



Service provider and civil society actor at the
same time: Challenges of rehabilitation of
survivors of sexual and gender-based violence
in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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**HRBA Conference, 04.05.2016, Bern
Switzerland**



Background

- The non-Governmental Organisation *Vive Žene* has been founded in March 1994 during the war in BH, with the aim to support women and children, the most vulnerable victims of the war.
- From initial emergency support and crisis interventions *Vive Žene* has developed into a professional Centre for Therapy and Rehabilitation, located in Tuzla and active in the whole of BH.
- The organisational developmental strategy of *Vive Žene* has been to follow the needs of our clients within the context and developments of the situation in the country.



Working principles

Vive Žene has developed a multidisciplinary approach in the work with survivors of GBV that integrates social, psychosocial, medical and legal assistance.

The psychosocial model implemented is based on the understanding that healing of trauma is a multidimensional long-term process that involves work at the individual, local, community and macro levels of the society.

Vive Zene's work integrates human rights-based and gender-responsive working principles that prioritize the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of survivors as well as strengthen institutional capacities to eliminate all forms of conflict related violence.



Value of the holistic approach

- Grants holistic responses addressing the survivors' inter-related rights and needs in terms of prevention and/or response to experienced violence
- Promotes coordination, networking and multi-sectorial partnerships, including governmental, non-governmental, other civil society groups in terms of burden sharing and joint responsibility taking
- Commitment to sharing knowledge, by documenting, evaluating and disseminating results (empowers communities, strengthens capacities of the boarder GBV respond system)

