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**SOCIO-THERAPEUTIC WORK WITH MALE GROUP
IN KONJEVIĆ POLJE
2008-2009**

From therapeutic group to Returnee Association “Mramorje”





IMPRESSUM

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FOREWORD

One of the activities which is conducted in the community by Vive Žene Tuzla is work in Konjevic Polje area in Republic of Srpska entity. Our first encounter with this population was during the survey and testing activities in order to get an insight about war trauma consequences. Some residents recognized the importance of other ways of help, not only material. They understood that not only agricultural machines, seeds, cows and similar things, are going to be sufficient for sustainable return process. Their neighbors, friends and pre-war socializing were missing. The post-war period brought all the burden of war horror, loss of their loved ones, loss of their homes, and loss of work. Some of them started having problems with sleep, mood changes, body pains, high blood pressure and other health issues. The thing is that Vive Žene could not offer material help, but the healing of their souls. Someone said: “All the things that we do not dare or cannot talk about, must not stay unsaid because they will destroy our soul.”

The bulletin about our socio-therapeutic work with returnees from Konjević Polje, was created as a result of two year work with male group. The members recognized their needs and trusted Vive Zene team to heal their souls, and through that, the soul of the community they live in.

Besides the objectives and results of our work with the male returnee group, there were, also, activities that were conducted, and the persons who, in some way influenced realization of certain goals, mentioned in the bulletin.

The main result of this group is forming of ‘Mramorje’ association, as a necessity of joint performance in order to create better life for all Konjević Polje residents.

Above mentioned activities were documented by pictures.

Description of performed workshops which may be applicable in similar groups, is located in the last chapter.

Working with this group was a challenge, as well as one more experience for me.

I want to thank the group members for their confidentiality, participation, honesty and dedication in the process of overcoming their problems, both in their community, as well as their personal relationships.

I, also want to thank my young colleague Elmir Ibralić, who helped me conduct this group in a supportive manner.

2009

Mr.med.sc Arnautović dr Azra
Therapist



KONJEVIĆ POLJE is a local community in Bratunac municipality, Eastern Bosnia. It is strategically positioned between Zvornik, Bratunac and Vlasenica, on the main road Sarajevo-Belgrade. It is 130 km from Sarajevo, 220 km from Belgrade, and 20km from Zvornik, Vlasenica and Bratunac. River Jadar flows through K. Polje and empties into river Drinjaca, towards Zvornik. K. Polje residents mostly lived from agriculture, wheat, corn, as well as fruits and vegetables. The rest of material contribution for their families they earned working as seasonal or field workers. Men usually went to work in certain areas of former Yugoslavia or abroad. Konjevic Polje went through more significant development after the first free elections. Many of them invested their earned capital opening private businesses, mainly grocery stores, coffee shops and residential buildings. During the aggression on BH, from 1992 to 1995, the population had to flee their homes. Some of them went to Srebrenica, and some tried to reach free territory through the woods. Significant number of residents died, 661 persons. There are some facts that first victims in this village lost their lives on May 11th, 1992. Today, there are about 2000 returnees in Konjevic Polje. There are 198 students attending elementary school. All children are of Bosniak nationality, while the teachers are of Serbian nationality. The children are taught according to plan and program of Republic of Srpska.

ABOUT THE MALE GROUP - KONJEVIĆ POLJE

Period of 2008

This group was initiated by several returnees who had contact with the part of our team that conducted monitoring of returnees needs, as well as existence of trauma symptoms. This part of the team also tried to find persons who survived camps and did not ask for psychological help or realized their rights on that basis.

The first encounter with the Male group happened on February 8th, 2008. During the period from February to December of 2008, there were 35 sessions conducted. The number of group members varied from eight to twelve. Three members were from Glogova village, and they discontinued participation during the period of summer field work season. The group was open for new members at the beginning, but as the time passed the group became more stabile, so there are eight constant members today. Age structure of the members is between twenty seven and forty seven. None of the members is employed in company. They earn their money only from agriculture work. They lack agricultural machinery, but at the same time, want to live from their own work. They still feel huge fear from possible persecution. They show PTSP symptoms through different manifestation and volume. The group was conducted once a week in the premises of local community in Konjević Polje. The sessions lasted from 90 to 120 minutes, and it was conducted by two therapists, Azra Arnautović and Elmir Ibralić. The beginning of group work aimed at developing mutual trust and insight in problems and needs of group members. After the few initial sessions, we made rules and work plan for the group.

The group members emphasized following problems:

- On individual level – war as a traumatic experience, camp, loss of close family members, lack of education, unemployment, isolation, loss of trust, loss of identity, low self-respect and self-confidence.
- On group level – non-existence of tolerance, misunderstanding, broken families, lack of communication, strong patriarchal family.
- On social level – poverty, poor political environment, lack of acceptance by local municipality, lack of care by municipal and cantonal institutions for this category of population, weak and unstable legislative in the country, unacceptable school system.

After establishing these main problems, we set the goals for our group:

- Developing and re-establishing lost mutual trust, as well as the trust in local community and wider.
- Work on self-recognition – developing knowledge and skills necessary for better understanding of self, other people and the community they live in. solving their personal and social problems with professional help, in order to deal with life difficulties successfully.
- Work on trauma – if initiated by group members or becomes obvious during group development.

We used following resources which were obvious in members during our initial sessions:

- Motivation to change current situation,
- Respect, openness to some degree, readiness to learn and work on themselves,
- Trust towards VIVE ŽENE.

It was necessary to adapt our methods of group work to the place, time, political situation, in general, life conditions of returnees.

Assessment sources: Life style questionnaire, Symptom checklist (SCL-90-R), Trauma questionnaire (BH version), session protocols, evaluation questionnaires, conductor evaluation.

