

## **Study on the Experience and Prevention of Violence among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Challenges and Perspectives in Creating an Inclusive and Safe Environment with a Focus on Gender-Based Violence**

### **- A Summary of Living Peace Lab Project at University of Sarajevo-**

Young people are in a particularly vulnerable position in society, where on the one hand they are in the process of forming their personal and collective identity, while on the other hand they are exposed to pressures and expectations that often exceed their resources and capacities. During this period, violence can act as an obstacle to development, but also as a serious obstacle to the realization of the right to safety, education and self-realization. Violence, including gender-based violence, among young people represents one of the most serious social challenges of the modern era. Its forms and intensity vary depending on the cultural, socio-economic and institutional framework, but in almost all contexts it leaves long-term consequences for individuals, their families and communities.

In late 2024 Living Peace Lab at University of Sarajevo launched a project named Developing Peer Education Initiatives. The project started from the assumption that young people are not just passive recipients of knowledge about violence, but can and must be active actors in recognizing and preventing it. Peer education, as one of the most effective tools in working with young people, enables the topics of violence and gender equality to be conveyed in a way that is understandable, close and contextually relevant to young people. In this way, prevention becomes a process of joint learning and action, in which young people shape strategies that correspond to their real experiences and needs. It is necessary for us as a society to see the importance of young people's participation in decision-making processes, especially when it comes to topics that directly affect their everyday lives. In the context of violence, this means that their experiences and perspective represent an indispensable resource for understanding the causes, manifestations and consequences of violent behavior. In line with the principles of the EUPeace Alliance, which emphasize the importance of connecting the academic community with other social actors in order to achieve positive social change in our environment, the project was designed in cooperation with the CURE Foundation and the Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The main outcome of the project is a book titled Study on the Experience and Prevention of Violence among Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Challenges and Perspectives in Creating an Inclusive and Safe Environment with a Focus on Gender-Based Violence. The book explores the key role of youth in understanding the causes of the increasing violence in the community, and its goals stem from the mission and goals of the EUPeace Alliance, which include fostering dialogue and generating



innovative solutions in the areas of peace, justice and inclusiveness. In addition to the members of Work Package 7, the research team also included professors from the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo. Given the importance of collaborative, or inclusive, work methodology, students from various study programs at the University of Sarajevo were actively involved in the entire process and have significantly contributed to the research activities and the design of educational tools for the prevention of various forms of violence in society.

The manual is currently available in Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian language and can be downloaded for free here: <https://ebooks.unsa.ba/index.php/ebooks/catalog/view/94/98/156>

