

Local Democracy Agency Mostar

City of Mostar

**TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS OF DONJA MAHALA  
FOCUSING ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**Mostar, July, 2019**

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# 1. Introduction

The analysis covers the spatial scope of the local community Donja Mahala, quarter of the City of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the aim to detect the current state and needs of this particular territory and its citizens focusing on the environmental protection. The territory was chosen upon the consultations with the representatives of the City of Mostar. The recommendation for the territorial analysis of this particular area coming from the City administration is derived from the fact that local community Donja Mahala is in need of upgrading conditions when it comes to environmental protection. The other reason for the recommendation is the willingness of the inhabitants of this local community to cooperate in order to improve the quality of life within their community.

During the process of territorial analysis, based on participatory planning approach, a series of statistical data shortage appeared, which threatened to influence the accuracy of the data, but the data collectors used numerous instruments in order to gather about exact indicators and optimize the projection process. The data shortage is derived from several reasons. Census from 1991 (last Census before the war in BiH in 1990s) and Census from 2013 (first Census after the war and the newest one) doesn't provide the data on the age and gender of the inhabitants of the local communities. The only data related to the inhabitants of the local communities are the once related to the ethnicity on the basis of which the total number of inhabitants of the local community can be concluded. Further, the City of Mostar doesn't have functional City Council since 2012, since the local elections haven't been held in the City since 2008 due to complex political situation in BiH. And the last and very important reason is the formal, but not practical existence of the local communities as the official units in several City areas including Donja Mahala local community. This implies the absence of a person who heads the local community, as well as the absence of a formal premises of the Donja Mahala local community. Detailed statistics on the inhabitants of the local community Donja Mahala and other statistical data are therefore non-existent or subject to subjective assessments. Additionally, during the research, data collectors were able to retrieve the document "Demographic trends and the settlement system study for the development of the spatial plan of the City of Mostar", dated from 2011, which helped in filling some statistical gaps.

## 1.1 Methodology

The analysis was conducted from late June till the end of the July 2019. After detecting the special scope of the analysis in cooperation with the City of Mostar administration, the next step was to create an action plan. Action plan includes field work based on the participatory planning approach, data gathering and data organizing. The first tool used within the field work were semi-structured interviews with the citizens (stakeholders and key informants), which were prepared and created on the basis of information gathered from different sources (City administration,

documents referring to the past of Donja Mahala as well as referring to the current situation, focusing on environmental protection. Focus group with the citizens was organized following the interviews, and was prepared on the basis of all the data gathered previously. During the work of focus group, territory mapping and SWOT analysis as well as the problem tree were created with the help of the participant. On the basis of the data from SWOT analysis and the log frame matrix but also on the basis of all the previously gathered data, survey was created and conducted among the citizens of Donja Mahala focusing primarily on the domain of environmental protection. The survey was important source and the main indicator of the real state of local community Donja Mahala and the needs of its citizens. All the data gathered on the basis of the aforementioned tools are supplemented with the data from the official documents available and scientific literature as well as from all the other available sources which contain relevant information regarding the territory of Donja Mahala.

## **1.2 Spatial Scope of Donja Mahala**

The boundary of Donja Mahala in the North goes along Street Stari Pazar and Lučki bridge (Lučki most). Westwards the boundary line goes along New City Highway (Nova gradska magistrala - “Bulevar narodne revolucije”) connecting on the South with Hasan Brkić bridge (most Hasana Brkića). The east border goes along Neretva river from Lučki bridge to Hasan Brkić bridge. Street Gojka Vukovića is the main street of Donja Mahala and is connected to the side street “Čevrina” which is directly connected to the New City Highway - towards the North direction. The traffic in Donja Mahala goes in two directions along Gojko Vuković Street while in Čevrina Street it goes in one direction, towards the exit to New City Highway. Beside these two main streets, Donja Mahala has 18 side streets which are mostly one-way streets leading to the family houses. The maps of the City of Mostar and Donja Mahala are provided below.



Google map of the City of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
(local community Donja Mahala - framed in blue)

