

ESSENTIAL SERVICES: ANALYSIS OF THE ACCESS
TO SUPPORT SERVICES (HEALTH, POLICE AND
JUSTICE AND SOCIAL SERVICES)
FOR WOMEN BELONGING TO MARGINALISED
GROUPS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE

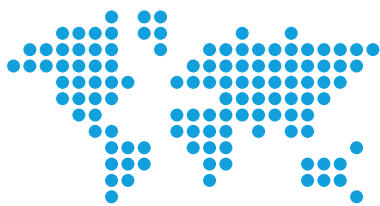


This project is funded
by the European Union



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Sarajevo, 2019



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I am thankful to sociologist Tatjana Žarković and social worker Olga Stojković for their generous contribution in collecting and processing data relevant to this research, thus providing the perspective of many experts in relation to this complex issue of intersectoral availability of mechanisms of protection from violence against women belonging to marginalised groups.

Also, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the employees in social work centres/services, police departments, prosecutors' offices, courts and healthcare centres who, in addition to their regular duties, found time and responded to questionnaires, which helped us to reach the best understanding of this problem.

I would further like to extend a special thanks to ten wonderful women whom we interviewed, and who spent considerable time with us sharing their experiences, knowledge and points of view.

I hope that we all make a joint contribution to a future which will see all women in Bosnia and Herzegovina protected from violence and their needs fully supported.

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INTRODUCTION

SUBJECT OF RESEARCH AND CONSIDERATION

Violence against women (VAW) constitutes a widespread form of human rights violation which is harmful to individuals and families but also to the society in its entirety. When speaking about the prevention of and response to violence against women, including domestic violence, it is a problem that affects the entire population regardless of wealth, ethnic or religious background, education, place of residence. This problem affects all groups in society. In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), almost every second woman over the age of 15 has been exposed to some form of violence in her lifetime, committed by both intimate partners and other family members.¹

However, the issue of assistance and access to support services, e.g. health, police and justice, social services for women and girls who have experienced violence is connected to hierarchy and their position in the society. In practice, much-needed assistance and support are not available equally to everyone. Marginalised groups of women in BiH (Roma women, women with disabilities, rural women, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and older women) are relegated to the margins when it comes to the prevention of and response to violence against women. This becomes clear when analysing official documents, strategies and action plans and noting the brief references to this issue and these groups.

The legal, political and strategic framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina regulating the area of domestic violence is gender neutral, and domestic violence is codified in legislation (entity Laws on protection from domestic violence, Criminal Code of BiH and entity Criminal Codes) covering several forms of domestic violence (physical violence, psychological violence, verbal abuse, stalking, economic violence, and neglect of children and elderly). However, the laws are not completely harmonized with relevant international

standards, such as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and not all female citizens have an equal access to the system of protection from violence. Furthermore, the more factors of marginalisation there are (for example, a woman with disability from a rural area), the more difficult it is to access services in the response system.

UN Women studies² have shown that administrative data on cases of domestic violence in BiH are not collected in a consistent and centralized manner. Each stakeholder collects and compiles a list of domestic violence cases and reports to their respective line ministry. In addition, the data that do exist, are often not disaggregated by vulnerability status. This impacts heavily the understanding of effects of domestic violence and violence against women in general in the society, and how it affects some of the most marginalized groups of women in BiH. The lack of data additionally hinders evidence-based programming and advocacy for improvement of the quality of and access to services.

It is critical to have a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach involving a broad range of institutions and key actors in order to identify, prevent and respond to domestic violence and violence against women, and especially to identify specific needs of female members of marginalised groups. This is key to ensuring a woman's safety and preventing her revictimization, as well as ensuring accountability of the perpetrator. The purpose of this research is to investigate the current situation, how familiar women

1 Prevalence and Characteristics of Violence against Women in BiH. Gender Equality Agency, 2013. https://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/studija_prevalenca.pdf. Accessed on 05 July, 2018.

2 Analysis of the cost of domestic violence: Estimating the cost of multi-sectoral response at the local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Women, 2018, https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2019/05/bosnia%20and%20herzegovina%20domestic%20violence/analysis%20of%20the%20cost_eng_final_compressed.pdf?la=en&vs=4459;%20Review%20of%20the%20multi-sector%20approach%20to%20domestic%20violence%20at%20the%20local%20level%20in%20Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina,%20UN%20Women,%202018,%20https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2019/05/bosnia%20and%20herzegovina%20domestic%20violence/multisectoral%20response%20review_eng_final_compressed.pdf?la=en&vs=4436.

are with reporting mechanisms and where to access support services, and, in particular, how women belonging to marginalised groups are accessing these services. Furthermore, the research also aims to see if there is potential for strengthening the institutional framework and action of civil society in responding to violence against women who belong to marginalised groups.

DEFINITIONS

Violence against women is understood “as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.³

Domestic violence “shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.”⁴

Marginalised groups of women are considered as “women belonging to social groups that are relegated to the margins of society with an aggravated or impossible access to social estates, services and enjoyment of their rights, because they are women, in combination with other social factors such as social, economic, ethnic, health and culturological status”.⁵ Without going deeper in theoretical debates about the definition of social exclusion and social marginalisation, our starting point is the definition according to which “social marginalisation means the processes, including the labour market and social protection system, according to which certain individuals, households, communities, and even entire social groups are relegated to

or kept at the margins of society”.⁶

In the context of this research, we deal with the following marginalised groups of women: **Roma women, women IDPs, women with disabilities, older women and women from rural areas.** This does not mean that other marginalised groups of women do not exist, but we only focused this research on the above-mentioned five social groups of women, whose disadvantaged position in the society is also emphasised in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as the 2013 Concluding Observations and Recommendations in the combined 4th and 5th periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the implementation of this Convention⁷. In particular, Concluding Recommendation No. 37. of the CEDAW Committee expressed concern about the situation of various disadvantaged groups of women, including Roma women, internally displaced women, rural women, older women and women with disabilities, stating that they are who are more vulnerable to poverty and are at risk of intersectional forms of discrimination. Gender equality is at the forefront of the 2030 Development Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals include a stand-alone goal to advance equality and gender-related targets mainstreamed across the Global Goals. In the attempt to stress the importance of fully reaching out to all categories of the population, the 2030 Agenda puts forward the principle of **‘leaving no one behind’**. Leaving no one behind means prioritizing human beings’ dignity and placing the progress of the most marginalized communities first – women and girls being all too often at the top of the list. It urges us to address the structural causes of inequality and marginalization that affect them.⁸

3 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, April 2011. Available at the link: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168046246e>. Last accessed on 05 July 2018.

4 Ibid

5 See: Čedomir Šargić, *Socijalna Marginalizacija i zdravlje /Social Marginalisation and Health/ Acta Medica Medianae*, 2007; 46(2):49-52.

6 Teague, Wilson, *Towards an inclusive society*, Report No. 2, quoted in Policy paper: *Socijalna marginalizacija u Bosni i Hercegovini /Social Marginalisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina/*, 2009.

7 Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Available at the following link: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5&Lang=En. Last time accessed on 20 June 2018

8 Thematic Sheet: “Leaving No One Behind’ in Action”, UN Women Fund for Gender Equality, 2017. <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2017/fge-leaving-no-one-behind-in-action-2017-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5026.%20Accessed%20on%2004%20February%202019.&la=en&vs=5026.%20Accessed%20on%2004%20February%202019>.

According to the United Nations Joint Global Programme on **Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence**, the guidelines on common characteristics of quality essential services emphasize that „services are delivered to reach all populations, including the most excluded, remote, vulnerable and marginalized without any form of discrimination regardless of their individual circumstances and life experiences of women and girls including their age, identity, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity and language preferences.”⁹

Intersectional discrimination is a term coined in the late 1980s to portray the idea that categories of discrimination overlap, and individuals suffer exclusion on the basis of different identities such as gender, race, class, ethnic or religious belonging, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation. These identities are “distinctive systems of subordination with their own range of specific social relations (...) and they may be treated as different ideological or discursive practices that emerge in the process

of power production and enablement.”¹⁰ “The idea of ‘intersectionality’ seeks to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of discrimination or systems of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, economic disadvantages and other discriminatory systems contribute to create layers of inequality that structures the relative positions of women and men, races and other groups.”¹¹ An intersectional analysis can help understand marginalised women’s experiences of domestic violence without further disempowering them.

9 United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, a partnership by UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC, 2015. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/essential-services-package-for-women-and-girls-subject-to-violence>. Accessed on 04 February 2019.

10 Anthias, Floya. “The Intersections of Class, Gender, Sexuality and ‘Race’: The Political Economy of Gendered Violence.” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (June 2014), pp.153-171. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24713310?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

11 Patel, Pragna. “Notes on Gender and Racial Discrimination: An Urgent Need to Integrate an Intersectional Perspective to the Examination and Development of Policies, Strategies and Remedies for Gender and Racial Equality”, background paper, panel on “Gender and All Forms of Discrimination, in Particular Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance”, Commission on the Status of Women, forty-fifth session (March 2001), as quoted in A/CONF.189/PC.3/5, para 23. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/15YearReviewofVAWMandate.pdf>. Accessed on 05 February 2019

RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

The methodology described hereunder has been developed so that we can identify the main obstacles in the society which prevent women belonging to marginalised groups from accessing the support they need when they experience (domestic) violence and discrimination. Although marginalised groups of women in BiH covered a wider context of women who are marginalised on a variety of grounds, this research shall refer to the following groups:

- Roma women,
- Internally displaced women and women returnees,
- Rural women,
- Elderly women and
- Women with disabilities.

In addition to identifying the main obstacles which prevent marginalised women from accessing these services this methodology has been developed to give us an in-depth review of service providers' knowledge and practices when it comes to response to domestic violence and violence against women, through direct contact with service providers.

For the purpose of this research, the methodology comprised the following steps:

1. The first step was a detailed desk review of the existing research studies and papers relative to the topic of intersectoral approach and violence against women, publicly available reports of institutions (Gender Centres in the Entities, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees) and nongovernmental organisations in BiH relative to the issue of violence against women, especially violence against women members of marginalised groups. The desk review helped us define the main questions that will be submitted to various participants and different organisations in order to determine our approach. The review also provided us with the local and entity /state context of social exclusion and marginalisation.

2. In the course of the second step, we

collected and analysed administrative data of the institutions relative to domestic violence and violence against women belonging to marginalised groups. This helped us understand the practice of various institutions when it comes to keeping of the records, collecting the data, distribution and flow of the data in the chain of responsibility between the institutions. This is crucial for the enhancement of a multi-sectoral approach to responding to violence against women on the part of the main service providers.

3. The third step included the selection of relevant questions and topics for interviews with stakeholders and the development of research tools for data collection.

3.1. For the purpose of this research, we developed the questionnaires with a view to collect data from institutions that deal with protection from violence against women and domestic violence. We created five different questionnaires for: Social Work Centres / Services (SWC), police sector, healthcare centres, prosecutor offices and basic/ municipal courts. The questionnaires are tailored to the competences of institutions prescribed by the Entities' laws on protection against domestic violence and the Brčko District (BD) Law on protection against violence.

All questionnaires contained a set of identical questions devised to collect data about the level of inter-institutional cooperation (as a particularly important segment of an adequate response to violence against women, particularly those belonging to marginalised groups); assessment of capacities needed for the activities intended for women from marginalised groups; questions intended to measure opinions and standpoints of institutional representatives about the possibilities for women from marginalised groups who have experienced violence to access support services; and questions related to the possibilities of architectural accessibility to buildings of

institutions and knowledge of sign language (in the context of availability of services to women with disabilities). In addition to the segment of standard questions in all five questionnaires, the questionnaires contained questions about the specific role of each sector /institution in responding to the needs of women who have experienced violence. For example, medical institutions were asked: "Does your institution offer a possibility of merging medical and forensic procedures in cases of violence against women, that is, an examination and collection of forensic evidence at the same time, same place and by the same person?" A specific question for the Social Work Centres read: "Have some of the women victims of violence, belonging to one or more of the aforementioned marginalised groups, been placed in a safe house?"

An electronic form of the questionnaires¹² was sent to e-mail addresses of 143 Social Work Centres, 23 healthcare centres, 18 prosecutor's offices, 50 basic/municipal courts, 2 Entities' Ministries of Internal Affairs, BD Police and 10 Cantonal Ministries of Internal Affairs.¹³

3.2. For the purpose of in-depth interviews with a view to collect data from women belonging to marginalised groups, we created the interview guidelines. The guidelines were created with a view to receiving all answers to the topics that were important for our analysis (access to services, information about support services etc.), but they also left some room for women themselves to identify obstacles or good practices from their experience. The method of in-depth interviews was aimed at getting an overview of situations women encountered in practice and understanding the needs of women belonging to marginalised groups as these needs usually go unnoticed when collecting quantitative data and are not visible in statistical analyses. In order to reach these women, interviewers relied on networks and associations these women pertain to, or are associated with, which acted as mediators and together with the interviewers made sure interviews were conducted in line with the highest ethical standards.

12 Google forms platform.

13 The Federation Ministry of Internal Affairs told us that they did not have data requested in the Questionnaire and that, in order to obtain necessary data, we should address the Cantonal Ministry of Internal Affairs.

4. Analysis of media reports on violence against women

The manner in which violence against women and domestic violence are reported, as well as the manner in which the public is informed about the actions institutions, took in addressing different forms of violence, gives us a perspective of the level of State due diligence (duty to prevent, investigate, punish and provide compensation for all acts of VAW wherever they occur) and whether the society is ready to respond to this problem. 24 BiH media reports about violence against women in BiH have been analysed. Media reports included 20 articles published at internet portals and print media and 4 television reports, not older than 5 years, in order to determine the following:

- Most reported aspect of violence against women (what type of violence against women the media report most about, whether the report refers to violence as a societal issue, work of institutions and organisations with regard to the topic of violence against women etc.),
- Whether media reports categorise women victims of violence as also being women belonging to marginalised groups, what reports look like, whether reports use proper terminology, and
- The focus of media reporting (victim, perpetrator, or something else).

5. Validation workshop – presentation of main results, conclusions and recommendations of this analysis to the groups of actors such as legislative authority and political representatives, service providers from governmental and civil society sector and representatives of minority women groups who are, but not necessarily, survivors of violence.

We envisaged that the analysis of this data shall help map what opportunities women from marginalised groups who have experienced violence, including domestic violence, have in terms of institutional response mechanisms of protection. Also, we believe that the collected data will help us identify ways to enhance access to these services. Thereby, we will help women who are from marginalized groups, to be a part of the solution that will be focused more squarely on their needs.

DESK REVIEW

THEORETICAL, POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Analysis of the existing legal framework and policies shows that BiH strives towards international standards when it comes to the prevention of violence against women and children. With regard to prevention of violence against women, including domestic violence, the most prominent document is the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) which was ratified by BiH on 7 November 2013, as the 6th member country of the Council of Europe that ratified this Convention. The Istanbul Convention is based on the principle of non-discrimination and equality between women and men (Article 4). This means that any measures taken to support and protect victims of violence against women must promote equality, including by abolishing any regulations or practices that discriminate against women. It also means that support services need to be provided to all women, regardless of their background and individual circumstances including their race, language, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, health status, disability, migrant or refugee status, or other status¹⁴.

