United Nations Population Fund

UNFPA AWARD OVERVIEW

# Executive summary

The award has been instituted to acknowledge the commendable efforts undertaken in BiH that challenge dominant social stereotypes, deconstructing prejudices against marginalized groups or for significant contribution in advancing rights of people in one of the four key UNFPA priority areas:

1. Sexual and reproductive health;
2. Adolescents and youth (sexual and reproductive health);
3. Gender equality and women’s empowerment with focus on conflict-related sexual violence;
4. Population dynamics with focus on ageing.

Entries are invited from CSOs, government institutions, media, businesses and dedicated individuals, in BHS or English languages.

Each nominator is asked to submit no more than one nomination, either for an individual or for an institution. Self-nominations are accepted as well.

Entries must relate to contributions (e.g. published article, implemented activity, setting of good practices etc.), carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 15 November 2017 and 15 November 2018. Submissions must be sent in electronic form to email – [bosnia-herzegovina.office@unfpa.org](mailto:bosnia-herzegovina.office@unfpa.org) by 16 November 2018. Late submissions will not be accepted.

# Background

UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is the lead UN agency for delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled. UNFPA expands the possibilities for women and young people to lead healthy and productive lives. With UNFPA, no-one is left behind is not just a phrase, it is our key guiding principle when dealing with issues in BiH. While dealing with disenfranchised youth, pregnant women, young mothers, key populations, survivors and perpetrators of violence, and older persons, we are faced with many hardship stories but what we have come to see is that these individuals are rarely, if ever truly, defined by troubles they endure. They were most often defined by their successes, by them defeating the odds, reclaiming their lives and moving forward. We believe that both accounts must be conveyed in order for the public to have a clear understanding of sensitive issues we are paying attention to.

# Guidelines for submission

UNFPA priority areas for consideration:

* + Sexual and reproductive health issues
    - Communities approach issues of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights with reluctance, even though all health should be devoid of value judgments and stigma. More importantly, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights do not exist in a vacuum of individual rights – they directly impact the overall wellbeing of entire population, and as such mandate special attention. These issues are often viewed through the gender prism and dealt with as primarily women’s health issues which relegates them to lower class health priority. Sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights issues are also highly political where various interest groups attempt to control women’s bodies, which hampers effective, inclusive and non-discriminatory access to sexual and reproductive health services. This in turn impacts the wellbeing and quality of lives of countless women and girls as well as the communities in which they live.
    - UNFPA works towards achieving the universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including family planning. For sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights to be realized, all people need to have access to accurate information and safe, effective, affordable and acceptable contraception. They must be informed and empowered to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases, and when they decide to have children, women must have access to services that can help them have a healthy pregnancy, safe delivery and a healthy baby. Every individual, including those most vulnerable and youth, has the right to make own choices about their sexual and reproductive health because that is a human right.
    - UNFPA sees excellence in contributions to the issues of sexual and reproductive health as public health issue equal with all other health issues. The stories of men and women, especially those most vulnerable and youth, have the great potential to promote better outcomes for sexual and reproductive health in BiH. Subsequently, support of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights removes associated stigma, and raises awareness of long-term needs and benefits of providing these rights to all.
  + Adolescents and youth (sexual and reproductive health)
    - The main issues affecting adolescent sexual and reproductive health in BiH include early marriage, early pregnancy and lack of access to full information and counselling appropriate for adolescents. The health consequences of these issues on the life of adolescents in general are higher maternal and child mortality, unsafe abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Although adolescents of both sexes face the same risks, these particularly affect girls who physically and emotionally suffer the adverse reproductive health consequences of sexual abuse, unsafe sexual behaviour and lack of social and physical access to reproductive health services, including access to information and supply of contraceptives.
    - UNFPA works towards ensuring that young people have those basic human rights satisfied. Youth sexual and reproductive health is within the right to information and counselling, right to choice, right to equality and right to liberty. For those human rights to be realized, professionals should be aware of their positions in offering appropriate services to all groups including adolescents to avoid violating basic rights. The provision of reproductive care and information to adolescents should be fully consistent with ethical principles such as confidentiality, privacy, choice, informed consent, respect for the person and the right to information. Every individual, including those most vulnerable and youth, has the right to make own choices about their sexual and reproductive health.
    - UNFPA sees excellence in contributions to the issues of youth sexual and reproductive health from the human rights perspective, removing stigma attached to the topic and/or the resistance it encounters from the popular opinion. Youth friendly services, comprehensive sexuality education, early marriages and early pregnancies are all the topics that deserve to be addressed, especially in the context of those most vulnerable. The topic of youth sexual and reproductive health remains controversial and people have mixed feelings about it. Advocacy and the stories of the young people are crucial to educate the policymakers, community leaders and the community at large about the problems faced by young people and the impact that the proper programmes can have on the whole community.
  + Gender equality and women's empowerment with focus on conflict-related sexual violence;
    - Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) survivors face multiple levels of discrimination in BiH society (self-stigma, family stigma, and societal/community level stigma) that is one of the main obstacles to their reintegration efforts. With that in mind, UNFPA is looking into bringing to the fore all the stories of survivors who reclaimed their lives, and who overcame pain and grief to take back the control over their lives. While reporting on CRSV always reports on a number of lateral, less important details – geographical location, marital status of the survivors, their name, ethnic background, age, etc., some information presented can always take the centre stage (i.e. disparities in ethnic backgrounds of perpetrators vs. survivors and political implications of such details) and re-focus the story from survivor to socio-political processes.
    - While recognizing that information should not be omitted just to avoid unpleasant reactions, from the perspective of wider healing of the community, UNFPA sees contributions in bringing to the public sphere a transformative story of a CRSV survivor, and not a CRSV victim that is confined to the life-long trauma.
    - On the occasion of 19 June 2016, International day of Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, UNFPA presented a ground-breaking report on Stigmatization of CRSV survivors in BiH, which gives a thorough, clear snapshot of public attitudes towards survivors. Results from this survey offer an unbiased understanding of the difference between actual attitudes of citizens and public narratives and could be used as a foundation for continued research and reporting on CRSV cases.
  + Population dynamics with focus on ageing
    - Older persons experience numerous economic, health and social issues. After spending most of their lifetime contributing to development and raising future generations, suddenly they are left alone to cope with own issues and survive anyway they can. In the modern times where the age of population is significantly extended and where fertility rates hit rock bottom, it is of outmost importance to show compassion for older persons, foster intergenerational support and extend the use of skills and knowledge older persons have. Also, there is a lot of evidence that older persons suffer from loneliness as a result of which they experience mental health issues from depression to dementia to Alzheimer and Parkinson diseases. In addition, low physical activity of older persons is contributing to deterioration of their general health and spread of non-communicable diseases that diminish the quality of life and put a lot of strains to health systems.
    - In order to overcome these obstacles and enable older persons to live healthy and actively, UNFPA promotes all activities from policy development to opening of healthy ageing centres that will result in changing environment for this population group. UNFPA seeks contributions that showcase the examples of intergenerational support, as well as healthy and active ageing through socialization with other population groups, physical exercises and promotion of positive and optimistic lifestyle at older age. Reaching the age of 60 should not mean the end but rather the beginning of new life with different challenges but also different opportunities.

Please refer to UNFPA website (ba.unfpa.org) for more information on our mandate and programmatic priorities.

UNFPA BiH main pillars of excellence that will be taken into consideration are:

* + Transformative
    - Significant efforts towards gender equality have materialized in the country in the past two decades. However, while all gender-equality and women’s empowerment efforts have approached gender roles with an intention to help women and men grow, a significant portion of the initiatives remained confined to traditionally proscribed gender roles, due to variety of reasons. UNFPA is looking to promote equality among genders but also showcase that equality must not be an empowered confinement within existing roles and societal expectations from men and women or between generations.
  + Inclusive
    - BiH society is a multicultural amalgam of different identities and shared realities and nominated entries should promote social inclusion principles. To that end, UNFPA is seeking contributions that do not overlook diversity for the sake of ease.
  + Non-discriminatory
    - Building up on previous criteria, nominated entries must not discriminate nor stereotype any one particular group, nor characteristic. UNFPA pays a special emphasis on linkages between non-discriminatory and transformative efforts. We seek to avoid derogatory approaches to peculiarities and uniqueness of various groups, but we strive to help groups transcend these socially-constructed confines.

Award in each of the four categories will consist of a Recognition of Contribution Certificate and gift of monetary value (equivalent to approximately 500 USD).

# Eligibility criteria

UNFPA invites nomination of individuals, institutions or organisations in contributing feature stories (investigative stories, editorials, op-eds, and columns, blog) in BHS or English language.

Entries must relate to activities carried out between 15 November 2017 and 15 November 2018. Submissions must be sent in electronic form to email – [bosnia-herzegovina.office@unfpa.org](mailto:bosnia-herzegovina.office@unfpa.org) by 16 November 2018.

Each nominator is asked to submit no more than one nomination, either for an individual or for an institution using the Award Nomination Sheet provided herewith.

Award Selection Panel will evaluate submissions against outlined criteria in this call, and preference will be given to those that fulfil the criteria the most.

The selection panel will announce winners on the occasion of marking of 10th December, International Human Rights Day, in each category.