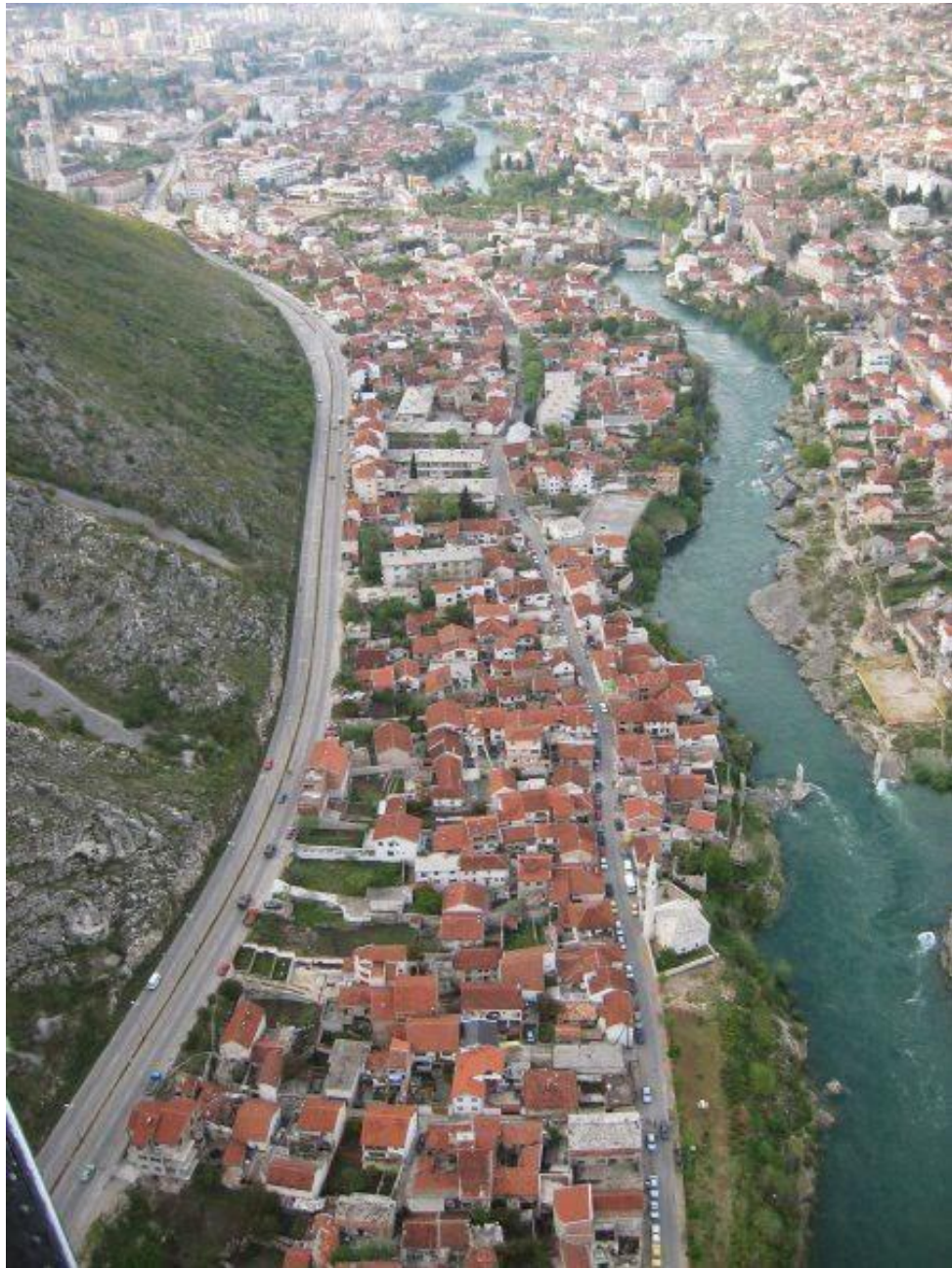


Google map - Local community Donja Mahala (red: New City Road - “Bulevar narodne revolucije” (westward);  
green: Lučki bridge - northwards, green: Hasana Brkića bridge - southwards; blue: river Neretva (eastwards);  
orange: main Street Gojko Vuković; yellow: Čevrina Street - connected with New City Highway)





Map of Donja Mahala form 2006 with main and side streets (north - south orientation, from left to right)  
(Map source: City of Mostar)



(Photo shoot from the south - New City Highway on the left; Gojko Vuković Street and River Neretva on the right)





Donja Mahala - footage from southwest - part of Donja Mahala called Čekrk as well as New City Highway





Donja Mahala - shoot from the west - street Stari Pazar and Lučki bridge view





Donja Mahala - main (north) entrance  
(beginning of the Gojko Vuković Street - Elementary school "Mujaga Komadina" can be partly seen on the left)

On the following [LINK](#) you can also find the video<sup>1</sup> dated from 2014, shot from the air. On the video: Čekrk area (south part of Donja Mahla) with the footage of Hasan Brkić bridge and Association Sinovi Mahale (sports-recreational and environmental association).

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<sup>1</sup> Video credits: Association "Sinovi Mahale"

### 1.3 History of Donja Mahala

Donja Mahala as we know it today is the name of the local community and the City quarter. During the 17th century in a period of Ottoman rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the territory of Donja Mahala four mahallas were situated and all were formed in the 17th century: Čevra's mahalla, Sevri-hadži Hasan's mahalla, hadži-Jahija's mahalla i Zirain-Ahmed-aga's mahalla.

The Sevri-hadži-Hasan's mahalla or the later popular name "Donja Mahala" was formed at the time of the Sevri-hadži-Hasan mosque formation before 1620/1621. Previously it was called the "Okjuzi mahalla". Along with the mosque there was a small harem (cemetery) preserved to this day, and in the mahalla there were several harems. This mahalla was 700 m away from the city centre (čaršija). The inhabitants were buried in their harem (cemetery).

The Zirain-Ahmed-aga's mahalla is located at the north entrance of today's "Donja Mahla" and among people was also called "Stari Pazar" (The old Bazaar). The mescit (mesdžid) in this mahalla was called Zirain Ahmed-aga's or sometimes "Aršinović" and was built before 1651. This mahalla was about 250 meters away from the City. It had its harem (graveyard) and an open space called the Old Bazaar, a kind of livestock fair.

Hadži-Jahija's mahalla or known among people as "Mahala na ogradi" ("Mahla on the fence") was located between Čerkić's and Buljko's sokak (a narrow curvy path) in today's Donja Mahala. This mahala has its own mescit (mesdžid) called Jahija – hodža's or Jahija's Esfel built before 1620. Among people this mescit was often called "Smokvin" or "Nametkov", named after the families whose members performed some of the services within the mescit. There was a large harem situated beside the mescit. This mahalla was 500 m away from the City.

The Čehra's mahalla or "Oručluk" had a Hadži-Ibrahim Čevra's mescit built before 1686. It also had its harem and Ahmed-efendija's fountain (česma). This mahalla was more than 1000 m away from the City.

Mahallas were specific independent residential zones as parts of the unique urban system of the city during the Ottoman rule over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aforementioned is visible from the distance between the mahalla and the city (čaršija) - 100 to 1600 meters distance, which is on foot 1,25-20 minutes.<sup>109</sup>

The distance between the mahallas even in the 16th century is between 100 and 1000 meters or 1,5-12,5 minutes by foot. Clear spatial discontinuity between the čaršija (city) and mahalla, but also between different mahallas. These unbuilt spaces: orchards, gardens and vineyards, represent a construction discontinuity.

Another proof of the specific character and autonomy of the mahala is its autonomy in functioning.



This is evident from the following factors:

- Economic: within relative economic autonomy residents of the mahalla often had, around the house, an orchard and a garden that provided them with partial satisfaction of nutritional needs. Within the later development of mahalla, the day-to-day sales shop (fruit and vegetable sales) and bakeries were also developing.
- Social autonomy: in the social sense, mahalla is the basic social unit of that period, evident in belonging to the community (džemat), at the same time the religious, state and military basic organizational unit. The mahalla has its headsman – malbaša.<sup>113</sup>
- Religious independence: Within the mahallas, daily religious duties were fulfilled, common prayers five times a day, which is one of the fundamental Islamic commitments in the core unit of the community lead by Imam.<sup>114</sup> The obligation to learn Islam (mekteb or medresa) was also a fundamental religious requirement. Within the mahallas, residents were buried in harem, also according to Islamic rules.

