supporting the Government of the Republic of Serbia in paving the way for digitizing crucial areas arising from the COVID19 crisis and relevant for COVID 19 recovery. The project seeks to promote family friendly hiking trails among Serbian citizens in the Valjevo area. It also intends to advance local creative industries products and services, accommodation offer, food safety and food diversity offer in line with various dietary requirements, additional and innovative ecotourism activities suitable for various age groups and levels of abilities, having in mind the needs and requests of both domestic and foreign visitors.

A special effort is being invested in **supporting women entrepreneurs along hiking trails and engaged in creative industries and tourism sectors to build their capacities and develop digital skills**, so they can meet needs of modern travellers. To date, out of the 35 businesses from tourism, hospitality and creative industries sector that we have worked with, 20 are women-owned. We provided dedicated training and on-the-job support, with special emphasis on the development of their digital skills and use of data for business planning and development. 10 en-



trepreneurs (including 8 women entrepreneurs) from the Valjevo mountains region were trained on data analytics for business development, in areas such as finance, customer segmentation, access to market, marketing and operations.

Through cooperation with Ethno Network, **10 women artisans and entrepreneurs in creative industries were trained in marketing, branding and product placement.** They were also trained on certification of origin and heritage preservation programs to professionalize as producers and service providers. They were provided better visibility through information placement on digital platforms (e.g. Google Maps). In addition to this, the artisans and entrepreneurs who were involved in these activities, have been included among the members of the Ethno Network, providing them with additional opportunities to promote their offer.

Through this, we have ensured that what for some has been a passion, can now become an income generating activity, serving also to preserve the values and heritage of the area.

### STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING

With the support of the project Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy and Inclusive Political Dialogue, the Women' Parliamentary Network implemented two workshops titled "Law on Gender Equality and local self-governments – possibilities and challenges". The workshops gathered representatives of fourteen local self-governments from the Zlatibor and Rasinski Districts.

Organized in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Serbia and Foundation BFPE for Responsible Society, the sessions (**streamed also online**) provided a space for discussion on provisions of the Law on Gender Equality adopted in May 2021, and their repercussion for the local level. The problem of gender-based violence, position of women in rural areas and women activism were also discussed by participants that comprised MPs, local officials, representatives of public enterprises, local ombudspersons, members of local gender equality commissions, social workers and local CSOs. Special emphasis in the discussions was put on the participation of women in decision-making, use of tools and mechanisms for gender equality at local level and implementation of gender responsive budgeting.

This was an opportunity for women MPs to gain insight into the conditions for implementation of the Law and related obstacles in the work of local self-governments and local gender equality mechanisms. Moreover, they learnt about the activities of local parliamentary networks, as well as visited local women's CSOs to better understand their efforts and the challenges they face.

### NETWORKING FOR STRONGER WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

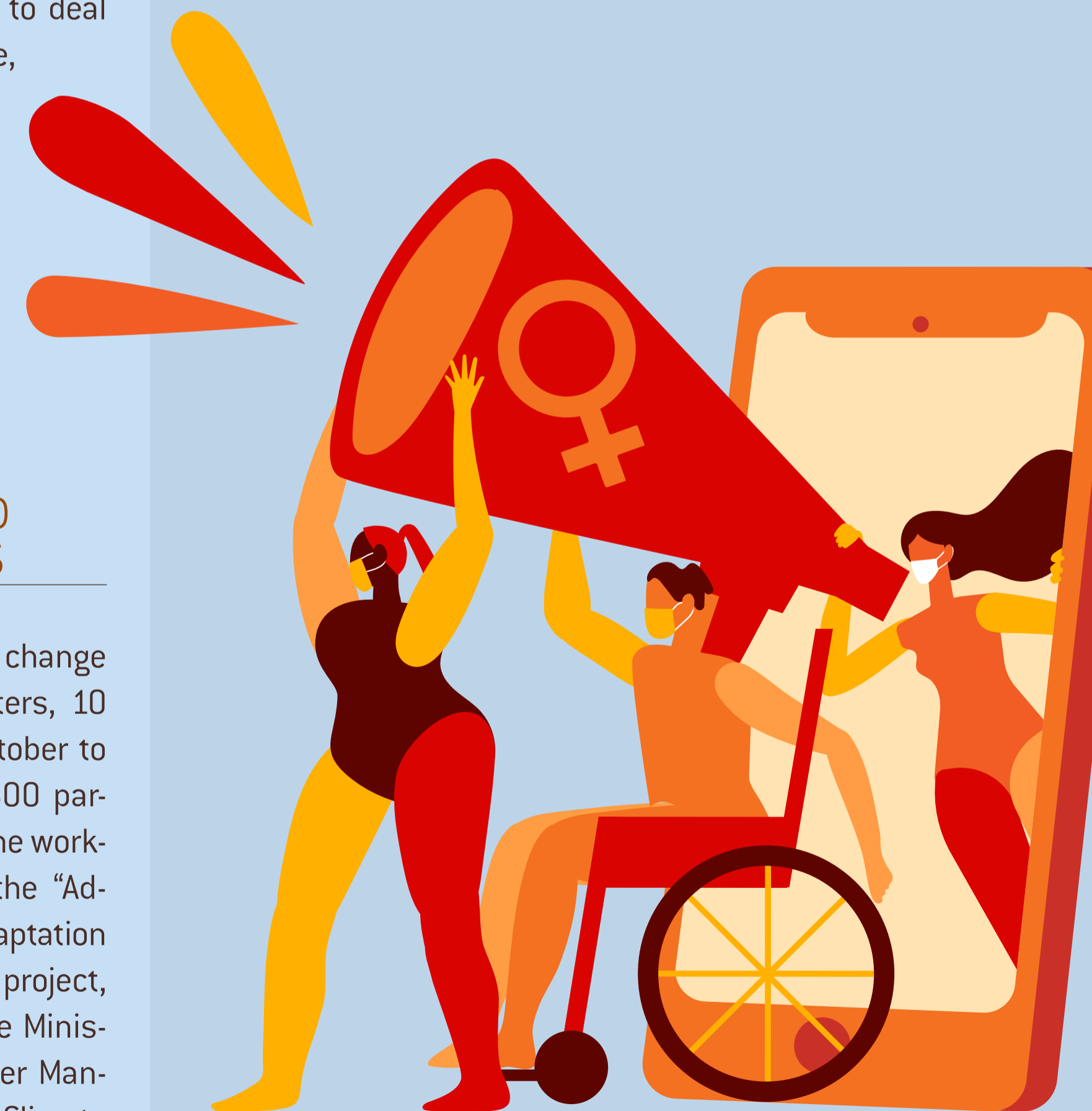
UNDP has continued its support to the Women Mayors Network, established in March 2021 on the initiative of the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government. This network of 22 women mayors and presidents of municipalities was formed

