



ANNEX 3

Analysis of questionnaires for civil society organizations providing social services, centers for social work/institutions from social welfare and service beneficiaries in order to analyze and identify needs for the improvement of social services in the Western Balkans

MAIN RESEARCH FINDINGS

Demographic map of the research sample

The total sample of completed questionnaires territorially covered the countries of the Western Balkans, which affects the quality of findings and provides an overview of the situation on the field in the area of improving social services, migration management and development of profession and professionals in the social protection system by institutions, civil society organizations and service beneficiaries.

Limitations and difficulties

The research covered a large territorial area, which includes different systems of social protection, different forms of social organization and different languages. Given the holiday season, it was challenging to get an answer from all respondents. Also, for some countries, a difficult circumstance was the translation of questionnaires and answers, but it was successfully resolved with the support of all partners involved in the project. The topic includes a large number of data that change daily in all countries. The fact that the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, it affected the respondents additional workload, especially the availability of beneficiaries. The obtained findings are important as a basis for further directing the development of social services and protection of all vulnerable categories in Western Balkans, especially the population of migrants, refugees and unaccompanied children, and the future focus should include a much larger number of respondents to obtain more specific data from the field.

INSTITUTIONS

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Given that social protection institutions perform the most complex tasks in this sensitive area, the challenges they face in their daily work with vulnerable categories are the *inability to help everyone even though there is a need* (due to finances or inadequate legal framework), the inability of professionals to react in certain situations if they are not recognized by law (eg definition and status of single parents), *bureaucracy overload*, insufficient material resources, lack of counseling by groups of problems, small number of licensed community services that prevent institutional protection, insufficient daily services (especially for the elderly), lack of shelter for people in absolute social need, the need for better regulation of custody care (especially for adults and the elderly) because obligations of the whole area are in social work centers, *lack of professionals* and *social services* in the community, inadequate office space, limited accommodation capacities in institutions and shelters, *insufficiency of adequate accredited professional educations*, large and

complex work and competencies, *low usability of electronic databases* (as well as access to official records) and the need for *multidisciplinary approach* in working with vulnerable social groups. Challenges stated by the institutions are also provision of long-term housing, employment and job stability, movement of cases in different municipalities, lack of services provided by local government (services are mainly provided by cooperation with NGOs operating in the area) and lack of a dedicated budget for case management. Representatives of Center for Asylum Seekers (Skopje) as challenges pointed to legal barriers to the speed the reaction of asylum institutions and lack of capacity.

Representatives of the institutions pointed out the fact that exercising rights and services as well as strengthening capacities and empowering beneficiaries to solve challenges independently implies developed rights and established sustainable services primarily in local self-government units, as well as in the country. When the basic conditions are met, institutions face a shortage of staff, and often services that are provided in limited capacity and timeframes.

The services provided by the projects are usually of limited duration and after the termination of the project they are usually no longer provided. A special challenge for professionals are the *standards and norms for certain services that are set high* and are not achievable with the existing staff and other capacities. A particularly aggravating circumstance is the lack of certain services that are necessary to support citizens.

The process of standardization of social services and licensing of social service providers in the Western Balkans is in various stages. Respondents from institutions from *Bosnia and Herzegovina* indicated that there is still no activity in this field (only the field of foster care in both entities is regulated in a way that resembles an attempt at standardization and licensing), and that it is necessary to develop standards that must be respected and implemented, that it is necessary to establish a body that would issue licenses for the provision of social services, where the competencies and capacities for the provision of certain services would be determined.

Respondents from institutions from *Serbia* pointed out that the process of standardization of social work services is stalled, that there are bylaws regulating this area, but that further development and response of the profession to the needs of citizens has not continued, that local governments have the opportunity to develop and standardize services according to the needs of its citizens, which is very rarely used in practice. They also pointed out that the existing Rulebook on Standards was defined with very high criteria, which resulted in a small number of licensed service providers, ie that the expected market development and pluralism of licensed service providers did not occur. This results in difficult work with beneficiaries and makes it impossible to meet the recorded needs of citizens. As a problem, it was pointed out that in Serbia the process of standardization and licensing is in the phase of application for which there is no supervision, that professional supervision over the work of social protection institutions is performed by the competent ministry, ie inspection, which does not have the capacity to perform professional supervision of other social protection providers. Also, local governments do not supervise the implementation of services they procure from a licensed social protection service provider, through the procedure of public procurement of social protection services. Supervision, ie control of the implementation of the contract/ service is usually performed through a narrative report, notification or explanation in connection with the realization of the contracted service, etc. with a request for monthly payment, ie presentation of records of work of executors through work lists. It is stated that there is a lack of systematic monitoring of the quality of service implementation, periodic examination of customer satisfaction, etc. Standards have not been adopted for certain services (eg marriage and

family counseling), and services have been implemented for many years and are not recognized as a priority, but are implemented in local communities and are an example of good practice. Standards for accommodation services are set too high, and it is often not specified whether they are services provided at the state level and who finances them, the local or the Republic.

Respondents from institutions from *Montenegro* stated that the competent Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare is actively dealing with issues of standardization and licensing in order to raise standards in the field of social and child protection and the expertise of employees in this field, that all professionals have passed the exam and received work license and institutions engaged in the provision of services in the field of social and child protection are also licensed. Based on their knowledge, a large number of organizations have obtained or are in the process of obtaining licenses to provide certain services.

Respondents from institutions from *Albania* stated that the process of standardization of social services is the competence of the State Social Service which through the Directorate of Social Services monitors residential, non-residential, public and private social care institutions to meet the approved standards such as standards of Social Care Services for trafficked or at risk of trafficking in residential centers, for Victims of Domestic Violence, in residential, public and non-public centers, for Children in Residential Institutions, for Children in Day Care Centers, for the Elderly in Residential Centers, for the Elderly in Day Care Centers, for Persons with Disabilities in Residential and Day Care Institutions, standards for Service at the National Emergency Transit Center, standards of Custody Service for Children in Need, standards of social care services, home assistance for the elderly, in family home centers for children aged 16-18 and standards of social care services, home assistance for people with disabilities. They also state that the legal basis is very well defined and that they have no difficulties in terms of legislation regarding case management. They emphasized the fact that they are at the stage where the local government is being encouraged to raise the basket of services through the application within the social fund, in addition to the allocation from its own funds. The trend is towards a multifunctional approach to service delivery.

Respondents from institutions from *North Macedonia* pointed that the adoption of the new Law on Social Protection provides a framework for standardization of services, their licensing and licensing of appropriate staff. The Institute for Social Affairs is an institution responsible for overseeing the implementation of standards. Many bylaws have been developed so far for defining standards and licensing of services.