The Mostar mahallas have survived to this day almost without any change in the urban morphology of the modern city, and the space which they used to take up, forms today a significant part of the existing urban area of Mostar.



The map of Mostar from 1878 shows the border of the City (blue) and the border of the City walls (red) way back in 1633. It is evident that Donja Mahala existed at that time out of the City border (no. 32) with the mahalla center (black square - most probably Sevri Hadži Hasan Mosque) but not in its final form. (Photo source: [www.cidom.org](http://www.cidom.org))

At its 14th session, held in May 2004, the Commission for the Preservation of National Monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina passed the Decision on the proclamation of the "Architectural Unit - Mosque in Mahala in Donja Mahala, Mostar" as a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The National Monument is the Sevre Hadži Hasan Mosque with its courtyard and its accompanying contents (fountain, abdesthana).<sup>2</sup>



Sevre Hadži Hasan Mosque with harem in 1900s (Photo source: [www.cidom.org](http://www.cidom.org))

<sup>2</sup> <http://aplikacija.kons.gov.ba/kons/public/nacionalnispomenici/show/2428?return=&page=14&sort=idgrad;>  
[http://old.kons.gov.ba/main.php?id\\_struct=6&lang=1&action=view&id=2428](http://old.kons.gov.ba/main.php?id_struct=6&lang=1&action=view&id=2428)





Sevri Hadži Hasan Mosque with harem today

## 2. Donja Mahala today

As previously explained in the introduction of this document, the lack of statistics regarding the local community and its inhabitants appears to be present. Even though, data collectors manage to retrieve some statistical information which are presented below.

| Population of Donja Mahala |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Year                       | Total no. of inhabitants |
| 1991 <sup>3</sup>          | 2 638                    |
| 2018 <sup>4</sup>          | 2 203                    |

| Age composition of the population in Donja Mahala (mid-2010 <sup>5</sup> )    |           |            |             |             |             |             |       |
|---|-----------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| Age   | 0,1 - 5,0 | 5,1 - 14,0 | 14,1 - 19,0 | 19,1 - 24,0 | 24,1 - 65,0 | 65 and more | Total |
| No.   | 116       | 182        | 141         | 22          | 1233        | 315         | 2009  |
| Gender composition of the population in Donja Mahala (mid-2010 <sup>6</sup> ) |           |            |             |             |             |             |       |
| Gender  | Female    |            | Male        |             | Total       |             |       |
| No.   | 1040      |            | 968         |             | 2009        |             |       |

<sup>3</sup> Office of Statistics of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Population of local communities by ethnicity - Census 1991", 15.05.1992.

<sup>4</sup> Office of Statistics of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Population according to ethnicity by local communities", 26.07.2018. This is the only official document issued since 1991 that provides statistics for local communities in BiH. Since it is based on ethnicity data, it is possible to draw out only the total number of inhabitants of the local community, but not the age and gender of inhabitants.

<sup>5</sup> "Demographic trends and the settlement system study for the development of the spatial plan of the City of Mostar", 2011; Ecoplan Mostar for the City of Mostar, 41.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 158.

The objects, facilities and institutions of importance for the community that are currently situated in local community Donja Mahala:

- Elementary School “Mujaga Komadina” is a public school situated near the northern entrance to Donja Mahala. Its school year 2018/2019 it received around 284 children (school is predominantly attended by the children from Donja Mahala). The elementary school has its own open playground for outdoor sports activities but it doesn't have the closed hall of any kind.



Front yard of the Elementary School “Mujaga Komadina”





Main entrance to Elementary School "Mujaga Komadina"

| Elementary School "Mujaga Komadina" in Donja Mahala in 2019 <sup>7</sup> |     |
|--|-----|
| Students   |     |
| M  | F   |
| 141  | 143 |
| TOTAL: 284   |     |

<sup>7</sup> Official data gathered by the administration of the Elementary School "Mujaga Komadina"

- [Kindergarten “Zem-zem”](#) Mostar is situated at the north entrance of Donja Mahala and receives approximately 350 children a year (kindergarten is attended by the children from Donja Mahala as well as children from neighboring City quarters). The kindergarten is owned by the Medžilis of Islamic Community of Mostar.



Kindergarten “Zem-zem” Mostar in Donja Mahala (photo credits: [www.preporod.com](http://www.preporod.com))

- [Association “Sinovi Mahale”](#) was established in 2016 and since then is actively engaged in sports and recreational activities as well as in activities in the field of ecology. The Association founder and current president is Dževad Pašić. The Association has its own cafe with the children’s playground, and the sports-recreational centre with concrete football field and another smaller field for youngsters. The Association is very active in the community and beside the sports and recreational part of their activities its members very much take care of the environment cleanliness and general safety within the community.



Entrance to the Sports-recreation Centre “Sinovi Mahale”





Main football field of the SRC “Sinovi Mahale”



Caffe Bar “Sinovi Mahale” owned by Association “Sinovi Mahale”

- [Sports Association “Donja Mahala”](#) (school of football for children and youth). The founder and the coach is Feđa Klarić. This Association uses concrete football field of the Sport Center “Harem” in Donja Mahala which is owned by Medžilis of Islamic Community in Mostar. The school of football works with boys aged 4-14, and it also actively cooperates with the Children's Home (for children without parental care) and the Los Rosales Center (for children and youth with special needs). During the year Association organizes 10 football tournaments.



Sport Center “Harem” in Donja Mahala - training of the members of the Association “Donja Mahala” Football School



- Memorial House of Gojko Vuković (this object is owned by the City of Mostar and currently used by [Squad of Scouts "Stari Grad"](#) and [Association of Anti-Fascists and Fighters of the National Liberation War \(NOR\) Mostar](#)). This memorial house is the house where Gojko Vuković was born. He was a prominent leader of the labor movement in Mostar and Herzegovina during and after World War I. This house was renovated in 2014. The Memorial House of Gojko Vuković is located next to the Elementary School "Mujaga Komadina".