Work methodology: group work using newer psychotherapy techniques, education on certain topics.

There was a legal counselor present at two of our sessions and she informed the members about some returnee rights they did not know about, such as establishing vital records office, activities of parent's school board, and some other legal issues. When it comes to educational part, we worked on recognizing their needs, workshops on developing social skills, communication and guided fantasies. We organized following workshops: "Life pyramid", "Unfinished shapes exercise", "Psychological needs theory", "Album of needs", "Everything have at least two sides". Guided fantasies: "Wise man", and guided fantasy for evaluation purposes.

The group had a visit from Swedish guests, with the idea to work together on certain projects. They, also established contact with members of "Jadar" association. A guest from Fight against torture Center from Russia also came to visit. Since the group members developed the idea to create their own association, they invited regional adviser for agriculture in order to learn about the process of forming the association, obstacles and advances. One of the sessions was conducted as a picnic with the goal to visit the places where they spent time during the war with their families or fellow soldiers. We, also visited ethnological location of historical monument called stecak- Mramorje, which has a legend behind it that has been transferred from generation to generation. According to that legend, stecak presents petrified wedding attendees of two young persons who loved each other but did not receive their parents blessing to get married because they were of different faiths. This young couple decided to get married anyway and they were petrified on their way to the wedding as some kind of punishment.

The group also had a joint excursion with female group to Raspberry Fair

in Bratunac. At the beginning of December, the group members came to visit our Center in Tuzla.

All these activities resulted in different dimension of returnee's everyday life. They started to involve in local community development, follow actual events and participate in solving some life issues. They talk about their problems easier. Certain members learned that they are not the only ones with personal experience problems, and started to accept that fact as a consequence of war and not as a health issue- they did not want to be stigmatized as psychiatric patients. They worked through their traumatic war experiences to some degree. They are more ready to plan and perform certain activities. They recognize their own needs better, as well as the needs of their local community. For that purpose they initiated forming of children groups in schools. Before that, the children of Konjevic polje did not have any after school activities, or sport activities.

GROUP WORK DURING 2009

Work with male group from Konjevic Polje continued during 2009. As a result of activities and results achieved in 2008. The need for continuance of this group was obvious after internal evaluation of our work with them. The crown of socio-therapeutical work and positive results of this group was the realization of the idea to establish returnee association. This group was the core of the association, but others were allowed to involve if they wanted to. This idea came from their experiences gained through the return process. They wanted to stay on their land, but that was not enough. There is not any stimulus from their local community. This is especially visible when individuals are trying to get donations, advise or similar. Their experiences tell them that together, connected and united they can achieve better life and sustainable return. They were all employed before the war, and agriculture served just as secondary source of income. Today it is their only source of income. In 2008, they started to participate in naming their problems more actively, and by doing that, they influence development

of their local community. They recognize their personal needs better. The problem arises when they need to solve the problem they recognized. They face a number of obstacles which discourage them and force them to quit. They consider themselves uneducated to take on some bigger projects. The idea about establishing their association, in some way, means regaining their role of head of the family and the community. It means “their own product” and they want to see that idea realized. The role of Vive Žene in this part is to support them in this realization. Certain activities were planned in that sense:

- Introducing the term Association.
- Introducing legal acts.
- Introducing similar association from their surroundings.
- Establishing contacts with corresponding departments in Bratunac municipality.
- Concrete activities related to association establishment (the name of the association, location-address, statute, seal, etc...).
- Working through war trauma and actual problems they bring to the group.
- Non-violent communication – with the goal to strengthen member’s communication skills, tolerance, and to indirectly strengthen self-confidence to find enough inner strength and ability to deal with life situations on their own.
- Working on collecting material for this Bulletin.

The group continued to meet in local community premises Konjevic Polje once a week for 90 minutes.

Group worked in this form and with above mentioned goals until July. After conducting internal evaluation, we concluded that we should continue the group in September. In the meantime, we planned to perform registration of the association, but it was not completed due to some technical issues. The members started to feel safer and more trustful among each other to make some positive changes. Some members attended educational seminar “Identity and reconciliation”, which was organized by NGO Delta,

with the goal to develop dialog among different nationalities, identity and reconciliation in the communities.

Their participation in this seminar had positive influence on improving self-confidence and self-respect of group members.

In September, the members started to work through their war trauma. All of them were, in their own way, impacted by the war. Some of them were directly threatened to be killed, some were combat soldiers, and some of them were just boys.

Today, they are men with responsibilities towards their families and communities. However, war images appear even today, and each of them deals with them in a different way. Patriarchal upbringing and their pre-war role in the family are preventing them from talking about difficult life during that period. They avoid the war topic very skillfully; however they cannot avoid the symptoms. All of them have some body complains, high blood pressure, stomach problems, insomnia. Mood changes are dominant with all group members. They carry the burden of survivor guilt and the feeling of injustice even to this day. There are no employment opportunities for them. The municipality does not offer programs for agriculture or farming development. These facts partly influence their inability to talk about their trauma. At the time of creating this Bulletin we work on their trauma. The war stopped, but the consequences are still there. The fear and sadness for their losses are present. Mutual trust they established makes them feel safer to verbalize things they never talked about before.

Psychosocial work is a set of interventions which are based on understanding that trauma healing is multidimensional, long-term process on individual, community and wider community level. In that sense Vive Žene developed model of work on three levels: individual rehabilitation, rebuilding trust and social integration in local community, as well as reconstruction of the whole community. To achieve the final phase, it is necessary to work long-term, not just with the group and population, but also, favorable political situation.