From the above it can be concluded that in the Western Balkans *instruments that enable the development of licensing and standardization exist or are recognized*, there is a will to improve this area, and that from internal relations in each country and its social order depends the development of social protection systems (for example social order in Bosnia and Herzegovina and insufficient resources to start licensing and standardization processes).

The existence of a database/social map is a prerequisite for planning the development of social services and monitoring the needs of citizens in local communities.

Respondents from institutions pointed out that in their daily work they use only their official records, that they do not have social maps (only a few municipalities are starting these activities) and that they cannot adequately monitor the needs of citizens because they do not have the capacity for professional preventive work, and that problems are not prevented but solved (*Bosnia and Herzegovina*), that planning the development of social protection services is based on the review

and use of data that the center for social work has in its records, that the employment of professionals engaged in analysis and planning has not yet taken root, but due to the reduction of employment in the public sector, most social work centers are in trouble to ensure regular work and functioning in accordance with law and other regulations, that they regularly express dissatisfaction needs for social work services, but that the local self-government can not meet the needs of citizens, when there are no licensed service providers, and cited an example in which Center for Social Work in cooperation with the City administration made a social map to subsidize utilities for citizens from the City Čačak and that this social card refers exclusively to the realization of subsidized communal services (*Serbia*), that they still do not have a social map on the basis of which they could monitor the needs of all citizens, but have an electronic social map in which there are data on beneficiaries, types of work and provided material benefits and services (*Montenegro*), that they have a social map on the basis of which the development of social services is planned and that map is updated annually, reflecting any new services that may be offered or services that have been offered but for one reason or another are no longer offered and data is also sent to the Regional Directorate of State Social Service at the central level, it is stated that the municipality of Tirana has drafted as an internal documentation a map of services at the local level and in 2021 and the needs assessment of vulnerable groups in the municipality of Tirana was carried out (*Albania*), that the Ministry in charge regularly develops and implements development strategies and service mapping in coordination with the Institute for Social Activities and that they have data basis regarding services they provide and beneficiaries (*North Macedonia*).

Based on working with vulnerable categories, institutions recognize opportunities to innovate/increase the coverage of social services, but also opportunities to develop new social services.

Respondents listed the following social services that need to be innovated/ increased coverage: informing beneficiaries about social protection rights, making social maps, professional social work with vulnerable groups and individuals, social monitoring of families with difficulties and expressed social needs (Bosnia and Herzegovina), increase the capacity of day care centers (for all ages of persons with disabilities), increase the capacity of the Help at home service for adults and the elderly, further develop and increase the capacity of supported housing services, increase coverage with Help at home services in rural areas, innovate and increase coverage of service accommodation in the Shelter and personal companion service, create legal frameworks for the provision of certain services at the regional level (Serbia), increase the accommodation capacities of shelters for the elderly and shelters for children victims of domestic violence, as well as accommodation capacities for adults and the elderly children with disabilities (Montenegro), day care centers where specialized services can be provided, for children in conflict with the law, cases of violence and abuse (Albania), services addressing a wide range of needs identified by determining the best interests of children, services for unaccompanied minors and all inclusion topics can be supported with additional facilities (North Macedonia).

Proposals for new social services: Family mediation, early intervention, integration into the education system (children of vulnerable families), organized social housing (old and sick people who have their own homes but need a certain service), help at home, day centers (Bosnia and Herzegovina), counseling centers (for marriage and family, for young people with disabilities, for children in the social protection system, for young people with delinquent and antisocial behavior, etc.), services of personal assistants for people with disabilities, work centers or work organizations for engagement of persons with disabilities, day care for the elderly with and without accommodation, adolescent clubs, family counselor, treatment of perpetrators of domestic

violence (Serbia), shelter for victims of violence, development of social educational and counseling services, development of unrelated foster care and family accommodation (Montenegro), development of foster care, daily services for children/ youth using narcotics, family services, alternative care (Albania). It was emphasized that special monitoring and evaluation of services should be envisaged. All respondents stated that it is necessary to increase the coverage of daily services in rural areas.

When it comes to quality control of social services, representatives of institutions pointed out that there are no prescribed procedures for measuring the quality of services they provide and that they measure it only through checking compliance with legal procedures and partial beneficiary satisfaction (Bosnia and Herzegovina), that the Centers for Social Work do not have the authority to control the quality of services, but the social inspection (occasionally), but that the Centers point to the need to control the quality of services and monitor the implementation of service in which the beneficiary participates, that there should be external control and evaluation by professionals and accredited organizations (Serbia), that there is control within the institution by the management as well as control by the competent inspections and the competent ministry, and that the Center monitors the quality of service provision through direct insight, based on communication, through mandatory training and support (Montenegro), that the quality control of services is the competence of the State Agency for the Rights and Protection of the Child and only services that are provided are those in cash, so it is not possible to talk about quality control of social services, in the absence of their provision (Albania), quality control and supervision of the realization of the provided services is in responsibility of the Institute for Social Affairs (North Macedonia).

In the process of developing and providing social services, institutions have various forms of cooperation with other sectors and civil society organizations.

Cooperation with education and health systems is assessed as insufficient, and it is pointed out that when it comes to social services, other systems consider that it is only an obligation of the social sector and sporadically establish cooperation, more with individuals than with sectors and that constant cooperation is present only in situations when it is mandatory, and when it comes to civil society organizations, cooperation is assessed as insufficient, but better than with governmental organizations (Bosnia and Herzegovina), multisectoral cooperation exists in practice, but the separation of the systems is still felt, ie the limits of responsibility are set, which burden the development of real cooperation, and there is cooperation with CSOs through joint projects, although a small and insufficient number of CSOs have chosen to be service providers and are mainly engaged in their program activities (Serbia), have excellent cooperation with all sectors as well as with civil society organizations, work in all "cases" as a team in order to find the best solution and point out that in some communities there are still no licensed organizations providing social services (Montenegro), have close cooperation with institutions such as education, health, police, etc and services are provided within the multifunctional approach through the division of responsibilities and the provision of services by institutions at the local level, and close cooperation with civil society organizations which are the main service providers in the context of social care services (Albania), to cooperate with various sectors and are included in appropriate working groups and also with licensed service providers, as well as international organizations that support the development of the social protection sector (North Macedonia).

Respondents also pointed out that through various activities they try to contribute to better provision and development of new services with integrated model and pointed out the importance of constant two-way communication with the city administration in order to develop new services.