Memorial House of Gojko Vuković



- Memorial room of aggression against Mostar (this object was conceived as an exhibition space with a permanent display of the photographs and objects used in the war in the 1990s, and the project was realized with voluntary contributions from members of the Association “Sinovi Mahale” and other individual donors). It is situated next to the memorial fountain of fallen defenders, the project initiated by the Association “Sinovi Mahale”.



A Memorial fountain to fallen defenders in the proximity of Memorial room



Memorial room



- 1 small community playground in Donja Mahala



A playground is situated in the middle of Donja Mahala and is pretty much outdated and devastated. That's why the majority of children in Donja Mahala play on the playground in front of Association "Sinovi Mahale" cafe bar.

- 2 Mosques (Sevri-hadzi Hasan's and Nezir-aga's) and 1 mescit (Jahja Esfel's)
- 1 pharmacy
- 1 general medicine ambulance
- 4 grocery stores
- 25 private accommodation objects (tourist oriented)
- one private company (Karttis)



## 2.1 Resources of local community Donja Mahala

Local community Donja Mahala has no manufacturing facilities. However, there is a company on the territory of Donja Mahala (Karttis) which deals with cardboard packaging and offers graphic services. The company does its business successfully since 1986 in Donja Mahala and since 2010 has started its manufacturing line in the facility in Rodoč (2km distance southward from Donja Mahala).

On the territory of Donja Mahala, as previously mentioned, 25 private accommodation objects (tourist oriented) are situated. These objects provide only accommodation and food/beverage, very few of them offer additional contents and arrangements related to Donja Mahala for their guests. In other words, tourists are just accommodated in Donja Mahala passing through this local community on their way to other parts of the City which are more attractive in touristic sense. Majority of the inhabitants of Donja Mahala work in other parts of the City of Mostar.

In accordance with its past and rich cultural heritage, but also in accordance with the geographical position and natural surroundings (Donja Mahala is situated along the coast of River Neretva, not far away from the famous tourist attraction Old Bridge and Old Town of Mostar), Donja Mahala has a great potential to become a tourist destination. Donja Mahala has lots of green areas above River Neretva banks which could be used for sports and recreational purposes for the tourists as well as for local inhabitants and citizens coming from other parts of the City.

Additionally, Donja Mahala is directly connected to the New City Highway, Aldo one can only enter the Highway in one direction - towards North to the City centre. During the research, stakeholders and key informants stressed that a solution for this is made and documented in a project proposal which offers a two-way exit getting on the highway and moving in both directions - towards North and South. The project has been completed, and its implementation requires an estimated amount of 32,000 BAM (cca 16.230 EUR).



One of the green areas of Donja Mahala

Many famous people, well known in Bosnia and Herzegovina, some of them even around the world, have been born in Donja Mahala (e.g. dr. Himzo Polovina and Derviš Selimotić-Dundo - singers of sevdah (traditional genre of folk music in Bosnia and Herzegovina), Bisera Olga Vukotić - actress starring in Bond movie; Mustafa Komadina, Nijaz Topuzović and Safet Oručević (former mayors of Mostar)...). The list is long and because of this semi phenomenon, members of Association "Sinovi Mahale" set up a panel in Donja Mahala listing the most famous names that came from their local community. This fact is also a touristic potential which is not entirely used.



Derviš Selimotić - Dundo (sevdah singer) in front of the panel listing the most famous people from local Donja Mahala

In Donja Mahala there was also a tradition of swimming and diving in River Neretva as well as jumping into the river from jumping platforms. This tradition is almost under extinction because of the level of pollution in River Neretva and neglect of its banks and beaches. Today in the Donja Mahala there are still a jumping-off points from which only the most skilled individuals jump into the extremely cold River Neretva.





Jumping platform in Donja Mahala



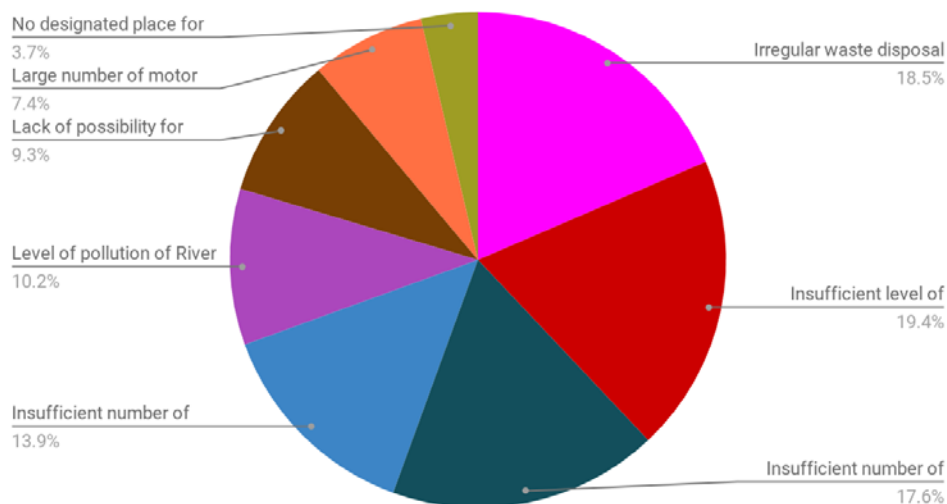
Audience watching the jumps from the platform from the beach in Donja Mahala

## 2.2 Problems detected by inhabitants focusing on environmental protection

As a part of territorial analysis, apart from semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and key informers, a survey was conducted among **44** individuals living on the territory of Donja Mahala. Examinees are very much different age and gender groups, different levels of education and employment status.

| Male | Female | Employed | Unemployed | Retired | Less than 30 years old | 30 to 65 years old | More than 65 years old |
|------|--------|----------|------------|---------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 22   | 22     | 32       | 5          | 7       | 4                      | 34                 | 6                      |

What are the biggest problems regarding environmental protection?