to promote gender equality and women's leadership at the local level. It also serves as a space for exchange of ideas and practices, and a means of women leaders' empowerment through hands-on and tailor-made capacity building for effective community management.

The third regular meeting of the Network, held in September 2021 in Arandjelovac, strengthened partnership among network members and contributed to building leadership and management skills, based on previous assessment of needs. Coaching sessions on topics of emotional intelligence and communications, as well as techniques to deal with stress and improve resilience, improved personal and professional skills. These are intended to enable women leaders to effectively respond to everyday challenges and persist in bringing transformative changes to their communities and society.

### INTEGRATING GENDER INTO CLIMATE CHANGE EFFORTS

To improve capacities for climate change adaptation and resilience to disasters, 10 workshops were organized from October to December 2021, gathering nearly 500 participants from all over the country. The workshops were organized as part of the "Advancing medium and long-term adaptation planning in the Republic of Serbia" project, implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, with support of the Green Climate





Fund. Over 40 per cent attendees were women, taking part in learning that enables better management of natural resources and communities and thus provides higher resilience to effects of natural and man-made disasters.

A workshop titled Integration of Gender Aspects into Environmental Policies of Local Governments was held in September 2021, organised by UNECE Environment Division. The event was part of a series of trainings on gender mainstreaming organized upon request of the Serbian Ministry of Environmental Protection. This workshop was aimed at representatives of local authorities and regional agencies in Serbia to support them in integrating a gender perspective into environmental policies and measures, in line with provisions of the recently adopted Law on Gender Equality. The workshops implemented so far were supplemented by a toolbox “[How to mainstream gender in environmental policy](#)”. Gender mainstreaming activities will continue in the upcoming period, to raise awareness of authorities on integration of gender aspects into environmental policies and activities.

### SUPPORTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF WOMEN AND MEN RETURNEES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Together with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, UNDP in Serbia is working to reduce the socio-economic gap between Roma and non-Roma populations and the discrim-

ination of Roma women, men and children, contributing to the effective reintegration of vulnerable returnees from the EU. This work is carried out within the regional project (Serbia, Macedonia and Albania) *Strengthen national and local systems to support the effective socio-economic integration of returnees in the Western Balkans*. The project targets individual returnees who face multiple vulnerabilities and barriers to integrate into the mainstream socio-economic life, including those related to prevailing gender norms and stereotypes.

In 2021 the project supported three local self-governments, Novi Sad, Valjevo and Bujanovac, in the development or adjustment of local strategies/action plans for reintegration of returnees and cooperation platforms, with innovative solutions for improving the livelihoods and social wellbeing of returnees and the broader community. The development of local reintegration strategies also focused on local governance issues, institutional capacities and bottlenecks hindering the effective implementation of reintegration policies. To mobilize a broad-based engagement of relevant stakeholders during strategy preparation and implementation, Local Migration Councils were established, which include representatives from public service providers, business community and civil society.

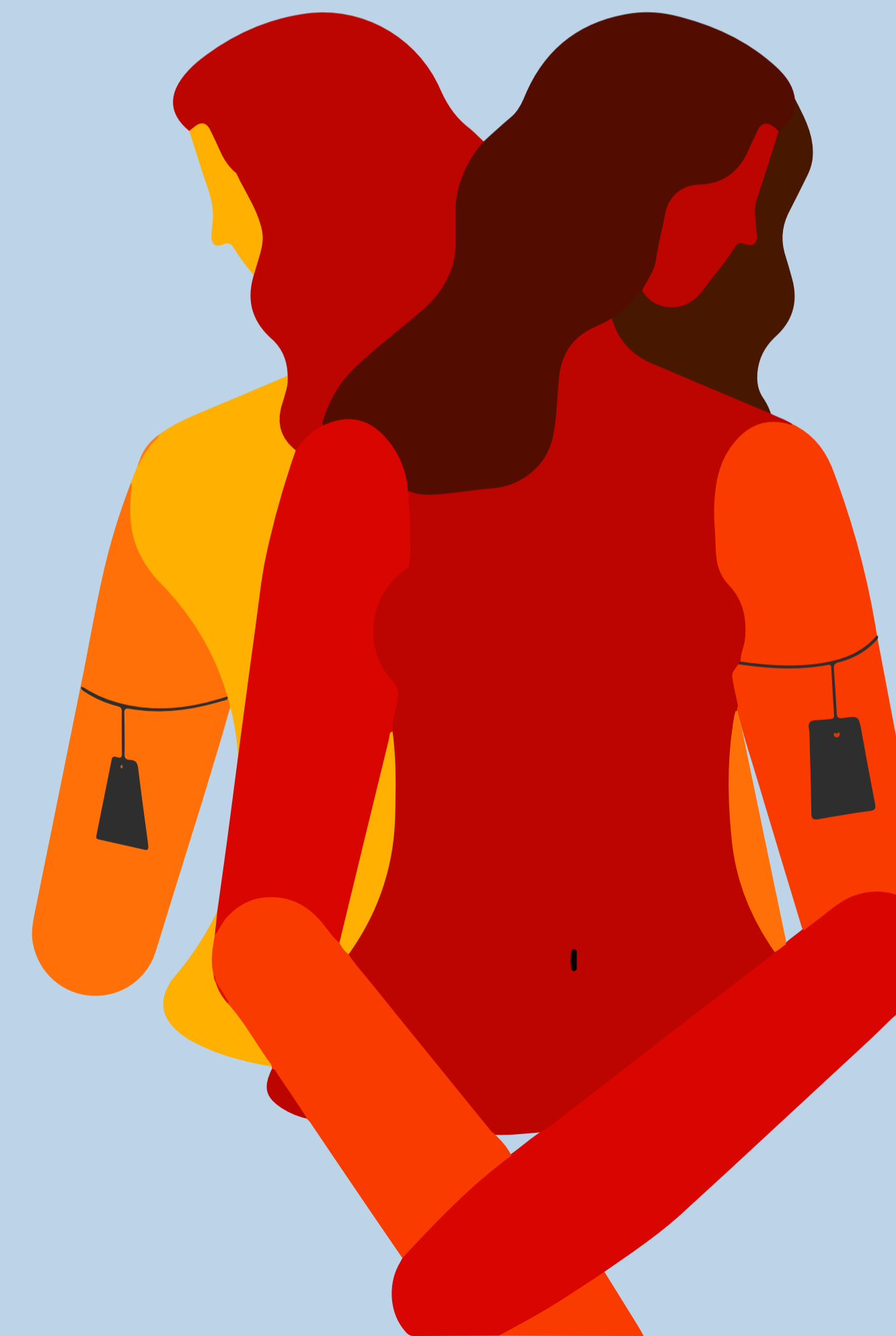
The assessment of 3 city administration - local partners’ services for returnees (social protection, migration policy mechanisms, education, health, employment, services offered by CSOs) has been completed. The assessment has measured the magnitude