Regarding the possibility of exchanging experiences with other centers for social work within country and abroad, which are an example of good practice in the process of providing and monitoring the quality of social services, respondents stated that they do not have official channels of cooperation, but try to exchange information with colleagues from other centers, that they establish it only at seminars on certain topics and mostly only within the country (Bosnia and Herzegovina), that they exchange experiences and opportunities for cooperation with other centers most often in the country, sometimes abroad, and that this is the right way for self-assessment, and the development and improvement of new ideas and existing practices (Serbia), that they had the opportunity to exchange experiences with other centers in the form of meetings organized within the ministry, seminars and educational workshops (Montenegro), that they had the opportunity to exchange positive experiences and experiences in case management with child protection units inside and outside the country but not in monitoring social services (Albania), that they have constant cooperation and a need for further capacity development, especially within the framework of achieving or maintaining EU standards (North Macedonia).

The coronavirus pandemic affected the work of institutions from the social protection system, as well as the beneficiaries of social services in the countries of the Western Balkans, which required additional personal engagement of employees and institutions during the pandemic.

Communication with beneficiaries has been reduced and the need for social workers to stay in the field and in direct assistance to beneficiaries has increased, especially those who live alone and the elderly as well as the mentally ill. Centers for social work either did not or were rarely involved in crisis headquarters and consultations in the adoption and implementation of measures that were in force (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the necessary isolation and minimization of contact has impoverished communication, and thus the quality of relations with beneficiaries and the quality of many services, imaginative forms of communication have been developed, employees in centers and service providers have made great efforts to successfully perform tasks through work from home, competent institutions have prescribed complicated and bureaucratic procedures, the introduction of a state of emergency and accompanying measures led to many problems in accessing social protection services, such as personal assistance, service personal companion, help at home and other services on which many people with disabilities depend in their daily functioning (Serbia), the pandemic has further complicated the already complex situation as in the whole country as well as in the institutions, the largest number of employees were infected and the work with beneficiaries was organized with protection measures (Montenegro), work was performed whole time in compliance with the instructions of the competent ministry (Albania).

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AREA

The involvement of institutions in supporting migrants/ refugees/ unaccompanied children depended primarily on whether they were in the territory under their jurisdiction.

Respondents from institutions in *Bosnia and Herzegovina* stated that their institutions were not involved in providing support because migrants did not stay in their territory and that the policy is such that no one in their area has registered them or they are not familiar with it. Respondents from institutions from *Serbia* were also not involved in providing support to migrants, as there were no

migrant centers on their territory. Respondents from institutions from *Montenegro* were involved in providing support, and stated that in their municipality (Danilovgrad) there is an institution for asylum seekers and a shelter for victims of trafficking, so their Center for Social Work is actively involved in providing support to these people. Respondents from institutions from *Albania* also stated that they provide support to migrants and they specified the form of support in a way that child protection units carry out socio-economic assessment of cases of unaccompanied children migrating from Albania to Western European countries following the request of the host countries to Albania. Respondents of institutions from *Northern Macedonia* emphasized that the centers for social work are direct service providers and that the competent Ministry with the support of IOM, cooperates with external collaborators to provide services within the reception transit centers. One respondent was the institution which provides accommodation and support for asylum seekers.

Based on the findings of the representatives of the institutions on whether the centers for social work in their countries provided support to migrants/ refugees/ unaccompanied children, they consider that the Centers are either not included or are insufficiently involved, and that they should be in a way to take input data from migrant families and continue to monitor their movement by submitting that input data to the authorities where those families end up or where they want to go, that there are not enough records or observations of these people and families, so there is no adequate help and support for their families (Bosnia and Herzegovina), that the centers for social work provided support on a large scale, especially when it comes to guardianship of unaccompanied children and other professional activities, and that the centers for social work in the cities and municipalities in whose territories the Migrant Centers were located were heavily burdened with these activities, that the centers for social work provided support to migrants, especially regarding temporary accommodation in shelters or reception station, if they have established this type of service (Serbia), that the centers for social work provided support, but only centers from border municipalities (Montenegro), that support was provided in the application of protection measures, for children who emigrate to other European countries, for children coming to Albania from other countries (Albania), that centers provided support and that they are the main carrier of the implementation of all rights and services intended for the protection of refugees, migrants and unaccompanied children (North Macedonia).

Regarding the existence of protocols on treatment and assistance to vulnerable migrants and refugees at the level of local communities in the Western Balkans, respondents from institutions in *Bosnia and Herzegovina* stated that there is no such protocol in their local communities, representatives of institutions from *Serbia* pointed out that there is a multisectoral protocol in Pančevo, which was signed for preventive reasons in order to be ready and operational in case of need, while Representatives of the Center for Social Work Čačak pointed out that such a protocol does not exist and that existing protocols are used if migrants are found in the city of Čačak, respondents from institutions from *Montenegro* stated that protocols exist at the national level and that in places where there are institutions dealing with migration issues have clearly defined protocols on treatment of migrants, respondents from institutions from *Albania* stated that they were not aware of the information on the existence of protocols, while one respondent from *North Macedonia* stated that such protocols exist, other respondent stated that they do not exist.

Adequate protection of migrants and other vulnerable categories is a challenge that requires numerous resources and daily activities in order to develop the overall social protection system in the countries of the Western Balkans.

It is necessary to accept migrants with minor children in the areas where they are found, record them by taking basic input data and take care of them in an adequate way. If migrants are in transit, the data should be provided to the addresses where they go so that the authorities of these local communities can plan their needs and take measures to take care of them while they are staying there (*Bosnia and Herzegovina*). It was pointed out that there is always room for improvement, but it is important to maintain a decent level of standards in the entire country, to preserve existing good practice during crisis periods as a good basis for improvement when conditions are created for providing higher standards. Better organization of reception, accommodation and transit through the country is needed because the number of people who want to stay permanently is negligible. It is necessary to strengthen the staff, enable continuous education, provide financial resources and cross-sectoral cooperation (*Serbia*). It is necessary to provide more accommodation capacities, adopt clear protocols on the actions of all involved actors and educate members of certain systems on their application. It was pointed out that it happens that even between two bodies of the same ministry there are doubts regarding the competence in the procedure (Ministry of Interior) (*Montenegro*). It is necessary to provide direct and long-term services, establish services based on the provision by the local government directly and not by cooperation with organizations and also inversely, if the local government can not offer the provision of services, then NGOs can provide it as a service (*Albania*). It is necessary to provide facilities for short-term and temporary reception of unaccompanied children - so-called Swedish model with the possibility of unaccompanied children to be cared for regardless of status or recurrence of residence, various protocols, laws and raising public awareness are needed. (*North Macedonia*)

To successfully respond to the migration process, it is necessary to know the area, identify and adequately respond to the needs of refugees and vulnerable groups.

