

**Local communities
in the fight
against human trafficking**

Local communities in the fight against human trafficking

Publisher:

Citizens' Association for Combat against Trafficking in Human Beings and all Forms of Violence against Women - Atina

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Printed by

Standard 2

Number of copies

500

ISBN - 978-86-917209-1-9

Belgrade, 2013.

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This publication was produced with the help of the European Union, Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, and German Federal Government through the "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH". The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the author, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, and German Federal Government through the "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH".

This project was funded by the European Union.

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INTRODUCTION

Publication *Local communities in the fight against human trafficking* is produced within the homonymous project, that was designed and implemented by the organization Atina, in partnership with Novi Sad's Humanitarian Centre, and in cooperation with the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, with the financial support of the European Union, Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, and German Federal Government through the "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH". The project is motivated by the need to strengthen the role of civil society organizations in decision-making process and, more specifically, their competence to monitor local strategies and action plans relevant to the field of human trafficking; empowering relevant stakeholders for intersectoral partnerships in order to provide support to vulnerable groups, and strengthening vulnerable groups to participate in decision-making process.

Enabling better understanding of the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking in the context of the reform of local social security system, the research should contribute to achieving these goals. In other words, the research has been fueled by recent changes in the area of human trafficking and in the area of social protection – a growing need to increase capacity and find answers to problems of the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking at the level of local community, starting from local public policies, to everyday practice within disparate sectors.

Research will continue to serve as a basis for improving local response to human trafficking and the networking of actors, working in the field of protection of vulnerable groups, in seven cities/municipalities involved in the project – Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Vranje, Nis, Novi Sad, Subotica, Sremska Mitrovica.

The research activities include the analysis of relevant documents in the field of international standards, national legislative and strategic framework, as well as relevant local strategies and action plans in the field of social protection, that are of importance for human trafficking. The second segment of the research was carried out with professionals who have experience in direct work on protection of groups that are particularly vulnerable to the phenomenon of human trafficking, as well as in creating local policies. This segment of research involved Cila Stojanovic from Novi Sad's Humanitarian Centre, who performed focus group interviews with professionals, and Tijana Moraca, who prepared an overview of international, national and local framework, performed focus group interviews with professionals and, with the analysis of secondary data, participated in the preparation of the final report.

Professor Dr. Sladjana Jovanovic, a longtime associate of NGO Atina, and Lidija Milanovic, director of the Office for Coordination of the Protection of human trafficking victims, were in charge of the segment of monitoring the work of Social Welfare Centers and creating the

report segment in this area (Chapter *Quality of Social Welfare Centers' work in the field of protection of human trafficking victims*).

Especially important project activity, and also a publication segment, are products of collaborative organizations and their representatives on the project. Alongside Tijana Moraca, on the chapter *Answer to the problem of human trafficking in local communities* also worked: Darko Ignjatovic, Ana Sacipovic, Sinisa Atanasov, Vera Otasevic, Nikola Jovanovic, Dobrilo Pejin, Dejan Hornik, Stevan Nikolic, Milena Dimitrijevic, Tijana Jovanovic, Ljiljana Aksentijevic, Milanka Stevovic, Snezana Konjevic and Nenad Radmanovic. Research activities carried out in this area, as well as analysis of the obtained data, with an exceptional commitment to cooperation and professionalism of our associates, can be considered as project success per se.

The report is organized in three parts. The first part, except for introductory and methodological guidelines, gives an overview of some of the most relevant documents of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union for the prevention and protection of victims, national, legal and strategic framework which regulate protection and prevention within different systems. The second and third part of the report present the findings of the research with professionals – representatives of different systems, with the use of secondary data for local and national level, as well as the results of the monitoring activities of Social Welfare Centers and local policies in this area. Basic features of social protection reform on the local level – the key processes, actors, characteristics of inter-sectoral cooperation, implementation of local strategic documents in the field of protection of vulnerable groups, as well as the key challenges, are presented in the second part of the publication. This segment also includes the analysis of the local response to the problem of human trafficking – an overview of social groups at risk of trafficking and victimization factors, the role of different actors and the characteristics of their cooperation; the key challenges of the current system, with associated recommendations relating to local level of prevention and protection of victims of human trafficking, especially in the context of the current reform of social security system. This part of the publication contains the report of the monitoring process of Social Welfare Centers in seven cities/municipalities. The third part of the publication presents a special overview of the local regulatory framework (from the cities involved in the project), with consistently transferred reports of collaborative network, that are the result of the monitoring activities of local policies for the protection of victims, and prevention of human trafficking.

We would like to thank all the project participants, which crucially influenced in making this publication comprehensive enough, and providing a complete overview of local community's capacities to adequately provide assistance and support to victims, and provide appropriate preventive action. Many activists of civil society organizations, social workers, policemen, professionals from education and health system, prosecutor's office and courts, employees of local governments, and elected representatives of local authorities are, with meager and often insufficient resources and a lot of enthusiasm and commitment, making the job and civic obligation to help establish a better and more just society – possible. Special thanks go to the victims of human trafficking, our fellow citizens, which, despite their suffering, or perhaps

because of it, made an invaluable contribution to our work, wanting to help prevent others from experiencing what they did.

NGO Atina

METHODOLOGY

Analysis of legislative and regulatory framework, status of the reform and process of protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking at the local level

The subject of this segment of research are policies and practices regarding the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking in the context of the reform of social protection system, with special emphasis on the practices that are carried out in seven cities/municipalities – Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Vranje, Nis, Novi Sad, Sremska Mitrovica and Subotica.

In each of these cities, a reform of social protection system has been going on for a number of years – new needs of vulnerable groups have been recognized, and there are new services that should enable meeting those needs directly at the local level – within families and communities, while local actors should have more significant role in the planning and financing of local social protection system. At the same time, in the area of fight against human trafficking, more attention is being paid to prevention and work with groups at risk, as well as to timely recognition and adequate protection of victims, which inevitably means displacement of the response to human trafficking at local community level.

The aim of this research is to provide insight and better understanding of the framework of social protection reform and the protection of victims of human trafficking, and its prevention, in Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Vranje, Nis, Novi Sad, Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica, and to formulate recommendations for improving the local response to human trafficking, bearing in mind primarily the need for adequate and timely protection of victims. Specific objectives of the research are as follows:

1.
Analysis of international standards in dealing with the protection of victims of human trafficking, national legislative and strategic framework of the protection of victims and local regulatory framework in the area of social protection, which may be of particular importance for the protection of victims of human trafficking in seven cities/municipalities involved in the project;
2.
Gaining insight into the characteristics of social protection reform on the local level – key processes, implementation of local strategies and action plans, the role of stakeholders and the characteristics of their cooperation and current challenges;
- 3.

Understanding of the prevention and protection of victims of human trafficking at the local level – social groups at risk and factors of victimization, the role of individual actors and characteristics of collaboration, key challenges and formulating recommendations.

Based on objectives formulated in this way, a questionnaire was developed, and following research questions were defined:

1.

What are the current standards for the protection of victims and for prevention like, in the international system of protection; what is the current national regulatory framework for the protection and prevention of human trafficking within different systems; what is the local strategic framework in the protection of vulnerable groups that may be important for the prevention and protection of human trafficking victims?

2.

What did key processes of social protection reform, in the cities involved in the project, look like?

3.

What is the perception of relevance, implementation and level of achievement of the current local strategic documents?

4.

What is the role of key stakeholders in the local system of social protection and protection of vulnerable groups, and what are the characteristics of cooperation?

5.

What are the key challenges in the reform of social protection at the local level?

6.

Which social groups are the most exposed to the risk of human trafficking and what are the factors of victimization in the cities involved in the project?

7.

What are the characteristics of the local response to human trafficking, what are the roles of individual actors and what characterizes their mutual cooperation?

8.

What is the understanding of key challenges; what are the key areas for improvement of prevention and protection of victims at the local level?

In order to provide a more comprehensive understanding and connecting different fields, different sources of data were used:

1.

International standards, national and local system of protection (research question 1) are presented through the analysis of standards for treatment and protection of victims within the

system of United Nations, Council of Europe and the European Union, shown from the most general documents of international protection of human rights to those specifically relevant to individual aspects of prevention and protection of groups especially vulnerable to the risks of human trafficking. The national legislative framework is shown through a review of a number of laws in the field of criminal justice and social protection, education, health, regulating the residence of foreign nationals, etc. Included is also the legislative framework that can be of importance both for preventive action, and thorough and adequate protection in situations when there are indications that human trafficking has already occurred, with a view to prosecution as an integral part of the protection process. Display of the national regulatory framework takes into account the strategic documents which have primarily regulated human trafficking so far, and an overview of the regulations relevant to the field of social protection and the prevention of human trafficking. Review of national strategic framework in seven cities involved in the project includes strategies that may be of importance for the prevention and protection of victims and for connecting stakeholders at the local level. They include measures for certain groups of the population who are often identified as the most vulnerable, and therefore at risk from human trafficking: socio-materially affected, people without documents, members of the Roma population, and so on.

2.

Analysis of the status of local social protection system's reform (research questions 2-5) was performed based on data obtained from the focus group interviews in seven cities involved in the project, in which participated representatives of different systems: social protection, local government, police, judiciary, citizens' associations, health care system. Further, we have used additional secondary, mainly qualitative, data from other reports and studies of the reform processes at the national level, carried out by public institutions and civil society organizations.

3.

Analysis of the process of victims' protection and prevention of human trafficking at the local level (research questions 6-8) was also carried out primarily on the basis of data obtained from the focus group interviews of representatives of various systems that participate in the protection of victims of human trafficking in a variety of ways – from creating policies, to everyday work with victims and prosecution of perpetrators. In order to better understand it, their insights were associated with additional primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data on dimensions of the problem, the characteristics of victims of human trafficking and vulnerability factors, trends in the national response to human trafficking, care and prevention.

Course of study and sample

Analysis of international protection standards, national normative and regulatory framework and local documents relating to the protection of vulnerable groups was conducted in March and April 2013.

Focus group interviews were conducted in April and May 2013. in seven cities/municipalities involved in the project: Subotica, Novi Sad, Sremska Mitrovica, Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Vranje, Nis. The participants were representatives of different sectors and institutions/organizations: social protection system – social work centres, social protection institutes, police, justice system – prosecutors, local governments and administration – city councils and municipal secretariats, health system – city health centers and civil society organizations. Average duration of a focus group interview was 90 minutes.

A total of 74 professionals participated in focus groups: in Novi Sad, 10 people from 7 institutions/organizations; in Subotica, 11 people from 9 institutions/organizations; in Sremska Mitrovica, 11 people from 8 institutions/organizations; in Kraljevo, 9 people from 8 institutions/organizations; in Nis, 10 people from 8 institutions/organizations; in Vranje, 12 people from 9 institutions/organizations; in Kragujevac, 11 people from 9 institutions/organizations.

Monitoring of Social Welfare Centers' work

Monitoring Framework

The purpose of monitoring the quality of Social Welfare Centers' work in the protection of victims of human trafficking is to improve the quality of social welfare centers when it comes to preventing and dealing with victims of human trafficking, in accordance with public authority of the centers, through the creation of unified methodology of monitoring and evaluation of the quality of their work in the prevention, and the work on actual cases of human trafficking victims.

Social Welfare Center, as a key institution of social protection in local community, is the holder of work and organization of community in meeting the needs of beneficiaries of the social protection system. Through core activity – assessing the condition and needs of beneficiaries and the organization of needed services in the community, Social Welfare Center achieves improvement when it comes to beneficiary's quality of life, with his full participation, and the participation of other systems in the community. Regular monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the quality of Social Welfare Centers' work is a prerequisite for successful work and customer satisfaction. This is particularly important in the area of human trafficking, which is a relatively new area for Social Welfare Centers. Creating an effective system for monitoring and evaluation of Social Welfare Centers in the area, creates conditions for continuous evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency, as a basis for improving the operation and creating an adequate system for the protection of victims of human trafficking in the Republic of Serbia.

Specific objectives of the activity of monitoring the quality of Social Welfare Centers' work:

- 1.

Determining characteristics of the work system of Social Welfare Centers in seven cities/municipalities in the process of supporting social inclusion of the victims of human trafficking;

a.

Understanding of the phenomenon and the national referral mechanism for the victims of human trafficking;

b .

The application of case management method in working with victims of human trafficking – identification and assessment, planning and work on the protection of victims;

c.

Cooperation with other stakeholders – public institutions, NGOs and other organizations in providing protection and assistance to victims of human trafficking;

d.

Satisfaction of the victims of human trafficking with the quality of support that is being provided by the Social Welfare Center;

2.

Improving the quality of Social Welfare Centers and strengthening the role of Social Welfare Center in the community, in order to improve the quality of services provided to the victims of human trafficking.

Establishing the system to monitor the quality of Social Welfare Center in this area has enabled access to:

a.

The existing legislative and regulatory framework for the operation of Social Welfare Centers and comparative comparison with the regulations in the field of combat against human trafficking;

b.

Characteristics of Social Welfare Center's professional work methodology (case management), professional knowledge and skills of Social Welfare Centers' employees in the field of working with victims of human trafficking and prevention;

c.

The role of Social Welfare Center in local community, in the prevention and providing service to beneficiaries, especially compared to other systems;

d.

Effects of Social Welfare Centers' business on the quality of beneficiaries' lives.

A framework for monitoring the quality of Social Welfare Centers' work in the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking involves several dimensions:

- a.
The level of skills of case management methodology and its application in dealing with victims of human trafficking (assessment, planning, immediate intervention, technical knowledge and skills);
- b.
The necessary resources for quality support to victims of human trafficking (protocols and procedures in the Center and the local community, membership in key departments);
- c.
Effects of Social Welfare Centers' work on the quality of life of beneficiaries with the experience of human trafficking, and prevention and combating against human trafficking in the local community.

Starting hypothesis of the monitoring process was to make Centers acknowledge the phenomenon of human trafficking, especially the specifics of victimization and victims' needs, and to more efficiently (than in the past) carry out their role in the local mechanism of protection of victims of human trafficking and members of vulnerable groups who might become victims of human trafficking if the effect of certain factors is not neutralized or mitigated on time (poverty, victimization, domestic violence, neglect by parents, educational exclusion, disability, etc; whereby it is usually the accumulation of multiple factors in one case) that could lead to victimization (which is actually a form of preventive response). This assumption is based on:

1.
The existence of adequate normative solutions
 - a.
Law on Social Protection¹ places the victims of human trafficking among users of social protection services, whether they are members of the category of children and young, or adults and elderly persons (Article 41 paragraph 2 point 7 and paragraph 3 point 4); while Article 7 speaks of the necessity of cooperation with other entities (governmental and non-governmental; natural and legal persons). Article 121 requires for Social Welfare Center to "initiate and develop preventive and other programmes that contribute to meeting of individual and collective needs of the citizens in the area of social protection in the territory of the local government for which it was established, to initiate and develop preventive and other programmes that contribute to preventing and combating social problems, and perform other tasks in the area of social protection, in accordance with the law and other regulations".
 - b.
Rulebook on organization, norms and standards for Social Welfare Center's work² in Article 8, which is dedicated to availability of services, emphasizes the Center's obligation to make their services available to all who need it, "with a special focus on vulnerable groups (children,

¹ "Official Gazette of RS", No. 24/11.

² "Official Gazette of RS", No. 59/2008, 37/2010, 39/2011 – amend. and 1/2012 – amend.

elderly, disabled, minority groups)" (paragraph 1), and one of the ways to achieve it is "the coordination of activities with other public services, charities, citizens' associations and other organizations in the local community" (paragraph 2). Article 9 is also of importance, dedicated to the area of prevention and preventive activities, which establishes the obligation of the Center to "develop preventive programmes that contribute to meeting the individual and collective needs of the citizens, and preventing and combating social problems in the local community" (paragraph 1).

2.

Data on a number of educational seminars whose target group were employees in Social Welfare Centers.³

Methods, sample and monitoring process

As a part of monitoring activities, focus group interviews with employees at Social Welfare Centers, and in-depth interviews with victims of human trafficking, were carried out. Also, relevant data from the files of victims of human trafficking, who have used the services of Social Welfare Centers in the reporting period (2011-2013) were collected.

Focus group interviews

With the approval of the Centers' directors, focus group interviews with employees were organized, whereby the groups were made by those employees available at the given time, from appropriate positions in the service for children and young, service for adults and elderly (including: case managers, supervisors, service managers) and legal service (lawyers and expert staff at the reception). Focus group interviews were conducted from May to July 2013. The interviews lasted two hours on average, and the study included a total of 49 employees of Social Welfare Centers, whose work has been monitored, namely: per 9 from Kragujevac and Subotica, per 8 from Kraljevo and Novi Sad, and per 5 from Vranje, Nis and Sremska Mitrovica.

Out of the total number of participants, female respondents were dominant, which is not surprising given that the care about others is 'typically' women's work (there were only eight men among participants), and most of them had a significant work experience in the area of social protection, lasting over 15 years. Social worker is the predominant occupation among the participants, while the fewest of them were lawyers, as was expected.

It is important to note that the participants had the opportunity to ask questions to interviewers (the authors of the methodology and reports on the monitoring of Social Welfare Centers)⁴ regarding the subject, and it could be said that these discussions also had the character of

³ Galonja A., Jovanovic S., Protection of Victims and Prevention of Human Trafficking, pages 14-17. Joint Program UNHCR, UNODC and IOM for combating human trafficking in Serbia, Belgrade, 2011, page 78.

⁴ Professor Dr. Sladjana Jovanovic (Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade) is one of the founders of NGO Atina and the author of numerous papers on the protection of victims of human trafficking, and psychologist Lidija Milanovic, director of the Office for Coordination of the Protection of Human Trafficking Victims, licensed supervisor in social welfare.

action research, and as such made a certain contribution to better introduction of Social Welfare Centers' employees with the current mechanism of the protection of victims of human trafficking, its possibilities and perspectives.

The period for observation – the period from 2011. to 2013. was chosen taking into account the significant changes in the field of the protection of victims of human trafficking – the adoption of the Law on Social Welfare (2011), which brought the victims of human trafficking into the categories of social protection beneficiaries, and the establishment of the Center for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking (April 2012)⁵. Another significant process is the process of creating a new national strategy in the field of preventing and combating human trafficking and protecting victims of human trafficking.⁶ In this period, but also before 2011. numerous educational seminars on the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking were organized,⁷ and the assumption was that the employees in the Social Welfare Centers are now well aware of the phenomenon of human trafficking and victim protection mechanisms, and that they act accordingly, in cases they work on (including the preventive actions).

Questionnaire questions were divided into three groups:

1.

Questions related to the participants, their profession, work experience and engagement in the Social Welfare Center;

2.

Questions of a general nature, respectively preliminary questions concerning the extent of knowledge of the phenomenon (especially the mechanisms of protection of victims and vulnerability factors in a particular community), familiarity with the specific cases the center worked with in the period for observation (number of cases, the profile of victims, some characteristics of the cases);

3.

Questions regarding the professional work in Social Welfare Centers, which were divided into three groups:

a.

admission and evaluation;

⁵ On the Center for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking at: <http://www.centarzztlj.rs/>

⁶ Draft proposal of the National Strategy for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims 2013-2018. is available at: <http://www.mup.gov.rs/cms/resursi.nsf/strategija%20predlog%20nacrt%20konacno%2012.2.2013.pdf>

⁷ On educational seminars organized by 2010: A. Galonja, S. Jovanovic, op. cit., pages 76-83. During December 2011. and January 2012. within the Joint Program of UNHCR, UNODC and IOM for combating human trafficking, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, a training of the social welfare centers' employees, called *The role of Social Welfare Centers in protecting the victims of human trafficking* was organized (for 167 professionals of 37 Social Welfare Centers in Serbia). More available at: <http://www.ungiftserbia.org/srp/?p=761>.

- b. planning and implementation of the services and measures' plan;
- c. cooperation with other governmental agencies and civil society organizations.

Analysis of the content of beneficiaries' files – victims of human trafficking

In addition to focus group interviews, and just upon the ending of each of them, data were collected from the files of victims of human trafficking, who have been on active records of the Social Welfare Center in the period from 2011. to 2013. Data were collected from a total of ten files (the sample included per one case from Nis, Kragujevac, Sremska Mitrovica and Novi Sad, and per two cases from Vranje, Kraljevo and Subotica). The research topic was the treatment of Social Welfare Centers in specific cases, in order to determine which activities were undertaken, how they treated beneficiaries (in all cases, the beneficiaries were women), how they collaborated with other state institutions and non-governmental organizations. It was particularly important to determine how they acquired information on the fact that a person is a victim of human trafficking, i.e. whether they performed the detection and initiated identification process by themselves, or was the victim referred to them. In all cases, the authors were able to obtain additional information or clarification on the case from the case manager, or employee of the Center, who is familiar with the case. Analysis of the records provided insight into the timeliness of taking activities and measures of protection, overview of assessment characteristics, and, particularly important, planning support and protection when working with victims of human trafficking.

By using this method, new information are provided about the activities of Social Welfare Centers and in specific cases, which were used for additional data, and verification of data obtained through focus group interviews. Also, access to files and concrete steps that have been undertaken in some cases allowed the identification of omissions in work, or good practices, when it comes to both Social Welfare Centers, and other stakeholders with whom the Center cooperated or sought to establish cooperation, which were of influence on the (in)efficiency in the work of the Center. Thus was point-blank achieved an insight into the effectiveness of some forms of cooperation of Social Welfare Center and other stakeholders.

In-depth interviews with Social Welfare Centers' beneficiaries

Monitoring the work of Social Welfare Centers would not be complete without taking into account opinions of the beneficiaries of their services – victims of human trafficking. In interviews, conducted based on a questionnaire with mainly open-ended questions, the basic question was how the beneficiaries see the Centers, respectively their own involvement in the case, has the involvement of the Center helped meet their needs, and how they perceive possible improvements of Social Welfare Centers' services and relations of expert workers of the Center toward the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries were informed that the obtained data will be

used for purposes of improving the protection of victims of human trafficking, and that there will be no mention of their personal data, or any data that might reveal their identity.

Key dimensions and indicators for monitoring

Determining the characteristics of Social Welfare Centers' work system in seven cities/municipalities in the process of supporting social inclusion of the victims of human trafficking

Monitoring Dimensions	Indicators	Methods	Data Sources
Normative provisions of SWC and requirements in the field of the protection of human trafficking victims	Compliance of professional practice in Social Welfare Center with the Rulebook on the organization, norms and standards of the Social Welfare Center Compliance of methodologies of professional work with current demands and approaches Methodology of work of the Social Welfare Center enables protection of victims in accordance with international standards	Analysis of regulations Analysis of the documents governing the professional practice	Regulations and documents Files of the beneficiaries in Social Welfare Centers Reports from the focus group and in-depth interviews
An assessment within the methodology of case management	Areas, methods and techniques of assessment provide an adequate assessment of the condition and needs of beneficiaries with experience in human trafficking Assessment is timed and timely to the current situation of the beneficiaries	Focus group interviews with the professionals from services for children and youth, and services for adults and elderly (managers, supervisors, case managers), admission staff and directors	Reports from the focus group and in-depth interviews
Planning within the methodology of case management	Planning process and the participation of relevant structures/systems provide high quality support to beneficiaries	In-depth interviews with employees In-depth interviews with beneficiaries – victims of human trafficking	
Prompt interventions	Prompt interventions are implemented in accordance with the prescribed methodology		
Professional knowledge and skills	Recognized necessary knowledge and skills and their level of representation		
Difficulties in the Social Welfare Center and discrepancies between the systems	Detected problems in the Social Welfare Center (organizational/structural and qualitative) for the successful support of beneficiaries with the experience of the victims of human trafficking		

Respect of human rights in the support process	Experts are familiar with human rights of victims of trafficking and can apply their knowledge in the process of protection of victims		
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Improving the quality of work of Social Welfare Centers, and strengthening the role of the Social Welfare Center in the community, in order to improve the quality of services provided to victims of human trafficking			
Monitoring Dimensions	Indicators	Methods	Data Sources
The place and the role of Social Welfare Center in the local community in the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking	SWC is a member of key bodies in the local community and a stakeholder in the area of social protection SWC has signed protocols on cooperation with relevant institutions SWC participates in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of local action plans in the area of social protection, particularly in the area of human trafficking Developed community services intended for victims of human trafficking	Focus group interviews in the local community	Reports from focus group and in-depth interviews Protocols, agreements on cooperation, action plans
Effects of the Social Welfare Center's work on the quality of life of beneficiaries, who experienced human trafficking, and on prevention and combating of trafficking	The degree of satisfaction of beneficiaries with case management and center support Implemented actions of the preventive type	In-depth interviews with beneficiaries	Reports from in-depth interviews

Monitoring local policies for the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking

Monitoring Framework

The purpose of monitoring local policies, including the implementation of strategic and action plans, is to establish the manner of functioning of the system of protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking in local communities, and improving the work of all relevant institutions at the local level through the establishment of long-term functional cooperation.

Establishing a system for monitoring the implementation of local strategic and action plans provided a basis for the creation of findings and recommendations to improve local policies and practices in the field of protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking in seven local communities, with the possibility of replicating the model for other local communities in the Republic of Serbia. Establishment of the monitoring system enabled an insight into:

1.

Existing regulations, level of implementation, as well as the missing provisions that would ensure a sustainable framework for the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking in local communities;

2.

Current practice in the implementation of the programme of protection and prevention of human trafficking in local communities;

3.

Current challenges and problems faced by social welfare institutions and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of measures for the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking, prescribed by the outline of a new strategy for combating human trafficking in the Republic of Serbia and the Law on Social Welfare;

4.

Existing capacities, and the capacities and resources that are lacking in order to adequately implement programmes of protection and prevention.

Prerequisites for the establishment of systemic monitoring process

In the first phase of the project implementation, ending with March 25. 2013, a methodology for monitoring was developed, and *Monitoring structure of local civil society organizations (MSLO)* was formed, composed out of 14 civil society organizations/youth offices from the cities where the project is performed.

In the next phase, the training of MSLO is organized, in order to strengthen the capacity of the network for monitoring implementation of local strategic and action plans in the field of social protection and, specifically, the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking.

The central phase of this monitoring process – the implementation of the monitoring process itself took place in the period from April 1. 2013. to July 26. 2013. ending with the submission of the final monitoring report.

In order to establish a systematic monitoring process at the level of the project realization, following prerequisites were identified:

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The development of methodological framework and monitoring instruments for the implementation of local action and strategic plans;

•

Training for members of MSLO in order to establish a common understanding of the objectives, methodology, dynamics of the monitoring process and methods of reporting;

•

Partnerships with local institutions engaged in the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking (local network of actors - LMA);

•

Fourteen partner organizations that are involved in the implementation of the project and use the same methodology to monitor and coordinate work in accordance with the planned schedule;

•

Persons in charge of monitoring in each local community were appointed and engaged, and they are responsible for carrying out the process of monitoring, communication with people in charge of monitoring from other cities and reporting (fourteen people).

A framework for monitoring the implementation of local strategic and action plans includes the monitoring of several key dimensions:

1.

The dynamics of the adoption and revision of local strategic and action plans (including the recording of missing plans and the reasons for it), and their analysis in relation to the requirements set out by the Strategy for combating human trafficking in the Republic of Serbia, and the Law on Social Welfare in the area of the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking;

2.

Resources for the implementation of strategic and action plans (decision on budget and financial statements of municipalities and cities in the years of adopting and implementing of the plans);

3.

Analysis of existing procedures and practices on the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking in municipalities/cities;

4.

The quality and the effects of implementation of the programme for the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking;

Monitoring the implementation of local strategic and action plans, in the field of social protection and, specifically, the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking, in

the period during which the project implementation took place continuously, based on the proposed indicators and tools for monitoring within the defined dimensions.

Monitoring methodology is designed to include the use of different research methods: qualitative, quantitative, participatory, as well as content analysis of existing reports and documents. Accordingly, the methodology includes a detailed proposal of potential data sources: representatives of social welfare institutions, police, prosecutors, courts, educational and health institutions, civil society organizations; representatives of local government (policy makers) and vulnerable groups.

Proposal of the framework and monitoring methodology includes:

- Key indicators that are the basis for the recording of initial conditions and the results achieved in relation to the objectives of the project;
- Instruments for monitoring/research;
- Sources of data – target groups relevant to the process of monitoring/research;
- The dynamics of the process of monitoring and reporting;
- The roles and responsibilities of MSLO and persons in charge of monitoring;
- Forms of reporting and content of the report .

Key dimensions and indicators for monitoring

Establishing mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of local strategic and action plans in the field of social protection and, specifically, the field of the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking:

Local Plans	Resources	Procedures and practices	Quality and effects
The dynamics of the adoption and revision of local plans Recording of the missing plans The process of making plans and reasons for absence The analysis in relation to the	Analysis of the decisions on the budget and financial reports of municipalities/cities by years of adopting and years of implementation Mapping of existing	Local referral mechanism Protection system being applied by Social Welfare Centers Cooperation with the Office for Protection of	The number of identified victims Forms of assistance that are being provided The degree of social inclusion of victims

requirements set by the Strategy for combat against human trafficking and the Law on Social Protection – recording of best practices and shortcomings Analysis in relation to protection programmes for especially vulnerable groups	programmes in the community: SOS hotline, shelter, CSO programmes for protection of victims of trafficking, violence, support for vulnerable groups Capacities of the system (social security, education, health care, police, prosecution, courts, other institutions of social protection Established partnerships and cooperation at the local level – a multi-sectoral teams (school violence, domestic violence...)	Victims of Human Trafficking Cooperation with NGOs and other institutions – mechanisms and practices	
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Dimensions of monitoring	Indicators	Meta definitions	Methods	Data Sources
The dynamics of the adoption and revision of local strategic and action plans (including the recording of missing plans and the reasons for it), and their analysis in relation to the requirements, set out by the draft of the Strategy to combat human trafficking of the Republic of Serbia, and the Law on Social Protection in the area of the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking	Dynamics of adoption and review of local plans	Have strategic and action plan in the field of social security been adopted, and if they have, when? Have they passed the review process, and during what period of time? Is the subject of social protection discussed in other sector plans?	In-depth interviews with local government officials competent on social policy Summary of adopted strategic and action plans	The strategy to combat against human trafficking The Law on Social Protection Local strategic and action plans in the field of social protection
	Recording of missing plans	Record the lack of strategic and action plans in this area Record the absence of sectoral policy involving issues of social protection	In-depth interviews with local government officials competent in the field of social policy	Other local strategic and action plans
	The process of making plans and reasons for the lack of them	Who initiated the enactment process? Who was involved in creating plans? How did the process of decision-making for the adoption of plan go? What are the reasons for the lack of plans?	In-depth interviews with local government officials competent in the field of social policy Analysis of secondary sources (reports...)	Employees in local government
	Analysis in relation to the requirements set out by the draft of the Strategy for combat against human trafficking and the Law on Social Protection - recording good practices and faults	Introduction to the Strategy and the Law Introduction to the contents of the local strategic and action plans Recording of good practices and faults in local plans in relation to the national Strategy and the Law on Social Protection	Analysis of the content of documents	
	Analysis in relation to protection programmes for especially vulnerable groups	Mapping the strategic objectives of local strategies and activities in the action plans aimed at improving the position of vulnerable groups.	Analysis of the content of documents	

Dimensions of monitoring	Indicators	Meta definitions	Methods	Data Sources
Resources for the implementation of strategic and action plans (decision on the budget of municipalities and cities in the years of passing and implementation of plans)	Analysis of the decisions on budget of municipalities/cities and financial reports for the years of adoption and years of implementation	Gaining insight into decisions on the budget and financial reports of municipalities/cities from the year of adoption of strategic/action plan, and for each subsequent year (information of public interest)	Desk research Submitting a request for information of public interest Meetings with representatives of local government	Published data of municipalities/cities Employees in local government CSO
	Mapping existing programmes in the local community: SOS hotline, shelter, CSO programmes for protection of victims of human trafficking, violence, support to vulnerable groups	Gaining insight into the existing programmes Gaining insight into the content of the offered programmes	Meetings with CSOs and Social Welfare Centers	Representatives of local institutions (social welfare centers, police, prosecution, courts, schools, health facilities)
	System capacities (social protection, education, health care, police, prosecution, courts, other institutions of social protection)	Do employees in institutions have the necessary knowledge, skills and financial resources for the provision of support to victims and vulnerable groups?	Focus group interviews	
	Established partnerships and cooperation at the local level - multisectoral teams (school violence, domestic violence...)	Is there a mechanism for cooperation between local institutions and organizations? How does it work?	Focus group interviews	
Analysis of existing procedures and practices for the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking in municipalities/cities	Local referral mechanism	Who identifies victims of human trafficking? Where are the victim referred to? How do institutions collaborate in this process?	Focus group interviews	Representatives of local institutions (social work, police, prosecution, courts, schools, health facilities)
	Protection system being applied by Social Welfare Centers	What services and measures are Social Welfare Centers taking to protect victims? What services and measures are implemented to protect vulnerable groups?	In-depth interviews with representatives of the SWC Analysis of Center's reports	Representatives of Social Welfare Centers Reports of SWCs Reports of the Office
	Cooperation with the Office for Coordination of the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking	Are social welfare centers and representatives of other institutions informed about the mandates of the Office? How many cases are worked on in cooperation with the Agency? What are the steps in collaboration?	Focus group interviews Analysis of the Office's reports	
	Cooperation with NGOs and other institutions - mechanisms and practices	Which programmes/activities were carried out in partnerships? What are prevention programmes?	Meetings with CSOs Focus group interviews	
The quality and the effects of implementation of	The number of identified victims	How many victims of human trafficking have been identified in the municipality/city?	Analysis of centers' reports Analysis of the Office's reports	Representatives of SWCs Reports of SWCs

Dimensions of monitoring	Indicators	Meta definitions	Methods	Data Sources
programmes for the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking	Forms of assistance that are being provided	What has been done in the cases of identified victims?	In-depth interviews with representatives of SWC Analysis of the Office's report	Reports of the Office
	The degree of social inclusion of victims	What is the status of those victims now? How are the effects of the programme being monitored?	In-depth interviews with representatives of the SWC Analysis of the Office's report	

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF VICTIMS AND PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

This chapter offers the review of key documents in the field of international legal protection and interior system of protection and prevention of human trafficking. These are specifically documents that are important in the prevention and protection of victims, as that is the primary focus of the project *Local communities in the fight against human trafficking*. In addition to these, the documents relevant to the field of national social welfare are included, given the relevance of this system for the timely protection and social inclusion of victims of human trafficking.

International Standards

International standards are shown from the most general documents of international protection of human rights to those specifically relevant to individual aspects of prevention and protection of the groups especially vulnerable to human trafficking – documents in question are the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, Convention of the Council of Europe on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, Convention of the Council of Europe on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and EU Directive on Preventing and Combating trafficking in Human Beings and Protection of Victims.

United Nations

International system for combating human trafficking is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁸ (1948) and Article 4, which prohibits enslaving and oppression, and all forms of slavery and slave trade. Article 13, which guarantees freedom of movement, is also relevant, as well as Article 16, which says that marriage may be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

Standards of the protection and fight against human trafficking are closely defined by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, along with the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime⁹ (2000). This document, known as the Palermo Protocol defines trafficking in human beings as (Article 3):

⁸ UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/217 A (III), Paris.

⁹ UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/25, New York.

recruitment, transportation, transfer, hiding and receipt of persons, by means of threat, or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of authority or of vulnerable position, or giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of an individual who has control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others, or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or service, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs...

The consent of the victim to exploitation is irrelevant if any of these measures was used. Also, if it is a child (any person under the age of 18), the recruitment, transportation, transfer, hiding or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation is considered trafficking even if it does not include the listed means.

The Protocol is based on the so-called "3P" paradigm, which includes prevention, protection and prosecution.¹⁰ Taking preventative measures, including the prevention of re-victimization and mitigation of risk factors such as poverty, are also stipulated in Article 9, and human trafficking has been established as a criminal offense under Article 5 of the Protocol. Assistance and protection of victims of human trafficking, including physical, psychological and social recovery (provision of housing, counseling and information about rights, further education, training and employment ...) are subject to Article 6. The former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia confirmed the Convention and its supporting Protocols by their ratification in 2001¹¹, making them part of the internal legal system of Serbia (given the continuity of the international legal subjectivity of the predecessor state).

As a document that deals comprehensively with the problem of human trafficking, Palermo Protocol is complementary to previously approved documents that were, in some aspects, engaged in this phenomenon. For example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹² (1989) provides obligation of contractor states to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Article 34), to take measures that will prevent the abduction, sale and trafficking of children (Article 35), as well as the recovery and reintegration of child victims (Article 39). SFRY, and later FRY, also ratified this convention.¹³

Eleven years after the Convention, the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography¹⁴ (2000) was adopted, supplementing the Convention with detailed requirements for the suppression of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, as well as the protection of children sold for financial, or any other type of, compensation. Contractor states should criminalize activities relating to the sale of children in terms of offering, delivery

¹⁰ <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/144603.pdf>

¹¹ Law on Ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, "Official Gazette of FRY" - International Contracts, No. 6/2001.

¹² UN General Assembly resolution **A/RES/44/25**, New York.

¹³ Law on Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, "Official Gazette of SFRY - International Contracts", No. 15/90 and "Official Gazette of FRY - International Contracts", No. 4/96 and 2/97.

¹⁴ UN General Assembly resolution, **A/RES/54/263**, New York.

or acceptance of a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation, transfer of organs of the child for profit, and the involvement of the child in forced labour; the offering, receiving or providing a child for child prostitution, and the production, dissemination or possession of child pornography (Article 3). Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ratified the Protocol one year after its adoption.¹⁵

Council of Europe

Of regional instruments, key place belongs to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings¹⁶ (2005), which is based on the goals of preventing and combating human trafficking, protection of and assistance to victims and witnesses, as well as promoting international cooperation. In the area of prevention of human trafficking several measures are provided – coordination of various bodies responsible for human trafficking at the national level, measures to discourage demand, adopting legislative or other appropriate measures that should, without compromising freedom of movement, allow border control, ensure the protection, integrity and security of personal documents, as well as checking of their validity and correctness. Serbia confirmed the Convention in 2009, by its ratification in the Parliament.¹⁷

This Convention and the Charter served as the starting point for the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse¹⁸, prepared by the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe which was signed in 2007. In addition to the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, this is the only international instrument relating to sexual violence against children.¹⁹ The two main objectives of the Convention are to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse of children, and the protection of the rights of child victims, and specific obligations are provided, in national context as well as in international cooperation. This Convention has become a part of the legal system of Serbia by its ratification in 2010.²⁰

European Union

Parliament and the EU Council adopted a Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims²¹ in 2011, which replaced the previous Council Framework Decision²² from 2002. This comprehensive document requires its member states to inculcate all forms of trafficking and severely punish the perpetrators. Also, the investigation and prosecution of cases should not depend on the testimony of the victim and

¹⁵ Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, "Official Gazette of FRY - International Contracts", No. 4/2001.

¹⁶ CETS No. 197, Warsaw.

¹⁷ Law on Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, "Official Gazette - International Contracts", No. 19/2009.

¹⁸ CETS No. 201, Lanzarote

¹⁹ Explanatory report, www.conventions.coe.int

²⁰ Law on Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Violence, "Official Gazette of RS – International Contracts", No. 1/2010.

²¹ Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

²² Council Framework Decision, 2002/629/JHA.

can continue even after the withdrawal of the victims' statements. Help and support for victims, on the other hand, should not depend on their will to cooperate in the trial process, and it needs to be ensured that victims of trafficking are not prosecuted for offenses which they were forced to perform. Furthermore, the member states are required to create measures to prevent secondary victimization during court processes, and to establish the Institute of National Rapporteur, or equivalent institute, to deal with government measures against human trafficking, including measurement of results and data collection.

National and local normative and regulatory framework

Constitution and relevant laws

Rights and standards in the field of prevention and protection of victims of human trafficking are resulting from a number of laws in the field of criminal justice and social welfare, education, health, regulating the residence of foreign nationals, etc. The following is an overview of the normative and regulatory framework that may be of importance for preventive action, as well as thorough and adequate protection in situations where there are indications that human trafficking has already occurred, both for citizens of Serbia, and foreign nationals, with emphasis on local level of intervention, which is in a special focus of the *Local communities in the fight against human trafficking* project. The legal framework is shown from the most general laws, such as the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, through laws that criminalize human trafficking and regulate the legal protection of victims of trafficking, whether they are adults or minors (Criminal Code, the Law on Juvenile Offenders and Criminal Protection of Juveniles), through laws regulating migration policy and are particularly important to consider the situation of foreign victims (Law on Foreigners, Asylum Law), to laws relevant to the prevention and protection within the system of social welfare, the authority of local government, educational and healthcare systems (Law on Social Welfare, Law on Local Government, Law on Primary Education, Health Care Law).

