

## Global Grant For Economic Development for Women in Rural Bosnia and Herzegovina

(In Eastern Europe on the Balkan Peninsula)

### The Problem:

The brutal Bosnian war (1992-1995) pitted Bosnians of different ethnic/religious groups against each other in mortal conflict that included ethnic cleansing and systematic rape. Men from the beautiful agricultural community of Stolac were taken to concentration camps or killed, and women and children were interned in refugee camps for the duration of the war. After an uneasy peace, they trickled home to find their town decimated, with formerly prosperous businesses shut down, and their homes destroyed or occupied by the very people that forced them to flee. Today ethnic/religious tensions persist, and people are still trying to heal emotional wounds and recover economically. Unemployment is 65%, and many women have difficulty finding work or don't have the skills to support themselves and their children, even though they have good agricultural land.



One of many burned out buildings in Stolac left from war

### Global Grant Project (\$62,000):

**This project will introduce new and more lucrative farming techniques into the area, and provide increased economic opportunity and better environment for women in rural areas of Herzegovina by**

- Training 30 unemployed women in the production, drying, processing, and preserving of consumption tomatoes for the needs of the domestic market, with at least 30 more women added the following year.
- Providing equipment and training to increase sales capacity of cooperative marketing through Association Orhideja Stolac



Mothers and children in Stolac



Training by agricultural consultant



Preparing tomatoes for drying



Co-op Products

### Meet our Global Grant "Dream Team"

**Cooperating Organization: Udruzenje Orhideja Stolac (Association Orchid Stolac)** – A grass-roots NGO founded in 2004 in the area of Herzegovina, with 160 women participants, most of whom belong to the war returnee population and are single mothers. It organizes community development in Stolac and surrounding rural villages, promoting goals to strengthen a civil society, primarily by *empowering women of all ethnic and religious groups* with emotional, social and civic competencies through skill development in sewing, agriculture, marketing, environmental workshops, and providing seminars on gender equality and women's rights. In 2014 the Association with several women grew, dried, and sold 4 tons of tomatoes, and discovered a high demand for their product that they currently are unable to provide in sufficient quantities. Women expressed a desire to expand on this previous success.

**Host Partner in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Rotary Club Mostar (D1910)** - Chartered in 2002 with the goal to overcome the highly complex situation in Mostar and heal the still present painful war wounds of its residents, Rotary is seen as a way for its members of all ethnic and religious groups to cooperate on civic projects and interact as true friends the way they did in pre-war days. RC Mostar is currently implementing a Global Grant to promote basic education for rural and Roma girls near Stolac. They are eager to empower rural women and partner with an NGO they know is competent. Mostar is 40 minutes away from Stolac.

**International Partner: Rotary Club of Ojai, CA (D5240)** - This project is tailor-made for Rotary Club of Ojai, which is located in a small agricultural community itself! Members of our International Service Committee include a business consultant who specializes in small businesses and social entrepreneurship, and farmers who started the successful Pixie Growers Association, a group of small family farms in Ojai that grow and market Pixie Tangerines. They are planning business and co-op consultation via Skype, and possibly a trip to Bosnia.

**We need your help to raise \$19,000 in cash contributions to fund this Global Grant!  
Your club's commitment is needed by October 30, 2015, with funds sent to TRF by February 2016.**

**For information contact Rotary Club of Ojai: Kay Bliss [kblissojai@gmail.com](mailto:kblissojai@gmail.com) (805) 640-8331.**