### LEGEND:

Insufficient level of awareness of residents about the need to protect the environment - 19.4%  
 Irregular waste disposal - 18.5%  
 Insufficient number of waste bins - 17.6%  
 Insufficient number of waste containers - 13.9%  
 Level of pollution of River Neretva - 10.2%  
 Lack of possibility for waste recycling - 9.3%  
 Large number of motor vehicles - 7.4%  
 No designated place for disposal of bulky waste and construction waste - 3.7%

On the territory of Donja Mahala there are 7 locations with waste containers and 1 location with the containers for sorting paper, glass and plastics. The current state of the containers is documented below. Some of the container locations are photographed before the waste collection and some of them after the collection. According to the inhabitant's testimonies, even though, utility company is collecting the waste, they don't collect any waste that is disposed out of the containers. Further, washing and disinfection of containers is not carried out, so this poses a great epidemiological risk, especially in the summer. There is an unpleasant odor coming from containers, many insects and rodents are present, which poses a direct threat to the health of the population and the occurrence of many different infectious diseases. The big problem is also bulky waste, construction waste and electronic waste. There is no designated location in Donja Mahala to dispose this type of waste. Inhabitants are also stressing that the current number of containers and trash cans is not sufficient and that at least 11 additional containers are needed.

Collection and removal of waste in the City is carried out by public company "Komunalno" through two companies: public company "Komos" and public company "Parkovi". The waste is deposited in the Uborak landfill managed by public company "Deponija". All the waste from the City of Mostar area is disposed on the same landfill "Uborak" near the City. Aforementioned companies are the only companies that are authorised to collect and manage the waste in the City and the City area. The existing landfill is overcrowded and its closure is planned in the near future as soon as the solution for the new landfill is found. Also, there is a shortage of field workers in these companies and for that reason the waste is not collected on time and in proper way.

Additionally, there are no waste sorting and recycling facilities in the City so all the waste is disposed of in the same place - landfill "Uborak". That's why the containers for sorting the waste in the City don't have its real purpose at the moment. There are several private utility companies operating in the City and Canton area which are collecting paper and plastics and exporting these materials to the international market. These companies have no permit to operate equally as previously mentioned public companies in the City and can only cooperate with private companies or with schools and other institutions, collecting the paper or plastics on demand.



















On the territory of Donja Mahala there are also several locations with trash bins (most of them are outdated or devastated, some of them don't have bottom, so the waste ends up directly on the ground). Inhabitants are not satisfied with the number of bins also.



Within the survey several inhabitants have drawn attention to the problem linked to the negligent pet owners. They claim that the vast majority of dog owners don't clean up after their pets. This results in pollution of the green areas and other surfaces including sidewalks.

Another problem which occurred within the survey results is the pollution of the River Neretva and its banks. Over 65% of the City population is connected to the City sewage network, however, there are no adequate purifiers, so the waste water is discharged into the Neretva river.

However, a much larger problem is posed by the rest of the population who use "cesspits" as a local method of sewage disposal, which in 95% of cases does not meet the hygiene standards. This method of disposing of liquid waste is especially problematic in settlements where the water supply is solved through the water supply system, because in this way large quantities of water are secured, and in addition there is a greater amount of wastewater. As the Mostar is a karst area, these waters sink into deeper layers, thus contaminating the soil, and can also lead to contamination of groundwater used as drinking water<sup>8</sup>.

While the pollution of the River Neretva is the systematic problem of the entire, the pollution of the river banks is something that is directly caused by the negligence and irresponsibility of

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<sup>8</sup> LEAP: Local Ecological Action Plan for the City of Mostar, 2009., 31.

individuals, in this case, individuals from Donja Mahala. Waste is often disposed on the upper part of river banks ending up on the river banks (beaches and rocks) and in the river itself.

Additional systematic problem of Donja Mahala is the number of motor vehicles and the lack of parking space, which leads to the improperly parked cars mainly on the sidewalks.

Another problem which came across within the interviews with local stakeholders is the absence of the organised activities for high schoolers from Donja Mahala. Since there is no high school in Donja Mahala, young people attend high schools in other parts of the City. Since there are no further activities in their local community tailored according to their needs and interests, the majority of them are left to figure out how to fulfill their free time. Most of them are hanging out during the afternoon and night hours in the backyard of the elementary school, which sometimes results in petty demolition of the school property or disturbing public peace and order.

As a conclusion, the majority of survey examinees consider that the low level of awareness of residents about the need to protect the environment is the crucial issue which creates major problems within the community.