Representatives of institutions from the Western Balkans recognized the complexity of this area and the need for additional knowledge. Representatives of institutions from *Bosnia and Herzegovina* believe that they are not sufficiently educated and that in the current policy towards migrants they do not have the opportunity to answer this problem. Representatives of institutions from *Serbia* believe that most employees are educated, that they try to maintain the level of education of employees, and that the large fluctuation of the workforce due to the employment ban sometimes makes it impossible to maintain the level of training of employees. Representatives of the Center for Social Work Čačak pointed out that within the Center for Social Work are Services of the Shelter for Homeless Persons and Victims of Domestic Violence, which contains activities related to providing temporary accommodation, meeting basic needs, access to other community services and time-limited crisis interventions situations. Although the shelter is not licensed, it is able to provide temporary accommodation to vulnerable social groups regardless of which group they belong to, so that professionals have enough experience to currently address the needs of vulnerable groups. The need for additional education in order to more adequately support this population of potential beneficiaries has been recognized. Representatives of institutions from *Montenegro* believe that they are not sufficiently aware of the migration process and support for this vulnerable group, that it is necessary to continuously work on improving and acquiring new knowledge in this area, especially due to its complexity and extremely complex position in which migrants and other vulnerable categories are. Representatives of institutions from *Albania* recognize the need for continuous training and they think that they do not have enough knowledge and that professional capacity building is very necessary. Representatives of institutions from *North Macedonia* state that given the country's efforts to move closer to EU standards, but also the

changes brought about by mixed migration movements, there is always room for improvement of capacity, knowledge, tangible and intangible resources, etc. They also pointed to the need for more field work.

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSION AND PROFESSIONALS IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

Regarding the possibility of continuous professional development of employees in institutions, respondents stated that there is no continuous professional development and that they have the possibility of professional development by attending seminars mainly organized by civil society organizations on topics of their choice or self-initiative training (*Bosnia and Herzegovina*), that they try to have as many educations as possible, but are limited by financial resources and insufficient number of people (it happens that they miss education because there is no one to stay to work in the Center), that professional training of employees is subject to regular annual Center plans and implemented in accordance with the financial plan and the recognized needs of the institution, that the Professional Development Plan envisages attending primarily those trainings that are accredited by the Republic Institute for Social Protection, but also other educations that enable gaining points necessary for obtaining and renewing a license (*Serbia*), that all employees have the possibility of professional training, but that the issue of burdening all professional workers with existing obligations, scope and type of work is present, that the Institute for Social and Child Protection organizes a series of trainings in the field of social and child protection, as well as civil society organizations (*Montenegro*), that they had the opportunity to participate in a series of seminars or capacity building trainings in the field of case management of children in need of protection, mainly provided by organizations according to their projects but also by institutions at the central level, that trainings are provided by local and international partners (*Albania*), that they have the opportunity for continuous professional development within the Institute for Social Affairs and that trainings require financial resources (*North Macedonia*).

Given the complexity of the work and the daily workload of institutions in the Western Balkans, it is questionable whether they have enough time to engage in preventive and innovative activities in the field of social protection.

Due to the heavy workload of administrative work, there is very little time for preventive activities, and centers for social work are becoming a landfill for all social problems (*Bosnia and Herzegovina*). Centers for social work participate in all activities in the field of social protection for which there is a possibility in order to provide access to vulnerable groups to social protection and services as well as to minimize unwanted socio-economic impacts at the local level. Employees are not able to continuously engage in preventive and innovative activities in the field of social protection, and these activities are usually performed on request when participating in working groups, seminars, trainings or when drafting strategic and other documents in the field of social policy. Also, the activities require additional engagement and active participation during and outside the working hours of the employees, but they do not relieve them of regular tasks. Due to lack of time, professionals are often very dissatisfied and frustrated (*Serbia*). Due to the small number of employed professionals, the large number of cases and the various areas they deal with, there is not much room left for preventive or innovative work. Given that the situation is becoming more complicated every day, a larger number of skilled workers is needed in order to take preventive and innovative action (*Montenegro*). The intensity of work is not the same in all municipalities, so it depends on whether they will have time for preventive activities, and it is also

questionable the time and financial possibilities and the necessary budget to carry out preventive or innovative activities in the field of social protection (*Albania*). One respondent from institutions stated that they have enough time to engage in preventive and innovative activities in the field of social protection, but other respondent stated that they do not have enough time for these activities (Reception Center for asylum seekers) (*North Macedonia*).

Improving the work of institutions and the quality of social services in local communities in the Western Balkans implies the existence of certain factors that are a prerequisite for the existence and sustainability of social services:

- Professionals training, material support of line ministries for the functioning and work of the Center, as well as the establishment of the Institute for Social Protection are needed (*Bosnia and Herzegovina*).
- A sufficient number of employed professional workers is necessary for the local community to be perceived as responsible, filling all systematized jobs, adequate working space for employees and providing the necessary funds for continuous education of all employees. In order to improve the quality of social services in the local community, it is necessary to provide monitoring and evaluation of all existing services individually. It is also necessary to work on the development of new services that are missing in the local community as well as services that ceased to be realized after the completion of the project. It would be important to adopt a strategic document both for the city and for the territory of the entire district or more of them due to the specifics of certain services. It is especially necessary to provide funds for the education of persons who provide services in the local community on a larger scale (*Serbia*).
- For even better performance of work, it is necessary to increase the number of skilled workers as well as to provide greater material support to social work centers. It is necessary to develop new services, strengthen the accommodation capacities of existing services, employ a larger number of skilled workers and standardize the number of cases per case manager (*Montenegro*).
- It is necessary to create a service monitoring methodology, to increase the basket of services at the local level, to provide transportation for employees during the implementation of field assessments so that the service is provided faster. There is no budget for case management, in each case the employee addresses the organizations for services from the most basic to the most complex (*Albania*).
- Very important is following modern trends, improving the use of innovative digital solutions, additional resources and expertise for regular analysis of trends in the country and the world and the involvement of European networks and institutions, the involvement of the academy, more resources, staff and better international cooperation (*North Macedonia*).

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Analyzing the social services provided by civil society organizations from the Western Balkans, it can be stated that they provide various social services to vulnerable categories: counseling services of various professionals- psychologists, social workers and special educators, personal hygiene, free legal aid, one-time humanitarian aid, mediation, economic empowerment programs,

radicalization and violent extremism prevention programs, programs to improve the mental health care system of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, day care centers for children at risk, counseling, emergency accommodation for women and children victims of violence, psychosocial support, reintegration services for victims of trafficking, exploitation and abuse, confidential persons service, legal representation of asylum seekers (in Serbia), empowerment and improvement of the quality of life of individuals from vulnerable groups, psychological interventions, educational programs and support, advocacy, humanitarian and legal aid, trainings life and career in order to facilitate later employment.

