

## **Nada Hajdarovac – Female Artisan**

I married in 1977 and a year later I opened a shoe store. I came up with the idea because my husband worked with his father, they made carvings, and I realized I could work with shoes. In Gračanica I finished a shoemaker school. We did not have a shoe factory (in Zavidovići), so I opened the shop. I got all the paper in the municipality within 24 hours. It started off pretty well. I gave birth to two children, and from what I earned in the shop I managed to send both of them to school. We lived modestly, since this job was acknowledged and appreciated. The shoes were made of really good quality (Borovo, Planika) – I enjoyed doing that job. I worked until the war. I didn't work during the war, just some stuff for the military, I fixed a few pairs of military boots. That was my contribution, and there wasn't any electricity or water. After the war, I continued the job. I never shut down the store. I'm still working today.

After the war, no one wanted to do this job. There was work, but no one interested in doing it. Not young people, and the older ones aren't capable. After the war, there was a lot of less work than before, the job wasn't as appreciated and well paid anymore. Now there are a lot of second hand and Chinese merchandise. Repair is expensive to the customers. Raw materials cost the same as before the war. The heels cost 5 KM. But, now it's expensive, and we can't do anything about it because we can't make heels for 3 KM. All in all, I am happy because I am working, I have a salary, I pay my dues and I think this is a nice job, but not a lot of people think the same.

A lot of people find weird that a woman is working there. It is unusual to them. I have my old customers, and they are really happy when they see me. We remember some memories before the war.

One customer brought me her boots. Since they are easy to slip in, she brought them to me so I can make the sole, to put the so-called pyramid, that isn't slippery. It is made of rubber, it is good and of high quality. It preserves the old sole of the boot, and it doesn't slip. It lasts longer. The heels as well. The fabric made ones are often plastic, they make a lot of noise, and the customers don't like that. But, we use the rubber material that doesn't make a lot of noise and doesn't slip. Hot glues are great. We use the hot glue with a hair dryer which we use to heat it up. Now I need to cut this with a knife, and we need to sharpen the knife. This is our shoemaker's knife, it's probably around 20 years old. Lasts long.