



USAID
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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

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Learning to Ask for Help



Photo: UMCOR

When parents of special needs children in Trebinje, the southernmost region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, first heard of a proposal to raise money through collection boxes, they were shocked. The idea just seemed too much like begging.

“We explained to them that if you have a cause it isn’t begging. You have to ask if you want to receive,” said Mirjana Popovic, a USAID official.

With USAID support, nine community organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina launched 14 fundraising campaigns to raise money for those in need, including orphans, disabled people, and children at risk.

Bosnian Handicrafts, an organization that helps vulnerable and marginalized women make a living through handicrafts, staged a fashion show and charity auction in Tuzla, an industrial city northwest of Sarajevo.

The campaigns employed a variety of fundraising tools, including auctions, special events, and direct mail. For every 1 KM, or Convertible Mark, spent the organizations earned an average of 1.5 KM, proving that locally organized fundraising efforts can indeed achieve success.

In addition to helping local groups prepare fundraising campaigns and events, USAID used this experience to share successes and lessons learned. To reach a wider audience of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), USAID published “A Guide for Domestic Fundraising for NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” available for all on USAID’s local website at www.usaid.ba/fundraising.htm.

Most people who contributed during the fundraisers said they had not given donations before because no one had asked them to. Local organizations have learned that if they ask for help, there’s a good chance they will get it.