The target groups of social service beneficiaries provided by civil society organizations from the aspect of their vulnerability are also diverse: beneficiaries who are socio-economically vulnerable on various grounds, children involved in living and working on the streets, children at risk and their families, women and children victims of violence, victims of trafficking, exploitation and abuse, the most vulnerable families, children and young people with behavioral problems, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, children and youth without parental care, children with behavioral problems, homeless people, users of psychiatric services, people in migration/ transit with field presence in border camps and irregular migration/organized crime in the Northern border with Serbia in the Lipkovo region (North Macedonia), children and families who have a low economic status.

Respondents from civil society organizations in the Western Balkans also noted that the process the process of standardization of social services and licensing of social service providers is at different stages.

In *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the process of standardization of social services and licensing of social service providers has not yet begun. The fragmentation of social protection in B&H results in an uneven system of social services, which leads to the unequal position of persons in a state of social need in the entities, Brčko District and cantons. There is no special law on social services at any administrative level in country. In March 2021, within the reform of the social protection system in the Federation of B&H, the process of drafting the first reform Law on Social Services was completed. This Law, among other things, regulates the issues of types of social services, their provision and financing modalities, standards under which they are provided, supervision, licensing of service providers, as well as other issues relevant to exercising the right to social services in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The process of public consultations has been completed and the Law has been sent to the parliamentary procedure for consideration and adoption. In the Republic of Srpska, within the Law on Social Protection, in the part that defines the rights in social protection, certain social services are prescribed in more detail and who can be the provider or beneficiary of these services, and the Rulebook on conditions for establishing social protection institutions and performing social protection activities is a regulated way of performing these services. In the Federation of B&H Federal Law on social protection integrates provisions that within the rights from the social protection system define specific rights to certain social services. The Law is complicated to apply in practice, and in addition to the Law, there are cantonal regulations (10) that regulate the field of social services in the Federation. Identical legal regulation also exists in the Brčko District. National laws do not correspond to European standards and prescribed norms in terms of comprehensiveness, accessibility, quality, standardized service providers and uniform criteria, which in a regulated manner provides all or at least a significant part of social services for citizens in need. Standardized social services in the existing positive regulations are not harmonized, are not sufficiently elaborated and explained, there is a lack of

clear division into groups and subgroups, respecting certain specifics of individual beneficiaries. The participation of NGOs, as providers of social services, is limited by law only to help at home services or through a special organizational form of NGO activity through a social welfare institution.

In *Montenegro*, more and more civil society organizations are being licensed and undergoing a process of standardization of social services. However, there are also a number of organizations that do not want to be licensed, or that do not meet the requirements of the ordinance, which require quite high standards and a lot of money. Licensing is carried out in accordance with the Law on Social and Child Protection and is an obligation, because if they provide a service without proper licenses, they may face fines from the Department for Inspection Affairs for Social and Child Protection. The licensing procedure took place before the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare until the end of 2020, and now the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare is responsible. The country has conditioned the licensing of services, which, in addition to the financial expenses for meeting the standards for obtaining a license, implies significant financial expenses for the payment of staff and utilities, which organizations must provide continuously on a monthly basis. Organizations that provide specialized assistance and support to victims of violence, in accordance with applicable legal solutions, are forced to license each individual service (SOS line, shelter /safe house, psychological counseling) which is a great challenge in terms of providing capacity and human resources. The same is not accompanied by the obligation of the country to provide financial support for licensed services, which puts licensed organizations at serious risk of how to ensure survival. At the same time, the country, although it is recommended that specialized support services for victims of violence be provided primarily by women's NGOs, operating independently of the country and other donors, financially supports organizations that have met formal prerequisites and have no experience and knowledge in this field, and they employ men who are at the same time employed in institutions led by men.

For a large number of social protection services (eg daily community services, support services for independent living and accommodation services) in the *Republic of Serbia*, the process of standardization and licensing of social service providers runs smoothly and this was made possible by the introduction of the Rulebook on detailed conditions and standards for service provision and the Rulebook on detailed conditions and standards for the provision of SOS telephone services for women victims of violence. In addition, Serbia regularly conducts a survey Mapping social protection services under the jurisdiction of local governments in the Republic of Serbia as defined by the Law on Social Protection and the Rulebook on detailed conditions and standards for the provision of social protection services, which collects data on social protection services provided in each local government unit, their distribution, availability, efficiency and quality. Such research contributes to the further development of non-institutional forms of protection, the development of pluralism of service providers and integrated social protection services, the creation and development of sectoral and local policies and the introduction of monitoring and reporting systems. A major challenge is the fact that the licensing process for counseling-therapeutic and social-educational services has not yet been completed at the country level, which consequently affects the insufficient distribution of this service and the fact that a small number of local governments can adequately finance the provision of counseling services in volume that is in line with the needs of the population. It is estimated that the introduction of the Rulebook on detailed conditions and standards for the provision of this service is necessary in order to enable and standardize the licensing process and this social protection service.

In North Macedonia, all social workers must be licenced by the Ministry for labor and social work and therefore, can be employed in the non-governmental sector with proper licencing. Standards and procedures for social service providers are issued by the Ministry for labor and social welfare.

Representatives of civil society organizations from *Albania* believe that standardization of social services seems to be okay as all service providers follows strictly rules of service provision, respects human rights, acknowledges that every beneficiary is different and should be treated properly. In regards to licencing of social service providers, the procedure is still unclear. Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Social Services and ADISA, all three are in charge of licencing, however, in regards to social services none of them seems to provide assistance on licencing or the documents needed to obtain a license on social services provision. Domestic legislation regulates standards for different categories of beneficiaries.

In the licencing and standardization processes, civil society organizations from the Western Balkans face numerous challenges: processes are long, unclear, slow, require numerous corrections and are extremely demanding financially, involve a large number of procedures, there are difficulties in formalizing the service because they are often not recognized in the law on social protection (precisely because of this, in the Federation it is not possible to obtain approval (solution) unlike the Republic of Srpska for the provision of social services, in terms of meeting structural and functional minimum standards), licencing regulations are complicated, extensive and unclear (Montenegro), the cost of service per beneficiary is extremely low, licencing and standardization processes for some services have not yet been completed (eg counseling-therapeutic and social-educational services in Serbia- mentoring support provided by the IRIS network), one organization states that the offices that are in charge of licencing work in shifts since the pandemic and it is a challenge to obtain a licence as the process is unclear, long and slow (Albania).

