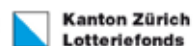


Social Service Workforce Mapping in Serbia



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Social Service Workforce Mapping in Serbia



Final Report

"We are not working with perfumes, but with problems" (FGMf5)

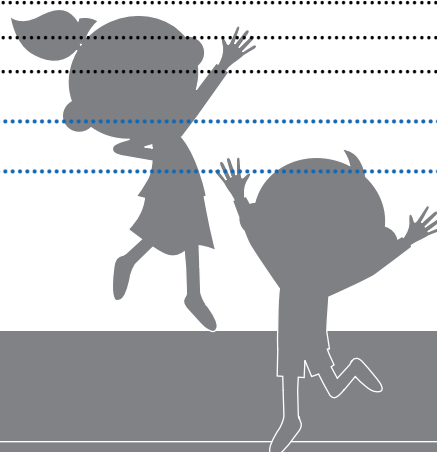
Prof dr Nevenka Zegarac

Information, findings and conclusions included in this report are based on the experiences, opinions, beliefs, viewpoints and expressions of social workers and other interviewees who participated in the research. The entire report is the product of the efforts of a National Researcher, with the intention to summarize and interpret all these data objectively as much as possible without changing their meaning.

The content of the report is the responsibility of a National Researcher. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily represent the views of the Child Hub.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The intention of this study is to provide a general overview of professional, paraprofessional and community-level child protection practice in Serbia as well as of the social service workforce skills, knowledge, and interests in order to strengthen the child protection workforce and improve overall child protection mechanisms. The study was created as a part of activities of the Regional Resource Centre for Child Protection (i.e. Child Protection Hub), an initiative aiming to develop a strong regional community of practices and innovations in South East Europe in the field of child protection.

On the regional level, the study is articulated around two main areas of interest:

- 1.) To provide a basic overview of the context in which child protection practices are delivered in the region, which includes the systems in place for the delivery of child protection services, related policies and frameworks, child protection education and resources management, and
- 2.) Data from research on the child protection workforce key skills, knowledge and interests based on common methodologies and tools.

1.2. The Research Problem and Questions

This study aims to provide an overview of the existing professional, paraprofessional, and community-level child protection practice in Serbia, as a part of the South East European region. The results provide a critical analysis of the needs and gaps to be addressed in order to offer appropriate support to professionals from different fields and disciplines in improving the quality of child protection interventions and responses. Findings from the study will:

- 1) Provide a basic overview of the education and training context in which child protection practices are delivered in Serbia (i.e. systems in place for the delivery of child protection services, related policies and frameworks, child protection education and resource management);
- 2) Identify needs and opportunities for further professional development, training and/or ca-

capacity building to strengthen the child protection workforce in the region.

More specifically, the study of child protection context, practices, resources and workforce searches for the answer to the following questions:

- What are the real needs expressed by workers in the child protection field?
- What kind of support is really requested from the range of different actors involved in the child protection field?
- Who requests what and how can these gaps best be filled?
- What have been the most and least successful experiences in answering this demand so far?
- Who has had ownership/initiative of the responses so far?
- How effective are the currently-offered services in terms of capacity building, knowledge sharing and advocacy?
- Are the currently-offered services driven by capacity-building demand, or are they driven by supply?
- How can the real needs of professionals best be converted into concrete support and solutions for them?

Answers to these questions should provide deeper insight into the needs of child protection in Serbia and in the region, as well as enable the drafting of appropriate recommendations.

This review of the child protection system and workforce needs in Serbia is based on a comprehensive review of the existing laws, bylaws and strategic documents in this area. The review encompasses many relevant formal and informal documents, reports and analyses dealing with social inclusion, status of children and families and analyses of the functioning of centres for social welfare and other institutions and services in the social welfare system. An analysis was conducted on almost all research published in the last 20 years on the topics relevant to the issue of child protection. I consulted databases of significant foreign academic papers, numerous international

documents, guidelines, reference manuals, handbooks and methodical reference books concerning the global context or comparative practices that were accessible via the Internet or through exchanges with colleagues and partners. Field research has involved 8 focus groups and 9 interviews. In this way the data were collected from front line practitioners, managers of child protection services, academic and other experts who are involved in the training of child protection workforces, as well as bachelor's and master's students of social work.

1.3. Key constructs and terms

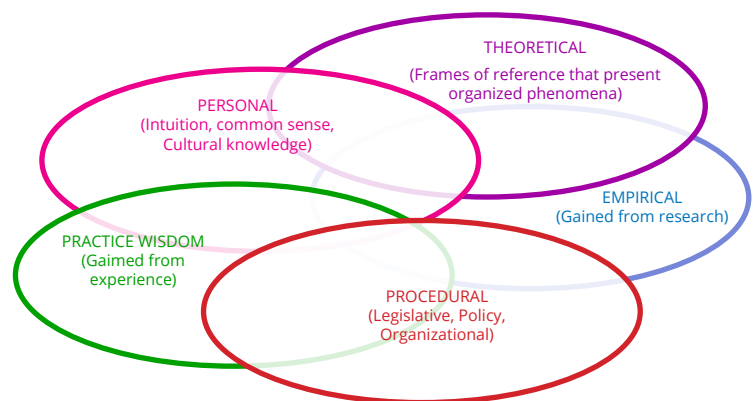
According to the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance (2015), "The social service workforce can be broadly defined as a variety of workers—paid and unpaid, professional and paraprofessional, governmental and nongovernmental—who make the social service system function and contribute to promoting the rights and ensuring the care, support, and protection of vulnerable populations" (p.5).

According to the defined task, for the purposes of this study, the term **child protection professionals** implies social service workers who are front line workers engaged in child protection work. In Serbia, that includes social workers, psychologists, pedagogues and, to a certain extent, lawyers engaged in social services who are dealing with children and families. In this report, we will focus on helping professionals who are dealing with children in child protection services, foster care service and residential care institutions for children, along with child protection professionals who are engaged in licensed community children services (counsellors, professionals in specialized day care centres for children, family outreach workers, etc.).

Paraprofessionals are those who do not fit into the strict and formalized educational criteria set out for professional social service workers (e.g. professional social workers). Paraprofessionals include non-governmental organization (NGO) workers, community-based organization (CBO) workers, community health workers or volunteers who have not received formal social service training through a formal regulatory body, but nevertheless greatly contribute to the social service workforce.

The research literature has verified that theoretical and empirical knowledge forms are rarely used in social work practice. It is argued that this disparity needs to be addressed in order for social workers to make effective practical decisions (e.g. Osmond & O'Connor 2006). This paper relies on Drury Hudson's (1997) **model of professional knowledge of social work**, with five main knowledge forms: theoretical, empirical, procedural, practice wisdom and personal knowledge (Scheme 1). None of these forms is a discrete category, and there is substantial overlap between each area.

Scheme 1. Model of professional knowledge (Drury Hudson 1997)



According to Payne (1997), **theory** was conceptualized as an explanation of client behaviour or phenomena, methodologies and/or how to do social work. **Empirical** knowledge gained from research is the foundation of evidence-based practice, therefore a careful and judicious use of the best research or evidence is necessary to inform practice. **Personal** knowledge and **practice wisdom** include intuition, empathy, communication, relationship and the use of self. Osmond & O'Connor (2006) claim that practitioners are "ethically bound to call upon the best possible knowledge to guide their practice" (p.14), i.e. the knowledge which is likely to produce the most positive outcomes for clients. This also means that practitioners need a clear understanding of the types of knowledge that can potentially inform their practice. At the same time, the growing body of research suggests that theory and research are not always guiding social work practice and that social workers rely on some types of knowledge more than others.

2. THE CONTEXT OF CHILD WELFARE IN SERBIA

By adopting the Law on the Ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Law on the Ratification of the UNCRC 1990), the Republic of Serbia agreed to respect the rights of the child stipulated by the Convention and to take all relevant measures to implement and protect the rights of the child.

Serbia has an aging population, with a growing proportion of people over the age of 65 and a decreasing percentage of children under 18 years of age. Projections of the Serbian National Institute for Statistics (2014) for the period 2011–2014 indicate that in the next thirty years, the population will continue to undergo the process of demographic aging. The percentage of young people is low and with a tendency to decrease, while the high proportion of the elderly continues to grow¹.

The population of children under the age of 18 is dominated by children ages 5 to 9. The proportion of children of elementary school age is the highest, at 55.2%, whereas the proportion of children between ages 15 and 17 is the lowest, at 18.83%.

According to the results of the Survey on Incomes and Living Conditions (SILC, 2013), in comparison with other age groups, children are most exposed to the risk of poverty. The lowest risk of poverty is among persons older than 65 years of age (19.5%). The risk of poverty is the highest among persons in households composed of two adults with three or more children under 18 years of age (44.4%), as well as single parents with one or more dependent children (36.2%).

In Serbia, every fourth child receives child welfare allowance, which is financial assistance available to children from poor families and awarded after an evaluation of family income and property, but only for the first four children in the family. Families receive support through other financial assistance schemes, most often using benefits for new mothers, parental leave and new-born babies. The UNICEF analysis of child welfare allowance in 2012 demonstrated poor targeting of users within this program, although it covers 25% of all children in Serbia, because the allowance does not reach three out of five children who are entitled to receive it (Matković & Mijatović 2012). The allowance for external care and assistance (an allowance for care provided to an individual with disability by a third person) was granted to 3,178 children in Serbia in early 2013, and the enhanced allowance for external care (for children with severe disabilities) was granted to 3,379 children under the age of 18⁶.

Furthermore, the children who are beneficiaries of the cash assistance programme are in the largest number of cases registered as socially vulnerable. This group of children benefits from various forms of material assistance intended for poor families which is funded by the republic or by the local budget (Republic Institute for Social Protection 2014).

Furthermore, Serbia worked on developing and strengthening the mechanisms of responsibility for the protection of human rights, including the rights of the child. The Office of the Ombudsman was founded in Serbia, with a Deputy responsible for the rights of the child and an Equality Officer in charge of discrimination against children. Serbia also has two As-

Table 1. Essential demographic and economic indicators for Serbia

Country	Year	Population	Number of children 0-18	% children 0-18	GDP in 2011. ²	Social welfare budget (% GDP) ³	Area km ²
Republic of Serbia	2011. ⁴	7.186.862	1.563.279	17,6%	1,224	23,0 ⁵	88.361 km ²

1 According to the estimates, the percentage of population under 15 would drop from 14.4% to 11.7%, while the percentage of population over 65 would grow from 17.3% to 25.2%.

2 TransMonEE, Database <http://www.transmonnee.org/dobijeno> 06.02.2014.

3 TransMonEE, Database <http://www.transmonnee.org/dobijeno> 06.02.2014.

4 <http://popis2011.stat.rs/> retrieved on 06.02.2014.

5 Data for 2010.

6 Data provided by the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy, information system, March 2013.

sembly committees: the Committee for the Rights of the Child and the Committee for Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality.

Following the recommendations from the document entitled "A World Fit for Children", Serbia has adopted the Action Plan for Children 2004-2015. Since 2005, Serbia has been systematically developing a normative framework regarding the child rights perspective, aiming to develop services for supporting children and families at the local level and to avoid institutionalization.

