

**Ariadne**  
network  
Against Trafficking in Human Beings  
in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe



Udruženje-Association  
ŽENA B&H WOMAN  
Mostar

## **Survivor Stories:**

”Hearing the persons speak: anonymised stories from trafficked persons and victims of violence and their experience and views on (re)integration process”

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## Story No.1

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I was a second year nursing school pupil when I fell in love with a 5 years older man from my town. He did not have a job but he always had money. After I had stayed pregnant, we got married and we started living with his mother. I gave birth to a healthy boy and was very happy. I was even getting along with my mother in law.

My husband was often away because he was in "some kind of business». I felt that he had no desire to discuss his job with me so I asked no questions. I have also noticed that my mother in law was worrying if he stayed away longer. They would often argue but after my entrance in the room, they would stop.

Once my husband stayed away for a whole week and my mother in law went to ask about his whereabouts. She found out that he was arrested for some sort of smuggling. He was sentenced on five years of imprisonment. My mother in law has spent her entire savings on lawyers so that soon we had no money left. I had to work by the day while my mother in law was taking care of my son.

We had a visit once. It was my husband's "friend". I have met him on our wedding day. He suggested me to go to work to Italy where I would earn enough money for the three of us until my husband's release from the prison. I arranged with my mother in law to go to Italy and she would look after my son in the meantime.

So, I went with my husband's "friend" and another three girls. The "friend" asked us to pay him 500 DM each before the trip. Since I did not have that much money he recommended me a man whom from I could borrow the sum.

When we were near the borderline, he parked his car near an inn. There was a friend waiting for him, they both went into the inn while we stayed in the car. After they had left the inn, he told us that we would cross the border much easier with his friend and he would join us on the other side. We have exchanged the cars but all of our belongings were in my "friends" car.

We have crossed the Hungarian border with no problems because the visa was not required. My husband's "friend" was not waiting for us on the other side and the driver drove on without stopping. We asked him about the man who took us to the border and about our belongings. He simply

laughed and told us that he knew nothing about it and that his job was to take us to Belgrade.

On the Hungarian Yugoslav border, our driver came out the car and started talking with the customs officer. We entered the customhouse so we did hear their conversation. After the driver had returned to the car, he told us that he had settled everything and that we were continuing our trip.

When we came to Belgrade, our driver took us to some motel that was under construction. There were, already, round 20 girls. A Ukrainian girl among them informed us that we were actually "sold" and that we will work in the nightclubs. She told us about the time she had tried to escape and seek help with the police. Police officer, instead of helping her, had taken her with the police car back to very hotel. "Learn to live with the fact that there is no way out" she said.

Next day, we, the "new ones", were taken to a separate room where we were ordered to undress ourselves naked. They picked up and taken our cloths away. They photographed us naked and then brought us new cloth to dress ourselves.

Third day on my arrival in Belgrade a man showed up. He took three Romanian girls and me with his car. We drove to some country inn where he parked. He went out and ordered us not to come out the car whatever the reason. He went to the inn and soon came back with a man. He told us that this man would take us across the river by a boat.

When we entered the boat, the man ordered us to lie down and then he covered as with some sort of tarpaulin. Then he paddled towards the other riverbank and under the tarpaulin, I secretly peek out. All I was able to see was anglers on the riverbank. The boat stopped on the other side. We were surrounded with trees and bushes. We had to wade through water and mud. Behind the trees and bushes there was a car waiting for us. The man who took us across the river ordered us to get into the car while he and the car driver went behind the bushes. Shortly the driver returned and took us to a house with the sign "Night Club" in front of the house. The "Boss" was waiting us inside the house. He told us that he had "bought" us and that each of us was 3000 DM worthy. He also told us that we "owed" him that money and that we would have to do everything he orders in order to pay up our "debt". After we pay up our debts, we can go wherever we want or we can continue to work at his place for our own interest. He showed us passports with our photographs inside but with different names. I was Natasha. I was told to use that name in future and to forget my real name.

