



## FACT SHEET

### Equality for All: Civil Society Coalition Against Discrimination

#### Project Snapshot:

**Total Funding:** \$2.3 million\*

**Project Duration:** May 2014 - May 2018

**Implementing Partner:** Mediacentar Foundation

Three core local partners: Vasa Prava (Your Rights), Analitika and Prava za Sve (Rights for All)

*\*Includes 15 percent in matching funds from Open Society Fund*

#### The Challenge

Many vulnerable groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) – women, national minorities and the LGBTI population, in particular – are often denied human rights and opportunities that others take for granted. Various forms of discrimination permeate all sectors of BiH society, including health care, employment and education. This takes a toll on the country as well as individuals as it prevents thousands of people from contributing fully to development of the country. In 2009, BiH adopted the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, however, implementation has been weak. This is due largely to low public awareness of legal recourse for discrimination, as well as inefficiency and the lack of action by relevant institutions that do not cooperate with civil society in protecting citizens against discrimination.

#### Our Program

Our program, **Equality for All: Civil Society Coalition Against Discrimination**, is based on the belief that the anti-discrimination framework in BiH will be more effective if grassroots civil society organizations (CSOs) are involved in amending and implementing the law, and help citizens navigate and garner protection under the law. This assistance will firmly establish dialogue between CSOs and key government institutions and courts to ensure that the

discrimination concerns of all citizens are considered and hopefully addressed in policy reforms. It also raises public awareness of discrimination issues and recourse for citizens.

#### Implementation and Results

The project has established cooperation between participating CSOs (the Equality for All Coalition) and relevant institutions in the fight against discrimination in BiH – the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, the Institution of Ombudsmen for Human Rights, and the BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees. They are working together at the local level to develop and establish models to prevent discrimination within these institutions.

The project has developed policy papers that will form the framework for improving BiH anti-discrimination legislation so that all citizens, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation or nationality, are treated equally in BiH. The project's legal experts trained two pools of local trainers specializing in providing paralegal aid in discrimination cases and anti-discrimination advocacy.

In the first 18 months of the project, coalition members addressed more than 60 discrimination inquiries and actively supported individuals in court proceedings and collective lawsuits.

In addition, the coalition has produced and published more than 200 stories through various media channels, reaching more than 250,000 BiH citizens. These public outreach efforts will teach citizens more about discrimination and encourage them to report it.

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