



FACT SHEET

Project Snapshot

Total Funding: \$339,500*

Start Date: June 2013

End Date: December 2014

Implementing Partner:

UNICEF BiH and

EU Delegation to BiH

**USAID co-funding: \$150,000*



BiH soccer star and UNICEF National Ambassador Edin Dzeko and fan.



“Children with disabilities and their communities both benefit if we all focus on what these children can achieve, rather than what they cannot.”

**— Actor Danny Glover,
UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador**

It's About Ability

The Challenge

Persons with disabilities constitute one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). They are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard in society. Their disabilities also place them at a higher risk of physical abuse. According to official estimates, the number of disabled children in BiH is 30,000, but this number is likely much higher because many disabled children in BiH are unregistered and kept at home, hidden away from their communities and society overall. In a recent UNICEF survey in BiH, only 10% of respondents said they encounter children with disabilities in their daily lives. One-third of respondents found it unacceptable that a child with intellectual disabilities would attend the same class with their child, and almost half of them would not accept a child with intellectual disabilities as their child's best friend.

Our Program

USAID is partnered with UNICEF and the EU in **It's About Ability**, a campaign to change public perception about children living with disabilities so that they are included in all aspects of society in BiH. This activity will develop and implement a nationwide awareness and social mobilization campaign on the challenges and the abilities of these children to change public opinion and encourage inclusion of children living with disabilities in all aspects of society. Increased awareness will reduce prejudice toward children with disabilities, and ultimately motivate and empower the public to advocate for policy changes that will improve the quality of life for disabled people in their communities.

Implementation and Expected Results

It's About Ability was kicked off by UNICEF BiH's National Ambassador and local soccer star Edin Dzeko, along with representatives of the Special Olympics and the BiH Federation of Football. Activities include surveys, focus groups, capacity building and community work. The USAID-funded portion of the program will support a media campaign and sponsor social mobilization and public relations events. The campaign will include TV commercials, billboards and media articles. The activity will also produce and broadcast a documentary TV series, with each episode dedicated to a specific disability. Promotional materials will include leaflets, brochures and posters on children with disabilities, early intervention, and preschool inclusion. By mid-2014, the level of awareness and positive attitudes towards the rights of children with disabilities will be increased by at least 20%. Increased knowledge and more positive perceptions and attitudes among the public will increase demand for better services for children with disabilities and highlight the need for policy reforms and systemic changes.