There were three girls already working in the bar. Three waiters were also there and the girls were very afraid of them. They were talking to each other only if waiters were absent. They confirmed our biggest fear that we would have to sleep with the guests.

Waiters took us upstairs to the first floor and gave us new cloth to wear. Even though we were exhausted, they told us that we would have to come down to the bar in the evening. After the night fell, we had to come down to the club and dance one by one around a "stick" on the podium so that the guests could see us. The girls from the bar were happy. That night they did not have to work. They were able to sit all night and drink with guests. Guests took only the "new meat" to the rooms because they wanted to try new merchandise.

I slept with six different men that same night. The bar was full. Very exhausted I managed to fall a sleep at down. A waiter woke me up and ordered me to come down to lunch. Other girls were already at the table. We had a plate of thick soup with a peace of bred. He explained that it was to prevent us from gaining weight. While we were eating our thick soup, the "boss" with waiters was eating roast beef with salad at the bale next to ours.

Few days after there were a police raid. The four of us were still not registered with the police so they hidden us at the attic. The attic was terribly cold and we were naked. We stayed there until tomorrow noon with no water or food. We were not to raise our voices because "boss" threatened to sell us to Albania. When the waiters came to attic, they said that they had simply forgotten about us. One of the girls protested and the waiter beaten her up in front of us.

Sometimes we had SFOR soldiers as guests. We were looking forward to them. They have always ordering a lot to drink and the boss was giving us a 1 DM of commission for each drink guest would order.

After a month, I managed to save 50 DM and I wanted to send that mone-y to my mother in law. Other girls wanted to send the money too. "Boss" ordered the waiters to take us to a grocery shop across the street. The waiters photographed us behind the counter. Later they gave us the photos and advised us to write that we were working in the grocery shop. I wrote a letter to my mother in law and put the photograph in the envelop. One of the waiters drove us, one by one, to the post office to send the letter and the money.

The girls who have already worked there were in that bar for over a year. They have paid their "debt" a long a go and now the "boss" owed them mo-

ney. One of them – Alona even expressed the desire to go home. The “boss” had no objections. Few days later, a man came and brought a new girl. The “boss” told us that that man would take Alona to Belgrade.

After they were gone, new girl told us that she did not believe his story. Her former “boss” had also promised her to take her home and she ended up at this place. She was convinced that Alona and she were simply exchanged between their “bosses”. She was in Bosnia for two years now. Moreover, during that time she had suffered a lot. She was disappointed and according to her the only way out was a suicide. I thought that it would be best to kill myself immediately. Then I thought of my son and rejected the idea.

I tried to be “good” in order to avoid problems with “boss” and waiters. That way I managed to save and sent my mother in law 30 DM each month. I knew that with that money, my son will survive and that was a reason enough for me to carry on.

A Ukrainian SFOR soldier was a guest at the bar. We spoke a lot and made friends very soon. He told me about the organizations in Bosnia which are helping girls to come home. It made me hope because I was sure that there was no way out. My fellow compatriot promised me help.

One night he came to the Club and told me to get ready to follow him out when he leaves the Club. So I did. He waited in the street. When I got out, he called police with his cell phone. The police came and took me to a Safe house. So my sufferings finally ended.

## Story No. 2

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Jane Doe is my cousin and we live nearby. We were seeing each other every day and we were very close. When her mother, for no apparent reason, was confined to bed, she left school even though she successfully finished the first grade of nursing school.

I was sad that she had to leave the school, and I knew that she was sad too but that she had no choice.

Once she told me about a man who was working in Germany and who paid them a visit. He was a stranger to me because he was from the neighbouring village. He came to ask her mother to let her go to Germany where she would baby-sit for his children. He promised to employ her later in some factory.