and propensity for outward migration and re-migration of the local population, as well as potentials and capacities for service provision, critical for sustainable reintegration of returnees. The report offers a holistic picture of the local situation, including views of returnees themselves.

### IMPROVING THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG ROMA WOMEN AND MEN, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

The joint UNHCR, UNDP and UNV project “Local initiatives for improved social inclusion of young people from vulnerable groups” is dedicated to involving and building capacities of young people from vulnerable groups for developing societal resilience, through networking with local institutions and advocacy campaigns. It was designed to improve the lives of young men and women from vulnerable groups, particularly Roma, Roma IDPs, as well as refugees and asylum-seekers.

In 2021, through a series of trainings, 10 young men and women were equipped to participate actively in decision making processes, awareness raising campaigns, particularly on issues targeting social inclusion. With this knowledge, young women and men were engaged as UN volunteers and partnered with local institutions and local non-governmental organizations to implement actions aimed at awareness raising on the position of the most vulnerable social groups. The goal of this initiative lies in mak-



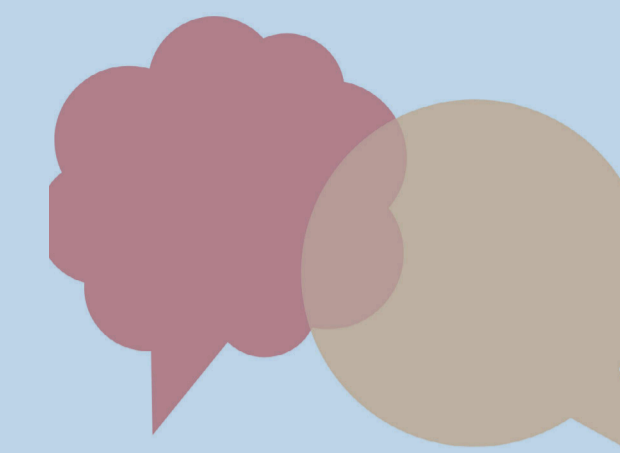


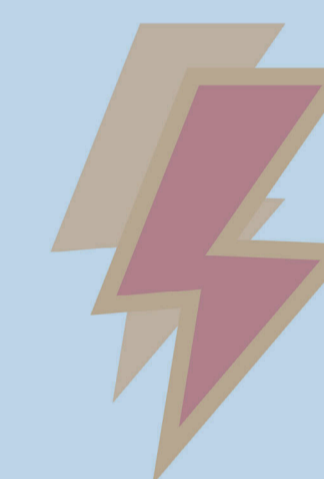
ing local government institutions more inclusive and increase their ability to integrate concerns and capacities of minority groups.

