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 World Vision®

# Child Friendly Spaces

AFTER FLOODS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – EXPERIENCES

**Throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Child-Friendly Spaces were opened  
with the support of:**

EUROPEAN UNION THROUGH THE FLOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM

UNICEF

SWISS GOVERNMENT

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

BASF

MALTESIAN GOVERNMENT

SAVE THE CHILDREN

WORLD VISION

**Child Friendly Spaces**  
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World Vision is an international Christian humanitarian organization for assistance, development and public advocacy; it is committed to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. World Vision works in the interest of all people, regardless of their faith, race, ethnicity or gender. World Vision has been working in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1994.

## INTRODUCTION

When disasters occur, parents and communities are often overwhelmed and have a hard time keeping children safe and occupied. One of the most important contributions World Vision made after record-breaking floods last year was to support communities to establish Child Friendly Spaces – or places where children can be safe, cared for and educated. Safe havens.

At the peak of activity there were anywhere between 60 – 100 children attending each of the centers daily. Child Friendly Spaces are one of the ways in which care and protection of children in emergencies is prioritized. We are grateful to our partners who worked closely with us: schools, local NGOs, municipality representatives, parents, media, Centers for social welfare, Civil Protection, and the Employment Bureau.

The model of Child Friendly Spaces responds to the unique needs of the local community and recognizes the different layers of vulnerability. For example, Child Friendly Spaces support children with special needs, Roma children and pre-school children who have no other kindergartens or centers to attend.

World Vision is proud to be partnering with UNICEF and Save the Children to implement Child Friendly Spaces as well as our local community partners.

Let us remember that we must always put children first, especially those most forgotten and invisible who already face hardship and high levels of vulnerability. The most important contribution we can make is to the future of this country - the children of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

*Sarah Bearup, World Vision BiH  
National Director*

# ESTABLISHMENT OF CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The floods that hit Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in May 2014 affected more than a million persons, including the most vulnerable – children. This natural disaster affected around 60% of children throughout the country; many of these children had to leave their homes. World Vision and Save the Children opened Child Friendly Spaces in flooded areas throughout BiH, as part of the assistance program with the support of UNICEF. Child Friendly Spaces over several months provided safe environment for around 3,800 boys and girls, offering meals and psycho-social support to help the children through the post-flood period without any serious consequences for their development.

Responding to natural disasters or man-made crises, the concept of Child Friendly Space directly focuses on protection of all, especially the most vulnerable children. Ensuring the best interest of children, Minimal Standards for Child Protection have been agreed and established following the principles of non-discrimination, confidentiality, community participation, and cooperation with communities. Through the Child Friendly Space, the community creates a caring and safe environment in which children can spend some quality, focused and organized time playing, and participating in recreational and other activities.

Opening the Child Friendly Spaces in situations of crisis requires minimal resources from communities: two or three persons able to work different hours with as many as a hundred children a day, a safe venue, and adequate didactic materials. The recent floods in BiH proved that many people here were willing to help both children and professionals (doctors, psychologists, social workers,

pedagogues, psychotherapists, etc.) in the flood affected areas. The floods also showed that it is possible to swiftly organize support systems for citizens and children. With a well prepared curriculum, some paper and pencils may prove to be a sufficient didactic material provided that the focus is placed on animators' instructions, discussions among children, and interaction of all those involved in the process of taking care of the children's mental health in crisis situations.

The required minimal resources ensure that children adopt new ways of coping with crisis and stress, normalize their reactions through social interaction and psychological reinterpretation of the events; time to freely play in a safe environment; time for parents to figure out how to provide resources for living. Parents as well often feel psychologically supported knowing that they are not alone in dealing with crises, and that they can refer to professionals or other persons for advice. Child Friendly Spaces should not be the initiative of international organizations only; they should be part of high-priority activities that the relevant BiH institutions coordinate in order to help the victims of floods in BiH.

This publication presents the work of eighteen Child Friendly Spaces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it conveys opinions of their youngest members. A special part of the publication is dedicated to creative workshops and the children's artworks – in which everyone will find something for themselves.

**Mirjana Gavrić Hopić, World Vision BiH  
Project Manager**

# CRISIS INTERVENTIONS AND OPERATION OF CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES

Psychological crisis intervention imply a set of actions aimed at helping people to cope with crises. It primarily means supporting and assisting these people to regain personal autonomy and control over their lives, which diminishes the feeling of helplessness, which is, again, the most obvious characteristic of a crisis as a psychological condition. Crisis interventions are primarily preventive actions, meaning they are meant to prevent more serious and longer-term consequences, or even psychopathological disorders which can result from crisis events.

The course of crisis events implying relocation of large numbers of evacuees cannot be foreseen or controlled; these events occur suddenly, they are long-term and they affect a large number of people, simultaneously causing various stress generating factors triggered by adverse situations such as no access to food or potable water and sanitation, where contagious diseases and similar problems represent high-risk factors adding to the crisis faced by individuals and groups.

A crisis is defined as a mental state caused by a crisis event after which regular stress coping mechanisms fail to provide help. A crisis event is a stressful, traumatic or dangerous event happening all of a sudden, or rarely. However, a definition of crisis event implies three additional conditions: disruption of psychological balance, inability to regain balance using regular coping mechanisms, and signs of agitation and disturbed functioning.

The establishment of Child Friendly Spaces in the areas affected by the threatening crisis events significantly mitigates the physical and mental consequences of crisis.

The organization of children's workshops in crisis situations ensures alternatives for the children affected by the crisis event. The workshops provide not only the

children's physical safety but also reduce probability of contacting potential stressors, thus providing for the children's normal psychophysical functioning. If the parents in crisis-affected areas are not able to dedicate sufficient time to their children's care, the children's workshops can compensate for their absence, and protect children from negligence. The Child Friendly Spaces offer children an opportunity to spend their time in a supportive environment where they can influence a curriculum and its implementation, giving them a sense of control necessary for focusing on development and application of skills for coping with stressful situations.

If children develop stressful reactions, the social support networks and the children's workshops programs present valuable resources that can help them overcome the stress. Children's workshops are especially appropriate for crisis situations, since the emphasis is put on the learning from experience. This approach to potentially negative and threatening experiences is more relevant and more efficient than standard educational approaches.

A particularly important characteristic of such workshops is their clear structure and purpose in the educational process. A structured and purposeful approach to problems provides a strong counterweight to the stress of crisis situations which is particularly heavy due to unpredictable and chaotic nature of these situations. Practicing particular cognitive skills can significantly contribute to building resilience in children threatened by extreme adversity.

**Mustafa Šuvalija, Faculty of Criminalistics,  
Criminology and Security Studies of the University  
in Sarajevo**



## FORUM THEATAR

In the Child Friendly Spaces I conducted Forum Theater, reinterpretation of a fairy tale, and Image Theater with children. We used cardboard boxes, straws, and papers to create our own worlds inspired by the May flood experiences. Although most of the children are in a difficult social situation, they amazed me with their imagination, openness, focus, and curiosity which are truly rare friends in the process of growing up in this digital era. Art has again proven to be a powerful friend to children, and to have a key even to the most hidden doors to spirituality. I was hugely helped by Biljana Begić, a psychologist who always managed to find a way to animate things deeply hidden in children's minds and translate them into a story. I am truly grateful for the trust these little beings vested in us. While driving home on sad, foggy, and muddy roads of Bosnia, I was thinking about how these children deserve museums you see throughout the world, and creative centers, and gyms – but instead of all this they only have the Child Friendly Spaces, and hardworking and creative animators who organize great workshops for them, with true dedication and professionalism.