Jane Doe was very excited for the given opportunity to leave the misery which she lived in, but she was also sad to leave the mother behind, alone and in terrible conditions. She confessed that her mother was “forcing” her to go with words that she will “manage” without her.

The following days went by very quickly because Jane Doe had to obtain the passport and to finish some other things. I think she went to get her visa so I did not see much of her.

I remember the day when a big black car with German number plates came for her. That very man with a woman and two small children was in the car. She and her mother were crying as they were saying goodbye to each other. She promised that she would write to me every day.

I believe that she wrote a single letter to her mother and it contained nothing special. She wrote that she was fine and that her mother should not worry for her.

We have not heard from her again. Her mother was sad; she was waiting by her old house window and constantly crying. I did my best to console and help her as much as I could. Her mother was upset at Jane Doe for not contacting her.

After a year Jane Doe came back. How did she come back, I do not know. She was terribly exhausted, thin and it was obvious that she was ill. She spoke to no one about what had happened to her. The following day one of our relatives took her to hospital, where she spent more than three months on treatment. I visited her twice but she had no desire to talk

about her illness, she suffered from lethargy, apathy with her eyes fixed upon the distance. After she had returned from hospital she refused to leave the house. It was pretty evident that she had no wish to communicate with us. I was sure that something terrible had happened to her but I did not know what. Only after a certain period of time I learnt from my aunt which works at the hospital unit where Jane Doe was committed, that the doctors had fought for her life because she suffered a severe case of sepsis due to the unprofessional operations where her kidney and spleen were removed. Unfortunately, Jane Doe still does not feel good, she is very thin and pale, her appearance is changed and she suffers from extreme apathy. She refuses to leave her house for days and she has never spoken about the period of time she had spent in Germany. It feels like she lives in constant fear of something or someone.

**Resume:**

Even with all my efforts to interview Jane Doe, I have not succeeded because she was refusing to meet me. I had a brief conversation with her mother, but as soon as I have revealed the real nature of my visit, she said that she had nothing to say and asked me to leave the house. I saw panic and despair in her eyes.

## Story No. 3

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Jane Doe was 16. She almost cannot remember of her childhood. Her memories are connected with alcoholism of some family members who were important in her growth. In the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina Jane Doe were forced to leave her native town. The period of exile was very painful for her and her family. Her contacts with her mother were very rare considering she was always busy. Father was as well occupied everyday and he had not time to be parent or he just did not know how to be one.

Jane Doe started her education. Parents often ignored her and she felt abandoned. Her family life in exile was very difficult for her, everyone was occupied with his/her own problems. As a little girl, Jane Doe had a responsibility for hard life tasks. It seemed to her that she was growing old too fast because she did all work which was not suitable for her age. Considering that she did not have any parental control, she was left to her own resources.

Such family life lasted for years. Her family situation became worse after coming home from exile. All family members expected that they would have again normal life as it was before, that they would keep on living where they stopped, but nothing was the same. Conflicts were there everyday life. Especially hard communication was between her and her father because her father started to have full control of his daughter. Sometimes that control became isolation.

Besides of psychic harassment her father beat her often. Her fights with father and emotional distance of her mother who was always busy led that Jane Doe ran away from home. From that point, her parents could not do anything. Jane Doe neglected her school engagement. Running from home, she "met" new people with whom she spent much of her time. Persons in her "company" were connected with drugs, crime and prostitution. Jane Doe was too young to understand situation she was put. She thought that those people were her friends and she could rely on them, even asked them for a help if she needed it. However, that was not the truth.

One night, "friends" took her to the bar with excuse that they were going on birthday party one of them. That was not their first out together, so Jane Doe did not suspect anything. However, party was fatal for her. She was brought to the bar where she was harassed physically and emotionally

and abused. After that, unknown men abused her sexually. "Boss" of the nightclub introduced himself to her as a friend and protector but instead he took her underground.