2.1. Reform goals and process

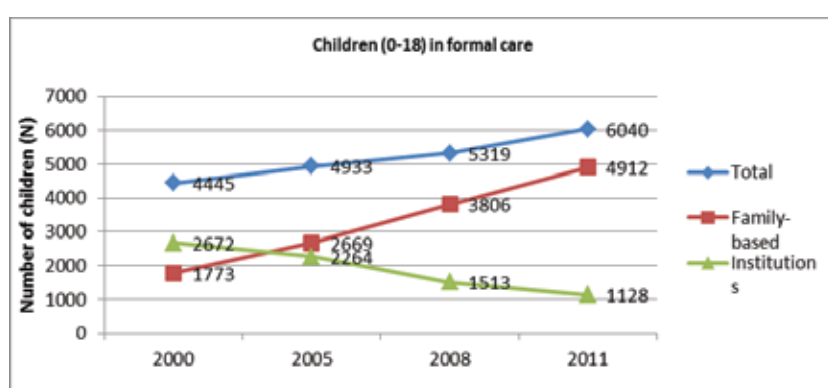
In 2002, Serbia started comprehensive reform in the field of child protection, where priority reform areas include issues such as the development of family care, the establishment of standards for gatekeeping mechanisms, the development of community services and the inclusion of the non-governmental sector in service provision. Upon adoption of the Strategy for Development of the Social Welfare System (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - MoLESP 2005), a large number of day services were developed in numerous local communities, especially in terms of services for children with disabilities and their families (day centres, home assistance, some form of respite care); shelters for women and child victims of family violence, abuse and neglect; programmes for work with street children; etc. A large number of these services were started as projects, but it is obvious that there is a problem with sustainability because some of them have been terminated.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, with the assistance of UNICEF, the EU and other partners, developed a Comprehensive Plan of Transformation of Social Welfare Institutions for Children 2009-2013 (the so-called: Master Plan, MoLESP, 2009) in order to attain strategic goals that were later built into the Law on Social Welfare. As part of the reform activities, different programmes were developed for strengthening and expanding family-based care. Specific policies and procedures were developed for recruitment, evaluation, training, support, monitoring and financing of kinship and foster families.

Significant results were achieved in deinstitutionalisation and the transformation of social welfare institu-

tions for children and youth. A large number of children were placed in foster and kinship families: out of 6,040 children in formal care in 2011, four-fifths of children under 18, or 81.9% of children, are now in family-based care⁷. The total number of children and youth (0-18) in family-based care in Serbia increased by 2.8 times in the period from 2000 to 2011 (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1. Children (0-18) in formal care in Serbia from 2000 to 2011⁸



2.2. Features of the social protection/welfare system

Until the 1990s, the social security system of Serbia was predominantly characterized by extensive coverage of citizens and a relatively high level of benefits. However, the last decade of the previous century has been a period of comprehensive and deep social crises, with severe consequences in terms of a generally continual decrease in living standards. This period presented a huge challenge for the functioning of the social welfare system and impacted the professional conduct of social workers.

The social protection or social welfare system in Serbia mostly functions through state-run institutions. Providers from the private and NGO sectors emerging during the 1990s (a period of extensive poverty, a high number of refugees, war in the surrounding areas and the dissolution of the country) developed their activity, cooperation and connections with public social services starting from 2000. In spite of significant legislative changes in 2011, the civil society

⁷ Data from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia, 2011.

⁸ Data from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia, 2011.

organizations still remain on the margins of the system due to difficulties in the introduction of legally prescribed mechanisms enabling their full and equal participation in rendering the services.

“The social protection services are financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia (and Autonomous District of Vojvodina) and local self-governance units, as well as through predominantly foreign donations to service providers. Basic social allowances, case management service, care of the victims of human trafficking, care provided in the residential social welfare institutions, foster care services and adoption, are funded from the Republic budget” (Zegarac 2014a: 94). The maternity allowance, parental allowance, child allowance and allowance for assistance and care by another person are also funded from the Republic budget. The local self-governance units are in charge of financing community based services. This includes shelters, safe houses, day care and service of supported independent living and residence, counselling, as well as support for persons and children with disabilities and youth leaving the alternative care system. Local funds also finance the work of social welfare institutions based and managed at the local level.

The social welfare system includes a developed network of Centres for Social Welfare (CSW) in every municipality (140 and 31 branches), 78 residential institutions for various groups of children, youth, adults and elderly, run by the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Policy (MLEVSP). Centres for foster care and adoption are new institutions in the system⁹ responsible for the recruitment, evaluation and training of potential foster and adoptive families as well as for capacity building, regular monitoring of children in alternative care and foster caregivers. They closely cooperate with the CSW where the appointed case manager monitors the child. In early 2014 there were five regional centres for foster care and adoption in Serbia, with a total of 106 employees, of which 73 are helping professionals, e.g. child protection workers¹⁰.

9 Founded in 2008 in Belgrade and in 2011 in Čuprija, Kragujevac and Niš. Another such centre exists in Miloševac and there are properly 4 of them in the territory of Serbia.

10 Three more foster care and adoption centres are planned in the territory of Vojvodina, where there are currently approximately 1,600 foster families.

There are 19 residential institutions for children and youth in Serbia, three of which are for children with behavioural problems and five are for children with disabilities. Five institutions have specialised departments for children with complex disabilities (during the transformation of institutions these were transformed into ‘small group homes’ with up to 12 children). Serbia has no private institutions for children at the moment. Most institutions have a maximum capacity of 48 children, as stipulated by law (Rulebook on the Network of Social Welfare Institutions 2012), and six institutions can accommodate between 100 and 250 children¹¹. The majority of children with moderate, severe, profound and combined disabilities are still placed in large institutions.

Different kinds of community services depend on the financial and organisational capacity of local governments. Only big cities have so far been able to fund day and home care services, different shelters, counselling centres and other daily services needed to support the families which care for children in need. During the reform process, the majority of child residential institutions started to provide some local services to their communities, such as shelters, day care, supported living or respite care services. This practice greatly contributed to the opening of institutions to the community and the improvement of the position of children.

The heart of the system is the organisation called the Centre for Social Welfare (CSW), the basic social service for children and adolescents, adults and elderly, and the body deciding on the social care rights. This means that the CSW is the referring agency, deciding about the need, type or intensity of services, and it is impossible to receive almost any kind of cash benefits, or to be placed in institutions, foster care, to be adopted or to use official community services without an assessment and decision of the CSW.

Additionally, the CSW has very important duties in the field of guardianship (the competent guardianship body has the public powers of guardian on the municipal territory). This organisation also has certain tasks in local social care planning, monitoring of social problems in the municipality and participating in design of new programs and services in local com-

11 The Law on Social Welfare limits the capacity of children’s residential institutions to 50 children.

munity. In addition to procedural services, the CSW provides some services directly to the clients (counselling, mediation, guardianship, assessment and some support for adoptive and foster families, etc.). The basic CSW components are:

- 1). Intake and emergency response service – including “gate keeping” functions
- 2). Assessment, planning, monitoring and coordination of services for:
 - a). Children and adolescents
 - b). Adults and the elderly
- 3). Interventions in family legal protection
- 4). Development of services in the community

2.3. Assessment in the CSW

The CSW assessment provides the grounds for utilisation of various forms of cash benefits, refers clients to day or home care services, residential institutions or foster care, and also deals with the restriction or termination of parental rights, the representation of the child’s best interest before the court, etc.

In the Republic of Serbia, the case management method started to be developed in 2002 and has been progressively introduced into practice since 2006. The case management standards were legally introduced in the CSWs in Serbia in 2008 (Rulebook on organization, norms and standards of work of Centres for Social Welfare 2008) with the aim to ensure the following: a holistic approach to the assessment of needs, strengths and risks faced by the child and the family; an individual approach to the planning of services and interventions; an introduction of the principle of permanency planning in child welfare; and the participation of the service users – children and parents.

According to this methodology, every service user in the Centre for Social Welfare is assigned to a dedicated case manager who is responsible for the initial assessment and organises further focused and specialist assessments. The task of the case manager is to develop, in cooperation with the user, an individual plan of services, to gather up a multidisciplinary team for the user, arrange access to services and monitor

the progress and dynamics of the use of services and evaluate the outcomes (Zegarac 2012). The new work method is based on the contemporary concepts of social work practices which have adopted the social ecology and strength perspective, recognizing the interconnectedness of family in community and individual needs of all members (Brown et al. 2001; McDonland & Coventry 2009).

Considering the groups of children and adolescents, the CSW responds in following situations:

- Suspected abuse and/or neglect of a child;
- When a child has no parents, and when parents or guardians are unable to care for the child due to health problems, mental health issues, developmental disorder or poverty;
- Children and adolescents in conflict with their parents, guardians or community, including children and adolescents whose behaviour carries risks for themselves and the environment (comprising children in conflict with the law and other children with anti-social behaviour);
- In children and adolescents whose special needs for care exceed the capacities of their families (e.g. children with disabilities).

Typically, the assessment in the CSW follows some form of demand or application for cash benefits or a service, or reported case of abuse and neglect. The work starts on **Intake** (Scheme 2), after the request of a client or family for services/ support, or else when other institutions, services and citizens refer the client to the CSW. The intake worker (usually a qualified social worker) reviews available information, interviews the client, family member or referral source, and decides about further actions; that further action is not required or the client is referred to other services. If the case is eligible for the CSW, the intake worker has to decide on the priority level: immediate – 24 h, emergency – 3 days and regular - 7 days to start the work on the case. If the intake worker assesses that it is only about the request for tangible benefits, the family is referred to the tangible benefits service, where the assessment is limited to fulfilment of the eligibility criteria for using the tangible benefits, without a deeper insight into the needs and circumstances of the life of the child and the family.