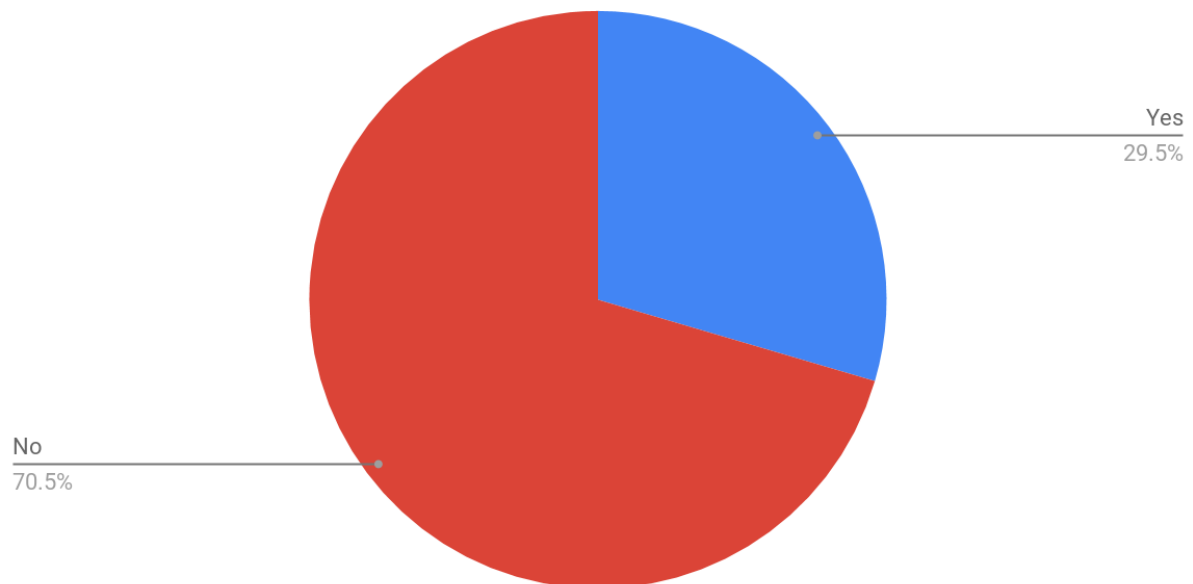
Bank of River Neretva in Donja Mahala



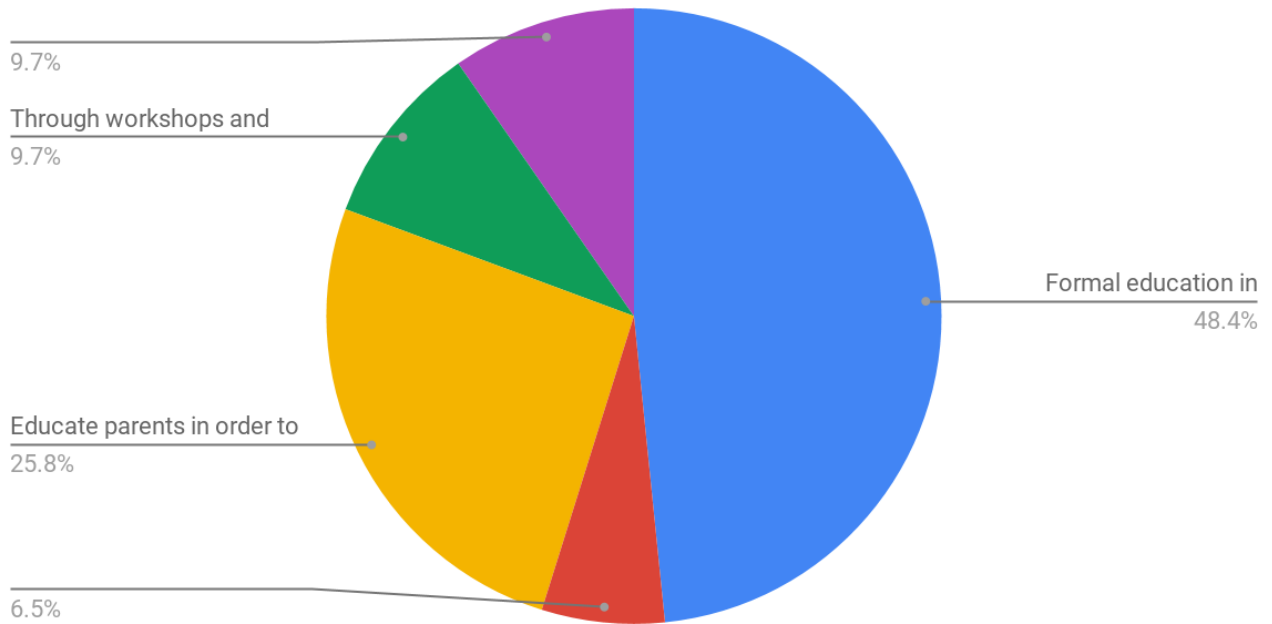


Bank of River Neretva in Donja Mahala

Do you consider that the enviromental protection and preservation is sufficiently represented in school's curriculum?



If NO, do you have any suggestions on how to educate children about the importance of protecting and preserving the environment, whether



**LEGEND:**

Formal education in schools, both theoretical and practical - 48.4%

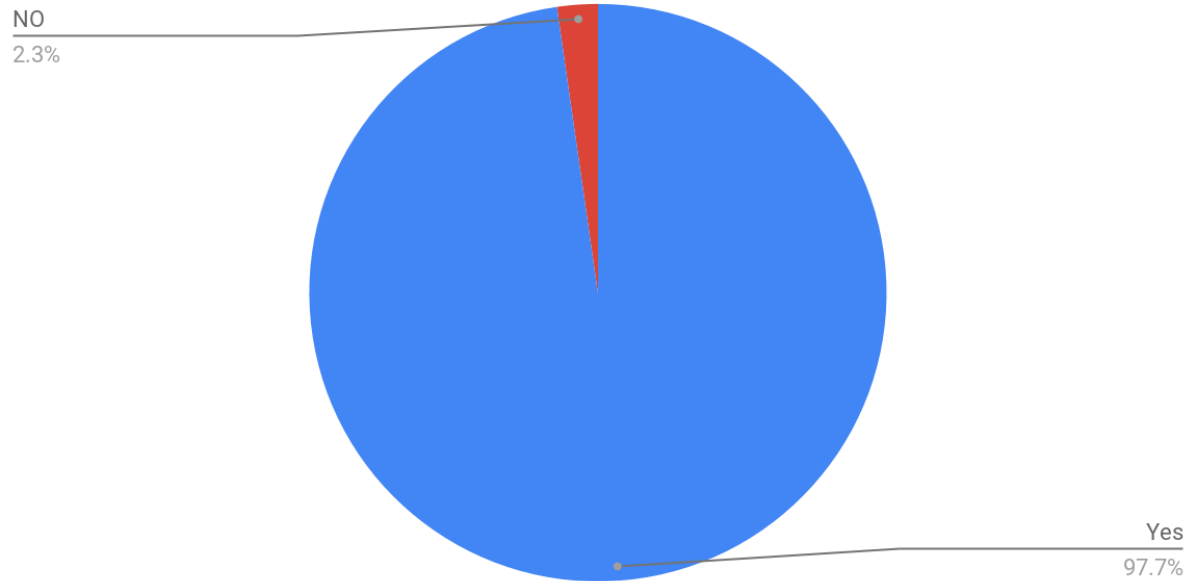
Educate parents in order to educate children - 25.8%