BiH's commitment to combat domestic violence against women is evident in a series of strategic documents and laws that were enacted in the past decade. In the text that follows, we shall make a critical overview of the contents and implementation of these documents and laws from the point of view of women who belong to marginalised social groups (primarily women with disabilities, Roma women, internally displaced women, rural women and elderly women).

The Law on Gender Equality in BiH sets out an obligation to enact a "Gender Action Plan" (GAP) for BiH (2007), as a strategic political

document at the state level which sets forth the basis for action aimed at achieving the goals of gender equality and application of statutory obligations in all important areas of the society. The GAP BiH for the period covering 2013-2017 encompasses the goals and specific activities for eradication of violence.¹⁵ The crucial strategic goal for gender equality and strengthening of women is the Strategic Goal I of the GAP, which includes the following priority areas: 1. Preventing and combating gender-based violence, including domestic violence as well as trafficking in human beings; 2. Public life and decision making; 3. Work, employment and access to economic resources; 4. Education, science, culture and sport; 5. Health, prevention and protection; 6. Social protection. This Action Plan emphasises the need to address discrimination and exclusion on several grounds as a cross-cutting area and expresses the need to pay attention to specific needs of groups that are excluded on multiple grounds.¹⁶

In accordance with the obligations assumed by the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, in its 16th session held on 23 July 2015, the BiH Council of Ministers rendered the Decision on the adoption of the Framework strategy for the implementation of the Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in BiH in the period from 2015 to 2018 ". The Strategy places particular emphasis on the need to focus on marginalised groups of population in violence prevention programs and awareness raising activities, and consultation with marginalised groups when it comes to improving frameworks for monitoring of integrated and gender-sensitive policies for combating VAW.

14 Krol, Paula. Mapping support services for victims of violence against women in Kosovo, 2017: Priština, page 48. Available at the following link: (<https://rm.coe.int/seminar-pristina-report-serb/16807316e1>.) Accessed on 21 June 2018.

15 Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH, Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the 2013-2017 period, available at the webpage of the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH: http://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GAP_BIH.pdf. Last time accessed on 10 July 2018.

16 In the period between when the desk research for this study was done and the publishing date, the Council of Ministers of BiH adopted a new Gender Action Plan for the period 2018-2022.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was ratified by BiH in 2010, reads in the preamble that "(...) women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside the home, of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation (...)"¹⁷ Besides that, strategic documents stemming from the said Convention do not cover the topic of violence against women with disabilities.

Domestic violence is regulated by criminal codes and family laws of the entities and BD and the entities' laws on protection from domestic violence. The following laws have been adopted: Law on protection from domestic violence in Republika Srpska¹⁸, Law on protection from domestic violence in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁹ and Law on protection from domestic violence in Brčko District²⁰.

The Law on protection from domestic violence in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not contain provisions that foresee special measures for marginalised groups such as older women, women with disabilities, internally displaced women, rural women and Roma women.

Pursuant to Article 8(2) of the Law on protection from domestic violence of Republika Srpska²¹, special assistance and protection in family is given to the following: a) child; b) older person; c) person with disability and d) person under guardianship. Pursuant to Article 11(1) of the said Law, subjects of protection shall be granted accelerated processing of cases of domestic violence, taking into account that the interest and welfare of victims are priority in these proceedings, especially if the victim is a child, older person, person with disability and

person under guardianship.

The Brčko District Law on protection from domestic violence²² is similar, for example, Article 6(2) which pertains to the assistance provided to victims of violence, reads that special assistance and protection shall be granted to: a) child; b) persons of 65 years of age and older; c) person with disabilities and d) persons under guardianship. Article 9(1) of this Law refers to the exigency of the procedure, priority of interests and victim's welfare.

The legislative framework regulating the area of violence against women and domestic violence does not recognise a need to have a specific regulation of protection from violence against marginalised social groups; however, recognising randomly that older persons and persons with disabilities should have additional or urgent procedures for the purposes of their protection. It is important to note that whenever laws refer to violence, it is a specific reference to gender, or 'vulnerable categories of persons', such as persons with disabilities or older persons, but at no point do they refer to women who belong to some of the marginalised groups (Roma women, women with disabilities, rural women, older women, or women IDPs). The current state and entity legislation on addressing violence against women, including domestic violence does not recognise multiple (intersectional) vulnerabilities in terms of protection against domestic violence.

As mentioned above, the legislation of BiH does not give a definition of violence against women. The Law on Gender Equality in BiH, as an umbrella law promoting gender equality, prohibits violence based on sex and defines its various settings (home, wider community, state institutions, armed conflict), however it does not refer specifically to violence against women, nor does it mention intersectional elements of this phenomenon. Furthermore, the Laws on Protection against Domestic Violence in the Federation of BiH (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS) do not give a definition of violence against women²³.

17 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, entered into force in May 2008. Available at the following link: http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/pdf/konvencija_bos.pdf. Last time accessed on 10 July 2018.

18 Law on Protection against Domestic Violence of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, Vol. 102/12 and 108/13.

19 Law on Protection against Domestic Violence of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Official Gazette of FBiH, Vol 20/13 /13.03.2013.

20 Law on Protection against Domestic Violence of Brčko District, Official Gazette of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vol. 2/10. The Assembly of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regular 26th session held on 28 February 2018.

21 Law on Protection against Domestic Violence of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska Vol. 102/12 and 108/13.

22 Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of Brčko District, Official Gazette of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vol. 2/10. The Assembly of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regular 26th session held on 28 February 2018.

23 Basic study – Analysis of harmonisation of legislation and public policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention and Combat violence against women and domestic violence, Foundation Udružene žene Banja Luka, 2015

REVIEW OF REPORTS, RESEARCH WORKS AND PUBLICATIONS TO THE TOPIC OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF WOMEN FROM MARGINALISED SOCIAL GROUPS

First of all, we would like to emphasize the problem of women belonging to marginalised groups on several grounds, not being sufficiently consulted nor included in laws and policies of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country does not have official data on the position of groups of women that are subject to marginalisation on several grounds, such as Roma women, LGBT women, single mothers, widows, third age women, women with disabilities and women subjected to domestic violence.

According to the 2013 Study of prevalence of violence against women developed by BiH Gender Equality Agency, one in two women in BiH survived some form of violence since the age of 15. Regarding women belonging to marginalised groups, this Study underlines that "the study sample included 5,2% of women with some disability. The prevalence of violence rate is 48,5%."²⁴ Despite the difference between urban and rural women' experience of violence being statistically insignificant, the study reads that "rural women (...) are more subjected to violence than women from towns."²⁵

Alternative answers of civil society organisations to the European Commission questionnaire read that "A 2015 survey on the implementation of the legal framework for the protection against domestic violence" indicates a number of problems in terms of the prevention, processing and support of victims of domestic violence that occur in practice. This report emphasises that reports of domestic violence are not always processed in accordance with the law, but rather that police officers treat them as "marital disputes", and identical misdemeanour complaints are filed against the victim and the perpetrator. This is in line with the widespread practice of registering domestic violence cases as a threat

to security or breach of the peace, and not as a criminal offense. If the reported offense is actually treated in accordance with the law, only a protective measure is imposed by which the perpetrator is held in custody 24 hours, after which he is released, exposing the victim to violence again."²⁶

According to answers to the European Commission questionnaire provided by nongovernmental organisations, an effective data collection mechanism for monitoring of domestic violence cases has not yet been established. "There are no uniform criteria and forms for keeping statistics on the number of victims of violence, and adequate records on monitoring the protective measures prescribed in cases of domestic violence are not kept by all institutions (especially social work centres)."²⁷

Insufficient knowledge of the current situation with regard to gender equality, lack of access to administrative data when developing action plans, as well as lack of a situation analysis, have a large impact on flaws in strategies and reports at the state level. Due to the lack of quality data and information, documents are frequently based on assumptions and with no basis to recognise real priorities for action.

This problem is recognised by the Framework Strategy for the Implementation of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2015-2018, stating that insufficient and inadequately disseminated information on the availability of protective mechanisms constitute a special problem with the so-called hard-to-reach groups. These groups include marginalised categories of population, which are excluded from the main social trends generally due to their minority status and sometimes because of societal prejudices. They often live in isolation, far from large centres and without opportunities to learn which rights they are entitled to, to demand the enjoyment or protection of their rights, or to address the existing subjects of protection in cases of violence."²⁸

24 Prevalence of Violence against Women in BiH. Gender Equality Agency, 2013.

25 Ibid

26 Alternative answers of civil society organisations to the European Commission questionnaire. Sarajevo, Banja Luka: Helsinki parliament of citizens and Sarajevo open centre, 2017. Available at the link: https://ba.boell.org/sites/default/files/upitnik_finalna-verzija-1.pdf. Last time accessed on 22 June 2018.

27 Ibid

28 Framework Strategy for the Implementation of

Hard-to-reach groups, therefore, become excluded on multiple grounds and left to their own devices, their exclusion leaving them more vulnerable and at risk of violence. Although it cannot be generalized, this particularly refers to women of minority ethnic, religious background and sexual orientation, women with disabilities, migrant women, both regular and irregular migrants.

To date, the research of violence against women and domestic violence did not cover each of the aforementioned groups. The Report on domestic violence against Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina²⁹ states that in the survey that was conducted with a sample of 609 women, 43.19% of respondents affirmatively responded to the question whether they personally suffered or still suffer violence, while 51% gave a negative response. Only 6% of respondents did not want to respond to this question.

“Bearing in mind that women, victims of physical and especially victims of domestic violence, find it very hard to admit it, let alone speak about it in front of anyone, this high percentage of affirmative responses is very alarming. Furthermore, if we view that in the context of 76% of Roma women providing affirmative responses to the question if they personally knew a woman who suffered physical violence, then it is completely clear that violence against Roma women is very widespread.”³⁰ Also, the research on the prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in BiH has shown that “women with poor health and disability are not exempt from violence - prevalence rates are the same as in the sub-sample of healthy women and women without disabilities.”³¹ According to the data of that research, not a single one of the said groups considered that they could get protection in most of the cases, regardless of whether this perception

the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2015 - 2018. (http://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CAHVIO_Strategija.pdf). Accessed on 22 June 2018.

29 Report on domestic violence against Roma Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rights for all. Available at www.rightsforall.ba/download/zenska_prava-bs-romkinje_finalni_bos.doc. Last accessed on 11 July 2018.

30 Ibid

31 Report on domestic violence against Roma Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Available at the following link: <http://www.rightsforall.ba/publikacije-bs.html>. Last accessed on 22 June 2018.

is correct or not. Other hard-to-reach groups and violence perpetrated against them mainly remain invisible.

In the context of analysis of domestic violence against women belonging to marginalised groups, special attention must be paid to economic violence³² the specific danger of which is recognised in GAP, which reads as follows: “Many women in Bosnia and Herzegovina face the domestic violence problem. Our society is built on deeply rooted patriarchal foundations, so victims of violence do not enjoy support from society and face traditional prejudices and often continue their lives with perpetrators of violence, primarily because of economic dependence and fear for children.”³³

An empirical research of intersectional inequalities in the social protection system in Bosnia and Herzegovina identified disabilities that result from the failure of the social protection system to respond to needs of various social groups that face intersectoral inequality. To that regard, cases of women with disabilities are mentioned and confirm that “body as a source of inequality plays an important role in this group as well, and it is even more complex due to poverty.”³⁴

Despite the said fact, economic violence has not been sufficiently covered in GAP as there are no specific measures foreseen to prevent economic violence, although there are measures indirectly foreseen through strategic goals 1.3. Labour, employment and access to

32 The laws which pertain to the prevention of domestic violence, economic violence is mentioned as one form of domestic violence and is described by different conduct which could be summarised in the definition of economic violence given by Marina Turković (<http://www.iusinfo.hr/DailyContent/Topical.aspx?id=20862>): Economic violence is deprivation of the right to economic independence aimed at reducing the possibility of successful opposition to violence. In the context of domestic violence, economic violence mainly affects women who are economically dependent on perpetrators which is why they rarely report violence. This type of violence is manifested through deprivation of money for basic needs, for children, deprivation of employment possibilities, or generally prohibition for getting employed, management of personal property without the victim knowing or approving it, deciding on what can be bought and when, asking for an explanation for any petty expenditure etc.

33 Gender Action Plan of BiH . Available at link: http://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GAP_BIH.pdf. Last accessed on 23 June 2018.

34 Aida Malkić and Tea Hadžiristić. Intersectional inequalities in the social protection system in Bosnia and Herzegovina: results of empirical research. Sarajevo: 2016.

economic resources and 1.6. Social protection.

The Framework Strategy for the Implementation of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in BiH in the period from 2015 to 2018³⁵ does not single out any form of domestic violence in terms of strategic programmes, including economic violence as part of a wider concept of domestic violence, specifically mentioning it only in indicators for the implementation of strategic programme 1.2., which encompasses the prevention of domestic violence “including vulnerable and marginalised groups”³⁶. In the aforementioned context and especially considering the economic position of marginalised women groups, it should be underlined that the research on domestic violence³⁷ show that economic violence is closely connected with other forms of domestic violence and it is exactly the economic dependence which is most often mentioned as the reason for which victims are in no position to leave their partner who abuses them, nor are they in a position to exercise their rights. On the other hand, bearing in mind their position in BiH society, which is still dominated by strict patriarchal norms and value systems, it is exactly women who are largely faced with economic violence. This is corroborated by the data according to which “despite the fact that women make 51,7% of total estimated labor force, only 35,6% goes to employed women. That is the lowest percentage in Southeast Europe when it comes to women’s labor market participation.”³⁸

Unfortunately, economic violence is hard to

recognise and criminalise because the society is not sufficiently informed about it. This topic is insufficiently covered by action plans, strategies, therefore allowing the continuation of discrimination and forcing women into a subordinate position as victims. One form of economic³⁹ violence is non-compliance with the statutory obligation to support family members. In that regard, a discriminatory practice in BiH must be mentioned resulting from inadequate and inefficient work of courts and prosecutor’s offices when dealing with this issue. Furthermore, an alimony fund has not been established as the relevant institutions have not regulated it although an initiative was launched back in 2014 based on the decision of FBiH government to resolve this issue.

Recognised flaws in several selected examples in the GAP⁴⁰, the Framework Strategy for the Implementation of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in BiH in the period from 2015 to 2018 and the Sixth periodic report of BiH on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women from 2013 to 2016 points to a neglect in addressing some of the critical problems that women in BiH face in strategic documents and an insufficient coverage of the multiple forms of discrimination that they face.

One of the largest obstacles for marginalised social groups of women in exercising their rights is apparent gender inequality or failure to recognise their specific needs for additional measures of protection or support services.