*Arma Tanović, actress*







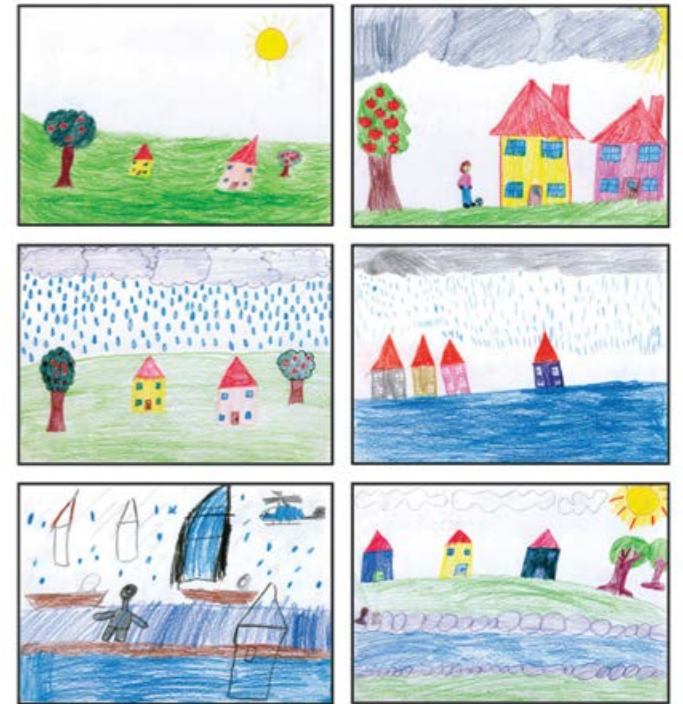


# Comics workshops





# FLOOD



## COMICS WORKSHOPS

Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) are definitely needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina since they can offer informal education to children, thus creating space in which it is possible to prepare children to cope with issues like trauma, multiculturalism, and identity.

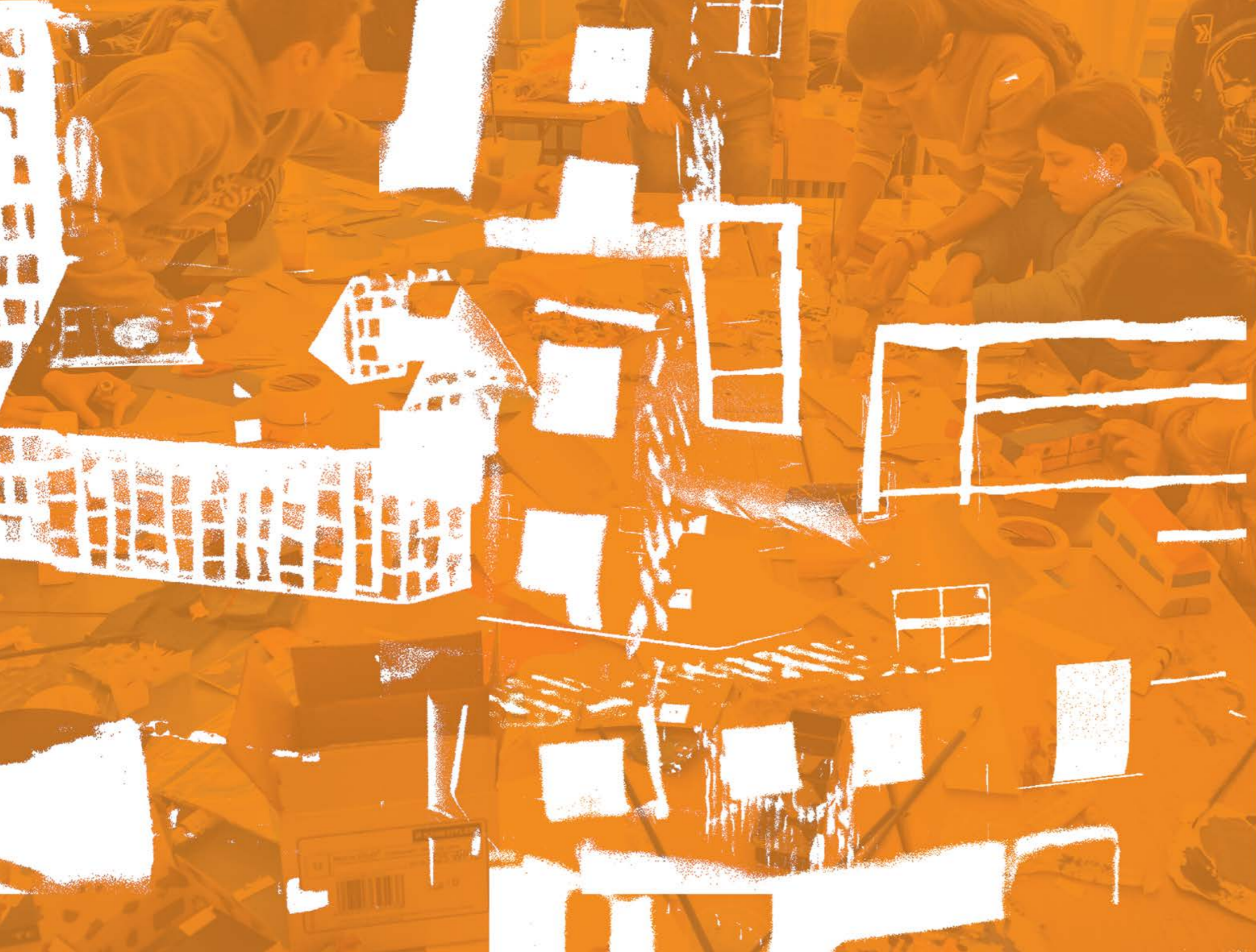
In order to create these conditions, it is necessary for CFS centers to become a priority to all key actors in the field, with an aim to ensure economic stability, protection, and safety for children. I think that the approach to CFS project should be serious, and focused on the CFS sustainability. Among other things, it should involve the training of animators and coordinators in pedagogical skills and work tools, with precisely coordinated workshops, and occasional lectures by visiting pedagogues and artists.

*Muhamed Kafedžić Muha,  
art teacher; MA in painting*



# FRIENDSHIP





Scale model creation  
- Risk maps



## SCALE MODEL CREATION – RISK MAPS

When I first accepted an engagement with World Vision and when I started drafting a plan and concept for the workshops in which children in the flood-affected areas were to make scale models of their communities, I had plenty of doubts and questions: how would the younger children, i.e. the children who had never made scale models before, cope with this project; would two hours be enough for them to learn how to make a scale model, which materials were the best to use, could some topics related to the floods be too painful for them, and should these be treated at all? However, to my great joy, during the very first workshop I noticed that the children participated in making the scale models with joy and enthusiasm. The children even showed competitive spirit, as they were clearly interested in accepting and learning new concepts. All my doubts disappeared, and I am pleased to say that this was one of my best experiences

ever. The best confirmation of the importance of this project to me is great creativity, sense of community, and children's desire to make their places nicer, and safer. The moments like when older children help younger children to improve their scale models were truly special. Or when three ten-year olds, who in the beginning of the workshop did not even know what an architect does, express their wish to become architects when they grow up. And, finally, the moment when the children ask you whether you will come again on Monday, so that you would continue making scale models. I hope that similar activities will continue. For children, especially those in smaller communities, such experience is invaluable since it provides new knowledge, and new perspectives.