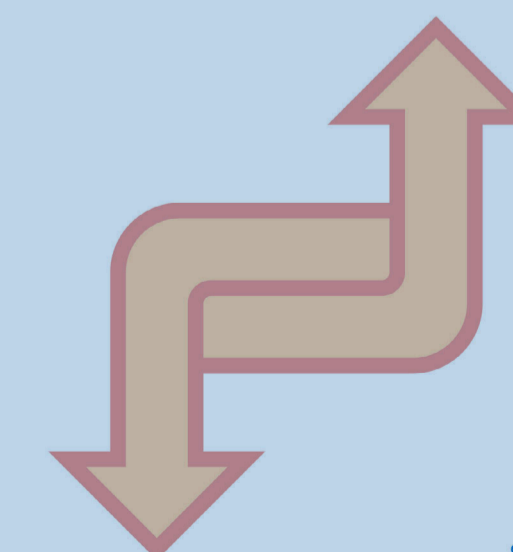
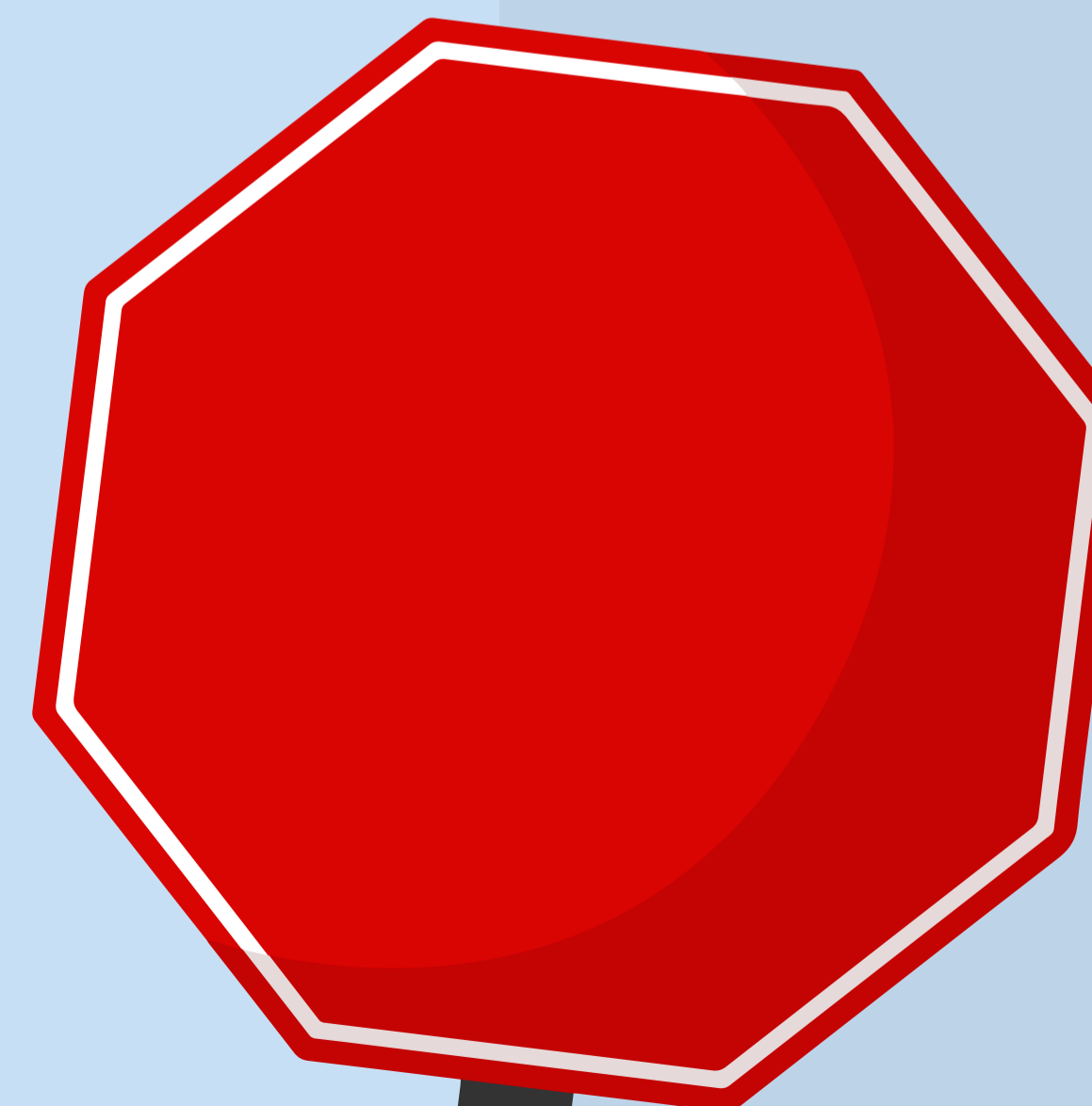
Three more initiatives were implemented by young volunteers:

1. To prevent and respond to racism, discrimination, xenophobia and lack of tolerance towards refugees, asylum seekers, Roma and IDPs youth, a scrapbook for schoolchildren was developed with stories written by Roma and refugees. The scrapbook was disseminated in 5 primary schools in Belgrade for schoolchildren to sign and answer questions.
2. Two animated short films are being finalized intended to raise awareness on the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers. The first film, titled “Medina” depicts the journey of a refugee girl to Serbia, while the second covers the issue of the exodus of Roma from India. Both films have been prepared by young volunteers, refugees and Roma, using their experiences and personal stories.

3. To support the employment of young people from vulnerable groups, we partnered with IT software experts to provide trainings on DevOps use. Cloud Devops trainings implemented from July to end of December 2021, were attended by 7 participants (5 men and 2 women). Among the participants, six belong to the Roma population and one is a refugee girl. Two participants received an internship after completing the training, other participants are very interested in the internship and will be supported in 2022 in job applications or internships applications within IT companies in Serbia. After the training, participants have the opportunity to pass the exam and certify for DevOps through a world acknowledged system (Amazon). Two trainees already passed the test while other five are preparing for testing and certification. A video was prepared to share the benefits of this initiative and participants’ experiences.







## GENDER RESPONSIVE PARENTING PROGRAMME

**The Fifth National Conference on ECD and gender-responsive parenting** with international participation was held as a hybrid event at the end of 2021. The Conference brought together a range of stakeholders working in ECD, including representatives of the government and line ministries, experts, front-line workers, caregivers, civil society organizations and media which generated a fruitful discussion on the scalability of parenting support interventions piloted across different service provision systems in Serbia. Key highlights were a) **Best results, practices and evidence on the effectiveness of gender-responsive parenting programme** were shared with policymakers and broader audience through testimonials from parents, both fathers and mothers, and professionals and practitioners; b) **Parents and caregivers were centered in the spotlight of the conversation about children**, including the mental health of parents and the paradigm shift in approaching caregivers including gender-driven differences and unbalanced approaches, c) **Dialogue on opportunities for inspired cross-sectoral action to further scale the gender-responsive programme was opened**. You can find Conference recording on the following [link](#).

Earlier, in October 2021 a **Master Class for Parents entitled ¶ Being a Dad ¶** was held within the UNICEF Parenting School. The Master Class was organized in partnership with the UNFPA Serbia, within the Playful Parenting Programme, implemented by UNICEF in cooperation with the Government of Serbia, and with the support of the LEGO Founda-

tion. The full Master Class is available on the following [link](#).