35 Framework strategy for the implementation of the Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in BiH in the period from 2015 to 2018. Available at: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CAHVIOStrategija.pdf>. Last accessed on 14 July 2018.

36 Ibid

37 Darja Maslić Seršić. *Ekonomsko nasilje nad ženama: manifestacije, posljedice i putovi oporavka.* (Economic violence against women, manifestation, consequences and roads of recovery) Zagreb: 2010. *Autonomna ženska kuća Zagreb, Ministarstvo obitelji, branitelja i međugeneracijske solidarnosti; Ksenija Klasnić. Ekonomsko nasilje nad ženama u intimnim vezama u hrvatskom društvu – konceptualne pretpostavke.* (Economic violence against women in intimate relationships in Croatian society conceptual assumptions) Soc. ekol. Zagreb, Vol. 20 (2011.), No. 3 (file:///C:/Users/tanja.m/Desktop/SE_2011_03_Klasnic.pdf). Last accessed on 23 June 2018.

38 Gender Action Plan of BiH. Available at link: http://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GAP_BiH.pdf. Last accessed on 23 June 2018.

39 Forms of economic violence are mainly connected with two basic patterns of conduct: making a woman totally financially dependent on a perpetrator (women do not have an access to finances, income is controlled by a man, money, valuables and property forcibly taken, etc.) or spending money only for one’s own needs; failure to meet the statutory obligation to support family members, or placing the financial burden on the victim of violence. (see: <http://www.sigurnakuca.net/nasilje-nad-zenama/vrste-nasilja/ekonomsko-nasilje> i Ksenija Klasnić. *Konstrukcija i evaluacija skala namijenjenih mjerenju prepoznavanja i iskustava ekonomskog nasilja nad ženama u intimnim vezama.* (Constructon and evaluation of scales intended for recognising and experiencing economic violence against women in intimate relationships), Zagreb: 2014. Zagreb University, Faculty of Philosophy.

40 Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period of 2013 – 2017. (Official Gazette of BiH Vol. 98/13). Available at the link: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/project/gender-akcioni-plan-bih-2013-2017/>. Last accessed on 23 June 2018.

The analysis of available documents led us to the conclusion that the specific needs of marginalised groups of women who have experienced violence were mostly attended by nongovernmental and international organisations in their research that they conducted, conclusions they adopted and recommendations they made.

Nongovernmental organisations tried to view the issue of violence and protection against violence from the point of view of marginalised groups of women. *Žene ženama (Women to women) Association* from Sarajevo conducted a research⁴¹ pointing to priorities of women with disabilities who believe that economic empowerment of women is an important part of efforts in the prevention of all forms of violence. A consistent implementation, as well as monitoring of the existing legislation and policy is necessary, as well as regular dissemination of information on support services, and continuous psychological support to women and family members subjected to violence or to those who got out of a violent situation. Women with disabilities, who participated in the research, stated that the defining effective steps aimed at preventing violence must include women with disabilities, e.g., when drafting legislation specifically relating to their needs. **They should also be included in all forms of planning and rendering of adequate assistance and services.** Thus far, women were included only on pro forma basis, without taking their opinion into account.

Marginalised groups of women are out of the perspective and priorities and are not sufficiently recognised in legislation, strategies and action strategies and plans. However, enjoyment of access to quality support services is the issue that affects all women on grounds of them being women, but the problem multiplies when women belong to marginalised groups. The research *Nasilje prepoznaj i spriječi! / Violence recognise and prevent!*⁴² mentions a good normative ground and statutory obligation of acting urgently and giving a priority to interests and benefits of victims in cases of domestic

violence at the same time stating the problem of insufficient practice in the implementation of laws, policies and measures. The research states that female experts who work in this area are most often faced with the following problems: those in charge of protection act differently although their actions are prescribed by the existing regulations, and this particularly refers to the police, prosecutor's offices and courts, inadequate implementation of laws and/or improvisation within the existing laws, failure to recognise violence, lengthy court procedures, mild punishments for perpetrators of violence (mainly conditional sentences), a small number of trained experts in institutions active with regard to this issue, as opposed to a large number of reported/identified cases of violence, which directly impacts their time available to document violence and to delve deeper into the problem (with regard to the position and feelings of victims, fear on the side of victims to take specific steps), lack of coordination between services inside the same institution but also between different institutions when it comes to expert actions and procedures. Such lack of coordination causes such a situation in which certain data are kept with one service without giving a possibility to other experts to get involved. This hampers long term monitoring of cases and finding a proper solution.⁴³

Having analysed answers under Chapter 19 of the European Commission questionnaire which pertain to social policy and employment, we noticed that representatives of state institutions did not recognise specific needs of marginalised women groups in the context of accessing support services. Marginalised groups of women are mentioned within the answer related to encouraging their participation in the labour market. On the other hand, domestic violence and violence against women are referred to as a form of discrimination in the context of institutional solutions for prevention of discrimination. However, that framework does not mention any specific characteristics or measures that exist in BiH society with regard to protection of women belonging to marginalised groups from violence.

In 2009 the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) published a document titled "Preliminary Findings on the Implementation of the Laws on Protection against Domestic Violence," in chapter 10

41 Sigurna od straha, Sigurna od nasilja (Free from fear, free from violence) (Memnuna Zvizdić, Mirjana Musić i Merima Spahić, Tanja Mandić Đokić, Jasna Rebac, Sandra Marković, Suvad Zahirović i Fikret Zuko), Udruženje Žene ženama, Sarajevo 2017.

42 Nasilje prepoznaj i spriječi!: Proživljeno iskustvo žena u teoriji i praksi; Maja Mamula, Silvija Ručević, Maja Vukmanić, Memnuna Zvizdić, Sarajevo: Udruženje Žene ženama, 2013.

43 Ibid. page 63.

making the following recommendations:

1. Together with relevant ministries, launch an information campaign to engage all officials and civil society organizations in the application of the Laws on Protection. In particular, informational material for victims and potential victims should be available and widely distributed. Outreach should target particularly vulnerable groups, such as rural women, Roma, disabled persons, and economically dependent women.⁴⁴ The recommendation is directed to the Gender Equality Agency in BiH, and the Gender Centres of RS and FBiH.

2. Gender Centres and relevant ministries should launch an information campaign to engage all officials and civil society organizations in the application of the Laws on Protection. In particular, informational materials for victims and potential victims should be available and widely distributed. Outreach should target particularly vulnerable groups, such as rural women, Roma, disabled persons, and economically dependent women. All relevant officials should inform victims of their rights and possibilities which they have at their disposal in accordance with the laws on protection.

Regardless of numerous recommendations made by international institutions and stressing the need for information campaigns, work on the ground, and direct contact with socially excluded groups of population, there **has been no significant improvement**. It is important to note that the obligatory coordinated actions of all institutions in a chain of responsibility that is regulated by signed protocols of cooperation at municipal or cantonal levels. However, the data from CSOs working directly with victims suggest that protocols of cooperation are not respected enough, and that institutions and services are still uncoordinated.⁴⁵

According to the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence⁴⁶, community

information, education and community outreach are key in raising awareness about the prevalence of violence against women and girls. The publication *Žene koje inspirišu / Women who inspire/* contains the research data which suggest that "In 40% of cases, women state that they first ask legal advice and urgent help from family members, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. (...) what is alarming is the data according to which 12% of women do not know whom to address, and 4% of them state that they have nobody to turn to for various reasons".⁴⁷

These data are especially indicative for women with sensory disability and internally displaced women because the obstacles for access to information are prominent in cases of women with impaired hearing or eyesight. With regard to internally displaced women, social support network (family, neighbours, and friends) is often missing along with a lack of this type of assistance, needed by a high percentage of women.

In 2013, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) published „The Status of Roma Children and Families in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a foreword by Florence Bouer stating that almost half of Roma women believe a husband or partner has the right to hit or beat his wife / partners⁴⁸. There is therefore a need to address these gaps through appropriate targeting of policies and programmes in order to break this vicious cycle of exclusion.

The GAP recognises that women and men marginalised on several grounds are faced with impossibility to get employed and they have no knowledge of the rights to social and health protection, and states that "the work needs to continue in analysing the status, mapping the needs and providing support to socially excluded groups, harmonising and implementing laws, regulations, strategies and action plans that pertain to enhancement of the status of persons who can be considered socially excluded".⁴⁹

44 Preliminary Findings on the Implementation of the Laws on Protection from Domestic Violence, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, page 32.

45 See the publication *Zaštita žena i djece žrtava nasilja u porodici na lokalnom nivou – od zakona do stvarne implementacije*, Banja Luka: 2014. Fondacija Udružene žene.

46 United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and

UNODC. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/essential-services-package-for-women-and-girls-subject-to-violence>

47 Tatjana Žarković. *Žene koje inspirišu...: Istraživanje o mogućnostima i uslovima života žena u malim lokalnim zajednicama u BiH*. Sarajevo: Fondacija Cure, 2017.

48 Položaj romske djece i porodica u Bosni i Hercegovini 2013., UNICEF, pages 53, 58

49 Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013.– 2017 (Official Gazette of BiH Vol. 98/13), page 12.

ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AVAILABLE TO INSTITUTIONS

The data on violence against women and domestic violence at the level of BiH *are not consolidated and there is no single methodology of data collection on violence against women and domestic violence*. Therefore, as the study Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina shows, it is very difficult to determine the scope of violence against women and domestic violence in BiH. The main reason for that is to be found in the very nature of the problem – efforts to conceal it, not reporting cases of domestic violence, lack of a single statistical records and view that the domestic violence is a “private problem”.⁵⁰

According to the above-mentioned study, this remains a problem not only for Bosnia and Herzegovina, but for other countries in the region and the world too. However, the complexity of BiH structure largely aggravates the collection and consolidation of social data in general, let alone the data that are usually difficult to get due to their specific “private” nature and numerous cultural conditions. In particular, the fact that the country is divided into two political-administrative entities, and then one of the entities is divided in ten cantons, hinders any attempt at consistent data collection and management. Progress has been made as the intervention of society has gained in intensity in the recent decade with development of awareness that prevention of this form of violence is one of the imperatives in terms of protection of human rights.⁵¹

Bearing in mind the identified problem of data collection relative to violence against women

and domestic violence, *a special challenge in this area is to collect specific data on violence against women belonging to marginalised social groups.*

In Republika Srpska, the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports is competent to monitor implementation of the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence and to that regard it collects and processes this type of data. At the moment of preparing this analysis⁵² the webpage of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports contains the information on implementation of general protocol of action in cases of domestic violence for 2016 in RS, and the information collected from the subjects of protection against domestic violence for the year of 2017.⁵³

Based on the data available for RS, we can see that those in charge of protection collect data about the age of victims of violence and gender, according to which, in 2017 there were 68 reported cases of violence against women older than 65, while there were 99 cases for the same category reported to the Social Work Centre. With regard to violence against women belonging to marginalised groups on other grounds, the police and healthcare institutions keep the records of gender and victims of violence with disabilities. Those data suggest that in 2017 the police registered no cases of violence against women with disabilities while healthcare institutions registered one.

In order to get an insight into the situation in FBiH, we addressed the Gender Centre of FBiH and received the document Statistical data on domestic violence which contains statistical data for the period 2006-2015, with a clarification that the data for 2017 have not been consolidated. They said they did not have any data on cases of violence against women with disabilities, elderly women, rural women, Roma women or internally displaced women.

There are no available data on violence against

⁵⁰ Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gender Equality Agency in BiH 2013.

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² July 2018.

⁵³ Available reports for previous years but we used the latest data for the purpose of this research.

women and domestic violence for BD but Article 29 of the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence in Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina⁵⁴ prescribes that “Subjects of protection and other bodies authorised to act in accordance with this Law shall keep the record on actions taken and data on the number of initiated and completed procedures and other measures, and shall submit reports to the Department of Health and Other Services”. Bearing in mind that this Law was adopted in 2018, one can expect the data to be collected for the coming period.

ANALYSIS OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRES

This chapter will give an analysis of answers we were given in the questionnaires. The questionnaires were developed with the aim to obtain the data from relevant institutions about their capacities, the manner of action in cases of violence against women and domestic violence, mutual cooperation between institutions, their adaptation to provide support services for women belonging to marginalised groups who have experienced violence, and whether these institutions recognise them as part of the problem of violence against women.

At the stage of data collection, five different questionnaires were developed for: Social Work Centres, the police sector, healthcare institutions, prosecutor’s office and basic / municipal courts. The questionnaires are adapted to the competences of institutions prescribed by the Entities’ laws on Protection against Domestic Violence and the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence of Brčko District⁵⁵. The questionnaires consisted of questions that would help us identify the level of cooperation between the institutions (as a

particularly important segment of adequate response to violence against women from marginalised groups), estimate of capacities needed for the activities directed to women from marginalised groups⁵⁶ and questions that would help us measure the views and opinions of institutional representatives on the ability of women from marginalised groups to access support services. When developing the questionnaires, we focused on strategic goals defined in the Strategy for Combating Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska, Strategy for Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence (2013-2017) in the Federation of BiH, Gender Action Plan of BiH, and the Manual on Conduct in cases of domestic violence, all with a view of consistently following the strategic direction of institutional response of BiH to violence against women and domestic violence and in order to get answers as to how much actions of institutions comply with the legal framework that is imposed on them. Yet, we took care that the collected data has a perspective of relations towards women from marginalised groups in order to paint the picture of respect for the principle of non-discrimination, and access to protection mechanisms for all women citizens of BiH.

An electronic version of questions⁵⁷ was sent to 143 e-mail addresses of the Social Work Centres, 23 healthcare centres, 18 prosecutor’s offices, 50 basic/municipal courts, 2 Entities’ Ministries of Internal Affairs, BD Police and 10 Cantonal Ministries of Internal Affairs.⁵⁸

Graph chart 1 shows a percentage of responded or non-responded questionnaires, per sectors

54 Available at the link: <http://skupstinabd.ba/3-zakon/ba/Zakon%20o%20zas--titi%20od%20nasilja/001%2007-18%20Zakon%20o%20zas+titi%20od%20nasilja%20u%20porodici%20u%20Brc+ko%20distriktu%20Bosne%20i%20Hercegovine.pdf>

55 Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of Brčko District (Official Gazette of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No. 2/10, Assembly of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 26th regular session held on 28 February 2018).