Forming of “Mramorje” association

Facing problems on everyday basis, it became clear to returnees that individual can hardly make any positive changes. This population was abandoned to try and live on their own. They recognized the necessity to cooperate together, but they were not ready for that yet. Difficult returnee life and children growing up, triggered them to start thinking about changes in quality of life. With Vive Zene coming to this area meant positive change for these people, they accepted us and gave us their trust. I already mentioned that the result of our initial work with these people was the idea about forming the association. There were many obstacles during realization of this idea. They needed experience in establishing, legal acts, choosing location, financial means for registration, and many other things. These obstacles were a reason that members felt they needed to quit this idea. Intensive work on breaking ambivalence, regaining self-confidence and self-trust kept their idea alive. At one moment it seemed that their great desire resonated in the sense that representatives from Hyresgästföreningen came looking for partners in Bosnia. This event and activities which followed helped realize the idea about the association. The key financial problem did not exist any longer, and the location was chosen before that. One of the members offered first floor of his house, where they could meet with minimal expense. After receiving financial help they started to deal with legal part of establishing association, Statute and other activities. Inaugural assembly of the association was held on 03.12.2009. The presence of other residents gave them hope that their idea mattered to the community they live in. The goals of association are to improve life of returnees through developing agriculture and cattle breeding, education of local residents about this issue, as well as others, reestablishing forgotten traditions and influencing current authorities in order to make the return sustainable. The members of this group, as well as members of the association take on responsibility for realization of their objectives, which is going to indirectly make an impact on life improvement in this local community. Also, the association is going to serve as a link for further cooperation among Vive Žene and returnees

MY STORY

“My story” is a chapter where some of the group members want to tell something about themselves and their life experiences. It is a fragment of their life they share with those of us who read this.

Ermin Muharemović called TUZLO; Hrnčići-Konjević Polje, Bratunac



My name is Muharemovi Ermin. I was born in Tuzla, on 31.12.1982. My experience is sad life. As a little boy, I played with my cousins. I got very sick and spent three years in a hospital in Tuzla. When I got out of hospital my father left with another woman and abandoned us. He had children with that other woman.

When I hear word life, I feel sad because I had never experienced any nice things in my life. I relate my childhood with the war. As a ten year old boy,

I watched my neighbors, friends and family die horribly suffering. We did not have any food or water. We did not have basic things to survive. My older brother was killed in 1992. That was horrible for me. Then they expelled us from the place I was born at and we had to go to Potocari. I lived through the most difficult days of my childhood there. I watched with my own eyes when Serb soldiers took a baby from a woman who just went through labor. She did not have time to even breastfeed the baby. They threw the baby, stepped on its stomach and I saw his guts coming out. The baby died. I was scared and sad. I remember how I wished not to exist at that moment. How cruel they were. The baby did nothing to them. I did not know why they were saying "one more Turkish voice" I asked myself what the Turks have to do with this baby? I understood that later. In July 1995, this damn war finally stopped. Even though there was still no food or accommodation, I felt a little happier when I met people who survived. Somehow, during that period, the most important thing for us was to count the survivors. And I thank dear Allah for that. We lived as displaced persons in Tuzla, Mramor and then in Vozuca. We stayed there until 2002, when we returned to our place. We hoped that everything would be as it used to, but it was not. We remember the war every day, as well as those who are no longer with us. Nothing is the same, but we have to continue living.

When we talk about happiness and the war, I get overwhelmed with sadness and pain, but when I think of my older brother, it is the most difficult. He was the oldest and everybody loved him. I miss him a lot today. I think that my life would be much better if he was alive. When I remember the war, I get the pictures from Srebrenica. Many have died. I live as a returnee today, and it is difficult life. There are my brothers who survived with their families and our mother. We work in agriculture. The returnee life is difficult. There are no jobs, and nobody cares to help us returnees. No one works in a firm, and it is hard to sell anything to earn some money for electricity bills, buy books for children and other things. I am angry at our politicians (Reis Ul Lema Cerić, Branković, Tihić, Dodik, Lagumdžija, and Silajdžić) who did not have to give up anything. They promise us the world, but we are the only ones who know how difficult

our life is and how much we have in order to live so called normal life. The question is if the life here is ever going to be safe again because we still live through the images of horror, and current authorities still do not make us feel safe.

I was married, but divorced month and a half later, and now I am trying to put that part of my life in order.

At the end of this story I want to write one more thing, because I write sometimes for my soul. I want some of my work to be written in this Bulletin:

AGRESSION ON BRATUNAC

to never forget

During May of 1992, Bratunac was the biggest slaughter house in the world. This is a poem I wrote in remembrance on all fallen heroes:

THE HEROES DIED FOR BOSNIA.
THEY FOUGHT AND GAVE THEIR LIVES,
CARRYING GUNS IN THEIR HANDS
AND FAITH IN THEIR HEARTS.

OUR DEAREST HAVE DIED
THEY DID NOT WANT THEIR LIVES.
THEY WANTED A FUTURE FOR OUR HOMELAND AND THEIRS.

FOR THEIR YOUTH AND BRAVERY
THERE MUST NOT BE OBLIVION.
WE SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER THESE HEROES, MY FRIEND.

THE HEROES DEFENDED BOSNIA,
THE HOMELAND WE ARE PROUD OF.
THEY DEFENDED OUR PEOPLE AND SAID:
“EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT”.



WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?
TOO MUCH PAIN AND SADNESS CAME TO OUR LIVES.

FOR THAT THE PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THESE HEROES
AND PRAY TO ALLAH TO GIVE PEACE TO THEIR SOULS.

