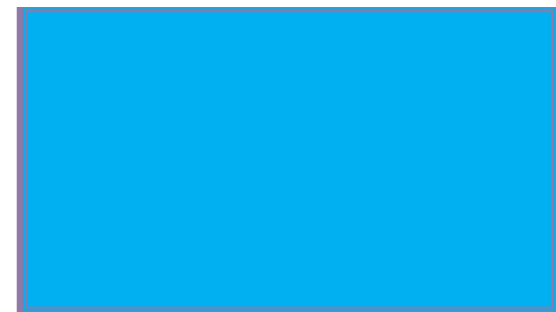
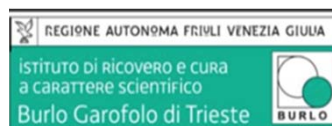




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Quality of Maternal and Newborn Health Care  
Translating research into policy initiatives  
in the WHO European Region

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
Amira Ćerimagić, MD, NGO Baby Steps





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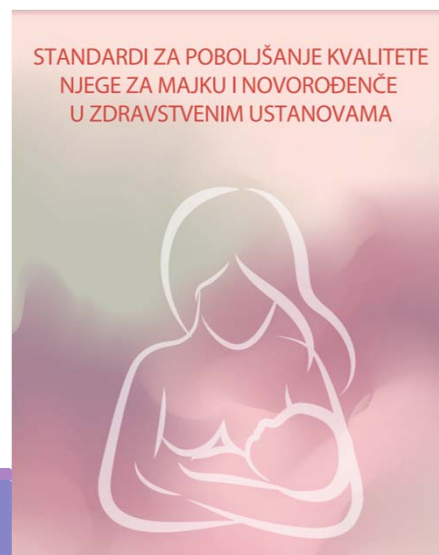
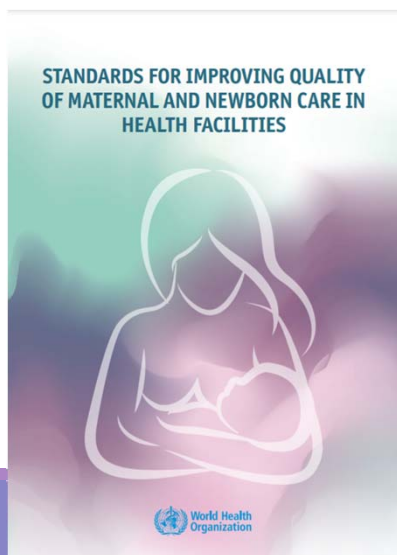


# 1. What?

In 2018, birth activists from Bosnia and Herzegovina translated the WHO publication „Standards for improving quality of maternal and newborn care in health facilities“ into bosnian.

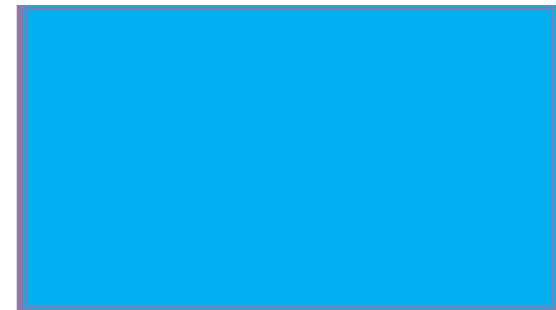
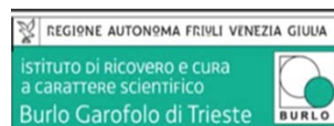
The translated publication was approved and supported (not financially) from the (1) Federal Ministry of Health and the federal (2) Agency for Quality and Accreditation in Health (AKAZ).

„Approved and supported“ meaning what? - Their logo was put on the translated publication and the news announced on their official website.