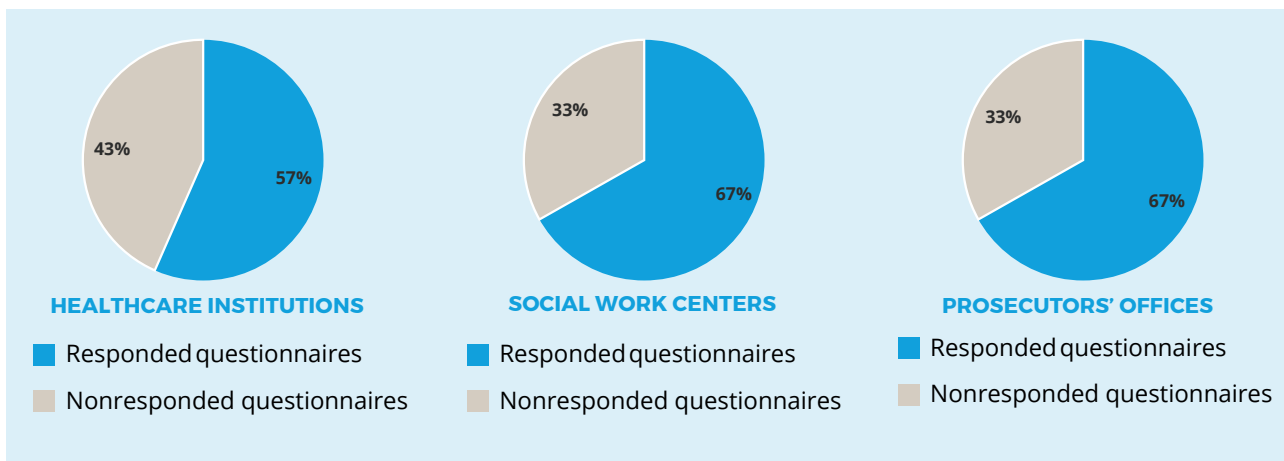
Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of FBiH, Vol. 20/13 /13.03.2013)

Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of Republika Srpska (Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, Vol. 102/12 and 108/13)

56 For example architectural accessibility for women in wheelchairs, knowledge of sign language and the like.

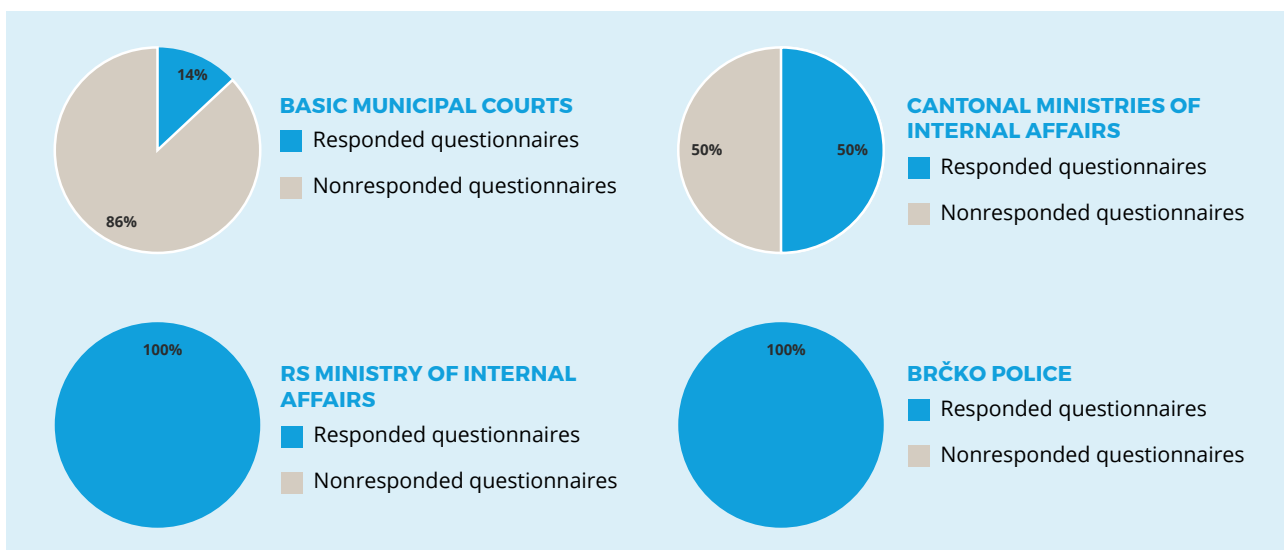
57 Google forms platform.

58 Federation Ministry of Internal Affairs informed us that they did not have the data requested in the questionnaire and that we should address the Cantonal Ministry of Internal Affairs.



Readiness of institutions to participate in this type of research speaks for itself as to how they

see their role in a multisectoral response to violence against women and domestic violence.



Graph Chart 1. Percentage of questionnaires which were responded and nonresponded from the institutions in the system of protection against domestic violence and violence against women.

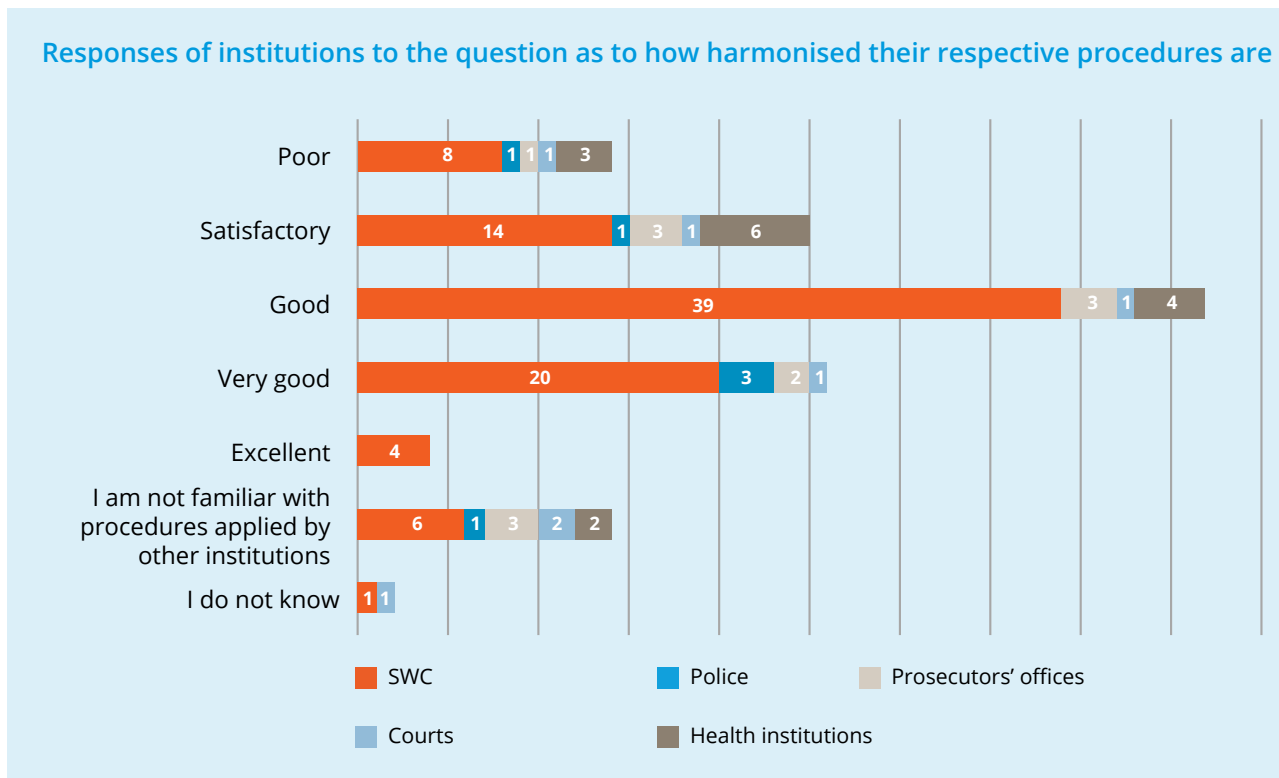
The importance of a holistic approach to the problem of violence against women belonging to marginalised groups is underlined, as a coordinated approach involving correlated activities by a variety of institutions in the areas of psychosocial welfare, law enforcement (police, prosecutors and justice departments) and health can help to ensure that these groups of women receive needed support especially in view of a variety of vulnerabilities attached to them, usually more than one. The research and practice suggest that the very manner of service provision for victims of violence impacts the success of the violence protection measures⁵⁹. A comprehensive set of support services

for women who have experienced violence implies a coordinated action of all responsible institutions, that is, activities that are carried out in the sectors of health, education, social welfare, police and judiciary, and mechanisms of coordination and management. Considering the existing differences in procedures and the level of prescribed coordination of institutions responsible for response to violence against women and domestic violence between the Entities and BD, as well as the inconsistency of identification, registration and reporting on cases of domestic violence, it is not hard to anticipate possible difficulties in the implementation of a coordinated multisectoral response to violence against women and domestic violence. That is why the questionnaires especially focus on how the institutions themselves see the consistency of

⁵⁹ Multisectoral response to gender-based violence, An effective and coordinated way to protect and empower GBV victims/survivors, Module 1, EEIRH, UNFPA EECARO, 2015, page 12.

procedures used for identification, registration and reporting on cases of domestic violence with procedures of other institutions responsible

for extending assistance to victims of violence against women and domestic violence.



Graph Chart 2. Responses of institutions to the question as to how harmonised their procedures are⁶⁰

Healthcare institutions mainly (46%) see the issue of procedures harmonisation at a satisfactory level, while 15% of them state that they are not familiar with procedures applied by other institutions. En equal ratio (25%) of **prosecutor's offices** consider the level of harmonization of procedures satisfactory and good and also 25% of them are not familiar with procedures applied by other institutions. In two instances, courts (28.6%) are not familiar with procedures applied by other institutions, while other responses are equally distributed between the options poor, satisfactory, good, very good and I do not know. The police in most instances stated that the harmonisation of procedures is very good, at one instance they evaluated it as poor, and at another instance they were not familiar with procedures applied by other institutions, while the **Social Work Centres** see the harmonisation of procedures as good in 40.6% of responses; furthermore, they are the only ones who used the response

excellent (4.1%), but in 6.2% of responses they state that they are not familiar with procedures applied by other institutions.

There is a relatively large disproportion in responses that institutions gave to questions which can be explained by a subjective evaluation of persons who filled in questionnaires. However, what is concerning is the fact that four out of five sectors which received the questionnaire said that they were not familiar with procedures applied by other institutions, more precisely, such response was given by 14 different institutions. **There is a significant room for improvement in terms of inter institutional cooperation in preventing and combating violence against women, including domestic violence**, which is further proven by additional response to this topic which we received from health sector. "There is no adequate inter-institutional cooperation; it is only through a group for protection of children and youth 'Mreža' did we manage to identify problems of children, but we have not managed to solve the problems in an adequate manner. There is no adequate procedure of inter-institutional cooperation

60 One should keep in mind the ration between the number of responses and number of questionnaires per institutions. The graph presents realistic numbers for better visibility.

in the sphere of domestic violence (children, women).⁶¹

Lack of harmonisation of procedures and joint coordinated action of institutions active in the prevention and protection against violence against women, including domestic violence can be one of the reasons for which victims of domestic violence are faced with long lasting processes despite the statutory obligation to act urgently⁶². This explains why the victims lack trust in institutional responses in terms of protection.

A coordinated response of institutions is even more important to women from marginalised groups as such support needs to be tailored to the specific needs of those women. It turned out that the system is not yet ready, as confirmed by experiences and positions of interviewed women who belong to marginalised groups.⁶³

We analysed the readiness of institutions to respond to specific needs of women who do not belong to an “average”, but to marginalised groups, and we asked them if they had specific procedures for women from marginalised groups who are the subject to this research (women with disabilities, Roma women, internally displaced women, rural women and elderly women), we asked if they had capacities for service providing to all women citizens such as for example employees who know sign language, architectural accessibility for women in wheelchair and the like. Besides that, we wanted to know if they at all recognised the need for specific (adapted) access to protection of women from marginalised groups, whether they kept the records of violence against women from this group, as it would help them recognise and create adequate responses such as activities of prevention and protection adapted to them.

With regard to accessibility to institutions

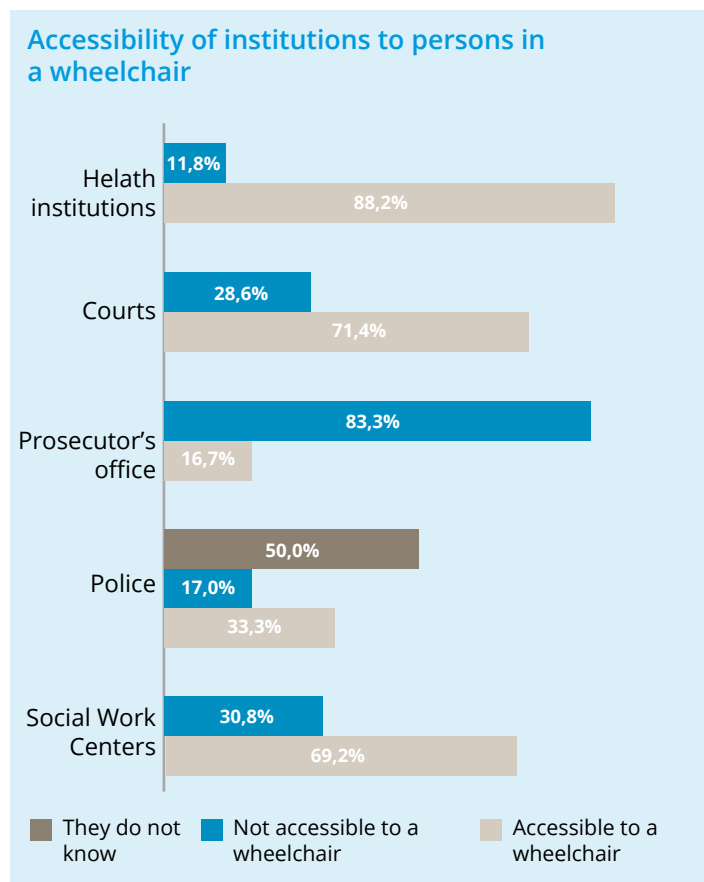
61 JZU Healthcare Centre Pale.

62 Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of Brčko District (Official Gazette of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No. 2/10, Assembly of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 26th regular session held on 28 February 2018).

Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of FBiH, Vol. 20/13 /13.03.2013) Law on Protection from Domestic Violence of Republika Srpska (Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, Vol. 102/12 and 108/13).

63 See the chapter Analysis of in-depth interviews with members of marginalised groups.

and services of protection from violence against women with disabilities, as opposed to healthcare institutions, police and prosecutor’s offices seem to be least accessible to persons in a wheelchair.



Graph chart 3. Accessibility of institutions to persons in a wheelchair

As we can see in graph chart 3, healthcare institutions are accessible to persons in a wheelchair (and persons hard of movement) in 88.2% cases, courts in 71.4% cases, SWC in 69.2% cases, the police in 33.3%⁶⁴ and prosecutor’s offices in only 16.7% cases. These data suggest that the international principles of non-discrimination are not upheld by several sectors included in the response system, and the obligation to provide unhindered access to all citizens (including those hard of movement) is not observed by all in the sense that “goods, products and services are open or provided to the public,

64 The information on accessibility at police should be taken with reserves because the questionnaire was filled in at different levels; in RS the questionnaire was filled in by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, while in FBiH it was filled in by cantonal Ministries of Internal Affairs. We do not have the information on accessibility to police stations.

they must be accessible to all.⁶⁵ Deprivation of access is considered discriminatory. The obligation to provide architectural accessibility of buildings is prescribed by the Law on Spatial Development and Construction of RS⁶⁶, Law on Spatial Planning and Land Use at the level of Federation of BiH⁶⁷, Decree on spatial standards, urban development technical requirements and norms for prevention of constructing any barrier for persons with disabilities (Federation of BiH)⁶⁸, Rulebook on requirements for planning and designing of buildings for unhindered movement of children and persons with disabilities⁶⁹, as well as specific regulations relative to meeting the requirements for establishment of health and social welfare institutions.