*Sabina Beširević-Zahirović, architect*





# MUSICAL WORKSHOPS

Children welcomed us with smiles and hopes, although several months earlier, water swept away their homes and everything they had. We brought them a gift – music – which children in all Spaces received with great joy and pleasure. For some of them it was the first time they played music – especially the music from another continent – Brazilian rhythms. Sometimes a shy child would open up and become the best in a small orchestra. When classes at school cease so that all children could enjoy in a happy musical parade, we rediscover that every encounter with children has a special charm. Music gives them great, new and informative experience, it gives them pleasure, and they react to it with even greater love, happiness and excitement, as if all of a sudden they entered a dream of a magical world of dance and rhythms of Brazil. According to the leaders of the Spaces, many children grew to love music thanks to this interaction. Music awareness was instilled even in children not much interested in music before; even they expressed a desire to meet with us again, to play these unusual samba instruments. The children and the leaders of the Begov Han Child Friendly Space wrote a lovely, inspiring letter, to which we added music and translated it into their Hymn to Bravery. Thanks to good deeds of those who recognize the children's need to surmount difficulties, and to show themselves in the best light despite the difficulties, you will have an opportunity to hear this song in public.

*Robert i Gordan Kranjčić,  
Sarajevo Drum Orchestra/sdo.ba*







# ANTHEM OF BRAVERY

*Lyrics: Maid Jusufović, Armin Bolić,  
Child Friendly Space Begov Han*  
*Music: Gordan Kranjčić*  
*Musical Arrangement: Robert and Gordan Kranjčić*  
*Choir: Girls and boys from the  
Child Friendly Space Begov Han*



123

SOPRANO 1

Dje-co dra-ga ne-pla-šte se sa-da po-pla-ve su pro-šle no-ve

SOPRANO 2

ALTO

Dje-co dra-ga ne-pla-šte se sa-da po-pla-ve su pro-šle no-ve

123

Piano

Dje-co dra-ga ne-pla-šte se sa-da po-pla-ve su pro-šle no-ve

5

ra-do-sti su do-šle do-nje-li ih lju-di dob-ra sr-ca s osm-je-hom ve-li-kim do

ra-do-sti su do-šle do-nje-li ih lju-di dob-ra sr-ca s osm-je-hom ve-li-kim do

ra-do-sti su do-šle do-nje-li ih lju-di dob-ra sr-ca s osm-je-hom ve-li-kim do

3

sun-ca. Ni kli-zi-šta vi-še ni-su sa na-ma od nje-la ih ve-se-la

Ni kli-zi-šta vi-še ni-su sa na-ma od nje-la ih ve-se-la

sun-ca. Ni kli-zi-šta vi-še ni-su sa na-ma od nje-la ih ve-se-la

3

sun-ca. Ni kli-zi-šta vi-še ni-su sa na-ma od nje-la ih ve-se-la

dje-či-ja stra - na Os-r

dje-či-ja stra - na Os-r

Os-r





# Eco graphic worksop



## ECO GRAPHIC WORKSHOP

The transfer of know-how to younger generations is a privilege, and always entails many good and positive impressions, and a sense of inner satisfaction and happiness. The children were offered an opportunity to develop new methods and processes of creation of image performances, and we do hope that this will stimulate their imagination and curiosity, and encourage them to continue developing their creativity in the art of painting. The goal of eco graphic workshops is to develop children's imagination through a creative process of transferring images from a board, the so-called matrix. This time we used monotype technique. In an intimate and relaxed atmosphere, children of different ages and their instructors and animators treated the topic of natural disasters and their prevention, as well as those like The Future, the Strength and What Do I Want to Do When I Grow Up? For many participants, the printing technique was something new, so the curiosity and thrill of creation soon prevailed. Although the plan was for each student to make one piece of art, in most workshops the children wanted to do more, to make two or even three artworks in the course of single workshop.

*Taida Jašarević, painter, PhD*





**BRCKO**

**Sapna**

Maglaj

Begov Han

Prijedor

**Sanski Most**

Banja Luka

**Begov Han Olovo**

Šekovići

Šamac

Nemila

**Maglaj BRCKO**

Maglaj

Banja Luka

**Olovske Luke**

**Begov Han**

Boboj

Ševarlije

Nemila

**Maglaj**

Solima

Šamac

**Sapna**

Sapna

**Olovo**

Begov Han

**Olovske Luke**

Solima

Šekovići

Maglaj

**Solun**

Ševarlije

**Kosova**

Šekovići

**Child friendly spaces**



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN SAPNA

By opening the Child Friendly Space, World Vision greatly contributed to the quality of life in our environment. We, the young people, were thus given chance to express our creative and professional skills, and obtain a new working experience.

The Child Friendly Space is a special joy to children, considering the fact that there is no place in our community where younger children could socialize and spend their free time. The Space is a safe place for learning, playing and creative activities; it is free of charge and receives children of all ages.

An advantage of this type of activity is reflected in a broad spectrum of possibilities: creative, theatrical, etc. It is adjusted to children's needs.

There is no kindergarten in our community, and the Child Friendly Space is the only chance for pre-school children to socialize and acquire working habits before they start school.

For the Sapna Child Friendly Space team, this Space is an opportunity to work and contribute to the progress and quality of social life in our community. It is also an opportunity for us to work and contribute to children's joy, putting the smiles back on their faces, to save them from floods and landslides which befell our community a couple of months ago. It is of great importance to react adequately and to adequately deal with potential consequences for children's psycho-physical development in this situation. The Child Friendly Space is a great idea to get children off the street, and from collective centers where they had found shelter. Finally, we can say that the Space makes children smile and brings them joy – which is the basic measure of children's growing up.

**Coordinators and animators  
of the Sapna Child Friendly Space**

## My Child Friendly Space in Sapna

*The Child Friendly Space is good for me, because I learnt a lot here. I feel safe in the Space. I like it. I prefer the Space to the school. I would like this Space to stay. I learnt a lot of games, and much, much more. I became more independent and responsible, I learnt a lot about children's rights; which I did not know before. I learnt how to make a paper pumpkin, a Snowman, and all sorts of paper flowers.*

*The Space is real fun. I love to spend my time there. I like the animators in the Space. I wish we could all have a New Year's party here. I learnt a lot here and made a lot of friends. I hope the Space will stay in the school for many years.*

*I love the Space so much. I have a lot of fun here and learn new things. I would not change anything, because it feels like home to me. Our animators are very attentive. They treat us all equally. That is my opinion about the Space.*

*For me, the Space is the best and most beautiful place in the school. If it was not there, I would be bored. I have the best time in the Space. I even met someone I like in the Space.*

*The Space is always fun. We always do something interesting, and we learn. It would be great if they never closed the Space.*



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN SOLINA

Opening of the Child Friendly Space came as a refreshment for the entire local community. This became a busy place again; games and smiles of happy children brought the positive change to the entire community. The interest shown by parents was great; briefly – we are all very happy and satisfied.