### MATERNAL, CHILD HEALTH AND BREASTFEEDING – MAINTAINING THE CONTINUITY OF CARE IN FOCUS

Although 93 per cent of children in Serbia were ever breastfed, only 24 per cent of children aged 0-5 months are exclusively breastfed (MICS, 2019). The COVID-19 crisis has imposed many new challenges to families with newborns but also to the health care in support of these families. To overcome this, the continuity of programs focusing on the improvement of breastfeeding support and developmental care for newborns has been strengthened by UNICEF Serbia and relevant national partners who continued to perform online courses for breastfeeding support to health professionals. In the period covered by the Brief health professionals engaged in more than 50 health institutions have completed training based on a 20-hour WHO course for breastfeeding support. In order to ensure the quality of trainings, UNICEF supported translation from English to the Serbian language of BFHI training manuals for Trainers and Participants available [here](#).

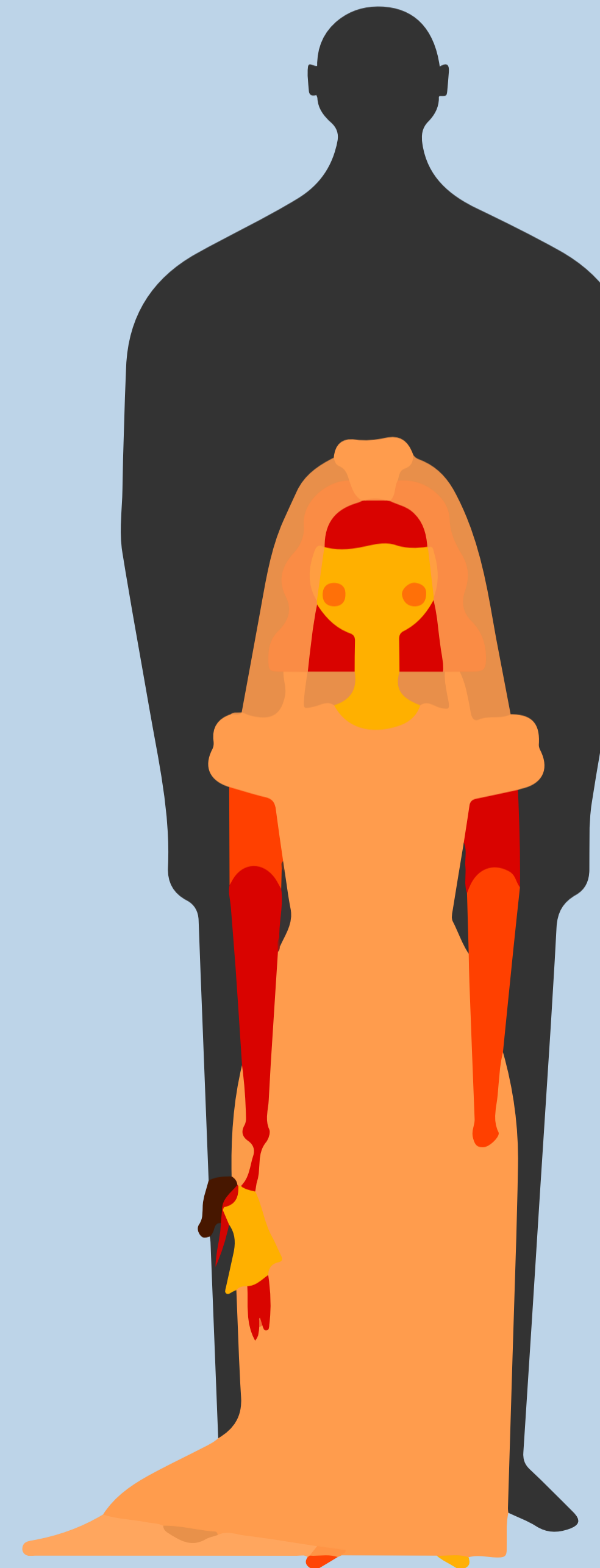
As part of activities focused on the protection of breastfeeding, UNICEF supported the finalization and dissemination of a professional [publication intended for health care workers related to the safe use of drugs during breastfeeding](#).

### GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2030

UNICEF provided substantial technical assistance in the process of development of the new Education Development Strategy 2030, adopted in mid2021, providing significant support in defining strategic goals, measures and activities relevant to ensuring equity, quality, accessibility and inclusion of pre-university education, as well as gender equity and protection of all forms of violence including gender-based violence.

As a result, the New Education Development Strategy 2030, envisages several important goals and measures relevant to gender equality in education, such as:

- further development of curricula as to ensure that the curricula are gender-sensitive and that they contribute to gender equality and non-discrimination
- measures to develop and integrate standards for the accreditation of study programmes for the education of teachers, in terms of inclusion of content on human rights, rights of the child, gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusive education in study programmes
- further promotion of gender equality within the education system
- measures relevant to elimination of gender inequalities and provision of equal access to all education levels, such as gender - sensitive financial support measures for students, and affirmative gender measures



- measures to combat violence and discrimination, including gender - based violence and gender related discrimination, through i.a. development of code of conduct for education professionals and establishment of ethical committees, as well as through further capacity building of education professionals
- implementation of training programs in the area of gender equality, gender-based violence, gender - sensitive prevention of drop-out, and combating gender stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

### PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In 2021, two major cases of long-term sexual abuse of girls in non-formal education settings emerged, after several young women reported being sexually abused as minors, during their activities with NGOs providing non - formal learning. Fueled by thorough media coverage the common understanding emerged on the need for appropriate standards to be established for entities providing non formal education and other services to children. In order to contribute strengthening mechanisms to prevent such violence against children UNICEF as been advocating with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MoESTD) to strengthen prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse standards within organisations and entities providing extracurricular

activities with children, such as of learning, arts, sport, recreational and other activities (language, arts, and other courses, sports, student camps, visits and recreation, etc).