Slavery and servitude are prohibited by the Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia.²³ Furthermore, the same Article also prohibits forced labour – sexual or financial exploitation of a person at a disadvantage. Within the rights guaranteed to children, it is guaranteed that every child has the right to a name, the entry in the register and to protection against any exploitation or abuse (Article 64). Children under the age of 15 may not be employed, nor, if they are under the age of 18, work in jobs harmful to their health or morality (Article 66).

Human trafficking has been criminalized in legislation of Serbia since 2003²⁴, based on the definition of trafficking set out in the Palermo Protocol. Further activity in this area has resulted in the separation and special punishment of trafficking and illegal border crossings

²³ The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 98/06.

²⁴ Law on Amendments to the Criminal Law, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 39/03.

and smuggling since 2006.²⁵ Shifts in the criminal legislation, in accordance with international requirements, brought stricter penal policy and punishment, and consequent relocation of trafficking to the higher court, as well as introduction of new forms of trafficking.²⁶ This should, among other things, result in more effective protection of victims, punishing the wider circle of those involved in the trafficking chain, better protection of minors, as well as the same protection in the cases where there is consent of the victim to exploitation. In the existing Criminal Code²⁷, the act of *committing the offense* is defined as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, delivery, sale, purchase, brokerage, hiding or holding of another person, for the purpose of labour exploitation, forced labour, commission of offenses, prostitution or other types of sexual exploitation, beggary, pornography, establishing slavery or similar status, removal of organs or body parts or use in armed conflict". *Methods of execution* may be "force or threat, deception or maintaining deception, abuse of authority, trust, dependency, difficult circumstances, keeping of personal documents or giving or receiving money or other benefits", and is punishable by imprisonment of three to twelve years (Article 388). If the offense of trafficking is committed against a minor, the minimum sentence is five years, even in the cases where the above mentioned methods were not applied. If the crime of trafficking results in serious bodily injury of a person, the penalty is five to fifteen years, and if death occurs, minimum sentence is ten years in prison. Two special forms of crime are the execution by the group, and by the organized criminal group, when the prison sentence is minimum five and ten years. Furthermore, a prison sentence of six months to five years is issued for a *special form of the offense* when the person that knew, or could have known, a person was a victim of human trafficking abuses its position or enables another to abuse its position. If the offender knew, or could have known, that the person is a minor, the penalty is one to eight years. The positive news is that the act of consent to exploitation or slavery, or similar status, does not affect the existence of the crime (paragraph 10). Recognition of the dangers of human trafficking by the legislator is also shown through the ban of the ability to mitigate penalties for human trafficking (Article 57).

To control the system of child protection, as a particularly vulnerable group, there are significant provisions of the Law on Juvenile Offenders and Criminal Protection of Juveniles²⁸, containing specific provisions on the protection of children and minors as victims in criminal proceedings. The law provides that the presiding judge, the public prosecutor, the investigating judge and the police authorities involved in the investigation of criminal offenses against minors, as well as the lawyer appointed as a representative of a minor victim, must have expertise in the field of child rights and legal protection of minors. Furthermore, during the conduct of proceedings, they should particularly seek to avoid possible harm to the character and development of minors, with the involvement of experts in the hearing (e.g. psychologists and pedagogues). If a minor, who is the injured party, is questioned more than twice as a witness, the judge shall take particular care of the protection of character and the

²⁵ Article 350, Criminal Code, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 85/05.

²⁶ Galonja A., Jovanovic S., op. cit., pages 14-17.

²⁷ Criminal Code, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 85/2005, 88/2005 - corr., 107/2005 - corr., 72/2009 and 111/2009 and 121/2012.

²⁸ The Law on Juvenile Offenders and Criminal Protection of Juveniles, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 85/2005.

development. Minors, as witnesses-injured parties, can be interrogated in their apartment or other room, or an authorized institution-organization, and the use of technical means is also provided (Article 152).

Law on Foreigners²⁹ regulates the conditions for entry, stay and movement of foreigners and the action of the state administration of the Republic of Serbia in this regard. The issue of the victims of human trafficking, who are foreign nationals, is regulated in the context of their participation in the criminal proceeding. Thus, a foreigner (a person who has no nationality of RS) who is a victim of human trafficking, is granted a temporary residence in the country, if that is in the interest of criminal proceedings. If the person does not have sufficient means of support, adequate shelter, food and basic living conditions will be provided (Article 28). Temporary residence, which normally lasts for one year, with the possibility of prolongation for the same period of time, is granted for a term which is necessary for their participation in criminal proceedings (Article 29). Although the said provision conditions inclusion in the protection system, by involvement in a criminal proceeding, "other provisions of this Law, that talk about the reasons of humanity, and in respect to those, make some harsh decisions more flexible, by providing certain benefits to persons whose side these reasons are on, give base to different interpretation."³⁰

Minor foreigner is placed in a shelter, with a parent, or legal guardian, unless the authority estimates that alternative accommodation is more suitable (Article 52). Also, a minor foreigner can not return to their country of origin, or to a third country, until an adequate reception is provided.

Certain groups of foreigners, who fall into the category of persons with disabilities, are persons who have undergone torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual abuse, as well as minors, incapacitated persons, children separated from their parents or guardians, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, single parents with minor children. In light of the protection of potential victims and victims of human trafficking, the competent authorities have an important duty to act in accordance with the regulations governing the status of persons with special needs and international agreements (Article 58).

Law on Asylum³¹ was adopted in 2007. and it establishes the principles, conditions and procedure for granting and termination of asylum, as well as the status, rights and obligations of persons who seek or have been granted asylum in Serbia. An asylum seeker is a foreigner who applies for asylum on which a final decision has not been made, while a refugee is a person who, owing to well-founded fear of persecution, is not in its country of origin, or former habitual residence, and is unable or, owing to fear, unwilling to return to that country. An unaccompanied minor is hereby defined as a foreigner who has not reached 18 years of age, and who does not have, or has lost, his parents or guardians upon entering Serbia. Asylum is the right to residence and protection, accorded to a refugee in Serbia who is established to have a well-founded fear of persecution, and the Government shall establish a

²⁹ The Law on Foreigners, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 97/2008.

³⁰ For more information, see: Galonja A., Jovanovic S., op. cit. pages 21–22

³¹ Law on Asylum, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 109/2007.

list of safe countries of origin and safe third countries. Given the possibility that among the asylum and potential asylum seekers are persons who are potential victims or have been victims of human trafficking, it is important to point out that one of the fundamental principles of Law is prohibition of expulsion, or return of any person against their will to a territory where their life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, sex, language, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (Article 6). Persons who have undergone torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual abuse are recognized as persons with special needs, and their specific situation is being taken care of in the asylum process (Article 15). A particular principle requires that guardianship authority appoints a custodian to unaccompanied minor, before applying for asylum, who will be present during the hearing (Article 16).

The Law on Social Welfare³² (2011) confirms guidance of social welfare reform that took place in the past decade, and that were partly given to the strategic framework that preceded the Law – Social Welfare Development Strategy (2005). Some of the basic principles of the reform include decentralization – devolution of certain responsibilities for social protection on local governments, development of community services that are oriented to the needs of beneficiaries, introduction of civil society organizations and private companies in the social protection system as the new providers, and so on.

The objectives of social protection are, among other things, defined as: the preclusion of abuse, neglect or exploitation, or elimination of their consequences, and the creation of equal opportunities for independent living and encouraging of social inclusion (Article 3). Some of the principles that underpin social protection are timeliness (timely identification of beneficiaries' needs, and the prevention of conditions that affect safety and social inclusion – Article 29), integrity (Article 30), availability and individualized approach (Article 33). Beneficiaries of the law have guaranteed right to information concerning the exercise of their rights, the right to participate in the assessment of their situation and needs, and decide whether to accept the services, the right to free choice of services, to confidentiality of personal information and, ultimately, the right to privacy in the provision of services (Articles 34-38). In line with the key role of social protection system in the protection of vulnerable groups (including the prevention of human trafficking), the law stipulates that every adult (26-65 years of age) is the beneficiary of rights or social protection services, if their well-being, safety and productive life are endangered. It is important to note that this law, for the first time, recognizes victims of human trafficking as beneficiaries of the social protection system in Serbia (Article 41), and next to them, specifically singles out the following groups of adult beneficiaries, i.e. characteristics of beneficiaries that require the use of social protection services: physical, intellectual, sensory or mental disabilities, functional limitations; if there is a danger of becoming, or has already become, a victim of self-neglecting, neglect, abuse, exploitation and domestic violence; disturbed family relations, addiction; if the person is a foreign citizen and stateless person in need of social protection; if there is a need for institutional placement and other requirements for the use of social protection services. For persons under the age of 26, the law also mentions specific circumstances that particularly

³² Law on Social Welfare, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 24/2011.

threaten the health, safety and development: the absence or the risk of losing parental care, alcohol and drug abuse, if there is a danger of becoming, or if a person has already become, a victim of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation, or if their well-being and development are threatened by actions or omissions of the person that is of his immediate care; if the person is a victim of human trafficking; if the person is a foreign national or a stateless person, unaccompanied, and so on. Social protection services are classified into five groups (Article 40):

- assessment and planning services (assessment of the condition and needs of beneficiaries; preparation of individual or family plan to provide services and legal protection measures, and other assessments and plans, etc.);
- daily services in the community (day care; shelter and other services that support the stay of beneficiaries within the family and immediate environment, etc.);
- services of support for independent living – training for independent living and other means of support necessary for active participation in society;
- therapeutic counseling and social-educative services (intensive services of support to families in crisis; counseling and support for parents, foster parents and adoptive parents; maintenance of family relations; counseling and support in cases of violence; family therapy; mediation; SOS hotlines, etc.);
- accommodation services (accommodation with relatives, foster family or other family; institutional placement; placement in shelter and other types of accommodation).

For each of these groups, a funding has been established, from local or national budget, while it is planned for the services of shelter for victims of human trafficking to be funded from the state budget (Article 206), while local government should, among other things, fund the daily services in the community, therapeutic counseling and social-educative services and other social welfare services as needed (Article 209). In the context of the emphasis on inter-sectoral collaboration, it is important to note that the law provides cooperation of those who provide social welfare services with the healthcare and educational institutions, police, judiciary and other state authorities (Article 7), providing cross-sectoral services (Article 58), the establishment of social health institutions – organizational units (Article 60), while the Social Welfare Center performs the referral of beneficiaries (Article 69).

In the context of decentralization of social welfare, and the transfer of responsibilities for organizing and financing social welfare services, it is important to mention the Law on Local Self-Government³³, that was adopted several years ago, which provides that the jurisdiction of

³³ The Law on Local Self-Government, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 129/2007.

the municipality includes the establishment of institutions in the area of social welfare, monitoring and providing their performance, licensing social welfare institutions, established by other legal entities and individuals, establishment of eligibility to provide services, setting norms and standards for the performance of activities of institutions founded by local self-government, as well as the regulation of rights in the area of social welfare and performance of state guardian duties (Article 20, paragraph 17). The system of social welfare and the Law will be discussed further in the chapter *Quality of work of Social Welfare Centers in the field of protection of human trafficking victims*.

In light of the importance of education system for the prevention of social exclusion, as well as for reducing exposure to the risks of trafficking, i.e. social inclusion of victims if the trafficking has already occurred, it is important to mention the The Law on the basics of education and upbringing³⁴. Reform Law in the sphere of education, as principles through which education and upbringing are implemented, among other things, provides equal rights and access to education and upbringing without discrimination, equal opportunities for education at all levels and types of education and upbringing, cooperation with the family by involving parents, or guardians in order to successfully achieve set goals, cooperation with the community in order to achieve harmony of individual and social interest in education and upbringing, and more. In pursuing these principles, special attention is paid to the timely inclusion in pre-school education, adequate preparation for learning and for transition to higher levels of education, and to the possibility that persons placed in social welfare institutions exercise the right to education during their stay in the facility. Some of the goals of education are defined as: the full development of each child, in accordance with the needs and interests; acquiring quality knowledge and skills, and forming value judgments, development of core competencies needed for life in modern society, vocational training through creation of professional competence; development and practice of healthy lifestyles, awareness on the importance of their health and safety, nurturing and development needs, development and respect for equality and tolerance. In the context of the realization of right to education of victims, or potential victims of trafficking, of importance are the provisions of Law which provide foreign citizens and stateless persons the right to education, under the same conditions and in the same manner as the citizens of Serbia (Article 6).

Certain provisions of the Law on Health Protection³⁵ are important in order to provide an easily accessible, non-discriminatory health protection of victims of human trafficking, as well as for the care of population exposed to risk factors of trafficking. The law explicitly cites the victims of domestic violence and victims of human trafficking among particularly vulnerable groups, in which are also included: the Roma who are without permanent residence, children under 18 years of age, unemployed and beneficiaries of permanent financial assistance by the social welfare regulations, and assistance for placement in social care institutions or with other families (Article 11). Also, concerning the protection of victims in emergency situations, it is important to note that the Law defines, as one of general interests in health care, the emergency medical services to persons of unknown residence, and

³⁴ The Law on the basics of education and upbringing, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 72/2009 and 52/2011.

³⁵ Law on Health Protection "Official Gazette of RS", No. 107/2005, 72/2009 – amend., 88/2010, 99/2010, 57/2011 and 119/2012.

other persons who do not exercise the right to emergency medical care in a different way, in accordance with the Law (Article 18). The provision of health services applies the principle of fairness and prohibition of discrimination based on race, sex, age, national origins, social background, religion, political or other opinions, property, culture, language, type of illness, mental or physical disability (Article 20). Part of the Law dealing specifically with the health care of foreigners stipulates that foreign citizens and stateless persons, including persons temporarily residing or passing through the country, have a right to health care (Article 238), in the manner under which health care is provided to Serbian citizens (Article 239), including the obligation to provide the emergency medical services (Article 240).

Strategic, action plans and other relevant regulations

In the next section, we will present the documents and action plans which primarily regulated the fight against human trafficking – Strategies for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Action Plan for the period of 2009-2011, as well as the draft of the new Strategy for prevention and suppression of trafficking and protection of victims, and accompanying Action Plan for the period of 2013-2018. We will also present overarching strategic documents dealing with the improvement of the status of certain vulnerable groups, which have, among other things, been exposed to the risk of violence and trafficking – National Plan of Action for Children, General Protocol on the protection of children from abuse and neglect, Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of children from violence and Action Plan for the period of 2010-2012, Strategy and Action Plan for improving the status of women and improving gender equality, and Strategy and Action Plan for improving the status of Roma. This is followed by an overview of regulations specifically relevant to the field of social protection and the prevention and protection of victims of human trafficking – Rulebook on organization, norms and standards of Social Welfare Center's work, Statute on the network of social protection institutions, Statute of the Centre for the protection of victims of human trafficking, Rulebook on internal organization and systematization of duties and tasks of the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking.

The fight against human trafficking became the object of attention in Serbia in the past decade, under the influence and support of the international community. The first multidisciplinary body to combat human trafficking in the former SRY was created in 2001, and two years later the National mechanism for coordination and creation of anti-trafficking policy was established in Serbia. Its strategic level consists of the Council for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the Republic team, while the judiciary, police, the Office for Coordination of Protection of Human Trafficking Victims and specialized civil society organizations act at the operational level. The first shelter for victims of human trafficking was established in early 2002.

Further operationalization and institutionalization to combat trafficking created a National mechanism for the identification, assistance and protection of victims, to whom also belong the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Human Trafficking Victims and the National Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The Agency was formed in 2003, and integrated into the social security system in 2005, i.e. it became a part of the Ministry of

Labour, Employment and Social Policy. Specialized teams and units have been formed within the Ministry of the Interior, within the Department of Criminal Investigation, and the Border Police. Agency was later transformed, and in 2012 The Center for the protection of victims of trafficking has been established, which has jurisdiction over the Agency and Shelter, and is conducting identification, i.e. grants victim status.

Strategy to combat human trafficking³⁶ was adopted in 2006, as a further step in standardization and operationalization of response to the problem of trafficking. The document is divided into five areas, with defined specific goals. The first goal –*institutional framework* includes the improvement of the National mechanism, training and development of actors who come into contact with victims, improvement of the legal framework in accordance with international commitments and improvement of the statistical monitoring data. The next goal is related to *prevention* and includes specific goals to increase awareness about human trafficking issues, and reduce risk factors (including improvement of social and economic conditions of groups at risk). The following strategic goal is related to *assistance, protection and reintegration of victims* and includes specific goals related to improvement of victim identification (including the facilitation of self-identification), prevention of secondary victimization (including effective prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, and compensation for victims), the long-term protection and reintegration of victims which, among other things, includes continuing education, professional development and possibly monthly fee in the reintegration process. The final, fifth goal of the Strategy concerns *international cooperation* and connotes implementation of tools for the mutual recognition of evidence, and investigation with intergovernmental cooperation of prosecutors, police and the judiciary; speeding up the extradition of offenders and seizure of goods that were acquired by trafficking .

National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings³⁷ (2009-2011) includes activities for each of the five strategic goals of the Strategy, some of which are particularly important in the context of the problems of financing, i.e. sustainability of the state response to the problem of trafficking, as well as prevention, assistance and protection at the local level. In the area of institutional framework, an establishment of a special Fund to help the victims, which would be financed from the budget, was planned for consideration. Furthermore, it is planned that the budget and other sources provide funding for the development and implementation of training programmes, and trainings for professionals from different systems that come into contact with victims, as well as for those who work in law enforcement. Extra training is provided for judges, prosecutors and police, to enforce the Law on seizure of goods acquired from crime, with emphasis on the benefit acquired from trafficking, and continuing professional development in accordance with the Law on Juvenile Offenders and Criminal Protection of Juveniles. Identification of potential services providers to victims of trafficking is an activity provided within the same goal, the bearer of which should be the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy .

³⁶ Strategy to combat human trafficking, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 111/2006.

³⁷ National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings for the period from 2009. to 2011., "Official Gazette of RS", No. 35/2009.

In the part related to prevention, i.e. specific aim of raising awareness, development and standardization of general prevention programme, and specific prevention programmes for vulnerable groups in particularly vulnerable areas, are planned. The specific objective of reducing risk factors, i.e. improving social and economic conditions of groups at risk, is operationalized with the Action Plan, through two activities – Mapping of national strategies and regional instruments relating trafficking, as well as networking and collaboration with teams for the implementation of existing strategies, supported by Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Advisory body of the National Team.

In the strategic area of victim protection and assistance, consistent with the institutional framework, development of specific training programmes for working with victims is envisaged, whose predominant carrier is the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, training for the representatives of local self-governments and non-governmental organizations on the identification and protection, in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Administration and Ministry of Local Self-Government. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is responsible for activities of creating special services and programmes that focus on children victims of trafficking, as well as providing funds for the smooth operation of programmes for assistance and protection of victims. In the context of social protection, i.e. standardization of services, it is important to note that the Plan provides development and adoption of standards for working with victims, with special standards on working with children, as well as the adoption of mechanisms for their implementation, and development of standards for shelter. Fundings should be provided for the establishment of other various forms of accommodation for victims, if the Fund to help victims of trafficking is established. In the same area – reintegration of victims, provision of funds is planned for offering various forms of assistance and SOS hotline, in the state budget and from other sources. In the area of professional development, the mechanism for affirmative action for victims of trafficking should be made, i.e. their integration into the labour market, and as a form of reintegration, referral of suggestions on the possibility of financial assistance to victims of trafficking was provided to working group, who, at the time, worked on the drafting of the Law on Social Protection.

New strategic framework and action plan – Strategies for prevention and suppression of human trafficking and protection of victims, and the accompanying Action Plan for the period of 2013-2018.³⁸, were launched during 2012. and are expected to pass during 2013. These documents should address some of the changing trends in human trafficking and some of the challenges identified in previous institutional responses, such as: lack of formalized partnerships at local, national and international level, inadequate institutional framework and current mechanism of coordination, poorly developed mechanism for data collection, the lack of specific budget lines for activities directed against trafficking, uneven training and sensitization of professionals, lack of programmes for groups at risk, an inadequate system of identification and support for victims, especially children. The EU accession process is highlighted as part of the political tendencies that are beneficial to the fight against human trafficking, in part because of the possibility of funding the activities that Strategy and Plan

³⁸ Draft proposal for the Strategy for prevention and suppression of human trafficking and protection of victims and the accompanying Action Plan for the period of 2013-2018., available on the website of Ministry of the Interior, http://www.mup.gov.rs/cms_lat/sadrzaj.nsf/nacrt-strategije-prevencije-suzbijanja-trgovine-ljudima.html

predict. The issue of funding is particularly relevant because the policies and programmes for suppression, prevention and assistance to victims have so far been largely funded and carried out with the support of foreign donors.

As for the five strategic goals in the proposed draft of the new Strategy, they are somewhat grouped in similar areas as in the previous Strategy, and the major novelty is introduction of an entirely new goal relating to the protection of children:

- systemically strengthened partnership in response to human trafficking at local, national and international level
- improved prevention and reduced influence of the causes of human trafficking
- improved proactive detection system, efficient processing and legal protection of victims of human trafficking
- improved system of identification, protection, assistance and support to victims
- children are protected from trafficking and its consequences by participatory programmes in their best interest.

At the level of activities foreseen in the proposed draft of the Action Plan, some solutions were introduced, that may be more important in the context of this particular view, or that are innovative compared to current practice. Thus, within the first goal, special activity of partnerships at the local level was planned, which would, on the level of tasks mean appointment of local coordinator for combat against trafficking and protection of victims, and creation of mechanisms for cooperation, for which is a responsibility of the Council and the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government. At the national level, advancement of partnership includes the development of a model of cooperation with civil society, which has been recognized as an actor in the previous strategy, but also with companies, employers' associations, churches and religious communities and the media. The novelty should also be the establishment of intergovernmental Implementation Team Strategy managed by the National Coordinator. Furthermore, in the area of prevention, it is planned that the Ministry responsible for social policy should develop an early warning system, i.e. matrix to identify early risks.

In the goal relating to the detection, prosecution and legal protection, i.e. the judiciary, it is planned for interdepartmental working groups to be formed at prosecutor's office, a mechanism to compensate the victims to be created, advocacy for its implementation, and mechanism to help victims in the proceedings.

The fourth goal includes tasks of identifying the list of indicators, and procedures for identification and referral concerning the safety of victims in the processes of social welfare system. Furthermore, there is a prescription of service delivery standards, Guidelines on their use, development of services intended for victims. In addition to these tasks, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will, in the future, propose to Government the establishment of the budget Fund for the protection of victims, which was included in the previous Strategy, and which would serve to finance programmes for which there are no funds in the regular budget.

The last strategic goal, activities of protecting children, is grouped into three areas – prevention, prosecution and legal aid, identification and protection of children. The last area involves building capacities for urgent care, developing Guidelines for professionals, guardians, in organizing protection for the children involved in living and/or working on the street.

New strategic area for combating human trafficking, related to children responds to the lack of specific policies and protection mechanisms that are specifically designed, and directed at children, who had been identified by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.³⁹ Although children have yet to become recognized as a group requiring special protection, by adopting the new Strategy, the existing regulatory framework for children addressed some of the issues, i.e. vulnerability factors. Thus, the National Plan of Action for Children⁴⁰ for 2004-2015., as a comprehensive document of public Policy of the Republic of Serbia towards children, among seven priority areas includes the reduction of child poverty as a cause of numerous law violations, whether it is a transgenerational or "new" poverty, and the protection of children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

Systemic response of the state to the problem of violence against children is specifically developed by General protocol on the Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect⁴¹ (2005). Protocol provides the principles and procedures of treatment for recognized forms of abuse and neglect (physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation), as well as in situations where there is a risk they will occur. Social Welfare Centers have a coordinating role, but there is a need for intersectoral work on protection as a singular process, at all stages: 1) identification of abuse and neglect, 2) reporting to the competent authority/service, 3) assessment of risk, status and needs of the child and the family, 4) planning of services and measures of protection. In addition to the measures of protection taken by the center (temporary guardianship protection, securing housing, legal actions, deprivation of parental rights, etc.), other community services are also taking measures within its jurisdiction. Immediate intervention is undertaken in the event that the life and health of a child are directly affected, or if there is reason to believe that the failure to take urgent measures will lead to that. Service which is the first to contact the child reports to the center on whose territory the child resides, or the nearest center – the one in whose territory the child

³⁹ The Committee noted, in its commentary from 2010., that questions of the sale of children, who are the subject of the Optional Protocol, require special attention in regard to the issue of trafficking. CRC/C/OPSC/SRB/CO/1, 2010 Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

⁴⁰ National Plan of Action for Children 2004-2015, adopted by the Serbian Government on February 12, 2004.

⁴¹ General Protocol for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Conclusion of Government 05 No. 5196/2005 of August 25, 2005.

was found. Networking of the system of protection is emphasized by defining internal procedures within individual systems and institutions in special protocols – for social welfare institutions (2006), police (2006), educational institutions (2007), health care system (2009) and the judiciary (2009).

National Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children against Violence⁴² (2008) and the Action Plan⁴³ for the period of 2010-2012. further develop the state's response to violence against children. Groups of children particularly exposed to risk factors are Roma children, children exposed to poverty, children from families of refugees and displaced persons, children in the readmission (returnee children), children separated from their parents. In the area of establishing a national system of prevention and care, one of the specific objectives is to develop a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary network for prevention and protection against violence, within which is the activity of preparing and adopting of Strategies to combat child trafficking by the end of 2012. At this level of activity, the implementation of standards for shelters and safe houses for children victims of violence is also planned, as well as SOS hotline service for victims of child trafficking, and direct assistance in the recovery process. At the level of local self-governments, the Plan provides training for multidisciplinary teams for child protection in a minimum of 15 municipals per year. Strategy and Action Plan specifically highlight the importance of research into the causes and consequences of violence, and keeping adequate records that should unite the various sectors, services and facilities, including the Republic Institute for Statistics, Institute for Health Protection of Mother and Child, Ministry of the Interior, judicial authorities, etc. The body that should coordinate the activities of prevention and protection is the Council for the Rights of the Child of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality⁴⁴ (2009-2015) and the Action Plan for its implementation⁴⁵ are significant due to the strong gender dimension of the phenomenon of human trafficking. This strategic framework recognizes trafficking, sexual violence and domestic violence/intimate partner violence as the most common forms of violence against women. Trafficking is an area in which institutions of the system formed a multisectoral collaboration, but, among other things, remains a necessity to more accurately define the criteria for the identification of victims, and a proactive approach.

Within the goal of improving regulatory framework, i.e. monitoring of law implementation, activity of developing standards for monitoring mechanisms in the area of trafficking is planned, for which predominant authority belongs to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. Furthermore, within the goal of strengthening capacities of protection, it is planned

⁴² National Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children against Violence, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 122/2008.

⁴³ Action plan for the implementation of National Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children against Violence (2010-2012) "Official Gazette of RS", No. 15-10.

⁴⁴ National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality "Official Gazette of RS", No. 15/09

⁴⁵ Conclusion on the adoption of the Action Plan for the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women and the Promotion of Gender Equality, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 67/10.

that the Action Plan leads to measures that will ban sensationalistic reporting on topics of domestic violence, abuse and human trafficking .

In the light of connection between social exclusion and risks of trafficking, of great importance are planned activities of the Strategy that should influence the reduction in number of children, especially girls, who prematurely leave the education system, as well as the provision of scholarships and student aid, supplementary and additional classes for girls from multiple marginalized groups, as well as a functioning education for adult women (within the goal to eliminate gender disparities in education of repeatedly discriminated groups).

In the context of trafficking, gender equality and local level of policies, it is important to note that the Strategy recognizes that an important role in monitoring and collecting data on the implementation of Strategy and Action Plan belongs to the local committee for gender equality.

Also, the restructuring of public expenditure to improve women's economic opportunities should lead to specific and gender-sensitive budget lines in municipalities, i.e. a number of local governments that have adopted the principle of gender equality in the execution of the budget, from 2011. onwards. These activities (within the goal of introducing the principle of gender equality in the planning and execution of budget) should lead to long-term improvements in gender-sensitive policies and make their impact on the prevention of trafficking.

Strategy for improvement of the status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia⁴⁶ and the Action Plan⁴⁷ contextualize the issue of trafficking within specific area which is engaged in the status of women. Strategy notes that the issue of trafficking is even more problematic within the Roma population, due to inadequately defined attitude of public toward trafficking when it comes to Roma population, and due to the common law and the unwritten codes that can violate basic human rights of women from the Roma community.

In accordance with the recognition of trafficking as primarily associated with the position of women, this area is covered by the goals in the position of women, who were operationalized through the Action Plan. Achieving specific goal in this area – disclosure of the problems of minors and arranged marriages, is planned through activities of opening youth counseling centers and the education of Roma population on customary law and respect of the law, whose main carrier should be Social Welfare Centers. Furthermore, the next goal of this strategic area is to establish mechanisms to protect women and children from trafficking and exploitation, which includes the activities of regular collection of information on victims of trafficking, training and sensitization of stakeholders on the specifics of Roma victims, enforcement of legal measures for more efficient operation of institutions, mediator work in counseling with Rom victims, setting up shelters, halfway houses, both open and closed type, and the provision of funding from municipal and state budgets.

⁴⁶ Strategy for improvement of the status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 27/09.

⁴⁷ Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for improvement of the status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 57/09.

Funds for the implementation were provided in the central budget, the budgets of local governments and through international donors. The necessity of multisectoral approach is emphasized by the separation of strategic areas in several ministries – Ministry of Economy and Regional Development provides funding for the employment of Roma within the active employment measures (programmes for obtaining the first qualification, one-time subsidies for new jobs ...), while the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy should develop preventive programmes to support families, especially women and children.

In the light of importance of social protection systems, both in prevention of human trafficking, as well as in adequate protection of victims, in particular with regard to the new Law (2011), it is important to present main provisions of the Rulebook on organization, norms and standards of the Social Welfare Center's work,⁴⁸ as the basic operating document of Social Welfare Centers. Rulebook defines work of Social Welfare Centers in the exercise of public authority, as the institution of social care and guardianship. This includes jobs of the submission of findings and expert opinion on court request, when deciding on the protection of child's rights or the performance of, or deprivation of, parental rights, and the measures of protection against domestic violence; assistance in obtaining the necessary evidence for proceedings related to the protection from domestic violence; checking the execution of the educational measures of increased supervision by parents, adoptive parents or guardians. Rulebook clearly highlights the coordinating role center has in relation to other public services and citizens' associations in the community, in the provision of social services, as well as the need for preventive measures and the achievement of service availability. In accordance with the reform principles of orientation of social services toward beneficiaries, it is defined that each beneficiary of the centers (except for the financial aid beneficiaries) has a case manager who coordinates the evaluation process and the implementation of protection and support measures, using all the resources available in community (this would also imply the services provided by citizens' associations). Also, the case manager proposes the establishment of professional team of other experts from the center, and from other institutions and organizations in the community, for the assessment of situation, providing services and taking measures of legal protection, in accordance with the requirements of intersectoral cooperation.

Furthermore, in the light of considerations of protection of victims of trafficking, of importance is the provided obligation for centers to provide services for urgent interventions 24/7 by organizing watch or introducing pre-alert (watch duty of the employee in his apartment, or availability over the phone). Rulebook provides layout of steps in the treatment of Center, from admission to the closing of the case. For identification and further appropriate treatment of victims of trafficking, first contact with a potential victim is crucial, i.e. the admission. It is imperative to pass the case on the services in the center responsible for the assessment, i.e. acting upon brief, including when it comes to physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect of children, or in case of an adult victim of domestic violence, persons with disabilities and elderly persons who are suspected to have been neglected, abused or exploited. Center then initiates proceedings ex officio when it is necessary to make a decision

⁴⁸ "Official Gazette of RS", No. 59/08, 37/10, 39/2011 – amend. and 1/2012 – amend.

on measures of parental care, when deciding on measures of corrective supervision of parental rights, as well as in other cases, and taking into account the initiatives of other institutions, local governments and civil society. Each admission includes evaluation and prioritization of treatment, during which are taken into account: the need of support or providing security, the existence of injuries, the gravity of the situation and circumstances, and the like. Priorities of treatment are as follows: *immediate* – in case when the lack of immediate measures would lead to a threat to life, health and development, and when there is an obligation of immediate intervention in not longer than 24 hours, by the center or in cooperation with other authorities; *urgent* – when the risk is moderate, and initial assessment process must begin no later than 72 hours upon reception of information; *regular* – when safety is not compromised and the risks are low, the initial assessment process must begin no later than five working days upon reception of information. After opening the case, the decision on the priority level and determining a case manager, *initial assessment* is performed, which must include an interview with the person, family members and observation of living conditions, which forms the basis for determination of further work and services. In addition, *focused assessment* is performed if it is determined that more data are needed, and necessarily when a child is separated from its family in order to ensure its safety; when planning the placement of a child outside the family; when a case goes into court procedure, and there is the complexity of elements that influence the decision; when incapacity proceeding, and putting adult or elderly person under guardianship, is initiated and in other cases when a more detailed insight into the person's condition is needed. The Center, i.e. case manager, prepares a *finding and expert opinion* for the court, at the request of the court, or when the center initiates court proceedings, and for the purposes of other services and institutions.

In the context of reform request for a results-oriented social protection, it is important to note that the Rulebook provides that the plans of service provisions must include defined indicators, i.e. outcomes of service provisions that are visible, specific in terms of required conduct and conditions which are pursued and measurable; a clear plan of activities, timelines and parties involved, as well as a description of indicators that the goals were reached. During the provision of services, whether it is done by a competent or other type of center, case manager will, at least once every two months have a phone or direct contact with the beneficiary, and if a beneficiary receives services outside of his home, at least one direct contact during the first month and thereafter, at least twice a year with a beneficiary placed in a foster family, or at least once a year with a beneficiary placed in a facility, i.e. three times a year if a child is in question. Part of the contact takes place in private, and, at least once a year, includes an observation of beneficiary's residence. *Re-examination* is conducted at least every six months since the enactment of service plan. The prescribed situations, when the work with beneficiary ends, include cases when a beneficiary no longer meets the criteria for service use, when a beneficiary does not need further services, or when the center loses territorial jurisdiction.

Regulation on the network of social welfare institutions⁴⁹ establishes a network of social welfare institutions which provide home accommodation, and family accommodation centers

⁴⁹ "Official Gazette of RS", No. 16/2012 and 12/2013.

established by the Republic of Serbia. *Center for the protection of victims of human trafficking* is located in Belgrade, and is the only planned facility providing services of emergency shelter, assessment, planning, advisory-therapeutic and socio-educative services. Children, youth and adult victims of trafficking are the beneficiaris of the Center, with a capacity of up to six beneficiaries. In addition to the Center, it is important to note that the potential victims of trafficking are often placed in other existing facilities for other reasons. For example, Institutes for Education of Children and Youth, in Belgrade and Nis, provide dormitory accommodation for children and youth in conflict with the community and foreign citizens, i.e. stateless persons and/or unaccompanied persons. Belgrade facility has a capacity of 48 places, and the facility in Nis up to 36 places. In addition, there are 21 institutions for children and youth without parental care, children and youth with disabilities, and 59 institutions for adults with intellectual and mental disabilities in communication, as well as sensory and physical disabilities. In addition to residential institutions, there are eight centers for family accommodation, which provide assessment and planning services, counseling and support for relatives, foster and adoptive families, which is important as a form of shelter for identified victims.

Statute of the Center for the Protection of victims of human trafficking.⁵⁰ Center is an institution of social protection established by the Government, and the founder's rights are made through the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy. Statute states that the basic activities of the Center are carrying out the assessment of condition and needs of victims of human trafficking and, based on the indicators pointing out that a person is a victim of human trafficking, performing identification in accordance with its statutory powers; developing individual plans to provide services and protection of victims; monitoring implementation and outcomes of services and care; coordinating the provision of protection; providing emergency admission of victims; maintaining records and documentation on the beneficiaries and the services; participating in research; working on improving the system of protection of victims of trafficking. The Center is organized into two organizational units – *the Office for Coordination of Protection of Victims* and the *Shelter for Victims of Human Trafficking*. The governing body of the Center is a five-member Board of Directors, who is appointed and dismissed by the Minister in charge of social protection; while the Center is run by a Director, who is also appointed by the Minister, upon obtaining the opinion of the Board of Directors. Director, Management and Supervisory Board have a four-year mandate. Funding for the Center is provided in the central budget.

Rulebook on internal organization and systematization of jobs and tasks of the Center for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking.⁵¹ Rulebook regulates internal organization of the Center for Protection of Victims, i.e. provides job description and systematization of jobs within the Office and the Shelter, as the organizational units of the Center. The Office carries out comprehensive services within the Republic of Serbia, which, among other things, include: the identification of victims; the assessment of risk, status, needs and strengths of

⁵⁰ Statute of the Center for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <http://www.centarzztlj.rs/index.php/zakonska-regulativa#podzak>

⁵¹ Rulebook on internal organization and systematization of jobs and tasks of the Center for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <http://www.centarzztlj.rs/index.php/zakonska-regulativa#podzak>

victims and other significant persons in their environment; making of individual plans of service and protection; referral of beneficiaries to the social welfare center, social care institutions, other provider to implement the measures and the provision of services; monitoring the implementation of service plans and care, as well as the outcomes of care and support of victims; coordination of care; coordination of returning the victim to their country of origin; cooperation with competent authorities, agencies and organizations; coordination of preparing victims to participate in court proceedings; keeping records and documentation of the work on protection; keeping a database of identified victims, and so on.

The Shelter is housing adults and senior citizens, citizens of Serbia and foreign citizens and stateless persons from the territory of the Republic of Serbia. The Shelter performs:

- Activities which help meet basic needs and provide a safe environment: nutrition is provided in accordance with the needs, appropriate therapy is being given; minor injuries are treated and nursed; clothing and footwear are acquired, and the space and equipment to allow beneficiary privacy are provided; washing and ironing; escorting beneficiaries during departures to other needed services outside the institution, and so on.

- Activities aimed at development and preservation of beneficiaries' potential in order to: support building a positive relationship with the environment, organize work-occupational, educational activities to acquire new knowledge and skills; support maintaining the contact with family and significant people; organize leisure, cultural and entertaining content, in accordance with the needs and interests, desires and capabilities; development of skills to identify and solve problems; development of communication skills; skills for self-protection; skills and knowledge necessary for independent living; provision of rehabilitative and therapeutic services.

- Activities of legal support include: initiation of determining and solving citizenship and legal status; provision of access to legal aid and support according to the needs; provision of communication between foreign beneficiaries and diplomatic consular agencies; other duties of legal support and guidance.

- Activities of support in education and employment.

The systematization of workplaces, which is part of the Rulebook, states that the Office and Shelter have per one manager. Employees that have basic expert tasks at the Office are responsible for specific beneficiaries and coordinate the evaluation process, carry out identification of beneficiaries as the victims of human trafficking, coordinate measures of protection and support; decide on the opening of the case with the manager; create and monitor the implementation of individual plan; keep records and documentation, and the like. Employees that have basic expert tasks at the Office implement the provided activities within the individual beneficiary plan, work on developing potential; provide support in education

and employment; participate in the purchase of clothing; follow beneficiary during the departure to other services outside of the institution; provide support in building and maintaining relationships with people from their surroundings and their family; organize leisure, cultural and entertaining contents; work on the development of skills; see to the provision of services; initiate resolving of citizenship and legal status; work on ensuring legal aid and communication aid for the foreign beneficiaries, etc.

Rulebook provides that the Shelter and the Office each employ per four workers, which should, in addition to meeting the requirements for basic expert work in social welfare, have a completed training programme relevant to the victims of human trafficking, and sensitization to work with vulnerable groups, especially the victims. In addition to the expert work employees, Shelter should have two more associates.

It is important to note that, up to the date of this publication, the Shelter has not been opened.

Local strategic and action plans

A detailed review of strategic documents, related to social protection in seven cities involved in the project *Local communities in the fight against human trafficking*, which may be of importance for the prevention and protection of victims of trafficking and connection of actors at the local level, is included in the chapter of the publication that contains review of the reports of organizations collaborating on the project, on monitoring activities of local policies, in the field of combat against human trafficking. This review includes a special focus on appropriate measures for certain groups that are often identified as the most vulnerable, and therefore at risk of trafficking – the socio-financially disadvantaged, persons without personal documents, members of the Roma population, and so on.

In order to gain insight into the content, and the priorities of local policies, a tabular overview of the objectives and activities of local strategic documents of particular importance in the area of combat against human trafficking is presented below.

Overview of the objectives and activities of local strategic documents

CITY	Priorities	Stakeholders/	Strategic objectives	Operational objectives	Activities/projects	
CITY		Priorities	Stakeholders/	Strategic objectives	Operational objectives	Activities/projects
Sremska Mitrovica	Adults and elderly OSI Children, youth, unemployed		Developing the capacities, creating conditions for the implementation of the Strategy, introduction of new services	Monitoring the development of services and the implementation of the new strategic plan Strengthening the capacities and networking private sector, citizens' associations and institutions	Monthly meetings of KOSP, advocacy to governments to use incentives in order to encourage other sectors to provide services	
			Creating conditions for socialization and integration of children and youth	Promotion of healthy lifestyles Development of programmes for children and youth with behavioral risk		Media campaign and workshops for prevention of addictions Youth counseling and workshops for non-violent communication and "School without Violence" programme
Kraljevo	Children and family		Establishment of family Counseling center, empowering of financially disadvantaged single parents, forming multisectoral network for children without parental care	Opening Counseling center at SWC, preventive programmes for improvement of the family life, the continuation of work of clubs for guardians, foster parents and youth with behavioral problems, and forming of new clubs, deciding on priorities for employment in public sector, and support of the economic empowerment, addressing issues of children living without parental care upon leaving accommodation, assistance in finding temporary and occasional jobs. The opening of the Center, establishing a fund for the Center, providing space, infrastructure		

CITY	Priorities/Stakeholders/	Strategic objectives	Operational objectives	Activities/projects
	Youth	Establishment of Youth Center	and equipment.	
Vranje	Developed system of social protection services	Improvement of cooperation between different sectors	Strengthening the capacities of social and health care institutions, intensifying the activities of the City Coordinating Committee for social policy, development of Protocol on intersectoral collaboration for improvement of services	Provision of legal assistance to victims of violence and human trafficking, providing accommodation for victims, building of a Safe House, SOS hotline, forming networks of different institutions for the needs of socially disadvantaged
Affirmative policy for resocialization of vulnerable groups		Retraining and additional training for the unemployes and for Roma youth, implementation of the Decades of Roma programme	Database of the poorest sections of society, improvement of housing conditions of Roma and internally displaced population, training for the socially handicapped for the active job search	
Strengthening the capacities City Administration		Improvement of working conditions and creating a database in local communities, and staff training	Renovation and adaptation of LC, population register by LC	

CITY	Priorities/Stakeholders/	Strategic objectives	Operational objectives	Activities/projects
Nis	Social Development	Incentive and safe environments, in which all citizens will be able to express themselves and meet their needs for belonging and identity, socialization and personal development.	General increase of safety and reduced risk to life and health, property, social security and housing. Strengthening communities through the involvement of all citizens, strengthening solidarity	Designing social protection system, that includes institutions, individuals, private sector and NGOs; Initiatives to mitigate unemployment; solving housing problem (housing programme for the poor and the vulnerable groups); networking NGOs, local governments and private companies in order to meet the needs of the city jurisdiction
Kragujevac	Adults affected by poverty		Helping adults affected by poverty, improving their living conditions, and employment of those with a factor of difficult employability (under 30 years of age and over 50 years of age)	
	Children, youth and families at risk		Increase of services for financially disadvantaged families. Increase includes existing services for children and youth by 30%. Increase includes the strengthening of cohesion of the families at social risk	
Subotica	Children and youth	Strengthening non-institutional services, with an emphasis on prevention	Putting into operation stations of admission for emergency temporary accommodation	

CITY	Priorities/Stakeholders/	Strategic objectives	Operational objectives	Activities/projects
	Family		Building Safe Houses for the victims of violence. Implementation of the programmes for psycho-social support and assistance to victims of violence	
	The poor and unemployed	Increase includes help to the poor, by providing services for easier exercise of rights, as well as an increase of the number of services through the development of intersectoral cooperation and regular monitoring	Defining protocols on cooperation in identifying and responding to the situation of poverty between public institutions and associations. Protocol on cooperation with the National Employment Agency for the beneficiaries of social protection. Unique database for services and users between institutions and associations	
	Roma	Development of educational inclusion and solving problems of the persons without personal documents	Research of the opportunities to address and define measures for obtaining personal documents. Introduction of all persons without documents in the register, introduction of the Roma Coordinator Defining protocols on cooperation between educational and social institutions, municipal authorities and Roma organizations.	

SOCIAL WELFARE REFORM IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In order to assess current capacities of local communities and individual actors within communities to implement appropriate programmes/activities in the area of protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking, it is necessary to understand the current status of reform processes in local communities through four different aspects – key reform processes, relevance of local action and strategic documents, key actors and intersectoral cooperation and challenges in the social welfare reform. Insights and knowledge of professionals and/or decision makers from social welfare and other related areas of the cities involved in the project – Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Vranje, Nis, Sremska Mitrovica, Subotica, Novi Sad, are associated with observations on the broader reform changes at the national level. Adequate understanding of the framework can thus provide insight into the possibilities and limitations faced by institutions and organizations at the local level, in an attempt to comprehensively, and in a sustainable way, deal with the phenomenon of human trafficking.

Key processes of social welfare reform

In all seven cities involved in the project, the local system of social welfare is undergoing fundamental changes, in accordance with the broader reform processes at the national level.

Social welfare reform in the Republic of Serbia was, prior to the adoption of the Law on Social Welfare in 2011., primarily regulated by the Strategy of Social Welfare Development (2005). Given that the Strategy was the only regulatory document of the reform process in six years, it is important to recall basic guidelines and ideas concerning the reform, that have been specified in this document:

- Orientation toward the development policy of social welfare, and connecting with other systems and activities.
- Decentralization of social welfare system – decentralization of jurisdictions and fundings.
- Developing mechanisms for citizens' and beneficiaries' participation in decision-making on the ways and means to meet the needs.
- Providing quality services, including a variety of services and stakeholders who provide them, providing services in the immediate environment of beneficiaries, standardization, linkage of sectors in the provision of services.

- Strengthening professional capacities of employees, which includes continuous education in various fields, responsibility for the implementation of professional treatment (case management), quality control through monitoring, supervision and evaluation.

Decentralized approach and greater autonomy of local governments, including the sphere of social welfare, were also encouraged by the Law on Local Self-Government (2007). As presented in the previous section, this Law provides that the jurisdiction of local self-government includes even the establishment of institutions of social welfare, monitoring and ensuring of their performance, issuing working permits, determination of eligibility for providing services, and so on. (Article 20).

Reform directions have been confirmed by the Law on Social Welfare (also detailed in the previous section of the report). In addition to perceiving new needs and introducing new groups in the social welfare system (including victims of trafficking), the introduction of new forms of protection which should, in a more comprehensive way, respond to the needs, and reliance on quality standards, the Law clearly categorizes and provides accountability in the funding of services. So the Republic of Serbia, among other things, finances: family housing services, services of counseling and training of foster and adoptive parents, home accommodation services, accommodation services for victims of human trafficking, institutions for the education of children and youth (Article 206). On the other hand, the local budget, among other things, provides daily services to the community, advisory-therapeutic and socio-educative services, except for the counseling and training of foster parents and adoptive parents, which are the programmes of institutions founded by local self-government (Article 209). An important provision, that should ensure the functioning of the financing system, is the use of state budget for the provision of dedicated transfers to local governments, whose level of development is below the national average, for the services of social protection in local authorities, with institutional placement facilities in the process of transformation on its territory, including the costs of transformation of these institutions, as well as innovative services and social welfare services of special importance for the Republic of Serbia (Article 207).

In other words, the reform of social welfare system should, in conjunction with the broader process of decentralization, result in effective transfer of jurisdiction to the local level. This type of system modernization does not mean simply replicating the model in each municipality. On the contrary, it involves a design of a system that adequately meets the local capacities and creates social welfare services in relation to better perceived needs of vulnerable groups.

A new approach to planning and providing of social welfare was largely supported by international donors, both before and after the adoption of the Law on Social Welfare. This usually meant building capacities of local governments to assume new roles in planning, funding and monitoring of social welfare services, and support in diversification of providers and the introduction of new services.

Described reform framework is evident in each city included in the project – in the last decade, institutional arrangements are changing, relations between the actors and different levels of management, and the reform processes that were particularly accentuated during the focus group interviews and which will further be discussed are:

- The transformation of social welfare institutions, creation of new public institutions and introduction of new social welfare services.

- Donor projects as a support to the reform of local social policy.

The transformation of social welfare institutions, as a part of the reform process, is taking place in accordance with the principle of orientation towards the beneficiary and provision of services in the immediate environment of the beneficiary. This process was largely related to the institutions for accommodation of children without parental care, and children with disabilities, and it took place with the support of UNICEF and the Ministry in charge of social policy, based on the five-year plan on transformation of residential institutions.

Deinstitutionalization as a principle was subsequently established – the Law on Social Welfare (2011) prohibits the institutional placement of children under 3 years of age (Article 52). Bulky institutions, which were characterized by non-individualized and often dehumanizing approach to beneficiaries, transformed in recent years, with varying degrees of success, into smaller units with a more flexible approach.⁵²

One of the transformed institutions is "Cradle", Subotica's Home for children with disabilities. Day care center for children with multiple disabilities also works within the Home, and its services are used by about 30 children.⁵³ After the closing of Subotica's Institute for Children and Youth, at Subotica's Social Welfare Center, Cradle added a Reception facility for children up to 18 years of age, who are found on the streets, begging, illegally crossing the border, as well as for the accommodation of pregnant women and mothers with children up to one year of age.⁵⁴ Another new service launched in Subotica is Day care center for children and young people with behavioral problems, which began working as a project activity, and was later financed from the city budget.

A successful deinstitutionalization, i.e. reducing capacities of institutions, requires a complementary development of other services that can support the stay of beneficiaries in a community setting. The development of foster care enabled for children to move from Homes for children without parental care. Release of accommodation capacity in the Home for Children and Youth Dusko Radovic in Nis, enabled reception of children with disabilities through the programme of small dormitory communities. A Shelter also worked in the Home, at one time, in which the children victims of human trafficking were also being placed.

⁵² MDRI-S organization has been in charge of monitoring the deinstitutionalization process for years. See: *The Hidden and Forgotten*, MDRI-S report on the position of children with disabilities, and adults with intellectual disabilities, 2012.

⁵³ *Cradle's* website: <http://domkolevka.rs/>

⁵⁴ The practice of placing children victims of violence and trafficking has stopped several months ago, according to the participants of the focus group interviews in Subotica. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Subsequently, a Safe House for the victims of domestic violence has been established, which should also have offered improved solutions for the accommodation of victims of trafficking.⁵⁵

Transformation of the Home for children without parental care in Vranje made Center for the development of local social protection services. This new institution under the jurisdiction of the City provides a number of social protection services – in it are housed reception facility (shelter) for children and youth; reception facility (shelter) for adults and the elderly; shelter for the victims of domestic violence; day care center for children and youth with special needs. By this transformation, the Home was transferred from the republic jurisdiction to jurisdiction of the city, and is accordingly now funded from the city budget. Thus, the process of deinstitutionalization of Home for children without parental care – sending children to foster families or by returning them to their families, had enabled physical capacities and professional staff to be directed toward several other missing social protection services. Currently Vranje is working on establishing a Safe House, with the support of B92 Fund and the U.S. Embassy, whose funding also needs to be taken over by the city.

Center for development of social protection services was established in Kragujevac in 2011, also in response to the process of transformation of institutions (Home for children without parental care "Mladost") and the simultaneous launch of new services on a geographic basis, i.e. tailored to the needs of the local community. Center directly provides a range of services, for beneficiaries whose right to use it is established by the city Social Welfare Center: day care for children from families at risk, day care for children with behavioral problems, day care center for the elderly, shelter for children and youth, shelter for victims of domestic violence, home help for the elderly, youth center, youth club for people with disabilities.⁵⁶

Examples of new services, and amended old services, are also the establishment of Day care center for working with children with behavioral problems in Sremska Mitrovica, services implemented by the Red Cross; as well as Safe Houses for victims of domestic violence, Counseling for victims of violence, and Children's Safe House in Novi Sad. Children's Safe House is a part of the new solutions, which should lead to the reduction of extent or full suspension of placing children in institutions – that is where emergency care is provided, while working on the assessment of opportunities for the child to return to the natural family, or if that is not possible, to work on provision of accommodation in a foster or adoptive family.

The transformation of social care institutions, the creation of new public institutions and the introduction of new social services in the cities involved in the project, as it was already mentioned, is a part of a broader trend of deinstitutionalization, increasing the number of services and diversification of service providers. However, although there was an inevitable increase in the diversity of services, it should be noted that the number of services at the national level is still inadequate – over 30 municipalities do not provide any of the services,

⁵⁵ The Safe House and Shelter for the victims of trafficking in Nis will be specifically discussed in the section relating to the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking.

⁵⁶ Website of the Center for development of social protection services: <http://www.kneginjaljubica.org.rs/kneginjaljubica.html>

based on the only official consolidated data held by the Republic Institute for Social Protection.⁵⁷ According to more recent data⁵⁸ local governments have, during 2011, funded a total of 331 services: day care center and home care for children and youth with disabilities, children and youth with physical disabilities; day care center and home care for adults; day care center and home care for the elderly; shelter for street children, shelter for adults and elderly.

Another observed characteristic of the social welfare reform process, in the cities involved in the *Local communities in the fight against human trafficking* project, is the implementation of donor projects whose aim, in the last ten years, has been to contribute to the public policy-making process and/or to the establishment of new services. In response to the needs of coordination of reform processes, and the coordination of donor funds, in the period before the Law on Social Welfare was adopted, the Social Innovation Fund was founded. Its creation was to be a key project and the momentum of reform both at the national and local levels. The Fund is designed as a mechanism for distribution of funds for development of new, and improvement of old, services at the local level, but also as a meeting point for systematization of different initiatives. This mechanism supported about 230 projects in local communities,⁵⁹ in the period of 2003-2009, and its finances are secured by UNDP with support from the EU, the Government of Norway, the United Kingdom and the Fund for Open Society.

One of the biggest projects financed by the Fund, during the period of intensive strengthening of capacities of local governments for new jurisdictions in the sphere of social protection, is "Planning community-based services of social protection – PLUS".⁶⁰ As a joint project of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, EAR and UNDP, it included 81 municipality (out of the cities involved in the project, Sremska Mitrovica and Kraljevo were included). During 2007. and 2008. it supported municipal budget allocations for the establishment and provision of new services in the community, specifically those services arising from the strategic plans, and if it is a strategic planning process close to an end.

Closely associated with the PLUS is the project "Support to the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Social Welfare - component of social policy planning at the local level"⁶¹ (Subotica was one of the fifteen cities involved), enforced by the Ministry, in cooperation with the Fund and the Standing Conference of cities and Municipalities. Some of the goals of these projects were:

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⁵⁷ Data from the Services' Base of the National Institute quoted in the *Report on the results of implementation of social policy measures 2011/2012. for youth, children, refugees and internally displaced persons*, Belgrade 2013, available at <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3GsyncnrBBm-Zk11bFYyQUU2bUE/edit>

⁵⁸ *Annual report on the work of the Social Welfare Centers*, Republic Institute of Social Welfare, 2011.

⁵⁹ *First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction*, Belgrade, 2011, p. 31, available at: <http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Prvi-nacionalni-izvestaj-o-socijalnom-ukljucivanju-i-smanjenju-siromastva1.pdf>

⁶⁰ More on: <http://www.prsp.gov.rs/vest.jsp;jsessionid=49612E47ED8D9A548821D87801539128?id=539>

⁶¹ The project was implemented in 24 municipalities - Jagodina, Paracin, Cuprija, Svilajnac, Despotovac, Rekovac, Vrsac, Plandiste, Bela Crkva, Alibunar, Zajecar, Sokobanja, Bor, Kikinda, Valjevo, Loznica, Cacak, Knjazevac, Kanjiza, Krusevac, Stara Pazova, Zrenjanin, Ivanjica, Subotica. Standing Conference of cities and municipalities <http://www.skgo.org/reports/306>

The creation of intersectoral institutional framework for social policy planning (establishment of structure for social policy planning, with the establishment of new bodies).

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The development of local strategic documents with implementation budgets, along with a range of trainings in the field of strategic, action and budget planning and mentoring.

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Provision of the sustainability of local social services, which included planning the budget funds for the development of local services in action plans, while the approval of grants in the second phase of the project meant that action plans with budgets were adopted; that there are decisions on the establishment of service; and that municipalities participate in the current costs of service, funded from the grant.

These two projects, conducted in Subotica, Kraljevo and Sremska Mitrovica, give an illustration of guidelines and other donor projects in other cities involved in the research, projects that have thoroughly started and shaped the process of social welfare reform. Although there is no analysis of the range of international aid, in any of the cities or at the national level, there is no doubt that the principles of reform, such as intersectoral cooperation, or the more important role of citizens' associations, were stimulated by the donor engagement.

Relevance, implementation and level of achievement of current local action and strategic documents

The beginning of the social welfare reform in Serbia, since 2001, was marked by intense strategic and action planning – mastering the art of strategic planning and the development and adoption of strategic and action plans. Given the need for decentralization, and the need for local governments to prepare for the entire process of creating and financing of social policy, this process was, in addition to national, largely focused at the local level of management. The support of international donors also meant training of local levels of government and administration, for strategic planning, as well as the financial support for implementation of some of the activities out of strategic plans. The Base of local strategies and action plans, made by the Standing Conference of cities and municipalities and the Team for Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, with 401 registered document, also belongs to that period.⁶²

As it was already presented, in the reports of partner organizations from seven cities, all the cities involved in the project have local strategies and action plans that are directly relevant to the field of social protection, or indirectly relevant for the prevention of vulnerability, and for the social inclusion of different social groups: *Sremska Mitrovica* – Strategic Plan for Development of Social Protection Services (2008-2012), Youth Action Plan (2010-2014);

⁶² More on: <http://www.prsp.gov.rs/istrazivanje/planoviPretraga.jsp>

Kraljevo – Strategic plan for Social Policy, Action Plan for Children (2008-2012), Action Plan for Improvement of the Status of Roma (2009-2015); *Nis* – Action plan for improvement of the status of refugees and internally displaced persons of the city of Nis (2009-2013), Development Strategy of the city of Nis, the Action plan for Children; *Vranje* – Strategy of Sustainable Development, the Action Plan for Improvement of the Status of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (2009-2013), Youth Action Plan (2011-2015), the Action Plan for Children (2006-2010); *Novi Sad* – Local Action plan for Youth Policy 2010-2014; *Subotica* – Strategic Plan for Social Welfare Development (2008-2012), Local Sustainable Development Strategy (2013-2022), Youth Action Plan; *Kragujevac* – Strategy for Social Welfare Development (2010-2013), Action Plan for Employment.

It is important to note at the very beginning that the focus group participants did not know whether or not, and in what way, the monitoring of the implementation of the adopted documents is being performed. Overall, a noticeable attitude was that the practice of monitoring and evaluation of the success of the adopted legislative and strategic documents, at the national level, is generally rare and underdeveloped, and from there comes the assumption that it is not carried out at the local level either. Due to the lack of monitoring of local strategies and plans (or at least ignorance of the results of this monitoring, if it is still present), its level of importance and achievement can be assumed on the basis of direct insight of the participant in everyday practice in the sphere of social care.

Opinions of the participants on the relevance of local adopted policy documents vary, depending on the city and the system they represent.

Thus, for example, the previous Strategic plan for development of social protection services in **Sremska Mitrovica** was described as insufficiently realistic and overly ambitious. This was certainly contributed by the fact that it was not accompanied by an action plan. Significance of this document was reflected in the fact that different actors called referred to it while writing projects, to the extent that it addressed issues that were of interest to them. The Local Youth Action Plan was similarly rated.

Kraljevo's Strategic Plan on Social Policy has been developed in the framework of the aforementioned project "Planning of local services of social protection - PLUS" which was supposed to contribute to the reform of the local system of social protection, including raising the capacity of local actors to carry out reform processes. However, the Strategy that was created as part of this process is in the focus group, and from the distance it was judged as mostly poorly founded, with some of the ideas that were not achievable in practice. Some of the planned things were known to have been realized, such as Counseling for marital and family relationships.

Similar situation happened with the public policy documents adopted in **Nis** – the participants were either not aware of the existence of a relevant strategic document, or have participated in its development in the consultation stage, and are not sure what happened after that. In the case of the Local Action Plan for children, present representatives of civil society felt that almost nothing in that Plan was accomplished, and other participants in the focus group interviews did not have any other knowledge of it.

In **Vranje**, participants were also unaware of the existence of plans, except for the representatives of local self-government – member of City Council pointed out that there are relevant documents whose monitoring is done continuously, which are reviewed, and which require forming of work groups for the task of monitoring and implementation. Foundation and applicability are also taken into account – planned actions and measures accompany adequate resources, that are either already determined in the budget, or the money for it is sought from donor projects. However, further check with the rest of the actors of social protection is needed, on their viewpoint on ways of implementation – revising documents, their mutual conformity, as well as uniformity of competences of the members of working groups and the allocation of resources to citizens' associations.

Novi Sad has not adopted an overarching strategy document that would regulate the development of social policy at the city level. When it comes to the Local Action Plan for Youth Policy 2010-2014, the participants were not aware of the degree of its implementation. The drafting of the Action Plan for Roma is in progress, i.e. the proposal of plan is made, but it is not known what exactly are the next steps and whether or not the document will be adopted.

Subotica's degree of implementation is also unknown when it comes to the Strategic Plan on the Development of Social Protection, which was in effect for the period of 2008-2012, and was not revised since.

Participants of the focus group in **Kragujevac** were generally of the view that most of the activities of the city's Strategy for Social Welfare Development were achieved, even though they did not precisely know at what extent. In the absence of reliable indicators of success, it can be assumed that this view is, at least partially, due to the fact that Kragujevac is often touted as a rare example of successful intersectoral cooperation, taking over responsibilities by the local government and bringing innovation in institutional solutions (Center for Development of Social Welfare Services), and thus the success is assumed in other related areas as well (implementation of strategies and action plans). This is supported by the fact that the strategy of Kragujevac has never been audited, and that there were no allocated funds in the first year of its implementation (2010), which calls into question the integrity of its use.

The focus group participants were generally not aware whether the bodies that were supposed to ensure the implementation and monitoring of the Strategies and Action Plans (those were usually Coordination Committees for social policy – OKOSP) still exist. On this basis, it can be assumed that these bodies ceased to be active at some time after the adoption of the documents, or that their relevance and visibility dropped.

Another general conclusion of all focus group interviews is that poor economic conditions and lack of resources, as well as frequent changes of government, combined with the lack of professional capacity of local administrations, are main reasons for the general shortcomings in design and implementation of strategic and action plans. This corresponds to the situation at the national level – observation that many of the Government's strategies are inadequate, as they were adopted without consideration to their effectiveness and feasibility.⁶³

⁶³ *The Europeanization of Serbia*. Civil Society, Fund for an Open Society, Belgrade, 2011, p. 41.

It should also be noted that local strategies and action plans are often not available on the websites of local government or public institutions, although these are the documents of public interest. This is an indirect indicator of the attitude authorities have towards the availability and purpose of the public policy documents, and, in part, of the frequency of use, visibility and importance of these documents.

Here are some of the responses of the focus group participants on the relevance, and the degree of achievement, of local strategic and action plans:

Coordinating Committee – OKOSP was founded, I do not know if it was just on paper, but we simply do not have any such body anymore... It is of great importance, if the Strategy is to be adopted, and if we feel it is good and realistic, to track its exercise.

The local government should play a greater role in creating and monitoring the implementation of documents, at a high enough level – e.g . deputy mayor for social affairs, health care, city government, that is where we need to have a wide range of people who can achieve it. There would be a basis to implement, and further include, local government, and to achieve better results. I think it was not enough so far.

Action plan for the children of Nis – this document is a good example of how institutions can do a good job on a document. It was later unanimously adopted, but now there is nothing to follow, because nothing happened .

I have to say that one part of this latest strategy (2005-2010) was a fairy tale that was never implemented. (Kraljevo)

The strategy in the area of social protection was also a part of the reform, it was the UNDP project back then. Other strategies were also bad, for example the education strategy. Later, when they wanted to apply for a project, and were supposed to refer to the strategy, it was no longer there.

We had a Strategy of social policy development from 2010. to 2015., but we met the goal in 2011. and now we are going to revision. We constantly review, it is important that plans are applicable. Each plan has a working group to follow – those are representatives of institutions dealing with it, and those are the people who are responsible for the implementation in the working group. We first bring funds in the budget and then make a local plan. In most cases, we try to turn all these donor projects into something that has already been provided by the LYAP, and after the project ends, the City takes over the funding. (Vranje)

The municipality has its Strategy of social protection, but I did not get it, and it is not on the site. I participated in the drafting of Action Plan for improvement of the status of women, in the Medijana community, where we did comprehend violence and trafficking. Last year it was done within the framework of some project, but I do not know if it was approved. (Nis)

Actors and characteristics of intersectoral collaboration in reform processes

Interviewees in the focus group interviews – representatives of different systems from seven cities involved in the project, singled out local social welfare centers, citizens' associations, international donors, and to some extent local governments, as the key actors in social welfare reform and in the protection of vulnerable groups.

Social Welfare Centers have a demanding and complex role in the context of comprehensive reform processes of social welfare. First of all, they have a greater responsibility to take the initiative in their area of jurisdiction, in accordance with the adopted documents of public policy, and to take a coordinating role in their community, in the provision of social services. This role is underlined by the Rulebook on organization, norms and standards of the provision of social services, as the basic operating document of social welfare centers in Serbia. In addition, the Social Welfare Center is also the organ of guardianship and social care institution, and performs the assessment, planning and referral of beneficiaries to other services, both in the center itself and with other providers in the community. One of the changes, which our interviewees – representatives of the social welfare system, mentioned as one of the most important in the organization of work with beneficiaries and in the internal organization of the centers, which has been active for ten years now, is the introduction of case management, which should provide an integrated approach oriented towards the beneficiary. The focus group interviewees have mixed feelings when it comes to this change – while some see progress and emphasizing individual responsibility, with the possibility of getting adequate support within the team, through internal supervision, as well as from the competent authorities (provincial Department of Social Welfare), some feel that it is simply a case of shifting the burden to the individual, and that it also prevents specialization, i.e. that knowledge and training is necessary in several areas simultaneously. Another change, which will be specifically discussed in the section of the report dealing with human trafficking, is the change in the system of recording of beneficiaries, i.e. the establishment of a system of recording which will provide full access to beneficiary's profile, and thus provide a basis, not only for better protective measures, but also for more effective prevention work with vulnerable groups.

The introduction of the system of quality is another long-announced news, which will also affect work of the centers. Rulebook on standards of services⁶⁴ which was put into effect in May 2013, defines the minimum common and specific structural and functional standards for home accommodation services; shelters for victims of abuse, neglect, domestic violence and human trafficking, vagrant children, homeless adults, unaccompanied minor foreigners; respite accommodation; day care for children and youth with disabilities, offenders, adults and elderly who need day care; assistance at home; shelter for children, youth, adults and elderly who live or work on the streets, and so on.

The relation between centers and other stakeholders will be further modified by a long-awaited regulation of pluralism of service providers through a licensing system. Rulebook on

⁶⁴ Rulebook on the conditions and standards for the provision of social protection services, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 42/2013.

licensing⁶⁵ is also adopted and put into effect in May, more than two full years after the adoption of the Law on Social Protection. Although citizens' associations provide social protection services for many years now, issuing public documents (licenses) for the provision of services has not been able to start. The centers will continue to provide services, but those will have to be carried out within specific organizational units that are licensed to provide services, and if the local community has no other authorized provider of social protection services (Law on Social Protection, Article 122).

The issue of capacity to adequately perform all of the responsibilities was often mentioned by the representatives of all systems, even from the very representatives of centers who participated in the focus group interviews. Surely, taking into account many internal changes, changes in the relation toward beneficiaries, as well as the required changes of relations with other actors in the community, the upgrading and improving the capacities of centers is necessary – from the financial resources that are at the centers' disposal, to the improvement of the competence of employees.

Greater participation, and even the key role of citizens' associations and international donors are evident in all the cities involved in the project. This is consistent with the very context of post-socialist transition in which the reform of social care occurs, and which includes significant participation of civic actors – citizens' associations, which should mitigate the effects of social change, substitute national programmes' faults and, through partnerships with the state, help reform the social protection system.⁶⁶ Thus, in Serbia, after the changes in 2000, the donors are oriented toward development, innovative and pilot programmes in cooperation with the state, including the area of social protection, and in relation to the scope of investment and range of activities donors are certainly becoming key stakeholders and funders of reform.

In this sense, the agendas of civil society organizations, that have foreign donors as the dominant source of income, change and redirect the reform initiatives and partnership projects with the state. This change on the relation civil society-state, i.e. new role of civil society in what were previously the exclusive competence of public services, is largely seen in the area of social protection, which becomes an important issue of civil society.

As the previous section of the report stated, in all the cities involved in the project, the presence of donor projects was singled out as one of the key features of the local social security system in the reform. Donors and citizens' associations are seen as initiators, investors and holders of long-term reform projects, with special emphasis on various bilateral and international donors – EU, USAID, the Norwegian government, the Italian government, the Czech Development Agency... Through their work, a more complex discourse of social exclusion, vulnerability and poverty is being introduced, which requires a multi-dimensional and intersectoral approach, instead of the previously dominant discourse of protection carried out by a single sector. Beside meeting some of the needs, that were identified in the previous system – the needs of the elderly, refugees and displaced persons, children, donors and

⁶⁵ Rulebook on Social Welfare Centers' Licensing, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 42/2013.

⁶⁶ Kolin, Marija, *Civilian actors of transition*, in "How Serbian citizens see the transition", Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Belgrade, 2010.

citizens' associations influence the introduction of new issues, needs and population groups in need of protection, or special measures that will contribute to their social inclusion. Thus arise the activities and services in the areas that were not previously present in the social welfare system (or at least not in this form and extent) – gender-based violence, human trafficking, vulnerable groups (Roma, persons with disabilities, women, children, legally invisible persons), their social inclusion (inclusion in the education system, health care, labour market), preventive work with vulnerable groups, linked operation of the systems of social protection, education and health care.

With focus group interviews, it became evident that representatives of all systems, especially the system of social protection, have knowledge of donor activities beyond the local context – they cited reform projects at the national level. However, one gets the impression that the projects funded by donors are attributed to the Ministry and/or local governments, which are in fact stakeholders and partners on projects funded by donors. This view, which does not give a complete picture of the source of funds, is a direct evidence of a certain neglect when it comes to sustainability of the project activities upon completion of donor funding.

Citizens' associations, which were mostly mentioned in connection with the social welfare reform at the local level –the piloting of new services, participating in the creation of public policies, multi-dimensional approach to social protection, were present at focus groups, and are among Atina's project collaborators: Novi Sad's Humanitarian center (Novi Sad), Open Club, Osvit (Nis), Fenomena (Kraljevo), Nexus (Vranje), Oaza, Alternativni krug (Kragujevac), Stav +, Roma Education Centre (Subotica), ProVitae (Sremska Mitrovica), and the aforementioned Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization from Novi Sad. More on the profile of these organizations will be said in the next section, in the context of their importance in the protection of victims of trafficking (especially in prevention).

The role of local governments in the creation, planning and financing of local social policy has increased over the past ten years, in line with the fact that decentralization has been singled out as one of the postulates of the reform. At the normative level, the Law on Local Self-Government acknowledges, and pays attention to, local government responsibilities for the establishment and funding of new services and the plurality of providers. The transfer of jurisdiction and strengthening of the local governments' capacities has continued to this day, mostly through donor projects, and a clearer definition of authority in the financing of services came with the Law on Social Welfare. These changes are also evident in the available data on the proportion of funding for local services and social welfare centers coming from local budgets – in 2011, over 20% of the jobs in social welfare centers was financed by local government, and that percent is expected to increase, given the broader jurisdiction of centers and the development of local services.⁶⁷ Change in the financing structure has been stressed by the participants of focus group interviews – for example, it is mentioned that in **Vranje** the city took over the financing of part of the activities of the Center for Social Work that does not belong to the public authority, in accordance with the Law on Social Protection (Article 206), and also the activities of the Center for development of local social protection services, after its transformation in the process of deinstitutionalization, i.e. its transfer from republic to city

⁶⁷ *Annual report on the work of Social Welfare Centers*, Republic Institute of Social Welfare, 2011.

jurisdiction. In addition to providing these resources, it is noted that the City is working on finding new resources and that it participates in the projects by providing a certain percentage of funding.

A share of responsibilities for the provision of local social services should be carried out by local government, in cooperation with local citizens' associations, including of course the financing of services – in **Novi Sad**, a competition was started two years ago, by the City Department of Social and Child Protection, i.e. a sign-on was provided for all interested associations, instead of automatically transferring funds to certain associations.

In addition to financing, the role of local government in the reformed system of social protection in the cities involved in this project is not equable – while in some cities it was unclear to what extent the local government and administration have insight in, and are managing to plan the approach to, social protection, others emphasized their proactive role. An example of this is **Kragujevac**, where the local government excels, i.e. City Council not only assumes part of the obligation of funding, but also actively monitors and participates in the planning of added activities.

The need to further define the jurisdictions and responsibilities of local government is evident in all the cities – not just formally, through the obligation of making Decisions on the rights and services in social protection, but also in the sphere of proactive planning – consultation and assessment of vulnerable population groups.

When it comes to **connectivity of actors and characteristics of cooperations**, cooperation of social welfare centers with new institutions – centers for development of local services, is generally well quantified. This is not surprising, given that these are public institutions – parts of the same system, but it certainly speaks of the extent to which the diversification of services, brought by the centers for development of local services, was much needed. Thus, the interview with representatives of Vranje and Kragujevac's social welfare centers clearly showed that the local centers rely entirely on local service centers for various types of accommodation services, and that there is a mutual understanding and flexibility in cooperation.

Although there was not much mention of the relationship between the centers and citizens' associations, the issue of competition between the citizens' associations and public service providers was apparent. The new Law legally equated citizens' associations, as service providers, with public institutions. Specifically, local government unit must provide services through the procurement process, with centers conducting the assessment and planning service, and they are to provide other services if there is no authorized service, within their specific organizational unit, as previously mentioned. However, partly due to the postponement and delay in the licensing process, the practice is still dominated by public sector providers, or those who are closer to the public sector. Thus, for example, in **Sremska Mitrovica**, a project that had been led by a citizens' association, for prevention of human trafficking, was financially taken over by the City upon its completion, but the Red Cross started carrying out the programme. Similar examples are also at the national level – the activities and services which have been developed for years, by civil society organizations,

through the project framework, are being taken up by social welfare centers upon the completion of the project.⁶⁸ Also, citizens' associations continue to participate in the provision of services at the national level, in a lesser extent - with only little more than 20%.⁶⁹ Consolidated data of social welfare centers⁷⁰ indicate a more significant proportion of services provided by citizens' associations – in 2011, social welfare centers and their organizational units were providers for over 200 services out of all the services funded by local governments, while the institutions established by local government provided 58 services, and citizens' associations provided 164 services.

In addition to the licensing system, it is certain that the relations of the old and new providers should be further regulated by a better defining of roles and responsibilities of local governments in the planning and provision of services, as well as by defining the coordinating role of social welfare centers.

Cooperation between actors, both within the social welfare sector, and between sectors, is being carried out in an informal way in all the cities, and is mostly based on personal judgment, initiative and available network of acquaintances in other institutions and agencies. This reflects an old point of the lack of intersectoral cooperation at the national level, which has also been recognized as one of the key causes of the insufficiently successful reform within individual sectors (health, education, social protection, etc.) and as such was an object of special donor projects. The reference to binding intersectoral cooperation through signing of the protocol between different sectors at the national and local level, and the establishment of horizontal and vertical coordination, is addressed by competent legislative authorities.⁷¹ The lack of formalized and binding cooperation in the cities involved in the project was ascertained as one of the greatest shortcomings reflected in all spheres and aspects of protection – from the evidence of needs of vulnerable groups, to the systemic exchange of information on beneficiaries, and the coordination of protection activities. Of the cities involved in the project, **Kragujevac**, which is usually cited as a positive example of cooperation between actors, provides a somewhat different picture. One of the illustrative examples, which focus group participants cited as an indicator of the success of cooperation, is an increase of reported cases of violence. The fact that Kragujevac had 205 reported cases of violence in 2012, about ten times more than Belgrade and Nis, in their opinion, provides evidence of the consolidation of the system response to domestic violence cases, as a direct result of formalized and regulated sector collaboration. Following the formalization of cooperation, by signing the Protocol long before other cities – in 2008, the revision was done, and the development of performance indicators and revision of procedures are currently in progress.

⁶⁸ An example of inadequate service takeover by the centers is the hotline for victims of domestic violence. *Report on the results of the implementation of social policy measures 2011/2012. for youth, children, refugees and internally displaced persons*, Belgrade, 2013, p. 20.

⁶⁹ Data from the Services' Base of the National Institute, quoted in the *Report on the results of implementation of social policy measures 2011/2012. for youth, children, refugees and internally displaced persons*, Belgrade, 2013.

⁷⁰ *Annual report on the work of Social Welfare Centers*, Republic Institute of Social Welfare, 2011.

⁷¹ The formalization of cooperation between actors is referred to in the Conclusions of the Parliamentary Committee on Labour, Social Affairs, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, in the session of January 31, 2013, after a public hearing *A year of application of the Law on Social Protection*.

Unambiguous conclusion is that intersectoral cooperation, that has been established in at least one area, contributes to building overall capacity for the prevention and protection of vulnerable groups and their social inclusion. The absence of clearly defined roles, responsibilities, cooperation and handling procedures was identified as one of the greatest challenges in the local response to human trafficking, and shall thereafter be specifically discussed in the following section.

Social Welfare Center has not taken the reform of social protection seriously. It was expected that the reform is a project that will fail and things will go back to how they were before... The reform has brought changes – the teams were abolished, and now there is one man who is not familiar with other areas, which lowered the quality of social protection... Expectation that the reform will fail was an excuse not to 'roll up the sleeves'.

There used to be teams – for example, five people worked on divorces, five people worked on delinquency, and five worked on abuse... Now we have a situation that it is all reset to the office level, and that everyone has to do everything. A question arises how to send people to training – one or two persons, when all the workers have to know all that. The reality will bring us back to the fact that we have to specialize people for particular areas.

It's a natural resistance, because now those who worked divorce have to work, for example, on sexual harassment... which are very difficult topics. People are afraid to do it.

The reform has brought more work – the problems that were put aside, that existed before, but were not being reported, now come to light. The beneficiary is empowered to turn in himself, to be turned in by a neighbor.

From the perspective of NGO sector, project operation is extremely frustrating - everything we plan, we plan for a year or two. Our desire to develop a service remains at the level of desire, as there is no continued support to the employees who provide the service. NGO envisions itself integrated into the system in the future, but not as a parallel structure, not even in terms of the control mechanism, but in the sense of cooperation in providing services.

Our local government proved itself in action – strong and politically responsible figure of the Mayor, strong and responsible City Council, and they are the carriers and drivers of all the projects, and from time to time do the checking. It's never a dead letter. So, the action plan and everything that is done needs to be checked and monitored regularly.
(Kragujevac)

The cooperation between different actors and sectors predominantly exists at the project level, and is more intense during a project in that aspect. When the project is over, the networks usually also disband. So, the cooperation exists, but formal mechanisms do not,

so it flows through informal channels, through projects, and so on. Cooperation after a project exists only in a small fraction.

Challenges to social security reform at the local level

Fundamental changes that have occurred in the social protection systems are perhaps the most visible at the local level – they are reflected in the complexification and increase of the number of local services, in strengthening of the role of civil society as a direct service provider and as a participant in the creation of local public policies in the field of social protection, and in the improvement of the position of vulnerable groups – children, youth, Roma, women, etc. However, despite the undeniable achievements, decentralization and diversification of social protection, and its approach to beneficiaries, is a process that has been facing challenges. Thus, based on the responses of participants from seven cities involved in the project, we can identify two main current challenges of the social protection system at the local level: insufficiently clear roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and questionable sustainability of the initiated processes.

Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the protection of vulnerable groups

It was evident, based on description of local social protection system's operation, given by the representatives of different systems which are directly or indirectly involved in the process of protection and/or inclusion of vulnerable groups, and especially social welfare centers and local governments, that the roles and responsibilities are often not clearly defined, or the responsibilities are clear but the implementation of regulations is inadequate. This happens at two levels - between local and national institutions and agencies, and between institutions at the local level.

When it comes to relation republic-local jurisdictions, some of the mentioned examples of unclear division, and inadequate exercise, of responsibilities are related to funds for financing of the costs of housing (shelters) for foreign nationals – potential asylum seekers, but also to funds for general financing of the costs of emergency admission and accommodation, in case that the local government does not have conditions for it. Thus, for example, it is stated in Vranje that the City funds the Reception facility, where irregular migrants are being placed during the court proceedings, i.e. prior to their departure to one of the two asylum centers (Banja Koviljaca and Bogovadja). Considering that they do not receive funding from the state budget for that, the City is forced to pay for the costs of accommodation, although it does not have allocated funds for it. This is worrying, in terms of the exercise of rights when it comes to both beneficiaries of other services that are funded from the same budget, and migrants, especially given the expected increase in their number in the future.

Furthermore, the example of a situation when jurisdiction is clear, and the implementation of regulations inadequate, is the accommodation for victims of human trafficking, which is, by the Law on Social Protection, in the jurisdiction of the Republic (Article 206). However, the burden of accommodation in practice often falls to local governments. As they mostly do not

have the conditions for adequate and specialized programme of accommodation, protection and social inclusion, the victims who need help the most are further victimized (the problems in the protection of victims at the local level will be specifically discussed in the next section).

Concerns about jurisdiction – the shifting of responsibility between sectors, overlapping jurisdiction, or cases for which no one is clearly in charge, are common among stakeholders at the local level. The lack of clarity and of uniformity of practice in the performance of certain tasks is particularly evident in areas which previously lacked attention, or were transferred to the local level of decision-making during the reform – these are, for example, jobs of the assessment of needs of vulnerable groups, keeping unique record of their needs and services available to them, timely and proactive treatment and planning of prevention and protection measures, monitoring the entire system of protection at the local level – intersectoral cooperation, implementation of services and benefits, their effectiveness, the degree to which the system responds to the needs. The manner in which these activities are planned and carried out is entirely dependent on the local context, and in many cases it is not systematically arranged.

One of the reasons for this is an insufficient capacity for the reformed and decentralized system of social protection. Thus, capacities of social welfare centers – from their infrastructural, material to personnel capacities⁷² are insufficient to meet the needs of their new responsibilities, and of coordinating role in the local social protection system. In the focus groups, this was specifically mentioned in cases when the social welfare center in one city should assist the centers in surrounding smaller municipalities in performing more complex tasks .

A similar observation also applies to local governments – it remains an open question to what extent they can be carriers of the social protection system at the local level. The effectiveness of trainings, conducted in the last decade, for the representatives of local government and administration in the area of social protection, is questionable in the context of the overall process of decentralization (including fiscal decentralization), which has been inconsistent, with no clear strategy, with frequent changes of jurisdiction. In spite of the fact that decentralization was promoted as one of the priorities of transition, including the social protection system, it is questionable to what extent the local authorities had the financial resources, financing stability and autonomy in planning that would appropriately corresponded with the new responsibilities. Thus, for example, the Law on Local Self-Government Financing⁷³, adopted in 2006, was changed and suspended several times, which certainly did not contribute to the capacity of local government to assume responsibility for the proper planning and financing of social protection. This is additionally aggravated by the fact that political changes often lead to discontinuities in the implementation of public policies.

Ascertainment of the lack of clarity and incoherence of jurisdiction with the capacities of actors (primarily social welfare centers and local governments) corresponded to the

⁷² Annual reports of social welfare centers testify to difficulties in the current provision of basic working conditions - office space, vehicles, computers, etc.

⁷³ The Law on Local Self-Government Financing, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 62/2006, 47/2011 and 93/2012.

observations related to the general process of decentralization. The two most recent annual reports of the European Commission on the progress of Serbia state that a clear view of the jurisdiction of local governments does not even exist, and that the jurisdictions are continuously being transferred without providing sufficient capacity and resources at the local level.⁷⁴ It can also be said that, to some extent, this situation corresponds to the one at the national level – it is a common complaint that, simultaneously with the promotion of intersectoral cooperation, ministries have some illogically established and overlapping mandates, which reduces the coherence of policies they need to implement.⁷⁵

Sustainability of reform processes

As noted above, international donors and citizens' associations were the key actors of social protection reform, and almost all of its segments – building the capacities of local governments, the launch of new services, developing strategic documents and action plans... Although fundamental changes were initiated with the help of these efforts, there is the question of their sustainability, especially bearing in mind the fixed term of donor funds from which these activities have mostly been financed. Thus, the representatives of different systems – the focus group participants from all the cities involved in the project, cited sustainability as one of the problems they have already been faced with, or one they expect to be faced with. As an illustration of the uncertain sustainability, local services launched within donor projects, and whose providers were mostly civil society organizations, are often mentioned. This is not surprising, given that civil society organizations are seen as one of the pillars of social protection sector, primarily in the role of providers, but at the same time it is not possible for them to equally participate in contests of local governments and receive funds, due to the delayed process of accreditation at the national level. This led to a situation where organizations provide services within donor projects of limited duration, and do not shift to budget funding, despite the proven existence of needs of beneficiaries, and already formed habit of beneficiaries and their families to use the service. The strong dependence of civil society organizations on donors in the area of social protection is a challenge that has, on many occasions, been ascertained at the national level. The most widely used model, that should lead to the sustainability of services, is the one in which donors, when starting a service, expect a percentage of stake from local governments, as a guarantee that the service will be sustainable.

Some services are listed as successfully sustained, in the local social protection system, especially in the case of Kragujevac. It was pointed out there that the establishment of the model of center for the development of social protection services, which has taken over many of the necessary services that were developed within the civil sector, contributed to their release into the public service system and stable funding. An example of this is a Shelter for victims of domestic violence, which began as a project funded by the Social Innovation Fund,

⁷⁴ EU Progress Report 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/sr_rapport_2012_en.pdf, and EU Progress Report 2011:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/sr_analytical_rapport_2011_en.pdf

⁷⁵ *The Europeanization of Serbia*. Civil Society, Fund for an Open Society, Belgrade, 2011, p. 41.

followed by the Czech Development Agency, and was then moved to the city budget and became a regional service of accommodation.

Inclusion of services in the public budget is certainly welcome as a way of their sustainability. However, as noted in the previous section, in the context of cooperation between stakeholders, taking over services that have been developed within civil society by service providers from the public sector could be seen as an unfair competition and favoring public service providers, especially considering that there is no regulated and stable system of transparent procurement of services by the local government.

Unfortunately, there are no integrated and reliable quantitative data, at the national level, on the services launched from donor funds – services that were taken over after the expiration of financing, and became a part of the local social protection system (by their introduction in the Decision on the rights in the area of social protection), and those that have ceased to work, which would be a basis for more thorough dealing with the sustainability of donor projects and, to some extent, for the success rate of the reform itself. This corresponds to the fact that serious analysis on the scope of international assistance, assessment of importance and the extent to which these programmes contribute to the position of vulnerable groups, are still very rare.⁷⁶

The problem of sustainability of reform processes is, of course, wider than the question of the form and extent of local social protection services, it is also reflected in other areas of local social policy. Another challenge is sustainability of intersectoral cooperation, for which was, in some of the cities, noted that it represents the result of project requirements, and often ends with the completion of the project. Failings of intersectoral cooperation are reflected in the non-implementation of documents, including the protocols on intersectoral cooperation, especially when the initiator of work is one of the civil society organizations. Public policy documents – strategies and action plans, also often remain limited to projects within which they originate, under the influence of political changes in the implementation of policies, and the lack of budgetary resources for their implementation. Finally, the issue of sustainability is directly linked with the challenge of reform of the local social protection system that was previously mentioned – inconsistent, partial or inadequate definition of the jurisdiction of actors who need to carry out reform processes.

We have a lot of, both republic and local, jurisdictions that are mixed between the national and local level. However, at the local level, between different sectors and local government, in many areas and situations it is simply not clear what is whose area of responsibility.

We have a reception facility, the City funds it, through which 270 people who cross borders, in the asylum, passed through last year. We do not get any funding from the Republic, we provide around 40 million RSD for them ourselves. During the court proceedings, they are there, at the Shelter, at the Service Center. This financially endangers our other services, because it is not foreseen. We have the announcement that,

⁷⁶ On civil society actors in social protection, see: Kolin, Marija, *Civil society actors of transition*, in "How Serbian citizens see the transition", Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Belgrade, 2010.

in 2013, 2000 people will be placed there, how to predict something like that? No one wants to pay, neither Ministry of the Interior, nor Commissariat for Refugees, no one... (Vranje)

It is a good question how many new jurisdictions local governments can take, and also the question arises whether the Social Welfare Centers (SWC) can meet the requirements... True reform of social protection can be performed only when the reform within SWC is done. Reform and the control of earnings, control of assets, control of employees. It is well known that SWCs are an incurable ailment, and they are the umbrella institution of social security system. Can our SWC deal with the problems of adoption, foster care, human trafficking, incest, of the surrounding cities? These are all cases that are being referred to us.

When it comes to the participation of civil sector in the provision of social protection services, those are but ad hoc donations, and we shouldn't reduce the cooperation with civil society sector to that. According to the Law on social protection, all three sectors – public, private and civil – are equal.

A project happens, a service is uplifted, beneficiaries become accustomed to it, and then that problem becomes an issue of SWC. Then it is expected of the local community to take over the funding of that service, and there is no money.

Institutions tend to be scared of losing their job. The point is to work together with experts, and to negotiate with the local government on the services that are needed in a particular local community; to methodically develop new services.

The cooperation between different actors and sectors predominantly exists at the project level, and is more intense during a project in that aspect. When the project is over, the networks usually also disband. So, the cooperation exists, but formal mechanisms do not, so it flows through informal channels, through projects, and so on. Cooperation after a project exists only in a small fraction.

PROTECTION OF VICTIMS AND PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The next section of the report provides analysis of the local system of prevention and protection of victims of trafficking, especially considering the following areas: social groups at risk of trafficking and victimization factors, the role of stakeholders and the characteristics of their cooperation, and key challenges of the current system. Insights from professionals, in seven cities involved in the project, are associated with the data on trends at the national level.

Social groups exposed to the risk of trafficking and the factors of victimization

Results of the focus group interviews, in seven cities involved in the project, suggest how professionals from different systems and civil society organizations see which social groups are most at risk of becoming victims of trafficking, i.e. which are the key risk factors.

In all the cities, without fail, it was stated that the **members of Roma population** are at risk of victimization, due to a combination of different unfavorable circumstances and forms of deprivation – poverty, unemployment, poor educational structure. This fully corresponds to the picture at the national level – Roma children are significantly less included in the education system and a high percentage of them abandons full-time education; working-age Roma population lacks adequate education for the labour market, which influences the low quality of employment, predominantly informal employment.⁷⁷

Internally displaced persons from Kosovo are recognized as the most vulnerable among Roma, especially if they do not have identity documents and therefore can not exercise the rights in the field of social and health care, or be included in the education system. Persons who have, for a number of years, been living in collective centers, of which is specifically mentioned "Salvatore" in Bujanovac, are another group with a combination of risk factors. The scope of this problem, of course, goes beyond the cities involved in the project – over 200,000 internally displaced persons lives in Serbia, and the estimates of the share of Roma range from 10 to 20%.⁷⁸

Furthermore, in addition to internally displaced in Roma population, the **children** who are being abused by **forced marriage** are recognized as especially vulnerable. 11-16 year-old girls are singled out as particularly vulnerable, due to the fact that it is an accepted practice within the Roma community, while, on the other hand, representatives of the system do not respond adequately, classifying juvenile marriage as part of the customary law, despite the frequent cases of forced marriages and clear risk of trafficking. Similar problem exists with the Roma children who are being exploited in **begging** – this widespread practice is not recognized or sanctioned, but is usually justified and relativized as a cultural difference, tradition, and so on. Even if it is clear that it is a case of trafficking, passivity in reaction is present, as a result of several factors – the lack of opportunities to do a preventive and long-term work on improving their status, the existence of prejudice, lack of understanding and misperceptions about the causes of the specific situation of Roma population.

It was pointed out that, on the one hand, the Roma population is mostly at latent risk of trafficking, and, on the other hand, different systems fail to adequately respond with preventive and corrective measures.

In addition to the Roma population, **children from dysfunctional families** are also singled out as potential victims of trafficking, especially by the representatives of social welfare centers. These are young people whose parents do not provide them with adequate support,

⁷⁷ *First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction*, Belgrade, 2011, p. 111.

⁷⁸ *Analysis of the main obstacles and problems in the access of Roma to their right to social security*, Praxis, Belgrade 2011, p. 22.

and broken families, which in the context of the protracted crisis and deprivation can not offer an adequate frame of reference for the child.

The exposure of children to the risk of trafficking, that participants of focus groups singled out is, of course, present in the wider national context – minors make up almost half of the victims of trafficking recorded in the last four years (except for 2011, when their share in relation to adult victims was smaller).

The structure of victims at the national level - data of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims⁷⁹

This is a continuation of the trend of increase in the share of minor victims, as well as of lowering the age limit of identified victims, who had previously been recorded.⁸⁰

At this point, it would be useful to look at the data on juvenile beneficiaries, which social welfare centers have as a guardianship organ, among whom are children victims of trafficking. The active records of centers **during 2011. had a total of 160,592 children** (0-17 years old), divided into two main groups – beneficiary, and particularly vulnerable groups.⁸¹

A method and challenges of recording of social welfare centers will be further discussed in the next section, but for now it should be noted that a child may be found recorded in several particularly vulnerable groups of children at the same time, while there is no information on whether the recording of affiliation to particularly vulnerable groups was performed in all cases. Serious shortcomings, i.e. multiple counting in the records of centers, are probably the reason why the number of children victims of trafficking drastically changes in different parts of the report for 2011. – in one part it is 805 children trafficking victims, and in the other part it is stated that there was a total of 48 victims, of which children make up the majority – 30.⁸² Given the above mentioned information of the Agency which, in 2011, recorded 26 minor victims, we certainly need to take as relevant the information of social welfare centers about thirty children victims. Thus, out of the total of thirty children victims who have been registered by the centers, **the most numerous are children between 7 and 14 years of age**, there were sixteen of them (16). Children in this, most disadvantaged, group are usually female, and they are usually victims of some **other form of exploitation**, after which come forced begging, labour exploitation, forced marriage and the rarest form is sexual exploitation.

⁷⁹ Data of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims published within the report of the Ministry of the Interior

⁸⁰ Galonja, A., Jovanovic, S., op. cit., p. 56.

⁸¹ Annual reports of the Department of Social Protection for the national level do not contain data on cities. Data are from the merged report on the work of social welfare centers in 2011. p. 25-28.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 65.

Of the total number of children registered at the centers, 17.1% do not attend any educational institution, which is indicating the **complexity and multiplicity of exclusion**. A testimony to the plurality of exclusion is also the fact that almost every third or fourth beneficiary of financial aid (i.e. from the group of socially and financially disadvantaged) is at the same time a member of some of the beneficiary groups or particularly vulnerable groups. Over 22,000 children⁸³ were the holders of right to receive financial aid, i.e. they made about 10% of total beneficiaries and holders of financial aid right.

In addition to children, the participants of focus group interviews in seven cities consider that **women**, and especially **single mothers and women from poor segments of society**, are exposed to the risks of trafficking. Similarly speak the trends at the national level – women make up an absolute majority of the victims, and sexual exploitation dominates among the forms of exploitation. Foreign citizens accounted for the largest number of casualties until 2004, after which Serbia has been increasingly becoming a country of origin and internal trafficking, i.e. the number of local citizens in the total number of victims is growing.⁸⁴ According to the integrated annual reports of social welfare centers, as well as by the data from the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims, women make up the majority of victims.⁸⁵

The structure of victims at the national level - data of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims

The group that has recently become recognized as exposed to the risks of victimization by trafficking are **adult unemployed men who are at risk of labour exploitation**. This is interpreted as a direct consequence of the difficult economic situation, and the very exploitation often occurs abroad – the construction sector in Russia was mentioned in the focus groups. Due to difficult financial circumstances, and drastic decline in working conditions and job security, labour exploitation is often qualified as a difficult and unjust employment, and only recently has been increased awareness of it as a form of trafficking. This corresponds to the situation at the national level, and the fact that the police did not elucidate crimes, or file criminal charges for the cases of labour exploitation, until 2007.⁸⁶ Of all the focus group participants, members of police first and foremost pointed to men as potential victims of labour exploitation.

Type of exploitation by criminal charges at the national level⁸⁷

⁸³ The exact number based on the data of SWC - 22 316, *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁸⁴ Summary reports of Ministry of the Interior until 2008.

⁸⁵ Report on the work of social welfare centers for 2011, p. 66.

⁸⁶ Ministry of the Interior, integrated report by 2008.

⁸⁷ Ministry of the Interior, annual reports

	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Sexual exploitation	34	37	27	42	140
Labour exploitation	9	8	2	2	21
Forced marriage	5	4	2	2	13
Forced begging	4	10	2	13	29
Coerced criminal offence	2	5	2	4	13
There was no exploitation				3	3
Organ trade	/	/	/	/	0
Total	54	64	35	66	

It should be noted that, in addition to extrication of these particularly risky groups, focus group participants clearly indicated the large number of **unemployed and the poor**, who do not necessarily belong to the above mentioned groups, but who are, due to poor living conditions and often long-term poverty, exposed to risks of trafficking. Thus, members of the general population that is impoverished during the transition, including the educated class, can also be potential victims. Interlocutors from all the systems have argued that we can not talk about an isolated risk of trafficking among the poor, bearing in mind that the entire middle class has been impoverished during the transition, with the failure of big companies that employed a large percentage of the population, which left deep social and economic consequences in all the cities.

Following are some of the responses of the focus group participants on which social groups are most vulnerable and most exposed to risks of victimization:

Girls from the Roma population, 11 to 16 year olds, that is the age when the work with them should start; that is when their parents, or associates of their parents, are already starting to act and abuse and expose them to trafficking. There has been a rapid increase of number of users and substance abusers in the Roma population, and it brings these young people, teenagers in a situation where they are exposed to trafficking, or forced prostitution, in order to obtain money for drugs.

The problem with children who beg on the streets is that they are used to it, it's their way of life, same as in the case of those families that force girls to marriage. They are not aware, and do not think about what happens to those children. In this context, the most vulnerable are those children from Roma families.

Risk group are women, especially the category of single mothers, who are very suitable for traffickers. It's mostly women in need, who require financial assistance, without job, ready to accept anything.

A large number of children is faced with the fact that some of their peers have much more than they do. In a value system, that has been building for years, where good examples and a frame of reference, are not offered, a number of children can slip.

Because of the whole economic situation, labour exploitation among the male population is being increasingly recognized and present. However, it has not been detected and prosecuted in a large number of cases, but there are checks throughout Serbia, some concrete actions are taken, I think...

The fact is that it is always associated with some marginalized groups, but in a situation where almost all big companies are closed, all those who have lost their jobs are, again, that risk group that is difficult to employ – older people, and younger employees who have been unable to find employment for years.

From the responses of the participants to issues of vulnerable groups, the **key factors** affecting the greater exposure to the victimization of trafficking can clearly be seen.

Certainly most frequently mentioned are **poverty and unemployment**. According to information at the national level, children up to 14 years of age are the most exposed to poverty,⁸⁸ the group that the representatives of various systems also singled out as being at risk of victimization by trafficking. Prevalence of poverty is directly linked to unemployment – poverty rate among the unemployed is about four times higher than that of the employed population at the national level.⁸⁹

The views of professionals, from the cities involved in the project, on the difficult economic conditions reflect the official data for urban level of unemployment rate, i.e. the number of unemployed persons and average earnings.⁹⁰

	Vranje	Kraljevo	Kragujevac	Nis	Sr. Mitrovica	Subotica	N. Sad
Unemployment rate	30.25%	34.50%	33.61%	36.40%	28.14%	23.25%	18.74%
The number of unemployed in 2013.	9193	14210	22063	36947	6886	11793	30387
Average net salary in 2012.	294	313	348	317	334	329	423

Much like with unemployment, poverty was also associated with a level of education – national data show that the share of the poor is much higher in households where the head of household has not completed primary school, or has only completed primary school, i.e. that

⁸⁸ *The First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction*, Belgrade, 2011.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Data from the Base of municipalities of the Agency for Foreign Investments and Export Promotion (SIEPA), taken from the Federal Statistical Office.

poverty declines with the increase of education level.⁹¹ The officials of the focus groups recognized **inadequate education** as a distinct factor of vulnerability, especially as it directly reduces later employment opportunities for the victims of trafficking. The simultaneous presence and correlation of these factors – poverty, unemployment and inadequate education are, according to the focus group participants, particularly expressed in the **Roma population**, which corresponds to the data on the status of Roma at the national level. When it comes to Roma, as one of the factors contributing to vulnerability, we must also specify **discrimination**, which is often implicitly present in representatives of various systems, that should, among other things, work on their social inclusion.

Furthermore, **domestic violence and dysfunctional family relationships**, especially if they are present in large, socially disadvantaged families, are a strong factor of victimization.

Status of **internally displaced persons**, which is often associated with **unresolved civil status** is highlighted as a serious risk factor, especially in cities that are close to collective centers, or if there are settlements or greater concentration of population displaced from Kosovo. Thus, in Vranje, collective center "Salvatore" was mentioned, which has been recognized as a suitable target for traffickers because of the huge rate of unemployment; while in Kraljevo it is the new Roma settlement, formed after 1999. Problems following internally displaced persons are complex – they include low socioeconomic status, high level of unemployment compared to the rest of the population, inadequate housing, particularly for the Roma, who often live in slums. Directly related to settling in illegal and informal settlements is a long-standing unresolved issue of legal invisibility, which is again primarily related to the Roma population. Problems with the subsequent registration of birth, residence, issuing of identity cards, directly affect the disempowerment and even stronger marginalization and denial of access to social and health care and education systems to those who need them most.

Beside these factors, an additional specificity for Vranje is the nearness of border crossings to Bulgaria, Macedonia and Kosovo, which is favorable for the rapid transfer of victims, smuggling of people and goods. For Kraljevo, it is also the geographic location – closeness to Kosovo, with **the absence of contact with international forces**. Lack of cooperation with Kosovo is also observed as a negative consequence of the policy of the Serbian Government in the U.S. State Department's annual reports, stating that it prevents the prosecution when the offense is committed outside the borders.

Also, what was allocated in Kragujevac as a specific risk factor is the arrival of **foreign citizens with high incomes**, which is why the police are paying extra attention to the possibility of sexual exploitation, which increases with the flow of money in an environment where the rest of the population is mostly poor.

Certainly, the participants in the focus group interviews pointed out that the risk of trafficking should not be narrowed down to members of a particular social or ethnic group. However, it is clear that the current profile of victims in Serbia shows **consistent multiple risk factors that are often present simultaneously**, and which one of the focus group participants, a police officer, described as: crisis, hunger, despair, ignorance.

⁹¹ *The First National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction*, Belgrade, 2011.

Protection of victims and prevention in local communities – the roles of stakeholders and characteristics of cooperation

Findings of the focus group interviews show that there has been a shift in many areas of the fight against human trafficking, that the roles of stakeholders at the local lever are better defined and accepted, but that, simultaneously, with the increase in the number of cases and an appearance of new and more complex demands for protection, new challenges have emerged.

At the very beginning, it should be noted that it is obvious that **members of the police** have a key role when it comes to the fight against trafficking, both in terms of knowledge and training, and the practical involvement in all the phases of the fight against trafficking. Police work and assistance has been recognized by representatives of other systems – the police is seen as operational and functional contributor to whom other actors rely. Thus, the primary role of the police is emphasized in the first contact and the detection of victims, reporting when there is suspicion that there are elements of trafficking, collecting information, cooperation with the Center in placing of the victim, and so on. This is particularly important given that the police is almost always the first to come into contact and detects the victim, and then notifies the prosecution, Agency and local social welfare center. In addition to social welfare centers, police representatives emphasized close cooperation with the prosecutor's office as a key cooperation, particularly the need for good coordination and consultation prior to the filing of criminal charges. Bearing in mind that human trafficking is a relatively new criminal offense, and that there is still a lack of familiarity of the judiciary with it, cooperation between prosecution and police is essential for the success of the criminal charge, i.e. its negate due to the lack of elements of crime.

Police officers often take a proactive role in various aspects of the fight against trafficking in the local community, except for disclosure of the act and the perpetrator – so it is very common that they, together with other actors, work on prevention through informing in local schools (usually the local Red Cross organization), on sensitization of other actors, or participate in addressing the issues protection and of housing the victims. Thus, for example, Head of Division for Foreigners, combating illegal migration and human trafficking, in the Police Department in Nis, participated and helped in the procurement of resources for the establishment of the Safe House that would also serve for the victims of trafficking, and a member of the Counter-Human Trafficking Team, from the police Department in Kragujevac, initiates activities of sensitizing and education of judges and prosecutors. It should also be noted as a positive step that there is a greater orientation towards of the victim and a better understanding of the complex needs of victims, which can not be ignored or subordinated to the interests of the judicial process. It is clearly stated, even by the police officers from Kragujevac, that in the assessment of the situation, the protection of the victim has a priority in relation to filing criminal charges.

The attitudes of police officers, from the cities involved in the project, are definitely a part of the broader trend and development in Serbia, in the knowledge of this crime, treatment of victims and understanding of the right to protection (including provision to prevent secondary victimization). In general, key commitment of the police at the local level is in line with the efforts of the Ministry of the Interior, and of the Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, as the key national stakeholders in the fight against trafficking.

Criminal charges filed by the officers of MOI, on the suspicion that a criminal offense of Human trafficking under the Article 388 of CC was committed⁹²

Data by cities – filed criminal charges by the officers of MOI on the suspicion that a criminal offense of Human trafficking under the Article 388 of CC was committed⁹³

	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Kragujevac	4	1	/	1	6
Kraljevo	/	/	1	1	2
Vranje	3	4	1	1	9
Nis	2	/	/	1	3
Subotica	/	/	3	/	3
Novi Sad	14	15	12	5	46
Sr. Mitrovica	/	3	1	1	5

Members of the **social security system – social welfare centers** primarily emphasized cooperation with the police as a key cooperation, which is consistent with the fact that the police are usually the one who perform the detection. On the other hand, representatives of other systems pulled and emphasized the role of centers in the prevention, possibility of early identification and subsequent adequate protection of victims. While it is clear that the police are most likely to come into first contact with the victim, it was remarked that centers must play a leading role, especially when it comes to protecting children, since they are the central organ of guardianship. In addition, the need was underscored for centers to have a proactive role in the early detection of risks from trafficking even when it comes to adults, who are their beneficiaries on other grounds. This is certainly a relevant expectation, given the frequent multiplicity of factors of vulnerability of social protection beneficiaries, and the strong possibility that potential future victims are recruited from the very ranks of SWC's beneficiaries.

⁹² Annual reports of the MOI

⁹³ MOI, annual reports 2009-2012.

When it comes to communication within the social protection sector, employees in the centers invariably emphasized their responsibility to inform the Agency, as the only body with the mandate to perform identification, which is an improvement in the understanding of the referral mechanism and the role in the protection of victims. The duty of centers to protect victims in each specific situation, and to, when it is assumed that a person is a victim, inform of it and cooperate with the Agency, is also prescribed by the Instruction on the work of social welfare center in protecting victims of human trafficking.⁹⁴

Underlining the need to inform the Agency, and emphasizing their own increase in sensitization and knowledge of the topic of trafficking, is certainly an improvement over the findings of previous research and the situation a few years ago, when the centers generally did not recognized its role in the detection.⁹⁵ However, it is a fact that the number of detected victims, and the total number of victims the centers in seven cities involved in the project have registered, is very limited, which of course indirectly speaks of their still **undeveloped capacity to protect victims**, whether the cause is the failure to identify victims, inadequate recording or the lack of measures and programmes of protection.

Information on the activities of social welfare centers vaguely correlate with the number of criminal charges filed by the police in those cities – sometimes the police officers perform detection and file a criminal charge, and the centers do not have a more active role. Thus, as an illustration, by the previously mentioned data, Novi Sad's police department in 2009. and 2010. filed 29 criminal charges (with 32 victims in 2010. alone), and Novi Sad's Social Welfare Center has, for those two years, recorded only 10 victims of trafficking. Similarly, there is a mismatch in data of centers with those of the Agency – thus, centers at the national level in 2010. have 118 victims, and the Agency only 89, and the following year, 2011, SWC registered a total of only 48 victims, while the Agency recorded 88 victims for the same year. Since the activity of the Agency in the identification of victims is approximately the same for these two years, this change can be explained by a drastic decrease in the activity of centers in 2011, by weaker detection and/or recording of the victims.

Recorded victims of trafficking in social welfare centers – centers' data

The number of victims at the national level – data of the Agency for protection of trafficking victims

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Identified potential victims	20	28	12	9
Identified victims	107	61	76	70
Total	127	89	88	79

⁹⁴ Instruction was issued by the Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Policy.

⁹⁵ Galonja A., Jovanovic S., Protection of Victims and Prevention of Human Trafficking, Joint Program UNHCR, UNODC and IOM for combating human trafficking in Serbia, Belgrade, 2011, p. 108.

Despite the fact that the competence of employees in social welfare centers, working on prevention and protection of victims of trafficking, are undoubtedly increasing, a small number of detected victims is, on the other hand, indicative that their role is still modest. This is particularly worrying given that they are the ones who come into contact with vulnerable groups, and have the opportunity to test and deepen their knowledge through direct contact, and to act preventively.

The issue of capacity of social welfare centers to adequately perform all functions, especially given the reformed social security system, is often open – during the focus group interviews, remarks were made, by representatives of other sectors, on coordination within the centers themselves and ignoring the responsibility of providing immediate interventions, i.e. introduction of 24h duty, as prescribed by the Law on Social Protection, as well as by the Rulebook on organization, norms and standards of Social Welfare Center's work. Centers themselves emphasize a great number of competencies and complex issues they deal with while, on the other hand, there is a **limited number of trained personnel, material and infrastructural capacities and resources, and system support**.

Closely related to the above mentioned is also a questionable capacity of centers to properly **record the number and profiles of victims** or potential victims, and therefore capacity for further adequate work with them. As a part of wider reform processes of social protection sector, the method of recording is being changed at the national level – so the recording of work with the victims of trafficking and recording of the number of victims started in 2007, and a separate recording of children beneficiaries began in 2011. (prior to that, a unique record for children and youth had been kept). Although this should lead to more accurate information, and thus the creation of adequate protective measures and services for beneficiaries, it should be kept in mind that, as the Republic Institute for Social Protection notes, centers do not monitor their own data, and also do not have data for the entire corresponding population. The latest published annual report on the work of social welfare centers,⁹⁶ the one for 2011, due to deficiencies of data processing in situations when there is no data for specific services or beneficiaries, lacks the real picture on the broader, national level.⁹⁷ This serious deficiency not only calls into question the validity of report on the number and profile of beneficiaries and services of centers, but inevitably complicates the creation of adequate response to the needs of beneficiaries (including those at risk of trafficking) in the system of social protection.

When it comes to those victims of trafficking that centers in Serbia record, it is useful to look at the measures that they apply, and that most directly speak of the way in which the social protection system at the local level approaches the protection of victims and their social inclusion. When it comes to **financial social assistance**, as one of the rights in the area of social protection, a total of 17 trafficking victims in Serbia exercised this right in 2011, and it was almost exclusively in a form of one-off payments – to 13 of them, while only one victim

⁹⁶ *Annual report on the work of social welfare centers for 2011*, the Republic Institute, 2012.

⁹⁷ Data processing system does not distinguish "0" (no users) from " " (no data).

exercised the right to receive financial social assistance, and one exercised the right to increased financial social assistance. When it comes to other types of **financial aid**, in-kind assistance was dominant (opposite to subvention).⁹⁸ In addition to financial aids and financial assistance, as the organ of guardianship, center has various **measures of family-legal protection** available. Out of a total of 48 registered victims of trafficking in 2011, centers applied some of the prescribed measures in 31 case - usually appointment of a temporary guardian, as was expected because children make up the majority of victims, followed by appointment of a guardian and measures of protection against domestic violence, while the least frequent was supervision over the exercise of parental rights.⁹⁹ All 48 persons stayed in some kind of **accommodation** available in the social security system – the dominant form of housing accommodation was in a shelter or reception facility (28 persons), followed by "some other type of accommodation" (11), followed by accommodation with another family (5), residential accommodation and accommodation with the extended family. In the context of deinstitutionalization, further strengthening of the capacity for emergency foster care should probably be expected, especially given the long-standing lack of capacity and resources of existing institutions for urgent admission. As for the jobs of **assessment and planning, service of urgent intervention**, and providing **advisory-therapeutic services**, centers do not keep records on the structure of beneficiaries by affiliation to beneficiary and particularly vulnerable groups, while the number of implemented prevention and support programmes is assessed as low.¹⁰⁰

From the quantitative data at the level of Serbia, as well as from the insights of representatives of various systems (including SWCs), social protection sector does not have sufficiently developed capacities to lead the rounded process of protection at the local level, which includes early recognition, adequate records, rehabilitation, urgent care, short-term reintegration and long-term programmes of social inclusion. Unfortunately, when it comes to trafficking, centers still have a largely reactive role, and the measures that they apply are mostly exhausted in the repairing of consequences and providing short-term assistance. The activities of social welfare centers of the cities involved in the project will be discussed in more detail later, in the section of the report on the monitoring activities that will be transferred in its original form.

Apart from the centers, other **social protection institutions** play a key role, especially when it comes to taking care of victims. Accommodation and protection of victims occur in the context of social protection reform – the transformation of institutions, deinstitutionalization, development of local services, which influences often lack of long-term, systematic and adequate solutions. The shape and quality of protection of victims is thus uneven in quality and varies from city to city.

In **Novi Sad**, there is a Shelter for children victims of violence and neglect, which is also housing children victims of trafficking. At one point, the Safe House for women victims of

⁹⁸ *Annual report on the work of social welfare centers for 2011*, p. 63-64.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

violence also accepted human trafficking victims, and the costs of their accommodation were covered with funds from a project funded by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This practice was discontinued due to the cessation of funding, and there are estimates that victims of trafficking should not be placed in the same area as women victims of domestic violence.

In **Sremska Mitrovica** there is no Shelter or a Safe House, and expected solution should be the opening of a Safe House of regional character (for Srem) for victims of domestic violence, but if necessary, also for other victims.

Subotica, also, despite the existence of need lacks reception facility and accommodation for both trafficking victims and for victims of violence. Children were, until a few months ago, placed into Home for Abandoned Children "Cradle".

In **Vranje**, the Center for development of local social protection services was established in 2008, it is under the jurisdiction of the City, and was created by transforming a home for children without parental care. Within the center, there are Reception Facility (shelter) for Children and Youth, Reception Facility (shelter) for adults and the elderly, shelter for victims of domestic violence and day care center for children and youth with special needs. So, within the same building, different types of emergency accommodation are solved – for victims of violence, for urgent housing of families left without accommodation, for the children victims of violence until a foster family is found.

In **Kraljevo**, as the focus group participants pointed out, one of the biggest problems are accommodation and protection of victims. The lack of Safe House and shelter are spanned by placing the victims in two urgent foster families (one for children and one for adults), or, if that is not possible, victim is referred to Kragujevac.

In **Kragujevac**, which is often mentioned as one of the most successful examples of a functioning intersectoral collaboration and social protection reform, a city Center for development of social protection services exists since 2011. Several services of social protection are being provided there, and in the context of prevention of trafficking and protection of victims it is necessary to single out the existence of day care center for children from families at risk, day care center for children and youth with behavioral problems, as well as two regional type of shelters - for children and youth, and for victims of domestic violence.

In **Nis**, as the participants of focus group interview pointed out, the accommodation for potential victims is one of the biggest problems they face. In fact, victims of trafficking, along with victims of domestic violence, had available accommodation in Nis at the Shelter, in the Center Dusko Radovic. However, the newly formed Safe House, which was supposed to represent the advanced solution for accommodation and protection of victims of trafficking compared to the Center, does not perform reception of victims of trafficking, which left Nis as a regional center without a system solution for accommodation, although accommodative capacity in the Safe House exists.

When it comes to minors, there is a Center for accommodation of unaccompanied minor foreigners, within the Institution for Education of Children and Youth, which provides primary reception and further proceedings, depending on whether the child wants to return to the country of origin or seeks asylum. Nis' Center has a capacity of only 10 places for male beneficiaries. Within the same institution, there is also an accommodation for children and youth in conflict with parents, carers and the community.¹⁰¹

The participants of focus group interviews from all the systems have pointed out that the protection of victims and their accommodation are one of the key challenges they face, so it will be further discussed in the next section of the report.

Furthermore, participants of focus group interviews were senior public prosecutors and deputies from **Higher Public Prosecutor's Office** of the cities where the project is implemented. It was estimated by the participants that prosecutors are more sensitized and aware of this criminal offence, and they have shown themselves not only familiarity with the cases, but also wider awareness of the field of trafficking, including the causes and risks of victimization, as well as adequate protection of victims. Some of the prosecutors pointed out that the Court began to understand this crime more seriously, and that a higher level of training has led to a better understanding of the seriousness, organization and financial interest that are often behind this act, including its clear distinction from violations of order (prostitution). However, opinions on the effectiveness of the judicial process and work of the courts are not uniform – as some of the prosecutors, deputies and police officers point out, further work is needed in this area, especially in the domain of the protection of victims during the trial, simplification of attestation and testimony, and acceleration of the court processes. This corresponds to the situation at the national level, where the number of completed trials and the lengthening of sentences slowly started to increase just in the last few years. Thus, according to data published annually by the Department of State for the offense of trafficking 40 persons were convicted during 2009.; 27 - 2010, 42 - 2011.; 47 – 2012. Length of sentence also increased – from an average of two to four years in 2009. to sentence of February 2013. when the sentences of 10 to 15 years in prison were awarded for members of organized criminal group, along with a fine of more than 73,000 dollars, which is one of the most severe penalties adjudicated in Serbia.¹⁰² Assessment of contact persons, for the cases of trafficking, in each public prosecutor's office should contribute to the improvement of the status and rights of victims in the justice system, and consequent prosecution.

It is encouraging that some prosecutors and deputies who participated in focus groups show an excellent understanding of the complexity of the issues of trafficking, can map the deficiencies in the protection of victims, the need for additional training of their own, and interpret their role wider – that they should contribute to the empowerment of victims, including for example encouraging victims to file a claim for compensation, and care for victim's safety if the defendant is not in custody, especially if safe accommodation for the victim is not provided. One of examples is certainly the commitment of senior prosecutor

¹⁰¹ Regulation on the network of institutions "Official Gazette of RS", No. 16/2012 and 12/2013.

¹⁰² Department of State, TIP reports.

from Kraljevo, who engaged in solving the problem of accommodation for victims in this city – lack of adequate accommodation exposes the victim to risks of retraumatization and revictimization, and violates her right to security, and one of the consequence of that is an uncertain outcome of the trial. Prosecutors pointed out a valuable cooperation with associations, on empowering the victims, finding accommodation, assistance during the process, as well as with the police in obtaining evidence.

Local government is certainly an important actor in the field of decision-making, that regulates wider related areas – social protection, social care of children and so on. Previous Strategy and National Plan of Action to combat trafficking, have, in line with the trend of decentralization of social protection, envisaged education activities for representatives of local government, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government. However, the reform of social protection acquired a legal framework in 2011, with the adoption of the Law on Social Protection, and only then were responsibilities of local government in the sphere of social protection defined (primarily funding of daily services in the community, advisory-therapeutic and socio-educative services), and for the first time, the victims of trafficking were explicitly listed as beneficiaries of social protection. The fact that this happened after the expiration of former Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Trafficking surely had an impact on the fact that local government representatives are not thoroughly familiar with human trafficking. New Strategy for the prevention and suppression of trafficking and protection of victims, and Action Plan to 2018. predict more concrete measures at the local level – the appointment of local coordinator and the creation of local cooperation mechanism, again with the involvement of the Ministry responsible for local government. This transfer of jurisdiction (including financial responsibility) corresponds to trends at the national level – as mentioned in the previous part, local governments have recently started to significantly contribute to the financing of social welfare centers they founded .

Systemic changes of the role of local government in social protection require fundamental change of approach – from financial aid for disadvantaged students, or funding transportation for children with disabilities, to a more proactive attitude in providing and financing services. What local actors – focus group participants already see as the responsibility of local government, when it comes to trafficking is definitely participation in the provision of accommodation (although accommodation for victims of trafficking, by the Law on Social Protection, should be financed from the state budget) , by opening dedicated accommodation, or adaptation and pooling resources with existing accommodation for victims of domestic violence, help in working engagement of victims in the process of reintegration, and allocation of funds for financial assistance to victims who are in need.

The **education system** is recognized by the participants of focus group interviews as an important actor in the prevention and detection. In general, the attitude of Red Cross representatives is that teachers and students in schools are well educated and informed, which is explainable by the fact that the Red Cross has, for many years, been conducting information and prevention activities precisely in collaboration with schools. However, representatives of other systems estimate that the role education system had so far in prevention, which mainly

consists only of the fact that schools are a place where informing on the subject of trafficking is carried out, is not enough. In addition to prevention, statement about the insufficient capacity of the education system is especially true when it comes to timely reaction to the risks of trafficking and early detection. The role of education system in the early recognition is evaluated as insufficient, and compared with their inaction and failure to report violence in schools. Employees in the education system did not take part in focus groups, and it would certainly be valuable and necessary to hear their knowledge of trafficking, seeing their role and the capacity and roles of other systems.

Representatives of the health system mostly did not single out any significant contact with the subject of trafficking, especially in comparison to other areas, in which more work was done on raising their capacities in recent years, such as domestic violence and protection of children from abuse and neglect. Thus, representatives of the health system mainly mentioned enactment of the General Protocol for the protection of children from abuse and neglect, which defines the steps in protection of children as a unique and intersectoral process, i.e. Special protocol for the health care system passed in 2009. They perceive child abuse and domestic violence as widespread phenomenons (which is certainly a result of sensitization) and most closely linked to the issue of trafficking. In order to respond to violence and protection of victims, specialized teams or counseling at health centers or networks of local institutions for the protection of victims of violence often exist. Already established infrastructure and expertise in the field of prevention and protection from violence, and sensitization on these issues, are certainly seen as a good starting point for responding to human trafficking within the health system. Thus, in the context of direct work with the population, the functioning of already established youth counseling services, within health centers, can help in early recognition of risks and detection of trafficking cases.

In addition to issues of violence, representatives of the health system, as well as other systems, mentioned practical problems in realizing the right to health protection of members of vulnerable groups who do not have health cards, as is often the case with victims of human trafficking. The need was recognized to, at the system level, with the National Health Insurance Fund, promote general improvement of access and quality of health care for vulnerable groups, to whom the victims of trafficking often belong on several basis.

Research findings also suggest that the representatives of the **National Employment Service** are not significantly familiar with the subject of trafficking, and are not seen as important actors by the representatives of other sectors. Although they have defined risk groups who have priority in employment, it seems that employees of the Service do not have actual experience when it comes to victims of trafficking (it is explicitly stated only in Sremska Mitrovica that there is cooperation with Atina). However, they were clearly recognized by the others as someone who can play a significant role in the later inclusion of victims in the labour market, and they suggested themselves certain financial measures, training (motivational activation training), and training programmes (similar to current Second Chance) that would be the answer of their Service to prevention and rehabilitation of the

consequences of trafficking. It should be noted that, although representatives of Service do not have significant knowledge of trafficking, or contact with the victims, that on the other hand they already have some capacities for the implementation of measures aimed at victims of violence, towards the Roma, people with disabilities, which of course is important both for work with potential victims and understanding of the complexity of the problem of trafficking.

Lack of knowledge of human trafficking, and insufficient capacities for detection within the education and health care system and employment services, are unfortunately accompanied by an insufficient recognition of the importance of these systems in the prevention, detection, and their crucial role for the later social inclusion of victims by other key actors - social protection system and police.

The local **Red Cross** organizations in all the cities have a very active role in the prevention, i.e. informing and education of children, youth and population which is considered to be at risk of trafficking. They have, for many years now, not long after the criminalization of trafficking, primarily with the police officers worked in the field of education and prevention, with a special focus on activities in October, the month of fight against human trafficking. In addition to primary and secondary schools, the Red Cross works with colleges, and training activities are the backbone of activity in the network of 167 organizations of Red Cross in Serbia. In addition to primary activities in schools, they work with the beneficiaries of soup kitchens and single parents.

Citizens' associations have been recognized as a very important actor in both prevention and protection. This is not surprising, given that the institutional capacities for trafficking are not sufficiently developed, and that the most important role in the protection of victims belongs to citizens' associations, who are actually providing specialized care and services – psychosocial support and reintegration programmes. Representatives of different systems, primarily prosecutor's office, police and social welfare centers, often mentioned valuable assistance and cooperation they have established in the area of victim protection, empowerment and assistance, during the proceeding and the provision of accommodation with **associations Atina and Astra**, as well as support programmes, social inclusion and long-term follow-up of victims by the association Atina. Some cases actually reach the local protection system through associations that operate at the national level – in Vranje, for example, was mentioned that the case of the group of men who were victims of labour exploitation, came to Vranje's SWC thanks to the support of Atina. Regarding the associations that operate at the local level, in seven cities involved in the project there are no associations that deal exclusively with issues of trafficking and social integration of victims, but those that have, for many years, been engaged in work with vulnerable groups are seen as first associates when it comes to this subject. In Kraljevo, that is the association **Fenomena**, that is mainly dealing with issues of gender discrimination, including violence against women; in Nis, **Osvit** is committed to working with the Roma population, and leads SOS hotline for women and children victims of domestic violence; "**Nexus**" in Vranje, working with vulnerable groups, including children, the Roma population, as well as with victims of violence; in Kragujevac, "**Oaza**" and "**Alternativni krug**" involved in the protection of women victims of domestic violence, and

intimate relationships; in Novi Sad, primarily **Novi Sad's Humanitarian Center**, which covers much larger geographic area with its activities, and is committed to working with vulnerable groups, including direct work with victims of trafficking, as well as **Ekumena humanitarian organization**, leading Shelter for children who are living and/or working on the streets; in Subotica, association **Stav +**, which works on improving the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS, and the **Roma's Education Center**; in Sremska Mitrovica, **Pro Vitae**.

As for the connection with actors outside the local community, communication with the **Agency for protection of victims of trafficking** was mainly emphasized, and most of all by the representatives of the police and social welfare centers, but some actors still do not treat it as a liability, but as an option (the prosecution). Also, the experience of cooperation with the Agency varies from city to city – while some members of the police emphasize fast reaction and going out to the field of Agency's representatives, some believe that the Agency does not provide adequate support, that the institutions at the local level are on their own, and that the identification is not sufficiently resolved (e.g. that recording of someone as a potential victim by the Agency is not a good solution, and it does not help in filing criminal charges and prosecution). These seemingly incompatible experiences can be explained by the fact that the Agency was, during a considerable period of time after its establishment, inoperable. Although it was, from the beginning,¹⁰³ the only one with a mandate to perform identification, which was a prerequisite to bring the victim in, and help her get rights in the system of social protection, including access to certain services without documents that would otherwise be required, the Agency has also for many years been almost non-functional, with a severe shortage of personnel and material resources. Even more recent reports of the U.S. Department of State for 2009, 2010. and 2011, almost a decade after the establishment of the Agency, are showing that the existing resources (e.g. two paid persons) to perform the official identification are far from their needs. This long delay in operation clearly influenced the perception of the Agency, and its cooperation with other actors – from arbitrary decisions about informing and involving the Agency, to the fact that it really can not offer an adequate support system.

A social welfare center definitely has a key role. If those who work there are not trained and interested to recognize it, we have nothing of it, the police can not enter into the family if they do not have any information.

Whenever we have some information, as soon as we hear sale, delivery, we make sure to inform the Agency, even before notifying the prosecutor of a potential victim...

Once the victim is with us, the first interview that we perform, we immediately notify the Agency, that sends us a team, within approximately 4 hours and/or SWC is notified.

When we suspect, we immediately inform Belgrade, and they without fail take over the victims, and they take them to Belgrade, they provide that, it is where the activity of the Social Welfare Center stops.

¹⁰³ The first instruction on the work of the Agency was issued in 2004, and the Agency has been integrated into the social protection system since 2005.

On several occasions, the Agency declared that someone is identified as a potential victim. Someone can not be held responsible for the crime, because of a potential victim. Confirmation arrives – so-and-so is identified as a potential victim, but we know that too, and they need to verify the suspicion. We can not report anyone because of the fact that someone is a potential victim.

Basic and major cooperation of the police is with the prosecutor's office, and the cooperation is good because oral consultation are always happening before starting the concrete work, criminal prosecution. At least in Nis, no charges for trafficking have been filed without, at least, a meeting and that is why it did not happen for a charge to be dismissed for the lack of elements of a crime. We need to be aware of this – the police and the prosecutor's office, without quality information that is the basis to prove something, can not work.

Some of my colleagues were in a situation when a judge does not know what trafficking is, and does not understand the subtlety of the criminal act. For example, the abuse of victims is long gone, if a victim of trafficking is sexually exploited, she can not be beaten, she must be ostensibly happy. When you bring a victim who is not beaten, it is harder to prove a crime.

The problem is not to engage the police in any case of suspected trafficking. But, the main task of the police is to, in addition to identifying a potential victim, refers the victim to someone who will work with her... The result of the police work, when it comes to trafficking is to discover the crime and its perpetrators. This means that, when the police learns about the crime, they should direct, involve, and so on. But also, NGOs and institutions should try to, through that work, help, conversation, interview, get the information .

School usually subsumes it under some anti-social behavior, failure to appear in school, and then center should be involved, to see what is behind it. But, if they only marked it as a possibility of existence of trafficking, people are not even aware of all the forms of trafficking.

We have no connection with that topic at the branch (Employment Service). We do not have a base, we do not know who those people are. Out of 22,000 unemployed in Raska district, we had the information about only one girl, and we helped her get a job.

In general, all the participants of focus group interviews agreed that the area of fight against human trafficking has been considerably improved in recent years. This is primarily related to **understanding the roles of different actors** and stages of this process, learning about the issues of trafficking and raising awareness among the general public about it. Speaking of human trafficking, professionals have often compared this subject with the subject of domestic violence, and the way in which the violence eventually became socially unacceptable, punishable and moved from the private sphere of the family into the public sphere and the area in which the reaction of state authorities is required. The key to this change was sensitization, learning and specialization of professionals. In the area of fight

against human trafficking, that advancement is primarily reflected in proper **understanding of the difference and the connection between begging, prostitution and trafficking**, which, among other things, results in the **termination and punishment** of victims for offenses committed as a direct result of victimization by trafficking. Within social security system, this should result in the **proper identification of victims** among the cases registered as neglect, conduct disorder, problematic family relationships. Furthermore, the police members noted better understanding and respect for **victims' rights** – providing safety, medical care, respect of will, and seeking the consent of the victim, transition from repressive to **preventive measures** and the beginning of direct contact with vulnerable groups for the work on prevention.

It should be kept in mind that these are findings that do not include the perspective of the victims themselves, and the people from their surroundings – these are mainly insights of representatives of the system, about their own, and the work of their colleagues. In order to get a complete picture, it would certainly be necessary to check exactly how much are the respective programmes of prevention, awareness raising and sensitization of actors really effective, in terms of victims and potential victims, and the achieved results.

Progress of the national response to human trafficking was, in the annual reports of the Department of State, recognized primarily in the area of penal policy tightening, improving the performance of the police work in proactive detection, general improvement of identification (which is certainly the basis for the protection of victims), introduction of protection of victims of trafficking in the social security system and national initiatives to raise awareness of human trafficking.

Only later did we learn to distinguish trafficking from prostitution –I am not sure if we had, a few years ago, put the cases immediately to the records of victims of trafficking, or did we only later, passing some of those seminars spread our views, and then realized who is the victim of trafficking...

We were able to spread awareness to the fact that if someone is engaged in prostitution does not mean the same person can not be a victim of trafficking. We have made that clear, because there are 3-4 completed criminal proceedings, where people were convicted as perpetrators of that crime. So the awareness is spread, we are trying to deepen and spread knowledge of that issue.

The issue of domestic violence is much more prevalent, but when we first started there was a lot of wandering with that part, whether or not to intervene and enter into the intimacy of the family, then it crystallized that it must be done, and the protection is being provided in better ways. So when it comes to trafficking, I think this is only the beginning, and that the work is yet to be done.

We need to speak openly about the presence of the phenomenon of trafficking, not hide it behind violence, exploitation... It was the same when it comes to violence – until a few years ago, there was no talk about violence, it was called dysfunctionality, disturbed family relationships and the like, and now the public speaks of the existence of violence.

The same is true for trafficking – we need to speak openly in order to work preventively, to make it leave the family; there is still a lack of knowledge of the phenomenon...

The first and basic thing – safety, security and health of the victim. No way should it happen that we do something without the consent of the victim and without her will. Even the protocols are not needed. It is the personal integrity, not just a professional obligation any longer, it is a personal understanding of responsibility for combating trafficking.

When the fight against human trafficking started, it went repressively, and we have achieved outstanding 'results'. But, we immediately realized that prevention is very important, took off the masks, and sat down with Roma association, told them openly that we are police officers who deal with this and that we now aim to work preventively. It was our goal to erase ignorance as a risk factor.

Social Welfare Centers as a key actor in the system of protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking

Within the project *Local communities in the fight against human trafficking*, a project activity, called *Monitoring the quality of social welfare centers' work in the protection of victims of human trafficking*, was realized, and the report on monitoring activities will be transferred here in its original form.

The work of centers in seven cities was monitored – places of origin or identification of victims of trafficking (Novi Sad, Subotica, Sremska Mitrovica, Nis, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Vranje). Although one of the goals of the project was creating a network of all relevant actors at the level of local community, and based on its needs and possibilities, with the idea to provide more effective preventive action, as well as effective protection of victims that can be achieved only within the framework of multi-sectoral collaboration, social welfare centers are recognized as the most important actors in the local network. Given the mandates they have (especially in relation to minors and persons under guardianship protection), and as of recently an explicit legal norm according to which victims of trafficking are identified as beneficiaries of social protection services,¹⁰⁴ social welfare centers are undoubtedly a key system in providing protection to victims of trafficking and in prevention of victimization by this phenomenon (in terms of vulnerable groups whose members normally appear as beneficiaries of social welfare centers' services), which makes the interest in monitoring and evaluation of their activities in terms of the protection and welfare of beneficiaries – victims of trafficking, clear.

However, interest in the activities of social welfare centers has its stronghold in the criticism leveled toward the social welfare centers in the past, when it comes to their treatment in cases of human trafficking (at all levels – from identification, to providing protection to the victims

¹⁰⁴ See Article 41, paragraph 2, point 7, and paragraph 3, point 4 of the Law on Social Protection, "Official Gazette", No. 24/2011.

and, of course, prevention of victimization, in the cases of working with members of vulnerable groups). Most criticisms were related to not performing its own, very important, and even exclusive jurisdictions in the sphere of direct assistance to victims, lack of knowledge of the existence of national referral mechanism of victims of trafficking, and of the existence of the Agency for the protection of victims of human trafficking and its mandates, as well as the phenomenon of human trafficking.¹⁰⁵

Social Welfare Center is an institution of social protection which, in accordance with the regulations, makes decisions on the exercise of rights of beneficiaries, and provides services to beneficiaries in accordance with the law, and regulations based on the law. In the exercise of public jurisdictions, the center is, as a social protection institution and as a guardianship organ, acting in accordance with the norms and standards established by the Rulebook on the organization, norms and standards of the Social Welfare Center's work.¹⁰⁶ In carrying out other tasks stipulated by the law, the center acts in accordance with the standards and regulations set by the competent authority of the local government. In the exercise of public authorization, the center, in accordance with the law: a) decides on the exercise of rights of beneficiaries in the system of social protection, and other aspects of protection of beneficiaries, assigned to it as public authorizations, b) performs other work within the public authorization, relating to the protection of beneficiaries, in accordance with the Family Law, and other activities in accordance with the law, and c) in exercise of public authorization, provides services of social work, and institutes legal proceedings when authorized to do so.

Social Welfare Center is required to provide transparency of its work, to, in the exercise of rights and provision of services, respect human rights and dignity of beneficiaries, and to provide to beneficiaries protection from discrimination and availability of services. Availability of services is provided by the center through coordination of activities with other public services, charities, citizens' associations and other organizations in the local community, and through informing citizens in various available ways, highlighting the address and contact information, etc. Also, in accordance with the Rulebook, the center is required to develop preventive programmes in the community, that contribute to meeting the individual and collective needs of the citizens, i.e. preventing and combating social problems in the community. In addition, the center is required to participate in the development of social functions of the community, by participating in planning and community development. All personal and family information about beneficiary are confidential information.

Within the new organization of the Social Welfare Center's work, which was introduced by the said Rulebook, and is supported by the Law on Social Protection, the duty of social welfare center to coordinate the protection of beneficiaries in the local community, in accordance with the needs and current status of beneficiaries, is defined. These tasks,

¹⁰⁵ Galonja A., Jovanovic S., *Protection of Victims and Prevention of Human Trafficking*, Joint Program UNHCR, UNODC and IOM for combating human trafficking in Serbia. Kljajic, S., Jovanovic, V., *Analysis of the functioning of the Agency for coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims* (draft), Joint Program UNHCR, UNODC and IOM for combating human trafficking in Serbia, Belgrade, January 2011, p. 33. <http://www.ungiftserbia.org>

¹⁰⁶ Rulebook on the organization, norms and standards of the Social Welfare Center's work, "Official Gazette of RS", No. 59/2008 and 37/2010;

in direct protection of individual beneficiary, are performed by the expert of social welfare center, who works in a position of case manager. "The case manager is the expert in charge of a particular case, who evaluates and coordinates the process of the assessment of needs of a specific beneficiary, takes actions, and coordinates the process of taking measures to protect and support the beneficiary, using potentials of the center and other services and resources in the local community."¹⁰⁷ In the coordination of activities, carried out by the social welfare center, within the above mentioned activities in the local community, other experts of the center, as well as the heads of departments and the director of the center, also participate.

Such extensive and, it is safe to say, exclusive authorizations of social welfare center, are also related to the support and protection of victims of trafficking, as well as beneficiary groups of the social welfare center. Given the fact that the victims of trafficking have been identified as beneficiaries of the social security system only after the adoption of the Law on Social Protection in 2011, and considering the complexity of the phenomenon of human trafficking, a legitimate question is raised on exactly how qualified social welfare centers are at the moment, when it comes to both organization and personnel, to adequately respond to complexity of the needs of victims of trafficking. There is also a question of whether the local community, including the Social Welfare Center, has resources for active support to victims of trafficking and combating this phenomenon. This question is particularly relevant in the context of the implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent and Suppress Human Trafficking and Protect its Victims, which is in the process of adoption and provides decentralization of many activities, where the operation and coordination of local institutions and organizations is of crucial importance. Also, since 2012, the new institution of social protection functions in the social protection system, Center for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, which is the only one authorized to perform the identification of victims of trafficking through its organizational unit – the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims, and perform coordination activities to protect specific victims, with a clear division of roles with the social welfare center in coordination, and with the involvement of other actors whose activities can provide adequate support to victims of human trafficking.

For the functioning of social welfare center, in the field of prevention and protection of victims of trafficking, another important act is the Instruction on the work of social welfare center in protecting victims of trafficking, which is issued by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, and applied since April 2007.

Point 3 of the Instruction states that it is the duty of Social Welfare Center to protect the victims in every concrete situation, but also to, when it is assumed that a person is a victim, cooperate with the Agency for Coordination. Social Welfare Center is due to prepare a plan for the protection of victim, along with the Agency, and, if necessary, also include the organization to which the victim was referred to for accommodation, with the

¹⁰⁷ Rulebook on the organization, norms and standards of the Social Welfare Center's work, Article 31: "Official Gazette of RS", No. 59/2008 and 37/2010;

obligatory participation of the victim in the planning process (point 5 of the Instruction). Point 6 states: "Social Welfare Center is due to, in accordance with the circumstances of each individual situation, protect the victims, take measures, activities and tasks within its jurisdiction, that relate to: the right to financial support, the right to assistance in vocational training, the right to placement in a social protection institution or another family, the right to equip the beneficiary for placement in a social protection institution or another family, the right to one-off help, the right to social welfare services (preventive activity, diagnosis, treatment and advisory-therapeutic work), child protection, family protection, supervision of the exercise of parental rights, deprivation of parental rights, foster care (also refers to the temporary protection of personality, rights and interests of minor foreign nationals, as well as to adult foreign nationals who are unable to protect their own rights and interests), deprivation of legal capacity and protection from domestic violence."¹⁰⁸

Given the complexity and comprehensiveness of the protection of victims of trafficking, in a context that is current in Serbia, it is important to consider the operation of social welfare centers, in view of its key role in the protection of victims of trafficking.

Understanding of the phenomenon and national referral mechanism

When it comes to questions regarding the phenomenon of human trafficking, and its characteristics, respondents gave answers that suggest that the phenomenon is known to them. It could be concluded that the implemented seminar and long-standing presence of this theme in the media gave positive results.

However, when it comes to additional questions on how they see the impact of the phenomenon on a particular person, there were difficulties in understanding the impact of human trafficking on psychophysical functioning of the victim. Understanding the phenomenon indicates that the effects of human trafficking are somewhat equalized with the effects of domestic violence or abuse/neglect of a child. There was some uncertainty in the centers, regarding the role of this institution when it comes to the phenomenon of human trafficking – the experts are not sure of the frames of their jurisdiction, will the jurisdiction of the center be exceeded if they take measures to protect the victim, if there are no "safe" indications that this is indeed a victim of human trafficking.

All respondents were familiar with the criminal dimension of the phenomenon. It seems that the respondents give this dimension greater importance (in the sense that this is primarily a criminal justice, not social issue), highlighting the need for more effective prosecution of perpetrators, which should not be the focus of interest and the subject of particular interest of the social welfare center, because it shifts the focus from the victim and her needs. Answers to additional questions, which were aimed to get more specific information on the phenomenon,

¹⁰⁸ Provisions of the Instruction are cited according to the study of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy from 2011. (whose author is D. Cukic-Vlahovic). It should be kept in mind that in the content of point 6 of Instruction, that is listed here, a terminology is used from then applicable law. Although the current law defines the rights and services differently, the content of tasks remains current.

for example, on the forms of human trafficking, means of coercion, were usually partial, given after a short reflection. All respondents stated that they need additional training on the phenomenon of human trafficking, as well as associates with whom they could consult on all issues relevant to detection and support of victims on a participatory basis. They believe that these consultations would help them to adequately utilize the knowledge and skills they have, and develop new ones in, for them still new, area of work. In two centers (Vranje and Subotica) it was pointed out that the phenomenon of human trafficking is still new for the social security system, and that in the past (before the adoption of the Law on Social Protection) there must have been cases of human trafficking who were not identified as such in the system. The lack of professional guidelines and policies is pointed out, primarily by the Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Policy, by professional institutions and bodies (the National Institute for Social Security, for instance).

When it comes to the knowledge of referral mechanism, answers of respondents from different centers vary. It is clearly seen that those professionals who have attended some of the seminars held recently have better knowledge of the mechanism, while the others (majority) emphasized the lack of knowledge of it, and that they would need additional information and practical guidances on the treatment. The majority of respondents stated that they are not fully familiar with the role of other public institutions and non-governmental organizations in the referral mechanism, or with the procedures applied within the existing mechanism. They are familiar with the procedure for, say, the provision of humanitarian stay, but only at the level of information, while the process of regulation of this stay is unknown to them, except at the center in Vranje, that had one case this year, in which they regulated humanitarian stay. It seems that a direct experience of centers is one of the "safest" ways of remembering operating procedures.

In terms of knowledge of the work of NGOs in the field of human trafficking, it is interesting that social welfare centers are not familiar enough with the work of NGOs at the local level, although they are their closest available associates in the local community. Generally, they inform that "the existing ones are not working with the victims", and that they otherwise have a good cooperation with them on other issues. When asked whether they have ever initiated starting programmes of support to the victims of human trafficking with these organizations, the answer is that they have not, and that they have a small number of those beneficiaries, which is one of the reasons for such an approach. In all the centers it was noted that experts are overloaded with other tasks and obligations, and do not have enough time to devote themselves to training and informing on the phenomenon of human trafficking as much as it is needed.

When it comes to work of non-governmental organizations at the national level, it was stated that they know of two such organizations, NGO Atina and NGO Astra. They are particularly well acquainted with the work of Atina, through the current project of network development, but also through previous contacts in direct assistance to victims. When asked if they knew what programmes are being implemented by these two organizations, and what kind of assistance would they address them for, they mainly answered that they do not have

information on that, but they know that they are dealing with human trafficking, and that is why they would consult them.

Given that, as of July 2012, a new institution of social protection functions, the Center for the protection of victims of human trafficking, this institution has in practice become a part of the national referral mechanism, and, at the same time, a change to the existing mechanism has not yet been made (which is planned by the Strategy that is in the process of adoption). Center for the protection of victims of human trafficking, immediately upon its start, submitted a notice on its work to all social protection institutions in writing, and in particular on the work of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims, which is the active organizational unit of the Center. Only social welfare centers in Kraljevo and Vranje informed their employees about the work of this institution at the collegiate conference.

We understood that, if it is a victim of human trafficking in question, they (Center for the protection of victims of human trafficking) take over the case. Ours is just to inform them. The Center does all the work.

The answer of the respondent reveals an inadequate understanding of the transmitted information. Only one center, the Social Welfare Center in Kraljevo, shows a complete knowledge of the work of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims.

It can be concluded that social welfare centers do not have the necessary extent of knowledge when it comes to the national mechanism of referral of victims of human trafficking, which reduces their capacity for adequate and timely support to victims of trafficking who are their beneficiaries.

As for the factors of victimization by human trafficking (within the local community), all participants have shown that they are good at recognizing risk factors for entry into human trafficking, and the answers were generally uniform. As most vulnerable groups of citizens, due to presence of multiple risk factors, were cited: the youth, especially girls, the poor, the unemployed, members of Roma population, internally displaced persons, victims of domestic violence, abused, neglected children, mentally underdeveloped, drug addicts...).

Social welfare centers, whose work has been monitored, are usually passive when it comes to detection of trafficking victims (recognizing victims, suspicion that it is a victim in question in a given case, which entails a duty to inform the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims for purposes of identification). Reports were (in the period) sent only by the social welfare centers from Subotica (2 reports, in August 2012, and July 2013) and Kraljevo (2 reports, in April 2013).

Passivity of other monitored centers, when it comes to reporting (potential) victims of human trafficking, is confirmed by the reports for the period of August, September, November of 2012.¹⁰⁹ and reports for six months of 2013.¹¹⁰ True, according to these reports on the identification of victims, the situation is not different in other social welfare centers either.

¹⁰⁹ Reports for October and December were not available

¹¹⁰ Reports and statistics <http://www.centarzztlj.rs/index.php/statistika>

However, compared to the previous period, in 2013. there were several reported cases of (potential) victims. In addition to already mentioned reports from Subotica and Kraljevo, reports were sent by social welfare centers from Kovin and Loznica, and one unnamed center (for a total of 6 reports, while 74 charges were filed for that period of time, most often by the police). It should be mentioned that the police departments, of the cities whose social welfare centers' work was monitored, filed charges. Thus, in 2013. charges were filed by PD Kragujevac (1), PD Sremska Mitrovica (4), PD Novi Sad (3), PD Nis (3). In the year before that, according to existing reports for three months, there was 41 charge, and only one came from a city that was the cause (by the Social Welfare Center in Subotica). It is clear that the police are in this area as well (detection and addressing to the Center for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking) still the most active, which may imply (persistent) overbalance of the criminal dimension of the phenomenon (although identification of a victim is not dependent on the existence of the possibility of prosecution in a present case). Respondents frequently pointed out that the police are the one who first come into contact with the victim. Respondents perceive the cases in which it is possible to detect a victim in situations "when they report for the documents, so there is an indirect information that it may be a victim in question", but the data were not presented on whether the police or other institutions, including the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking, were informed of that suspicion. In the case from Vranje, Atina was the one who referred adult males, the victims of labour exploitation in Chechnya, the residents of Vranje, to the Social Welfare Center, in order to exercise the rights to financial aid.

Social Welfare Center achieves the identification of potential victims of human trafficking through the process of assessing the condition and needs of the beneficiary. According to the method of case management, which is the basic method of operation of the social welfare center, and indicates a "systemic approach in social work, which includes activities of assessment, arranging access to services, planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of services that need to respond to the needs of specific beneficiaries",¹¹¹ the evaluation indicates an organized process of data collection, identification and assessment of problems, needs, strengths and risks, of a situation and persons involved, which gradually develops in order to determine the objectives of work with a beneficiary, and necessary services and measures.¹¹² The same Rulebook, in section IV – Standards for Case Management, defines procedures for evaluation (initial and focused evaluation), process of planning services (initial plan, plan of services and measures for family, plan for adults and the elderly...) and implementation of services, as well as re-inspection and re-evaluation of plan. Also, which is important for the monitoring of social welfare center's work, Rulebook defines prioritization of responses on three levels: *urgent*, *immediate* and *regular*.¹¹³

In the focus group interviews, all centers stated that the evaluation process is done in accordance with the Rulebook, but they do not always have time to document the process in

¹¹¹ Rulebook on the organization, norms and standards of the Social Welfare Center's work, Article 2, paragraph 5, "Official Gazette of RS" No. 59/2008, 37/2010 and 39/2011.

¹¹² Rulebook on the organization, norms and standards of the Social Welfare Center's work, Article 2, paragraph 8, "Official Gazette of RS" No. 59/2008, 37/2010 and 39/2011.

¹¹³ Rulebook on the organization, norms and standards of the Social Welfare Center's work, Article 50, "Official Gazette of RS" No. 59/2008, 37/2010 and 39/2011.

the manner provided by the Rulebook – by structuring data from the evaluation through an evaluation form or through finding and opinion. This also applies to the evaluation in case of suspicion on human trafficking – the vast majority of respondents stated or confirmed that, in the realization of evaluation in cases of suspicion on human trafficking there is no documented process in accordance with the Rulebook.

Usually we do not have evaluation. We do it all in our heads, but do not find the time to record everything as required. There is a lot of paperwork, and we do not have the time to write everything down. Besides, the most important thing is to provide help to beneficiary, and we will document what was done when we find the time. We are swamped with cases, and often do not even get to write it all down. The best is to ask the case manager for all the information, he knows all about the beneficiary.

It is interesting that, during the analysis of files, in a number of cases it was determined that there are completed forms of evaluation, and that the level of priority of response was set, which employees themselves have forgotten all about. It appears that the experts of the center have a stereotypical way of thinking about their work and commitment, in the famous cliché "we do not have the time, we are overloaded with work", so even when they carry out a professional process in accordance with the Rulebook and profession, they are not aware of it.

The experts of social welfare center conduct the evaluation process, in cases of suspected human trafficking, or when working with already identified victim of human trafficking, in accordance with the basic professional principles and guidelines by areas of evaluation for children and youth, and adults and the elderly.¹¹⁴ All the experts state that, in the evaluation of needs of beneficiaries with the experience of trafficking, or in a case of suspected trafficking, there are no defined criteria or adopted indicators for the evaluation in the system, which would be valid for the whole social security system and used as "tools" for good evaluation of this group of beneficiaries. Everyone thinks that it is necessary for the social welfare center to have defined indicators that apply to them, but also defined indicators that would be applied by other participants in the process of evaluation and support, as well as specific indicators that would be applied by the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims in identification of victims of trafficking (last paragraph was adopted after the previous familiarization of respondents with the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking, and cases of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims).

Respondents emphasize that they lack the necessary professional knowledge when it comes to the evaluation of needs and identification of risks, especially in the safety of beneficiaries

¹¹⁴ Experts from SWC must attend training by an accredited training program "Social Welfare Center in the Protection of Trafficking Victims" (authors: Dragan Vulevic, Sanja Kljajic, Vladan Jovanovic and Marijana Savic), which defines the area of evaluation of needs and status for children and youth and adults and elderly beneficiaries. These areas are determined in accordance with holistic approach to individual, systemic and development approach, and include key areas of development and forming of a person from birth to old age. During evaluation, risk factors for proper psychophysical development of a person are determined (including individual, family and environment effects), its functioning and safety in the community, i.e. meeting the needs of beneficiaries, and on the basis of established conclusions and reached decisions, measures and services are determined through a collaborative approach to the beneficiary, which are necessary to meet the needs and stabilize the individual and the family.

with experience in human trafficking. They also do not govern the processes and procedures within the mechanism of referral of victims of trafficking, at the operational level.

As one of the difficulties in identifying victims of human trafficking in the social protection system, respondents cited lack of recognition of victims by other actors in the community, who are often the first to come into contact with the victim.

One of the difficulties in identifying victims of human trafficking, that interviewed experts point out, is related to cultural diversity and the so-called "common law of the Roma", referring to the early establishment of a "community of life" of Roma girls under the age of 16. Experts express uncertainty about the need for response, not realizing the obligation to protect the interests and rights of children who are threatened by that life scenario, both in terms of children's rights defined by the international Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in terms of "welfare rights" granted by the Family Law. They also have difficulty in assessing the vulnerability of the rights and interests of children in these situations, which, combined with the aforementioned uncertainty regarding the acceptance and tolerance of cultural diversity, makes reaction of center significantly reduced in these situations,¹¹⁵ and the protection of interests and rights of children inadequate.

The common law of the Roma is being normalized. (Kragujevac)

When they refer to the common law, I do not know what to do, whether they have the right to do it because it is part of their tradition.

A girl goes to another city, "gets married", has a child, and she is not even 14 years old, and no one is paying attention to that. (Kragujevac)

Sometimes, while working with a family, you may suspect that there is a victim of trafficking. (Kraljevo)

It was said, in Social Welfare Center in Kraljevo, that each case of "married" Roma child is being reported to prosecutor's office, because "such custom should not be allowed". However, there were no information on what happened with those reports later on.

It was stressed that the citizens (in Vranje) do not have enough knowledge of this phenomenon. The cases of abuse are possibly reported to the police, and the police refers to the social welfare center.

None of the social welfare centers reported these cases to the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking, for the sake of identification.

As a problem of evaluation in the context of human trafficking, also tied to the Roma population, the problem of begging by minors is also stated, especially young children (under the age of 10). The dilemma of experts here is not so much in evaluation – they consider it to be an endangered safety of children and forced begging, as in how to avoid reacting because

¹¹⁵ Center for the protection of victims of trafficking, in the process of identification, classifies this type of behavior in the corpus of behavior within the criminal act of human trafficking, determines the status of victim of human trafficking to juvenile Roma women (exploited or potentially exploited).

they do not recognize how the system can adequately provide support to children and their parents. Respondents agree that begging is a wider social phenomenon, and the social welfare center is not able to respond adequately.

A review of a case from 4-5 years ago, of the social welfare center,¹¹⁶ where experts estimated that it is a case of human trafficking, but the documentation of this evaluation is missing – children were not identified as victims of trafficking, and the case was processed at the social welfare center within the treatment of children exposed to neglect and abuse by parents. The case relates to the abuse of children for forced begging:

Father gave children (a boy and a girl) to someone in Montenegro for 500 euros each, to beg. They begged for a year, and then were "in a terrible state" placed in a local Shelter, and Social Welfare Center was alerted. The children were educationally neglected, illiterate, "the girl did not know how to pronounce even 16 sounds". Expert from the center took over the children from Montenegro (without regulating temporary guardianship, he crossed the border without passport control and required documentation). Children were placed in a foster family, and are now going to school. Social Welfare Center did not submit any complaint against the parents of the children, not even for abuse of parental rights. Agency for Coordination of Protection of Human Trafficking Victims was not contacted, and there are no information on whether there was any proceeding. There are eight children in the family, and the parental right is not limited to any one of them (correctional supervision over the exercise of parental rights, temporary guardianship or guardianship protection...).

This review shows apparent omissions of social welfare center, as well as other services and public institutions that were able to react and take action within its jurisdiction. The dreaded fate of two children was more than enough alarm for enhanced care and protection of other children in the family.

This case can be seen as an illustration of many similar cases where social welfare center failed to timely recognize the endangerment of development needs and the rights of a child, and to take appropriate protective measures. At the same time, this is a "classic" case of failure to recognize the phenomenon of child-victim, when parents appear on the side of offenders. Although it is known that the father even took the money to "rent" children for begging, the process of identification was not initiated, neither was a legal action taken by the social welfare center. This conclusion could be added the one on the "normalization of Roma customs", and of course insufficient care and focus on Roma families, especially in terms of prevention, although they are recognized as one of the risk groups in terms of human trafficking.

Other cases of suspected human trafficking were also mentioned, but due to the lack of elements for report, the cases were not reported to the police. From the description of events and actions, it appears that they were not reported to the Center for Protection of Victims, or the Agency. This also leads to the conclusion that criminal dimension of the problem in cases

¹¹⁶ Information on the center and closer information on the case are not shown in order to protect data confidentiality. For the purpose of checking data sources address the authors of the analysis

of detection of victims still has the upper hand in understanding the concept of victimization. If a case does not arouse interest of the police, identification fails.

A woman, victim of domestic violence, was placed into a safe house with light injuries. Says that she is not really a victim of domestic violence, that she made it all up to get revenge on her husband because of an argument. After a week, she goes home.

In this case there was a suspicion that the husband was pimping her – forced her to provide sexual services. Since information were obtained informally, the center did not find a reason to report the case to the police, although there is clearly a reasonable doubt that the woman was a victim of violence or coercion, which are the elements of a crime for which the police could take an interest in, and deeper insight into the family situation, interviews with neighbors, etc., could help reach more complete information. Thus, the victim, who was likely out of fear hiding the true state of things, was left on her own. It seems that the employees often retain on the surface, on information obtained from the victim, which may be incorrect due to various reasons, such as fear of the greater evil, lack of trust in institutions, and failure to establish a relationship of trust with the interviewer. Simply put, if a person denies being a victim, despite the existence of doubt to credibility of the statement, there will usually be no further proceeding in cases of domestic violence and human trafficking.

It is a public secret that high-school girls are pimped in B., they are brought there by car and prostituted. It is known that a guy comes to the coffee shop by car, and drives them there.

And nothing is being done on this issue in the community.

It can be concluded that the passivity of social welfare centers in identifying, and participating in the identification of victims of trafficking, is in part the result of underdeveloped competencies, but also in significant part the result of disregard of the aforementioned Instruction on actions in the protection of victims of trafficking.

When it comes to working on support for victims of trafficking, social welfare centers strive to respect the methodology of work, starting with the planning of service, based on the conclusions on the needs of beneficiaries. A situation was repeated here as well, that most respondents claim that individual service plan is not always composed, although the analysis of files affirms that individual service plans are made for a significant number of beneficiaries. They cite that it is complicated to make an initial service and plan of measures for each beneficiary, and to later make a more comprehensive plan of activity.

The initial service plan is aimed at ensuring operation of the social welfare center, implementation of necessary measures and services at the very beginning of work with a beneficiary, in order to ensure the efficiency of work, and timely meet the identified needs of a beneficiary. In discussing the planning of work with victims of human trafficking, it was evident that the center's experts have difficulty in recognizing the needs of trafficking victims that should be answered first, and then the resulting difficulties in defining the method and implementation of services and measures to be taken. Difficulties arise in defining priorities

of reaction – a situation that is not a priority is often identified as one, or reports are disregarded and response is much longer than is necessary.

Particular confusion arises about deciding on the implementation of measures in the field of family legal protection, mostly in the part of implementation of measures of guardianship protection and temporary guardianship, when it comes to children victims of trafficking. It is evident that in these cases centers usually occupy two opposite attitudes, depending on their own experience and fear of failure (fear of failure is related to an order that the Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Policy or the Provincial Secretariat for Social Security could send in a concrete case if the beneficiary's record is referred on appeal to appellate process). Measures are implemented uncritically and unnecessarily, which can lead to repressive decisions, or they are not being implemented at all, and the protection is carried out without an adequate framework. In both cases, child protection is inefficient, untimely and without corresponding effects on a child victim of trafficking. It is the same with adult beneficiaries with the experience of trafficking, where the implementation of measures and legal regulations is also absent. This is particularly indicative given that social welfare centers are good at recognizing risk factors for the development and safety of children and adult beneficiaries¹¹⁷ and provide a quality description of characteristics of vulnerable groups of beneficiaries.

In implementation of necessary services and activities of support, it seems that social welfare centers in the local community do not have a choice of services that are appropriate to the needs of victims of trafficking. In almost all areas, respondents reported that the local community does not have non-governmental organizations that can provide necessary programmes and services, and state that they are familiar with all organizations operating in their territory. On the related question of whether they worked with a specific organization and on which activities and services, it is stated that it rarely happens, and that the support organizations provided was mostly reduced to financial support or help in other assets (Kragujevac), while the cases where the victims of trafficking, children, youth or adults, were involved in other support programmes, are very rare. When asked which programmes of support do victims of trafficking need, the answers were mostly general, such as "support in overcoming the consequences of the experienced situation", without sufficient recognition of individual specificity of concrete beneficiaries.

Social Welfare Centers are facing a phenomenon that has been recognized in all areas, and that is a fact that almost all the victims of human trafficking with whom they worked come from extremely poor groups of beneficiaries, and that the poverty, according to them, is one of the most common causes of entry into the human trafficking, with all the consequences that it entails (low educational level, etc.). Social Welfare Centers, in accordance with their

¹¹⁷ All the risk factors that centers identify are listed in the analysis *Social Welfare Centers in protection of victims of human trafficking – possibilities and perspectives*: "In cases when victims of trafficking are minors, the following problems are present: running away from home, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, intellectual disabilities, poverty, lack of parental cooperation, educational neglect, mental illness, emotional abuse and the loss of a significant person, conflict with the law and physical illness. Estimated problems of adult victims are: emotional abuse, social isolation and financial insecurity of existence, domestic violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, drug abuse and exploitation, intellectual difficulties, trouble with the law, the loss of a significant person and physical illness and self-neglect." D. Cukic-Vlahovic, op. cit., p. 20.

jurisdiction, can help beneficiaries to exercise their right to social financial aid, which is a stipulated sum set by legal regulation, or to provide immediate financial aid through local governments or in-kind assistance from various sources. The processes of providing this type of support often take a long time – due to collecting documents, existing procedures (when it comes to eligibility for social financial assistance), and the amounts of immediate financial aid are often insufficient for all the beneficiaries who need this kind of help, so the amounts are being further reduced and therefore do not meet the needs, or there are long delays (most centers have waiting lists for immediate financial aid), so that the help victims of trafficking finally get is neither timely, nor sufficient. Respondents state that these capacities at their disposal, on the one hand, and extreme poverty of beneficiaries with the experience of trafficking, on the other hand, make them powerless to adequately respond to the needs of beneficiaries. They also state that this is often the cause of dissatisfaction of beneficiaries, which undermines cooperative relationship between a beneficiary and the case manager and social welfare center, and reduces the effects of protection.

The use of programmes and resources of NGO ATINA and NGO ASTRA is in accordance with the above mentioned statements that they are not familiar enough with their programmes. The most commonly used is NGO ATINA's Temporary House, and they also list tips and guidelines they are getting from ATINA and ASTRA. Centers that have worked with these organizations point out that their support was important, and that these organizations took over better part of support and work with beneficiary (Nis, Vranje). Two centers state that the existence of Center for the protection of victims of trafficking is significant to them, as an institution in the system they can consult with (Kragujevac, Kraljevo) or they became familiar with support they can get from the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking through training (Vranje).

Centers state that, in working with victims of human trafficking, the need for cooperation with other public institutions and organizations and service providers is evident, which is a difficulty when working on a concrete case, given the unsettled relations between institutions at the local level, the lack of clear policies and guidelines on the treatment in the system, large amount of work in the center and an overload of case managers.

It can be concluded that social welfare centers have difficulties in providing adequate support to victims of trafficking in the process of their recovery and (re)integration, partly because of the lack of organization in the system and unsynchronized treatment of various institutions, and partly because of the lack of competence, and lack of resources in local communities for the provision of necessary services. Awareness of centers of support options, roles and jurisdictions of different institutions, including the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking, and of activities of NGO is still insufficient to ensure fast and quality support of beneficiaries.

When it comes to question regarding the creation of specific prevention programmes or participation in some of them, responses were mostly negative. In Kragujevac, the involvement of the Center in a programme that was implemented in cooperation with the police, in relation to forced begging, was indicated. The police had identified the children, and

the Center was working with the families, because this phenomenon is judged to be "more of an intrafamily problem, the problem of incompetency of parents". At the same Center it was indicated that particularly vulnerable are "members of vulnerable groups with health problems".

Preventive activities were not quoted in the responses, in a sense that the center itself organizes or initiates preventive activities. Cooperation with other actors was mentioned, mostly non-governmental organizations (in Kraljevo, they worked with young Roma girls a few years ago, and a programme "Rebels without a cause" was implemented in order to prevent anti-social behavior in children from dysfunctional families). Preventive activity is mostly exhausted in individual work with beneficiaries at risk, advising the youth (or family members), informing, referral to risks, monitoring children in foster care. In Vranje, it was said that there are no capacities for prevention in a wider sense.

Representatives of social welfare centers are members of all the bodies in the local community that aim to improve social protection in the community, and participation is mostly discontinuous. When asked if they are familiar with the order of the Ministry of Labour Employment and Social Policy on the establishment of local teams for the protection of children from neglect and abuse, whose carrier is social welfare center, the responses varied – from fully informed (Kragujevac and Kraljevo), to partial or complete lack of information.

Mostly, the members of vulnerable groups, who are worked with by following certain rules/protocol of treatment, are domestic violence victims, especially children. Given how many mechanisms are developed regarding the protection of victims of domestic violence, it is not surprising that the majority of respondents referred to the existing guidelines, i.e. protocols in place to facilitate their work. Also, the similarity of these categories of victims (of domestic violence and human trafficking) was often emphasized, so it was pointed out that a protocol for protection against domestic violence, and abuse and neglect, can also be applied when it comes to children (in Kragujevac, internal protocol on the protection of victims in cases of domestic violence was particularly praised). The situation in Vranje was similar:

When we work with abuse and neglect, we have a different approach. That is so since we've had the General protocol on the protection of children from abuse and neglect, and special protocols. (Kragujevac)

When asked whether they are engaged in filing complaints to determine the measures of protection against domestic violence, responses were negative, which is a fact that all previous studies dealing with this issue stated,¹¹⁸ and which could call into question the

¹¹⁸ T. Ignjatovic, *Consequences of violence against women in domestic relationship to children and the response of public services to this issue*, Autonomous Women's Center, Belgrade, 2013, p. 17-19; D. Vlahovic, *Social Welfare Center in the Protection of Trafficking Victims - opportunities and perspectives*, Belgrade, 2011; V. Jovanovic, *Services of social welfare centers in the protection of victims of domestic violence, sexual and gender-based violence*, the material presented at the conference of the Gender Equality Division of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy "Combating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence", held on April 27. 2010. in Belgrade; N. Petrusic, S. Konstantinovic-Vilic, *Family-legal protection from domestic violence in the practice of courts in Belgrade*, Autonomous Women's Center and Women's Research Center for Education and Communication, Belgrade 2006.

adequacy and/or inertness of legal service. This is particularly indicative given the fact that "recorded victims of trafficking are, in a large number of cases, persons who were already registered at social welfare centers (44.5 %) due to: neglect and domestic abuse, anti-social behavior, domestic violence, material shortages, delegacy in divorce proceedings, extrication of a child from a family and placing in a foster family, deprivation of parental rights, placement under guardianship and placement in a social protection institution. Social welfare centers must give these facts due attention, in terms of taking preventive actions within its jurisdiction in the field of human trafficking".¹¹⁹ Even after a period of two years, according to the survey, which included some of the centers from the previous analysis, there has been no significant progress in preventive reaction of centers, which leaves a high risk of entry of known beneficiaries of social welfare centers into exploitation for the sake of human trafficking.

It can be concluded that work with vulnerable groups lacks preventive activities, as well as implementation of appropriate measures and activities at the level of specific beneficiaries belonging to these groups, although these groups are well recognized as being at risk of exploitation for the sake of human trafficking.

Cited factors that complicate the work of employees are: lack of knowledge of the effects that experience in human trafficking has on behavior and psychological state of a victim, lack of knowledge of the mechanism of protection, (over)load with other jobs, lack of motivation, lack of stimulation (a reward for duty hours, which is evaluated as symbolic and humiliating, was cited as an example) and the lack of personnel. The lack of information in this area is also cited, both on current events, and the existing programmes and activities of other actors, particularly NGOs and the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking, the lack of guidelines and instructions (it is interesting that only two social welfare centers stated that there are guidelines of the competent Ministry from 2007). Some respondents, according to their own experience, stated that the biggest problem is – the problem of accommodation, work with beneficiaries with multiple problems, particularly with drug addicts (Kraljevo). All the centers cited the unavailability of the required training and adequate support from relevant institutions as a problem, and cooperation at the local level is mentioned as one of the aggravating factors for the quality work of the center, especially in terms of arranging services for the beneficiary in the community.

Cooperation with other actors

When it comes to the quality of collaboration, the first place belongs to the police, and collaboration with the judiciary is the worst (especially in terms of centers not receiving feedback on the outcome of a proceeding). Information can, possibly, be obtained if requested. In particular (in Kragujevac), it was pointed out to a problem with defining interim measures, i.e. short terms that the court orders, and that the Center can not comply with, that is can not do its job well, because "which procedure can be completed in two days' time". In Kraljevo, the prosecutor's office was objected to being insensible to (not recognizing)

¹¹⁹ D. Cukic-Vlahovic, op. cit., p. 29.

psychological and emotional abuse, and rejecting reports in which physical violence and torture are not mentioned.

The police are objected to being excessively tolerant of Roma customs ("they are more inclined to Roma common-law" – Kragujevac), which affects the work with vulnerable groups, that Roma families, especially children, belong to. Thus, in one case, because of this attitude of the police towards Roma tradition of early entry into "marriage", or "marriage" under duress, an information was received too late about a girl who "married" at the age of 14, and became pregnant soon after that, and they do not react when it comes to children begging either.

Another complaint to the police was regarding the unsuccessful efforts of SWCs to provide assistance of the police during the night, which can point at the increased risk for the implementation of immediate interventions. One gets the impression that our social welfare centers do not have clear knowledge of how they can provide assistance of the police in certain situations. Social Welfare Center in Novi Sad emphasizes good cooperation with the police, mutual knowledge of procedures and courses of action, and cite increased efficiency of intervention, especially when it comes to forced child begging. They state that good planning and the exchange of information with the police are a model of successful cooperation.

Cooperations with health and educational system were also marked as poor. The problem in health system is the lack of procedures and the fact that "everything depends on good will and personal contacts" (Kraljevo), while the poor cooperation with educational system is best illustrated by cases from Vranje (which will be discussed later on). There is no cooperation with the National Employment Agency, although the problem of (pre-)qualifications of beneficiaries, and their employment, is recognized as very important.

Cooperation with the Center for protection of victims/Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims was assessed as good, except that in one case (Kragujevac) there were difficulties to even reach the correct phone number of the Center/Agency.

When it comes to cooperation with non-governmental organizations, responses vary from city to city. Participants mostly stated that there are no organizations dealing with victims of trafficking in their city, so when they talk about cooperation, it is cooperation with NGOs from Belgrade they have in mind (although the focus group in Kragujevac revealed information about the lack of knowledge of services of Belgrade NGOs). In Novi Sad, in cooperation with the organizations is assessed as good and useful.

Cooperation with non-governmental organizations (mainly those dealing with women – victims of violence) is evaluated as good and useful. In Kragujevac, good cooperation with the Office for Roma Issues was emphasized. In Nis, it was pointed out that there are examples of good cooperation, but there is a problem of sustainability, as it is mostly reduced to project activities that are usually time-limited. As an example of good practice, a cooperation with non-governmental organization that had a mobile on-site team that even worked in the afternoon, was mentioned. "But when the project was completed, that was over with, as well". In Vranje, it was said that better support can be expected and received from non-governmental

sector than the system. "They are more in contact with the victims, they are practical, knowledgeable and also able to provide financial support". Social welfare centers believe that this cooperation needs to be formally regulated as well. Only in Kraljevo was cooperation with the Red Cross mentioned as good.

Sometimes collaboration is problematic even with other centers. Problems may arise due to different evaluations of the necessity of beneficiaries' protection, or organizational problems at one or the other social welfare center. These situations can lead to serious failures in the protection of beneficiaries, and unnecessary, unreasonable professional and emotional exhaustion and stress of the responsible experts.

Thus, in Kraljevo, a case of two adults, who were suspected to be victims of human trafficking, residing in Cacak (sisters, 21 and 27 years old, mentally underdeveloped, at the time of intervention haven't been identified as victims of human trafficking) was mentioned. An emergency intervention to protect them was performed (medical examination, emergency foster family accommodation). In agreement with the local competent social welfare center on taking over further jurisdiction and protection of victims, authorized center did not recognize the need to protect and, above all, ensure security of beneficiaries:

Colleagues did not understand the seriousness of the situation. They wanted us to just drive the beneficiaries to their villages, but we insisted that they take them.

After consultation with the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims during the proceedings, the beneficiaries were, by the city of Kraljevo, placed in a shelter in Cacak, to ensure the safety and adequate support of beneficiaries during the process of identification.

Suggestions for improvement in the protection of victims and groups at risk

Participants were given the opportunity to make suggestions on what would help them in their work, in order to improve their behavior, and provide better protection for trafficking victims and groups at risk. Suggestions were usually based on their experience in working with victims of human trafficking, and observed deficiencies, mainly related to the current system of protection –circumstances of the objective character. When it comes to circumstances of the subjective character, they usually mentioned lack of experience, the knowledge that would enable timely identification of victims or risks of victimization by trafficking, which was again connected with the failure of authorities to provide necessary information. There is a notable disproportion between two groups of proposals, those related to professional competences and resources of the center itself, which are mostly related to the (lack of) awareness and (lack of) training, and are far more numerous than those related to services for victims.

Suggestions related to awareness and training:

Leaflets or periodical publications on the services for victims would be useful.
Guidebooks with updated phone numbers of offices. (Kragujevac)

It would be useful to keep us up to date on changes, so we always know what resources we have at our disposal. (Kragujevac)

It would be good to have guidelines for work sent to us by the Ministry. (Nis)

It is a specific category of victims, new approaches and ways should be developed... A good example is domestic violence, because a lot has been accomplished through training at that area. (Nis)

We need concrete, clear guidelines for work. (Vranje)

In order to work better, we need education, clear instructions. It needs to be talked about more openly in public, like it is being done with domestic violence. (Vranje)

List of indicators would mean a lot to us. (Kraljevo)

Suggestions related to the problem of providing protection services for victims:

Shelter for youth is essential. (Kragujevac)

It is important to provide legal representation, for example, by non-governmental organizations, and we can offer psychological empowerment ourselves, that is, our psychologists can do it. (Kragujevac)

The problem is emergency medical examination. Victims of violence are conducted under the 'emergency' code. An internal code on the notation needs to provide emergency admission. (Kragujevac)

The problem of accommodation needs to be solved. There are also big problems with the addicts. (Kraljevo)

We are aware that social welfare center has a major role, we are in charge of the resocialization of victims, but we lack personnel, we do not have enough personnel. (Nis)

We do not have a contract with the National Employment Agency, and they need jobs. Most of them are unqualified, though. (Kraljevo)

Victims of human trafficking on the work of social welfare centers

We interviewed nine beneficiaries, that were available at the time of the interview, three of which were from the territory of the monitored social welfare centers (these are the beneficiaries who were available, and willing to participate in the research, from the records

of the Center for protection of victims of human trafficking). In the following text, false names of beneficiaries will be listed, in order to protect their identity, as well as basic information about them (age, type of exploitation, educational status). Four interviewed beneficiaries are minors (16-17 years old) and five are adults (19-30 years old). Interviews with minors were conducted according to ethical standards that are applied in these cases.¹²⁰ Four adult beneficiaries were closer to the age of majority (19-22 years old), which says a lot about their psychophysical development ("young adults") and needs related to it. One person was 30 years old.

Beneficiaries' satisfaction with services of social welfare centers

The first and basic question from the interview with beneficiaries referred to the satisfaction of beneficiaries with the work of social welfare center, namely provided services and response to their needs. Only two beneficiaries gave affirmative answers to this question. The answers were brief, with no particular reasoning for satisfaction or the services that were provided, so additional questions were usually asked in order to get a more complete answer (regarding the services that were requested/provided). None of the beneficiaries had anything to add to their responses, or something to propose in order to improve work of the center.

I am satisfied , they always provided assistance, helped me with everything, with documents and financial aid. I have nothing further to add. (Milena, 19 years old, sexually exploited as a minor)

I am very satisfied, they did everything as promised, no complaints, and I have nothing to add. (Katarina, 30 years old, victim of forced labour and sexual exploitation)

One beneficiary could not describe her (dis)satisfaction, because she did not have a deeper relationship with the competent center (from the city that was included in the research sample). She says: "I was with them (employees of NGO Atina) in the center, but I did not get any help. They know me, but they never called. I have received everything I needed only from ATINA. (Bojana, 17 years old, victim of forced marriage)

Other beneficiaries extensively elaborated on their dissatisfaction, disappointed, bitter and angry. Most complained about failure to provide financial assistance, which proved as the most needed, especially to beneficiaries with children. Repeated answers, that emphasized unfulfilled promises of help, whether that help is promised, and not given, or there was a delay regarding the implementation of the promised service.

They haven't helped me, even though they promised. They gave me nothing, they just kept stalling. I'm not satisfied at all. (Silvija, 20 years old, sexually exploited)

I'm not satisfied, the social welfare center gave me nothing. They promised a lot of things... The money and sorting out my documents, food, a lot of things... (Ivana, 17 years old, sexually exploited)

¹²⁰ More in: Galonja, A., Moraca, T., Avramovic, M., Diegoli, T., *Children on the Move - Status and programmes of support and protection of children on the move in the Republic of Serbia*, NGO Atina, 2013, p. 25-27.

I do not receive help, they gave me nothing... but I'm going to sign on to A., they promised everything, I only need to go and sign on... The money is the most important to me, I receive only 3,000 RSD for child support, I wish I had 10,000 RSD more, that would be enough. This way, I do not even have the money for application to A. If they gave me that, at least, to go apply there, I hope things will be better there. (Vukica, 21 years old, victim of forced labour and sexual exploitation)

I'm not satisfied, they do not want to help me, only about ID, but only after these women from the NGO phoned... When I came out of prison, they told me that I have no right to assistance, that they have to give it to my kids, and they are with my mother ... I need that RV which is distributed to those who have nowhere to live... I asked for it, and they said I am not entitled to that either. They said they can not help me in any way... And not to contact them anymore. (Lenka, 22 years old, sexually exploited)

I am terribly dissatisfied. They never came to that foster family to visit me... They just threw me out... (Milica, 17 years old, forcibly married off three times by her parents)

They do not give me help, and I know I'm entitled to it. And I need the money for school. All they say is "we'll see, we'll see". I had help in Belgrade, but not here. (Tamara, 16 years old, sexually exploited).

In three cases, the beneficiaries stressed that they received expected help, but not from the social welfare center, but from NGOs, whose work they praised.

Beneficiaries' satisfaction with employees of social welfare centers

When it comes to relationship of employees (usually case managers) with the beneficiaries, the situation is somewhat different. Besides the two answers that fully expressed satisfaction (with both work of the center and communication with employees), the responses are divided into two groups: those who express satisfaction with the relationship with employees (in its entirety or partially) and those who express complete dissatisfaction and resentment with the attitude of employees towards beneficiaries. Beneficiaries experienced discussion on this subject as an opportunity to complain and voice their outrage, and they extensively elaborated on their dissatisfaction. Beneficiaries often compared employees of social welfare centers with other people whom they came in contact with, assessing their relationship with the latter as a good and desirable.

At the same time, this is a question in regard to which beneficiaries had most suggestions on how to improve the work of social welfare centers, or had messages for the center (in the end, they were asked if they have something to say to the center they were in contact with). It seems that they feel the lack of help is easier to sustain than an unfair treatment.

They did not act correctly toward me. They were arrogant... I don't know, maybe that woman is not to blame, it's not her money, who knows how many cases there are, and it has to be distributed... but she did not have to behave so arrogantly towards me. (Ivana)

It is true that I did not get the help, but she (the case manager) bothered about me. She always takes my calls, she wants to help me, she drove me in her car... I have no objections, it's more of a friendly relationship, and I like that. She is even my best friend. (Tamara)

They behaved disgustingly towards me there in X... When I went there, they told me to go back to where I came from... And where I came from, they told me to go to X, to give birth to my baby there, that I will get more money from the municipality, which was not true. When I told them that I was alone with a child, that he won't acknowledge the baby, they just acted disgustingly. They said: "Why did you get pregnant with him when you don't know what to do now. Sue your husband." And I know that they help those women who have husbands too, and I am alone with a child, and when I told them that, they said: "It's your fault." (Vukica)

They were rude. When I told them I have no money, I have no place to live, that I can only live on the street, they said: "That's your problem". Only once were they kind to me, when I came out of prison and when M. was with me (employee of the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking). They were kind then, while he was there, otherwise they are not. And once I didn't have another 1,000 RSD for an ID, and they did not want to give it to me, they asked for my mother to come. They told her: "If she doesn't get the ID now, we do not want to see her again". And they told me not to contact them anymore. (Lenka)

Whenever I need to say something, she does not listen... Just makes a quick stop. U. from Nis is so kind (employee of the Center for foster care and adoption), she was so good to me, I spoke openly to her, she always listened and gave me good advice. But this other one (the case manager)... I begged her to help me get a health card, so I can go to the doctor, and she just said "I will, I will", and nothing. She doesn't care about me. She did not even phone me, she just wanted to unload the care to someone else. And, once I was supposed to stay in a foster home for an evening, and they couldn't take me I guess, so she (the case manager) threatened that woman, all the things she said... So, what's with that? Is she some mighty force, is she the strongest!? Once when I cried, she said: "I will send you where the crazy ones go". And how could she not care that there's a guy in that family, he's 22 years old, and she knows I'm 17 and that I'm scared, and he must go through my room. She actually does not know anything about me, and she's supposed to be helping me. So, I don't want to talk with anyone like that. It's enough for me to talk to M. (Center for the protection of victims of trafficking) and U. (Center for foster care and adoption), they are nice to me and give good advice. (Milica)

**Additional comments
and suggestions of beneficiaries**

Additional comments and suggestions of beneficiaries are usually related to dissatisfaction with the attitude of employees, whom they have been in contact with, and their wish for it to change.

I would like to tell them that they should carry out what they say they'll do... not just make empty promises. (Silvija)

They need to improve that relationship with us, the beneficiaries. Not to be cocky and arrogant. It can all be said nicely as well. (Ivana)

Those like her (the case manager) should be fired. If I were her boss, I would sack her. (Milica)

Protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking in local communities – key challenges

Participants of focus group interviews in seven cities involved in the project emphasized the undeniable progress that has occurred in this area over the past few years – primarily in understanding of this offense, its sanction, better understanding of the role of different systems, awareness of the needs and rights of the victims. However, more frequent identification of trafficking also revealed many oversights and weaknesses of the system, in all aspects of the response to trafficking – detection, identification, provision of shelter, medical assistance, legal assistance, preparation for testifying, further social inclusion.

The insights of actors from different systems in Kraljevo, Kragujevac, Nis, Vranje, Novi Sad, Subotica and Sremska Mitrovica testify about several basic challenges they are faced with. Given the scope of this research, the primary focus will be on those key challenges related to the local level and actors operating at the level of local self-government:

- failure to recognize and failure to respond to trafficking cases
- insufficiently clear procedures and lack of formalized cooperation
- lack of sustainable system solutions, especially for the accommodation and protection of victims.

Failure to recognize and failure to respond to trafficking cases

Despite increased sensitization of representatives of certain systems, failure to recognize and failure to respond to trafficking are still often singled out as a major challenge by the focus

group participants. This corresponds to different findings at the national level on the shortcomings of early recognition, detection and identification.¹²¹

In focus groups, low capacity for detection and identification of risks of this crime in the social protection and education system, was primarily highlighted. Due to the fact that primary education is compulsory, representatives of other systems considered schools to be the most appropriate first instance that needs to observe and appropriately respond to child's absence from school, which may be the first warning sign. Responding to risks of human trafficking is closely linked to the prevention and protection of children from violence. Action in this area is regulated in 2005. with the adoption of the General Protocol, and especially, in the field of education, with the adoption of Special Protocol in 2007. The protocol defines activities of prevention and intervention and treatment in a case of different types of violence, i.e. suspicion of violence, including the type that can be most connected with trafficking – violence against children by adults who are not employed by the institution. In this case, either an urgent report to the police is sent, or the case is reported to the competent social welfare center. However, there are no examples of human trafficking cases in which the educational institution was the one that filed a report of possible trafficking.

The attitude of representatives of other systems from the cities involved in the project, that the education system is not sufficiently adequate in the context of anti-trafficking, should be viewed in the light of the fact that in Serbia, generally, intersectoral collaboration, as a basis for the functioning of the protocol, and is still not at a satisfactory level, which of course suggests that capacities, awareness and sensitization are still under-developed within each individual system. Similar to social protection and health care, the education sector has limited capacity for proactive action oriented toward an individual, and fundamental reforms should, among other things, result in the approach based on the rights (including the right to security).

As for the social protection system, its role in recognizing and timely responding to trafficking is still not marked as adequate. As a reminder, centers have a clearly defined commitment when it comes to protection of victims of human trafficking – by the Law on Social Protection, an adult person is a beneficiary of social protection in following cases (among others):

- if there is a danger of becoming, or if he already is a victim of self-neglect, neglect, abuse, exploitation and domestic violence
- if he is facing difficulties because of disturbed family relationships, alcohol addiction, drug addiction or other intoxicating substances, or because of other forms of unacceptable social behavior and other causes

- If he is a victim of human trafficking

¹²¹ For example, draft of the new national strategy, State Department reports.

- If he is a foreign national or stateless person in need of social protection.

Given the deficiencies in centers' record keeping and their lack of capacity to offer a comprehensive approach to the protection of victims which were mentioned, and given the multiplicity of vulnerability of victims of trafficking, it is likely that victims and potential victims are in the centers' records among other beneficiary groups, as persons who have been neglected or are at risk of neglect, victims of violence, people with behavioral problems, people with disturbed family relationships and socio-financially deprived persons. This means that it is possible that the centers apply inadequate or insufficiently specialized measures for the victims, which can, at best, remediate the consequences, but can not provide comprehensive protection, or eliminate the causes, if they are not combined with other appropriate measures. Reasons for the failure of recognition and inadequate further work with potential victims are numerous, and it is certain that the lack of knowledge of the issue of human trafficking and the causes of this phenomenon are among them.

Work with the employees in social welfare center can certainly have an effect on their lack of hypersensitivity and knowledge, and focus group participants noted that there is progress in the general awareness about trafficking and identification of potential victims in recent years. The capacity of social protection sector should surely be upgraded by improvements in the normative sphere (Instruction on the work of social welfare centers in protecting victims of trafficking in 2009, the Law on Social Protection in 2011, the standards of social protection services in 2013), as well as by building capacities in other areas (especially in the area of the fight against violence), as well as by trainings that employees have passed. However, it is estimated that the capacities within the social protection system for response, early recognition and detection of trafficking victims are still not at a satisfactory level. Official data at the national level even mentions the declining of work intensity when it comes to identification and proactive approach – as shown in the previous section – the number of recorded victims in the centers, after an increase in the period 2006-2009, declines rapidly, to fall below the level of 2006. in 2011.¹²²

It is illustrative to compare the response of the social protection system to the problem of violence (of course, given the differences in the complexity of the required response to trafficking and violence) – the annual number of recorded victims is continually growing – from 2006. to 2011. (the first year of the implementation of the Family Law) the number of recorded victims of violence increased nearly two and a half times.

The decline in the number of recorded victims of trafficking in the social welfare centers at the national level, even assuming that the centers contact the Agency and do not record a case themselves, corresponds to observations of focus group participants that the capacity in the area of identification of cases of trafficking continues to be insufficiently stable and developed, i.e. is not improving, although the phenomenon is constantly changing.

¹²² *Annual report on the work of social welfare centers for 2011*, Republic Institute for Social Protection, 2012, p. 64.

Apart from the lack of knowledge and capacities, the lack of a proactive approach in detection and response to trafficking and the risks of human trafficking is also influenced by entrenched views and prejudices toward certain vulnerable groups. At the focus group interviews, the often lack of response to widespread begging of Roma children was mentioned. The seriousness of the situation is relativized by reference to traditional cultural forms, while, on the other hand, there is inadequate response by reducing and sanctioning of begging as a phenomenon that spoils city's appearance. Begging is, of course, accompanied by the absence of children from school, to which the employees in education system do not respond, again attributing child labour to the traditional cultural pattern, and not connecting it with forced begging, i.e. human trafficking. Similarly, the traditional "bride sale" is justified and normalized by reference to the common law. Some of our interlocutors from civil society sector have noted that, even their messages to the Roma community that forced begging and forced marriage are forms of a criminal offense, are followed by inaction of the police, education system and social welfare centers. These practices certainly damage and downgrade the efforts of Roma organizations, that are working on changing the traditional patterns of behavior, gender roles and relationship with children in the community. This is worrisome, given that the proper early identification of risks and practices related to trafficking are precondition for the protection of potential victims, which is the responsibility of the local level of government and social security system.

It happens that an act is not recognized as human trafficking, but as domestic abuse, or not even as a crime, so other types of assistance are provided, for example food, and no one digs deeper, nor are the family members talking about what 's going on, because often parents are the ones who commit criminal offense against their children. Social welfare centers need to work more seriously with such families .

It happens that the social welfare center has the same information, but does not coordinate with the police and prosecutor's office – they do not know that, and it's going on for years. Only when a criminal offense is committed (e.g. rape, shooting) an action occurs. Only then it is reported, and until then everyone kept quiet. The victim is also quiet, because she does not even know she is a victim – she is used to that kind of life.

Forced marriages do not fare well in court, because they are characterized as a part of common law.

Educational system is failing. If primary education is compulsory, how can it happen that a child enrolled in school is absent for a few months, that no one is informed, and instead of at school, it is in the streets begging. Then we wonder how it is that each successive generation is begging.

What can not possibly move forward is the exploitation of children for begging, and I always come into conflict with the representatives of the police, we can't have a police officer stand next to a woman with a small baby and do nothing. If I 'm working in the Roma mahala educating that it is a criminal offense, that it is child abuse, it must be recorded by punishment for the offender.

The school does not report that a child is not coming to school to the educational inspection. When it is reported to the social welfare center or the prosecutor's office, they do not react and so the child is lost from the system...

Insufficiently clear procedures and lack of formalized cooperation

Simultaneously with the importance and visibility that the issue of trafficking received, by detecting the first cases and the appearance of need for the protection of victims, serious systemic deficiencies in response to the trafficking also became obvious. Representatives of almost all the systems in seven cities involved in the project, especially of social welfare centers and the police, cited cases in which jurisdictions were not clear, and in which they had no one to turn to for help and guidance. This applies both to the local level and horizontal coordination of different sectors within a city, but also to communication and collaboration with other sectors in other cities and with the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Victims.

Focus group participants cited examples of situations in which it seemed that jurisdictions can not be established, i.e. sequence of steps and responsibilities is not clear, which is especially problematic when there is no adequate support at the national level, nor the capacity for urgent accommodation, which is the case in almost all the cities, and was particularly pointed out in Kraljevo, Nis, Sremska Mitrovica and Subotica. As the police are usually the one that first come into contact with victims of trafficking and violence, representatives of the police are the ones that have best insight into shortages when it comes to emergency response and care. In addition to trafficking victims, they stated that there is also a problem of coordination and emergency response when it comes to irregular migrants – potential asylum seekers, among whom are women and children – the police that are first to come in contact with them do not have tools and resources needed to provide reception, translation, food, clothing, medical care, and so on.

In addition to the local level, the lack of systemically defined roles and procedures, followed by a lack of resources, was also mentioned as a problem within the social protection sector. One of the examples is a case when the employees in Kraljevo's social welfare center were involved in the protection of the victim who was in Belgrade, but without the support of Belgrade's institutions from social protection and health systems, and in a situation when the Agency does not have the capacity to undertake and coordinate the care and rehabilitation. Due to the lack of networking and solutions for accommodation and protection of the victim, the only solution was for the psychologist from Kraljevo's center, which was the guardianship organ for the needs of protection and for trials, to travel to Belgrade from Kraljevo.

A similar example of the lack of systemic established solutions is also a case of a victim who was placed in Cacak, but for whom the center from Kraljevo was competent, and there was another element, one that was unknown in their former practice – the transfer of methadone, necessary to the victim, from Kraljevo to Cacak, as well as securing the drug (perpetrator took the bottles of methadone from the victim).

The problem of lack of system coordination and predominant orientation to the activities in relation to sectoral divisions, instead of the process and the victim, are reflected in the frequent absence of the exchange of information between sectors. For example, there is no formalized and standardized method of monitoring the victim after the detection and identification, or informing about the course of the proceedings before the judicial authorities. Some representatives of civil society organizations have noted it often happens that, after they refer a person, potential victim of trafficking, to other systems – social security, the police, and others – they do not receive any feedback. This is, of course, evaluated as a poor practice and lack of use of existing resources in the community, given the support they can provide through contacts and knowledge of specific problems and situation of vulnerable groups. One successful example that was cited is prevention of forced minor marriage – the return of Roma girl from the border, with the help of two-way communication and effective connection of local citizens' association and the police.

In addition, representatives of social protection system mentioned justice system in the context of poor feedback on individual cases – as to whether the information is processed by the Center, whether the proceeding started, whether the investigation is in progress, etc. It should be noted that this is not a case of omitting information, but from the focus group interviews it was evident that it was a remark about the issue of uncertainty from whom and to whom should information go, i.e. the lack of standardized information exchange, which is certainly the basis for coordinated action (including the filing of criminal charges). The need for more effective involvement and better coordination with the judicial system is also highlighted by the police, in particular with regard to the specifics of the crime of trafficking and the possibility that the victim could, due to failures in the coordination of those responsible for the victim's protection, be further traumatized and revictimized.

It should be noted that presented observations are related to the lack of systemic and coordinated cooperation – it was noted that solutions are found on a case-by-case basis, and on the basis of personal acquaintances and managing within the system. Therefore, the quality of informal, personal communication, and cooperation based on that, is marked as solid and satisfying, but, quite clearly, unsustainable.

A similar situation is sadly evident at the national level, for a number of years – in a study, published by the association Atina, which processes the period until 2010,¹²³ it was stated that there is no systematic exchange of information (in particular, the course of criminal proceedings was discussed) – that the police, after the filing of criminal charges, has no further information on the charge, unless they find out of their own accord, and that the Agency is mainly informed only on cases for which they provide legal assistance, for which the calls are made through the Agency.

The absence of formalized procedures and clarity of the information flow are also recorded in annual reports of State Department. In particular, it is a recommendation to establish

¹²³ Galonja, A., Jovanovic, S., op. cit., p. 53.

intersectoral teams and generally intersectoral approach at the local level,¹²⁴ and to formalize the roles and responsibilities and the coordination of actors.¹²⁵

At the local level, only the representatives of different systems from Kragujevac mention somewhat different situation. In this city, the Protocol on intersectoral cooperation in the process of protection of victims of domestic violence was signed in 2008. The participants of focus group interviews pointed out that the channels of communication and procedures, established under this protocol, are actually also the basis for effective cooperation in other areas, particularly for the trafficking, when the protection and care for victims require effective cooperation of multiple sectors, as in the case of violence.

Last night's example – a person who is in a very difficult situation – speaks Serbian badly, claims that she was born in Switzerland, no documents... Institute of Mental Health says that in terms of that medical institution she is fine, gynecological examination determines pregnancy, but that is okay in their opinion... You need to understand, a woman in that condition has been sitting on a chair in the police station since 9 p.m. last night, if the employees of the center did not take her over in the meantime. That is a principle – it does not matter whose job it is, the one who takes it first must try to resolve it, and the police are usually the ones. But the police do not have the authority to place anyone anywhere, and they do not know who to contact...

I received a call from a doctor in the Institute of Mental Health, around 1 a.m., who asked me where to place the victim, because there are no physical injuries, no mental harm, she is pregnant, the police found her wandering the streets, and now the doctor does not know what to do. The only one she found is our employee on duty on the SOS hotline. Whichever number she dialed, the social welfare center, the Safe House, no one answered... So, that person is not a victim of violence – there is no ground to hold her, the police have no ground to hold her either... I offered support –because I can help her get documents, help with translation, as well as be support for the empowerment of that woman, but have the police managed to take the woman to the safe house, have they reached someone at the center... Absolutely no feedback .

I believe a functioning network already exists in the city. However, we had a number of situations when everyone is incompetent, and then you need to make a superhuman effort to solve such a problem. Sometimes it is necessary to provide assistance to an individual who does not have a health card, does not have anyone to pay for insurance, from the countries that do not have a contract, that person should be placed somewhere... We are asking people from the social welfare center to coordinate with the reception facility, the center for local services – people are coming to our aid, even though they do not have the resources for that...

It would be good if there was some kind of "communication card" – to make it clear that, when that kind of person appears, they need to implement some special rules, i.e. he/she

¹²⁴ State Department, TIP Report, 2012.

¹²⁵ State Department, TIP Report, 2013.

should not need to pay, should not need to make an appointment, and so on. This would facilitate the provision of services and reduce unnecessary explanation.

Among health care workers, and other actors engaged in providing assistance to victims, there are doubts as to whom to call, whether the service is being charged, to whom to refer it to further, what should be in the report, etc. We can see there is some kind of lack of organization, lack of protocol, which is not necessarily related to finance.

The Center files a criminal charge, or sends some kind of notification, and we never get a feedback from prosecutor's office whether they prosecuted, whether they entered the proceedings, whether an investigation was conducted, whether they issued an indictment. They never inform us on their own. Unlike the police administration, for example – when we request information, we get an official note from the field and the report, and they inform us whether it was sent to prosecutor's office, whether it was processed... If the police department filed it, why would the center also file a criminal charge for the same act?

There are stories all over the media on all that has been done for the victims of trafficking, and you eventually find yourself in a situation that you feel you do not know what to do, where to go and that you are on your own.

Lack of sustainable solutions for the accommodation, protection and social inclusion of victims

Victim-oriented approach is a part of the official policy of combating human trafficking, versus the one that is focused on the prosecution and that was dominant at the beginning of the formulation of national response to trafficking. Protection and provision of the victim's well-being was particularly articulated by the Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, that was ratified by Serbia in 2009, and adequate victim protection under international standards also means that protection does not depend on the participation of victim in the criminal prosecution and the provision of conditions for physical and psychological recovery.

However, in all the cities involved in the project, by respondents from all the systems in focus groups, it was, unfortunately, noted that there are no adequate programmes for the protection of victims, that would include guaranteed rights to physical safety, rehabilitation, and long-term support for its social inclusion.

As already mentioned in the previous section, no city has completely and satisfactorily resolved the issue of accommodation, and most cities actually do not have even remotely adequate solution – in **Novi Sad**, the accommodation for adults in the Safe House was suspended due to the lack of funding, i.e. termination of funding by the IOM, and the child-victims are placed in a Shelter for children victims of violence and neglect; **Sremska Mitrovica**, **Kraljevo** and **Subotica** do not have solutions for the accommodation, neither for

the victims of violence, nor for the victims of trafficking; in **Vranje**, within the same building of the Center for development of local services, an accommodation is provided on various grounds – there are a shelter for the victims of violence, for children and youth, adults and the elderly; **Nis** has no space available for the accommodation of the victims of trafficking either; in **Kragujevac**, in the city Center for development of social protection services, several social services are being provided, including day care center for children from families at risk, day care center for children and youth with behavioral problems, as well as two regional type shelters – for children and youth, and for the victims of domestic violence.

When it comes to the absence of viable systemic solutions, the case of Nis may be the best example. Within the Home "Dusko Radovic" a Shelter that accommodated both victims of trafficking and victims of violence existed. According to the founder, it was a coordinated action that connected actors at the city level, as well as similar institutions in several cities – Belgrade, Kragujevac, Novi Sad, where there were also Safe Houses that accommodated both the victims of trafficking and victims of violence. Over a period of 8 years, while she was the director, about 17 victims of trafficking went through the Shelter, and in addition to accommodation, the victims were also provided with legal assistance – collecting evidence, preparing for testimony, monitoring and advocacy at court... Then, thanks to the efforts of professionals, primarily from the social security system, and the police, the funds were obtained for establishing and furnishing Nis' Safe House, which was to offer advanced solutions for accommodation and help to both victims of violence and victims of trafficking, who have previously stayed at the Shelter. According to the police officer who participated in the project design and procurement of funds to establish and equip the Safe House, the signed Protocol, which is not time-limited, clearly defines responsibilities of the city – that the facility, for which fundings for construction work are provided, in addition to providing accommodation for victims of violence, needs to have six beds available to victims of trafficking. However, almost two years after the work on the Safe House began, that accommodation is still not available. This is interpreted as an act of self-will of the current director, i.e. her assessment that protection and work with the victims of trafficking are complicated and carry more risks due to their often compromised health, substance abuse, or safety. This is a worrying example of the collapse of already achieved level of protection for the victims of trafficking, and the unsustainability of initiatives and donor investments – due to political changes and personnel decisions (director of the Safe House is appointed by the City) already set foundations for the institutional protection of victims of trafficking, and long-term work, are going backwards. This, of course, has a negative effect on the entire region of South Serbia, whose center is Nis, so it should be able to offer an answer to even more complex requirements in the protection of victims for the wider area.

It is important to note that representatives of the system, and citizens' associations, from all the cities involved in the project, spoke of inadequate or total absence of urgent accommodation programme. Key problems that were mentioned can be succinctly described as an absence of programmes intended for victims, as follows:

- encouragement to the victim to report trafficking immediately;

- assistance to the victim during the proceedings;

- protection of the victim during, and after, the proceedings.

Ascertainment that the least is done exactly in the field of protecting the victim is, of course, closely related to the success of prosecution. Violation of the rights of victims to adequate protection and accommodation and provision of safety, directly challenge the readiness for trial, and therefore the outcome of the process. Thus, in Kraljevo and Nis was noted that situations when the victim is not in a secure accommodation, and comes to trial on her own, are extremely risky, as the court may shorten the detention, which leaves no time to check where the victim is and to ensure her safety. Authorities have also faced the problems of protecting the victim when she is not safe in her primary environment, i.e. when there is a possibility that the exploitation is carried out with the knowledge or participation of someone in her primary environment, and they do not have solution for the accommodation of the victim. Closely related are bad experiences when the job of empowering the victim, and its preparation for giving a statement and testimony, are not adequately done, especially in situations when relatives and parents were accomplices in the exploitation.

The lack of sustainable solutions for the victims, and the lack of systematic and multisectoral cooperation on the protection of victims is also evident in the failed attempt and efforts of Kraljevo's Higher Public Prosecutor's Office to, in agreement with the Agency for Privatization, provide accommodation for victims. They proposed for a temporary accommodation for victims to be provided, in the space that is owned by the state, and that is out of use for a number of years, but this proposal was rejected, and the Agency later sold part of that same space.

Permanent problem of accommodation and protection programmes in Serbia was also noted by the State Department in their reports, which specifically noted problems with accommodation capacities for children and adult men victims of trafficking.¹²⁶ Thus, when observed at the national level, specialized accommodation for children victims of trafficking is still missing – children are usually placed in social care institutions – orphanages, Institutes for Education in Belgrade and Novi Sad, shelters for the victims of domestic violence, foster families. Unfortunately, the children accommodated in public institutions are, due to the limited capacities of the institutions, estimated to be at risk of revictimization and reentering into the trafficking. This is especially troubling given that, at the national level, within the Center for Protection of Victims, a Shelter is provided, intended exclusively for adults and elderly victims, which still leaves an unresolved issue of specialized programme for the protection of children.

In addition to observations regarding the accommodation, in the context of examples from Nis and Kraljevo, it should be noted that, at the national level, there is a larger problem of sustainability of programmes for protection and assistance to victims. As mentioned in the

¹²⁶ State Department, TIP Reports 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

previous chapter, representatives of the system, which are the basis of protection of victims and of criminal prosecution – the police, prosecutor's office and social welfare centers, noted that the cooperation with associations Atina and Astra is often crucial to them, as well as the support these associations provide. Specialized programmes that include rehabilitation, legal assistance and long-term social inclusion of victims (Atina), in a situation when the state hasn't had even basic programmes for years now, actually present the foundation of response to human trafficking, and depend almost entirely on foreign donors.

Limitations of programmes intended for victims are not exhausted in the issues of emergency accommodation and protection, which is certainly the biggest, but not the only problem. In general, the limitations of work on the prevention, that is dominant, were ascertained, which is to provide information to potential victims and general population, without influencing the structural problems that lead to trafficking, such as poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, none of the cities involved in the research has a long-term sustainable programme for the victims. It is again the need for a more complex treatment of the very causes of trafficking, which requires adequate involvement of other sectors, not only remediation of consequences. The participants of focus group interviews drew attention to the fact that, even in the cities with the commendable cooperation between actors in other areas, long-term intersectoral programmes for protection of victims of trafficking after the trial process (if there was a trial) still do not exist, and they would include adequate measures in the area of work and education, further psychological empowerment of victims, and action on the causes that led to trafficking, i.e. social inclusion of victims. As mentioned in the previous chapter, measures and services that social welfare centers offer are often exhausted in provision of financial assistance, which does not correspond to the complex needs of victims for comprehensive programmes of protection.

This can be tentatively compared with the theme of violence and the problem of frequent return of victims to an environment in which violence occurs, which is, among other things, the result of a lack of opportunities for victims of low socio-economic status, of support in finding long-term solutions, empowerment and gaining independence. On the other hand, the programmes of protection against violence, even when they are developed, do not provide necessary response to the needs of victims of trafficking, taking into account the specifics of this crime and the needs for specialized type of protection.

The last situation we had involved three children, and the person who exploits them is the biological mother of two, and the informal guardian of the third child – without any papers, and the biological mother is somewhere in Zajecar. And there were some disagreements – Nis-Zajecar jurisdiction issue... The problem arose at the time of their identification as potential victims, filing criminal charges and taking measures against the person who is a suspect. In my opinion, it automatically imposes obligation to accommodate these children, but not through the regular process of accommodation. Those children were being moved around by employees of social welfare center all day and all night, and they finally ended up back with their mother. Coincidentally, the court said it was not necessary to determine the measure of detention, and so they were

officially returned to their mother. So, that same night when she was released from detention, that same night they tried to flee to Belgium...

There was a potential risk, as it seems that the father was someone who knew about, or participated in, the exploitation – he did not have access to the whereabouts of his child, although he is the legal guardian. So that was a big dilemma as to how right it is to send her back to that environment, and there was an additional problem – where to place a minor victim of human trafficking?

The biggest problem is accommodation. When I call at 10 p.m. to say I have a potential victim, when will those from Belgrade's Agency arrive? Where are we to place a minor? We have urgent foster families, but we do not know whether they will accept them.

This needs to be defined: the core problem in this city, and this region, is that there is no center for accommodation, multifunctional one, which could accommodate domestic violence victim, potential victim of trafficking and a person who needs urgent accommodation, until it is determined who she is, where she is from...

When it comes to violence, in 90% of the cases the victims return to the family in which there is violence, because they did not have the support to get out of that situation, and we fail to help even after that – whether it's with housing, employment, and for these reasons they return, even of their own accord.

Specialty in this area is required – it requires specialized police, specialized prosecutors, specialized people in the center, non-governmental organizations that should support that story. Access to these persons is different, as in the case of violence, there is usually one person who commits violence, and in the case of trafficking, we are dealing with an entirely different people, who benefited from exploitation of the victim. It calls for a different strategy of protection.

What to do with the victim once the verdict is announced? It is not the end for her, there is still a risk, she, more than ever, needs empowering, on the psychological and social aspect. Should she have priority when it comes to employment, especially considering the issue of medical and psychological condition. When she leaves, she is again on her own.

To enter the social protection system, be entitled to financial aid, possibly one-off assistance, it really is not a solution for the victims, because they should also be provided with jobs. The center can not provide jobs, it can only possibly engage them in work, but those are minimal resources that do not provide a decent life for the victim.

We can work on education, prevention, the police can make arrests, etc., but as long as there is a poor economic situation in the country, there is not much we can do.

Some press releases are done, press conferences, billboards, and then it stops and nothing is done in the next two years.

Some kind of long-term plan is needed... Atina has been doing an awful lot, and we cooperate with them often, there is no victim of human trafficking that we still do not talk about, they monitor them all the time. But we do not have Atina in Kragujevac, maybe that is what we need.

There are not many victims, and monitoring of the victim after all the processes are completed is necessary, so the victim is able to engage in normal life activities... they need a job more than the welfare or soup kitchen. Especially if you are young, you can create, work...

LOCAL RESPONSES TO THE PHENOMENON OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

One of the activities of the project *Local community in the fight against human trafficking* was monitoring the implementation of local strategic and action plans, in the field of combating human trafficking, and primarily – the field of protection of victims and of prevention of human trafficking. Following are consistently transferred reports of collaborative network of civil society organizations from seven cities involved in the project.

Nis

Nis, as the third largest city in Serbia, does not have a specific document relating to social protection, or human trafficking, but these topics are indirectly covered by the Development Strategy of the city of Nis, which was created in 2007. and revised in 2009. As the Strategy itself, the revised version was produced with the support of UN-HABITAT and the Italian agency ERVET, with funding from the Italian government. Social development is one of the four areas of development that Strategy includes, and the SWOT analysis, created for the area of social development in Nis, recognizes as strength a qualified and influential civil sector, active in addressing social issues, while decentralization, i.e. transferring of social protection jurisdictions from the national to the local level, is recognized as a potential. Lack of local strategy of social policy, high and spatially unbalanced unemployment rate, and the fact that social protection does not include all the citizens and that there are no reliable alternatives, are all identified as weaknesses. One of the threats singled out in the SWOT analysis is a high degree of dependence of citizens' associations on foreign donors, without a proper foundation in the local community. The overall objective of the strategic direction of "social development" is to create a supportive and safe social environment, in which all the citizens will be able to express and meet their own needs for belonging and identity, socialization and personal development. The first out of four specific objectives is a general increase of protection and decrease of risks to life and health, property, social security and housing; and the last one is strengthening community through the involvement of all citizens and strengthening of solidarity. Some of the activities that may be relevant to the prevention of human trafficking, i.e. to effects on risk factors, include: designing local social protection system, which along the existing institutions also includes individuals, private sector and NGOs; promoting initiatives focused on mitigating the effects of unemployment; solving the housing issues in accordance with the strategy of housing (housing programme for the poor and vulnerable social groups) and networking NGOs, local governments and private companies to meet the needs in jurisdiction of the city.

The Strategy itself states that financial resources needed for the implementation are great, i.e. that the city can cover only smaller projects out of existing resources, making it necessary to search for potential investors and new sources at national and international level.

Other local regulations that may be relevant for the researched topic are listed below.

Assembly of Nis, on December 12. 2012, adopted a Decision on the rights in the area of social protection in the territory of Nis.¹²⁷ This Decision establishes the rights in the area of social protection of individuals and families in the territory of the City of Nis, governs the scope, terms and way of exercising the rights to social protection and financial support, and other types of financial assistance which are, in accordance with the Law on Social Protection, provided by local government. Beneficiaries of social protection may be persons who are legally designated as beneficiaries of social protection, and who reside in the territory of the City of Nis. Beneficiaries may also be other persons in accordance with the Law. Services listed in this Decision (financial support and other types of financial assistance), are financed from the city budget, by means of the beneficiaries themselves, their relatives or persons required to support beneficiaries, as well as by donors and other sources.

Services specified by this Decision:

- home help
- day care
- accommodation in a shelter and reception facility
- social housing in protected conditions
- temporary housing
- financial support

Also, more closely defined are:

- the right to equipment for accommodation in a social protection institution or other family
- the right to one-off support
- the right to a free meal
- the right to exemption from payment of utilities

¹²⁷ The decision can be found at: <http://www.eservis.ni.rs/propisi/Docs/6575.pdf>

- the right to compensation for funeral expenses
- the right to reimbursement of expenses for IVF treatment
- the right to emergency one-off financial assistance
- social card

More closely defined is also the procedure for obtaining the rights to services referred to in this Decision.

A significant section of this Decision, that can in some way be linked to human trafficking, is "Accommodation in the reception facility". Although human trafficking victims and their right to this service are not explicitly mentioned anywhere, it can be concluded that such persons are entitled to this service, by its definition, which says "shelter is a form of temporary accommodation of persons who are suddenly left without accommodation, or for other reasons need to be taken care of outside of their family". Specifically, temporary accommodation in a shelter is provided to:

- children without adequate parental care,
- children with behavioral disorders,
- women and children victims of domestic violence, and
- persons who are suddenly left without accommodation, or for other reasons need to be taken care of outside of their family

Services are provided to beneficiaries until an appropriate form of protection is established, and not longer than 30 days. Services at the shelter – Safe House for women and children victims of domestic violence, can last from one day to six months, provided that their stay can be extended up to one year based on the findings and proposals of the expert committee of the Social Welfare Center.

This service is also provided to persons who are vagrants, and in other cases when they need an organized care, but also to refugees and internally displaced persons if they have a residence in the city of Nis, until they make contact with the competent social welfare center, until the return of a person to its place of residence is enabled, or until an appropriate form of

social protection is provided to them. Social Welfare Center in the territory of the city of Nis decides about the admittance of persons to the reception facility.

Shelter and reception facility are organized in:

- Home for children and youth *Dusko Radovic*
- Gerontology Center Nis
- Institute for Youth Education Nis
- Shelter Safe *House for women and children victims of domestic violence.*

Significant for understanding of the status of groups that can be considered as particularly vulnerable to the phenomenon of human trafficking, is the analysis of the Local Action Plan on improving the status of refugees and internally displaced persons in the city of Nis for the period from 2009. to 2013.¹²⁸ (adopted in 2009, created as a result of participation in the project *Support to the institutions of the Government of the Republic of Serbia competent for refugees and internally displaced persons*). The idea of the Action Plan is to find solutions and effective and sustainable response to the needs of refugees and IDPs. City Work Group participated in development of this Plan, and it consisted of the representatives of: local government as the carrier of the process and the formal bearer of this document, including the Committee for Refugees; institution of the system that is, at the local level, dealing with refugees and internally displaced persons; non-governmental organizations active in the local community and the Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia. The overall objective of the Action Plan is to improve the quality of life of refugees and internally displaced persons in Nis, through the creation of conditions and the implementation of a sustainable programme of support until a permanent solution to their status is found.

In the process of the drafting of Local Action Plan, the following problems have been identified as a priority:

- inadequate housing,
- low standard of living,
- limited access to rights,
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¹²⁸ Local Action Plan was taken from the link: <http://www.eservis.ni.rs/propisi/Docs/4871.pdf>

low level of organization and activism of refugees and internally displaced persons.

In the document Development Programme for the City of Nis for 2013.¹²⁹ a chapter on social protection was formulated, which defines the objectives of social protection, reflected in the efficient financial transfers and developed network of institutions and social services which may eliminate or mitigate the main risks to which the citizens, particularly marginalized groups, are exposed to in current conditions, and provide them with the necessary social protection.

Priority areas have been directed towards improving social status of individuals (personal, family and general social); development and improvement of services of the local community, in accordance with the identified needs and best interests of the beneficiaries; improvement of conditions for the introduction of new, and development of existing, social protection programmes (foster care that suits the children, and specialized foster care; safe house; halfway house, day care center for youth, personal assistant, a soup kitchen); forming an integrated service provider for elderly and disabled persons, improving the conditions for the involvement of various actors in the provision of services; specifying the services provided by the Home for abandoned children "Dusko Radovic"; creating the conditions for the introduction of new services within the day care Center for children, youth and adults with mental disabilities "Mara" (extended day and weekend stays; inclusive kindergarten); accommodation of vulnerable groups from the programmes of social housing; prevention of socially unacceptable behavior (aggression, bullying, intergenerational hostility, vagrancy, mobbing, crime, corruption...) and expanding the activities and strengthening of capacity of the Center for foster care and adoption.

A document titled Strategy for Safety of the City of Nis 2010.¹³⁰ includes a chapter that talks about social security. The chapter analyzed portions relating to poverty, domestic violence, housing quality and education quality. The chapter has many statistics and reviews of the current situation in these areas.

Local Action Plan for Children of the City of Niš (LAP)¹³¹ is a strategic document that defines the city's policy towards children, which is a result of the Multisectoral Council for development of the Local Action Plan for Children of the City of Nis, which is composed of representatives of all institutions responsible for the care of children in City of Nis, Republic Institute for Statistics – Department of Nis, as well as representatives of all municipalities and non-governmental organizations from Nis, who are actively working with children and youth, as well as representatives of children.

LAP is aimed at all children of the City of Nis, especially children from poor families, children with disabilities, orphans, child victims of violence and neglect, children from Roma population, and it defines measures and priority actions to be taken in order to create

¹²⁹ "Development Programme for the City of Nis for 2013." was taken from the link: <http://www.eservis.ni.rs/propisi/Default.aspx>

¹³⁰ Strategy was taken from the link: <http://www.eservis.ni.rs/propisi/Default.aspx>

¹³¹ Source: Association for the Development of Children and Youth – Open Club, <http://www.oknis.org.rs>

environment that fosters the development of children and creates conditions for their active participation in local community life.

LPA contains ten priority areas identified by the Intersectoral team:

1.
Reducing child poverty
2.
Improving education
3.
Children's health
4.
Improving the status of children with disabilities
5.
The status and rights of children without parental care
6.
Improving the status and rights of Roma children
7.
Protecting children from abuse and neglect
8.
Quality leisure, culture and sport
9.
Awareness of children and parents' awareness
10.
Strengthening the capacity of the city to improve the status of children

Although LAP was adopted by the Mayor of Nis, and thus got the green light for the implementation, since the adoption of the plan in 2010. no measures or actions provided by the plan have been taken.

Although some segments of social protection were discussed in the aforementioned documents, it can be asked whether they are sufficiently specific, and even more important question, how it can be determined whether the planned activities were completed within the deadline. Mechanism for control of the effects of defined chapters does not exist, and the degree of implementation of plans is impossible to determine with certainty.

1.
Develop strategic and action plans that are closely related to human trafficking

Based on the analysis, we discovered that there are no documents at the level of city of Nis dealing specifically with human trafficking. The absence of these documents indicates a lack of commitment and willingness to address this issue more carefully, but also the possible lack of understanding of the process of protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking, because these issues are not precisely defined in any document. Employees in institutions that deal with this problem are working by the rules of their institution, and there are examples of good practice there, but there are also examples of inconsistent treatment. However, the development of Rulebook, that accurately defines duties and responsibilities of stakeholders once human trafficking is established, is a necessity. In addition, it is necessary to develop a long-term action plan that will define future steps to be taken in order to solve this problem in the right way.

2.

Establish a network of representatives of key institutions in order to promote cooperation in the process of identification and prosecution of the perpetrators of human trafficking crimes

It is necessary to establish a network of representatives of the police, social welfare centers, Safe House, and all other institutions that may be of importance in this process. It is necessary to define responsibilities of all actors involved in the network, to establish a network of contacts and the contact system and institute proceedings as soon as possible. It is also necessary to develop a protocol to be signed by all members of the network, that will, in addition to specifying the duties and responsibilities, have a binding character.

3.

Connect the formed Network for Combating Human Trafficking with the Multisectoral Council of the City of Nis

Multisectoral Council of the City of Nis was formed in June 2013, and its main task is to achieve the necessary intersectoral collaboration between the education, health and social protection sector for timely and effective protection of children in the city of Nis. We believe that the potential connection of the Network for Combating Human Trafficking with this Council can be very helpful because the members of the Council are representatives of key institutions involved in the detection of cases of human trafficking. Network for Combating Human Trafficking can be a part of the Council, like the newly established Intersectoral Team for the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect. Multisectoral Council of the City of Nis is an excellent resource that can be used for the fight against human trafficking because it facilitates communication and joint planning activities, since it already brings together representatives of relevant institutions, has a specified dynamics of meetings and communication system.

Kraljevo

Starting with 2002, Kraljevo has been included in the *Project of reform of social policy*. Similar to the other cities and municipalities where the reform projects in the area of social protection were implemented, in Kraljevo was also formed Municipal Coordination Committee for Social Policy (OKOSP), with the primary task to develop local strategies and

prepare the funding for new projects and services in social protection, by linking multiple sectors, under the direction of local government (an advisory body to the Mayor). As one of the tasks of OKOSP monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy and Action Plans was specified, and accordingly their revision as well, which should be based on evaluations.

The Strategy¹³² was developed after two years of work, for the period 2005-2010. and this is the first strategic document in the field of social protection of this, territorially largest, municipality in Serbia. Before displaying the priorities and objectives, it is interesting to note that, as some of the principles, sustainability of proposed mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation of performance of the services provided, were cited. A software for the systematic monitoring of social needs was also designed in Kraljevo, and its update and use are under the jurisdiction of the Municipality, i.e. OKOSP (including equipment). Database contains data that forms the social situation of the municipality of Kraljevo, expressed through the statistics of some target groups and their territorial distribution.

Kraljevo's Strategic Plan defines priorities, which refer to four population groups: children and families, youth, persons with disabilities and the elderly. It is stated that these priorities are based on the evaluation of local projects aimed at launching new services for groups of vulnerable population.

In the context of the local response to risks of human trafficking, two areas will be presented in more detail – children and families, and youth, i.e. activities planned for the first year of implementation of the Strategy from the Action Plan.

In the area of children and families, ten target groups were singled out: children and youth from broken homes, and from families with disturbed family relations; children and youth without parental care; with behavioral problems; from displaced and refugee families; from the Roma population; threatened by difficult financial situation; in the risk of entering minor marriages; members of dysfunctional families exposed to violence; parents; foster parents and guardians. Three objectives set for *improving the status of children and families* are:

- establishment of family Counseling Center
- economic empowerment of disadvantaged single parents and family members who are exposed to various forms of dysfunctionality
- forming multisectoral network to deal with the problems of children without parental care.

Some of the planned activities within these three goals are: decision-making at the municipal level on the forming of Counseling Center for premarital, marital and family relations within the SWC, implementation of prevention programmes to improve life in the family intended for all target groups, ensuring continuity of operation of clubs for guardians and foster

¹³² Strategic Plan for Social Policy Kraljevo, 2005-2010. and Action Plan for the period 2005-2006.

parents, and youth with behavioral problems, and forming new clubs, deciding on priorities for employment of children without parents, single parents, people in need of social care, in public companies, cooperation with the National Employment Agency and employers, supporting the economic empowerment of financially and socially disadvantaged youth and adults (additional qualifications, retraining, courses, additional training, etc.), addressing the issue of housing of children without parental care after the ending of family or home accommodation, mediation and assistance in finding temporary and occasional jobs.

Within the priority of *improving the quality of life for youth* one goal is defined – the establishment of the Youth Center, which should help youth to gather, gain additional education, receive support and have leisure facilities, etc. Activities for the first year of the implementation of the Strategy include the creation of the Center, Decision on the establishment of funds for the Center by the municipal administration, the provision of space, infrastructure and equipment from the municipal budget and donations and launching activities.

In the period 2013-2015. (in the area of social inclusion) it is envisaged that the Social Welfare Center, the Police Department, primary and secondary schools and NGOs undertake activities to prevent and protect Roma population from all forms of human trafficking, based on the need to reduce the number of custom child marriages, reduce the number of children and adults begging and reduce the number of their victims of human trafficking. Funding for these activities will be provided based on the project.

When it comes to the issue of human trafficking, in the part of the Action Plan which addresses the problem of social protection, it is provided that through the period 2013-2020. several activities should be carried out to counter human trafficking. Thus, a programme entitled "Victims of human trafficking" includes the following activities of relevant factors:

1.

The process of combating human trafficking in the city of Kraljevo will start right after the adoption of the Strategy and Action Plan for the following year, 2013, and will last until 2020. continuously. Programme activities designed to prevent human trafficking will be realized by NGOs, Social Welfare Center, the Police Department and schools.

2.

As of the following year, 2014. to 2017. it is planned for the process of sensitizing the local community for all types of human trafficking to last. The entities responsible for the implementation of programme activities are: the Police Department, non-governmental organizations, Social Welfare Center and the Red Cross.

3.

For the period 2015-2020. it is planned for the programme of support to victims of trafficking to last, for the purpose of overcoming the trauma and reintegration and protection from re-trafficking. Responsible for the implementation of these activities are: non-governmental organizations, Social Welfare Center, Counseling Center for pre-marital, marital and family relationships, Psychological counseling, Counseling for youth in the Health center.

4.

Also, from 2015. to 2020. the programme for protection of victims of human trafficking from the institutional re-traumatization through specialized educations of professionals, will be implemented. The subjects participating in the implementation are: non-governmental organizations, Social Welfare Center, Counseling Center for pre-marital, marital and family relationships, and Health center.

Other relevant regulations in the field of prevention of human trafficking in the context of support for particularly vulnerable groups, are listed below.

Local Action Plan for improving the status of refugees and internally displaced persons in Kraljevo, for the period 2009-2013. was created as a result of participation in the project *Support for the institutions of the Government of the Republic of Serbia competent for refugees and internally displaced persons*. According to the Plan, during the implementation, several specific goals should be achieved, related to:

- improving housing and living conditions in the Roma colony Stari Aerodrom,
- improving the quality of life of refugees, IDPs and locals in the village Beranovac,
- continued implementation of various measures of employment and reduction of unemployment,
- improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable families of refugees and IDPs from individual accommodation, including families placed in "informal" centers, and
- intensification of activities related to the closure of collective centers by providing alternative solutions.

Also, the plan defines creation of conditions for the full integration of refugees and internally displaced persons in Kraljevo, through the improvement of their social status, increase in their employment, provision of adequate housing, improvement of socio-economic situation and poverty reduction. Planned activities are related to the establishment of effective cooperation between all the local actors (city, citizens' associations, public institutions and services, etc.), and Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, in order to provide housing for refugees and internally displaced persons, close collective centers, provide help to people with disabilities, etc.

Local Action Plan for Employment of the City of Kraljevo for year 2012. and 2013, as specific goals, defined: incitement of employment and prevention of unemployment by creating conditions for social inclusion and employment of youth, women, persons with

disabilities, members of Roma population, refugees and internally displaced persons, and others with employability issues; Incentives for the creation of new work places.

Local Action Plan for Improving the Status of Roma in Kraljevo 2009-2015. defines its purpose as improving the situation of Roma, particularly in the areas of education, health care, employment and housing, which will create the conditions for their greater involvement in the society. The aim of this action plan is to emphasize the importance of planned and systematic approach, and the importance of intersectoral collaboration in an effort to achieve minimal progress in addressing a number of issues related to improving the status of Roma in the local community. In this context, the Plan identifies the following areas as key ones:

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Housing: Create conditions for legalization of residential buildings in the Roma settlement Grdicka kosa II; Improve and build infrastructure in Roma settlements; improve the housing conditions of Roma families in Kraljevo, by providing minimum housing standards;

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Education: Increase the number of Roma children attending regular classes in pre-schools in Kraljevo, through the creation of better conditions for preparatory education; Increase the number of Roma children who are regularly enrolled and attending elementary school with the motivation to achieve successful results; Increase the number of Roma children who regularly attend secondary education by promoting the importance of secondary education; Increase the number of Roma children who are involved in the higher education system;

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Employment: Reduce the rate of unemployed Roma and increase the number of the population of working age and economically active Roma population in the territory of Kraljevo;

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Health: Increase the level of knowledge about the importance of prevention, treatment and control of health of the entire Roma population in Kraljevo; Improve the position of disadvantaged Roma through assistance in health care and adequate diet; Improve hygiene and epidemiological conditions in Roma settlements in order to prevent the emergence and spread of infectious diseases; Create conditions for greater inclusion of Roma in social and health care system.

Local Action Plan for Children 2008-2012. is a plan that is consistent with international conventions and other international and national documents. The main objectives of the plan are to reduce child poverty, quality education for all children, better health for all children, the advancement of the status and rights of children with disabilities, protection of rights of children without parental care and protection of children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

Vranje

The City of Vranje has not adopted a specific public policy document related to social protection, and the text of the Strategy in this area is still in draft. However, in the context of the response to the issue of trafficking, i.e. formulating an adequate response to the problem of human trafficking at the local level, some segments of the ten-year Strategy for sustainable development¹³³ may be of great importance. This main strategic document which directs other public policies of other sectors, as one of the five areas defined social activities, i.e. subdivision – Social policy and civil society. SWOT analysis of this area as the current weakness cites low standards and lack of intersectoral connection, and as threats the increase of the number of social protection beneficiaries and politicization. Defined strategic goal is to develop a system of local services of social protection that will function by satisfying the needs of all citizens, and has three priorities within:

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Improving cooperation between social protection institutions, local government services, health services, judiciary, the police, education, with detailed objectives of strengthening the capacity of institutions of social and health care, intensified activities of the City Coordinating Committee for social policy, and development of the Protocol on intersectoral cooperation in order to improve local services. Some of the specific projects within this priority are: providing legal assistance to women and children, victims of domestic violence and trafficking, providing accommodation for victims of violence, building a Safe House for women and children victims of domestic violence, education of employees in the Center for development of social protection services, SOS hotline and building the capacity of local networks for prevention and protection from violence, the formation of a working network of various institutions for a coordinated response to the needs of socially disadvantaged. These are all five-year projects (2010-2015), which should be covered by the budget of the Ministry, the City and by donors.

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Affirmative policy of local government for the resocialization of vulnerable population, with detailed objectives, such as creating preconditions for the inclusion of socially disadvantaged in economic and social life of the city, retraining and additional training for 15% of unemployed, and 20% of Roma youth (18-35 years old) and the implementation of programme The Decade of Roma. Planned individual projects in this area include development of a database for the poorest segments of the population, development of infrastructure of settlement and regulation of the legal property relations in Roma settlements, improving housing and employment of IDPs, training for socially vulnerable population for active job search, assistance to families and children below the poverty line, etc., which should also be realized in the period of 2010-2015, and funded by the relevant ministries, the city budget and by donors.

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¹³³ Strategy for sustainable development City of Vranje 2010-2020.

Strengthening the capacity of the City Administration includes, among other things, the improvement of working conditions – renovation of facilities and development of a database in local communities and training of employees.

The mentioned draft of the Strategy for Development of Social Protection 2012-2016. formulates the following general objective: Improvement of the existing, and development of new, services that will enable the advancement of the status of citizens belonging to vulnerable groups:

- elderly
- children and youth,
- persons with disabilities,
- unemployed,
- victims of violence,
- internally displaced persons and refugees,
- Roma
- migrants.

Plan for the implementation of strategy would have the purpose to: define responsibilities, establish sustainable city mechanism of ordering social services, provide transparency of the process. For a particularly vulnerable groups, the plan provides the provision of both housing and infrastructure for Roma families that get recorded through the process of obtaining social cards; while improving the status of refugees and displaced persons is planned through joint actions of the National Employment Agency, local government and local entrepreneurs, on the projects for employment and self-employment of these individuals. It is anticipated that the programs are to be consistent with the characteristics of beneficiary groups that are identified in the National Strategy for resolving the problems of Refugees and IDPs (existentially most vulnerable, the poor working-age families, the working age population).

The objectives in relation to the victims of violence are very important, given that in Vranje, only during the 2012, the SOS hotline for victims of domestic violence registered 164 calls of mostly women, in 140 of which were identified different forms of abuse and domestic

violence. It is estimated that, by the end of 2016, a program for the operational exchange of information relevant to the victims and perpetrators of violence will be developed, through programmes of psychosocial assistance to victims of violence, especially children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly. Also, the development of psychosocial support to perpetrators of violence/bullying is planned.

When it comes to the category of migrants, the Strategy provides for the care and reintegration of families displaced under the bridge "Gazela", employment, education, health and social care. In order to achieve the objectives set by the Strategy, the need for a reinvigorated multisector cooperation between the representatives of all relevant institutions and organizations is emphasized.

Local action plan for improving the status of refugees and internally displaced persons in the period of 2009-2013. as priority groups identified socially vulnerable families, families with a kidnapped member, unemployed and financially poor persons from this community.

Local Action Plan for Youth 2011-2015. was adopted by the City Council, while the city budget provides funds for its implementation, with co-financing by donor funds through the Ministry of Youth and Sports and indirectly. Priority areas of work that are simultaneously affecting the areas of prevention are *Promoting all forms of employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship of youth* and *Development of social inclusion and healthy lifestyles of youth*.

Local Plan of Action for Children for the period 2006-2010. as strategic objectives formulated the following:

- reduction of child poverty
- better health for all the children
- quality education
- advancement of the status and the rights of children with disabilities
- protection of the rights of children without parental care
- protection of children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence

Based on everything stated so far, it can be concluded that the strategic documents do not recognize the phenomenon of trafficking in any segment. Also, they are not mutually coordinated enough, which may be due to the absence of the general plan with clear priorities and differences in the availability of funds for development of these documents (development

processes are often motivated by donor support). One of the drawbacks of local plans are unadjusted support programmes, not only for the victims but for other vulnerable groups as well, so in this area necessary and planned activities are not being performed. Measurable results and precise indicators of successfully achieved goals are not formulated either. It is necessary to emphasize, once again, the need for the adoption of the Strategy for Social Protection.

As Vranje is well established migratory route – migrants from the territory of Macedonia and Kosovo leave towards the EU – it would be of great importance to develop programmes of systemic prevention, including poverty reduction and raising awareness of citizens about human trafficking and other risks.

In short, when it comes to the local policy of protection for the most vulnerable groups, in the context of prevention of human trafficking, it is possible to conclude the following:

- Strategic documents at the city level are mostly outdated, unaudited. Social Welfare Development Strategy has not been adopted, although a draft is made.
- Strategies are not mutually agreed upon, which is a result of the absence of general plan with clear priorities.
- Means for making of these documents often come from foreign donations.
- Working groups that participated in the drafting of strategic documents are uneven in capacity.
- The documents selected for analysis do not recognize the problem of human trafficking, there is no local strategic and action plan at the local level, which contains provisions on human trafficking.
- Documents recognize vulnerable social groups – representatives of the Roma community, refugees and displaced persons, victims of domestic violence, financially vulnerable families, persons with disabilities, migrants.
- Allocated funds are not transferred transparently enough to the holders of activities.

From interviews with representatives of various institutions and organizations at the local level, in the process of monitoring the implementation of local strategic and action plans, the following information were also obtained about the very treatment in cases of identification of victims of trafficking:

- The victim is placed in a reception facility until the representatives of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims arrive

- Social Welfare Center and health care institutions are taking measures within its competence, but also the activities of advisory work, placement in the Shelter, providing accompaniment, collecting the necessary information

- The Reception facility in Belgrade and non-governmental organizations dealing with this issue are being notified, because this proved to be an effective method of quality protection

In the process of protection of victims, representatives of institutions have good mutual cooperation. Again, as an example of good practice in this context, the cooperation with the police is cited. However, that cooperation is still based on personal relationships and enthusiasm, rather than systemic solutions.

It is particularly important to note that, in the protection of vulnerable social groups, social work center provides measures and services of:

- foster care

- residential accommodation/shelter accommodation

- the right to financial benefits, carer's allowance and increased allowance

- one-off financial assistance

- in-home assistance to the elderly

- day care center

- counseling

Currently, according to records in Vranje, there are 1463 beneficiaries of social assistance, the largest number of them being the Roma, refugees and internally displaced persons; 593 persons are beneficiaries of carer's allowance.

In the process of protecting victims, SWC often coordinates cooperation and schedules a case conference. If the victim first refers to the health facility, then the representative of the medical institution will inform other institution.

Institutions that react in the process of protection of victims are:

- the police
- social welfare center
- center for the development of local services - Shelter
- Health institution
- NGO/Human Rights Committee and the SOS hotline

When it comes to monitoring the effects of the programme, representatives of the police say they are monitoring them through statistics, practices, joint meetings and daily communication. Other representatives of institutions believe that the program effects are not being followed. The drawbacks of the entire mechanism for the protection of victims of trafficking all of the participants in the interview see in the insufficient accommodation capacities and the lack of adequate protection and prevention programmes;

In the context of prevention of human trafficking, another project should also be mentioned, which was implemented by the Social Welfare Center in Vranje in the period from 2010. to 2012. – *My rights and how to reach them*, intended for informing and educating migrants about their rights and ways to exercise them.

The Red Cross is working more actively on education and informing of youth and adults, in partnership with the police, about the risks and consequences of human trafficking, through discussions, workshops, meetings, media campaigns. As for the vulnerable groups, the Red Cross, other than prevention activities, provides assistance with food, clothes and lunch packs to beneficiaries from particularly vulnerable groups in rural areas.

One gets the impression that the institutions recognize the need for teams and a network for protection of victims of trafficking. Most representatives did not have more accurate information about the phenomenon of human trafficking, however, when it comes to responding to violence, representatives of various institutions cooperate with each other well. It is necessary, therefore, to continue to work on the education of employees from different systems.

It is important to note that citizens' association NEXUS-Vranje is working on a draft of the Agreement on intersectoral cooperation for the protection of children from abuse and neglect, which includes the area of protection of children from human trafficking. The signatories of the Agreement will be representatives of all relevant institutions/organizations. The objectives of the Agreement are:

- Early detection and mutual informing –data exchange;
- Establishment of an effective and uniform procedures that will ensure rapid and coordinated action in cases of violence against children;
- Alignment and adjustment of professional standards to the specific needs of abused children;
- Increase of the share of court prosecuted and legally sanctioned offenders;
- Increase of the number of detected cases of violence against children;
- Formation of unique database;
- Increase of security.

The Agreement is supported by the city of Vranje and will be presented to the City Council.

Recommendations

- Development of local action plan for the protection of victims of trafficking;
- Inclusion of a greater number of actors in the process of identification and provision of assistance to victims;
- Improvement of the process of identification of victims of human trafficking;
- Development of the Protocol on intersectoral collaboration of institutions for the protection of victims of human trafficking at the local level, which would define the duties and mode of action of all institutions and the process of identification, referral and assistance to victims of human trafficking;

- The formation of network at the local level, for the protection and better coordination of institutions;
- Creating programs of support for the victims, which must be adapted to provide the necessary long-term reintegration services to all the victims, such as education, vocational training, psychosocial counseling and psychosocial protection, finding a job, long-term support regarding accommodation;
- Opening shelters for various groups of victims (trafficking, violence);
- Establishment of a fund, existence of special budget for the programmes of support for the victims at the local level;
- Organization of education for the professionals on how to recognize victims of human trafficking;

Kragujevac

Social Welfare Development Strategy of the City of Kragujevac for the period of 2010-2013. has been developed within the project "Supporting the Implementation of Social Welfare Strategy in RS", which was governed by a memorandum between the City and the competent Ministry. Similar to the other cities in which strategic documents were developed in the field of social protection, in Kragujevac was established a Unit for coordination of development and implementation of the Strategy (nine-member body), and the Council for the Social Strategic Partnership as a governing body of 29 members. In the area of social protection, the Strategy notes that in addition to the Social Welfare Center, an important social protection institution is also Children's Home "Mladost", primarily designed for children without parental care, and with developed services during the process of transformation of the institution: supported housing, foster care, day care center for children from families at risk, shelter and reception facility for children and youth under the age of 18, and shelter for victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, in a review of activities and actors in the field of social protection, the association "Sunce" was singled out, which was, among other things, involved in the process of development of local services and the systemic support of development of local social protection, then 15 organizations engaged in improving the status of the Roma population. At the time of the Strategy development, Decision on the rights to social security was in force, which, among other things, provided the rights to temporary housing in the Shelter and reception facility for children and youth, temporary

accommodation in the Shelter for victims of domestic violence, as well as temporary housing of children and youth without parental care.

SWOT analysis, as one of the strengths of city's social protection, recognizes the existence of a protocol on cooperation between various sectors, which differs Kragujevac from many other cities in which this is one of the weaknesses. Furthermore, the strength are also services developed within the city government, as well as public institutions and citizens' organizations. Weaknesses are primarily insufficiently developed system of monitoring and evaluation, and insufficient number and coverage of existing services, insufficient monitoring of the needs by the citizens' associations, the lack of a unique database. Further reform processes – decentralization, standardization of services, pluralism and competitiveness of providers are seen as opportunities, while the threats for further development of social protection are primarily restrictive state policy toward local governments, low budget allocations from the republic level, slowness of reform processes, lack of financial transfers. The strategic objective in the area of social protection of Kragujevac – *improving the status of vulnerable social groups* should be achieved through four key priorities, i.e. target groups: i) children, youth and families at risk, ii) adults affected by poverty, iii) persons with disabilities, iv) elderly.

In the context of prevention of trafficking and protection of victims, it is important to pay attention to the planned operationalization of activities in the first two priority target groups, as potentially the most exposed to the risks of trafficking.

Thus, within the priority area: *children, youth and families at risk*, some of the defined six operational objectives are: increase of the coverage of financially disadvantaged families by social protection services; increase includes existing services for children and youth by 30%, by the end of 2013; increase includes beneficiaries of services of strengthening cohesion of families at social risk by 15% by the end of 2013.

As for adults affected by poverty, the Strategy defines only three much more general operational objectives: helping adults affected by poverty, improving their living conditions and employment of persons with employability issues (people under 30 years of age and over 50 years of age).

Human trafficking is not explicitly mentioned in the Strategy, except in the description of activities of the Red Cross, and it does not consider that the priority groups are to a greater or lesser degree at risk of human trafficking, but the realization of operational objectives contributes to the prevention and reduction of the causes of human trafficking.

The key observations that can be formulated by the performance of activities of monitoring the implementation of local strategic plans:

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Institutional and non-institutional forms of social protection are represented in the city;

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Cooperation of local authorities, social protection institutions and NGOs is developed through project activities;

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For the realization of the rights of beneficiaries that are defined by local strategic documents, funds were provided from the budget;

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For certain areas between institutions and other partners, there are defined procedures for handling and protocols on cooperation;

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Continued cooperation of local government and other actors in the community set the system of team and intersectoral work in order to effectively protect the citizens;

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Some social protection services are not developed, although the need is present. Underdevelopment of services is justified by the lack of financial resources and physical capacities;

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Awareness of citizens about the rights and social protection services is not sufficiently developed.

In order to acquire a more precise picture of the importance of prevention of human trafficking, it is important to note that the number of beneficiaries of social protection is constantly increasing. Social protection services in 2008. included 8% of the population of Kragujevac, 33% of which were children, and 51% adults. Female beneficiaries make 54% of a total number of beneficiaries of social services.

The Decision on Social Protection of the City of Kragujevac ("Official Gazette of the City of Kragujevac," No. 16/2011) determines the right to financial support and the provision of social protection services, which are under the jurisdiction of the city of Kragujevac. Services in social protection are activities of providing support and assistance to citizens and their families in order to improve, or maintain, their quality of life, eliminate or reduce the risk of adverse environmental circumstances and develop the potential of beneficiaries for independent living. Services that are determined by this decision are:

1. Day care center for children and youth with disabilities
2. Day care center for children from families at risk
3. Day care center for children with behavioral problems
4. Respite accommodation for children and youth with disabilities
5. Daily care for adults with developmental disabilities

6. Services of Youth Center
7. Services of the Club for youth with disabilities
8. Help and home care for adults and the elderly
9. Day care center for the elderly
10. Services of the Club for the elderly
11. Shelter for children and youth
12. Shelter for victims of domestic violence
13. Shelter for adults and the elderly
14. Center for marriage and family counseling
15. Social housing in a supportive environment
16. Supported housing for youth who are becoming independent.

Services and support set out in this Decision may be used, among others, by victims of human trafficking, if they meet certain requirements. During 2011. the services of the Youth Center were used by 494 people. The shelter for victims of domestic violence accommodated 81 users, 35 of which were women and 46 children, 532 clients sought help in the Center for marriage and family counseling, social housing in a supportive environment was used by 212 people in 66 housing units, and supported housing for youth who are becoming independent was used by 1 person.

Victims of human trafficking are mentioned as potential beneficiaries of two services – Shelter for Children and Youth, and Shelter for adults and the elderly.

In the context of prevention of human trafficking, the draft of the Local Action Plan for Roma women for the period of 2012-2015. may be mentioned. Local Plan, among other objectives in the field of social protection, includes the objective – establishment of mechanisms for protection of women and children from human trafficking. Specific objectives are defined as: Regular collection of information related to the Roma women victims of trafficking, and the training and sensitization of relevant departments and NGOs on the specifics of Roma women victims of trafficking, and the protection of "street children". Planned activities are informing about the dangers, implementation of the programme of safe houses, open and closed type of halfway houses for Roma women, as well as training of services to intervene and provide adequate assistance to Roma women – victims of trafficking and children involved in life and work on the streets.

Local Action Plan of employment of the City of Kragujevac for 2012. recognizes the victims of human trafficking as a particularly vulnerable category. Active measures and programs which include a large number of unemployed persons are focused on reducing poverty and

social exclusion, but in an unstable economic environment, these measures can be difficult to make a sustainable and long-term results.

Although the strategic documents and local action plans of the City of Kragujevac identify particularly vulnerable groups and provided services and social protection beneficiaries, the risk of human trafficking which these groups are exposed to is not recognized. Strategic and action plans do not provide, i.e. do not specifically allocate, the system of providing assistance and support to victims of human trafficking, except in cases of emergency accommodation. However, the local community has recognized this need and has been active in this area for years now.

In practice, the Police Department has a Team to combat illegal migrations and human trafficking, which deals with detecting cases of human trafficking and taking the necessary measures. As a matter of priority ensuring of safety and protection of victims are singled out, as well as medical care, and then prosecution of perpetrators. In the process of taking care of the victim, Police Department, Social Welfare Center and health institutions cooperate and take the necessary actions on the model of intersectoral cooperation, established by the Protocol on intersectoral cooperation in the process of the protection of victims of domestic violence, which proved to be successful in the processes of protecting victims of violence.

During the previous years, many prevention programmes related to human trafficking have been implemented. Roma organizations (Roma Information Center, Stablo, Romanipen and others) were the first to recognize the importance of prevention. In addition to the Roma, they have been working on the education of teachers and students in primary and secondary schools. During 2008. and 2009. Roma Information Center implemented the project *Culture against human trafficking*, in which a small group was formed out of students from eight secondary schools, who, together with their teachers in the role of mentors, created and performed a forum theatre play about human trafficking. Also, Roma organizations constantly work on education and inclusion of Roma, and they also have programmes for the increase of employment.

Since 2007. the Red Cross in Kragujevac has been implementing a programme *Prevention of human trafficking*. Within the programme, education of educators was implemented, a number of workshops and forums was held for elementary and secondary school children, students, youth with disabilities, the inmates of the County jail in Kragujevac. By the appearance of coordinators, educators, and collaborators on the programme in the media, the general public is introduced with the risks and the ways to prevent human trafficking. Since the publication of the first issue of the magazine *In the service of humanity* of the Red Cross Kragujevac, the activities of the programme are shown and described in detail in each of the issues, and in some issues it was indicated to the necessary precautions when traveling.

Every year, the European Day Against Human Trafficking is traditionally marked: dolls are placed in the windows of stores in order to draw attention of passers-by to the position of the victims of human trafficking; decorative packages with cautionary messages are placed in a busy shopping center...

At this point it is worth mentioning the results of a survey conducted by the Red Cross, which was attended by 342 persons – 143 male (41.8%) and 199 (58.19%) were female. When it comes to knowledge about forms of human trafficking, most of them (91.8%) were aware that sexual exploitation is a form of human trafficking. When asked what causes the increase in the number of trafficking victims, the largest number of respondents, 72.51% of them, considered the causes are credulity or pliability, and right after that is answering unconfirmed ads and desire for a better future. When asked to whom they would report a case of human trafficking, 80.12% of respondents said they would turn to the Ministry of the Interior. The most important is that the majority of respondents – 78.65% of them believe that informing people about this global issue through the media significantly influences the reduction of the risks of human trafficking, and right after that, they cite the lectures, forums, conferences.

In addition to these, the Ministry of Education also implemented a project - *Role of the education system in the protection of students from domestic violence*, and within this project one of the topics was human trafficking. In every primary and secondary school in the territory of the city, 5 or 6 teachers were involved in some of the educational programs on the subject of human trafficking.

Also, the Police Department had continuing education of the Roma and refugees, independently and in partnership with the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations. Youth Office organized workshops and panel discussions on this topic for its target audience.

In Kragujevac, NGO sector is quite developed, and includes different fields of activity. For years now, a variety of programs, aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion, have been implemented, which greatly contributes to the prevention of human trafficking.

Recommendations

- It is necessary to create mechanisms and standards in the process of the protection of victims of human trafficking – from emergency assistance (provision of accommodation, medical and psychological help), through rehabilitation to reintegration;
- It is necessary to make a binding document on multisectoral cooperation in this field;
- Creating procedures in the protection system, which bind to the principles of respect of the will of victim, her best interest, and non-discrimination;
- Improve the competence of professionals when it comes to identification of potential victims of human trafficking and their treatment;
- Establish a free medical and legal assistance for victims, as well as for those who are in the process of obtaining the status of victims of human trafficking;

- Continue to work on the prevention of human trafficking at all levels;

- Prevention programs need to include general public, a wider range of professionals, children and youth and groups at risk;

- All activities related to the prevention and suppression of human trafficking should be implemented through an approach based on the concept of human rights and the respect of gender perspective.

Novi Sad

In Novi Sad, there is no current document about of public policy which regulates the area of social protection or the protection of vulnerable groups. Several documents, which could have indirect importance on the prevention and protection of victims of human trafficking, have been made over the past few years, but have not been adopted.

Thus, the Social Welfare Development Strategy was completed in 2006, but the document has not been adopted by the Assembly. The database of local strategic documents of Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) states that the local government initiated the preparation of the document from its own funds, and that the partners in this process were Social Welfare Center and NGOs. Similar case is with the Novi Sad's City Development Strategy, that should apply to 2026, and that according to the aforementioned database was not adopted, and the members of the body responsible for coordinating the development are Roma representatives, youth, refugees and displaced persons, women and the elderly. Then, there is also an 'unadopted' Strategy of sustainable development, as a comprehensive socio-economic development plan that was planned for the period of 2007-2011. The making of this strategy was initiated by the local government and the Standing Conference of Cities and Municipalities, and as partners in development are listed SWC, educational and medical institutions, and citizens' associations.

However, of existing plans, the Local Action Plan for Youth for the period of 2010-2014. should be mentioned. Following the recommendations for technical assistance of the Federal Republic of Germany (GTZ), which, in a number of cities and municipalities in the RS, helped create LAP for youth, LAP for youth of the city of Novi Sad described and named institutional preconditions, baseline, participants and the very process of the creation of the document. Statistical data to display 11 fields that the action plan should include was also entered. This plan, the only existing one, did not pass the revision, but every year, based on the evaluation, one target is chosen that will be a priority that year. Based on that, the City invites tenders for project funding from the city budget, taking into account the selected priority target.

At the local level, the Action Plan for Roma women, for the period from 2012. to 2015 is in the process of development, and it should be in line with the Strategy for improving the status of Roma, as well as all other supporting documents related to improving the status of Roma

women, and departmental legal acts. The document should contain concrete and locally specific measures, aimed at improving the overall status of Roma living in the territory of Novi Sad.

As there are no strategic and action plans related to social protection, the possible framework for the protection of victims and prevention of human trafficking was possible to analyze only by LAP for youth. Specifically, the part of the plan that maps out security topic, within the *delinquency*, trafficking is wrongly explained as a sexual delict, and compared to rape and prostitution.

When it comes to vulnerable groups, LAP for youth recognizes some particularly vulnerable groups: youth who are sex workers, youth with disabilities, youth from dysfunctional families, youth users of psychoactive substances, youth who suffer from, or commit, violence, or live in a situation of violence, youth living in poverty, young Roma men and women, young LGBT persons, youth who are victims of forced labour, youth who live in the suburbs.

As the most urgent needs of youth in the social policy area in the City of Novi Sad, especially when it comes to particularly vulnerable groups, among other things, the following were pointed out:

- Lack of information on the work of social services
- Inability of temporary employment
- Discrimination of youth upon the employment
- Communication with social services
- Relation of media toward specific groups
- /The Roma, OSI/ - lack of basic living conditions
- Lack of awareness of youth about discrimination
- Segregation of Roma
- Lack of interest of educational institutions to help and care for the Roma and other discriminated groups

- The teaching staff and psycho-educational services in schools are not sensitized
- Unequal treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS and LGBT persons
- Lack of information on NGOs
- Inadequate information on laws/rights/possibilities
- Lack of information about women's safe house and a way to reach it
- Insufficient information about the institution of ombudsman
- Complicated bureaucratic procedure for exercising the right to social protection
- Lack of counseling services for youth aged 19 to 30 (who are not in the school system)
- Youth who are at increased risk of social exclusion/socially excluded are not familiar with the forms of social exclusion and the rights that citizens can exercise through the system of social protection
- There is no developed model of registering for youth who belong to vulnerable groups and their referral to different providers of social protection services
- Categories and problems of youth who are at risk of social exclusion/socially excluded are underrepresented in the media
- The media contribute to the deterioration of the social status of certain vulnerable groups of youth
- Physical and psychological violence as forms of discrimination against various groups of youth are forms of socially desirable behavior among youth
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The problem of young Roma men and women is that social protection institutions do not improve the quality of their living conditions

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Ignorance of youth about the difference between state institutions and civil society organizations in terms of addressing for the purposes of social protection

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Lack of information about the work of civil society organizations engaged in social protection

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The lack of information necessary to identify different, less noticeable, and everyday forms of discrimination

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Problems of discrimination of various youth due to the lack of principles of gender equality, etc.

During the focus group interviews, carried out within the activity of monitoring the implementation of local policies for the suppression of trafficking, it was determined that the level of knowledge of respondents on the phenomenon of trafficking is very uneven. Respondents, who so far passed some training related to the phenomenon of human trafficking, have been very familiar with this phenomenon, they have knowledge about the mechanisms of protecting the victim, the existing legal acts related to human trafficking, etc. They were also informed about the existence of the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims, and its role and responsibilities. It is important to draw attention to the fact that, despite recommendations for treatment, the police contact the Agency only after the public prosecutor issues an indictment for the act of human trafficking.

On the other hand, especially in educational institutions, the level of knowledge about the phenomenon of human trafficking proved to be very low. The only sources of information on this topic are mainly the media, and in most cases misconceptions that are present are the ones that normally arise when it comes to the issue of human trafficking, such as, e.g. that human trafficking is mainly related to sexual exploitation, to foreign citizens and that the victims are always women. A lot of the respondents after the interview expressed a strong interest in more information about the phenomenon of human trafficking.

Recommendations

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Creating a local action plan for the suppression of human trafficking – as an example of good practice for the preparation of LAP, the example of LAP Youth Policy for the period of 2010-2014. can be used. Initiative to draft LAP for the suppression of human trafficking could start from a network of organizations and institutions that was formed by this project. Voluntary

programme jointly run by NSHC and Evangelical association of students, *Freedom has no price - Stop Human Trafficking*¹³⁴ will initiate the drafting of the plan in Novi Sad;

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When developing LAPs from other fields, enter the provisions on human trafficking;

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Education of potential actors in the process of identifying and assisting victims about the issue of human trafficking. During the interview, the team came to the conclusion that there are many actors in Novi Sad who could get involved in the fight against human trafficking, that there is a will, but also a great lack of knowledge about the topic, and that the education is much needed, especially when it comes to experts who are often in contact with the members of vulnerable groups (e.g. educational institutions);

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Inclusion of a greater number of actors in the process of identifying and providing assistance to victims;

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Strengthening institutions and organizations for mutual cooperation;

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Development of the Protocol on intersectoral institutional cooperation in the protection of victims of human trafficking at the local level, which would define the duties and activities of all institutions involved in the identification, referral and assistance to victims of trafficking;

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Continued operation of the network formed by the project *Local communities projects in the fight against human trafficking* after the project ends, monitoring and improvement of work of the established network. In order to achieve these recommendations it is necessary to choose one of the organizations or institutions, member of the network, which would be responsible for coordination and monitoring of the network;

•

Creating a program of support for victims, which must be adapted in order to provide long-term reintegration services necessary to the victims, such as education, vocational training, psycho-social counseling and psycho-social care, finding a job, long-term support for accommodation. In this sense, the existing programs in Novi Sad should be used (e.g. NSHC's Psychological counseling center for youth, the programme of the Elementary School for Adult Education "Sveti Sava", and the like), and new ones, that prove to be necessary, should be created;

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In cooperation with the Social Welfare Center, it should be established whether the Shelter within the Women's Safe House (open and capacitated during the partnership project of

¹³⁴ www.facebook.com/pages/Sloboda-nema-cenu-Stop-trgovini-ljudima

NSHC and Social Welfare Center in Novi Sad) will continue to accommodate the victims of human trafficking. If the Shelter will not continue to work, a new shelter should be opened;

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Establishment of a fund for the programmes of support for the victims at the local level;

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Organization of workshops, panel discussions, lectures, etc. in order to raise awareness of human trafficking, especially with vulnerable groups and youth. The voluntary programme *Freedom has no price - Stop Human Trafficking* should also be included, as well as the network formed by this project, in order to implement this recommendation. An example of how this could be done is also the proposal for cooperation which the voluntary programme received from the Student Health center, to include student workshops on the prevention of human trafficking to regular check-ups. In addition, public actions on this topic should be organized in the city, sharing flyers, brochures, informing citizens, and this actions should include youth organizations, Youth Office, schools, student parliaments and other actors.

Subotica

Strategic Plan for Social Welfare Development, for the period from 2008-2012.¹³⁵ and Action Plan for the 2008. were developed within the project "Support to the Implementation of the Strategy for development of social protection". One of the project activities was the establishment of the Municipal Coordinating Committee for strategic planning of social policy development (KOSP), which, as intersectoral body, composed of the representatives of local administration, public services, citizens' associations, led the process of developing the Strategy. It is the first unified document in the field of social protection in Subotica and it is directed toward specific reform requirements – decentralization of services and the transfer of jurisdiction to the local level. Although there are no specific areas where the response to the human trafficking is explicitly elaborated, the Strategy is clearly engaged in the prevention of risks of social exclusion, discrimination and poverty, and hence trafficking. The Strategy recognizes the following target groups, that need special attention: children and youth, families (women constitute a separate subgroup), persons with disabilities, the elderly, the poor and the unemployed, the Roma.

This would primarily entail ensuring the sustainability of existing, and provision of new, services for these groups of population, as well as educational and information work with members of marginalized groups. Allocation of a special budget line for social benefits and local services should ensure the viability and implementation of the Strategy. Four strategic objectives are defined:

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Improvement of the existing services for vulnerable groups, by increase of the volume and quality of services, the number of beneficiaries and the intersectoral approach and plurality of providers;

¹³⁵ Strategic Plan for Social Welfare Development in the municipality of Subotica for the period from 2008. to 2012. (November, 2007).

- Increase of the level of social protection of particularly vulnerable groups, through the introduction of innovative organizational forms and social protection services based on the principles of cooperation and partnership between the sectors and with the plurality of providers;

- Strengthening of the local social protection system through the development of sustainable mechanisms of intersectoral cooperation and institutionalization of them, based on the equality of providers from the public, private and civil sectors, the construction of comprehensive human resources and capacities of the system;

- Informing and educating the public to reduce discrimination of particularly vulnerable groups and the activation of all relevant factors in this regard.

The part of the Strategy which summarizes the situation in the field of children and youth states that there is a lack of systemic and sustainable solutions to meet the basic needs of children and youth in need of emergency care, especially considering that the reception facility does not meet the requirements, while, on the other hand, the number of children who are in vagrancy or victims of various forms of abuse is increasing. It was pointed out that the services are not available, and that the continuity of protection is not achieved. Furthermore, there is a lack of coordination, inefficiency and inequality in the distribution of resources, lack of, or a small number of, services that are designed for the most vulnerable groups of children and youth, and overlapping and unplanned implementation of the programmes, provided that they are not specifically targeted to the most vulnerable groups. As a result, children and youth and their parents are often exposed to new traumatic experiences in the, mostly passive, use of services. One of the specific tasks for this target group is an extension of the existing, and the introduction of innovative, organizational forms and non-institutional social protection services, with an emphasis on preventive action. By the end of 2008. as a specific goal it was planned for a reception facility, within the Home for children and youth, to be put into service for children and youth in need of immediate temporary care (children without parental care, children in vagrancy, victims of violence...) with a capacity of 20 places.

In the area of Subotica's Strategy concerning *the family*, children victims of violence are also included in a recognized group that requires additional protection. The trend of increase in the number of cases of domestic violence, problems in family functioning and in the performance of the parental role, was recorded. The protection and assistance to victims of domestic violence is not complete because of the lack of availability of institutional care and adequate work with the victims and the bully. As some of the specific tasks, the following are defined: the construction of Safe House by the end of 2008. with a capacity of 15 places for the placement of victims of violence, with the services of social and legal protection, and the implementation of psycho-social support and assistance for victims of violence through group activities and individual work.

The next target group, whose status should be improved with the contribution of the Strategy, is the poor and unemployed population. It has been observed that the level and extent of financial benefits for vulnerable groups are not sufficient, but that, in addition, governs a lack of cooperation and information sharing between the public sector and civil society, including the mutual system for finding and identifying persons in need. Strategic interventions, among other things, need to provide equal access to services to all persons in social need, as well as greater financial allocations for the poor, both at the state level and at the level of local government. Large families with more than five members, and the unemployed over 41 years of age, were selected as specific beneficiary groups. One of the specific objectives is the increase of coverage of poor people in social protection services, through measures to facilitate the exercise of fundamental and expanded rights, as well as increase of the number, and the quality, of services to poor citizens through the development of intersectoral cooperation and regular monitoring. At the level of duties, except those related to financial support, it was planned that during 2008. the protocols should be defined, on cooperation in identifying and responding to the appearance of poverty between public institutions and civil society, as well as to continuously inform the citizens about social protection services, at least twice a year. Protocol on cooperation with the National Employment Service and the regulation of community service of social protection beneficiaries should have been completed by the end of 2009. Another task was the implementation of an unique database of beneficiaries and services that would network institutions and civil society organizations, by the end of 2010.

In area of the Strategy related to the Roma, children were singled out as a priority target groups, and those are specifically children from the following groups: children under the age of 5, preschoolers and elementary school children, children who attend schools for adult education, as well as three groups that can be considered particularly exposed to risks of trafficking: youth who have never been covered by the school system, children of returnees from Western Europe and the children of undocumented persons. As two specific objectives, further development of inclusion in education and solving the issues of people without identity documents, as a condition for the exercise of other rights, were defined. Accordingly, some of the specific tasks are research of the possibilities for solving the issue, and defining of the measures for obtaining identification documents of parents and children during 2008. Over the next two years, it was anticipated that these measures would be implemented, i.e. that all the children and adults without documents will be recorded into database, in cooperation with the local government, civil society, Social Welfare Center, the police, etc. Long-term improvement of the status of Roma community was supposed to be supported by the introduction of the RC Institute since 2009. This area was, similar to others, supposed to have defined program and protocols on cooperation between educational and social institutions, municipal authorities and Roma organizations, mainly in order to improve access to education, by the end of 2008.

In addition to defining the activities by specific target groups, the Strategy provided that in Subotica the formalization of cooperation between actors is necessary, i.e. the adoption of an unique protocol on cooperation between local governments, institutions of social and health care, education, citizens' associations, to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each

actor in relation to the adopted Strategy. It was envisaged that the protocol would be signed within three months of the adoption of the Strategy. It was also planned to adopt Rulebook and procedures for ordering, financing, monitoring and evaluation of services, in accordance with the provision of a plurality of providers. Finally, implementation of continuous monitoring and periodic evaluations were planned – for each phase and comprehensive annual one, while the final evaluation of the Strategy was supposed to be carried out at the end of 2012.

As relevant to the field of prevention of human trafficking, the Local Youth Action Plan for 2013. appointed the following specific objectives within the general objective – development of healthy lifestyles, improvement of psychosocial skills and preventive action on health of the youth in Subotica:

- Empowering the youth from vulnerable groups for adequate integration into society and sensitization of general public for that;
- Developing healthy lifestyles;
- Strengthening coordination and communication between institutions and organizations dealing with addictions (health, education and civil society organizations);
- Strengthening cooperation between institutions and organizations dealing with protection of reproductive health and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (health, education and civil society organizations).

Apart from the mentioned area, LAP for Youth defines the problem of underdeveloped system of support in the area of stigma reduction, discrimination and development of psychosocial skills of vulnerable groups for their timely inclusion in society. This formulation has widely covered the problem of youth who are at risk of human trafficking.

As a possible resource in the community, it is necessary to mention services of the association Stav+ - youth counseling *Center of positive prevention* whose employees are counselors trained for work with youth, primarily from vulnerable groups. In addition to trained counselors from target groups (peer), professionals such as psychologists, pedagogues, epidemiologists, are also present. Over a period of one year, over 400 contacts were achieved, with youth who addressed various issues and problems. This service will certainly also be available to the victims of human trafficking in the future.

During the implementation of project Local communities in the fight against human trafficking, the established local network was extremely active, and will continue to work after the completion of the project.

Strategic plan for the development of social protection services¹³⁶ for the period from 2008-2012. was created as a part of the project *Planning of local social protection services - PLUS*, which was jointly funded by UNDP and EAR. The plan is the result of work of the interdepartmental Commission for social policy planning in Sremska Mitrovica.

As key stakeholders, i.e. population groups whose status needs to be improved, in addition to people with disabilities and the elderly, the unemployed, children and youth were particularly recognized (orphans, socially and financially disadvantaged children, children from families with disturbed relationships, children with disabilities and children with behavioral disorders). In the analysis of the situation in the social protection sector, it was stated that the city budget funds the Counseling for marriage and family, within the Center, which has a therapeutic room with equipment used by a multidisciplinary team working with child victims. For the needs of youth moving out of the institutions or foster families, an apartment in the city was purchased and equipped, within the programme Halfway House.

As general obstacles for the improvement of the protection system and the implementation of the Strategy, high unemployment, negative consequences of transition, reform of the social protection system (which is also seen as a possibility) and political instability were identified.

The first strategic priority is the development of local capacities for the implementation of the Strategy priorities, under which the Planning Commission for social policy was given the task of seeking funds for new social protection services, and the monitoring and implementation of decentralization of social protection system. Protection of children and youth is the next priority of the Strategy, in which problems are identified as: lack of prevention programmes, lack of programmes for support of the socio-financially vulnerable children and youth from disadvantaged groups. Recommendations and desirable interventions are preventive action through community, family and peer groups, while prevention plans should be established at all levels of government and include analysis of the problem, a list of available programmes and resources, clearly defined responsibilities, coordination mechanisms, and so on. At the level of specific activities that would include: the development of day care center for children who do not have adequate living and learning conditions, counseling for adolescent crisis to help families; expanding the network of foster families with a special emphasis on specialized foster care that would cover the cases of unstable families; development of preventive programmes for families from marginalized groups with the aim of socialization of children; establishment of dedicated funds for long-term assistance to the family for the prevention of poverty; creating a unique record of preschool children through educational institutions, particularly from marginalized groups, with a goal of their timely inclusion in the education system; the development of preventive educational and correctional programmes aimed at the completion of primary education; establishment of a fund for the training of youth who are outside of the system of secondary education and help to youth who are exposed to increased social risks (for the purchase of school equipment and to pay monthly tickets); prevention in the local community applies securing the conditions for the inclusion of youth in developmental centers, recreational facilities and services that would respond to the special problems of children who were exposed to social risks; provision of accommodation to youth

¹³⁶ Strategic plan for the development of social protection services 2008-2012, the City of Sremska Mitrovica.

who are unable to live with their families, or who have no home in which they would live; as well as a number of services and measures for youth who are facing with the problems while growing up (e.g. drug use).

Furthermore, in the context of the systemic response to the problem of human trafficking, some of the strategic and operational objectives and concrete actions from the Strategy of Sremska Mitrovica are of importance. Thus, the strategic objective within the priority "development of local capacities" is – *developing existing local capacities, creating technical and material preconditions for the implementation of the Strategy, the introduction of new social protection services and the improvement of the level of knowledge of professionals*, and two operational objectives are monitoring the development of services and the implementation of the strategic plan, and strengthening the capacities of the private sector, citizens' associations and state institutions, and their mutual networking. It should further be operationalized through the activities of regular monthly meetings of the Commission for social policy planning and the campaign of public advocacy toward local governments to use incentives in order to encourage other sectors to provide social protection services.

Within the second priority, *the protection of children and youth*, defined strategic objective is the creation of conditions for socialization and integration of children and youth, with two operational objectives – promotion of healthy lifestyles, which would, at the level of activities include media campaign and workshops for the prevention of addictions; while the second operational objective – development of psychosocial programs for children and youth with risk behavior, includes informing of youth through Counseling for youth and workshops for non-violent communication and the "School without Violence" programme.

As the development of new Strategy for social protection is in progress, in the preparatory phase, all the institutions and organizations that provide services to the beneficiaries of social protection submitted their work reports. In addition, the Commission for the development of Strategy, which includes various working groups, was formed. Participation of representatives of citizens' associations was also provided.

One of the successes of local network, created through the project Local communities in the fight against human trafficking, is the inclusion of the issues of the protection of victims in the draft of the Strategy. The intention is to, within the budget of the Red Cross and the Social Welfare Center, plan the resources to meet the needs of victims of human trafficking, and within the budget of the Office for Youth, the means for workshops aimed at preventing human trafficking. As the Office for Youth entered the process of revision of the Local Action Plan for Youth, within the future five-year LAP, there will be provisions relating to human trafficking.

In the planning phase of the Strategy, the need was emphasized to improve cooperation between social protection institutions, the City Administration for protection, health services, judiciary, the police, education system, civil society organizations and the media in this area. Also, the proposal for the adoption of protocol on intersectoral cooperation, in order to improve the quality of service to all beneficiaries, was highlighted.

So far the Police Department was dealing with the victims of trafficking in the city. In the process of providing and organizing all the activities, from the very identification process, the police provided assistance and protection to the victims of trafficking, in cooperation with the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims, which, unfortunately, rarely came out on the field so far, and provided care for the victim. The support system more often includes SWC, but also the Red Cross (when clothes or food are needed) and health center (the police has been achieving particularly good cooperation with the department of gynecology). Unfortunately, every action of providing care to potential victims of human trafficking is based only on personal relationships of officials who are involved in that process – problems are solved by officials often paying for services for victims themselves, or the service is provided free of charge (on personal responsibility, even when there are no conditions for it).

Of the activities of prevention, it is important to note that police are working on informing the citizens about the issue of human trafficking and its effects, through seminars and round tables. Preventive education with high school students is performed within the regular activities of the Red Cross and the Police Department, once a year, in October.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM OF VICTIM PROTECTION AND PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

General recommendations

Based on the insight of professionals and their contextualization in relation to national trends, it is possible to formulate several basic groups of recommendations in response to human trafficking at the local level: increasing the capacity to recognize and respond to human trafficking, promotion of intersectoral cooperation, work on sustainable social protection programmes and social integration of victims.

In the area of increasing the capacity to recognize and respond to human trafficking we need to do the following:

- Work on informing and educating professionals, especially in education and health care systems, on the subject of human trafficking and their roles in the early recognition and response in the event of suspicion on this crime.
- Use established capacities and local networks of cooperation in responding to violence (including child abuse and neglect and domestic violence).
- Provide additional training for the employees of social welfare centers, in the area of prevention and early detection of human trafficking, especially given the new responsibilities of centers in the coordination of the activities of social protection at the local level, as well as a new system of recording beneficiaries.
- Provide information and education on early warning system, i.e. matrix for the identification of early risks, and the list of indicators for the identification of victims, following their development at the national level (provided by the draft of the new Strategy for prevention and suppression of trafficking and the Action Plan).
- Continue to sensitize a wider range of social actors - local government, the National Employment Agency, the media, citizens' associations on the topic of trafficking – particularly information about the causes and risks.

In the area of improving intersectoral cooperation, based on the findings of focus group interviews, the following needs are arising:

- Include civil society organizations, as equal partners, in all the activities of suppression of human trafficking, including the area of creating policies.
- Define and formalize the roles of individual actors, relevant at the local level for the prevention and protection – both those who are the first to come into contact with victims, and whose roles are already defined by special regulations such as the police and social protection sector, and those who have not had significant contact with the topic of prevention and protection, such as education system, health system, a subsidiary of the National Employment Agency, local government, as well as local citizens' associations who work with vulnerable groups exposed (among other) the risk of trafficking.
- Establishment of local networks for cooperation, which would be formalized; formalization involves signing protocols/memorandums on the local level, that would define procedures and treatment, order of treatment, the scope of services and measures to be applied at different stages and aspects of prevention and protection.
- Specifically define the exchange of information between the actors, while protecting the confidentiality of data.
- Improve the communication of other actors, besides the social protection sector, the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking, so the victim could effectively exercise its rights in the local health care system, education system, the labor market.

In the area of creating sustainable programmes of protection and social inclusion of victims it is necessary to:

- Recognise existing expertise and experience of civil society organizations in this area and rely on their capacities to secure sustainable framework for social inclusion of victims.
- Provide adequate emergency accommodation facilities for the victims, with the use of existing local and regional resources, while respecting the needs for different approaches and strategies of care about the security of different groups of beneficiaries.
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Increase the capacities of local social welfare centers to provide adequate programmes to support victims – advisory and therapeutic services, empowerment and preparing for trials, monitoring during and after the trial, help in the exercise of other rights.

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Expand the existing prevention programmes and their consideration in the context of the causes of trafficking, such as poverty and unemployment.

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Secure the cooperation at the local level with the branches of the National Employment Agency for the programmes of support for inclusion in the labour market, including motivational and action training, additional training that contributes to the independence and autonomy of victims.

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Continue to sensitize a wider range of stakeholders and the public on the causes, forms and consequences of trafficking, given that the common understanding is necessary for a long-term involvement of victims in the life of the community after the initial rehabilitation.

Recommendations to improve the work of social welfare centers

Reviewing the operation of social welfare centers for a period of two years, and the context in which the centers have been operating in this period, it was noted that significant changes have occurred in the very context, that contributed to partial improvement of the capacity of social welfare centers to provide quality service to beneficiaries with the experience in human trafficking, especially in terms of their involvement in the process of recovery and integration of victims of trafficking. Following the adoption of the Law on Social Protection, two subordinate legislations were adopted, that provided a better quality of social protection services, and the adoption of other important subordinate legislations that will contribute to the quality and effective operation of social welfare centers are in progress.

At the community level, the networking of actors in this area is encouraged, as well as the decentralization of work, where the social welfare center is seen as the bearer of the work in local community, both in the area of working with individual beneficiaries, and in the networks and other activities at the local level, along with other relevant actors. In the exercise of public authorities of the center, improvements were noticed in the application of professional practices in working with victims. This refers to the awareness and understanding of the very phenomenon of human trafficking. The resulting changes are still not sufficient to provide adequate support to beneficiaries with the experience of trafficking, and the support is still untimely, insufficient and with unsatisfactory effects in the context of sustainable social inclusion of victims.

In this regard, it is necessary to improve the professional competences of experts in the social welfare centers and raise the level of operational readiness of social welfare centers to

respond, create the conditions for proper implementation of legal measures and regulations, and significantly improve communication and information exchange between the social welfare centers and other actors in the community, and, above all, work on identifying and supporting the victims of human trafficking regardless of the existence of the criminal act of human trafficking. Only in these improved conditions of work of social welfare centers will the quality of the protection of victims of trafficking be adequate to modern requirements and standards of operation. In this regard, the following is required:

- Motivate the social welfare centers to adequately include the expertise of civil society organizations in their work, and thus take advantage of existing knowledge and skills to improve their own competencies.
- Strengthen the professional competencies of employees, both in the field of knowledge of various aspects of the phenomenon and the mechanisms for referral of victims of human trafficking, and in the development of specific knowledge and skills needed to work with victims. It is particularly important to develop capacities to implement the measures of legal family protection, especially for children and youth and to implement methods of case management.
- Organize training for all experts working in the social welfare centers, by the accredited training programmes for the treatment of social welfare centers in working with victims of human trafficking, and initiate the development of new training programmes required.
- Improve internal mechanisms of knowledge exchange and training in the social welfare centers.
- Professional workers should be provided with a brochure with all the necessary, updated telephone numbers (in the first place of the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking), and web sites where they can find additional information on these subjects.

Although the level of knowledge of the phenomenon, and the mechanisms for referral of victims of human trafficking, is at a higher level than in previous years, it is still insufficient to ensure efficiency and effectiveness (quick, timely, constructive action in accordance with the needs, that leads to positive changes in the lives of beneficiaries) of social welfare centers in working with victims of human trafficking. In our sample, general awareness of the phenomenon of human trafficking prevails, while there is a lack of concrete knowledge about it and about the national referral mechanism. The roles and responsibilities of all the actors in the referral mechanisms are still not sufficiently clear. Also, it is unclear to social welfare centers what exactly are the mandates of the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking. In our sample, an uneven distribution of knowledge about the phenomenon and

referral mechanisms is visible – a group of professionals who have been trained have more concrete and functional knowledge, while the other group that did not attend the training has superficial knowledge. In addition, it was observed that the exchange of information within the centers is not working properly, which stands in the way of sustainability and long-term effects of training.

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Involve civil society organizations in the processes of rethinking the system of protection of victims, especially take into account their expertise when it comes from experience of working directly with victims and knowledge of international standards in this area.

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Strengthen the professional competencies of experts in the social welfare centers, case managers, lawyers and especially supervisors for the work with victims of human trafficking by providing quality support to case managers, specifically created and specific training, professional meetings and in other ways.

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Develop and distribute SWC guidelines and instructions, to be followed in dealing with victims of human trafficking, especially of the competent Ministry.

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Improve the availability of support to the social welfare centers by the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking.

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Develop protocols for treatment, by the model of existing protocols in the field of protection of victims of domestic violence, and protection of children from abuse and neglect.

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Suggest the development of internal guidelines on the treatment of trafficking victims.

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Ensure integration with civil society organizations – service providers and/or organizations that perform comprehensive protection programmes in this area, in order to provide adequate support to each individual victim of human trafficking.

In working with the victims of human trafficking, and documenting cases, social welfare centers follow the processes and procedures of case management methods, even more so in practice than it is stated in the oral evaluation of their own work. However, fundamental recognition of the needs of victims of human trafficking and organizing care and services in accordance with them is missing in most of the cases, among other things, due to the lack of resources of the state and local communities to ensure the implementation of necessary services, programmes and activities in the protection of victims of trafficking, but also due to the lack of knowledge and uncertainty of experts of the centers in this area.

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Define standards of work in the protection of victims of trafficking, with special standards for working with children as a particularly vulnerable group of beneficiaries, and introduce general and specific indicators for the identification of victims of human trafficking.

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Draw up a list of indicators that would be distributed/made available to all qualified employees.

Social welfare centers usually recognize victims of human trafficking in clear situations of existence of the criminal act of human trafficking, while there is a lack of identification of victims of trafficking independently of the existence of this act. Professional workers in the center do not have enough knowledge to identify victims of trafficking, and still commonly rely on the evaluation of others, primarily the police, resulting in untimely detection and failure to notify the Center for the protection of victims of trafficking. Also, the professionals well-recognize groups at risk of victimization by human trafficking, but often do not act in an appropriate manner, that would help prevent human trafficking or other form of violence or exploitation.

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Strengthen and improve cooperation of social welfare centers and other institutions and organizations at the local level, by developing a protocol on cooperation and local networks of action in combating human trafficking.

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In particular, work on strengthening cooperation with civil society organizations, active in the area of human trafficking, or working with groups at risk.

Cooperation of social welfare center and institutions and organizations, in terms of organization of protection and services for a particular victim, as well as in the field of creating local policies and specific prevention programmes, has been improved compared to the previous period, although it is still insufficient.

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Initiate/organize prevention activities on human trafficking (especially for members of the groups at risk, well-recognized by the centers), preferably in collaboration with partners from the local community.

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Use legal authorities (i.e. perform the obligation) in respect of the reporting of the act of domestic violence (even when the victim is an adult) and filing complaints to determine the extent of measure of protection against domestic violence. Follow development on the charge/complaint and provide the necessary assistance to the victim (regardless of the duration and outcome of the process).

In the work of social welfare centers, primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in the area of human trafficking is missing. The centers do not initiate or organize prevention activities on human trafficking, and are rarely involved in prevention programs of other entities. Also, to the low utilization of preventive activities also contributes "normalization of custom law of the Roma" (relating to coercion in marriage), failure to undertake legal authorities (and obligations) in cases of domestic violence, especially when it comes to adult victim (reporting these offenses, and filing lawsuits for protection against domestic violence are rarely done). Also, it is often inadequately responded, or not responded at all, in the protection of children who live in families whose members (usually parents) are suspected of having committed the offense of human trafficking (or domestic violence) to (a) child.

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To carry out the evaluation of work of the professionals and, in this regard, sanction misconduct.

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Organize training on communication with victims of human trafficking and provide material on the subject – improve the capacity of professionals in social welfare centers for establishing professional relationships with beneficiaries, which is characterized by acceptance, respect of personality and needs of beneficiaries, the acceptance of his/her right to choose and the right of beneficiaries to be informed and independently make decisions.

Relationship of expert toward the victims of human trafficking is often inadequate, unprofessional and without a clear message of respect and appreciation of the personality of beneficiary - child or adult. Thanks to such prevailing attitude, most beneficiaries who were interviewed expressed dissatisfaction, primarily by the relationship of experts to them, and then the services provided. Statements of beneficiaries clearly portray that individual experts act unprofessionally, unfairly, victimizing them secondarily that way. Blaming the victim for the situation in which she found herself, reproof, coarse representation of the lack of rights to support or unreasonable refusal of, or conditioning, aid, are all inappropriate ways of communication, and abuse of position. The above examples are examples of gross violations of the dignity of the beneficiaries and can not be regarded as a consequence of the lack of knowledge of specific categories of victims.

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In order to provide multisectoral collaboration, local networks, that will address the prevention of trafficking and protection of victims, need to be built, and which will consist of representatives of the centers of education, health system, employment services, law enforcement agencies, local governments and civil society organizations active in this areas.

Social welfare centers do not have good cooperation with other relevant stakeholders, without which there is no effective protection of victims or prevention of the victimization of groups at risk.

**Recommendations
to improve treatment
in local communities**

- Develop local action plans to combat human trafficking (especially for the municipalities affected by the phenomenon of human trafficking);
- During the revisions of old, and creation of new, strategic and action plans in the field of social protection and areas of importance for the prevention of human trafficking, bring provisions on human trafficking;
- Determine budget allocations to fund programmes designed to protect victims of trafficking;
- Involve a wide range of professionals and experts in anti-trafficking activities at the local level;
- Continue functional cooperation within local networks established as part of the project *Local communities in the fight against human trafficking* and in other initiatives, for the purpose of more adequate treatment in protecting victims and preventing human trafficking;
- Improve the coordination of multisectoral teams in the field of combating human trafficking;
- Develop a Protocol on intersectoral institutional cooperation in the process of protection of victims of human trafficking at the local level (following the protocols on the protection of victims of domestic violence);
- Formulate/adjust standards and mechanisms in the process of protection of victims of human trafficking – from detection, provision of emergency assistance (provision of accommodation, medical and psychological care), through rehabilitation to reintegration and long-term social inclusion;
- Improve the process of identification of victims of human trafficking and cooperation in the referral process at all levels;
- Create specialized support programmes for the victims of human trafficking;
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Establish an adequate system of free medical and legal assistance to victims, as well as for those who are in the process of obtaining the status of victims of trafficking;

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Improve the competence of professionals to identify potential victims of human trafficking and the treatment in the system of provision of support and protection;

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Perform preventive activities aimed at the general population, and particularly vulnerable groups;

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Conduct all activities related to anti-trafficking programmes through an approach based on the concept of human rights and respect for gender perspective.

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