Quality control of services provided by civil society organizations is measured through constant communication with beneficiaries, counseling, field visits, focus groups, evaluations, beneficiaries have at their disposal a system of boxes for complaints and compliments through which they can anonymously evaluate services (Bosnia and Herzegovina), some organizations have established an internal quality control system for social services they provide, which is implemented through quality measurement by service beneficiaries, and through external independent control, which is usually organized by the donor organization through the evaluation system, they do one-year quality controls, regular weekly meetings of employees with mentors, filling out an evaluation questionnaire by service beneficiaries and measuring their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with services, through social inspection as an independent control mechanism formed by the competent Ministry (Montenegro), through various forms of internal and external monitoring and evaluation, internal and external supervision, through research and analysis of trends and changes, through evaluation forms on a weekly and monthly basis after providing individual and group support, through questionnaires, direct communication, interviews, through pre and post-test tools and observations. As an internal mechanism, some organizations established technical group called Standards Monitoring Group for monitoring the standards and the policies. (Albania) Through these mechanisms, civil society organizations are able to provide continuous review and monitoring of various aspects of the system of protection and support of vulnerable categories.

Representatives of civil society organizations listed the *following social services that need to be innovated/ increased coverage*: day care centers for children at risk, day care centers for the

elderly, counseling centers for children, youth and families (Bosnia and Herzegovina), shelters for women victims of violence, services dedicated to the children of victims, services for economic empowerment and reintegration of victims, improve the approach to service delivery by focusing on the interests of victims, license counseling services in all cities, expand to other cities socially inclusive service Day care center for children in various forms of exploitation, forced labor, begging¹, shelter Services (Montenegro), social housing, access to social assistance, the amount of money received under different social benefits rights (North Macedonia), expand activities related to integration into the local community not only of refugees but also of other vulnerable groups, such as children without parental care and beneficiaries of psychiatric services (Serbia), educational services, health services, child protection in emergencies, youth education on violent extremism (Albania).

Proposals for new social services: support for distance learning, improvement of existing referral mechanisms for protection of child safety, Shelter for children without adequate parental care and/or at risk of becoming victims of crime, Maternity home for pregnant women and mothers with children up to one year of age, safe house for children victims of violence (specialized), shelter for adult homeless people (Bosnia and Herzegovina), opening of shelters and crisis centers in the south and north of Montenegro, establish a Center for women and girls with rape experience with trained staff to work with this vulnerable group, find new solutions for children victims of human trafficking (Montenegro), program for Mentorship in employment for refugees and asylum seekers residing in the Center for reception of asylum seekers in Skopje, social benefit rights for single parents families (North Macedonia), services that would rely more on models social entrepreneurship, work engagement and empowerment of users from vulnerable groups, which would encourage but their integration, self-confidence and increased sustainability of services² (Serbia), family empowerment, digitalization of social services, social services for male victims of trafficking- adults and children, centers for victims of trafficking who have mental health problems (Albania).

Cooperation of civil society organizations from the countries of the Western Balkans with other sectors, and especially with the centers for social work, is of great importance for the improvement of social services and the best interest of all beneficiaries.

Organizations develop cooperation with various levels of government, institutions and civil society organizations, cooperation with educational and health institutions is crucial in providing services, work together in working groups and implement various programs, actively advocate for the promotion of vulnerable categories, participate in policy and legal processes, work with the centers varies from case to case and takes place at the beneficiary level (identification/ referral of beneficiaries to use the service, creation and monitoring of individual beneficiary protection plan) and in terms of service development (in terms of developing the necessary records to monitor service quality and improvement, ie development of new activities with beneficiaries within the existing service) (Bosnia and Herzegovina), actively cooperate with various ministries and centers for social work and have signed memoranda of cooperation with all actors of social and child protection at the local level, in order to better and more complete provision of social services

¹ Representatives of civil society organizations from Montenegro stressed that such services are needed in each region, if not the city individually, to ensure that child exploitation is reduced and prevented.

² Representatives of civil society organizations from Serbia believe that this is the way to get out of the vicious circle of leisure, too much free time and the feeling that people from vulnerable groups cannot be useful members of society. In addition, models of social entrepreneurship in which there is a merging and permeation of several areas of activity, such as environmental protection, not only enable the employment of people from vulnerable groups but can have much broader social and economic benefits.

(Montenegro), cooperate with the non-governmental and governmental sector, as well as with international organizations in order to improve the system of refugee support, referral, provide adequate psychosocial support³ and monitoring and cooperate with various centers for social work in the territory of the country (Serbia), cooperate with social work centers for social work in various aspects (some established mobile teams for assisting vulnerable people composed of lawyers from organization and social workers from Centers) and provide legal council and assistance for beneficiaries which were turned down from social services, lost the rights to social services or, are new social service beneficiaries and need assistance in preparation of documentation, they cooperate with many relevant institutions and some have signed Memorandum for cooperation with the Government (North Macedonia), they cooperate with other NGOs, with many local and national institutions (State and local Social Services Offices and ministries), have a good practice of cooperation and are included in the process of drafting and consulting standards and other legal act related to the provision of social service. (Albania)

The intensity of the improvement of the social protection system in the countries of the Western Balkans largely depends on *the communication that civil society organizations have with policy makers and the support they receive in the development of social services.*

Civil society organizations assess the communication they have with policy makers in different ways, some assess it as very good in terms of improving the social protection system, they are recognized by decision makers in the process of creating legal solutions regarding the development of social services.⁴ Support in the development of social services is almost exclusively based on moral support, while financial support is still lacking or is based on project support. It happens that social services provided by civil society organizations are not recognized by decision makers. The situation is aggravated by the fact that there is no systematization of social services or political will to define social policies and improve the position of persons in a state of social need. Previous policies and interventions have been predominantly on action on consequences and elimination of consequences without adequate action on causes. Authorities often do not recognize the causes of social needs and intervene exclusively in the domain of consequences (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Communication with policy makers is assessed as insufficient, there is a frequent change of people in responsible positions, regulations, methods of measuring quality, inspection, price lists, forms to be used are very unclear, there are not enough seminars and meetings where this topic can be actively discussed, support should be at a higher level regarding the sustainability of services and financing of employees, some of the organizations actively participate in the drafting and amendment of bylaws and their proposals are largely respected (Montenegro). Communication is assessed as very positive and successful due to the response, representation and quality of cooperation during program implementation and through communication strategies, awareness raising and publication of various researches, and through regular communication and cooperation with domestic and international practitioners, researchers, institutions and stakeholders (Serbia). Communication is good with all institutions but changes in policies and lack of interest affect intensity of improvement of social services. Some organizations are very active in advocating towards amending various bylaws (North Macedonia). Communication is on good terms, but there are some issues as there is not always an answer or assistance from the policy makers. In the

³ PIN actively participates in a project coordinated by the Institute of Public Health and the World Health Organization, which aims to write Guidelines for providing psychosocial support to refugees and migrants adopted by the Ministry of Health and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia

⁴ In 2017, the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare entrusted the organization Zemlja djece BiH, Tuzla with the task of mapping social services in the Federation, which was the basis for creating the first Law on Social Services.

development of social services the policy makers sometimes do not seem to be on the same page as CSOs. Also, more financial and sustainable support is required in order to improve the system (Albania).

