



## Concept note

### Webinar on status of women and girls with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Topic:** Engagement, participation and inclusion of girls and women in the disability movement and in society with the goal to enable them to advocate for their rights and fight against the discrimination and SGBV

**Date and time:** Monday, December 6, 2 p.m. (CET)

**Place:** Zoom webinar. A meeting link will be shared closer to the event together with a final agenda.

#### Background

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of many countries that has ratified the CEDAW<sup>1</sup> and the Istanbul Convention to demonstrate the commitment to respect, promote and protect women's rights and provide gender equality. This has been additionally proved through domestic legislation and regulations such as the Law on Gender Equality and Gender Action Plans. However, none of these documents explicitly mention women with disabilities and their human rights and needs. There is no mainstreaming of women with disabilities and their rights are not specifically included in the existing regulations to ensure meaningful inclusion in the society. The lack of a disability perspective implies that all kinds of existing barriers remain and prevent persons with disabilities to enjoy their rights in the same way as persons without disabilities.

Although the UNCRPD<sup>2</sup>, that Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified eleven years ago, promotes the principle of gender equality and the obligation of the state to provide necessary measures to ensure it, it is rare to see women with disabilities active and visible in BiH society.

"Analysis of gender-based violence against persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina"<sup>3</sup> that MyRight coordinated during 2019. also recommended better use of mechanisms that would protect human rights, particularly the right to protection against discrimination and violence of persons with disabilities. This study encouraged MyRight to develop a project – "I am here visible and proud" – which goal is to contribute to better implementation of rights of women with disabilities through their increased and active participation in organizations of persons with disabilities. The project will help to better understand the reasons behind the lack of participation of women with disabilities in public life, specifically in the work of organizations of persons with disabilities. The project also aims to attract women with disabilities to become active members who advocate for their rights in these organizations. This project is a first step towards the empowerment of women with disabilities to recognize and react to the different forms of violence. The first phase of the project has been completed, where five coalitions of organizations of persons with disabilities in Bijeljina, Doboj, Sarajevo, Mostar, and Tuzla, have identified one hundred women with disabilities who have not been active in organizations of persons with disabilities. All hundred women were interviewed about their life. The collected information is put into a report on socio-economic situation and causes of passivity

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

<sup>3</sup> The analysis being the only, first, and therefore the most relevant study about the SGBV against persons with disabilities has laid down the foundations for another project that MyRight is currently coordinating in BiH that should also build capacities of persons with disabilities and their organizations to fight the SGBV.



of women with disabilities. The report will assist in focusing the efforts on necessary activities which will attract at least 60 out of the 100 identified women to continue their capacity building through a mentoring program, training, active work in the forum of women within the coalition, and practical implementation of advocacy and other actions. These efforts will in turn contribute to implementation of their rights.

### **Objective**

To provide space for an active dialogue among various stakeholders on how to find common ground on different methods, priorities and operational approaches, that can help strengthen the role of women and girls with disabilities in society and in organizations of PWDs, including addressing violence against women with disabilities.

Participants in the webinar will hear about the status of women and girls with disabilities, as well as the situation on gender-based violence against women with disabilities, based on a study conducted in 2019. The webinar will also discuss reasons behind lack of adequate responses and lack of information on this topic.

Building on examples and recommendations shared in the webinar, the organisers will identify action points for different stakeholder groups to advance collaboration and joint action on increasing participation and inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the society, as well as the prevention of violence against women and girls with disabilities.



*Seminar organized by MyRight*



### Questions for discussion

- What are the reasons behind women with disabilities' lack of participation and passivity in organizations of persons with disabilities?
- What are the main challenges when it comes to implementation of rights of women with disabilities?
- The principles of Leave No one Behind and Do No Harm compel us to acknowledge the unique vulnerabilities of the most marginalized. What opportunities for inclusion and participation do girls and women with disabilities have in organizations of persons with disabilities and society?

### Speakers

Speakers include participants in the project, donor, practitioners and project implementer, and consultants who were involved in project implementation.

**Lisa Curman**, Program manager and Deputy head, Development Cooperation Section, Embassy of Sweden, will present Sida's view and reasons behind supporting the project.

**Branislava Crnčević Čulić**, representatives of the Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, will present ARP's view on prevention of violence against women and girls.

**Tanja Mandić Đokić**, author in the study "Gender-based violence against persons with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina" will share the most important findings from the study.

**The representative of one of COPWD TBC**, will give an overview of the work that has been done in the field when it comes to mapping and interviewing women with disabilities as a complex and demanding activity for each coalition included in the project.

**Uma Isić**, consultant, will present the report on the socio-economic situation of women with disabilities, family interaction, and inclusion in the community.

### About the organiser

#### MyRight

MyRight is the umbrella organization of the Swedish disability movement for international cooperation, which has a long tradition of approaching disability from a human rights perspective. MyRight implements an international support program in Bolivia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana and Namibia.

The goal of MyRight's international support program for each program country is:

"Partner organizations in the countries where the MyRight program is implemented improve their abilities and skills and contribute to increasing the inclusion of people with disabilities in society, in accordance with the UN Convention."

MyRight's vision is a world in which people with disabilities enjoy equal rights and opportunities to live a life worthy of a person through the inclusion in society.

The values of MyRight are focused on growth and development of knowledge and skills of people with disabilities so that they can independently and well advocate for their rights.



MyRight has received a grant from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in 2020 for the implementation of the project “**I am here - visible and proud**” with focus on implementation of rights of women with disabilities.