We are all very much committed to making the Child Friendly Space primarily a safe place for children, a place where their rights are recognized, where we respect their wishes, opinions and proposals. The Child Friendly Space, school and families of children are complementary elements, which the children defined in the way characteristic of them: "The Child Friendly Space is a place where we don't have to work like we do at home or to learn like we do at school, and still we manage to do everything and learn everything." It is a pleasure to see the children every day at ten o'clock pulling their parents to get them to the Space as soon as possible; it is a pleasure to see them happy and smiling when in the Space. Very often, when their parents come to pick them up, they do not want to leave.

**Binasa Kavazović, the Solina Child Friendly Space Coordinator**

# Parents and Children about the Child Friendly Space in Solina

*I come to the Space because I always learn something new, and because we spend a lot of time together. I so much enjoy being here. I have been coming to the Space for quite some time. When I first came, I thought I would be bored, but the more often I came, the better I felt. Once we made dolls and it was my most interesting day. Of course, there are so many nice days I spent here that I could continue writing till tomorrow. Our aunty Binasa is what I love most about the Space; she's the coordinator and she's like a second mom to us. We also love the animators Lejla and Dženana and I thank them all for inviting me to come.*

*The Space makes a very nice impression on me, and that is why I come. I have many friends here. While I was acting on the stage, or preparing a puppet show, I had a stage fright. After my performance, when I heard people applauding to me, I was happy.*

*My child spends all his free time in the Solina Child Friendly Space. He is a boy with speech and language difficulties, which reduces his ability to communicate and socialize with his peers. Unfairly to our son, so far we have avoided kindergartens, and this kind of playrooms, waiting for his speech capacities to improve, so that he wouldn't feel anxiety and fear in communication. Upon recommendations of other parents, we decided to take him to the Child Friendly Space, where he luckily showed great progress in communication, socialization and learning of the new behavioral rules. And for all this we have to thank the professionals who do their job in a professional manner, showing great love for our children. All this would not be possible if they did not provide various amenities, including a free-of-charge stay for the youngest and most sensitive population in our settlement Solina. Thank you very much and I hope that this will last long. Good luck!*

*A Parent*

# CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN ŠEKOVIĆI

The Child Friendly Space in Šekovići began to function on August 26, 2014; the facility was provided by Primary School "Jovan Dučić". Assisted by World Vision and their office in Tuzla, we managed to completely renovate a classroom and prepare it for the work in compliance with all the Child Friendly Space standards. Today, the Child friendly Space classroom is the best equipped classroom in the school.

The importance of the Space is multifold and may be divided per fields of its activity: working with children, providing a chance for young people to work and develop, and involving the local community in the very process of work. As its name tells us, the work of the Space is mostly focused on the education of children in all areas: protection, learning about children's rights and implementation of children's rights, creative cultural workshops, working with children with special needs, and one of the most important things – developing empathy in children. The importance of the Space in relation to youth reflects in giving us a chance to work; for some of us it is the only source of income, the only way to attend seminars, improve the acquired knowledge, and acquire new knowledge – none of which we have had a chance of doing before. A broadened network of friends with whom we now cooperate, and a chance we had to improve life skills are also very important things.

Regarding the involvement of local community in the work of the Space, the biggest contribution was given by Primary School "Jovan Dučić" Šekovići which provided a venue and their full support. In return, the school has got the best equipped classroom used also by the first-graders to the mutual satisfaction of both the teachers and the children.

The Child Friendly Space is great for small Šekovići.

**Boris Davidović, the Šekovići Child Friendly Space Coordinator**



The Child Friendly Space provided to our children the whole collection of pleasant experiences – more friends were made, friendships intensified, children learnt many useful things. They learnt that they should not divide themselves on the basis of their status, religious or national affiliation. They learnt they were all equal with equal children's rights. For them, new and previous friendships are important in establishing the social support network. In the Child Friendly Space they learnt to protect themselves from various threats. This is a place where they get together, feel protected, and get a chance to express their creativity. In the Space, they had some nice moments which our community is unable to provide – workshops with psychologists, or actors. Through the workshops, the children embellished the school yard, cleaned it and planted vegetation there. Through discussions about volunteerism and altruism, they helped their peers who needed help and thus showed their humaneness. Simply said, the Space is a place where children can learn something through games and fun, where they can combine nice and helpful stuff.

**Vesna Šulić, the Šekovići Child Friendly Space Animator**

## What Does Child Friendly Space in Šekovići Mean to Me?

*It is great to have a place where you can relax. For me, that place is the Child Friendly Space. I like it a lot. I learnt so much in the Space. One of the things I learnt is that we should help others. I found the creativity week most impressive because I like to make various items. Salt painting with chalk really attracted my attention. All weeks in the Space are special in their way. I hope that the Space will continue to be a good and interesting place.*

*This is my first time in the Space. Everything I heard, I liked, since the Child Friendly Space is an opportunity for children to get together and learn something new. My sister talked me into coming here; she said I should see for myself what a great and funny place the Space was. This is a new beginning for me and I hope it will be fun. The Space is better than the school in which we do nothing but study. Unlike in school, there are no grades in the Space, and I like it. The Space is not boring; it makes children happy and joyful. Although I have just started coming here, the Space seems to me like a good place, and that's why I would like it to continue functioning as long as possible.*

*In the course of all these months, the Child Friendly Space was very interesting. We treated numerous topics: ecology, sports, security, volunteerism, and many others. No famous public figure has come to visit us yet, but we were told a man who draws caricatures and comics would. What I like most in the Space is that I can play with my friends. The Space is really great because we can play in it. So far, what I most liked about the Space was when we went to Tuzla and played a choreography there.*

*I have been in the Space since its beginning. I like many things in the Space. We socialize and play a lot. Every week we learn something new; but how we learn here differs much from that how we learn at school. I traveled to Tuzla with the Space. We learnt how to protect ourselves in uncomfortable situations, we learnt about culture, and how to help others. And the best thing that happened to me was a humanitarian action. We helped two little girls from a village. I would like the Space to stay for long, and become more interesting every day.*





## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN BEGOV HAN

The Begov Han Child Friendly Space started functioning in the summer of 2014, on June 24, with children's clamor, smiles, music, and balloons with photos of boys and girls holding hands. It was a day when Begov Han got something which children, still scared of floods and landslides, could only dream about until then. It was a day when a fairy tale about children's imagination and creativity started to be written. Animators worked hard with children between 2 and 15 years of age to teach them things they did not see either at school or home. After working six months as an animator, I noticed the difference in children we teach. Their creativity and imagination visibly increased, their behavior improved (workshops on peer violence), their care of protection of environment and nature was obvious, especially at school where they separate waste: plastic and paper (ecological workshops). Solidarity and readiness to help others (workshops on humanity), and respect for the elderly became obvious.

Every day we hear parents and people from the community praising us, speaking about the Child Friendly Space in Begov Han as the best thing that

happened to this place; they express their hope that it will continue functioning for as long as possible, because it takes children off the street and, through various workshops, stimulates children's willingness to participate in different out of school activities; many children attend musical school, attend karate classes, or football training, etc.

We get compliments from the people who moved to Begov Han after the floods and landslides, who were forced by natural disasters to leave their homes, and whose children regularly come to the Child Friendly Space. We also get compliments from the parents whose children attend the school in Begov Han but live in neighboring places (Donja Golubinja, Želeća, Željezno Polje, Kovanići, Pepelari), an who are therefore forced to travel to school by bus. At the end of this brief review, I would like to add that I am sorry that as a little boy I did not have a chance to come to a place as the Child Friendly Space.