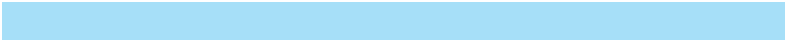
MY BROTHER SAID GOODBYE TO ME, AND THIS IS WHAT
HE TOLD ME: “LET US SAY FAREWELL, BROTHER, FOR WE
MAY NEVER SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN. , FOR I AM GOING TO
COMBAT NOW. I LEAVE MUJO WITH YOU, TO TAKE CARE OF
HIM, TO WATCH OVER HIM, MY BROTHER. ASK ALLAH TO HELP
ME AND OTHERS. PRAY FOR ALL OUR BROTHERS TO RETURN
TO THEIR MOTHERS ALIVE. I AM AFRAID, BROTHER. THE EVIL
ENEMY IS COMING FROM ALL SIDES, ARMED TO THEIR TEETH.
IT WILL BE DIFFCULT TO DEFEND OURSELVES....”

Abdurahman Orlović, Hrnčiči-Konjević Polje, Bratunac



To start writing something, especially about me, is very difficult sometimes. But, I am going to try. I was born on 14.01.1968, in Konjevići, Bratunac municipality. I was the fifth out of eight children in my family. Growing up in a large family, sometimes felt like I was not loved enough as a child. When I allow myself to think about those days of my childhood, I understand that I was wrong. There were attention and love by my parents, as much as they could give us. When I compare my children's and mine childhood, I would not trade it.

Many people told me that I do not have feelings because sometimes it is difficult for me to verbalize them, both, sadness or joy. Sometimes, though, I can express feeling of happiness. When it comes to sadness, grief and suffering, I like to hide it, because why burden someone with my sadness. I keep many things from previous war inside. However, I still want to socialize, not to close down for other people. I do not want to have too many friendships because I had been disappointed in some friends, during and after the war. While thinking about what would change me,

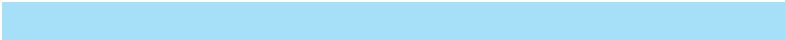


the conclusion is that it would still be friendship. I used to be in group treatment with Dr. Hasanovic in Tuzla, but I had to quit it because of my financial situation. When this group started in Konjevic Polje, few months after I quit the group in Tuzla, I decided to join. I expected that this group would be the same as a veteran group with dr Hasanovic, but it was not. However it filled the gap., and, after all, I like being a member of this group.

Muzafir Ibrahimović, Hrnčići, Bratunac



I was born on 28.10.1969 in Hrnčići, Bratunac municipality. I am married and have two children. During the war in BiH, I was in the Bosnian army since the first day. I left my hometown in March of 1993 and went to Srebrenica, and then to Tuzla. While going from Srebrenica to Tuzla I lived through hell. There were a certain number of us which reduced fear inside of me. The journey was long, difficult and exhausting. Thank God, I arrived alive and well. When I came to Tuzla, everything was new to me. First of all, the warning sirens, because we did not have them. It was difficult to adapt to a different way of life, but we had to go on. I have to continue fighting for my life and the life of others. I do not regret staying in Bosnia. If I had not stayed, I would not have the right to tell my children that there was a war, and that my people, as well as others, died for their country. By the end of the war I earned two ranks, but they are worth nothing today. I was selected to go to school in Turkey, but circumstances prevented me from going. My wife was about to deliver our first baby, and



I did not want my son to be without me for a whole year. I do not regret that either.

In 1996 I moved to Sarajevo with my family. I could not go back to my hometown yet. I lived in Sarajevo for eleven years. It was a difficult period of my life. Finally, the time came to return to Hrnčići. I could not stay refugee in my own country anymore. I want to emphasize that I never accepted the term refugee because I did not leave my home on my own free will. I was persecuted.

Two persons came to Konjevic Polje introducing them as Vive Žene. At the beginning I thought that they consider us psychiatric patients, but then I was convinced that those Women were very important for us. I am glad they are here because we need them. I have fun with them, and I consider myself responsible for contribution we create together for Konjevic Polje. I was never a quitter, and I think that I am not going to become one in the future. I believe in yesterday, tomorrow, as well as in better life. Yours, Muzafir Ibrahimović.

Mehmedalija Orlović, Konjević Polje



I was born on 12.10.1961 in Tekija, Konjevic Polje, Bratunac municipality. I finished elementary school in Kravica in 1976. There was no possibility for me to continue schooling, so I never graduated High school. After two years, when I was seventeen, I started working. Before my 19th birthday I went to mandatory military service in former JNA, which lasted for 15 months. After that, I went back to the firm in Rijeka, Croatia. Soon after that I enrolled in high school, traffic education to be a driver. Since Rijeka is a port, I met some sailors, and trusting their stories, started thinking of sailing. Before I finished my second semester, I received the letter to board the ship from Jadrolinija company, International sailing. I remember this first sailing when many sailors cried when women shouted “ My children, may the Mother of God be with you...” I did not know that there was no coming back for the next eight months. It was hard. As the time passed, it got harder, and the nostalgia grew stronger. I endured these eight months. I came back and five or six days later I had to go to the next trip. After that I did not want to do that job anymore. It was very

exhausting for me, unbearable. I went back to Bosnia and found a job in Sarajevo, where I stayed until the war started in 1992. I was at home when the war started. We tried to organize and resist the enemy. I was on the frontline on 26.06.1992. I was wounded at that time. We defended our village for about eleven months, but on 13.03.1993, Konjević Polje was occupied. I left for Srebrenica with the others since it was considered to be protected zone. I lived in that so called protected zone until it was taken by the enemy in 1995. When Srebrenica fell I managed to escape with my family and, through the woods arrive to free territory, first to Tuzla, then to Zenica. I stayed there for about six months, and then we moved to Ilijaš. We lived in Ilijas for next seven years, until our return. Final return to our place of birth happened in 2003. The house was devastated, but I succeeded to renew it with the donations. I hope to stay there until I die. The returnee life is difficult, empty and same every day. Nothing was same as before the war. The emptiness dominated. Somebody come from time to time. On one Friday I saw a group of friends gathered in front of Konjevic Polje local community building. I asked one of them “ Is this a meeting or what?” He answered that some organization Vive Zene from Tuzla wants to help demobilized soldiers on healing their trauma and consequences of war. They suggested me to join. I did that, and I am still the group member. It is important to say that, with the support of this group and Vive Zene, we are on the way to realize our idea of forming the association which would help us to function better as returnees. I want to thank Vive Zene, Dr. Azra and Elmir, who offered their support.