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCIES (GBViE): ADDRESSING GBV AFFECTING REFUGEE AND MIGRANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN

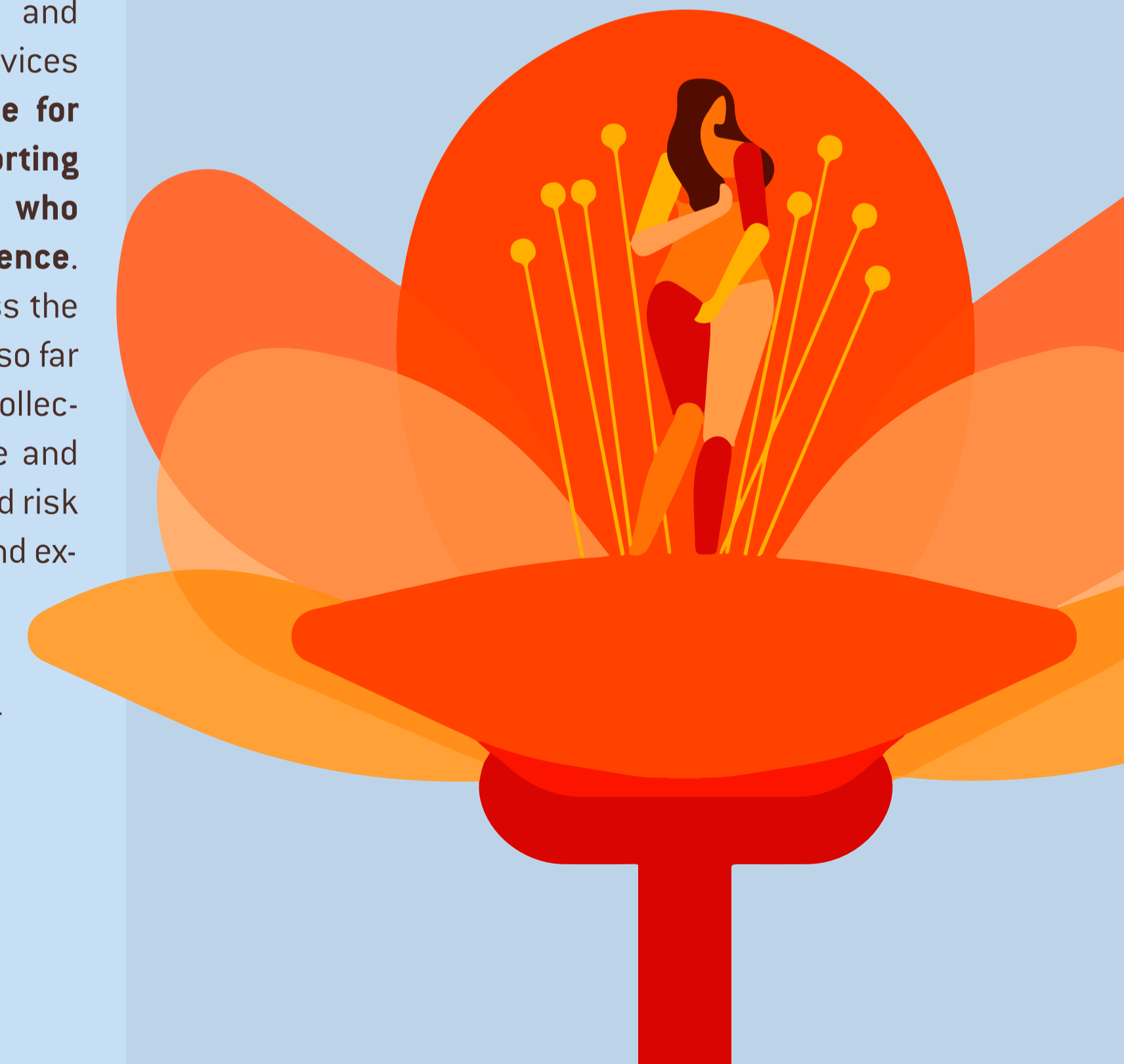
With its implementing partners Info Park and ADRA, UNICEF has continued to ensure increased availability and accessibility of **GBViE prevention and response services**, as well as gender-sensitive child protection, psychosocial, safety services and to maintain hygiene and basic human dignity for refugee and migrant children, adolescents, and women in Serbia. The support services are provided through **Women and Girls Safe Spaces and outreach activities in 4 locations** in Serbia, including specialized psychosocial assistance as well as access to information and case management and referral to further support to refugee women and girls – additionally adapted due to COVID-19. Recognizing the specific vulnerabilities in this context UNICEF has continued to distribute **dignity/hygiene kits** with key hygiene and NFI items for women, girls and boys including UASC accommodated in RC/TC/AC, social protection institutions and shelters.

In partnership with the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Political Science, UNICEF has developed the **course *Protection of chil-***

***dren affected by migration*** with integrated GBV modules with the support of the United States Government. In partnership with the EU the course has been accredited, became an integral part of the regular learning offer at Belgrade University - Faculty of Political Science and monograph and practicum for students (available [here](#) in Serbian and [here](#) in English) were developed.

This multidisciplinary course is accessible to both students and professionals working in humanitarian context including within the child protection or migration management sector. Key two-years program achievements were presented at two dissemination events, national and international.

Additionally, understanding that male youth on the move are often not perceived as being vulnerable to sexual violence, and that they might not be recognized and linked with the needed specialized services **UNICEF has prepared the field guide for frontline workers in Europe - Supporting young male refugees and migrants who are survivors or at risk of sexual violence.** A round table was organized to discuss the response, resources and experiences so far and reflect together on what we can collectively improve to ensure that refugee and migrant children who face a heightened risk of different forms of violence, abuse and exploitation are protected and have access to support they may need. Field guide can be accessed online here: [in Serbian](#), and [in English](#).