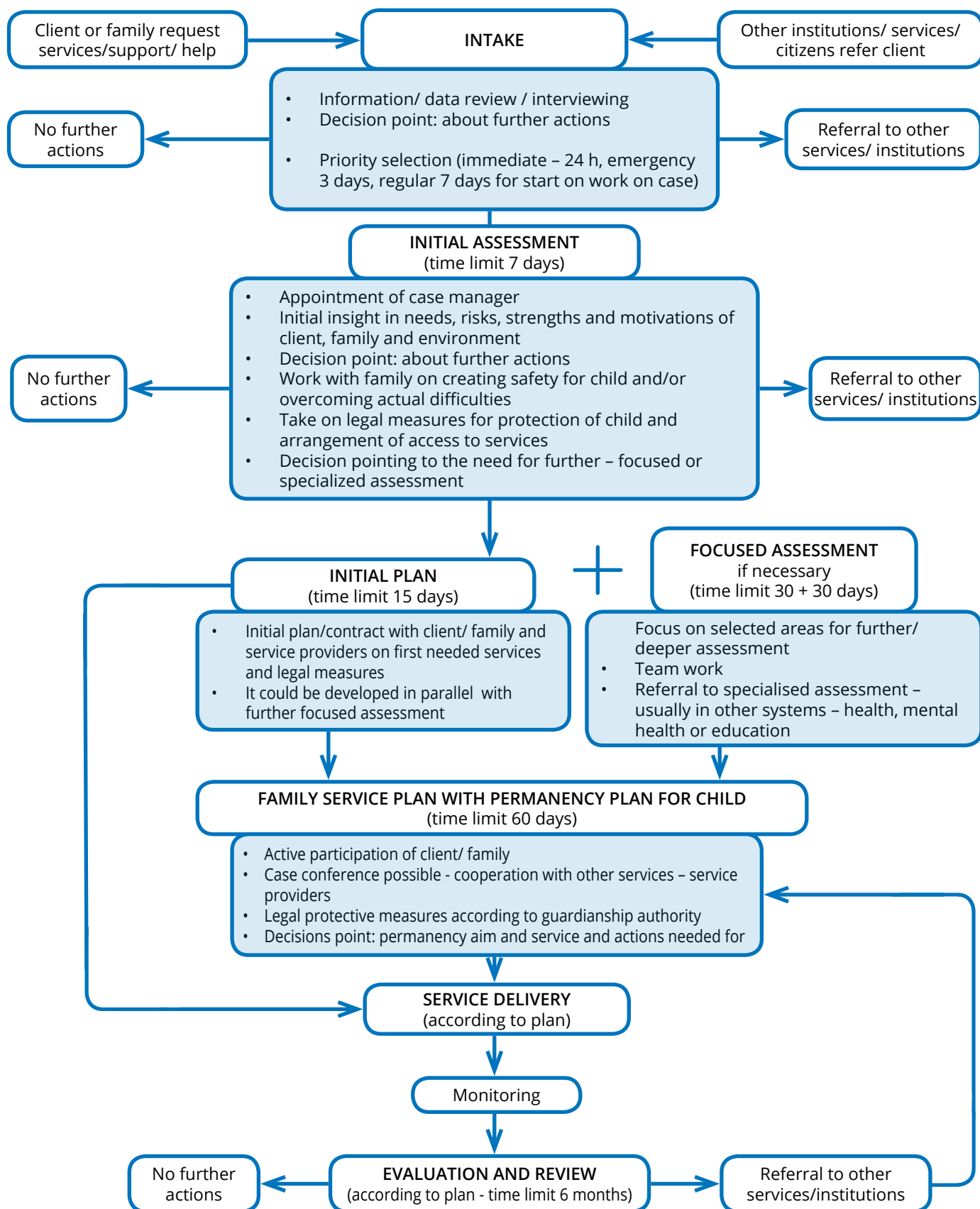
The appointed case manager (CM) starts the Initial assessment according to the priority level, if the case had been referred to the case management procedure and not to the tangible benefits service. On this stage, the CM has 7 days to complete the initial insight into the needs, risks, strengths and motivations of the client, family and environment, and, if needed, to work with the family on creating safety for the child and/or overcoming actual difficulties and taking legal measures for the protection of the child and arrangement for access to services. The CM also has to decide about the need for further focused or specialized assessment.

The worker has to develop the **Initial plan** within a maximum of 15 days from the beginning of work with the client. This plan points to urgent needs, and it could be developed in parallel with further focused assessment. **Focused assessment** directs activities on selected areas for further/ deeper assessment, and usually introduces team assessment and/or referral to specialised assessment, usually in other

systems: health, mental health or education. Within a maximum of 60 days from the beginning of work with the child and the family, the case manager develops the **Family service plan with permanency plan for the child**. At this point, it is possible to organise a case conference, since the plan includes service type, intensity, timeframe and provider together with monitoring issues. The plan also contains legal protective measures regarding guardianship authority, if needed, and permanency aim. **Evaluation and review** is completed by the CM, according to the plan, within 6 months at the longest. The standards also call for regular contact with clients, aiming to prevent institutionalisation and for achievement of permanency goals for children.

Actually, this is still a “new” system fully implemented in every CSW in Serbia from 2010, while comprehensive training of professionals for new standards and assessment and planning methodology was finished in the end of June 2009.

Scheme 2. Case managements standards for children and youth in Center for Social Welfare in Serbia



2.4. Legal framework and context for licensing of professionals, service providers and accreditation of training programs

Social protection in Serbia is legally regulated by different laws and bylaws. The umbrella law is the Law on Social Welfare from 2011. That law sets out the aims of social protection: to attain or maintain a minimum material security and independence of individuals and families in meeting basic needs; to ensure availability of services; to create equal opportunities for independent living and to encourage social inclusion; to preserve and improve family relationships, as well as to improve the family and intergenerational solidarity; to prevent abuse, neglect or exploitation, or to eliminate their consequences.

The law also includes the strategic objectives relating to the reform of social services, and regulates the rights, types of services, institutions and service providers, user groups, mechanisms for quality control, competence in establishing and funding services. The changes were particularly large in the institutional and regulatory sphere - the introduction of the Chamber of Social Welfare, licensing professionals and service providers, the introduction of the institution of public procurement of services, and the reformulation of quality control mechanisms, supervision and inspection. Different bylaws and rulebooks contain official job descriptions and legal mandates for the different types of social service workers (case managers, foster care counsellors, care workers, lawyers, etc.).

Other key laws are the Family Law and the Juvenile Justice Law, since they regulate the protection of children and the role of social welfare institutions (especially the CSW as a competent guardianship body on the municipal territory)¹².

The Law on Social Welfare (2011) has established a system based on pluralism of service providers (public, private and civil sector) and introduced the quality system with:

- a) Defined basic **standards** of social care services. Structural and functional standards for all social welfare services¹³ are presented as common min-

imum and special minimum standards and they are defined by the Regulation on detailed conditions and standards for provision of social welfare services, which was adopted in mid-2013. The problem is that one group of standards defined by the law is missing – the so called psycho-social and socio-educational services (i.e. counselling, family therapy, family outreach, intensive family preservation services, family conference and mediation). Consequently, the NGOs that mostly provide those services are unable to be licensed as service providers. The lack of this type of services is evident in practice. Numerous research and analyses point to the lack of preventive services, particularly the family support services, which among other things led to the increase in the number of children on formal alternative care (Zegarac 2014). Besides, the family support services are financed from the local budget, so that their sustainability is related to the financial capacities of municipalities. In the situation of economic crisis, services which are not mandatory are often the first to feel the restrictions.

- b) The system for **accreditation of training programmes** and programmes for treatment (established before the law in 2008, where the Republic Institute for Social Protection is in charge for the accreditation and quality control of training programmes; the register of accredited programmes and the register of professionals who completed the accredited training programmes have been established). The accreditation of training programmes implies the process of quality control, as it requires that the training deal with contemporary issues, to link the theory, practice, politics and laws pertaining to the actual topic; the application of interactive teaching methods; etc. However, the accreditation of treatment programmes as a new legal option is not well defined and developed in recent the bylaw. That document did not clarify what is encompassed by the programme of treatment (for example, in an institution for children with behavioural problems), who, how, under which protocol and with what groups of users is it being conducted, and whether and how it

¹² Description of relevant laws and by laws is in Annex 1.

¹³ The Rulebook stipulates conditions and standards for all social welfare services: alternative care service (residential care, small home communities, shelters and respite care; other types of care), daily services in the

community (day care centre, help in the house, drop-in centre and personal escort of a child), support services for independent living (supported living, personal assistance). Standards for counselling-therapy and socio-educational services, which are very significant for support of parenthood and prevention of separation of children from parent families, as well as for return of a child to parents or biological family, are not stipulated.

is accredited in accordance with the legal requirements, etc.

c) Licensing of service providers (service provider organisations obtain a license by the ministry in charge of social welfare if they conform with minimum standards of service regarding space, equipment, staff, defined procedures, etc. The license is issued for a 6 year period and must be renewed after it expires. The process of issuing the license and harmonising the work of residential institutions with the minimum standards in Serbia is only just beginning, and it is early to discuss experiences. However, it is obvious that among the hitherto licensed service providers, the private institutions for elderly people are the dominant ones (obtaining 40 out of 69 total given licenses), and that a small number of civil society organizations was licensed in this process (26). It is interesting that only two public institutions for elderly people got licenses in the process so far. In regards to services for children and youth, only 9 day care centres for children and youth with disabilities received licenses, along with one for children and youth with behavioural problems.

The license for services for children has been thus far obtained by 9 non-governmental organisations and one CSW.¹⁴ This question is beyond the scope of this analysis, but it is obvious that there are obstacles in the implementation of laws in this respect and that the system has not yet been ready (and maybe neither willing) to accept NGOs as equal partners in services provision. Further notable is the unpreparedness of both public institutions and non-governmental organisations to pursue licensing in accordance with the adopted standards.

d) Licensing of professionals (they obtain a license from the Chamber of Social Welfare). A lifelong learning concept for professional development is applied, since professionals must complete a set number of hours of some of relevant accredited training programmes, but also they may gain some credits in relevant professional conference organisation, participation or attendance, etc.

¹⁴ Data on licensing for the period December 10th, 2013 to June 29th, 2015 have been obtained from the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Policy.

Tabela 2. Licensed professionals in social welfare from 01/06/2013 to 15/05/2015 by professional affiliation and gender

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION	M	Z	Total
Social workers	174	1.106	1.280 (41,05%)
Psychologists	52	480	532 (17,06%)
Pedagoguists	29	247	276 (0,88%)
Special pedagoguists	52	233	285 (0,91%)
Defectologists	24	216	240 (0,76%)
Andragoguists	3	20	23 (0,07%)
Lawyers	148	328	476 (0,15%)
Others	1	5	6 (0,01%)
Total	483 (15,5%)	2.635 (84,5%)	3.118 (100%)

Systems of licensing professionals and service providers are quite new. The first round of licensing has just finished at the end of 2014.

The licensing of professionals that was introduced for the first time by this law affects the people in public, private and civil society organisations performing the basic social protection tasks (case managers, child care workers, foster care workers, etc.), supervisors and professionals engaged at specialised tasks (counsellors, family therapists, mediators, etc.). According to the rules on professional jobs in social welfare (2012), these tasks in different social services (CSW, residential institutions for children, foster care centres, community social services) can be performed by the following group of professionals: social workers, psychologists, pedagogues (including andragogues and defectologists).

In addition to this circle of professionals, the legal tasks in social and child protection require licensing of lawyers involved in the system. Sociologists, who are in the social welfare system in Serbia and are engaged primarily in planning and development tasks, are not subject to licensing. Besides professionals, the work with children involves a number of care workers, mostly in teaching professions (e.g. teacher of physical education, native language, etc.) who worked in residential care in a time when a much larger number of children were placed in institutions. They do not have a professional worker's status, but are called *associates* and are not subject to licensing. When involved in part of the professional work, they

do the work under the supervision of a licensed professional.

The conditions for obtaining the license according to the Rulebook on Licensing Professionals (2013) include :

- Obtained appropriate diploma;
- Completed internship and passed internship exam;
- Completed appropriate accredited training programme.

Until May 15th, 2015, the total number of licenses issued for professional tasks in social protection (3,118 professionals) is 3,625, mostly for basic professional tasks in social protection (2,604 or 71.8% of licenses)¹⁵. The highest number of the licensed professionals are social workers (1,280 or 41.05%; Table 2). The highest number of licenses was awarded to professional workers of the Centres for Social Welfare (2,033 or 65%). Although these data do not pertain only to helping professionals in child protection workforces, they illustrate well the structure of employees in the Serbian social welfare. It is clear that dominant, but not predominant, are social workers, while the workforce is mostly composed of women (84.5% in the observed period), and the various pedagogical professions make up around one quarter of the licensed professionals¹⁶.

¹⁵ Data of Chamber of Social Welfare, 15.05.2015.