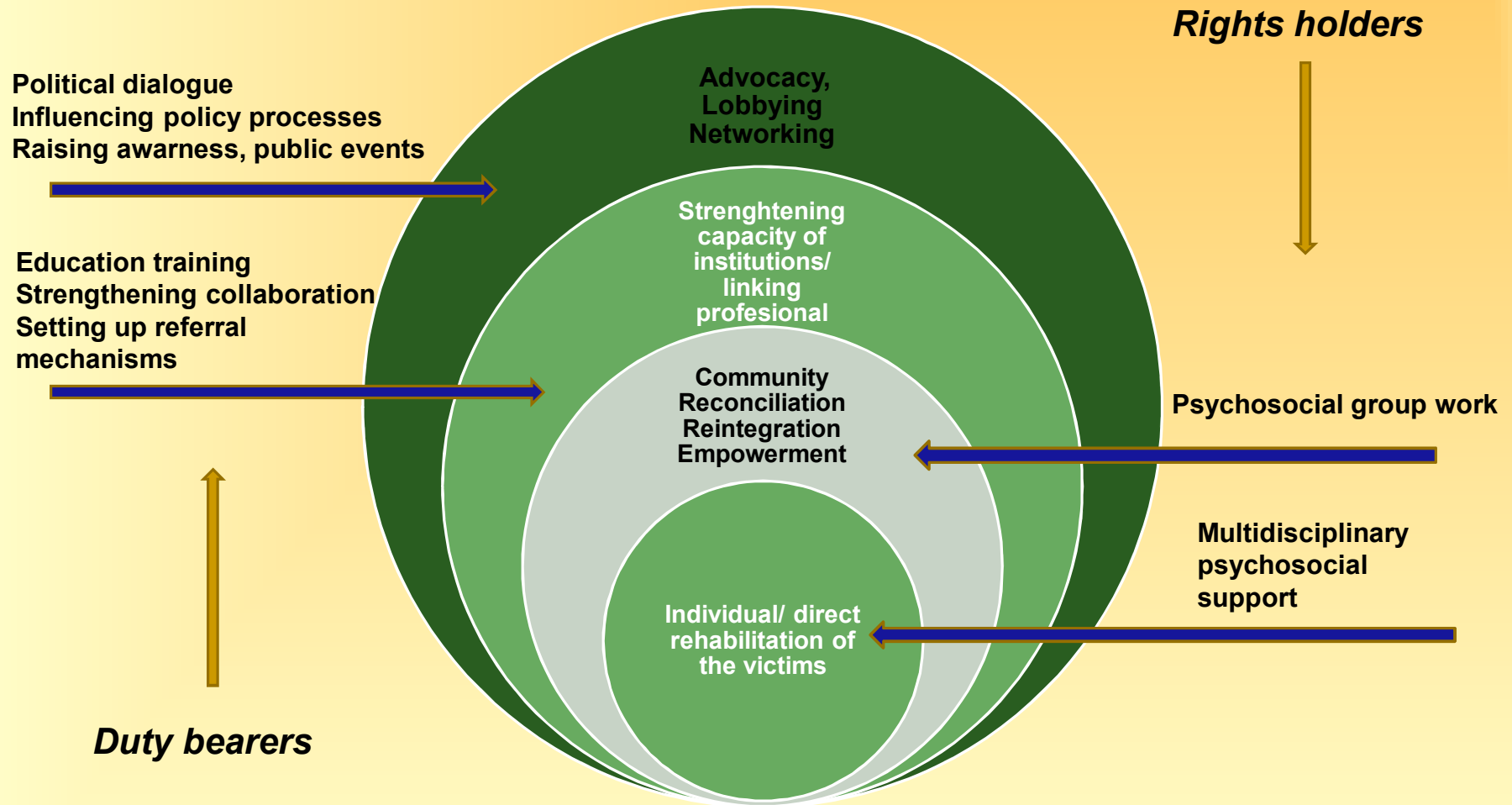


Value of the HRBA

- Adds **legitimacy** since it is based on universal human rights principles and standards.
- Establishes rights of individuals (“**rights holders**”) and corresponding duties of the State and non-state service providers (“**duty bearers**”)
- Increases and strengthens participation of local communities
- Supports the creation of **accountability** mechanisms through (establishment of Referral mechanisms)



Vive Zene Intervention levels



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Beneficiaries 2015 (TOTAL:1686)

Rehabilitation

- **Total:** 443
- Women: 281
- Men: 82
- Children: 80

Community Work

- **Total:** 379
- Women: 137
- Men: 61
- Children and adolescents: 181

Awareness Capacity building

- **Total:** 864
- Participants of round tables and trainings: 284
- Public events: 580



Rehabilitation program (TOTAL: 443)

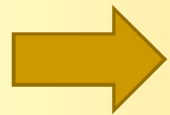
Gender structure of beneficiaries 2015





Challenges within the B&H context

- Despite the progress BiH has made in terms of advancing human rights and gender equality, the survivors of conflict related sexual violence and other forms of GBV are still not sufficiently protected, and some of the rights guaranteed by the BiH laws are not fully respected.



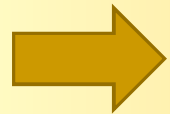
Vive Zene response in terms of HRBA:

- Empowerment of survivors
- Support in rights realisation
- Pushing for implementation of laws and regulations
- Capacity building in police, social services, etc.



Challenges within the B&H context

- Many survivors of rape and GBV live in isolation and have not yet been recognized as victims, nor is taken into account their personal suffering, their rights and dignity, and security that can testify freely without intimidation. They continue to suffer trauma and other psychological and physical problems as a consequence of rape and other forms of torture they experienced.



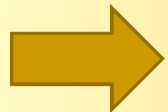
Vive Zene response in terms of HRBA:

- Lobbying for official recognition of status of survivors
- Provide longer term support to survivor groups (individual treatment, after care, community psychosocial work)
- Prevention of secondary traumatisation by working with children and youngsters in affected communities



Challenges within the B&H context

- The fragmented structure of BiH is reflected on the fragmentation towards the available services for the victims. This leads to unequal access to services, exposure to re-traumatization and even fear for personal safety.



Vive Zene response in terms of HRBA:

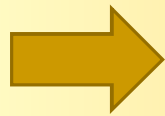
- Building up of collaboration mechanisms
- Training of professionals from public services
- Formalisation of referral mechanisms (protocols)
- Monitoring of implementation of protocols



Challenges within the B&H context

- Political tensions and current socio-economic hardship is additionally burdening the population and seriously influencing trauma work, particularly since trauma is a continuous, sequential psychological process for many people who are victims of GBV.

Vive Zene response in terms of HRBA:



- Contextualisation of working approaches and response (f.ex. in relation to floods in 2014)
- Awareness raising for interlinkedness of context developments and individual and collective suffering
- Accompanying community groups in times of crises
- Work on prevention of transgenerational transmission of trauma



Vive Zene activities in Lobbying, Advocacy (Victims of DV)

- 2003 Criminal law and law for gender equality
- 2005 Law protection of domestic violence
- 2005 Family law
- 2006 trainings for police, center for social and medical workers
- 2009 Protocol of intervention GBV
- 2011 Work with perpetrators
- 2014 Trainings for profesional





Vive Zene activities in Lobbying, Advocacy (Victims of war)

- 2006 - Law Civil victims of the war
- 2007 - Witness support network
- 2008 - Tuzla Canton
- 2009 - Brčko Distrikt
- 2010 - Bratunac Bijeljina region
- 2011 - Network Together against torture
- 2013 - Draft law on victims of torture
- 2015 - Networks W/V support in BH