## SUPPORT TO THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEE AND MIGRANT GIRLS IN SERBIA

In order to provide education continuity for children on the move, UNICEF has, since 2020, partnered with Akelius Foundations to provide the distance learning opportunities for children on the move at three reception/asylum centers in Serbia, through provision of digital equipment, strengthening learning conditions in reception/asylum centers, provision of English courses, as well as support to children enrolled in the formal education system in Serbia. Bearing in mind traditional gender roles and norms, the project focuses specifically on encouragement and outreach to girls on the move and their parents to enroll their female children in learning activities conducted within the Akelius learning initiative. Gender gap has been successfully tackled, and in the first phase of the project (2020/2021 school year) girls presented over 40 per cent of participants.

## GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN UNICEF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Promoting youth employability programme UNICEF tailored its campaign to ensure engagement of young girls. As a result, significant number of young girls expressed their interest in participating in internship

programme. Out of 586 youth registered for participating through project database, 70 per cent are female. As the availability of job opportunities of girls and women continues to be negatively affected by gender stereotypes, Programme will try to create opportunities for them in the sectors where they are traditionally less represented.

Furthermore, within the framework of the same Programme, UNICEF supported Government in developing of the new Internship law. Draft document was the first one to be screened through gender lenses by the Republic Secretariat for Public Policies and evaluated as gender sensitive not only based on the language, but also regarding its content and its planned impact on girls and women.

## VOICE OF THE YOUTH ON GENDER STEREOTYPES IN ADVERTISING

We have asked youth what they think of the gender norms and stereotypes in advertising - 70 per cent of total U-Report respondents on the poll Stereotypes in advertising think that girls and women are presented differently in the media than boys and man, which is more often noticed by female respondents (76 per cent) rather than male (57 per cent). Respondents note that the female gender is more often shown in advertisements in the kitchen, shopping, cleaning the house and helping children (89 per cent) and less as

stronger and successful (13 per cent) or at work, sporting events and in managerial positions (4 per cent). Additionally, in advertisements female appearance is often emphasized and sexualized, which is stated by 69 per cent of respondents, with again female respondents being more sensitive to this (71 per cent) rather than male (63 per cent). UNICEF Serbia, in collaboration with the National Association for Ethical Standards in Advertising, presented this data at the national conference demonstrating how use of negative stereotypes affects youth, including effects on their self-confidence, and promoting use of positive gender roles in marketing and advertising.





Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

The National Gender Profile for Serbia represents the first comprehensive and structured attempt to collect and analyze available secondary data across all sectors relevant to agriculture and rural livelihoods. It provides a profound analysis of gender issues in agriculture, food security, and rural livelihoods. By this, the assessment contributes to the existing body of knowledge on rural women's status, establishes connections between gender inequalities and agriculture and food security, and sustainable development in Serbia, and suggests areas for future work to responsible stakeholders and FAO.

This analysis of gender equality in Serbia's agricultural and rural development sector was carried out under the "Support to the Implementation of Inclusive Agricultural Policies in Serbia" project, which was implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The research was conducted by the SeConS Development Initiative Group based on FAO guidance for similar reports in seven different countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This Country Gender Assessment (CGA) is aligned with FAO's strategic commitment to closing the gender gap in agriculture, thereby generating

significant gains for the agricultural sector and helping to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty (FAO, 2019). The key objective was to produce a comprehensive analysis of gender equality in the agricultural sector and rural development processes, identifying gender inequalities and their underlying causes and consequences, and offering recommendations for gender-responsive policies to enable the transformation of gender relations and structures in the agricultural sector and rural development.

The CGA findings indicate significant gender gaps in rural areas across diverse dimensions, including access to assets, economic participation, roles in and gains from agricultural production, the exercise of a range of welfare rights, political participation, access to social services, lifestyles and resilience to climate change and emergencies. The latest emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, has had profound impact on the rural population, agriculture and the position of women in rural areas. At the same time, it has created opportunities for innovative approaches and new practices that can improve the economic activity of rural women in the future, and consequently their overall wellbeing. The full report is available [here](#).





Based on context analysis and needs assessments, and building on the so-far reached field experience and ongoing presence in all governmental Centers in Serbia through various protection activities, in 2021, UNHCR Serbia in 2021 intervened to further enhance its on-going program through: Prevention and Protection against SGBV inside the Asylum Centres; Identification of SGBV survivors, referral and providing continual support to relevant state institutions with follow up on individual cases. Together with specialised UNHCR staff, and in cooperation with relevant authorities (Social Welfare Centres, SCRM, Ministry of Interior, Public Prosecutor Office), a comprehensive approach to the reducing risks of SGBV, focusing on early interventions, was provided.

UNHCR Serbia, partners or the government stakeholders regularly collected data and reported as per trends that are disaggregated by age, sex, disability, and other aspects of diversity. The trends recorded and reported on a yearly basis show of disproportionate presence of men and women in the country, with evidently more male beneficiaries among the groups of beneficiaries. As per Governmental figures, in 2021, 60,075 persons were recorded to have entered the country with 3.3 per cent women and 96.7 per cent men. Among them there were evidenced 1,079 UAMs out of which 99 per cent boys and only 1 per cent girls. In addition, dominant age among the concerned population are the young people and among the recorded and profiled categories very few protection risks associated to disability or similar specific needs are report-

ed. To ensure that women have access to UNHCR cash interventions, as a rule UNHCR provided cash-based assistance to 25 asylum seekers and refugee women, asylum seekers and refugees,

The mapping of stakeholders at local level in Serbia aimed at developing a focused stakeholder analysis in the field of asylum seekers, refugees and other categories of vulnerable persons among the mixed migration flows, which would help in the development of internal strategies and external partnerships. Through a gender and age balanced approach, this exercise also assisted the identifying of main community problems, mapping individuals, associations, entities, and institutions, including physical assets; building and expanding existing community structures that would strengthen for sustainability. 600 different stakeholders from local communities, in 14 different locations of the country, were identified and listed in a comprehensive table. Maps of main and most relevant local community stakeholders in surroundings of the centres were produced and disseminated for further use in all the state-run centres.