¹⁶ In total, among licensed professionals of pedagogical occupations (pedagogue, special pedagogue, andragogue and defectologist) the social protection of Serbia employs the notable 26.4%.

3. REVIEW OF IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

3.1. Review of monographs, research and publications relevant for child protection

The review of relevant literature published in Serbia in the last twenty years or so points to several interesting trends¹⁷.

First, several topics are singled out in national research: violence against children, children in alternative care, children in conflict with the law and, to a lower extent, children with disability. In addition, there are also publications recognising some other vulnerable groups of children: victims of trafficking, street involved children, so called “children on the move,” and refugees and asylum-seeking children.

Second, a number of Practical Guidelines have been developed, offering practical instructions to professionals and paraprofessionals for working with specific groups of children.

Third, publications are produced by research centres, universities, non-governmental organisations and public institutions, making it obvious that publishing in the field of children protection is relevant for various sectors.

Fourth, in the last 10 years, regular reporting in this field has been significantly improved. Every year the Child Rights Centre in Belgrade publishes the report “Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Serbia”, making available the updated data in this field. The Republic Institute of Social Protection, as the institution in charge of the development of the social protection field (established in 2007 in order to support the reform processes) publishes annual reports on the work of all institutions of social protection and makes different analyses and practical guidelines available to professionals, managers and policy makers.

Fifth, the availability of different publications has been increased as well. A large number of documents, analyses, manuals, policy papers, laws and bylaws, and even research and professional monographs, has been made available via the Internet in recent years, which significantly facilitates the gaining

of new knowledge and the exchange of good (and not so good) practices.

The general impression is that the recent years have seen a qualitative (and quantitative) improvement in accessibility of relevant data important for child protection and that professionals and paraprofessionals mostly have access to contemporary knowledge, practical guidelines and research findings in this field. The majority of these publications emerged within some broader project which promoted the adopted policies, dynamic legal changes and changes in ideological and professional approaches to children and family issues. The open question is to what extent the professionals (critically) use these resources and whether they consider them useful in their everyday practice.

3.2. Curriculum analysis

Child protection professionals in Serbia working as social service workers who are directly engaged in child protection work include, according to relevant regulations: a) social workers, b) psychologists, c) pedagogues and d) rehabilitation workers – defectologists and, from legal point of view, e) lawyers. They are educated at different faculties. Social workers are so far educated only at the Department for Social Work and Social Policy at the Faculty of Political Sciences (FPN), University of Belgrade; while psychologists and pedagogues are educated at the Faculty of Philosophy (FP) and lawyers at the Faculty of Law, mostly at the three biggest universities in Serbia: Belgrade (UBG), Novi Sad (UNS) and Nis (UNI). The private university Singidunum has also recently begun providing a programme for the education of social workers, and it will produce its first generation of graduate social workers (4 years of studies) in the second half of 2016.

Recent analysis done as a part of the TEMPUS project *Strengthening Higher Education for Social Policymaking and Social Services Delivery*,¹⁸ indicates some differ-

¹⁷ Description of relevant publications is in Annex 1.

¹⁸ The main aim of the SHESPSS project is to develop new programmes to empower higher education for the training of professionals in the field of social protection and related activities linked to social inclusion. The plan is to develop new programmes for university education for social workers in Novi Sad and Nis, since there is a visible lack of educated social work professionals. The estimation (after the research) is that Serbia will need at least 500 social workers in next 5 years (Zegarac & Todorovic, 2015) *Obrazovanje za socijalnu rad i socijalnu politiku za XXI vek*

ences and needs in the education of child protection professionals.

The analysis of the education of **social workers** (FPN, UBG) at the undergraduate level (4 year studies) shows that the degree includes political science, social, legal, economic and psychological disciplines, which provide a broader theoretical framework of knowledge for future social workers. Education in the field of social work and social policy provides more specific theoretical knowledge, including knowledge and values of relevant policies. Social workers from that university gain knowledge about different social systems and their components, which is a strength of this programme compared to those of the other analysed professions, and this ultimately determines the kinds of tasks they are qualified to handle in the field of child protection.

Three basic social work methodological courses have been identified as crucial to work with vulnerable social groups, namely: "Social Work with Individuals", "Social Work with Groups" and "Social Work in the Community". Some courses are focused on specific vulnerable groups (such as "Social Work with Children and Youth", "Social Work with the Elderly", "Social Work with Immigrants", etc.). In addition to providing specific theoretical knowledge, they also provide skills for working with the specific vulnerable groups to which they relate. The course "Social Work with Children and Youth" specifically addresses issues connected to child protection, i.e. topics such as: construction of childhood, child rights perspective, child abuse and neglect (notion, theory, evidence based practice, intervention methods, General Protocol for protection of children from abuse and neglect and CP procedures in Serbia), children in alternative care (residential, foster, kinship care, guardianship, adoption, care leavers), participation of children, juvenile justice, antisocial behaviour of children and youth, etc.

Current programmes for the education of social workers are, in general, based on ecologic, sociological, systemic and psychodynamic theories, with particular attention being paid to the strengths-based approach and anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices. This is a change in the education of social workers,

who until ten years ago were mostly educated within the medical mode of practice (Payne 1997).

The contents relevant for social work with children and families are also contained in the courses "Psychology of Personality", "Mental Health" (special parts are dedicated to children), "Developmental Psychology", "Family Law", "Social Security Systems", "Counselling" (special parts are dedicated to children), "Advocacy", and many other courses dealing with family and parenting issues. Furthermore, supervised field practice is provided in every year of study. At the Master's level (a 1 year study programme), courses like "Case Management", "Social Work with Families" and "Gender Studies" particularly address the needs of children and many child protection issues.

In the education of **pedagogues** (FF, UBG, UNS and UNI, educated according to Russian and German tradition in child rearing and education) at the undergraduate 4-year studies, there is a series of theoretical subjects relating to children, but mostly in an educational context. Knowledge about child protection issues, protection system, legal framework, contemporary research and interventions is missing. The "Social Pedagogy" course (an elective at all studied universities) lists some topics related to the theory of social work, as well as the normative-legal, ethical, and institutional and organisational framework of educational activities in social work. Other relevant courses are "Family Pedagogy" and "Pedagogical Counselling". Students are mostly trained for direct pedagogical, preventive work with children and young people in educational setting, which includes children with special needs.

In the education of **psychologists** (FF, UBG, UNS and UNI), in the undergraduate 4-year studies the largest number of courses are offered, and this enables the acquisition of knowledge about family, children, family, education and mental health, in addition to knowledge of research and experimental psychology. Prospective psychologists are mostly prepared for clinical psychology in mental health and work in educational setting, but they lack knowledge about social systems, violence and relevant laws. Relevant courses are the "Developmental Psychology", "Mental Health", "Children with Special Needs", "Family Relationships", "Counselling and Psychotherapy", and at the UNS also the course named "Children in Foster Care". In this way, psychologists acquire important but not

[Education for social work and social policy for the XXI century] Nis: University of Nis.

complete knowledge of child protection issues, the needs of abused and neglected children, juvenile delinquents, children in foster and residential care, etc.

Defectology at the UBG and the UNS educates *speech therapists*, *typhlologues* (specialist for blind and visually impaired people), *somatopedists* (professionals for rehabilitation of people with physical disability), *surdologists* (professionals for damage in hearing, and *oligofrenologists* (professionals for people with learning difficulties), and *special pedagogues* (professionals for people in conflict with the law, probation officers, only educated at the UBG). Only the so-called *special pedagogues* have some relevant knowledge about child protection and juvenile justice issues. Special pedagogues from the UBG are mostly employed in Centres for Social Welfare and special juvenile residential facilities, and they are educated to deal mostly with children in conflict with the law, family and community. The UNS mostly educates this profession from rehabilitation perspective and medical model.

In the education of **lawyers** at the law faculties at the three biggest universities in Serbia, courses like "Family Law" and "Social Pathology" as well as other law disciplines prepare lawyers for child protection. In Master's level studies, some other courses relevant for child protection are available (particularly in the new Master's programme of Child Rights at the UBG).

3.3. Accredited training programmes for continuing education

So far, there are 119 accredited training programmes in the Catalogue of the Republic Institute for Social Protection, classified as follows (Republic Institute for Social Protection, http://www.zavodsz.gov.rs/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=148&Itemid=154):

- I. Development of general competence in social welfare (25 programmes).
- II. Support for children and young people (20 programmes).
- III. Support for family (24 programmes).
- IV. Support for persons and children with disabilities (28 programmes).
- V. Support for adults and older people in the social welfare (13 programmes).
- VI. Support for marginalized groups (9 programmes).

Relevant accredited training programmes for child protection which had at least 30 participants will be presented in tables 3 to 6. Also, the tables present the number of trainers for concrete programmes, however only for those having 4 or more trainers, because the number of trainers indicates the dissemination capacity of concrete training.

Table 3. Relevant accredited training programmes for child protection forming the “Development of general competence in social welfare” group

Name and duration of the programme	Content	Target group	Number of trained professionals
1) Knowledge and skills for case management Duration: basic 40 hour and advanced 72 hour programme and training for trainers 120 hours	<p>After the basic programme, participants are able to: conduct work with the service user - assess needs, prepare individual plans; negotiate, coordinate and monitor the activities of providing services; form a team for the service user; negotiate and advocate for service users; organise and conduct emergency intervention to protect children, adults and the elderly.</p> <p>After the advanced program, participants will be able to: assess needs, strengths, risks, prepare individual service plans and help others in their development; advise, negotiate and represent the interests of users; discuss the ethical implications of interventions; organise and conduct preventive, developmental or protective intervention; evaluate work on the case and define indicators for monitoring activities and outcomes.</p>	CP professionals (and professionals from adult and elderly services in CSW)	1775 professionals 30 trainers
2) Training of lawyers in the Centre for Social Welfare Duration 28 hours	The Programme develops competence of lawyers related to communication skills and teamwork in different professional activities in the Centre for Social Welfare; enhancement of specific professional competencies in the field of children's rights and parental rights; competence for the efficient and effective conduct of administrative proceedings; participation in professional procedures within the methods of case management.	Lawyers in CSW.	380 lawyers
3) Basic training for supervisors in CSW Duration 40 hours	<p>After completing the training programme, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan the individual and group supervision • implement individual supervision cycle • organize group supervision • monitor the progress of each individual Case Manager • take accurate records on the implementation of the supervision process • carry out the evaluation of progress of case as well as evaluating the overall process supervision • report on progress of each case manager 	Experienced CP professionals	442 supervisors 8 trainers

Table 4. Relevant accredited training programme for child protection forming the “Support for children and young people” group