Through workshops and seminars for children and teachers 9.7%

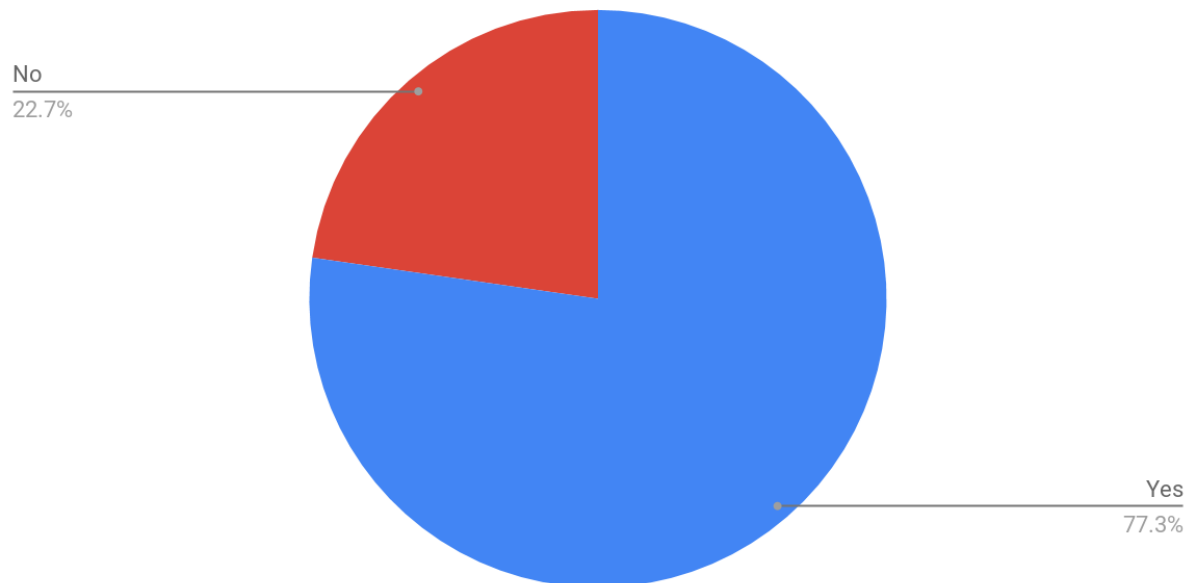
By participating in the cleanup activities of their local community or their street - 9.7%

Engaging expert for school lectures - 6.5%

Would you sort the waste if there was a possibility?

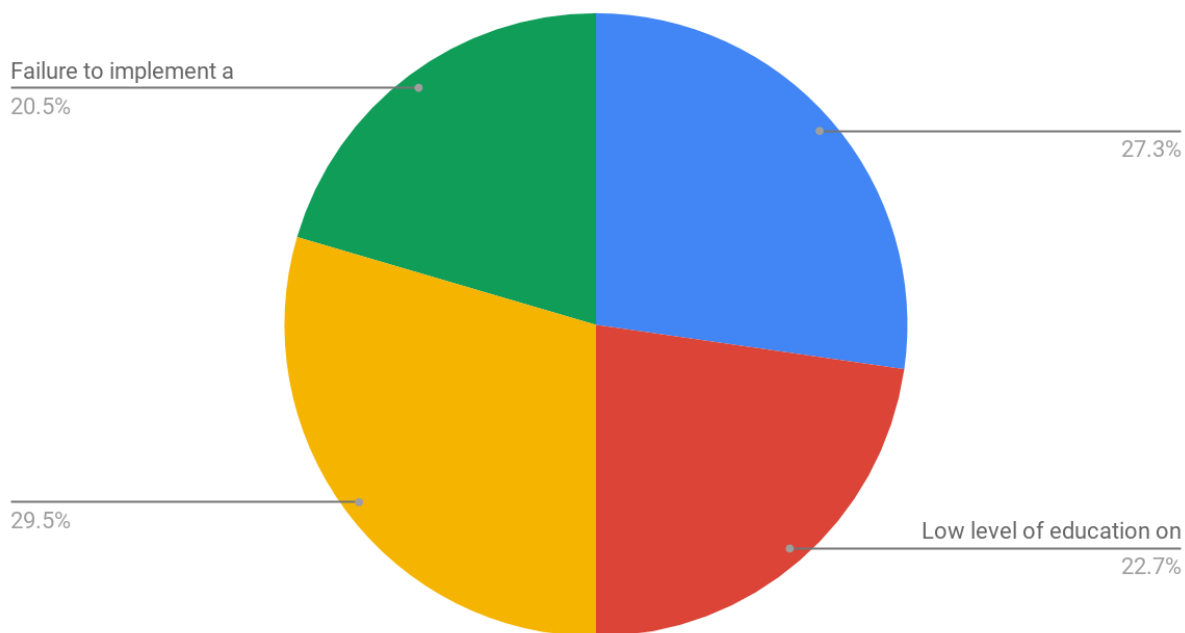


If yes, would you attend a waste sorting and recycling training?





## Key issues that affect the state of the environment in Donja Mahala?



### LEGEND:

Insufficient involvement of City authorities when it comes to the environment preservation 27.3%

Low level of education on ecology 22.7%

Lack of sorting and recycling systems 29.5%

Failure to implement a misdemeanor measures in practice 20.5% (\*referring to the penalties prescribed by the law for those who commit an offence against the environment)