Jane Doe was kept in the bar against her will. Abuse lasted for days. She was taken also to another night clubs, where she was physically, emotionally and sexually abused. She lost every hope it seemed to her that there is no way out from the hell in which she was put. She suffered for days until one night when police made raid. For Jane Doe that was salvation. She has been placed to safe house on the secret location. She looked horrible. Her condition was result of brutal abuse. She cried for days. In the safe house she has been given psycho- social help and we are hoping that she will manage to rehabilitate.

## Story No. 4

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Police has finally arrested me along with other women who worked in Peter's brothel. We are arrested because we had no documents to stay in Holland. It seems quite absurd that this arrest was my only chance to escape.

I felt extremely humiliated working as a "prostitute", especially when I had to work regardless of my illness, exhaustion or my periods. I was forced to work as a slave deprived of any kind of dignity. I think that Peter should be locked up for everything he did to me and to other women.

Monologue:

- My name is Kasija.
- I live with my mother and sister in Piortkow duchy.
- I am graduated hair stylist. It was very hard to find a job in my town.
- I needed the money because my life was difficult.
- My elementary school friend told me about a possibility to get a job somewhere in Germany.
  - She was talking about the job in kitchen, restaurant or something like that.
    - It was an ideal opportunity for my!!!
    - My friend introduced me to two men.
    - We crossed the state border in the evenings.
    - One of them took my passport. He said that it was for safe keeping.
    - We stopped near some motel to stay over night.
    - I was locked in my room and told to take my close off.
    - I was tied up to my bed.
    - They raped me several times and one of them even took pictures.
    - The following day we arrived to some big house.
    - I had met there a girl from Poland called Eva. She told me that I was sold to an exclusive club for men.
      - There were a lot of women from Poland, Czech Republic, Ukraine... the club's owner "bought" them and treated them as private property.
      - After I had refused to come down to bar they beaten me up.
      - They showed me pictures from the motel. They blackmailed me by saying they would send the pictures to my mother, if I did not do what I was told.

- One of them even stepped up to me and started kissing me.
- I nearly vomited! They were supervising my every move I knew that I had to follow him up stairs.
- They kept me locked up.
- I was not allowed to go out. I did not have a passport.
- They said that if I tried to escape.... they would kill me and threw my body into the river.
- They have also told me that there is no use in trying to call the police because they are also bribed.
- What can a person do?
- What can I do?

Before you go...

If you come back...

## Story No. 5

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It was a bit harder for me to write this sad story than other ones, for I had an opportunity to meet this girl after all that what happened to her. I expected to see a girl/woman – trafficking victim, BiH citizen, and I saw a tiny under-age girl, a child, in fact. It was hard to listen her „story“, which she did not want to share with anyone, and she did not want to remember at all, just to forget... I did not force her at all, we just talked about „trivial things“, and just got to know each other a bit. However, soon after these our „trivial“ talks ended with her confession about all these things which happened to her. The most difficult to her was to have a perception of “shame” put on herself (which she did not deserve for any single reason) and the feeling of “being marked“, which resulted with losing a will for living and rather pessimistic view on her future.

We have had an opportunity to meet with “classic” jobs being offered to girls through advertisements. It is about jobs of waitress, baby-sitter etc. Sometimes it is not announced a type of job for which “young female workers” are wanted. The most often it is about advertisements for future actresses, singers, dancers, fashion models, etc for mainly non-existing agencies.

There is another, a „less known“ way of entering into sphere of private and intimate life of not only a girl, but also of her closest family.

**Scenario is mostly like the following:**

**“MAN” meets, charms and wins over a girl.**

**GIRL (usually under-age girl for it is easy to cheat her, and presently it is the highest demand for them in the sex industry) falls in love with man (it is mostly about men in their 30s).**

**“MAN” promises that he will marry her. It often happens that girl loose her virginity with that particular man.**

**Then, they go to the trip to meet his parents (these girls often run away from their homes)...**

And then she disappeared without leaving any trace, at all. If we take into account that the aforementioned men falsely present themselves while avoiding to meet her parents or parents do not even know that their daughter has a “boyfriend” at all, it gives them sufficient period of time to hide or run away and complete the “job” as previously planned.