Name and duration of the programme	Content	Target group	Number of trained professionals
Protection of children from abuse and neglect: the implementation of the General Protocol Duration 40 hours	<p>The Programme develops general and specific competences (knowledge and skills) necessary for implementation of the General Protocol for the protection of children from abuse and neglect, considering: Taking immediate intervention to protect the child; Making individual child protection plan, including specific intervention with the child and the family; Participation of users (children and parents) in creating and implementing the plan; monitoring the implementation and evaluation of the effects of the measures taken; Multi-sectorial cooperation in the protection of children; Prevention of burn-out syndrome in working with abused and neglected children and their families</p>	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	218 CP professionals
Interventions of Centre for Social Welfare in protection of children from abuse and neglect Duration 24 hours	<p>The Programme develops, connects and integrates personal and professional basic and specific competences in the protection of children and young people regarding: Skills, knowledge, processes and methods of assessment, data collection, evaluation risk and safety analysis, reasoning, decision-making; emergency intervention to protect the child from the standpoint of CSW; Planning skills in cases of child abuse and neglect and development of Family service plan with permanency plan for the child; Participation of users in the process; Usage of strategies for engagement families, techniques for building relationships and child participation; Interviewing skills of a child - a witness, child -victim, associates from other service, non-offending parents and abusers; Knowledge and ability to understand the legal aspects of the intervention and the role of CSW and Guardianship authority to protect children from abuse and neglect; The ability, knowledge and skills of making professional opinions and court skills for participation in court proceedings in cases of child abuse and neglect; The acquisition of knowledge about the cultural competent practice in the protection of children from abuse and neglect; Awareness of the presence and distribution of myths about children, childhood and competence of children to express their view in the professional and general public, myths about domestic violence and abuse.</p>	CP professionals.	146 CP professionals 14 trainers

<p>Initial training for phone counsellors for children and youth</p> <p>Duration:</p> <p>72 hours of training and 2 months of supervision</p>	<p>The Programme develops further competencies: Skills in counselling and communicating with children, young people and adults; Identification and risk assessment of the child or young person; An understanding of a number of themes that children and young people can meet; The ability to receive feedback on all aspects of their work; The ability to be able to make an accurate record keeping to the guided conversation; Knowledge and skills of application of binding documents relating to the child protection; Knowledge and skills in recognizing and protecting children and youth from neglect, abuse and exploitation; Skills of identification and recognition of the phenomenon of marginalization and developing and improving mechanisms for reducing vulnerability, social exclusion and poverty; Skills to work in a team and the development and promotion of teamwork; Knowledge and application procedures of internal and external evaluation and supervision</p>	<p>CP professionals</p>	<p>151</p> <p>CP professionals</p> <p>6 trainers</p>
<p>Protection of children from abuse and neglect in residential institutions: application of the special protocol</p> <p>Duration:</p> <p>32 hours</p>	<p>The Programme increases knowledge and skills necessary for the implementation of the Special Protocol for the Protection of Children from abuse and neglect in institutions of social protection, including: Taking emergency intervention to protect the child, making individual child protection plan, including the specific intervention with the child and other children in the institution, participation of users (child and guardian) in development and implementation of the plan; Monitoring the implementation and evaluation of the effects of the measures taken; cooperation of professionals in the protection of children; Prevention of burn-out syndrome in working with abused and neglected children and their families.</p>	<p>CP professionals</p>	<p>54</p> <p>CP professionals</p> <p>4 trainers</p>
<p>OPTIMUS for youth - Optimal treatment program and the integration of youth in conflict with the community - workshops for young people</p> <p>Duration:</p> <p>32 hours</p>	<p>Training for implementation of group treatment for young people from the target group in the form of 12 workshops. It is an application of elements of cognitive-behavioural interventions related to the strengthening of pro-social forms of behaviour and reducing antisocial behaviour, including enhancing the communication, anger management, development of constructive problem solving strategies, responsible behaviour and so on.</p>	<p>CP professionals</p>	<p>49</p> <p>CP professionals</p>

OPTIMUS FOR FAMILIES - Optimal treatment program and integration young people in conflict with the community - family visitation Duration: 32 hours	<p>Training for 12 semi-structured visits to families of children and young people from the target groups. The Training contains effective assessment of risks, strengths and needs; Preparation and implementation of individual plan; Multi-system application and solution focused approach to the target group in the local community; Cognitive-behavioural approaches and evaluation of treatment.</p>	CP professionals	132 CP professionals
Designing and conducting groups for (self) support of youth at risk - club for young people model GRiG Duration: 30 hours	<p>The Programme develops knowledge of basic concepts, methods and techniques of socio-therapeutic club for youth (model GRiG); Planning and organizing club for young people; Promoting the club for young people; Recognising emotional condition and needs of the individual or group process, capacity and power; Establishing of trust, developing and terminating relationships; Positioning of the group; Facing the confrontation of attitudes, opinions and difficult issues; Encouraging and processing of control group exchange; Promotion and encouragement to participate in joint activities and purpose; Awakening of the mission; Management of tension; Supporting to solved tasks and decision-making from youth.</p>	CP professionals and paraprofessionals	1204 CP professionals 6 trainers
Encouraging pro-social and prevention of aggressive behaviour of youth Duration: 24 hours	<p>Training in identifying factors that contribute to socially (in) competent behaviour of young people; Social skills needed for effective social functioning; Training of children and youth in social skills and techniques of nonviolent problem solving; Recognition of the causes of bullying and the possible ways of prevention; Improving social relations particularly of the vulnerable groups of children and young people; Conducting workshops; Encouraging pro-social and preventing an aggressive behaviour; Monitoring and evaluation of program impact.</p>	CP professionals and paraprofessionals,	140 CP professionals 4 trainers

Programme of support to young people who leave the care Duration: 40 hours	<p>The Training improves sensitivity for identifying and understanding the needs of young people in the process of emancipation, the exercise of basic development tasks relating to the responsible choice of partners, marrying and developing a functional family model; actively acquire basic principles of the modern pedagogy and interactive development of the skills necessary for the application of the principles of active learning in order to encourage proactive attitude of young people; acquiring knowledge and skills necessary to encourage professionals to support independence of young people.</p>	CP professionals.	145 CP professionals
Support for the development of life skills for the social integration of young people Duration: 18 hours	<p>Acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for professionals to support young people in social integration. Support of the youth relates to: Successful social communication; successful resolution of conflicts; Acceptance of lifelong learning strategies; Development of skills necessary for life in the modern and urban society. Also, the program develops knowledge and skills needed to encourage the development of children in order to reduce the restrictive effects of institutional care; knowledge and skills of making programs to support children and young people to become independent.</p>	CP professionals.	140 CP professionals
The role of the Centre for Social Welfare and other providers of social services in implementation of corrective orders Duration: 18 hours	<p>After completing the training programme, the participants will be able to: Apply basic knowledge of approaches to working with children with problems in behaviour, based on modern theoretical concepts and binding documents in this area; Understand the purpose of corrective orders, knowledge of the kind of corrective orders and the principles of their application; Know the roles and responsibilities of key actors in the implementation of corrective orders, procedure of applying corrective orders, standards applied to each individual educational tasks; Write a report and professional judgment for juvenile justice procedures in accordance with the recommended structure.</p>	CP professionals and paraprofessionals.	188 CP professionals 5 trainers

Table 5. Relevant accredited training programmes for child protection forming the “Support for family” group

Name and duration of the programme	Target group	Number of trained professionals
1. Parents in another way - a training programme for professionals group workshops work with potential adopters Duration: 40 hours	CP professionals.	30 CP professionals
2. Programme for preparation and training of future foster parents - Safe Steps to Foster Care Duration: 40 hours for CP professionals, 33 hours for prospective foster parents)	CP professionals	359 CP professionals 4 trainers
3. Preparation and support for foster families to care for babies and small children Duration: (18 hours)	CP professionals	57 CP professionals
4. Preparation and support to foster families to accept a child with Down's syndrome Duration: 18 hours	CP professionals	46 CP professionals
5. Urgent foster care Duration: 12 hours	CP professionals	110 CP professionals
6. Foster family as a place of restoration and reintegration of the victim of human trafficking Duration: 16 hours	CP professionals	110 CP professionals
7. Training of social services providers for the protection of victim of gender-based violence Duration: 24 hours	CP professionals and paraprofessionals.	39 CP professionals
8. Safe House - work in the centre to help victims of domestic violence Duration: 24 hours	CP professionals and paraprofessionals.	
9. Mediation in family disputes Duration: 48 hours	CP professionals.	37 CP professionals

10. Domestic violence and institutional protection Duration: 18 hours	CP professionals and paraprofessionals.	1794 CP professionals 19 trainers
11. Organising case conference for protection against domestic violence Duration: 6 hours	CP professionals and paraprofessionals.	1923 CP professionals 10 trainers
12. The coordinated action of the local community in prevention of and protection from family violence Duration: 6 hours	CP professionals and paraprofessionals	1444 CP professionals 13 trainers
13. Work with victims of domestic violence in the Centre for Social Welfare Duration: 12 hours	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	216 CP professionals
14. Work with perpetrators in the Centre for Social Welfare Duration: 12 hours	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	225 CP professionals
15. Initiating of judicial proceedings by the Centre for Social Welfare Duration: 6 hours	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	164 CP professionals
16. Family oriented support - Cooperation with families of children with disabilities Duration: 6 hours	CP professionals.	114 CP professionals 4 trainers
17. Training of professionals for treatment of offender in intimate partners relationships Duration: 56 hours	CP professionals.	51 CP professionals 14 trainers
18. The training programme for the initiators of family conference Duration: 22 hours	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	247 CP professionals 4 trainers

The review and the analysis of the accredited training programmes show that there are numerous relevant programmes for improvement of knowledge of professionals in the field of child protection and family work (a smaller number of programmes is intended for paraprofessionals). The presented topics pertain both to general knowledge and skills (case management, supervision) and to specific groups of vulnerable children and youth recognised during the reform of the system: child victims of abuse and neglect, youth in conflict with the law and, to a certain extent, children in alternative (primarily) foster care.

An important number of projects is intended for education of professionals who train and support foster families (6). There is a visible presence of programmes dealing with domestic violence (8), although none of the programmes from this group deals specifically with the child witness of domestic violence or with specific issues of children protection in these cases.

Notable is the lack of programmes which more completely deal with issues linked to the participation of children, techniques for interviewing children and direct work with children on overcoming traumas and losses.

Furthermore, only the programmes dealing with basic knowledge and skills applied to a higher number of professionals, while, based on the number of trainees, some accredited training programmes were carried out only a couple of times, probably during a certain project period. Only a few programmes have a sufficient number of trainers to provide widespread dissemination.

The majority of training programmes last for 2-3 days, which suggests the tendency to provide shorter trainings (although it is unclear to what extent these are focused). The reasons for this situation are most probably connected with limited financial assets at the disposal of the professionals and their institutions.

In the period of intensive reforms, a large number of professionals were trained for free, as the trainings were carried out within some of the projects supported by various donors (the EU through IPA funds, the UN agencies, particularly UNICEF, the UK government through DiFID, the Government of Norway etc.). The existence and accessibility of accredited training

programmes enabled the first round of licensing of professionals in social protection in Serbia. A potential problem was created by the manner in which the Rulebook on Licensing Professional Workers in Social Welfare (2013) values the accredited training programmes: namely, they all “count for” an equal number of points, regardless of whether they last for 60 hours or for 6 hours. This to a certain extent discourages professionals to enter into longer and more demanding trainings, which is problematic because those would certainly provide for more profound learning.

3.4. Other forms of professional development

Besides the accredited training programmes available since 2007, child protection professionals improve their professional education in various ways. The number of available relevant specialisation and Master’s programmes is small, but there is a significant number of relevant trainings for particular kinds of counselling or psychotherapy. These trainings are most often organised by certified psychotherapist associations, they are usually conducted in phases that take place over several years. There is no data on how many child protection professionals were educated in this way, but some insights show that they found the trainings in family therapy (initial training of 2 years for systemic practitioner and 2 years of training and supervised practice for family therapists) and training in rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) particularly attractive.