The annual exercise of participatory assessment based on age and gender diversity mainstreaming, that UNHCR Serbia conducts with persons of concern in the country, in 2021, focused on the theme of acceptance and inclusion along to community engagement and integration. UNHCR and its partners approached 73 (respectively 46 persons through Focus Group Discussions and 27 through KOBBO questionnaires) as per all target groups. This year

UNHCR paid considerate attention to the proportional reach from gender, age and nationality perspective respectively with 40 per cent of its respondents' women and girls and 20 per cent of the total number of participants were children (unaccompanied minors or children with or without families). The level of interaction with the host community varies in different parts of the country. Such positive impressions and good feedback from host community was observed mainly in the South of the and Southeast of the country (Presevo, Vranje), as well as in South-east part like Bosilegrad and finally in Sid. Vocational and skills building activities were highlighted as core components that help women refugees gain new qualifications and later on increase self-reliance through employment. They mentioned the widespread perception among the host community that foreigners arriving in Serbia are only in transit to other destinations and due to this they see the efforts taken of a short-term effect, rather than creating a sustainable environment for their inclusion.

UNHCR and partner CRPC gathered in Belgrade a number of local and refugee representatives of the LGBTI+ population, and local/regional CSOs involved with LGBTI protection - Da se zna, Equal Rights Association (ERA) and Pride Info Centre. Several aspects of discrimination and the experiences of being an LGBTI refugee were shared and discussed by the participants, who agreed on a number of joint activities in anticipation of Belgrade Europe Pride Week in September.





UNHCR through its implementing partner, DRC organized a series of awareness and sensitization, recreational and socio-cultural activities in Women Safe Space in Asylum Centre Krnjaca. On the occasion of the campaign 16 Days of activism, 10 empowerment workshops were organized with participation also of 50 women from Burundi, Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan, Cameroon etv, In addition individual counselling sessions to prevent sexual and gender-based violence incidents followed.

INDIGO organized 11 community-based activities in cooperation with the local actors in South and South East of Serbia. Three meetings with female led organizations from Pirot, Bosilegrad were conducted in the last quarter of 2021. The events had as main purpose to set a place for discussion between refugee women and local female activists. The representatives from 5 local organizations were present at the meeting – NGO Zene sa juga (feminist organization which provides support to GBV survivors); NGO Ternipe (organization who support Roma women and girls), NGO Zvo-no (organization whose focus is on education), NGO Tempsanke (organization who supports women from rural areas) and NGO Luzicke rukotvorine (organization focuses on organic agricultural led by women).

On the occasion of the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, in cooperation with Presevo Youth Office, the boys and young adults joined their local peers for an outing, where they prepared and shared the local food and both girls and boys took part in sports activities, reiterating the equal rights of girls and boys

to participate in all activities in their communities.

In the second half of 2021, DRC provided targeted services for 31 SGBV survivors out of which 2 were male UASC. 16 cases of domestic violence, 13 cases of sexual violence including 2 cases of sexual exploitation, and 2 cases of sexual harassment were followed up. DRC together with IDEAS monitored asylum procedure for 3 female asylum seekers with SGBV based asylum claims. 7 workshops on COVID-19 related preventive measures and vaccination were attended by 19 females and 31 males; 3 workshops on Reproductive Health/ Family Planning were attended by 15 females; 2 workshops on Puberty were attended by 8 girls; 12 workshops on Breast cancer early detection by Breast self-examination were attended by 43 females; 3 workshops on Sexually transmitted infections and HIV were attended by 9 males and 5 females; 3 psychosocial support workshops were attended by 14 females.

As many as 12 educational workshops that covered number of topics and aimed at increasing the knowledge about psychosocial and life skills, parenting, SGBV, PSEA, integration and cultural orientation were organized by IAN. 223 PoCs benefited from these educational activities. Educational workshops were organized for the PoCs accommodated in asylum centers in Bogovadja, Banja Koviljaca, Krnjaca and Tutin, and private accommodation in Belgrade. Most topics were chosen together with the beneficiaries, based on their interests and needs.





## INTERNATIONAL DAYS

### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN

On 15 October 2021, UN Women together with the Provincial Ombudsman and the Provincial Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality with the support of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, organized a conference entitled “Rural women – drivers of local development”. Aimed to support the advancement of the position of rural women through the improvement of frameworks and mechanisms for their economic empowerment, the conference gathered

different experts and professionals including professor Zoran Pavlovic, Provincial Ombudsman, Brankica Jankovic, Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Aleksandar Bogicevic, Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture in charge of rural development and many others. In the discussion, representatives of the women’s CSOs expressed their opinion on the position of women in rural areas and explained the challenges they are facing in their working and living environment.

### 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

UN Women in Serbia marked this year’s 16 Days of Activism together with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality in the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of European Integration, the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia and the Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade. The focus of this year’s 16 Days of Activism campaign in Serbia was a theater play, which aimed at disseminating strong messages against violence against women and girls. The one-hour play “Pussycat is fried” was created with the aim of causing transformative change in young girls and boys, to develop healthy and respectful relationships. The play included famous Serbian actors and actresses and premiered on 25 November in Teatar

na Brdu. It is set to play for a whole theatre season, several times a month. The premiere was attended by over 350 people including many celebrities, Deputy Prime Minister, numerous ambassadors and other UN Women partners and friends. The total reach of the campaign stands at around 5 million in Serbia.

In addition, as part of a joint UN Serbia campaign, a Roma women’s band Pretty Loud recorded a song in Serbian and Romani and produced a video which was broadcasted during the 16 days campaign. The song reflected different forms of violence different generations of women from different groups face and conveys the message that young women wish to break that cycle.