

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

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# 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 referral ministries (for the population of 3.7 million) 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** **2005**
- Number of CSW: **112** **116**
- Number of SW professionals: **1 680** **1063**
- Number of Cases: **322 311**
- Number of interventions **447 884** **413 955**
- Poor working conditions (low salaries, temporary 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)

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# 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

A hand is shown typing on a keyboard in the background, which is out of focus. In the foreground, a large, three-dimensional '@' symbol made of cardboard is prominently displayed. A black rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing text.

Thank you

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