The UN Committee for the Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed its concern regarding the accessibility of persons with disabilities to public institutions: "The Committee is concerned that there is no comprehensive accessibility strategy nor harmonized legislation at all levels with effective sanctions, and that most public buildings and institutions, with special regard to those providing public legal assistance and/or services for persons with disabilities in particular, as well as public transport, are reported as inaccessible."⁷⁰ Consequences of

inaccessibility are evident in the example of functioning of mechanisms for protection of women with disabilities as the inaccessibility becomes an obstacle to equal access to a significant social mechanism such as protection against violence.

Sign language trainings were attended only by healthcare institutions employees (17.6%) and a very small percentage of employees in SWC (6.7%), while the others did not attend such trainings. Such a small possibility of institutions to communicate with victims in case of violence against women who have hearing/speech impediments, begs the question of whether it is possible to provide adequate protection and implement necessary procedures. Although there is no specific statutory obligation for public institution employees to attend such trainings, we can refer to the non-discrimination principle in service provision and ask the question of how it is possible to abide by such a principle when service providers do not have capacities.

Existence of special procedures (e.g., hiring an interpreter, expert, psychologist, hearing in accessible premises etc.) in cases of violence against women belonging to marginalised groups are mainly mentioned by prosecutor's offices (50%), followed by police (20%), courts (14.3%), and just 10.2% by SWC, as well as 6% of responses of healthcare institutions state that they apply special procedures.

65 General comment to Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ACCESSABILITY, My right 2017. (http://www.myright.ba/uimages/Opsti20komentar20na20clan20920Konvencije20o20pravima20osoba20s20invaliditetom_PRISTUPACNOST_MyRight_2017.pdf). Last accessed on 19 July 2018.

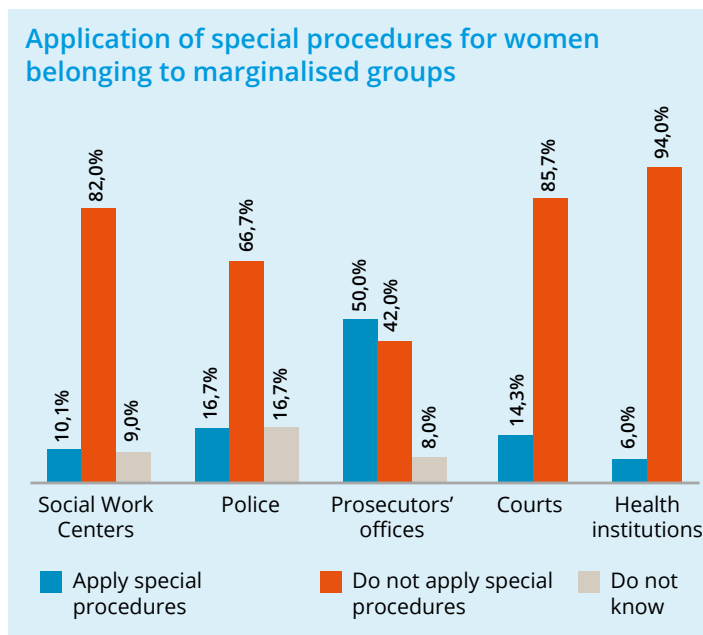
66 Law on Spatial Development and Construction of RS (Official Gazette of RS, Vol. 40/2013, 2/2015).

67 Law on Spatial Planning and Use of Land in the territory of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH, Vol. 2/06, 72/07, 32/08, 4/10, 13/10 and 45/10).

68 Decree on spatial standards, urban development technical requirements and norms for prevention of constructing any barrier for persons with disabilities (Official Gazette of Federation of BiH), Vol. 48/09.

69 Rulebook on requirements for planning and designing of buildings for unhindered movement of children and persons with disabilities (<http://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/Ministarstva/mgr/Documents/pravilnik%20o%20uslovima%20za%20plan.%20i%20projekt.%20objekata%20za%20nesmetano%20kretanje%20djece%20i%20lica%20sa%20umanj.%20tjel.%20sposobn.pdf>). Last accessed on 19 July 2018.

70 Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Concluding observations on the initial report of Bosnia and Herzegovina: http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska_prava/Prava_osoba_sa_invaliditetom/Zakljucna%20razmatranja%20i%20preporuke%20Komiteta%20za%20prava%20osoba%20sa%20invaliditetom%20za%20BiH.pdf . Last accessed on 20 July



Graph chart 4. Application of special procedures for women belonging to marginalised groups. According to submitted responses, a majority of institutions states that they do not keep

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separate records on victims of violence against women belonging to marginalised groups. Such records are not kept either by courts, prosecutor's offices, healthcare institutions, BD police, Cantonal Ministries of Internal Affairs in FBiH. The only exception is the Ministry of Internal Affairs of RS which keeps the records of victims of violence - women with disabilities and women older than 65 years.⁷¹ In less than 5% cases, SWCs keep the records on whether victims of violence are elderly women, and in 1.1% cases state that they keep the records on rural women.

As the flow and exchange of data is one of key factors for integrated action of institutions, we tried to learn how they exchange the data on cases of domestic violence with other institutions /organisations. Prosecutor's offices exchange the data upon a separate request in 73% of cases, while the remaining 27% of the data exchange is done *ex officio* by default. Basic/municipal courts also exchange the data upon a separate request in most cases, more precisely in 57% of cases. Healthcare institutions do it *ex officio*, while some of healthcare centres in RS also have a successful practice of regular (period) reporting⁷². SWC in 83% of cases exchange the data *ex officio*, while in 15% of cases they do it upon a separate request. Two out of total 96 SWC exchange the data only upon a separate request that must be submitted by a person to whom the request refers. Despite a small percentage of the total responses, the practice which makes the flow of data between the institutions impossible is still in place in some institutions due to procedures that are not in conformity with laws, strategies and obligations.

Legal rights and information are an internationally recognized Essential Social Service, as many girls and women often have

limited knowledge about their entitlements. According to the data received, 21.6% of SWC render services of legal counselling to women in cases of domestic violence, and more than 31% of centres do not render services of psychological counselling/support to women victims of violence. It is also worth noting that, according to current regulation, SWC do not have the obligation to render this type of support to victims of violence⁷³, but they can organise that type of support in line with their capacities. This support is also part of the international standard which puts "victims in the centre of interventions and institutional responses. Models of integrated care enhance a holistic treatment of health, sexual and psychosocial needs.⁷⁴" Increasing the capacities of SWC so that they can render basic types of legal and psychological counselling to women belonging to marginalised groups (at least in small municipalities where centres for mental health or legal aid nongovernmental organisations are not easily available) would provide more opportunities for the empowerment of women victims of violence⁷⁵, and services of support would be more accessible.

40% of healthcare institutions do not render special services of counselling in cases of abuse, including domestic violence, sexual abuse and other forms of abuse⁷⁶; according to our data, only in 8% of healthcare institutions there is a possibility to consolidate medical and forensic procedures in cases of violence, so that examination and forensic collection of evidence are done at one place and by the same person.

The Manual for conduct in domestic violence cases, developed by the FBiH Gender Centre, underlines that a network of well-trained service providers with necessary skills and

71 This information is consistent with the Information on the implementation of general protocol of action in cases of domestic violence for 2016 in Republika Srpska, which reads that the subjects of protection are obligated to keep the records on victims of violence, including the records categorised by gender of victims over 65 and victims with disabilities. However, that type of records has to be kept in RS also by healthcare institutions and educational institutions, prosecutor's offices and social work centres/services and these data are visible in the data we processed in chapter Analysis of the data on violence against women and domestic violence; however this is not reflected in responses given to the questionnaire which may suggest that persons who filled in questionnaires were not familiar with this procedure.

72 Find more in Chapter: Good practices of institutions.

73 As needed, include centres of mental health, that is, nongovernmental organisations that render this type of services.

74 Good practices in responding to domestic violence: A comparative study / Lori Mann. 2018.

75 The need to empower women victims of violence is especially underlined by rural and Roma women in the course of interviews.

76 Such service is needed, and it is recognised in for example: the order on standards and norms of health protection in obligatory health insurance system of FBiH, introducing a new set of services, and recognising new services in the community, which is applicable to certain needs of victims. It introduced a special service of counselling in abuse cases which included counselling on domestic violence, sexual abuse and other forms of abuse, within the protection of mental health and services in the sphere of counselling and psychoeducation.

appropriate attitudes can render adequate and efficient support tailored to the needs of victims and reduce the risk of repeated victimisation.⁷⁷ According to the data we received from institutions, most training programmes, which pertain to the enhancement of efficient support to victims of domestic violence and violence against women, are available to the police and prosecutor's offices. According to the responses, the police really use most of those training programmes. For example, RS Ministry of Internal Affairs state that in the past three years 168 police officials attended trainings that pertain to enhancement of efficiency in rendering support to victims of domestic violence against women, in Tuzla Canton 104 employees attended such trainings. Although certain Ministries of Internal Affairs in RS and FBiH state that there is a large number of employees attending such trainings, 60% of responses we received from Ministries of Internal Affairs in FBiH Cantons and BD mention just two or less employees.

Response from prosecutor's offices, however, show that prosecution employees have full access to training programmes that pertain to enhancement of efficiency in rendering support to victims of domestic violence. However, in the past three years in 80% cases only three or less employees completed those programmes. Most of basic/municipal courts also have access to those programmes (stated in 72% responses), but same as prosecutor's offices they rarely use them. According to the collected data, in 80% cases not more than three employees used them in the past three years.

According to submitted data, the training programmes that pertain to enhancement of efficiency in rendering support to victims of domestic violence are the least available to healthcare workers and only 47% health institutions state that such programmes are available to them. What is concerning is the fact that as much as 30.8% SWC state that they do not have access to those trainings. SWC are second to last when it comes to access to such training programmes.

In the course of data collection in questionnaires, we registered opinions of

representatives of competent institutions in the system of protection against violence against women and domestic violence in order to learn what obstacles are faced by women from marginalised groups when using the system of protection against violence. We also wanted to hear other observations.

Social work centres or services state that *women from marginalised groups are most often faced with the lack of information which is also the problem of all women belonging to marginalised groups*. Besides that, women are judged by the community when they request assistance. Furthermore, women with disabilities also recognise the problem of architectural barriers.

Representatives of SWC are faced with the problem of lack of staff, training opportunities, professional advancement opportunities, but also with the problem of records and access to information. They referred to the aforementioned as obstacles which prevent them to extend a high quality support to victims and do their job comprehensively. The questionnaire also allowed for their additional explanations, and most often they mentioned the lack of staff, primarily psychologists in SWC. That is why there is small possibility for psychological counselling which is necessary in cases of domestic violence. We learned the following from the questionnaire: "There is a need for additional trainings of experts who work with victims of violence, especially for those experts who work with perpetrators of violence." Besides that, they mention a lack of supervisory support to experts who work with domestic violence issues. "We do all we can do in case of every victim of violence regardless of which group the victim belongs to. SWC Kakanj unfortunately has no employed psychologists. A supervisory support to experts working with domestic violence issues is poor; or rather it is not existent at all."

A lack of professional advancement opportunities is the second most often mentioned problem. It generally refers to additional trainings for experts working with victims of violence but also specifically refers to trainings for experts working with perpetrators of violence.

Responses suggest that there is commitment and desire for the advancement of work. However, some responses refer to the lack of recognition for specific character of problems faced by certain groups of women. For

77 More details at: Conduct in cases of domestic violence, Multisectoral response, Protection, assistance and support to victims of domestic violence, Implementation of protective measures imposed on perpetrators of domestic violence, Gender Centre of FBiH, Sarajevo, 2017.

example, SWC state that procedures are not sensitive to specific character of certain groups, but they do not recognise it as a problem. Such insensitivity and lack of recognition of specific characteristics lead to a hidden discrimination in terms of the access to services. However, the responses show that an equal treatment of all is seen as an advantage and apparent equality is not singled out as a problem but as a positive thing because everyone gets to be treated equally and there is no separation:

„In the territory of Živinice municipality, there is a protocol on action in cases of domestic violence. The protocol was signed by all institutions relevant for resolving of the cases of domestic violence. In cases of domestic violence there is no separation and different action on any ground whatsoever (women with disabilities, Roma women, rural women, internally displaced women, elderly women). Everyone gets to be treated equally.“*SWC TK*

„We provide the same treatment to all victims. We make no difference between victims of violence.“

Service for General Administration and Social Issues of the Municipality of Drvar.

Healthcare institutions state in their responses that the most frequent problems faced by women belonging to marginalised groups are the lack of professional capacities or staff that could render assistance. With regard to Roma women, a frequent specific problem is that they do not have health insurance, while architectural barriers are the most frequent problem for women with disabilities. Specific problems faced by some healthcare institutions are the lack of high quality electronic records and inadequate procedures for inter institutional cooperation.

Basic/municipal courts identify the lack of information and professional support as the main problems faced by marginalised groups of women. They also mention architectural barriers as the problem for women with disabilities.

In explanations given by courts, it is mentioned that they do not have the data about protective measures imposed in specific cases of elderly women, Roma women, women with disabilities, internally displaced and rural women because the initiators of minor offence procedure or criminal offence procedures do not submit

such data. This suggests that the shortcomings in record-keeping can leave an impression of relieving oneself of the responsibility to recognise the needs and enable the services of protection from violence and specific situation of marginalised groups of women.

As the most frequent problems of women belonging to marginalised groups, prosecutor's offices refer to women being judged by the community if they ask for assistance and a lack of capacities.

Same as courts, prosecutor's offices say that a lack of records is a problem, which is why they were not able to answer all questions in the questionnaire.

The Police recognise the problem of economic dependence of women on their partners.

Both prosecutor's offices and the police left a comment in four cases stating that they could not say which problems women belonging to marginalised groups face "because we are not familiar with the obstacles faced by members of marginalised groups when it comes to using the system of protection against violence. "

Examples of good practice in institutions

PHI Healthcare Centre Derвента state that they successfully exchange data on cases of domestic violence with other institutions/organisations, in a form of regular (periodic) reporting and additionally in individual cases. Also, they state that there are joint projects for prevention of domestic violence conducted with SWC, police, prosecutor's offices, nongovernmental organisations in the municipality.