**“Marguerite’s” story is very similar to this, we can say it for sure, disgusting scenario. She was treated like an object, like any goods, and moreover, she was “ordered” by a man who wanted to revenge to her family. This event left such psychical and physical consequences that will deeply follow her for sure for the rest of her lifetime.**

Her first love did not only disappoint her, but also cheated and lied to her. All was planned with the goal to kidnap and sell her. He was only an agent and she was only a well-paid job to him. In addition to so much pain and humiliation, she was treated like an object only, a thing and here it is the conclusion – she is not worthy as a person, her thoughts and feelings are not important at all she herself is insignificant. Given it was her very first boyfriend, while not having any single earlier experience with men, a message to her was quite clear – love does not matter.

**Her «journey» to meet his parents ended in front of a house in surrounding, completely unknown to her where they stepped in at his friend to have a drink there. As she says, she felt that „something was not at all ok” at the time, but never thinking that everything would have been ended like that. Entering the room with a few men sitting in, she firstly learned that „her boyfriend” presented falsely himself. Then she recognized a man who „ordered” her and only then understood how deep the trap was she fall in. They kept her captured for a couple of days and maltreating her in numerous ways. Firstly they made her to drink an alcohol enormously, and for they were drugged themselves they probably put a drug also in her drink. They were physically abusing her and beating all over her body. In addition to bruises, hematoma and pains, she experienced injuries of the internal organs. I was amazed how she survived at all, given these five men were beating her ruthlessly and repeatedly but her weight was only 50 kg. And all five of them raped her repeatedly for several times each.**

**It is about „introductory demonstration” of the power with the goal to “train”, destroy, intimidate, humiliate, disgrace, impose a feeling of total helplessness and fear in order to make her obedient in the future while unquestioningly doing whatever is asked from her to do.**

**After numerous tortures, immeasurable suffering and pain, “SHE” found a refuge and salvation, unlike many other girls having almost identical life stories, but which would have never ever been written. She managed to use an opportunity when one of her “jailers” fall asleep and ran away.**

**If not so, the worst would have happen to her just like to thousands**

### **of others, the most probably she would not be alive now...**

Girls are usually sold abroad, which additionally makes their finding much more difficult. However, over the recent period of time, traffickers and their co-workers often keep girls in their country of origin. „Marguerite“ was far away from her city only an hour and half drive.

We can't avoid asking ourselves how it is possible for a girl to disappear without leaving a trace in our Bosnia and Herzegovina? Is it a consequence of inefficiency of the police or „traffickers“ have become so highly profiled in hiding traces, we could only assume that.

**The problem of trafficking is unfortunately a reality in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the world. Non-understanding, inefficiency, and sometimes inhuman society in terms of perception, understanding and resolving of the trafficking, is proved in the best way by the fact how journalists published all personal data of the aforementioned girl along with all details of her case, but not a single word about the perpetrators! They did not stop there, but even “published the interview” that were allegedly made with her and all aimed at having “media scandal”.**

**She has never ever been interviewed, I am sure, for at the time of making this “interview” she was only with me but no one else.**

Unfortunately, it seems that B&H society has not been paying sufficient attention to this problem yet. Many people consider trafficking as a form of the prostitution and that it is „something that happens only to others but it is so far away from us and our reality”.

Probably, the family of “Marguerite” was not aware that “something that is far away from them” could have happened just to their own daughter! Therefore, we put such a part of the title to this book. It could be your daughter... it is not only a slogan, but unfortunately it is one of harsh realities of 21st century, as showed by numerous studies conducted across the world.