Džemail Husejnović, Hrnčići, Bratunac



I was born on 11.01.1967, in Hrnčići, Bratunac municipality. I am married and have three children. During the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina I was in Srebrenica. I survived horrible journey from Srebrenica to Tuzla. I experienced difficult times during the war as a soldier. I rejoined with my family in Tuzla, which I was separated from until 1995. I lived with my family in Sarajevo from 1996 to 2002. At first, when I returned, I lived in someone else's house. I started rebuilding my own house in 2005, with the help of the donations. After all these difficult experiences I met with Vive Zene team from Tuzla. We worked through our war trauma little by little, but, in general, we achieved great results. If there was no support from Vive Zene Tuzla, with Azra and Elmir, we would never realize our great desire to establish the association. We are in the process of realization of this desire. What seemed impossible before, currently is slowly realizing. We need this association in order to improve our lives. It connects us, all the residents of our small village in the community of Konjević Polje.

Other group members who, for some reason, did not write “My story”:

Hazim Muminović



Edin Muharemović



Fadil Bećirović



The members who quit the group after some time: Avdurahman Bakarić, Fahrudin Omerović, Senad Beganović, Zahirović Džemil.

At our first meeting with the residents of Konjević Polje, there were following persons present : Jusufović Adil, Muminović Avdo and Jusufović Džemil. They did not continue coming to our group meetings after the initial one.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Group work



At the session



At the session – psychological needs workshop





- **Picnic** was initiated by the group members because they wanted to show places where they grew up or fought in the war to the group leaders. This picnic had a healing character for the members because each of them could talk about some detail from war and to explain to others how they survived certain war experience. Even though the members visited these places on their own, while working on everyday chores, this joint visit had a different effect in the sense that they were able to talk about that to the group leaders, who did not have a chance to hear about those events before.







- **Visit to Raspberry Fair in Bratunac** had two goals: to introduce the female group from Đugum which is of similar character as our male group and two learn about new things in raspberry production which is characteristic for this region. The women group from village Đugum, near Konjevi Polje, was formed few months after our male group. The members of this group formed this association in order to grow vegetables.





- **One day visit to Tuzla and the organization „Vive Žene“** appeared as mutual desire of the group leaders and the members. The purpose was to introduce „Vive Žene“ and the things they do, as well as sight-seeing of Tuzla touristic attractions (newly built salt lakes and „Banja“ promenade).





- **The visit to women group “Jadar”** near Konjević Polje in Đugum village. The purpose for this visit was, also, to expand their knowledge about forming and managing association, but from the point of view of another association. The members of our men group faced some new facts about managing the association.





Other contacts:

The group hosted different visitors, either on Vive Zene or the members' initiative. Purposes for these visits were different, but they were all directed to present this group outside the local community limits, as well as making new connections and contacts with organizations and associations from abroad.

The visit from Swedish organizations Hyresgastfereningen and Olaf Palme Center was initiated by Vive Zene.

The contacts continued and resulted in the support during registration of the association, as well as cooperation and mutual projects in the future.

The group also had a visit from the guest from Moscow, Russia, who works for NGO with the activities in fighting against torturing citizens by the state government. This visit was initiated by Vive Zene and the goal was to inform the members about different kinds of torture, as well as the ways to fight it in other countries. They talked about the discrimination cases and possible ways to fight it.

We invited coordinator of agricultural business center in Bratunac to one of our sessions, with the goal to inform our members about current agricultural situation in their local community. This was the opportunity for members to learn about agricultural fields with good perspective.

The group got a visit from NGO "Women forum" from Bratunac. They exchanged information and this NGO offered their support to the members in their efforts to establish association.

One of the visitors was also, prof. dr Gregurek, the director of Psychological medicine Clinic in Zagreb. He came as an external evaluator of Vive Zene work. The members emphasized all the difficulties they face as returnees, as well as importance of Vive Zene Tuzla support.



- **Pre-election campaign activities by the SDA party** influenced the change in group dynamics significantly.





Granny Fata- the woman who became a symbol of returnee bravery.



Inaugural assembly of “Mramorje” citizen association









ATTACHMENT

ROLE PLAY FOR SOCIAL LEARNING: LIFE PYRAMID

Goal: encouraging active thinking about existence issues, as well as the debate about it with others, building of simple value system.

Time: about 60 minutes.

Material: piece of paper and a pen for each participant, A1 size charter paper sheet for group work and a marker.

The flow of a role play: after each member received a piece of paper and a pen, they receive instructions for the first step. Each participant needs to think about basic things needed for ones existence. They have 10 minutes to do that. Then, they need to draw a triangle- the side of a pyramid which is build from stone blocks. They need to fillout the blocks with one of basic conditions for survival, in a way that base blocks represent the most important conditions, and continue towards the top of pyramid according to the importance of certain condition, with the least important ones at the top. They get 10 minutes for this task.

After that, they work in small groups where they compare their “life pyramids” and discuss them for 20 minutes. During the discussion they try to “build” the mutual pyramid on the charter paper sheet. This part takes about 10 to 20 minutes.

After the role play, we ask following questions: Did you like working on the pyramid? What is different and what is the same in working on the pyramid individually and in the group? What did you find out during work? What is most important on individual level, group level and in general?