The Analysis showed diversity in responses when it comes to the possibility of exchanging experiences with other organizations that are an example of good practice in the process of providing social services and monitoring their quality.

Some organizations are active in a significant number of networks at national, regional and European level, which enables active exchange of experiences from various domains in which they are active (emphasis is placed on membership in the IRIS network, which provides rich opportunities to exchange experiences and improve capacity to provide social services- Bosnia and Herzegovina). Some organizations emphasize the daily exchange of experiences with organizations from the country, while some point out that the exchange of experiences takes place exclusively through personal acquaintances (Montenegro). The organizations pointed out the high-quality cooperation with other organizations, opportunities to participate in trainings, study visits within the IRIS network, regular attendance and guest appearances at various congresses, scientific conferences, as well as bringing a large number of experts from the country and abroad (Serbia). Organizations point out that they have constant communication with other partner organization on national and regional level, and especially cooperation with local networks that bring together a large number of organizations from their field of activity and they work together (North Macedonia). One organization point out that they have the opportunity to exchange experiences with local organizations, but not with international ones, and other organization stated that they are part of several joint networks and mechanisms at both national and regional levels (Albania).

The corona virus pandemic has affected the work of civil society organizations in the Western Balkans, but also the beneficiaries of the social services they provide.

Some organizations already had extensive experience in emergency interventions, formed a database that they improved with the support of the IRIS capacity building network, were flexible, complied with prescribed measures, conducted COVID 19 prevention campaigns, shared humanitarian packages assist and implement an innovative distance learning support program. During the pandemic period, organizations recorded an increased number of cases of domestic violence, the situation of beneficiaries was further aggravated, group activities with children were minimized, great commitment has been made to providing support in food, hygiene products and technical devices necessary for monitoring school classes (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Some organizations also pointed out that the COVID pandemic had a major impact on beneficiaries with experience of domestic violence, that government pandemic measures contributed to increase of family tensions (30% more cases of domestic violence than before the pandemic), that employees provided the availability of the service for 24/7, that a large number of food and hygiene packages were distributed, that the pandemic deepened the gap between families, and that regular work was overshadowed by replacing it with online communication. Also, the organizations faced a financial crisis and a lack of projects (Montenegro). During the pandemic, the organizations harmonized their work with the emergency situation and revised the way of working in the new circumstances, prepared a document on guidelines on priorities in the protection of mental health of refugees, actively worked on establishing alternative ways of providing psychological support, were available daily for asylum and reception centers visits, introduced a telephone line where psychologists and interpreters were available every day from 1 pm to 8 pm for psychological counseling by phone, WhatsApp and Viber, organized online Serbian language classes for

beneficiaries in accommodation centers, and launched Facebook page where they shared information and news about the state of the pandemic, in appropriate languages and in an adequate way (Serbia). The staff of some organizations decided to work throughout the pandemic, their work doubled and number of their beneficiaries increased, they provided protection materials: mask, gloves and information packages for local population and refugees in transit, hygiene and disinfection materials, humanitarian aid and with weak economy needs of organization increased. Some organizations limited the physical contact with beneficiaries and provided free legal aid and legal advices through using electronic communication (North Macedonia)⁵. COVID-19 has affected activities of the organizations and demanded new methods and channels to deliver activities, instead of live, they had to deliver activities through digital channels. COVID-19 has increased the vulnerability of beneficiaries, there have been increased cases of violence and a malfunction of the system, especially during the lock down, social services were delivered 24/7 with respect COVID-19 prevention plan. (Albania).⁶

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AREA

Most CSO respondents from the Western Balkans were involved in providing support to migrants/refugees/ unaccompanied children

Involvement took place primarily through humanitarian and information-referral activities of mobile teams, organization of local language courses, distribution of vouchers and hygiene packages, educational-integrative workshops, provision of accommodation for victims of violence, counseling, legal advices, legal representation and legal aid to refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, stateless persons, psychological support services for refugees, migrants, unaccompanied children and asylum seekers, conducting workshops, psychological assessment services for asylum procedures, raising awareness of the general public about the problems facing the refugee population, through providing humanitarian aid and legal counseling, mentorship program for employment of refugees and asylum seekers and psycho-social support for women from refugee and local population. Some organizations were present in the transit centers and Center for asylum seekers.

Also, civil society organizations are in most cases aware of the existence of local and international organizations that provided support to this population, and pointed out that support is provided within reception centers where is the largest number of migrants, while in transit areas organized support is not sufficient. Some organizations pointed out that country bodies generally have an ignorant attitude towards this population, while organizations work in informal and insufficiently defined coordination (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Numerous organizations from the Western Balkans that provide various forms of support are listed: NGO Open Center "Bona Fide", Pljevlja, Red Cross of Montenegro, NGO Legal Center, Civic Alliance (Montenegro), Belgrade Center for Human Rights, APC, PIN (Serbia), Red Cross, Macedonian Association of Young Lawyers, Legis (North Macedonia), Terres des Hommes and Nisma per nderyshim shoqeror Arsis (Albania).

Civil society organizations from the Western Balkans believe that *in order to improve and adequately protect migrants and other vulnerable categories*, it is necessary to adequately assess needs, improve accommodation and living conditions in reception centers, distribute the burden of

⁵ Legis staff decided to work through all of the pandemic and their staff in the border camps also remained

⁶ SHIS Albania stated two examples of importance of well trained staff- corona virus pandemic and earthquake that affected Albania in November 2019, they had to adjust their field activity in chaotic and unfamiliar situations. The staff has been active and well trained and structured to carry out and adapt its activities in the above conditions.

the migrant crisis throughout the country, provide humanitarian minimum and full access to health care in transit areas (Bosnia and Herzegovina), develop and implement training programs for civil servants and employees, establish gender-based statistics and reporting, strengthen the capacity of CSOs and include them in all aspects of providing services and support to all groups of beneficiaries in the field of migration especially single mothers, women, children, the elderly, implement activities in the field of fight against discrimination and xenophobia, improve social inclusion, integration and reintegration, establish an IT system for monitoring migration flows, inform all officials in charge of migration and asylum about the types and forms of persecution and abuse that women may face and which especially affect them, improve laws and bylaws and identifying of vulnerable categories in line with EU standards and best practices (Montenegro), improve cooperation and communication between the governmental and non-governmental sector, amend the Law on Asylum, improve the system of integration of refugees and other vulnerable categories into the community (Serbia), provide available funds for enforcing the existing system to respond to migrants and vulnerable categories, trainings, equipment, access to services, revision and implementation of the Strategy for integration of refugees and foreigners, faster judicial procedures, better representation and translators in court proceedings, asylum procedures have to be individualised and readmission legislation fully respected, asylum requests need to be registered without any delay, asylum procedure need to take in consideration all the circumstances of the asylum seeker, Law on international and temporary protection needs to be synchronized with the EU directives, administrative courts need to hold public hearings, respect the deadlines enshrined in the legislation, migration detention must be revised by a court while children must not be subject to immigrant detention, early integration of asylum seekers is needed while children refugees/migrants located in the reception centers must be included in the formal education process (North Macedonia), reduction of inequality with the society in which they are due to the migratory situation, improving daily living conditions and setting up reception centers for legal migrants in country, improve the conditions for the implementation of well-structured government policies, increase reintegration services and accommodation capacities (Albania).