Similarly, some organisations dealing with child protection have more or less structured internal trainings for their staff, particularly for those who are newly employed. This field has been partly regulated in recent years, however there has not been a clear demand for designing individual learning plans, and it is similarly unclear who has a duty to finance the training.

For renewal of the license, in addition to pursuing the accredited training programmes to obtain academic, specialist and professional knowledge, child protection practitioners are also expected to collect “points.” These points are awarded through certain activities, such as: lecturing at national and international congresses, professional and academic meetings, training others in the capacity of a certified trainer, participation in professional and academic projects,

organisation, leading or active participation at discussions and round tables, publishing of papers and editorial work in indexed and non-indexed journals and monographs. Certain points are obtained also through attendance of relevant conferences, round tables, discussions and the like (Rulebook on Licensing Professional Workers in Social Welfare, 2013).

Ultimately, important steps have been taken in incentivising professionals to improve and develop their practice, which has notably added new dynamics in the child protection system.

3.5. Research knowledge and impact

Training in research methods in Serbia is taught primarily at universities (of social sciences) at the undergraduate, Master's and PhD levels. The graduate levels of studies (MA, PhD) traditionally provide more space for research methods. Contents of the programmes are not well represented in the university curricula in Serbia.

At the FPN UBG, the relevant courses for the Master of Social Work in this area are the "Research Method in Social Work and Social Policy" and "Management of Social Work", courses which deal with different aspects of programme evaluation. Other study pro-

grammes (except law schools) have various research methods included in the curricula, however these are not specifically targeting the programmes and service evaluation.

The programme and service evaluation as an approach in the quality of service started about ten years ago, with a demand that came from various international and UN agencies. They required some kind of evaluation as an integral part of the project. Furthermore, these agencies have developed a network of independent domestic and foreign consultant evaluators, which increases the skills and knowledge in the field.

At the same time, a large number of non-governmental organisations and CP professionals associated with them have developed knowledge and expertise in mapping the needs, strategic planning, management of project cycles and various aspects of programme evaluation. During the last 5-6 years, the social welfare system developed and accredited a number of relevant trainings available to the professionals and associates from the NGOs. The relevant accredited training programmes for CP professionals and paraprofessionals from the civil society regarding research, evaluation and program design are displayed in table 6.

Table 6. The relevant accredited training programmes regarding research, evaluation and program design

Name and duration of the program	Content	Target group	Number of trained professionals
The methodology of establishing an integrated model of development of social services in the local community Duration: 32 hours	It is a training on identifying and analysing the needs of users for social care services in accordance with the integral model; On evaluation of the state and quality of existing social care services in local community; Marking the missing services necessary to meet the needs of individuals and groups of users; Preparation of plans for the development of social care services; Development of an integrated model of social protection through local social partnership, and leading the process of developing a protocol on cooperation between the partners in local community.	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	33 CP professionals 4 trainers
Volunteer management Duration: 15 hours	The programme develops professional competence in identifying the needs that can be met by voluntary work; Defines the profile of volunteers needed; Identifies, motivates and trains appropriate volunteers; Manages, leads and supervises the work of volunteers and accesses the success of this work; Ensures the conditions for the implementation of the program through planning of human, material and financial resources; Integrates and coordinates the work of volunteers in the system of the organisation; Organises a stable volunteer program in organisation.	CP professionals and paraprofessionals.	178 CP professionals
Successful project and human resources management Duration: 54 hours	The programme contributes to the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the field of project management, human resources and project cycle. Influences the development and improvement of skills needed for effective decision-making, communication skills, leadership, team work and problem solving.	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	26 CP professionals
Participatory strategic planning for sustainable community development, organizations and services in the field of social protection Duration: 21 hours	The Programme addresses the participatory planning methods and development of ability to plan according to service needs in the community; Evaluation of the quality of existing and planning and the feasibility of new services through examining the economic cost of each service and its effectiveness; Learning the mechanisms for monitoring changes in the field of social protection and social policy and environment (projection impact on user groups and community as a whole).	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	184 CP professionals

Strategic management of integrated social protection in the local community Duration: 42 hours	The programme supports professionals and others in acquiring knowledge and skills for preparation of strategic documents in the field of integrated social protection in the local community; Methodology for the assessment of needs and resources for the development of social services in the local community; Knowledge on theoretical principles of strategic management; Knowledge and skills of analyses of the strategic framework, SWOT analysis, analysis of stakeholders and problem tree; Knowledge and skills of defining the mission, vision and strategic objectives and priorities and defining and implementing the action plan; Knowledge and skills of monitoring and evaluation strategies; Skills for writing and development projects; Knowledge about the legal framework and procedures for the establishment of sustainable social care services in the community.	CP professionals, community child protection workers and paraprofessionals.	56 CP professionals 6 trainers
Operational planning in the centres for social welfare Duration: 24 hours	Upgrading of the existing and adoption of advanced knowledge of the concepts and operational planning methodology in the context of the reform of social protection and primary activity of CSW, in bringing the functions and tasks of planning and development in community; Adoption of methods, techniques and skills to develop new services and partnerships community; Fund raising; Development of internal organizations in CSW to improve the quality of services for users.	CP professionals, managers, supervisors and sociologists form CSW and different local community services.	100 CP professionals 18 trainers

Data from the Table 6 shows that the child protection professionals in Serbia have available programmes dedicated to the planning and evaluation of services and to the development of services in the community. It is notable that there is no training dealing with the evaluation of direct practice.

3.6. Policy and practice issues

Regarding the ways in which the university curricula and additional trainings address the issues of **policy and legislation**, in addition to previous remarks, specific accredited training programmes in social welfare system address the following particular issues, like the training programme *The Roles and Responsibilities of Local Governments in the Implementation of the Law on Social Welfare* (16 hours). The aim of the programme is the advancement of knowledge in the field of social protection, system of services, service standards and the regulatory system; improving the

knowledge of the public procurement system of social services; improvement of knowledge on the role of local governments and service providers, in mutual relations as well as in relations with other social actors, especially with the Centre for Social Welfare. Target groups are administrators from local governments, managers for social services and paraprofessionals.

In fact, the regulations regarding accreditation of training programmes in child protection and social welfare in Serbia require compliance with current policy and law. Therefore all accredited training programmes more or less reflect the actual policy and laws.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Data Collection Methods

We used semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Focus groups and interviews were made on the basis of the protocol defined by the main researcher and adjusted by the national researcher. Guidelines for interviews and focus groups were created and adjusted to identified groups of respondents: educators (academics and non-academics), managers, practitioners and students. All respondents filled in a uniform questionnaire with demographic data, while the questions from the given fields were formulated according to respondents and interpersonal and group dynamics. The fields in which questions were posed encompassed general questions about social work and child protection, questions related to curriculum and obtaining of formal and informal education in the field and questions related to practice, research and policy as well as knowledge and skills related to the use of information technologies in learning.

4.2. Procedures

The data was collected by trained researchers, holders of MA in social work and social work PhD candidates.. All respondents received full information about the aim of the research and signed an informed consent form for participation in the research. All respondents agreed to participate in the research, showing interest for the research topic and expressing a need for their voices heard. The discussions in the focus group and in interviews were recorded and transcripts were made for further analysis. The researchers also wrote reports after each focus group and interview, which served as material for analysis.

The field research was carried out in the period May-June 2015 in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš. These are three large cities from the different regions in Serbia. In total, 8 focus groups were processed (2 with BA and MA students of social work, 1 with educators, 1 with managers/administrators and 4 with child protection practitioners). The number of participants in focus groups varied from 5 to 9, while 5 focus groups had 6 participants. All focus groups included a group activity in consensus building which dealt with knowledge and skills of child protection professionals. In addition to these focus groups, 9 interviews were

conducted – three with academic/educators, 3 with managers of child services, and 3 with CP practitioners/professionals. The interviews with practitioners involved a case story. The interviews lasted between 80 and 90 minutes, while the focus groups lasted for about 2 hours and consensus building for about 30 minutes more.

To protect the privacy of respondents, their names were encrypted, so that every respondent was accorded the letter FG (for focus group participants) or I for interviewee, followed by a letter M for managers/ administrators; E for educators/ academics; S for social work students (followed by number of focus group 1-2), and P for child protection professionals (in that case followed by number of focus group 1-4), and a m or f marker, which indicates their sex, followed by number.

4.3. Participants

Participants were recruited from three selected cities which are the centres of the largest regions in Serbia, on the basis of their position in the child protection system. The selection started with the insight of the national researcher regarding potential participants' work and experience, and later relying on the recommendations of respondents and field researchers and recommendations of managers of certain services. Thus by direct call and "snowball" or chain-referral technique an appropriate sample was reached, reflecting the diversity of positions (and views) in Serbian child protection.

The focus groups involved 51 respondents in total (47 females and 4 males), while all the interviewed (9) were females. The respondents are relatively equally distributed across relevant age groups (see Table 7), which has been expected considering that their involvement in the research was made on the basis of their positions and experience (student, professional, manager, educator etc.). Sometimes it was not easy to divide the roles as many of those who are now at managerial positions (mostly mid-level managerial positions) perceive themselves primarily as practitioners, while some practitioners and managers also work as educators in the system or have supervising duties.

Table 7. Sample characteristic

s

	Focus groups	Interviews	Total
Gender			60
Female	47	9	56
Male	4		4
Age			60
20 - 23	5		5
23 - 30	12	1	13
30 - 40	11	4	15
40 - 50	8	1	9
50 - 60	16		16
61 +		2	2
Profession			60
SW students	9 (+6)*		9
Social worker	29		34
Pedagogist	5	5	6
Psychologist	7	1	8
Special pedagogist	7	1	1
Lawyer	1		1
Psychiatrist	1		1
Organisation			60
CSW	24	3	27
Residential institution	7	1	8
Foster care centre	7	1	8
Academic/ research	3 + 9 students	4	16
Policy	1		1
Position			60
Student	9		9
Case manager	20	3	23
Manager	9	3	12
Foster care counsellor	6	2	8
Care worker	6		6
Academic		2	2

* 6 students of Master's studies of social work were involved in the number of social workers, considering that immediately upon completing their studies they started their internship.

Regarding the respondents' professions, most of them are social workers (34 or 65%), whereas psychologists, pedagogues and special pedagogues are equally represented. Within the interviews for academic staff, interviews were conducted with a female psychiatrist and a lawyer who have important multi-year experience in education of child protection professionals and in the creation of policies and programmes in this field.

Regarding the organisations from which the respondents were recruited, the highest number comes from a basic social service CSW (27 or 45%), whereas residential institutions for children and foster care centres were represented with 8 respondents each, and academic/ research institutions with 7 respondents. Accordingly, the positions which the respondents occupy in the system mostly pertain to case manager (23), manager (12) and foster care counsellor (8) or care worker (6).

If we analyse the working experience of the respondents, case managers' range of working experience with children is 1-25 years (12.9 in average); managers of children services have a range of 3-32 years (20.2 in average), while educators (academic and non-academic) are the most experienced on average, however with the highest range in years of experience, between 15-45 (27.75 in average).