This role play encourages activity, thinking about self and close persons. The group connection sthrengthens through cooperation in small and large groups. Each member can contribute to their joint work, and more withheld and introvert members have an opportunity to be “felt” and accepted by a group through these activities. The leader will discreetly recognize this in front of the group in order to strenghten their sel-perception and warn the group about their possibilities.

MY BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

People from all over the world have same basic needs: a need for love and belonging, personal power and self-respect, freedom and independency, as well as entertainment.

There is desire in all of us to satisfy those needs.

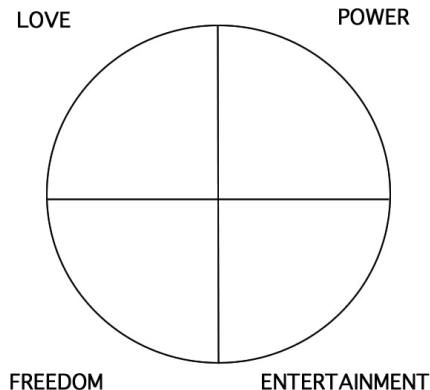
What one person wants may be different from other person's, but the needs are the same for all persons.

Exercise goal:

1. Accepting the idea about theory of needs.
2. Understanding functioning of theory in our lives.
3. Noticing similarities and differences among people. The needs are the same, wishes are different.
4. Better knowing each other.

Directions:

The members are given papers that have 4 fields on them. There is one of basic human needs written by each field: love, power, freedom and entertainment. The task of each member is to write as many persons and activities they satisfy that exact need with. When they finish the discussion starts about the need which is satisfied the most (which field is most filled out), and which need has to be “worked on” some more“? This needs to be discussed in pairs or small groups!



ALBUM OF MY NEEDS

Albums remind us on persons and events, they are often a nice memory. It would be useful for this album, also to make a nice memory.

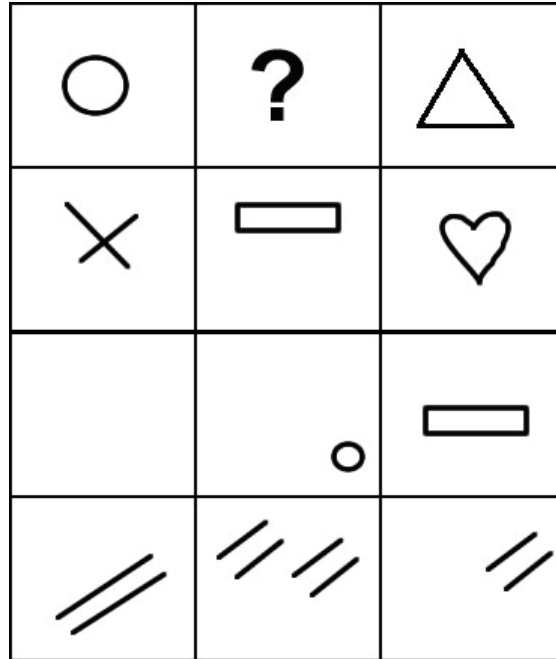
Exercise goal:

1. to determine understanding about basic psychological needs.
2. to learn how to recognize own needs.
3. noticing similarities and differences among people.

Directions:

Each participant receives four pieces of paper with one of basic human needs written on them (LOVE, POWER, FREEDOM AND ENTERTAINMENT). Then they get material such as newspaper and magazines where they need to cut out picture or a text which reminds them on certain need and glue it on the paper they got earlier. At the end of this exercise, all participants should say a few nice words about their own album.

UNFINISHED SHAPES EXERCISE (free association exercise)



Directions:

Each participant gets a piece of paper with twelve boxes with certain symbols and shapes, as shown above. All participants receive pencils and colored pencils with the task to finish each of those symbols or shapes according to their ideas (they are told that it should be according to their own feelings, not worrying if it is going to look nice or not). They are also told that they can be creative and use their imagination. When they finish the drawings, the leader gives a name or certain human characteristic to each field. The leader then tells the participants what each box represents, and they can comment on that, for example, how they decided to draw a certain thing and what it means to them.

The goal is to generate discussion and for participants to start talking about themselves, as well as to exchange experiences related to similarities and differences among them.

UNFINISHED SENTENCES AND GENERATING GROUP DISCUSSION - EXERCISE

Directions:

The leader holds a few pieces of paper with unfinished sentences or questions regarding human characteristics written on them. The participants are not able to see what is on these papers. Then each participant draws one and reads it to himself. Five minutes later, the leader asks who wants to read their question aloud and answer it from their point of view. When this participant answers, all others may comment on this question, give practical example or express opposite point of view. The procedure continues for each question.

Exercise goal:

Generating group discussion and dialogue, developing ability and capacity to listen to a different opinion without prejudice.

Examples of unfinished sentences and questions which generate discussion:
„Tolerance – do you have an opinion about it?“ „I am afraid of...“ „If a fairy was here, I would ask her...“ „Last session satisfied my expectations, but...“ „What is your hidden talent?“ „Are you aware of your own prejudice?“ „Do you consider yourself as handsome, beautiful and smart?“ „What were you thinking when you woke up this morning?“ „I like the best...“ „Do I know why I am here?“ „what is your greatest desire at this moment?“ „Is there something important to tell us about you today?“ „Do you like to cook?“ „What is the meaning of love to you? You could ask other participants this question if you want“ „Do you understand people around you?“, etc.

ROLE PLAY FOR SOCIAL LEARNING: „EVERYTHING HAS AT LEAST TWO SIDES“

Goal: Social learning.

Time: about 60 minutes.

Material: paper and pen for each participant.