PI SWC BL has had a mobile team for combating domestic violence since 2006, and nowadays it functions as a standby team which goes to the field upon a call of a violence victim. The said public institution also states that they actively work in the field trying to recognise the specific character and needs of users which are not resolved by the system of support and will use the information they obtain to update and enhance the existing Memorandum of cooperation with the institutions.

ANALYSIS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH MEMBERS OF MARGINALISED GROUPS

In order to get a comprehensive review of possibilities that women from marginalised social groups have in terms of access to institutional mechanisms of protection against violence against women and domestic violence, by this research we also covered the point of view of women with disabilities, Roma women, internally displaced women, elderly women and rural women. By the method of in-depth interviews we collected the data on experiences, points of view and opinions of marginalised groups of women following the order of priorities they mentioned.

Interviews were conducted with three women from rural areas, one of whom is a member of the LGBTI community, one is a woman with physical disability and one woman who represents persons with intellectual impairments, two internally displaced women, two women older than 65, one of which is also from internally displaced group, and two Roma women who are representatives of the Roma Women's Association.⁷⁸

Therefore, among interviewed women we had women who are marginalised on more than one ground; more precisely they are subjected to intersectoral discrimination. Furthermore, interviewed women come from the territory of entire BiH: Banja Luka, Sokolac, Prnjavor, Brčko, Rogatica, Tuzla, Mostar.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN

Interviews were conducted with two internally displaced women one of whom lives in a rural area and the other one in a large town, thus providing for different perspectives of violence against women and institutional mechanisms of protection from violence, on the basis of the place of residence.

An alternative report on the implementation of concluding observations and recommendations of CEDAW Committee from 2016 recognises internally displaced women as especially

vulnerable category but taking into account other social parameters that are result of displacement. "Refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees represent especially vulnerable groups in view of their exposure to poverty and all forms of discrimination. As for the category of returnees, women, single mothers and elderly are most vulnerable. A large number of women returnees works in agriculture, either as seasonal or permanent workers, but most often they are not registered as workers and have no possibility to exercise social welfare and other rights."⁷⁹

The analysis of interviews with internally displaced women showed that an intersectoral vulnerability of this group of women plays a huge role. More precisely, other social parameters, including the separation from initial social network in local community (neighbours, friends, families) are intersected in case of internally displaced women and they affect their feeling of security and availability of information on mechanisms of protection against violence and strength to report violence. The status of internally displaced women is not dominant when it comes to using of available mechanisms of protection against violence or such status is not recognised as vulnerability in their identity. Talking to women who belong to this category, we realised that other factors were more dominant in terms of their empowerment for using of mechanisms of protection against violence.

"I believe that displaced women are in a more difficult position when it comes to violence against women. Women from rural areas are in the same position. The fact that I am an internally displaced person would not stop me from reporting a case of violence; however, mostly women from marginalised groups are reluctant to report violence for a variety of reasons, among others, their desire not to stand out. Educational degree and keeping abreast of information play an important role in a community which is closed and conservative and where women are less empowered and find it more difficult to report violence."

Both internally displaced women who were

⁷⁸ One Roma Women's Association works in the territory of RS, and the other one in the territory of FBiH.

⁷⁹ Report of civil society organisations on the implementation of concluding observations and recommendations of CEDAW Committee for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013- 2017. Sarajevo, 2016. (<http://zenskamreza.ba/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CEDaW-WEB-final-novembar-2016.pdf>). Last accessed on 22 July 2018

interviewed identify several forms of violence against women and both submit that physical violence is not the most frequent form of violence against women. They say that psychological but also sexual violence are present. Besides that, they identify economic and internet violence. Women residing in rural areas, who are at the same time internally displaced persons, do not have sufficient information on mechanisms of protection against violence, but they also do not have trust in mechanisms of protection:

"If I found myself in such a situation, God forbid, I would not know whom to address. But I think that I and most of women in the community would not even think about addressing anyone, let alone knowing whom to address. The only thing that would be done is a report to the police in case of a severe violence. However, I truly believe that the police would not do much."

However, one internally displaced woman residing in an urban area has more information on mechanisms of protection. "In case of violence, I would address the police, SWC, SOS line, safe house, and healthcare institutions - doctors."

She states that she would first call the police or ambulance, she is not sure if she would call SWC and does not know if she can address SWC directly, or whether the police address SWC ex officio. She knows that there is a safe house in Banjaluka and she knows of Udružene žene / United Women/ Association which deals with protection of women from domestic violence.

A woman residing in an urban area would address general practitioner "without hesitation", while a woman residing in a rural area says that her distant relative is a gynaecologist and she is ashamed to address him. She also submits that "most of women would not easily go to an infirmary and admit that she was a victim of violence. Such thing in our community is mainly kept hidden and hushed up. The same is done even by the victim's surrounding, although they might know about it. The reasons for that is perhaps the way we live here minding only on "what people would say", feeling ashamed or fearing a partner, I guess. I would treat my bruises myself, putting compresses on them."

The said interviewee expressed distrust in SWC, police but also in nongovernmental organisations stating that she does not have sufficient information about their actions.

"I do not know if SWC resolved anything, I heard that they are ripping people off..."

"The Police are impertinent; a policeman responds to a call and says: talk a little bit, and reconcile. That is not his job; it is his obligation to protect that woman from a perpetrator regardless of whether he knows him."

Women with less information have less trust in the institutions in the chain of mechanism of protection against violence.

An interviewee who had more information about protection mechanisms, competences of institutions she also has somewhat more trust in protection mechanisms. She also submits that "...there should be a lot more discussions on that topic, on any form of violence, especially on domestic violence and goes on to say that the sanctions should be stricter". This is possible an answer to the question as to what needs to be done to gain more trust and enhance mechanisms of protection from violence.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

With a view of having a proper analysis of the issue of violence against women with disability, we have to understand different ways in which women with disabilities are vulnerable due to a type of impairment which caused their disabilities. Different types of disability have a different impact on the increase of risk of becoming a victim of violence for women with disabilities, and the possibility or rather impossibility to use available mechanisms of protection against violence even if we do not take into account intersectoral vulnerability (for example a woman with disability from a rural community).

With a view of covering this issue from different points of view, we decided to conduct an in-depth interview with one woman with physical disability and hard of movement and with one woman with intellectual disabilities who has years long experience in representing persons with intellectual disabilities.

A special challenge for this research was the intention to identify violence against women with intellectual disabilities and also to identify (non)functionality of protection mechanisms.

A high degree of dependability on family

members is what generally makes women with disabilities very vulnerable and opens a room for various forms of domestic violence, and is hard to identify which is why even the associations of persons with disabilities do not have such data.

"Few parents would talk about physical violence in families. Associations do not have such data as no parents would approach them and say "I beat my child with disability". Our laws left such persons in hands of their families only and although we do not have any data it is hard to believe that violence does not happen in families. However, in such cases victims are in no position to report violence. We really have no specific information. There were some suspicions that we raised in our conversations as someone who are seeing this from aside. It is very difficult to say that there is something going on, but the fact is that no family members ever complained. Everyone is somehow reserved."

Women with disabilities point to insufficient thematisation of violence against this social group:

"Society believes it is impossible that we are victims of violence and think that our family members surely take care of us."

A woman with physical disability testifies of her experience in being a victim of violence:

„As a woman with disability, I survived domestic violence on several occasions. As a child, I witnessed violence between parents, physical assault of father against mother, police interventions... Another thing that happened to me is when I was at a second year of faculty my mother literally forced me out in the street and not a single protection system reacted. SWC was unaware of that for a whole year because nobody paid us a home visit to see if I was taken good care of and whether someone attends to my needs. Instead, they simply believed in what my mother catered to the public."

Women with disabilities mainly lack trust in institutional mechanisms of protection against violence as they are used to see the society create services in such a way that does not take into account needs of women with disabilities.

"There is no trust in institutions... it has never been built. Systems that are in place refer to stereotyped cases."

Describing her feeling of not having anyone to turn to in case of domestic violence, our interlocutor states:

"SWC employee told me that I had to go back to my mother if my father was no longer there. SWC was of the opinion that I, as a person with disability, have to go back to my mother's apartment. We are complete ignorants of the phenomenon of disability and so it is considered that somebody needs to take care of me since I am ill and "damaged"and that it is best to be done by my family no matter what they are like."

Also, the institutional care for persons with disabilities, which most often pertains to persons with intellectual or combined disabilities, increases the risk for these persons from violence and abuse, especially girls and women. This is accounted for by a woman who represents persons with intellectual disabilities:

"Girls and women in institutions are vulnerable to sexual violence perpetrated by other persons with intellectual disabilities but also by workers. There were some suspicions."

Organisations which represent persons with intellectual disabilities suggested the institutions to provide for a video surveillance in those parts where persons with intellectual disabilities stay either for 24 hours or for a certain period of time (living room or some sort of special education)."

This is particularly important because the impossibility of self-representation is a crucial problem of violence against women with intellectual disabilities.

„Neither a woman nor a girl, with even the lowest degree of intellectual disabilities, can express what is going on with her with 100% certainty."

An interlocutor with whom we discussed violence against women with intellectual disabilities strongly emphasises the risk of sexual violence against these women identifying the problem of failure to recognise intellectual disabilities of women with disabilities. She states the example of an attractive girl who possess social skills „... decent, always greets people with a smile but she is at the developmental level of a five year old child. Those girls are most vulnerable when it comes to sexual violence. They are at risk from both - those who are aware and those

who are not aware of what they are doing.”

Women with intellectual disabilities are also at additional risk from physical violence as it happens that parents (alone and in lack of support in the sphere of social protection) have difficulties in coping with grown children with intellectual disabilities (moderate or severe mental retardation) who have physical strength and a lot of energy. In such cases, they have to physically prevent them from going out of home, for example and so some forms of physical violence are being tolerated.

Both interlocutors with whom we talked about violence against women with disabilities identified the failure of institutional response mechanisms to violence against women with disabilities in believing that victims can identify violence and that they can request assistance and express themselves in a way understandable to institutions. Also they agree that the community is not eager to react even when they know that violence exists and so when a victim of violence is in no position, or has no information or strength to “request assistance”, nobody else will do it.

“Neighbours noticed that my mother exploited me, but they never reacted, called the police or informed the SWC. Women with disabilities believe that the system is not sensible enough or knowledgeable enough to adequately respond to the needs of this social group for protection against violence. Women know that they will not get an adequate access even when they are in the system of protection against violence. We have procedures/protocols for protection against violence and it is expected that women fit in. If you manage to fit in, you are fit in, if you do not fit in, who cares.”

The reasons for which women with disabilities do not report violence (even if we leave out women who cannot recognise it due to intellectual disabilities) are their lack of psychological strength and impossibility of communication for example in cases of women with impaired hearing or speech, or unavailability of information in formats tailored to women with hearing or eyesight impairment.⁸⁰ This begs a question of what are the capacities of institutions to communicate with women with disabilities who cannot communicate in a “usual way” due to their

impairments.

“Women with disabilities are raised with the idea that they are dependable and not valuable enough because the whole systems of social protection, healthcare and education reiterate to those women that someone takes care of them and that they are somewhere thanks to someone else. They are learned that they are a burden and that they owe something to someone. The problem is that they teach us that we are not capable enough, hence we are not valuable enough.”

With regard to the issue of access to institutional mechanisms of protection from violence against women and domestic violence against women with disabilities, the interviewed women with disabilities pointed to another, as they put it, invisible yet very vulnerable group of women - mothers of children with disabilities who should be given special attention when creating the services of protection against violence that would be available to all women.

THIRD AGE WOMEN

Elderly women are often subjected to one or more forms of violence, abuse and neglect on grounds of their age, gender and other features. Violence is often a result of discrimination on grounds of age, sexism or the result of accumulated discrimination during the entire life cycle. We believe that national legal frameworks do not adequately respond to violence against elderly women.

Interviews were conducted with two elderly women, both residing in an urban community. At a preparation phase for the interview with women elderly than 65, it is noticed that both interviewed women are concerned that they do not know much about the topic of our interview and we got an impression that they are reserved and do not feel comfortable responding to questions about violence. During the interview we realised that they have unequal knowledge and information on forms of violence. One of the interviewed women did not know what forms of violence exist while the other one referred to, with a dose of uncertainty “violence among children, domestic violence and violence at workplace” as forms of violence known to her. Both women stated that in case of violence they would address the police; one of them would call ambulance in case of injuries inflicted upon her. Women,

⁸⁰ Information in sign language or written information in Braille.

belonging to this group, identified two types of obstacles in addressing the institutions for support. When asked about going to see a doctor, one of them saw a distance of infirmity as a problem while the other one stated that she would feel ashamed "...because such things are condemned here, somehow a woman is always to be blamed for it."

None of the interviewed women would easily decide to go for a gynaecological check-up, not even in regular circumstances or upon a recommendation of a general practitioner (one of the mentioned reasons is that a gynaecologist is a man).

Asked if they heard of any organisation active in the protection of women against domestic violence, both women stated that they were not sure; one stated she heard about such organisations but she did not know which ones while the other stated that she heard of a safe house but she did not know anyone who is accommodated there. According to responses we got from interviewees, we conclude that women over 65 years of age do not have sufficient information about State and/or nongovernmental organisations in charge of providing support services for women, including groups of marginalized women who have experienced violence.

Asked about the factors which, in their opinion, lead to violence, one interviewee stated that it was most often alcohol and other vices.

"Some women are not lucky and they get married to a drunkard and then she and children survive all sorts of things. There are such cases in the neighbourhood and the police came, there was even an instance of a son beating his mother and the police intervened a couple of times and nothing else has been done."

Another interviewee believes that poverty and lack of education lead to violence while the opinion that it is acceptable to hit a woman and that she should be "in a corner or at some other place" is mentioned as a part of Balkans cultural heritage and is mentioned as one of factors that affirm violence as a model of behaviour. One interviewee suggested that trainings, education and institutional support are the factors which would lead to empowerment of women. Uncertain financial status, economic dependency and social isolation lead women victims into an impasse and so most often they have to come back to and continue living with

the perpetrator of violence. One of the reasons for which women are forced to continue living with the perpetrator of violence is untimely and inadequate sanctioning.

ROMA WOMEN

We talked to representatives of associations that strive to enhance the position and rights of Roma women, one of which works in the territory of RS and the other one in FBiH.

Representatives of Roma Women's Association believe that the most dominant factors that lead to domestic violence is underdeveloped awareness of violence, upbringing, and socially constructed behaviours. In addition to that, they mention a general economic situation as a dominant factor, which especially affects marginalised groups and economic dependence of women caused by the aforementioned factors, upbringing and socially constructed behaviours.