4.4. Data analysis

Thematic units for interviews and focus groups were organised in the following areas:

- General public, clients' and other professionals' view about social work in Serbia;
- Understanding of child protection
- Training of child protection professionals
- Research knowledge and impact
- Policy knowledge and impact
- Types of skills and core practice competencies for child protection practice.

The division into categories is certainly provisional and primarily serves to create a clearer presenta-

tion of results, as students, professionals, managers and educators/ academics in speaking about one topic almost always mentioned other areas as well. Therefore, the presentation and disaggregation of results by categories represent an additional challenge. "A theme.... represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke p.82). They propose six stages in the thematic analysis applied in this research (familiarising with data; transcription; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes and producing the report). Since six loose topics were defined at the start, they served as initial codes. Following several close readings of the transcripts using methods of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990), an inductive process using textual data was used.

The national researcher independently codified the text and then discussed her codes with field researchers (9 of them), which included comparison, review and harmonisation. At certain stages of the process, the coders agreed to re-label specific experiences based on the literature and the context in which the experience was referenced. The NVivo 10 programme for qualitative data processing was used in addition to manual processing.

During the analysis of the data, the following topics were identified:

- Understanding of social work and child protection.
- Training, training needs and licensing and of child protection professionals.
- Research and policy knowledge and impact.
- Types of skills and core practice competencies.
- Obstacles for the high-quality child protection practice.

5. THE RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1. Understanding of social work and child protection

Views of public, media, service users, other systems in community and of civil society were analysed in all focus groups and interviews. Almost all respondents emphasise that the views are mostly negative, and that they are based on insufficient and inaccurate information and assumptions. Additionally, it seems that the relation towards social services reflects the general relation of society towards marginalised groups, and that the neglecting of needs, stigmatisation, discrimination and exclusion which a large number of service users face is “spilling” also to the services dealing with them.

“As for the CSW, there is a lack of information; people don't know what we are dealing with and what is the scope of our activity. The mostly equalize us to ‘social’ (insurance; ... they think, that is what Roma get, that is for poor and somewhere here it ends.”

FGP3f1

It is notable that the majority of respondents point to the negative stigma linked to social services, ignorance about the scope and methods of work, **media** in search of sensationalism so that the “centre is accused for everything bad in the society” (FGMf1) and in media “we often see those feeling stymied, with a little space for others” (FGEf5).

“I am deeply disappointed... I am looking how much we are working here and how much we fight for each user and that story which comes from the public is entirely negative. That we kidnap children, that we are not objective in divorce in entrusting the children, that in violence we are most often on the woman's side regardless the manner in which the violence occurred, what in my opinion is absolutely not true.”

FGP1f6

Social workers particularly emphasise the **unrecognizability of their profession**: “when you are a baker, everybody knows what you are doing” (FGEf6) or “they often think that I graduated sociology”(IP1f). It is interesting that students in a similar manner perceive

the attitude of the public towards social work and social services and point to various anecdotal situations which have they faced already during the social work studies:

“While I was an intern in the CSW, everybody from the doorman, cleaning staff and some employees kept telling me why this, you are young, you could find something more attractive for the 21st century.”

FGS1m1

One section of respondents emphasised also that there was prejudice and complete ignorance or only partial knowledge, particularly about the CSW. This is noticed even among the local authorities and associates in the fields of health and education. The respondents from other services for child protection offered a different picture: they think that the new programmes and services for the development of foster care and de-institutionalisation which were brought during the reform yielded a popularisation of the work of some institutions, which now the community recognises as valuable. This has been assisted by a large number of volunteers who have been involved in the work of these services and programmes in recent years.

Additionally, a large number of the respondents mention that the image of **civil society** in relation to the work of social services and mutual cooperation has been improved even though the “competitive relations” are still present (IE3f). It seems that common programmes and attempts to resolve the problems contributed to higher mutual trust and that the recent years saw a significant progress in this field:

“The citizens' associations are increasingly active, and it is good that the state institutions finally opened the door for such kind of cooperation, to see that we cannot be alone nor we should be and that they can facilitate a good part of job to us.”

FGP1f5

Respondents' attitudes toward the **service users' opinion** about the child protection service are far more diversified. It is stated that the users' attitudes

are under the influence of the negative image which social services have in public (“they think that we are doing two things, either taking away the children or give money”, FGP3f3; “people complain on administration, they need a lot of papers to exercise their rights” IE3f), which among a portion of users is changed over the course of the direct work (“in cases of violence, they get surprised with how much help and support we give them, with information they get from us and how much we are trying to help” FGP2f4). Examples of users’ positive perception were mentioned both among the youth, using various clubs and counselling services, and among elderly persons without another support.

The respondents related the users’ attitudes to their preliminary expectations (“some expect that we are magicians” IP3f). Often systemic problems were stated, colouring the relation both of the public and of the users towards child protection services. This primarily pertains to broad competences and extremely scarce resources, in which the insufficient number of professionals appears as a constant subject in all discussions.

In several occasions it was mentioned that the opinion is formed also on the basis of the social worker with whom contact was established, as well as that the reason for contact with social services among a large number of users is some negative experience or situation, so that people sometimes “perceive the cooperation with the centre as their personal failure, no matter what was achieved” (FGEf4).

Furthermore, respondents stated that the prevailing unfavourable (or to themselves unpleasant) image of social services was the consequence of ignorance and inactivity of professionals with regard to changing such an image:

“This is also the matter of marketing and PR services and that could be also differently presented, as here hard and important tasks are carried out.”

IP1f

“...we always turn out silent, it ends that we are not giving any statements, an impression is made that we are hiding something.”

FGP3f4

Two focus groups held with BA and MA students of social work gave insight into the ***motives for enrolling in the studies***. The largest number of students emphasise that they chose these studies because of their inclination towards social sciences, desire to directly help people, altruism and an empathy they had felt since childhood. Some thought about studies of psychology and concluded that “it does not offer broadness, whereas social work enables working with different people” (FGS1f3). Only a few knew what the social worker job exactly meant, and that was only if they knew a professional or personally met people with problems. The majority state that in the beginning “they were not aware of what is in front of them”, but that in time they realized it and “did not regret”, as stated by FGS1m1. Students of both levels of studies are mostly financed by their parents: scholarship schemes are undeveloped and insufficient. About 2/3 of the interviewed 15 students stated that they are interested in work in children protection, which they consider attractive and demanding.

Understanding of the child protection system is broad among the majority of respondents and they attempt to perceive the system as an action of subsystems of social protection, healthcare, education, judiciary and police:

“Representatives of the system of social protection, centres for social work, case leader. There is the police which has its portion of responsibility, with political officers having special certificates for working with children. There is also the judiciary... and of course, the health protection system with health workers, doctors, paediatricians. There are also secondary and tertiary institutions, like the Institute for Mental Health, institutes for treating addictions, non-governmental organizations offering services within the framework of social protection.”

IE1f

Such a perception of child protection is strengthened by governmental policies which, since 2005, have been developed in the fields of protection of children from abuse and neglect, juvenile justice, inclusion of children with disabilities and child victims of domestic violence. New laws have been passed alongside various protocols which attempted to redefine the roles of various systems in child protection. The central role in social reaction in these fields of social protection is

played by the social welfare system, which has significantly less resources and probably lower public support than other systems. The majority of the respondents think that child protection within social welfare “underwent significant changes in positive sense... and that it represents the most quality segment of the system” (IE3f). There are also understandings that child protection changed with the introduction of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1999) into the social protection system:

“Social workers previously did not deal with children but with parents as responsible for the child. Child was always ‘somewhere there’, but not in the focus. Now we know more about the best interest of children, about participation.”

FGEf5

Since important changes have been introduced into child protection between 2002 and 2012, a large number of respondents state that in the last few years “the children protection policy is not clearly visible” (FGP2m2), that there are delays in adopting the new strategy and action plan in this field and that children are currently less in political focus than before. Particularly emphasised is the lack of preventive programmes or various family support programmes, particularly those for family preservation and family reunification. This leads to “getting stuck” and leads to children remaining too long in alternative care (“And when children once enter, the process of exit from the system seems as vicious cycle”, FGEf1).

Other problems in child protection practice mentioned by the respondents include the lack of specialised institutions for the treatment of children with behavioural problems (particularly for girls), as well as programmes for care leavers, inadequate legal regulation when it is about family violence (“I cannot understand that the law enables the violator to remain at home, while we take care and displace other members of the family, woman and children” FGP2f3), lack of foster families and small residential institutions for placement of children with disabilities and insufficient number of professionals in the system. Similarly, in several occasions it was emphasised that “recognizing child’s ability to express its view of the situation” is at a very low level (FGEf6), and that decisions are often based on assumptions and personal beliefs of practitioners.

The lack of cooperation among various systems is seen as a very high obstacle, although the experiences with various systems are different. Generally, the worst experiences are in cooperation with the health service, where doctors avoid responsibility or reporting particularly in situations of violence “...in order not to be sued by someone tomorrow...they give reports which are unclear, ambiguous or written in a manner that everything is ‘maybe this, maybe that’” (FGP3f4). On the other hand, cooperation with the police and prosecutor’s office is assessed as having significantly improved, which was influenced by common trainings and defined protocols of actions, as well as certain organisational changes.

It is interesting that the resources for child protection in different environments are “measured” through multisector cooperation. Almost all respondents state that services are not equally available to children and families when comparing large and small urban environments with rural ones. However, “smaller” local communities base their strength on a higher possibility for establishing multisector cooperation, which facilitates access to services.

5.2. Training, training needs and licensing of child protection professionals

The interviewed professionals, managers, educators and students consider in a relatively similar way the **knowledge which professionals in child protection obtain during the studies**. The majority of respondents state that the undergraduate studies provided them with a foundation for further improvement and learning. In direct practice, according to the practitioners’ opinion, practical skills and techniques come to the fore. A portion of respondents emphasise that undergraduate studies in no way prepared them for work in child protection. This is particularly emphasized by psychologists and pedagogues:

“We have some theoretical knowledge which is certainly necessary, but some practical knowledge on work in social protection we don’t have, we didn’t even mention that during the studies.”

FGP3f4

Social workers recognise and think that others in the system also see that they are better prepared for social

protection practice. It is also stated that they were doing better in legal reforms and new approaches to work:

"I am surprised as social worker how much of that knowledge from the undergraduate studies I remember even today and how much I use them only now to the full extent. I was asking myself as a student why did I need all this rights and systems, but in fact there is no actual social work without it."

FGP1f5

Furthermore, there are observations that the generations which graduated from social work degrees 15-20 years ago got a "good and broad" theoretical basis, whereas practical skills were neglected. Now we have available Master's studies of social work as well, which opens new approaches and enable obtaining directly applicable knowledge and skills ("...incorporated to the previous knowledge, I have a winning combination" FGP4f3). Also in many occasions it was emphasised that "young colleagues" obtain contemporary knowledge and skills and that today they have many more opportunities for advanced training in different fields. The obligatory internship programme implies that the work in social services is envisaged at all years of studies of social work, whereas other professionals involved in child protection very rarely gain practical experiences in that setting during the studies.