Parents, as individuals, cannot eliminate this problem but they can protect their children if they do the following: finally get educated about the aforementioned problem, throw away the prejudices being too numerous in our society, as well as, introduce their children and themselves about the character and consequences of the human trafficking. And the most importantly, they will create such relationship wherein children will not be afraid to confide in their parents.

Schools, as the most important upbringing institutions, should even at the level of primary education, introduce their pupils with this set of problems, as well as, introduce them with ways how traffickers recruit new

girls, but boys, too.

How little bit parents really know about their own children and what attitudes they have toward trafficking, it was showed to me by a gentleman thinking probably the same way as most of the people living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Gentleman considered that among prostitutes there was only a few of them who were cheated and get trapped and trafficked, and when he was asked „What if your daughter find a boyfriend, not telling you anything at all about that, run away with him but he eventually sells her away then?“ his answer was that he provided a good upbringing to his daughter, full of trustfulness and that she would have never ever lied to him. But, the above true story was about “Marguerite”, who did not start to go out with her female friends yet not to mention having any boyfriend at all!!!

**We are aware of the fact that both good upbringing and parental care have a major role in the personality building of their children, but from the aforementioned example we reach the conclusion that „troubles“ do not happen to „bad girls“ only!**

## Story No. 6

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When she was 15, she was beaten by her mother and threw her out. The reason was, one of her five brothers saw her talking with some soldier through the fence. She was on the street on cold winter night, ragged, half-naked, only in her socks. Since we were friends from the elementary school, she came to me. I remember that night as one of the most horrible nights in my life. Shrunken on the edge of my bed, with bruises, appeared to me like she is crushed ball of a meat.

She disappeared with the first sings of morning. I did not see her the next two years, and than she suddenly show up. She was wearing odd provocative dress. She told me about horror she has been through on the Zagreb railway station, were she gone after she had left my house. Conductor was the first who raped her and than he was selling her to passengers. She said that for some time she did not come out from the train. She disappeared again and one day she phoned me from Italy.

For the third time we met accidentally met in Trst. She still looked like girl.

Her big brown eyes were deep like Cairo gipsy. She was with some strange old man. They seemed like grandfather and grandson. She married him.

Now she is living in Padova. The old man died when she was 27. He left her large sum of money. She invested money in the building of Safe house for young girls from Padova. Last year her mother died, her father died earlier. Since she left home, she did not speak a word with her family members. She would not want to come on funeral of her parents either. She disowned her family publicly.

What is left for her? The job makes her happy, but as she says, "I am not a woman, nor girl. I am nobody by the will of women who gave birth to me".

Often, we talk a lot by phone. She is still working, saving girls with similar destiny. That helps her to overcome her own tragedy.

## Story No. 7

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I am 26 years old.

I want to forget everything, but only after I tell my story... as if I want to make sure ...that perhaps I will be able to help you, not to fall into the same trap. My Lord, I was 16 long time ago. .. I lived in a poor family together with my brother and my two sisters, my father and mother. My mother was some sort of conflict person.

I used to meet one nice woman on my way to school. She always had something nice to say about me. She offered me to help in one café in taproom. I was overjoyed with happiness. I worked Thursdays and Saturdays and I received good pocket money for my work.

Later, she offered me to join her in Italy, where I would be able to earn even more money.

I agreed, I got my parents' approval and I joined my "aunt" in Italy.

My suffering started as soon as we entered the "promise land".

That same evening, she "transferred" me to an older fat man. He tortured me all night. I was a virgin .... and at dawn I was all covered with wounds, bruises. Some "doctor" had to "sew" me up. She told me that my condition was as if I had given birth to a baby, as if I was born that very night to lead another life. To me it was dying.

I had an impression that I had stayed with that man for a longer period. I stopped counting the days, months, I only counted the times I was forced to have sex, then, and I stopped at 314. I used to look my reflection in the mirror, how thin and ugly I was. Then I changed the "owner".

The fat man, they called him Tony, "sold" me to other town.

I was dancer and a prostitute in a night bar .... until I was exhausted.

I lived in a constant fear that I would be killed, because they threaten me that if I even tried to complain ... I would "disappear". I watched my "girlfriends" from all over the world in bruises. Some of them had simply "vanished"...

Sometimes I wanted to do the same, and sometimes I accepted my destiny....

My body was in a terrible condition and my sole died long time ago. As my physical appearance changed, my status changed. I left the bar for the street and that was my only job. My body was covered with cigarette-stub

marks, it was full of cuts. My body was destroyed. I no longer had fillings for my family in Bosnia. I only wanted to die, but I had no courage to take my own life. I was only 26 years old but I felt old.

I was “picked up” by police during one police action. I found myself in a police station. I asked them for help. They placed me in a Safe House. A told Pierra everything I went through. She promised help, help to return to Bosnia. She said that she contacted one woman’s NGO.

I returned.

I was lucky... I was not alone. I had help, understanding, education and retraining.

Today, I am, so it seems, a normal person. I have my “small” business; I have my friends. I even got my feelings back. I am even capable to help others who are in need.

My name is...

## Story No. 8

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We received very unusual letter from the bar above Bihac. Four girls with foreign names signed it – or it was their nicknames. By handwriting, it could be concluded that the letter wrote elementary school stature child.

The girls were closed in the room next to the bar and released outside only after midnight

They would walk around the bar and sat to the rich men in the lap. After, they would go with them in the room with big bed next to the bar. “Boss” Prsan charged sexual services of the girls.

“Boss’s” family lived on the next floor of the house. He had a wife and the child, son in the wheelchair. As far as we know, son wrote to us the letter by persuasion of his mother. Mother was jealous on one of the girls with who Persan lived and gave expensive presents.

The rest of the girls, as well as the Prsan family, lived on butter and bread. Wife decided report everything tour organization and to the Ministry of Internal Affairs through her immovable son. She was probably scared.

Boss Prsan also had a trailer on the hill Gorjevac, in the wood where the girls occasionally “worked” for 30 KM. big bed next to the bar cost 50 KM.

Thanks to this profitable “business”, Prsan started to get rich very soon. He lived luxuriously and bought things and objects, which were very expensive. On the contrary, girls were frightened and hungry.

Action of the Ministry of Interior Affaires took place, after we received the letter. Girls who were set free were bought in Serbia. They origin were from Moldova. Boss Prsan paid 500 000 KM for five girls. He brought 4 girls, one escaped. Their voyage from Moldova to Serbia is not familiar to us. Boss Persan is now in the prison as well as his lover. Other girls are deported to their homes. Two of them were under age.

## Story No. 9

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It is a wonderful feeling to help those in trouble. Sometimes, we feel an urge to help other, but we have no possibility to do so... and stay empty and disappointed. BUT once someone enables us to do so, just like donors enabled ZENA BIH, then it is the right thing. Then there are no obstacles for us and nothing can stop us not even the cases of the highest risk possible, life-threatening one. .

It was just another springtime and sunny day but quite ordinary one for us in ZENA BIH. And then we received the telephone call from the Canton and police station with whom we signed the Protocol on providing comprehensive assistance to victims of violence quite normal two days before.

They asked whether we could place a woman with three children at our Safe house and that they were victims of an abuser who shot a policeman, who was put in prison for several times and presented a real fear and fright for everyone around.

We placed the woman with children and soon after we placed the mother of abuser, too.

Entire ZENA BIH team immediately got fully engaged in the case.

Woman suffered from violence for 12 years, while constantly reporting violence to the police, center for social welfare, but no one was able to help her at all. She lost her confidence in the institutions in their place of living. She told us such shocking stories that 'frosted our blood'. She said that she strongly wished to get out of that marriage. Then we asked her if she was willing to cooperate with the police and investigative organs, because that was the only way to initiate things.

So, we promptly started with legal, psycho-social treatment and made individual plans for each person individually.