**Armin Bolić, the Begov Han Child Friendly Space Coordinator**



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN KOVAČI

From the very beginning, children and parents showed extraordinary interest in the Child Friendly Space in Kovači. Due to the absence of quality content for children, who are additionally impoverished by the floods and landslides that befell this area, the Child Friendly Space was the only place to which children could come and spend their time in quality and safe manner. The work of the Child Friendly Space is based exclusively on education and games, but the Child Friendly Space is also a truly safe place for children. In a small community as local community Kovači, the Child Friendly Space is extremely refreshing for the entire area. This can best be seen in the parents' reactions; they say that the Child Friendly Space is the best thing that recently happened in their place. Mirza, a grandma of a little girl who regularly comes to the Child Friendly Space, emphasizes that her granddaughter every morning wakes up asking when she would go to the Child Friendly Space.

Many educators and lecturers visited the Child Friendly Space in Kovači, and they all agree about one thing: the atmosphere in the Space is positive, and



warm. We even had a problem because children did not want to leave the Space to go home. A boy who in the beginning did not want to stay in the Space without his parents, now does not want to leave the Space. The cooperation with the entire faculty of the school which has provided the room for the Space is at a very high level; they are all very kind and always willing to help. Positive changes which the parents notice in their children are invaluable. Through education in the Child Friendly Space, some children learnt their first letters, colors, animals ... while older children learnt what it means to respect everyone, how to behave during and after the floods, and much more.

The entire team working in the Space in Kovači thinks that working with children who come to the Space is a great privilege and pleasure for all of us. Children's smiles are invaluable, and represent an additional incentive to continue improving our work in the future.

**Adnan Tursić, the Kovači Child Friendly Space Coordinator; Sara Yousef and Aida Hodžić, the Kovači CFS Animators**



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN KOSOVA

The Child Friendly Space in Kosova provides innovative content activities for children, didactic materials, toys, technique – which all lure many smiles, and make children happy. The Space primarily helps with the children’s socialization since we live in a small village and have no access to kindergartens. Children managed to develop a sense of belonging to a group, and the response of both parents and children was great.

The Space is a place which also helped us, animators, to develop our skills and capacities, adopt new knowledge through different workshops and learn about team work. Our impression is that the children see the Space as their daily obligation which they look forward to meet; we also noticed that the parents trust us and have a growing interest in the continuation of the project, given the recent natural disasters that have destroyed the little space that was meant for children’s play.

**Armina Bočić, Merima Sejmenović and Merima Spahić, Coordinators and Animators in the Kosova Child Friendly Space**



## Children about the Child Friendly Space Kosova



*I love to get together with my friends, I like musical instruments and especially the fact that I can play these instruments without anybody telling me I shouldn’t do it.*

*I like the games, and having a snack, making new friends and I like playing with my classmates.*



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN NEMILA

In cooperation with UNICEF, World Vision BiH recognized the need to establish child friendly spaces in the areas affected by natural disaster, and in addition to the six child friendly spaces opened in the most affected areas, the Space was also opened in Nemila. Initially established as a safe place for children, thanks to the dedication of its animators, professional lecturers, interest of children and their parents, it grew to become a place of educational socialization. CFS Nemila is now the place in which children are offered an opportunity to learn, in addition to playing, socializing and having fun. Through art workshops, children understand the importance of teamwork and togetherness, and their own role in the group. Their self-confidence improves, as well as communication skills and critical thinking which takes into account a sense for other and different. Children games are always learning-oriented, and they have so far proven to be a very successful way of learning, especially for the vulnerable group of children who, thanks to that approach, show a growing interest and develop the sense of responsibility and rights, belonging to a group and create a positive impression of themselves. Children are relaxed, they speak out without fear of being judged, and they are encouraged to use their imagination in a practical form – creation. Children from the vulnerable group

who were very quiet and shy, and even seemed as not interested in any kind of work in the beginning of this project, are now children who actively participate in the work, they smile and even give own initiatives for certain activities. CFS Nemila is therefore proud of its work. It is also important to mention that CFS Nemila is mostly attended by the children who commute from thirteen surrounding villages; they spend quality time in the Space in the period between the end of school classes and arrival of the bus. The Space takes the children off the street, and they get together with their peers in a warm and healthy community where they have a chance to learn, create and socialize. Thus, they realize they are valuable, and it strengthens their spirit, emotions and intellect. For the above reasons, we think that the Child Friendly Space continues to be needed, especially because of the vulnerable group of children, socially threatened children, children with developmental difficulties, for whose problems formal educational system does not offer an adequate answer; the Spaces is also needed because of all other pre-school and school children who found their space in the Space, i.e. place in which they spend quality and pleasant time.

**Aida Vejzović, Andrea Stjepanović and Meliha Hodžić, the Child Friendly Space team in Nemila**

## Children about the Child Friendly Space in Nemila



*I love to stay in the Space because I can play there, and get a snack, and write on the board. I would be sorry to see the Space closed, since I met a lot of new friends there, participated in new activities, learnt English, drew, and learnt about the rules of the Space and respected them; and the aunties are really good.*

*I like the toys; I danced, sang and learnt that the English word for glava is head.*

*We learn, we play, and have many interesting books to read, and there are rules that we must follow in the Space.*



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN MAGLAJ

Welcome to the Child Friendly Space in Maglaj!

After the catastrophic May floods which affected many towns, children needed a place to get together, sing and play. Knowing this, representatives of World Vision and UNICEF decided to jointly help the citizens of flood-affected towns, including our town, Maglaj. Thanks to their fast reaction, the Child Friendly Space was opened, a safe place where children can spend several hours with professional staff. Children get together, learn and develop new skills. The aim of this Space was to prevent children's exposure to stress and trauma after the floods; and truly, at the time, it was the only place where children were protected and where they could enjoy the beauty of childhood. Our space was opened six months ago, so we are now celebrating a small anniversary. In the meantime we had to move three times and the fact that children followed us to each new location indicates how important the Space is for our town and our children. Eldar, for instance, who has been with us from the very beginning, whenever they come to pick him up, says: "You always come too early! You could have waited for a little while, I'm not done playing yet!"

**Jasmina Mehinagić, Evelina Gračić and Sedžid Mujanović, the Child Friendly Space team in Maglaj**



## Parents about the Child Friendly Space in Maglaj

*"I do not know what I would tell him if the Space were to close up."*



*"My son used to go to kindergarten, but he has never managed to fit in the way he did in the Space. This is something no money could buy!"*

# CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN OLOVO

When love for children, people's humanity and their honest intentions and willingness to help unite with hard work – miracles become possible. This past summer we witnessed such a miracle, a result of a noble idea and plenty of hard work – a great project named the Child Friendly Space. The invested hard work and endeavors clearly paid off, since the Space very soon became the main topic after of all conversations. The Space was open every day – four hours of active work with children. The activities were implemented in accordance with certain weekly topics which involved various educational games, creative work and workshops. In addition to offering some quality time spent playing, the aim of the Space was education of children as well as their parents and animators. In this regard, various lectures by leading experts in the field of psychology and pedagogy were organized in the Olovo Space. Meant as a safe place for children, the most vulnerable population group in the flood-affected areas, the Space not only fulfilled the initial intention, but also laid the foundation for similar projects in the future. A need for the Space is more obvious in smaller towns like Olovo where children are deprived of the activities available to their peers in larger communities.

It is said that children can recognize honesty, and they indeed recognized it in the hard work invested in the Space. Very soon our Space was given the attention it deserved – from parents, children, and the local community. It has become a place where people gladly come for games, fun, equality, tolerance, and love. We hope similar nice things will continue to happen in the future.

***Amra Mešić, the Olovo Child Friendly Space Animator***



Children have come in great number to the Child Friendly Space in Olovo. The number indicated their interest in spending time there. My colleagues and I tried hard to make them happy, and did our best to make all the Space beneficiaries feel comfortable, safe, nice, and satisfied.

***Amra Mešić, the Olovo Child Friendly Space Animator***



From the first day they spent in the Space, the children were delighted with all the possibilities the Space offered. The children saw the Space as their second home, since in those days their homes were destroyed, burdened with worry about the huge job needed to be done after the natural disaster that had befallen Olovo. They helped their parents and watched the sad faces around them. The Child Friendly Space was the only place where they could forget about their concerns, mud and bad smell caused by the floods. On the other hand, they had a place where they could enjoy with animators, discover new games, learn about new values, get relief from fear and stress. They understood there was still a place where they were safe, where they could play, learn how to fight for themselves in case of danger. The children visiting the Child Friendly Space in Olovo are very happy, their modesty sometimes makes me sad. They are extremely happy when you show willingness to listen to them, to talk to them. I am happy I can be there for them. Our children do not know what possibilities life offers. They are a bit shy and afraid to show their knowledge and skills. I think the Space helps them open up and raise their level of self-esteem.

***Džana Klis, the Olovo Child Friendly Space Animator***



# CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN SOLUN

The existence of the Child Friendly Space in the lives of children in the Olovo municipality is an important detail, a great novelty. When it began functioning in June this year it drew great attention of all the children. The children of different ages responded in large numbers, and that's how it was every day. They spent time playing, having fun, learning, meeting new friends. The good quality equipment in the Solun Space was of great assistance to the animators in conducting activities and workshops successfully. The timing is another important detail which I want to mention here, i.e. season of the year when the Space opened. This is specific for our area, since parents are engaged in the fields several kilometers away from home, for hours. Children cannot walk such long distances or be exposed to high temperatures, so the Space was, in a way, the only safe place for them to stay while their parents prepared winter food stores. Work-wise this month was similar to the previous three months. The animators would selected a weekly theme, and every day we treated it through group and individual work, creating billboards, writing compositions, drawing or painting, discussing, etc. Additionally, children were given a chance to choose what they wanted to do, and to show their creativity through writing their homework, playing different social games, dancing, singing, painting, drawing, writing ...

Children are very happy that the Space exists, and they very much want it to continue working since many of the children who commute more than five kilometers have to wait at the bus stop for two hours, which is very risky as the buses are not very frequent.

**Almasa Smailhodžić, the Solun Child Friendly Space Animator**



For each Child Friendly Space the most important factor is safety, and then come freedom of expression, creativity, and learning new things related to life and school. Working in the child friendly space has given a lot to both children and animators. The children meet with their friends here on daily basis, and share games and various interesting stuff which otherwise they do not have a chance to do often. Here they participate in creative activities organized for holidays, birthdays, visits. Older children always want to play sport games (table tennis, football) while younger children prefer creative work, reading and winner's games. The Child Friendly Space is a safe place for children, their imagination, desires, and learning.

**Dženana Višća, Animator, the Solun Child Friendly Space**



*The Child Friendly Space is full of creativity, fine and interesting games, and every moment spent there is invaluable. I observed children from 5-14 years of age; they were all in the same shift – due to the transportation issues we could not organize it differently and we all functioned as a single team. We used to work in two groups in our Space. We got along well; sometimes the older children had to give in to the younger ones, but we would usually manage to reach compromise, and find a solution for everything. We treated our weekly themes, we had the time for playing, dancing and watching cartoons. There were also many informative courses for animators, and workshops for children in the Space. I was looking forward to each and every course and workshop; this was a new, and nice experience for me. Many interesting and creative people visited us, and I would like to use this opportunity to thank World Vision for the trust they vested in us for this job. The Child Friendly Space is a true realization of something new; the children feel safe there, and their progress is noticeable in every segment of their lives – in both educational and creative way.*

*Lejla Šehić, the Solun Child Friendly Space Animator*



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN OLOVSKE LUKE

On the first work day, many children came to the Child Friendly Space out of curiosity; they wanted to see what it was all about. After some time, children who found the Space interesting became the regulars. But we had also children whose parents were too busy to take care of them, as well as traumatized children whose behavior was characterized as problematic.

The number of children in the Space kept growing, and we realized that the children liked spending their time in the Space. We successfully implemented the programme following the themes assigned as work guidelines. In every assignment, children gladly participated and contributed to its implementation. Over time, their self-confidence grew, and they progressed in showing solidarity and patience.

***Dalila Sirčo, animator in the Child Friendly Space in Olovske Luke***

Working in the Space is different from formal education. There is no strict curriculum; the primary focus is on the children's needs, and we work in accordance with their desires. For me personally, working here is a new, nice work experience, and a step forward in my life. Children are truly the pearls which make life more interesting and entertaining.

***Benisa Avdibašić, Animator, the Olovske Luke Child Friendly Space***



The Child Friendly Space is something new for children, something they have never known before, since they have never had a chance to stay in any playroom before they start school. When the Child Friendly Space first opened, children have made many new friends; they played social games within the tasks assigned to them by their animators, they treated weekly themes, played football, volleyball, table tennis; they acquired habits such as housekeeping. Briefly, we educated and raised these children.

I have to say that the Child Friendly Space is also useful for the children commuting to school from distant villages. They spend their free time in the Space, until a bus comes to take them home. Sometimes they spend up to two hours in the Space. If the Space were not there, they would spend their time at the bus stop, and wait for their transport home. But, thanks to the Space, they are safe, and warm.

***Rifet Muhić, the Olovske Luke Child Friendly Space Animator***

# What Does the Child Friendly Space in Olovske Luke Mean to Me

*I love to play in the Child Friendly Space because then I don't have to stand at the bus stop for long.*

*I love the Child Friendly Space because I don't have to stay home alone. In the Space, we play, learn, and discuss always a new theme.*

*The Child Friendly Space is important to me. We play competition games. The teacher lets us play football. And I also like when we make different decorations.*

*The Child Friendly Space means a lot to me because I learn so many new things there, and meet a lot of friends. There are plenty of toys in the Space. Every week we treat a new theme. We have the best teachers there. They take care of us, and we behave well. There are sweets, fruits, and juices in the Space. It is all colorful and new. I am only sorry that it is not open longer, and that it is not open on Sundays.*

## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE OKC DOBOJ



For us, the establishment of child friendly spaces was a chance to support parents and families in general. The floods in Doboj interrupted the work of all public, educational, health care, cultural and other institutions. It was very difficult for children to stay in the town, because of mandatory cleaning and disinfection of the streets, parks, buildings, houses. A place where children could stay and be safe, and not be exposed to health hazards, was therefore desperately needed.

The OK! Center was selected as a location for the Child Friendly Space because it was placed on an elevated downtown area which was not flooded. We drafted the work program in accordance with the UNICEF guidelines, and tried to recognize the priorities for children in our town. Since the Doboj Mental Health Center was not able to continue providing treatment to children with developmental difficulties, we hired animators who were defectologists – speech therapists, knowing how important it was for the children to continue with their treatments as soon as possible. The next thing we insisted upon was making it possible for children between ages 3 and 18 to be accepted in the Space. This of course required a special preparation and engagement of several animators, but also volunteers from our associations. Six months later, with the programs implemented both in the Space and in the community, we can say we succeeded! The Space programs involve four age groups. Each group includes children with disabilities who are most numerous in the youngest group because – even before the floods – they could not be placed in kindergartens. In addition to treatment appropriate for children's individual

needs, we very often had a preventive role through warning parents about further check-ups where that was deemed necessary.

In order to establish quality socialization, we agreed with the Doboj Center for Social Work that the children from Suncokret (Sunflower), a home for children without adequate parental care, should also be included in our programs. The Doboj Office of the Ombudsman for Children in RS recognized our work and they got involved with their program of peer education, implemented by Young Advisors who covered topics like the Convention on Child's Rights, Non-violent Communication, etc.

The Space is an important experience for the associations. We now know much more about the needs of children in our town. We have developed organizational skills, and got a chance to present our work and raise awareness in the community about the needs of children and youth with developmental difficulties. We have managed to eliminate at least some prejudices about limitations, and to point to the necessity of enabling capacity development in accordance with abilities. Many of us in the community are aware of the great importance of having a place where the inclusion program is being developed both quality and quantity wise. We hope, need, and now make an effort to help the Space survive in Doboj; initially as a good practice example, and later on as part of the service supporting inclusion in community life.

*The Doboj Child Friendly Space Team*



I will never forget May days in Doboj, the river Bosna which ran through the town causing havoc and destruction. The worst in all this was the absence of children.

Streets without children's voices, just a few frightened heads peeping through the windows, deserted playgrounds, and parks. I have been a teacher for more than twenty years, and I am a mother of three – so it felt like walking on the Moon. The town without children in the streets is the saddest place you can imagine.

And then, when the Child Friendly Space was established, the children, joy, laughter, and fun returned. I was always smiling coming to or leaving the Space, I felt full of energy again, and the world became colorful again. At the same time, it was a great responsibility – you had to do your best, and help the less experienced colleagues, but it was also a chance to learn something new. How to describe a moment

when a mother tells you it is the first time for her to leave her son in somebody else's care? She decided to leave him in the Space knowing he would be safe, and sure there was no need for her to worry although the boy, who suffered from developmental dysphasia, has never before been separated from his immediate family. For many young children, staying in the Space was the first experience of being separated from their families, grandmas, grandpas, aunts who took care of them. For many people a kindergarten is not an option – they simply cannot afford it. Now many children will remember the Space because they have learnt their first poem there, or made a new friend, or played a new game ... The Space strengthened my belief that inclusion is possible, and needed by all.

*Sanja Živković, coordinator of the Child Friendly Space in Doboj*



# What Does the Space in Dobož Mean to Me?

*To me the Space is when I come here to draw, and play with Una, Lenka, Minka, when we have a glass of juice and then my mom comes and she is happy that I drew and she asks if I behaved well.*

*- The youngest group, Group 1*

*The best thing ever was when we were 10 angry pirates. It was funny when we made earthworms for the girls were shouting „Yuck!“ The thing is, they made nicer and multicolored earthworms, but mine was so biiiiig!*

*- First graders, Group 2*

*When my friends came to the Space once we all made a billboard Village together and I drew a horse. I love it when we organize exhibitions and I get a chance to see what the other children drew. My horse was really the best.*

*- School children, Group 3*

*I go to medical high school and I think about studying defectology; it's that I have totally changed the way I see children with difficulties. They are so open and honest while we are kind of scared, so the limitations are actually ours. I have come to appreciate the importance of health more than before, and I have different views about what really matters in life.*

*- Youth group, Group 4*

# What Does the Child Friendly Space in Dobož Mean to Me?

*I am a single mother, and I live in alternative accommodation. My son is autistic, and a kindergarten has never been a possibility for him; and, honestly speaking, even if it were, I couldn't afford to pay the fees. Thanks to the Space, my son could socialize with other children and he was prepared for the first grade. It was the teachers in the Space who told me that he was entitled to have an assistant at school. They helped me to find out who I should talk to, and now, in the second half of the first grade, my son has an assistant in the classroom.*

*- A Parent*



*I have two sons; they both come to the Space. The younger one has a combination of difficulties but, with a speech therapy he was offered in Space his speech improved. My older son is now happier, and I can see how much it matters to him that his own friends accept his younger brother as well.*

*- A Parent*



## Children about Their Small Child Friendly Space “Sveti Sava”

*I learnt the letters in the Small Space, but what I love most is when the teachers read fairy tales to us, and then we make drawings about these tales.*



*What I like doing most in the Small Space is making plasticine animals; what I've also learnt here that you should not throw food away, tattle on somebody, or tell a lie.*

## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL “DOSITEJ OBRADOVIĆ” DOBOJ

Our aim, as animators, is to develop children's capacities indispensable for life-long learning. The activities are equally linked with needs, experiences, interests and desires of the children, and of the society. The desired outcome is the children's complete and harmonious development; the development of their work habits, the improvement of their social and emotional development, the nurturing of their creativity.

*Dejana Milačak and Dijana Arsenović, Animators in the Child Friendly Space in Primary School “Dositej Obradović” Doboj*

## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE “SVETI SAVA” DOBOJ

The Child Friendly Space well-qualified staff consisting of a speech therapist, a surdo-audiologist and a social worker ensure that this is a truly safe place for children, with creative and educational activities to animate the children, and put smiles back on their faces. This is their chance to start new friendships and acquire new knowledge and skills.

*Slobodan and Bratislav, Animators, the “Sveti Sava” Child Friendly Space, Doboj*



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN ŠEVARLIJE

The floods that befell Dobož did not miss the village of Ševarlije in the Municipality of Ševarlije. Children from this and the neighboring villages experienced many hardships during the May floods in which their school was damaged.

World Vision came to our town with their project whose main goal was to alleviate children's trauma due to natural disasters, i.e. floods. The Ševarlije primary school, after its renovation, offered the venue for the Child Friendly Space. Children who visit us come from all age groups, from pre-school to the ninth grade.

Our workshops have educational, psychological, creative and sport character; they are conducted through playing, and their content is adjusted to the children's age. The children are divided into groups, in order to meet the different needs of different age groups. The Child Friendly Space Ševarlije is an oasis of playfulness, imagination, love and friendship. It is the place in which new friendships are made, where children feel safe, and protected, and comfortable. The Space is supported by the parents whose children come here, the teachers, and other school employees.



## Children about the Child Friendly Space in Ševarlije

*The Space is the best place in the world. I also like getting together with my friends after school. I like it most when we create art. I am so glad that we have such a place in my village.*



*Our Space in Ševarlije is the best place to get together with my peers. I love to go there. It means a lot to me that after school I can go to the Space, socialize, play, and do useful things.*

**Nataša Ristić, Coordinator**  
**Vesna Vukmirović and Sanja Lukić, Animators**



## THE CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN ŠAMAC

Since the kindergarten in Šamac was flooded, it was the Space that helped children not to feel this loss, and to continue with their usual activities. Additionally, it was a chance for the children who have never had an opportunity to go to a kindergarten, because the Space is free of charge and available to every child. The Space significantly contributes to the development of our community, and the quality of our lives.

This is a way for children to grow healthy and to socialize, and hence feel safe, and forget about the traumatic events.

**Ana Vajić, Coordinator and Facilitator,  
the Šamac Child Friendly Space**

## Parents and Children about the Child Friendly Space in Šamac

*I love to play here, and I wish this Space would never close, so that we can come here all the time. My favourite is Lego bricks; I made a house and a garage of Lego bricks, and I made a truck too. That's what I like most; but I also like when we draw, or when we all lie on the floor, and teachers read stories and fairy tales to us.*

*- A child*

*I have the highest regard for the Space. After everything that happened, the Space offered us a great help. My child is happy and feels safe there, and that is what matters most to me. After the disaster had befallen us, there was no time to focus on everything, and maybe sometimes our children paid the price. In the Space they had all the attention and understanding they needed. My daughter has learnt a lot there, I can tell.*

*I am delighted with the workshops for children; they learn through play, and it is the best way for children to adopt knowledge. I noticed that my child now thinks differently about certain things, that her thinking is more positive, and in a way that she transfers her positive mood to the whole household.*

*- A parent*

*This has largely contributed to saving the children from negative atmosphere at home, and all the concerns all of us now have. We all think that they are just small children, that they don't feel much, but it is not true, they do know and they do understand a lot. We are still recovering from the floods, we are still afraid, and it is good that children have their space, and do not have to go through it with us. I feel my child has changed a lot; and every day he learns something new and useful. It is obvious that the Space staff works a lot with our children.*

*- A parent*



## THE CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN PRIJEDOR

The location of the Child Friendly Space in Prijedor is not meaningless. The Space venue is the primary school which was flooded, which reopened after the renovation. The older children, who were students here, could have developed an uncomfortable feeling towards the building itself, after having it seen flooded. However, spending quality time in the renovated school – socializing with other children through playing and other interesting activities, they have developed positive feelings – the uncomfortable feeling that could have developed was successfully eliminated. For the younger children, the Space was an opportunity to get familiar with the school even before they start attending classes; they had a chance to see the classroom, and meet other children, as a group, since most of them do not go to kindergarten and have not had a chance to be part of similar organizations. The aspect of socialization is hugely significant, because the children not only spent time together but also learned to follow certain rules.

**Zorica Marjanović, psychologist**



I was happy while I worked in the Child Friendly Space. I am happy if I helped children forget everything bad that happened to them, if I helped them to enjoy in playing, if only during the three hours they spent there. Their parents daily participated in our activities, we laughed a lot, there were so many great moments which meant a lot to children, which made them happy - and that was actually our goal.

**Milja Blagojević, supervisor**

## Parents about the Child Friendly Space in Prijedor

*I knew that my daughter wouldn't want to stay alone in the Space; she never went to kindergarten; she has never separated from me. There were problems on the very first day and I had to stay with her – she spent two hours in the Space. On the second day she stayed for three hours, and on the third day she spent four hours in the Space without any issues. Teachers are very dedicated to children, which I like very much. They are creative, and the children learnt a lot from them. My daughter became more independent in the Space, she became more responsible, learnt to spend time with other children, and generally learnt a lot. The time spent in the Space helped her to get ready for pre-school, and now I know that she will have no problems to adapt, and adjust to it. I noticed that the children who were traumatized after the floods, now seem much happier, more relaxed; they seem to have forgotten their fears. At the end of the day, it is the best thing that happened to these children after a long time.*

# Parents about the Child Friendly Space in Banja Luka



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE BANJA LUKA

Typically, the children showed how they felt about the Space every day – through pleasure, happiness, drawings, songs, and verbal statements. One of the statements was a farewell poem which a little girl dedicated to the Space staff:

Dear Teachers, see you soon,

We loved the Space, and we loved you,

But, December 22 is today.

We played musical instruments, we jumped,  
we enjoyed games.

We even had a snack every day.

We loved the Space as our home

In which we were the emperors on the throne.

Super nice, super great

That to us was our Space.

And this one might be a message for the parents: "Oh, dear World, happy you will be, if only one child is made happy by thee."



Being in a position to give children this kind of support and assistance was a fulfilling experience for all of us. We learnt a lot from it, and we had a chance to give a part of ourselves to those on whom we were focused most in our work – to the children."

**Snežana Jondža, coordinator in  
the Child Friendly Space Banja Luka**



*My son would come home and tell me about what he learned in the Space: what should be done when earthquakes happen, what we should do with animals. Of course, I was telling him about it as well, but it did not have the same impact on him. The process of knowledge adoption is simply different in the Space.*



## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE BRČKO

The floods that befell certain parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, our town included, completely changed the way our population lived. The priorities of the population affected by the floods totally changed. They have been struggling ever since, unintentionally neglecting the needs of their children. They simply did not have time to think about the children's feelings. And that is where the Child Friendly Space fit in; it provided support to the children, and made them feel safe in a healthy environment. Parents also relied on our assistance (psychological assistance); they relied upon our advice about defeating the sorrow and insecurity they felt as easily as possible.

Regaining security and returning to normalcy after a trauma may last for days, months, even years. To my great joy, in my very first weeks in the Child Friendly Space, I noticed that children were becoming more open, and their shyness was slowly diminishing. In time their drawings became more joyful, full of light ... We discussed diverse topics. Therefore, the floods ceased to be the primary topic of discussion, the children started forgetting bad things and returned to joyful games and topics, which are meant for children anyway.

**Ksenija Ristić, Association of Psychologists of the Brčko District**

## Parents about the Child Friendly Space in Brčko



*Knowing that my little girl is taken care of in the Space, that she is safe and sound, I could finish all the work at home. It means a lot that I can leave her for four hours here, where she is safe, while I clean the house from what the floods brought in it. The situation is awful: everything around the house looks like a horror movie: disaster, litter, bad smell. I simply could not let her stay there.*

*- A Parent*

## CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE IN ORAŠJE

The Child Friendly Space brought lots of joy to Orašje, to both parents and children. After the May floods in this area, children felt safe and happy in the Child Friendly Space. The Space was located in the school building, and children came to the Space after classes, during lunch break, or in their free time. They took part in various activities. The pre-school children also used to come, and the time they spent in the Space prepared them well for the upcoming school year.

In the Space children attended various classes, participated in games and workshops, and through them developed creativity and self-confidence. The progress was noticed within a very short period of time; one was able to see how the children changed – from once insecure and quiet children into active children motivated to work. Children's progress was noticed by their parents, who gladly accepted to participate in workshops, and were very grateful for everything we provided to their children.

*Ivana Jurić, Facilitator*



## My Space in Orašje

*I live in Orašje with my mom, dad, and two older brothers. I love singing and playing music. In my choir „Azizija“ I play tarabuka. I love to play it. I also train football, and karate, and I attend a fashion model school. I love spending time in the Child Friendly Space. I have now made many friends. I love to draw. We play and learn a lot. It's always fun here. I will soon start school, and it will definitely be fun, like here. I am looking forward to it.*

*During the floods I was very bored. I couldn't go anywhere. I did nothing. That is why I am happy it is all over now. I can play football again.*

*- A child from the Child Friendly Space in Orašje*