Flow of the play: the directions are given after a few introductory words about understanding the same content in a different way and the need to “see things through the eyes of others” in order to understand their reactions. The participants are asked to remember one of the more recent situations when they came to conflict with important or close person in their life (parents, friends, partner...), and did not resolve it. They have 10 minutes to do that. After they remembered such situation, they need to put themselves in other person’s situation, with that person’s point of view and reaction. Then, from that same position, they need to write the letter to themselves about their feelings during the conflict, thoughts and expectations, as well as their reactions. This takes about 20 to 30 minutes. When the time is up, they split in groups of 3 to 4 members and talk about their feelings, difficulties during the exercise and writing a letter. They have 15 minutes to do that.

At the end, we may ask each participant to answer the letter, but from their own point of view. For this part we need about 10 minutes.

After the game: how did you like the game? How it felt being in others person situation? What did you learn about yourself, that other person and your relationship?

This game encourages self-introducing, own blind spots and projections. Relationships are very complicated and each participant sees them in their own way. It is not possible to solve these problems if other person’s views are not taken into consideration. That is one of the ways to see the problem from the other person’s point of view. This is the way to develop communication flexibility.


WISEMAN

Goal: to establish contact with inner wisdom which lies in all of us, finding solutions for problems which participants are working on and relaxation.

Time: 20 minutes + time needed for comments or possible discussion.

Flow of the fantasy: the leader may say: „ we are going to do a fantasy where each of you is going to meet with Wiseman who lives in a cabin on top of the mountain. Imagine that you heard he is very wise and that many people received a good advice and solved their problems. When you meet with him you are going to ask a certain question, which may be prepared earlier or when you meet with him.

I invite you to make yourself comfortable in your chairs, touching the floor with your feet. You may close your eyes or keep them open, find an object or a spot to look at and direct your attention. I invite you to imagine a pathway in the forest, and yourself climbing up the pathway. It goes through the woods, so you need to pay attention on the leaves and grass on the ground. The sun is high and the rays are shining through the branches... pay attention to those branches...is there any leaves on them... buds...birds... you arrive at the field and sit on one of four tree stumps positioned in a circle... After a short break, you continue. The pathway gets narrower and steeper, it gets harder to climb, but you notice how the nature gets more interesting. The forest is getting darker, and the nature is more diverse... pay attention to details...the climbing is getting harder and on some parts you have to crawl... suddenly you see the cabin at the top. Pay attention to how it looks...the walls...the roof...the vegetation around it... You come to the door. You knock. The door opens and you see the Wiseman you heard of...you observe him...what does he look like... is he sitting down or standing...how do you feel? You ask him a question. Instead of answering, the Wiseman opens a closet on the side and takes out a package-present for you. He tells you that you can go back, and when you get to the field, sit on the tree stump and open the package. What you find inside is going to symbolize the answer to your question. You take



the package and start going back...it gets harder to climb down on some places then it was climbing up...you are curious...but you are not opening a package...you hurry towards the field...after some time you can see it...the sun is going down and vegetation changes color. You sit on a tree stump and start opening the package.. inside the package you see...what you saw inside is unique and represents the answer to your question...remember what you found inside...pay attention to what you do with the present...do you take it ...how do you carry it...do not try to understand immediately what it means... just pay attention how you relate to it... you are climbing down...the pathway becomes wider and finally you come to the starting point...the carriage awaits for you, you hop on it and it takes you to the street where this group is...you return to this room.“

After the game: participants may share their experiences with the group. Each person can say what was in the package and what it could mean to them. It is ok if someone does not want to talk about their experience. It is possible to work through first steps towards solution of certain problem on the basis of symbols. Such fantasy may be predecessor to individual work with certain participants.

WORKSHOPS ABOUT COMMUNICATION THEORETICAL PART

Some of the definitions of communication:

- communication, in its most relaxed form, means exchanging messages between two or more persons. The messages which are being exchanged may be verbal or non-verbal. (Zvonarevi , 1978.)
- communication is a process of sending, transferring and receiving messages, signals and information. (Petz and associates, 1992.)
- communication is an activity of creating something mutual (Novosel, 1991.)

There are many prejudices related to communication process. (Novosel, 1991.)

- *communication is the thing everyone knows about.* Good communication is understandable by itself. This prejudice, probably comes from the fact that communication is present everywhere. Communication is everyday thing, unavoidable in different situations- family, work place, grocery store, even when we are alone and doing our inner talks, so people see it often as understandable by itself. Unfortunately, it is not thru, and communication skills, as well as others, have to be learned in systematic way.

- *We communicate through words.* Most people think that we communicate exclusively, or mostly through words. However, according to some authors' opinion, the majority of communication goes through non-verbal means. We convey messages with hand movement, mimics, appearance and many other non-verbal signs.

- *Almightiness versus powerlessness of communication.* While some people think that through appropriate communication they can achieve everything, part of them think that they cannot, really, achieve or change anything. Both standings are wrong. Considering the fact that communication process depends on a number of factors, it is not possible to talk about its impact in absolute terms of total success or failure.

• *It is possible to avoid communication.* Many people believe that they can avoid communication if they do not talk, turn their heads, leave the room or do not verbalize certain opinion, but we already emphasized that we do not communicate with words exclusively. We communicate through our behavior as a whole, which is a number of non-verbal signs telling us, often more than words.

• *Communication is conscious and intended activity.* It is possible to completely control your own communication. If we accept the significance of non-verbal signs in communication process, we are not going to think twice if it is possible to completely control own communication. Not only non-verbal behavior (voice trembling or redness), but often our verbal conduct is not under our control. Besides that, the communication process is not determined only by our intentions but, also, by the significance that the person who receives a message gives to verbal or non-verbal messages we conveyed, regardless of the fact that we were aware of them or not.

• *Wider communication leads to better relationships and better problem solving.* More communication does not always lead to better and more effective problem solving. Sometimes the effect is opposite-continuance of communication may deepen the conflict. Because of that, it is better to stop communication sometimes in order to give a chance to involved persons to “chill out”. During the decision making process, for example, too much communication may lead to masking of certain problem instead of clearing it.