For woman, mother of the abuser we took over a series of administrative actions , opening a new bank account for her pension to be received at her account but not as earlier to be received by other persons like it was before.

For children we organized their studying, according to their curriculum for it was too dangerous for them to attend the school.

For woman, wife of the abuser, following her voluntary cooperation with the investigative organs, we worked on her empowering and regaining se-

If-confidence, assistance in divorce process for children to be allocated to mother afterwards etc.

After six-month hard work and our numerous travels to their place of living in order to have a meeting and/or negotiations there, transport for them to attend the court discussions to the Canton where they belong and numerous other activities, in the end it was settled the divorce along with the verdict of allocating children to their mother.

We helped them in attending the exams for their classes because they could not attend the regular educational process in their schools, we helped for this entire family to move out to another country, neighboring one. Our letters of recommendation from the Safe house for the police from another country to help this victim and her children if necessary, were fully respected, they had their protection at the time, as well as, nowadays.

Given the neighboring country is well-structured, the woman received many benefits as a self-supporting mother with three children, so according to the fresh information gained two day ago, from her personally, she along with her children live quite well finally.

They were so grateful to us that we felt a bit embarrassed even for listening so many words of gratitude, but we, ZENA B&H are so much grateful to donors because without your kind financial help to our activities and work of the Safe house surely we would have not been able to help this family.

Entire family of five members from this story has completely changed their lives thanks to our concrete help. Life full of violence, fear, uncertainty, bruises, stress, nights with no sleep at all, and only after a half of the year they began with a brand new chapter in their lives.

Nowadays, they live the life they dreamed of, new surrounding and new friends, it seems to them that a Sunshine is somehow new one for it better 'heats' them now than before. Children took part in extra-curriculum activities, they travel, take part in various competitions, they finally laugh and sing.

We express our deep gratitude to donors for support to our organization to be able to provide those in needs with a safe shelter, where able to heal their wounds and wherefrom we could create new perspectives and vision of the life without violence together with them.

## Story No. 10

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A girl addressed to us by phone, asking whether we could place her in our Safe house. She was from Bosnia coming to work in Mostar (Herzegovina), and she had no place to sleep over etc. We explained to her that the Safe house was not designated for such a purpose and that she could find a cheap accommodation somewhere else in Mostar....

Then she made another phone call to us, repeatedly again and again.... and finally said very desperately: Please, help me!

It was a sign to us that she was in trouble, then I promptly asked her where she was located precisely at that moment and she explained that it was about a restaurant and gave a precise address.

I told her to wait for me and that we would be there in some 15 minutes. When we arrived we saw a 20-year old girl, rather pretty and very scared. Someone from the bus station brought her there and left her with a promise that she would work therein. Immediately upon her return, she saw that it was about a troublesome place.

We took and placed her in our Safe house. Our Team revealed that she was sexually abused by her father, and trafficked by her employer afterwards, then she ran away from him, but then she was searching for her because of her debt of 5.000 BAM, which he lost because of her 'disobedience'.

For full 11 months, our Team was completely devoted to this girl. Through the rehabilitation and work with our psychologist, she told us terrible stories about her life. There were intertwined various forms of violence and human trafficking in her case.

She left our Safe house feeling empowered and self-confident.

We found her a job of her profession and while she was working there we were constantly in contact with her. Unfortunately, that firm stopped its work in the meantime. Then she found a job by her own, but through our project "Economic empowering of women, victims of all kinds of violence" we educated her practically in concretely for doing that job. We are permanent mentors to her in all segments of her life, naturally, only following her willingness for doing so.

We will not leave her never ever. We have remained to be her support for everything she would need and it is very important to her as she does not have any kind of support from her parents at all.

The working principle for us in ZENA BIH is that we bring both professionalism and emotions into our work. It is the request coming from our heart and it proved as the best and the most efficient way for our beneficiaries.



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