Nongovernmental organisations keep reiterating in their research works⁸¹ that women decide to report violence after they have suffered severe forms of violence for years and this is confirmed to us in conversations with representatives of associations for protection of Roma women's rights. However, there has been no specific action taken to change that. Our interlocutors, who have been working in nongovernmental sectors for years, mention that the reason for that is first in the upbringing and patriarchal social behaviour, stigmatisation connected with domestic violence and especially specific for rural communities, economic situation, but also a lack of trust in institutions which is widely present in Roma women population. Specific examples are given by our interlocutors:

"There was a case when one girl was sold by her family, she managed to escape and she addressed us. We immediately called SWC and I got a feeling that they hardly waited for something like that to happen, because a girl was in one municipality and escaped to other municipality and they said it was not their

81 For example Analysis of legal position and access to justice for women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2015. Sarajevo: Vaša Prava BiH /Your Rights/ Association; The Orange report- Annual report on the state of women's rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016.). Sarajevo: Sarajevo Open Centre and Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka.

jurisdiction and that she could lose her child if she did not get back to her municipality, they did not want to do anything. She was underage and she was already pregnant. They simply said that the case did not fall under their jurisdiction. "Representative of the Association of Roma Women in RS

According to specific examples mentioned by nongovernmental organisations there are such cases as follows:

"After women escape from their family houses where they were abused and raped, if they want to see their children SWC sends them back to those houses where they survived violence and they do not grant them custodianship because in their view it is a woman who left her home and children or a woman cannot provide for residence and sustenance. "

Therefore, being economically dependent prevents women from putting adequate resistance to the perpetrator of violence. Although the law prescribes protection measures such as a restraining order or committal to mandatory rehabilitation and other measures that are imposed on the perpetrator of violence at the same time recognising an underprivileged situation of victims of violence who are economically dependent on the perpetrator, our interlocutors say that such measures are rarely implemented:

"In our cases, the measures are very rarely imposed on perpetrators of violence. I have a feeling that in such cases perpetrators of violence are privileged... in the whole town there was one case when a husband was removed from home because he was a perpetrator of violence, who even wanted to rape his daughter. " Representative of the Association of Roma Women in RS

According to the interviewees, beneficiaries in the Roma Women's Association are often faced with arrogant behaviour, arbitrary actions of persons coming to the site and long duration of proceedings when a domestic violence case is reported and proceedings instigated. The non-governmental sector is trying to protect them from an inadequate reaction of institutions and from being uninformed about their rights by way of commitment to their beneficiaries, informing them and supporting them in their access to institutions, as well as by raising their awareness with regard to violence. However, nongovernmental organisations have limited

and irregular capacities and means and they believe that the problem will not be solved on the long run if the work and responsibility is shifted onto the non-governmental sector.

"We are lucky to have a lawyer who comes to our office every 14 days so we managed to help her...Finally we managed to find her an apartment and job and she divorced him, so this paints a picture to you about how SWC works. We took the whole case over and SWC did not even want to record that this woman was not only beaten but also raped because, according to them, it was impossible that rape happens in marriage. On the other hand, everything the perpetrator of violence stated was reflected on the record, such as that she was not a responsible mother, that she left home. In fact, she hardly managed to stay alive whereas they stated that there was a minor brawl without mentioning that she was beaten and raped. We did not want to let that go, we took over the case and helped the girl." Representative of the Association of Roma Women in RS

Representatives of association express their concern regarding a long duration of a court proceeding and the very course of a pre-trial procedure. The Police often do not follow up on a reported violence as they do not get an order from prosecutor's office. According to their experience, women are not adequately protected in that period. According to them, safe houses are a short-term solution and the problem of providing shelter to victims remain, so they believe that a practice should be put in place according to which a perpetrator of violence should be removed from home along with a restraint order and adequate protection. They believe that such practice is the only one that can provide for existential security of victims:

"Even those women who are informed do not opt for that because of the pressure from the society, especially in rural communities when women have no place to go and are afraid that courts will not give them children because they have nothing, they have no job, no apartment, no house. But if a woman had a place to live in or any security whatsoever she would not be crazy to suffer." Representative of the Association of Roma Women in RS

Everyone mentions insecurity with regard to procedures not being abided by responders who go out on the site or who are addressed by victims, leaving all female victims to their

own devices against arbitrary and subjective decision making by responders. That is why we keep hearing that it all depends on who would respond to a report on violence, that mechanisms and procedures for protection of victims against such arbitrary conduct of responders are not regulated enough, which especially affects groups of women who are not sufficiently aware and informed of their rights and live in poor social conditions.

“On the other hand, when police responds to a call in Roma families, they often make a record and do not forward it anywhere or follow up on it, which means that no report gets registered. It happens often that they just say – well let it go, they just argued and engaged in a brawl, so typical of gypsies, they will reconcile again. So that is how it connects with discrimination because of people who have prejudices and yet they work in such institutions where they are expected to resolve problems.” Representative of the Association of Roma Women in FBiH

A big problem, according to Roma Women’s Associations, is that their beneficiaries do not always get accurate and timely information about their rights and possibilities for standing against violence to which they are subjected when they address the institutions. This goes that far that sometimes they are deprived of basic information which directly threaten their lives and health.

“Some women do not know their basic rights, they address police and SWC and nobody gives them basic information, we even had one case when a woman did not know she had a right to go to hospital for a check-up, they did not even tell her that.” Representative of the Association of Roma Women in RS

“The problem of Roma women is that they are not sufficiently informed and they do not get accurate information. We work in this field and a difference can be seen between communities where such actions are taken and those where they are not taken.” Representative of the Association of Roma Women in FBiH

Both representatives of Roma Women’s Associations state that the establishment of intersectoral cooperation in combating domestic violence which include nongovernmental organisations is very positive in the work and efforts invested in combating domestic violence. However, it is not all institutions that give equal contribution to the work of groups

and it is not sufficiently regulated and depends on arbitrary actions of representatives of those institutions:

“We have had an intersectoral group for a long time now and our association is included. We have a good cooperation with the police and they seem to have taken a different approach since the group was established, a positive improvement is felt ... We also have a centre in the working group but they are not open for cooperation, when I tell them something they turn a deaf ear and they do not want me to “meddle,” as they put it. Yet this is the problem to all of us. I come from the nongovernmental sector and yet it is my business to point to certain issues, that is why working groups exist etc.” Representative of the Association of Roma Women in RS

On the other hand, even when there is a will for cooperation it is most often unfeasible due to inadequate records and lack of relevant data. “With regard to a harmonised cooperation, it is very poor and this is primarily due to the lack of adequate data, records, and statistics. During our research, we requested certain data and got an answer that such records are not kept, that they do not know etc.” Representative of the Association of Roma Women in FBiH

RURAL WOMEN

We interviewed three women from rural communities, one of whom is a representative of association that strives to enhance the position and protection of rural women’s rights. In every conversation with women from rural communities we learned that rural women are neglected and deprived of basic rights and services which the state should provide to them. A representative of the association mentions that the needs of rural women are recognised in strategic documents and action plans developed at various levels of authority. However, they are not implemented to a sufficient degree but sporadically and periodically without a real systemic solution.

“Economic violence is very frequent upon rural women not only by their partners but the entire society. I believe that the society is much to be blamed because rural women are deprived of many things on economic factor grounds. “Representative of the Association “Žena sa sela” (Rural woman)

Considering that rural women have much more difficult access to institutions and information, it is emphasised that those women do not have accurate information as to whom they can address in case of domestic violence, and they do not have a sense of security and they do not trust that the institutions would indeed protect them from violence.

"I am afraid that the trust is low. They hear about cases that are numerous and not resolved so it only deepens their lack of trust. " Representative of the Association "Žena sa sela" (Rural woman)

That is why our interlocutors emphasise the need for the institutions and all relevant actors in the chain of responsibility, to go on the ground and have an active contact with the community, in order to prevent violence, raise awareness and inform women and raise the level of their trust in the system of protection which is needed for rural areas where domestic violence is still dominant and considered a private problem wherefore the victims of violence are often deprived of an adequate support by the community.

"In general, when it comes to violence against women, I see that women lack trust and do not feel support from the community. That problem is even larger in case of women in rural communities; they do not get enough support from the community and trust in cases of domestic violence. In the community where I live, this is a widely known fact and women feel that kind of pressure... Then, there are women who think it is their obligation to keep silent and suffer and that they do not have the right to address anyone. Specific strategies are needed so that this issue is tackled and the state of mind changed. " Representative of the Association „Žena sa sela“ (Rural woman)

With regard to raising awareness, changing the state of mind and position towards domestic violence in small places with dominant traditional values and opinions, our interlocutors again emphasise the significance of education. They believe that educational institutions and curricula policies bear a great responsibility and that curriculum policies need to be changed and enhanced.

"I believe that violence is not talked about much, especially in the community where I live. It is the community with a deeper problem of economic violence against women and so

many do not recognise it and do not see it as violence. Women themselves do not admit and are not aware that they are victims of economic violence. The reason for such situation is the lack of information and education primarily in schools where violence is rarely discussed. Even when violence is discussed, it is done in an insufficient manner and mainly just mentions physical and psychological violence. " A rural woman, 32 years old

In rural areas the access to services of support and to institutions is aggravated. The access to basic services such as gynaecological check-ups is also aggravated and women in rural communities always emphasise that as a huge problem which, due to isolation and exclusion from the system, reflects further on general trust in institutions and services of support.

"Most of small places do not have a gynaecologist on a permanent basis, but rather on specific day's basis. I underline that all small places do not have a gynaecologist working there on permanent basis and it is a huge problem. " Representative of the Association „Žena sa sela“ /Rural woman/

Due to general lack of trust, stigmatisation and insufficient support of the community, education, economic dependence and the like, rural women also report only severe forms of violence while the first signs of violence are hardly recognised and without sufficient reaction.

"I would probably go to the police; it is the only option I would consider. But I do not know what I would do after, because I would be embarrassed in the entire village and my husband would not let me come back home even if I wanted to come back. Where would I go? " A rural woman, 23 years old

Interviewed interlocutors say that the impact of friendships and corruption on the work and decisions of the services of support in small places especially visible. The problem is even larger because women from rural communities feel excluded and isolated and do not know whom to address to complaint against irregular decisions. Furthermore, they do not believe that by complaining they would uphold their rights ".

„Our SWC is not functional and accessible at all due to political interventions. If I had a problem, my husband would surely intervene with the

Mayor and take my children away from me. As simple as that, everybody knows everybody here." A rural woman, 35 years old

"Despite the existence of the police, prosecutor's offices, NGOs there are many cases of murders, missing women, raped women, women ending up in the street, hungry, barefoot, unprotected, etc. I would like to mention a recent case of a woman from Kalinovik who was separated from her children and placed in psychiatric ward in Sokolac; it is a woman who is living a hell because of people from SWC." A rural woman, 32 years old

Women representatives of nongovernmental sector express their concern due to lack of respect and implementation of the rights, decisions and activities recognised in official documents of BiH. They stress that the need to enhance the system of implementation and specific execution of decisions at lower levels, as well as the need to sanction the neglect and non-discharge of duties by responsible persons and institutions.

"I think that the real way would be to punish any failure to act, non-implementation and non-realisation of statutory provisions... Numerous agreements, protocols are nicely devised but they are rarely applied when something happens, those who should implement them are never punished for not implementing anything. Rural women are mentioned in documents but nothing is done to implement them. We are used to copy paste and harmonise everything with the European standards but we do not take care to implement these standards. At some point we, the NGO sector activists, simply burn out because of that situation. Representative of the Association „Žena sa sela" (Rural woman)

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF MARGINALISED GROUPS

Non-governmental organisations extending support to Roma women underline that specific projects showed that giving women incentives to start their own businesses proved to be a crucial factor that managed to impact the empowerment of women on multiple grounds, such as material and psychological

empowerment of women along with a change in other people's attitude towards those women. Therefore, the results of specific women empowerment projects in Roma communities also had an impact by changing widespread relations and roles that kept women in a subordinate position in traditional patriarchal relationships. Our interlocutors mentioned their experiences from the ground following the implementation of projects of economic empowerment as part of actions by organisations where women beneficiaries stated that:

„...ever since they had a greenhouse husbands worked more with them and family members had different attitude towards them and treated them with more respect, they did not have to ask for permission to leave home and the like. It meant a lot to them and they keep saying it to us. For the first time a woman can go out for a coffee with her friends without having to report to him, she just says I have an appointment and leaves. I noticed that it really empowered women to a large extent in different ways. Some women earn some money every now and then by cleaning something or painting walls but it is different when they have their own sources of income. She is immediately treated differently and has more room to move and improve." Representative of the Association of Roma Women in RS

In view of the situation on the ground that lead to an underprivileged position of women victims of violence, nongovernmental organisations had come up with "tricks" that proved to be good practice that sometimes can help to protect women from arbitrary and subjective assessment by institutional representatives who respond to a call. Women from lower social levels are assumed to be uninformed which is used by representatives of institutions to deprive them of their basic rights:

"We have certain tricks and we advise our beneficiaries how to protect themselves against, for example, improper work of the police, we advise them to ask the police to say their names, to look at their badges and when police officers see that women pay attention to details and know whom to complain, they act differently. We came up with those tricks that we always share with women. When they see that a woman knows her rights, they change their attitude, otherwise they do what they please and subjugate women to all sorts of things."

Representative of the Association of Roma Women in RS

An example of good practice with the Roma Women's Association are mediators from the Roma community who represent some sort of a link between nongovernmental organisations, Roma communities and institutions, and state that they manage to point to many problems and find solutions with a help of mediators. Also, rural women state that a response upon a call is crucial and they notice that women rarely address them on their own initiative and have no information about their activities. However, when they get in touch in specific actions, women address them for help, legal advice or information.

Interlocutors point to some examples of good practice from the region, for example in Montenegro where the police work directly and actively with civil society organisations with regard to early marriages and similar problems specific to Roma communities:

"They even made a special department and have an excellent cooperation with Roma organisations thus acting preventively. It is important to go to the field and exchange experiences." Representative of the Association of Roma Women in FBiH

All of our interlocutors said that going out to the field and acting preventively is very important for the protection from violence against women from marginalised groups. This is because the institutions take an active role by sharing information and acting in prevention, but also getting to know specific characteristics and needs of communities which helps them enhance their operating procedures. On the other hand, going out to the field, and establishing a direct contact between communities and institutions can increase the trust of victims towards the institutions; currently, the level of trust is very low. To that regard, our interlocutors recognise good practices and improvements in the work of institutions that need to continue and advance. "But I think the situation got better lately since there is an outreach section and since the intersectoral commission was established, which really has some effect. Therefore, reaching out to the community is crucial, especially if it is done by representatives of institutions. They get to be informed and the level of trust in the institutions grows. "Representative of the Association of Roma

Women in FBiH

ANALYSIS OF MEDIA REPORTS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WHO BELONG TO MARGINALISED GROUPS

We analysed the contents of 24 BiH media reports about violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Media reports included 20 articles published on internet portals and printed media, and 4 television reports, not older than five years with the aim to determine the following:

- The most frequent topic of reporting on violence against women (which form of violence against women is covered by reports, whether reports refer to violence as a problem of the society, work of institutions and organisation in relation to the topic of violence against women and the like),
- Whether media reports identify women victims of violence as belonging to marginalised groups, how they report about those women, whether they use proper terminology, and
- What is the focus of media reports (victim, perpetrator or something else).