Communication includes verbal aspect, or the meaning of words or sentences. But, in the communication process, non-verbal aspects, such as body language, eye movement, tone of voice and facial expression, are equally important. Communication as social interaction, is multifaceted process, which includes not only behavior, but thoughts, values and attitudes of the persons involved in that process.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- Unavoidable in other persons presence
- Conveys messages through the body and face
- People are less aware of non-verbal than verbal communication
- Non-verbal messages are often received unconsciously
- Non-verbal signs can
 - replace words
 - Repeat what is being said
 - Accentuate the verbal message, especially the emotional part
 - Regulate interaction
 - Be opposite to verbal messages (often unconsciously)

ELEMENTS OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- **FACIAL EXPRESSION** is the most important one because it shows the level of likeness or understanding, interest or involvement, reflects emotional states from joy to desperation, shows emotions even when the person wants to hide them.

- **THE LOOK** is the element we use to open and close communication channels. It reflects closeness, but, also, lack of readiness for interaction. We can successfully signal to other people what we want from them through facial expression and by looking at them.

- **BODY LANGUAGE AND MOVEMENT** refer to the stance of the body and extremities, the way a certain persons is sitting down, standing or walking. These elements reflect person's attitude, feelings towards self and others. Body language may show warm feelings towards others, but, also power and status.

- **MOVEMENTS** are, after facial expression, the most expressive signs of non-verbal communication. They make communicating possible even when it is not possible to establish verbal communication.

They can also contribute to strengthening of verbal messages, or serve as indicators of emotional state even when facial expression is being controlled.

- **PHYSICAL CLOSENESS** indicates the level of likeness, closeness or status differences.

It has been confirmed that in close, intimate relationships physical closeness is up to 40 centimeters, and in close, friendly relationships, physical closeness is from 40 centimeters to one meter. In social relationships is between one and three meters, and in public three meters or more. (Hall, 1966.).

- **TOUCH** represents the final level of reducing the distance among individuals, and, as such, has a role of strengthening all interactions.
- **APPEARANCE** conveys a message about our personality, social belonging, stands, even about emotional state.
- **PARA-LINGUISTIC SIGNS** – emotional tone of voice, clarity, speed, volume, accuracy and pauses during speech.

The weak side of non-verbal communication is lack of simple interpretation (smile-friendship and openness or uncomfortable feelings and hiding unfriendly feelings). This can lead to misunderstanding in communication.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication refers to exchanging messages through speech or words. During the process of communication we use speech in order to give information to others about certain facts or events, in other words, to express our ideas and stands, to ask questions or give instructions to others.

Conversation is based on two communication skills: listening and talking.

LISTENING

There is only one correct way of listening, but there are seven ways not to listen:

- PSEUDO-LISTENING – listener reacts as if he was listening, but he does not.
- ONE-LAYERED LISTENING – receiving only one part of messages (for example- verbal part, while completely neglecting non-verbal part).
- SELECTIVE LISTENING - listening just what you are interested in.
- SELECTIVE REJECTION – focusing only on unwanted topics. When such a topic arises, the listener rejects it.
- STEALING WORDS – the listener listens just enough to grab a chance for personal “show”.
- DEFENSIVE LISTENING – the most innocent statements are taken as attacks.
- LISTENING IN AMBUSH - listening only in order to attack the speaker.

ACTIVE LISTENING

The goal to any real listening is to understand the message being conveyed by the speaker. While doing that, the listener may actively react in order to understand the speaker in the best possible way. Such listening is called active listening, and represents a base of successful communication process.

The basic characteristic of active listening is to make an effort to help in clearing up of received messages.

The essence of active listening is in asking questions, especially indirect ones.

Direct questions about sensitive and personal topics may cause uncomfortable feelings, negative or defensive reactions, lack of trust, complete withdrawing and termination of communication of the speaker.

That is why we use indirect questions in difficult and sensitive situations, when we are not clear about speaker's feelings or desires.

PARAPHRASING OR RESUMING (giving back the spoken words to the speaker). This is the way to give a speaker the opportunity to confirm or correct what listener heard and understood: “in other words...”, “you are saying...” besides the facts, it is important to show interest for the emotions of the speaker by starting a sentence with “It seems to me that you are feeling...because...”

While listening to other person you convey following messages:

- I HEAR YOUR PROBLEM
- I SEE HOW YOU FEEL
- I AM GOING TO HELP YOU TO THINK ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM AND FIND SOLUTIONS
- I BELIEVE IN YOU AND THAT YOU CAN FIND YOUR OWN SOLUTION

The person who receives such messages becomes more self-confident, responsible, independent, as well as more efficient in solving own problems. During conflict- with active listening we can determine better what the persons in conflict think and feel.

PRINCIPLES OF EMPHATIC LISTENING

- To give an opportunity to a person to express own feelings
- To listen to what caused those feelings (event, situation)
- To help a person to find own ideas for solving their problems by asking open ended questions (we do not criticize or rank)
- To encourage the person to realize their own idea (try to do that! Do it if you think that is the best option for you!)

EMPATHIC UNDERSTANDING OF SELF

- What do I feel right now?
- Why do I feel this way?
- What is it that I want?
- Which one of my needs is not satisfied?
- What are the ways to satisfy this need?

CONVERSATION OF ACCEPTANCE

There is an assumption that we know how to listen to others with empathy and speak in a form of personal statements (so called I STATEMENTS). Personal statement is a way of clear expression of our opinion related to certain situation. That statement is free of putting blame on someone, judging, criticizing or prejudices against other person. (IT IS CLEAN.). Furthermore, this statement is focusing on the problem and facts (IT IS CLEAR), and it verbalizes the way we see it and what would we like to change about it.