### **3. Positive inputs about Donja Mahala**

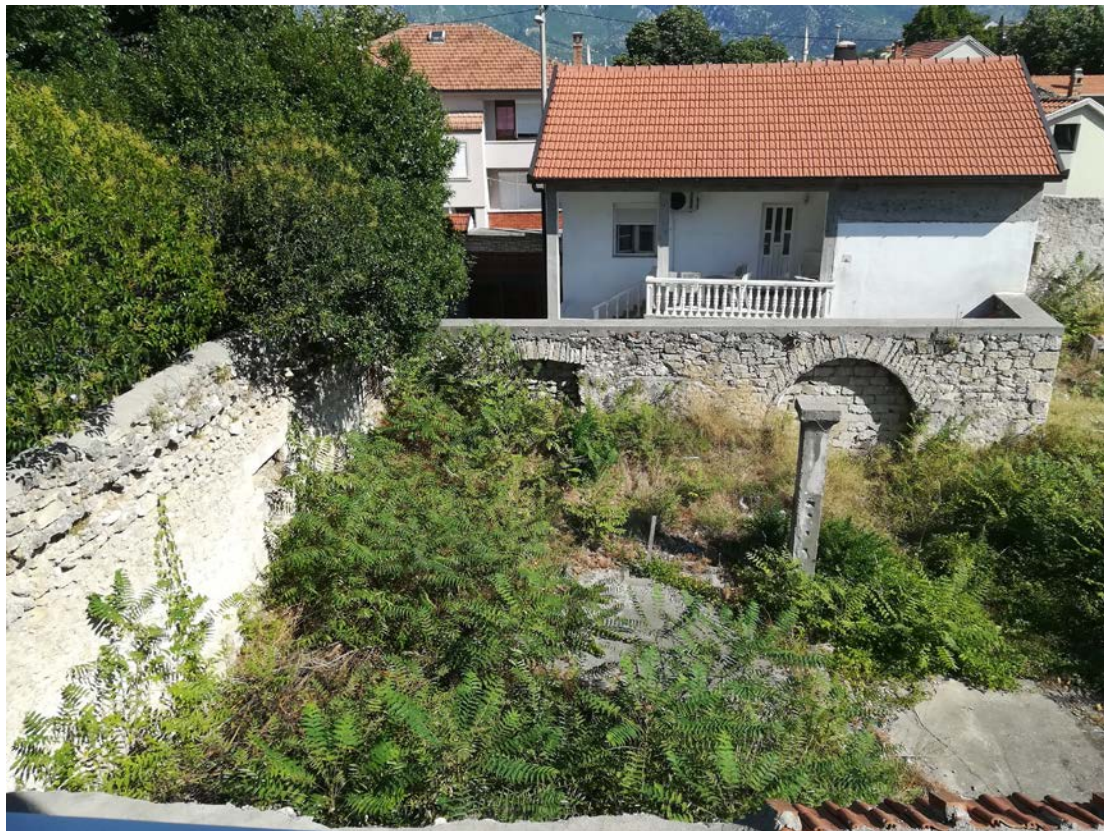
During the territorial analysis based on the participatory approach, in a conversation with stakeholders, key informants and other inhabitants of Donja Mahala, many highlighted positive things in their local community:

- excellent geographical position - Donja Mahala is not far away from the main tourist attractions of the City of Mostar - the Old Bridge, Old Town and other buildings of cultural and historical importance which is an advantage when it comes to touristic accommodation
- rich cultural heritage (Sevri Hadji Hasan Mosque, Memorial House of Gojko Vuković, Krulj's wine basement, many old houses and passage from the Osman Empire period) and rich historical narrative
- three out of four fountains dated from the Osman Empire renewed
- new lightning along Donja Mahala installed
- direct entrance to the New City Highway
- excellent microclimate with an above average number of sunny days a year which is suitable for using solar energy as a renewable energy source
- windy microclimate, suitable for exploiting winds as a renewable source of energy
- proximity of River Neretva and its beaches and rocks, which can be used for recreational and sport activities (swimming, diving, canoeing)
- lots of green areas along Donja Mahala (on the upper banks of the River Neretva) which can be used for recreational and sports activities, as well as organising some community activities
- few very active Associations and their members who strive to improve the quality of life in Donja Mahala and who are much interested to cooperate with other organisations and the City of Mostar
- Elementary School "Mujaga Komadina" proactive with the extracurricular activities of its students (competitions, excursions, cultural and other activities)
- Safe environment for families with children, no significant crimes in the local community
- Good interpersonal relations among the inhabitants

#### **4. Ideas for the future development with a focus on environmental protection**

As a result of all gathered data on the basis of interviews, focus group and survey, as well as on the basis of all available documents, the conclusion is that there are several proposals which can contribute to the community welfare. Given some systemic issues that require deeper analysis and more time to solve, we have presented those ideas and suggestions that are more likely to be implemented in a shorter time frame.

- Donja Mahala is in need for a community center which would be used for various community activities, especially activities which include children and youth, and different sorts of education. During the conversation with stakeholders, one of the possible solutions occurred. Krulj's vine basement, which is an old Austro-Hungarian ruined building is situated next to the Elementary School "Mujaga Komadina". Its plateau occupies 10m<sup>2</sup> of ground space and just as much underground space and its owned by the City of Mostar. The Krulj's vine basement is documented below.



Krulj's Vine Basement - view from the Elementary School's window - on the left side from the school's entrance, not seen from the main street





Krulj's Vine Basement - view from the Elementary School's window - on the left side from the school's entrance, not seen from the main street

- Walking trail along Neretva River is something which cross many times in the conversation with the stakeholders and key informants, as well as within the survey. Currently there is no passable path which connects Dona Mahala with the rest of the City by the River Neretva. According to inhabitants' opinions it is possible to make the walking trail with few adjustments along the path with reasonable budget. An estimate of the funding required for this idea has not yet been projected. The walking trail would bring multiple benefits for the community. It would connect Donja Mahala with rest of the City bringing tourists and citizens by walking through nature to Donja Mahala. The path could also be a good recreational place for jogging and pets friendly place.
- Procurement of new containers and trash bins - additional 11 containers according to local stakeholders' estimation are needed in order to meet the current needs of the Donja Mahala population. This figure is provisional, given that some of existing containers and trash bins are quite outdated or devastated. This would improve the issue of overflowing the waste out of containers and less pollution around the containers and bins.
- The construction of the detour which would connect Donja Mahala with the South entering the New City Highway. This would help tourists and inhabitants to directly enter and exit

Donja Mahala from the Highway without circling around the City. It would highly improve the road connectivity.

- Organizing education on environmental protection, trainings on waste sorting and recycling for all the categories of people in Donja Mahala in order to raise awareness on the need to protect and preserve their environment.
- Organizing the activities which would be the practical guide of environmental preservation involving especially young people and children, but also their parents and senior citizens
- Protective fence along the upper part above the banks of the Neretva River, which would bring the security to the people, especially important for protection of small children.
- A possibility of installing solar panels on the building roofs. There are 16 buildings in Donja Mahala currently (the rest are the family houses). As previously stated, Mostar has the largest number of sunny days in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in the region.
- Expansion of the private businesses - tourism oriented. With enhancement of the community capacities, emphasizing on cultural heritage and natural resources, it would increase the complexity of tourist arrangements and programs, which would attract and retain tourists, bringing new investments into community.

Some of the additional proposals that should take care in Donja Mahala:

- a bakery
- another pharmacy
- procurements of grandstands and football field pitch
- restoration of the children's playground
- education of the pet owners related to the importance of cleaning after their pets
- multifunctional closed hall for the school
- independent collection of used paper which would be collected by the private utility companies until a selection and recycling mechanism is established by the City of Mostar