While searching through the media reports we found that that search of the web by key words (tags) "violence against women" mostly refer to media reports on activities of nongovernmental organisations and institutions in relation to violence against women, *while media reports on actual cases of violence against women are found under the crimes and accidents column and not only that they are not "tagged" as violence against women but most often they do not even contain that phrase.*⁸² There was only one in 24 reports, which we analysed for the purpose of this research, published in a daily paper and was tagged as domestic violence. Only three reports dealt with violence against women as a problem of the society, two of which referred to the report on activities of nongovernmental organisations and one is about violence against women belonging to marginalised groups, in

82 Similar conclusion stated in the Research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, authored by Elvire Mujkić Jukić, published in 2016.

this specific case women with disabilities.

This article which is about violence against women with disabilities was published on a specialised portal about social issues⁸³. Daily press, daily news, portals or daily information shows do not contain reports on violence against women with disabilities save for one article on sexual violence which state that a victim "is highly likely a mentally unstable person."⁸⁴ In this article, the victim is not qualified as a woman with disability but the article leaves an impression that it was all about a misunderstanding between a highly likely mentally unstable person and an elderly man. This article is followed by a completely inappropriate illustration of a model wearing lingerie. We point to this problem of vulnerability of women and girls with intellectual disabilities and mental illness within the analysis of in-depth interviews.

We did not find a single report on violence against internally displaced women and rural

women. Elderly women are recognised in two out of four media reports that mention victims. Both times they were referred to as „old women“.⁸⁵ However, the data on this category of women can be singled out of media reports because every report contains initials, place of residence of a victim and her age.

The total of two media reports refer to victims who are Roma women and it is emphasised in the title and subtitle of the articles.

A pattern of media reporting on violence against women is easily noticed, covering the place of incident, town/place, often other details as well for example „In Zenica area at Trgovišće, more precisely in Štrosmajerova Street...⁸⁶“, then it goes on describing the act of violence, not leaving out the relation between a perpetrator and a victim, such as in “A common-law partner attacked his wife...⁸⁷ and possibly a reason for which a victim was attacked “Brutally beat his wife because of a debt⁸⁸.

	Women with disabilities	Roma women	Internally displaced women	Rural women	Elderly women
Physical violence		1			4
Sexual violence	1	1			
Other forms of violence					

This small number of media reports on women belonging to marginalised social groups does not come as a surprise. Rather it fits in a general lack of recognition that the society shows towards this problem and general impression that the institutions do not recognise these groups of women as additionally vulnerable

victims of violence. Therefore, they do not collect the data and do not share the information on violence against women. On the other hand, there is an alarmingly small number of media reports on violence against women, and we had already identified obstacle these women are faced with about filing a report on violence.

83 <http://www.diskriminacija.ba teme/nasilje-nad-%C5%BEenama-s-invaliditetom-%E2%80%93-dru%C5%A1tveno-nevidljiv-problem>. Last accessed on 23 July 2018

84 <https://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/hronika/Djevojka-u-donjem-rublju-u-centru-Banjaluke/444891>. Last accessed on 22 July 2018

85 Example: <https://faktor.ba/vijest/sarajevona-bjelavama-teze-povrijeena-starica-policija-istrazuje-257104>. Last accessed on 23 July 2018

86 <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/crna-hronika/393016/incident-u-zenici-jedna-osoba-izbodena>. Last accessed on 24 July 2018

87 <https://avaz.ba/vijesti/crna-hronika/391521/teslic-nevjencani-suprug-napao-svoju-zenu-pa-je-s-maloljetnim-djetetom-istjerao-iz-kuce>. Last accessed on 24 July 2018

88 <https://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/hronika/Detalji- napada-u-Banjaluci-Brutalno-pretukao-zenu-zbog-duga/401338>. Last accessed on 24 July 2018

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions of the analysis of secondary and primary data on institutions:

a) Reporting, collecting and exchanging of the data

- The system of protection does not sufficiently recognise the need for a specific approach to women belonging to marginalised groups who have experienced violence and for the most part, they are not able to access necessary support services (health, justice and policing, social services).
- An unequal and ad-hoc approach to collection of the data on victims of domestic violence results in a lack of or existence of only sporadic⁸⁹ data on the number of women from marginalised groups who are victims of violence. Due to the lack of harmonised and high-quality data, it is not possible to recognise situations and needs or to develop protocols and actions tailored to the specific needs of various groups of women.
- Violence against women from marginalised social groups is still “an invisible phenomenon,” in the society. There is no adequate response because the problem is not identified. In lack of the records on the number of cases of violence against women with disabilities, the system does not find a solution to an “inexistent problem.”

For example, the institutions which were surveyed stated in their responses that they have not met women from marginalised social groups. According to the 2017 data from the RS Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports, the RS police did not record a single case of violence against women with disabilities while healthcare institutions registered one such case. These data are

89 For example, when collecting the data on victims of domestic violence, subjects of protection in RS make notes if cases involved males or females with disabilities, if persons were over 65, but they do not make notes of other marginalised groups,

conflicting with the international data on frequency of violence against women with disabilities according to which “girls and women with disabilities are two or three times more likely than women without disabilities to survive violence and abuse in different spheres and they will probably survive abuse over a long time span resulting in serious injuries.”⁹⁰

b) Coordination amongst sectors

- There is evident lack of collaborative effort by multi-disciplinary teams and personnel and institutions from all relevant sectors to implement laws, policies and protocols, and communication and collaboration to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and domestic violence. Four out of five sectors which received the questionnaire responded that they were not familiar with procedures applied by other institutions; more precisely 14 individual institutions gave such a response.

c) Capacities of service providers to respond to the needs of marginalised groups of women

The analysis of collected data showed that the institutions included in the system of protection do not recognise the intersectoral nature of violence against women with disabilities. It is obvious that violence against these groups of women cannot be viewed only from a gender perspective, but should also focus on all other factors of experience that shape their reality, their needs and the manner in which they seek support and assistance.

- Results of the analysis of data collected via questionnaires show that the institutions rarely apply specific procedures tailored

90 AccountABILITY: U.N. Standards on Gender-based Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities Women Enabled International, Washington DC, 2018, (<https://www.globaldisabilityrightsnow.org/tools/women-enabled-international-accountability-toolkit>). Last accessed on 23 July 2018.

to women belonging to marginalised social groups (e.g., hiring an interpreter, expert, psychologist, hearing in accessible premises etc.).

- A lack of recognition of the need to tailor the services to specific needs of beneficiaries from marginalised groups constitutes a problem. Under the auspices of apparent equality, entire groups of women remain invisible in the system of protection against violence. Judging by the institutions' responses, they see the equal treatment of everyone as an advantage and apparent equality is not seen as a problem but a positive thing where everyone receives "the same treatment", and where there is „no separation“. This creates space for indirect discrimination, that is, the system fails to take affirmative measures to provide access to quality, multisectoral services for all groups of women.
- Reporting of violence is another point of contention in the system of Bosnia and Herzegovina protection against violence against women and domestic violence. The system is such that it implies the victim of violence is capable and empowered to recognise violence and report it and that the victim can communicate with representatives of institutions without any obstruction (for example nobody knows sign language).
- Lack of opportunities for professional advancement is the second frequently mentioned problem in the questionnaires, and the same issue was identified in the secondary analysis of available data. The Strategy of BiH for resolving the issues of Roma⁹¹ recognises discrimination against Roma women, as a consequence of the lack of understanding and insufficient education of unskilled administrative clerks and other civil servants.

Conclusions related to in-depth interviews

a) Possibility to access and adapt support services for women from marginalised groups who have experienced violence

- Women belonging to marginalised social groups recognise that institutional services of protection against violence are not tailored to their needs, which creates a very

high level of distrust on the side of women from these social groups when it comes to institutional mechanisms of support and protection.⁹²

b) Trust in institutional mechanisms of protection

- The data collected through interviews show that women from marginalised groups do not have trust in protection services; hence they report cases of domestic violence more rarely. Roma women frequently stress the lack of trust in institutional mechanisms of protection. Also, women with disabilities lack trust in the capacities and readiness of institutions to respond to their specific needs.
- Representatives of marginalised groups stressed in interviews that SWC do not have a practice to "follow up" on the situation in families which have a member belonging to marginalised groups, saying that the "system" finds it easier to let families take care of women with disabilities or to assign violence against Roma women to the tradition; thus, they fail to recognise the danger and prevent violence and fail to comply with a due diligence standard prescribed by Article 5 of the Istanbul Convention.

c) Access to information

- Interviewed women think that sharing information on violence against women from marginalised groups must be a two-way process. In addition to the need to inform women from marginalised groups, the wider public needs to be informed and their awareness raised so that violence gets reported when noticed.
- Formal education institutions and curricula policies bear a great responsibility for dominant values and perceptions about domestic violence and violence against women.
- Interlocutors also state that schools and curriculum policies are very important factors so that children learn from early ages that violence, prejudices and discrimination are not acceptable.

91 Strategy of BiH for resolving the issues of Roma (http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska_prava/Odbor_za_Rome/Strategija%20BIH%20za%20rjesavanje%20PROBLEMA%20Roma.pdf). Last accessed on 20 July 2018.

92 According to one interviewee in this research: We have procedures/protocols for protection from violence and it is expected that women fit in. If you manage to fit in, you are fit in, if you do not fit in, who cares 'who cares'.

d) Empowerment of women from marginalised groups

- Empowerment of women from marginalised groups is highly needed, so that they put up resistance to violence. It can be done primarily by raising their awareness and informing them, and this is especially mentioned by Roma women and rural women. Women's organizations noticed that women whom they work with are not aware of various forms of violence that they do not recognise and hence they tolerate first signs of violence when a perpetrator is trying to control them, limit their freedom of action, decision making and isolate them from the community. They state that targeted trainings and going out to the field proved to be useful in the regard.
- Research and practice have shown that economic empowerment of women is directly proportionate to their lower tolerance to violence. Interviews with women, especially with Roma women, showed that giving women incentives to start their own businesses proved to be a crucial factor that managed to improve their material and psychological wellbeing along with change of attitudes of others towards those women.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO THE ANALYSIS OF MEDIA REPORTS

- When it comes to violence against women, the media reports are more about activities conducted by non-governmental sectors instead of referring to it as a problem affecting much of the population. This leads to a conclusion that the issue of violence against women and domestic violence is not yet fully understood.
- Violence against women belonging to marginalised social groups is almost not at all mentioned in the media, while a very small number of media reports do not see this form of violence as a problem of the society and treat them under crime columns where they refer to victims either neutrally⁹³ or in a discriminating context. It is only specialised portals that deal with this

issue in an educational and appropriate manner, although very rarely.

The aforementioned conclusions lead us to a general conclusion that BiH does not enable equal access to institutional mechanisms of protection against violence against women belonging to marginalised social groups since the system does not recognise violence against women from marginalised social groups as a separate problem and does not show any flexibility for specific needs of women from marginalised groups nor do they have capacities that would provide for a full range of quality, multi-sectoral support services to all women on an equal access basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- By way of advancing the cooperation between the institutions and civil society organisations active in the protection of rights of marginalised groups (especially women in those groups), provide for women from marginalised groups to participate at all stages of planning and development of policies, protocols and services of prevention and protection against violence against women and domestic violence.
- When included in planning and design, marginalised groups of women and organisations representing them can make sure strategic documents, policies and laws reflect the needs of these groups, take into account their interest and welfare and prescribe special measures in addressing cases of violence against women and girls belonging to these groups.
- Establish a standardized methodology for the collection of data relative to violence against women, in order to provide for harmonisation of the data from both entities; enhance the collection of data relative to women victims of violence belonging to marginalised groups.
- Increase the number of filed reports of cases of violence against women belonging to marginalised groups by way of increasing the level of trust on the part of women from marginalised groups with regard to institutional mechanisms of protection against violence (mutual meetings, increased number of affirmative activities of institutions in the community, services of

93 For example by just stating that it is an old woman along with many other data.

mediators in the community and the like).

- Access to justice does not end with increased reporting of cases. Apart from making sure cases of violence against women from marginalised groups are reported, it is extremely important to monitor the case management process in order to have information on court decisions and follow-up for women after the legal process.
- Establish a regular and widely available dissemination of information relative to support services, such as legal and psycho-social counselling in cases of violence against women, particularly domestic violence, with a focus on the availability in rural areas and less developed municipalities (for example, provide information targeting those communities by way of social events, trainings in schools, institutional outreach to communities and manner of communication adapted to a target audience).
- Further attention needs to be paid to the harmonisation of operating procedures of various institutions that are included in the mechanism of protection against violence especially in response to violence against women from marginalised groups. In addition, strengthening coordination of support services and information sharing (in a confidential way) between these services will contribute immensely to the quality of service provision. Cantonal coordination bodies and the Council for combating domestic violence in Republika Srpska have an important role to play in overseeing the functioning of essential services. These bodies should include representatives of civil society organizations.
- Creating a supportive comprehensive legislative framework is essential in order to lay out a foundation for quality service provision. Current state policies and entity legislation on protection from domestic violence in BiH do not take into account multiple or intersectional vulnerabilities of victims or consider the interest and welfare of especially marginalized groups. In order to guarantee essential services that effectively respond to needs of women and girls, plans and policies designed to address violence against women and girls must also be supported by the financial resources that will build and sustain environments

safe from violence.

- Provide for additional education of the public about this “invisible” problem by way of introducing elements on violence against women from marginalised social groups into the motivational and educational campaigns teaching the public to recognise and report violence in their community. Tools can include media – TV adverts, national and community radio broadcasts, newspaper and magazine articles and social network campaigns.
- Raise awareness of the society relative to a variety of marginalised groups and eliminate the elements that support social prejudices (revise the contents of textbooks and remove the contents that encourage gender, racial and other stereotypes⁹⁴, educate the media about reporting etc.).
- Engage in prevention work from early on. Children’s adult relationships and prejudice are shaped by social norms they learn while growing up. Interventions targeted to young people through school settings would contribute to transform their violence-supportive attitudes and gender stereotypes, as well as discriminatory prejudices. This work should include youth, teachers and school faculty.
- Prompt the mobile teams to engage in combat against domestic violence at the level of all SWCs by being more sensible to specific needs of marginalised groups of women and intensifying their activities.
- Enhance and provide all institutions with access to training and supervisory support for the activities related to cases of violence against women from marginalised groups. It is fundamental for the delivery of services that those institutions responsible for providing the services have capacity to support the delivery of these services. Setting standards in workplace and training of service providers ensures delivery of quality services, and that service providers have the competency required to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BD – Brčko distrikt

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

CEDAW – Convention for Elimination of All
Forms of Discrimination

SWC – Social Work Centre

FBiH – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

GAP – Gender Action Plan

OSCE – Organisation for Security and
Cooperation in Europe

RS – Republika Srpska

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund