Learning on strengthening the social service workforce in the post conflict recovery: The Case of BiH

Prof. dr. Sanela Bašić
University of Sarajevo
Faculty of Political Sciences
War and Post - War Context

• Out of 4.7 million people

• 1.2 million internally displaced persons
• 1 million externally displaced persons
• 100,000 killed
• 31,500 forcibly disappeared - “missing persons”
• between 25,000 and 50,000 raped women
• destruction of social ties, tolerance and co-existence, breakdown of families and local communities, collapse of social values and norms of normal/ordinary life

• Rising social problems
• unemployment, poverty and social exclusion,
• mental health issues, youth delinquency, gender based and family violence, human trafficking and prostitution, substance abuse,
• etc...
• while drastically reduced capacities/resources of public welfare sector to respond
• IO/NGOS as service providers manding the gaps
Legal and Policy Framework for Social Service Delivery

• No state authority/competences in the area of social welfare
• **13 Laws on Social Protection** + 13 referal ministries (for the population of 3.7 milion) without any coordinating or harmonizing mechanism in the development, adoption, implementation, evaluation and monitoring

• **Sectoral Strategies** at Entity and Cantonal levels

• Service Delivery: *Centers for Social Work* - in 1991 SW force comprised 1460 social workers
  
  • 2021
  
  • Number of CSW: **112**  
  • Number of SW professionals: **1680**  
  • Number of Cases: **322 311**  
  • Number of interventions **447 884**  
  • Number of Services: **413 955**

  2005

• Number of CSW: **116**  
• Number of SW professionals: **1063**

• Poor working conditions (low salaries, temporarily contracts – insecurity, lack of material/infrastructural, institutional and financial resources → high level of burnout)
Education and Training

• Training and the education of professionals: four departments of social work at public universities in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar and Tuzla
  • Three/fourth BA, (one/two year) MA programs, PhD program
  • Master study programs in Youth in the Conflict with Law; Family and Society; Management in Social Work and Supervision in Social Work
  • Social work curricula modernized and improved in line with Global Standards for SW training and education (SW with Families, Domestic Violence, SW and Mental Health, SW and Disability/Children with DD, Poverty, Human Rights, Empowerment, Service User Involvement) - gaps between formal knowledge and practice
  • Sporadic programs for continual professional education offered by NGOs/IGO

• No national association of social workers, but two professional associations at entity level + 10 cantonal - for now, largely invisible

• NGOs: from (short –term, donor –driven and thematic) service delivery to advocacy work
Successful Reform: Mental Health Care System

*From Institutional to Community - based Care*

1. **Policy development**
   (administrative and legal framework for community based mental care)

2. **Establishment and provision of health services**
   (centers for mental health)

3. **Reduction of stigma**
   (awareness raising campaigns)
Some Lessons Learned

• External influence might have a stimulating effect on the initiation of reforms by introducing new concepts and approaches + technical and economic support, including education of professionals

• Problematic points: ownership and responsibility, privatization and decentralization
  • Inclusion of key decision – makers (political level) and other relevant stakeholders in public, private and NGO sectors + academia

• External intervention must be coherent, prioritized and coordinated with local stakeholders → Efforts for reconstruction - regeneration -development must be linked with peace building and democratization strategies
Thank you
E-mail: sanela.basic@fpn.unsa.ba