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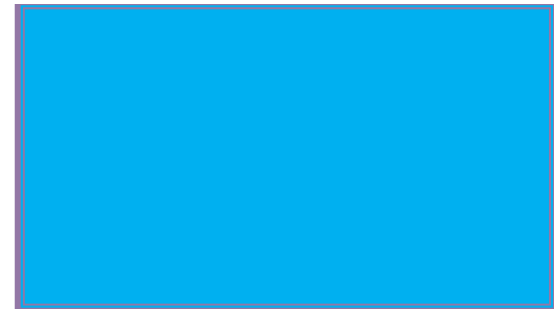
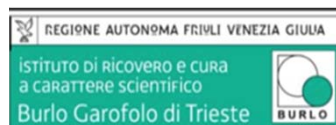
## 2. When & Where?

The provided WHO translation was the first publication in bosnian on the aforementioned topic, since research on the quality of maternal and newborn health in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is completely lacking.

It was the only up-to-date translated publication with international recommendations on improving the quality of maternal and newborn health care (original paper published in 2016. the translation published 2018.)



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### 3. Who

We must bare in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina, a small country with 3 million people, has 12 ministries of Health because of the extremely complex state structure which was designed in the Dayton Agreement after the war 1992-1995.

Any attempt and initiative from the NGO sector very often goes from one institution to another, like a hot potato. The issues on maternal and newborn health are partly covered by these 12 ministries of health, but there are also multiple hospitals on the local level and health insurance bureaus which cover certain aspects of the issue.

The online release of the publication was an incentive to organize an official meeting in Sarajevo, between the NGO sector and the Federal Ministry of Health, AKAZ, ob/gyns (one out of three invited representatives from three hospitals showed up) and the WHO regional office.



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## 4. How?

The idea was to put these WHO recommendations as official steps for the „Mother Friendly“ accreditation system, a syntagm first derived from the FIGO, WHO and White Ribbon Alliance publication.\*

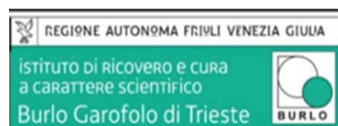
AKAZ already had set up a system of accrediting maternity wards with „Baby Friendly Hospital“ and was very succesful with it (11 out of 13 federal maternity wards were accredited as „Baby Friendly“).

The idea was to, through accrediting and through recertification procedures, make sure that any guidelines and recommendations remained adhered to.

\*<https://www.whiteribbonalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/MBFBF-guidelines.pdf>



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## 5. Why (unsuccessful)

After that meeting, nothing happened. The initiative was **unsuccessful**.

### Why?

There are several reasons. The NGO sector after translating the publication and releasing it, completely handed control to one of the official government institutions. None of the government institutions took the lead role or responsibility into making this happen.

No other meeting was organized, the idea for introducing „Mother Friendly“ accreditation system was halted. The heads of agencies changed over time and the incentive is lost since it was not in any written form of project or program.

### What have we learned from this?

The NGO must never let go of being a crucial part of the ongoing process, must maintain a watchdog position and must collaborate closely with (in our case) AKAZ since they were the best option out of all the government institutions that had the tools to make this initiative successful. Positive correspondence remains between the NGO sector and AKAZ and we hope to continue with this endeavour, certain that we will succeed.



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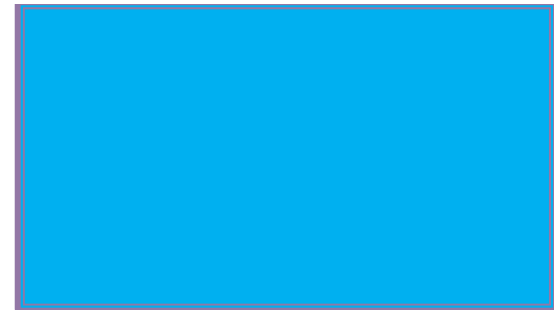
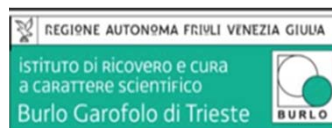


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