All employees in civil society organizations who participated in the research are *sufficiently familiar with the area of support for vulnerable categories and migration* and that *they can recognize and adequately respond to the needs* of refugees and vulnerable groups of migrants. Team members of the organizations underwent various trainings (mostly with the support of donors), and it was indicated that for new hires it is always necessary to provide adequate knowledge transfer within the organization or appropriate external training. It was also pointed out that any additional knowledge would certainly contribute to the better work of organizations. In some organizations, clinical supervision is provided with the aim of recognizing and adequately responding to the needs of refugees and vulnerable groups of migrants, and the appearance of secondary traumatization is pointed out, which often occurs in helpers who are in daily contact with traumatized people. Also, some organizations conduct trainings for legal professionals and young lawyers on legal protection of migrants, asylum procedures, international legal standards and migrant rights.⁷

⁷ Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Skopje

AREA OF DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSION AND PROFESSIONALS IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

All respondents from civil society organizations in the Western Balkans stated that employees in their organizations have the opportunity for continuous professional development, that they use all opportunities for capacity building, that training plans are part of the organization's annual work plans, and are conducted from the resources of organizations and through the offered trainings of other subjects, that they undergo a large number of trainings in the country and the region, that they try to listen to the needs of employees and empower them to go through different mentoring programs, that the staff of many organizations have high qualifications for different areas and work with vulnerable categories. Some of the organizations have regular clinical supervision and organize professional trainings for other organizations.⁸ Also, some of the organizations developed and implemented several projects that are focused on capacity building and improvement of social services provided by the staff of the organization.⁹

Given the complexity of the social protection system and the diversity of needs and the number of beneficiaries, employees of civil society organizations in the Western Balkans manage to find time to engage in preventive and innovative activities in the field of social protection, inform the public and beneficiaries about their rights, conduct various trainings, use their expertise and many years of experience to explore new possibilities, write new projects aimed at creative solutions in the community and in accordance with the possibilities employ external professionals and adapt to new situations.¹⁰ Respondents pointed out that they recognize the importance of preventive activities and social innovations, and cite as a difficulty the lack of funds for the implementation of innovative services and information and educational campaigns.

The Analysis showed that in order to improve the work of civil society organizations in the Western Balkans and the quality of social services they provide, it is needed:

- support in advocating for sustainability, capacity building and improvement of social services, a quality legislative framework that will recognize and clearly define social services and sustainable financing system (Bosnia and Herzegovina),
- financial resources for working with employees and prevention of burnout syndrome, organizing study visits to organizations in the region and internationally in order to gain and apply new experiences in existing services and develop ideas for innovative services, adequate work space with beneficiaries (Montenegro),
- permanent sources of financing the work of organizations and projects for direct support to vulnerable individuals, impact on donor regulations related to covering the costs of human resources (Serbia),
- sufficient staff, cooperation with companies and possible employment of local population in aim to decrease number of people living below the poverty line (North Macedonia) and
- newer methods regarding migration and refugees processes and use of best methods of field work, increase financial support from sustainable financial sources to cover and

⁸ PIN organizes professional education for PIN psychologists and other psychologists working in a refugee context aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of psychological interventions in working with children who have experienced trauma.

⁹ "Different & Equal" Albania

¹⁰ International Association for Solidarity, Tirane, Albania stated example of earthquake when staff had to adjust its field activity in chaotic and unfamiliar situation

expand the social services provided according to the needs of the beneficiaries, improve the legal position in terms of safety and status of employees who provide social services and protect vulnerable categories (Albania).

The Analysis also pointed out the challenges in improving the access of beneficiaries to rights and services that are not provided by civil society organizations, but are within the competence of institutions, the importance and need to develop funding plans for specialized services and the need to increase activities integration of people from vulnerable groups. Also, it is stated that the controls of social inspection are frequent, as well as extremely high requirements for standards in work, in contrast to the attitude towards public institutions of a similar type. It was pointed out that during the pandemic, there was a visible unwillingness of country authorities to provide adequate support and protection to victims of violence in the form of ignorance of laws and existing procedures, especially when it comes to police services that go to the field (Montenegro).

The respondents emphasized the fact that an improved integration system would provide greater independence of beneficiaries, which would improve their mental health and well-being and further influence the creation of sustainable social and economic solutions in the local community. It was pointed out that the provision of social services must be accompanied by quality legal assistance and representation, and for this purpose organizations are often unable to provide funds. Working directly with beneficiaries and involving them in decision-making is considered the only way to ensure changes based on data and needs that will lead to the creation of a system that is sensitive to the real needs of individuals.

BENEFICIARIES

Of the total number of respondents using social services provided by civil society organizations from the Western Balkans, 71% are female and 29% are male. One respondent belongs to the population of children under 18 years of age and others in equal percentages belong to the middle-aged population (36-64 years) and the population of adolescents and young people (18-35 years).

Social services provided by civil society organizations, beneficiaries use a minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 13 years, and most often they use counseling, assistance in accessing the rights to social protection, legal aid, support regarding submitting requests for exercising different social rights, health insurance, support for school attendance and mastering materials, food services, workshops, hygiene maintenance services, empowerment, humanitarian aid, legal counseling and psychosocial support.

All service beneficiaries stated that they are very satisfied with the support they receive from the professional teams of civil society organizations whose services they use, that it means a lot to them and their families and that they feel great gratitude. It is also highlighted that organizations connected beneficiaries with humanitarian organizations and offered help regarding their financial vulnerability. Also, all beneficiaries stated that they would not change anything when it comes to activities and social services provided by CSOs, that they feel positive changes after using the services, that they love working with the same staff and that it means a lot to them that organizations ask them for opinion and their needs.

The level of beneficiaries satisfaction with social services provided by civil society organizations is a good indicator of the quality of social services, the commitment of staff, the work of the organization and its further development.