It is interesting that students of social work, depending on whether they are at the final 4th year of BA studies or at the Master's studies, have different perceptions of their knowledge about child protection. The final year students assess that they have no sufficient practical experiences or systematised knowledge about working with children ("we are overburdened with so many rules, conventions, guidelines, various value systems, theories, approaches" FGS1m2) and they assess that it would be difficult for them to succeed in independent work without team support. Students of Master's studies who participated in the focus group do their internships in parallel with their studies. They critically assess their knowledge and competences, but think that did well and indicate that they recognise both the knowledge and skills they obtained in the field of child protection and the failures and deficits. Students mostly think that they need a larger number of hours in different practice place-

ment with responsible and trained mentors¹⁹. Those who were involved in various voluntary programmes think that in that way, they obtained significant competences for child protection.

A number of interviewed professionals and even managers said that they **could not link their faculty education with direct practice** ("I even feel that the knowledge obtained at the Faculty 'I pushed to the back side of my brain' and I am not using it in my daily work" FGP3f4). The respondents with longer experience particularly emphasise the importance of experience and knowledge obtained after the faculty:

"Since I graduated 30 years ago, it is entirely senseless to talk about what I learnt then, during the work we passed through so many transformations and reforms, educations. That knowledge, first empirical and then obtained through educations got synthesised and these segments intertwined so much that I never approach from one position and I sometimes really don't know where some of my solutions come from."

FGP2f6

The majority of respondents emphasised that in the field of child protection **life-long learning and training is necessary**, and that there is no bad education, "even if some things are repeating" (FGP4f3). Of course, there are those who think that they do not need trainings ("due to my rich experience, I learn little at these trainings, but my administrator says that I must attend them" FGP4f2). Students and less experienced professionals showed particular interest in various trainings and readiness for improvement. In doing so, this specific group has a feeling that they are unguided (without enough information) and unsupported in their aspiration for further education ("I have been working for already 8 months without the envisaged training" FGP3f2). Some interns said that they are not involved in trainings "because they are not envisaged for them" (FGS2f2).

The respondents recognise that professionals have access to various accredited trainings, that they are all relevant and that they follow the needs of practice, but that their attendance depends on financial assets. Professionals mostly cannot afford to pay themselves²⁰,

19 The actual curriculum of the FPS BU envisages only 400 hours of practice placement in total across all years of studies

20 The salaries of public administration employees were significantly reduced in

while numerous institutions do not have available funds. However, there are some views that knowledge from these trainings “cannot be implemented in practice without supervision” (IE2f). It is also apparent that there are no plans about who, when and how to attend certain trainings and that there are no individual learning plans being made. There are understandings that “trainings are often linked to projects and they are imposed by the Ministry” (FGP3f6). The role of managers is also notable in the creation of opportunities for education, and they are able to incentivise and provide the opportunities, but some managers don’t support the advancement of works and may even put up obstacles. In the words of the executive of one of the big institutions for child protection:

“Every year we are focused on some topic in trainings. That is available to everybody and whoever wants can join, and who doesn’t, the manager incentivizes him or her.”

IM2f

The City Centre for Social Work in Belgrade, which has 19 units in municipalities, itself organises various short trainings for professionals, which was assessed as a good practice. Even so, it is said that there the planning was still lacking, that trainings were not organised according to needs of professionals and the kind of work needed, and they are not equally available to everybody.

A portion of respondents stated that upon their own initiative they attended educations in some psychotherapeutic approaches, which they financed themselves. Training of professionals before the introduction of the system of accreditation of trainings (2008) and licensing of professions (2013) was left to personal motivation and initiative. A noteworthy portion of professionals in the system did not attend any training after completing university education. The system of licensing changed this, so in that respect the majority of respondents assess it as positive because

“...licensing motivates for permanent professional education also those who are lethargic and not too interested.”

IMf1

The assessment is that licensing is necessary and important, but most of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the bylaws which regulate this field. The main remarks are related to the number of points that must be collected (120) during the 6-year periods for renewing the license. A large number of respondents think that it is too much and that many will have difficulties in obtaining the points. Additionally, they state that the first question posed now when considering training is “how many points does it bear” (FGP3f6), and only after determining how many points an activity is worth is attention paid to the kind of activity or training. Several respondents expressed their fear that everything would be reduced to a “race for points where one takes whatever is offered” (FGP1f7), and that this initial phase neglects the actual knowledge necessary in the professional development of individuals and the users’ needs. Furthermore, there is dissatisfaction with the way points are awarded to certain activities; it is said that mentor work is undervalued (bringing only a small number of points), that process of licensing is not sufficiently transparent etc.

A number of respondents state that they need trainings which are concrete and which provide practical skills and guidelines for direct practice with certain groups of users. They assert that the most beneficial for them were trainings which used interactive teaching methods, including role play, case studies, simulations, concrete instructions (“not only WHAT to do, but they teach us HOW to do it” FGP3f4), etc. Trainings are useful also because they enable the exchange of experiences with other professionals.

Other sources of learning which respondents mentioned include exchange with colleagues (younger respondents state more experienced colleagues as the key learning resource), supervision as well as collegiums of services which enable exchange, discussion of practical dilemmas and equalisation and standardisation of practice. These sources are in direct relation to organisational issues, where communication among units and professionals are carried out through formal and informal channels, with all the favourable and unfavourable implications which can occur as a result (Woodside & McClam 2003). Also mentioned is the Internet, reading of literature, information on legal changes and developments in that field.

All respondents within the research stated that they use Internet, through PC, tablets, lap-tops and tele-

phones. The majority use Internet for several hours both at the workplace and at home. Computers and Internet are available to almost all child protection professionals, but some of them have problems with connectivity and obsolete equipment or poorer knowledge on the use of new technologies (this refers to a number of elderly workers close to retirement). Respondents think that workers in this field do not need training in use of electronic means ("The young ones know it themselves; the elder ones are not much interested in that" (FGEf3).

The largest number of respondents have not thought so far about training through the Internet nor heard about webinars. The criteria for choice of training through the Internet were defined in the following manner: who is the author of training, interesting topic, usefulness/applicability in practice, possibility for advancement, duration of training and its price. Respondents think that it would be significant that these trainings be recognised by the Chamber of Social Protection in order to obtain points for license renewal.

About one half of participants stated that they were ready to allocate a moderate sum of money (50-100 EUR) for trainings that they considered useful and attractive. These possibilities were to a larger extent chosen by the respondents younger than 40 years of age. The others think that it is director's duty to provide trainings and that their salaries are already so much reduced that payment for trainings out of pocket is unacceptable and unfeasible.

About 2/3 of respondents think that a "live word" in training and direct contact with the lecturer has an advantage, although some state that webinars are an interesting option worth thinking about. Those who prefer appointed on-line trainings think that their advantage is the exchange with the trainer and other participants and the structured time allocated for training. Others who would rather choose trainings which can be accessed in different times of the day emphasise that they can adjust their time in such case.

5.3. Research and policy knowledge and impact

Respondents had divided views about the importance and practical applicability of knowledge of **re-**

search methods in child protection practice. A portion of respondents emphasise that knowledge about research methods, evaluation of one's own practice and implementation of research results in practice is extremely important, while others advocate for the attitude that this "knowledge should not be of all, but is enough that few people from one institution deal with that" (FGEf1). Educators (academic and non-academic), professionals with less than 15 years of experience and students to a larger extent emphasised the importance of research in child protection practice. The prevailing opinion is that the research knowledge of professionals is insufficient, that only psychologists and social workers are educated about this field during their studies and that

"... neither basic nor formally university education is sufficient for someone to deal with research work."

IM3f

Students of BA and MA studies of social work think that they obtained theoretical knowledge about research, but are not sure how ready they are to implement it in practice. Concerning the obtained knowledge and skills, particularly critical are the students of Master's studies ("when only I think on final master paper and how I am going to do it..." FGS2f1) who pointed to the lack of applied knowledge about research ("It is important that we know the definition of hypothesis, without knowing how to formulate it" FGS2f3). On several occasions it was mentioned that a lot depends "on the professor" who decides the importance to be given to research and the use of results in teaching; these professors use their own background knowledge and moral biases, so there is a lack of quality control.

Except for academic-research, non-governmental organisations are recognised as the performers of research, although there are observations that "there is a lot of ignorance and abuse... abuse derives from ignorance" (IE1f).

Professionals see the importance of research for the evaluation of their own practice, an opportunity for facing the results of one's own work and as means for obtaining feedback from users:

"... to assess where we are both personally and professionally, where we are staying within the entire community, that would contribute planning".

FGP1f6

Respondents often reported that professionals are not sufficiently informed about research results and that (both domestic and international) research is frequently not available to them in a useful manner. Students quoted examples of their usage of research in diverse courses during the studies, however at the same time emphasising that the numerous data they were given within the compulsory literature were obsolete and unlinked to actual context.

It seems that professionals do not have enough time to follow research results in the available forms (monographs, reports, academic articles), but that they will benefit from a presentation of results of relevant research in some user-friendly digest version. They recognise that some accredited training programmes contain relevant research findings. All interviewed educators stated that in carrying out and creating trainings, they use research results and they regularly search for new data

"Before each training I search if there are some new data... Maybe trainees think that there is no need for that, but I put that at the beginning."

FGEf5

Knowledge of relevant regulations in child protection is considered an integral and unavoidable part of the knowledge of professionals. That is the matter of formal education (at social work studies), but it is also an integral part of the introduction of interns and new employees to the job. Several respondents emphasised that frequently the first thing an intern received was a package of legal regulations in the field. For those who have been in practice for a longer period of time, following legal regulations is "self-understandable"; however it is not clear to what extent it is actually done. Respondents emphasise that the flow of information among the parts of the system has not been optimum in recent years, so that the situation in services in which management regularly informs employees about new regulations and initiatives is different from those where workers are left to search sites with regulations upon their own initiative.

Capacities and possibilities to **influence changes of laws and creation of policies** are seen as modest. Respondents mostly state that they don't have enough knowledge in the field and that they feel like they can not fight either for themselves or for the service users. On several occasions it was stated that there were numerous attempts by practitioners to influence amendments to laws, to present data before local self-government etc. However, there is an impression that "this was not noticed" (FGEf4), for their voice to be heard, so that after several unsuccessful attempts professionals give up, because "the system is not arranged as to enable us to demonstrate our knowledge" (FGP2m1). It seems that professionals assess that the actual power structure does not allow their activism, so they take a passive position ("we must carry out that even if we disagree" FGP4f2), similar to some users of services.

One big problem is the actual lack of policy in the field, and policies and programmes are not founded on data, so that there is no valid strategic document or adequate strategic planning.

"We lost a clear direction of movement, which reflects in child protection as well."

FGEf4

5.4, Types of skills and core practice competencies

Although during the interviews and discussions in focus groups no particular questions were asked about the knowledge and skills necessary for child protection, the discussion on several occasions spontaneously led to that topic. The respondents' views can be classified into several categories of knowledge and skills which the professionals do not have to an adequate degree and for which there are no specific trainings:

- **Communication** with different users with whom it is difficult to communicate (violators, victims of violence, communication with parents of children at risk of abuse and negligence, communication with other services in the community, written communication and documenting skills).
- **Direct practice with children**, when making decisions about the best interest of the child, meth-

ods of children participation, issue of child's identity, skills of communication with various groups of children, work with traumatised children, skills of counselling children, interventional approaches in work with various vulnerable groups of children, particularly work with children – victims of sexual violence and with children with anti-social behaviour and conduct disorders.

- **Strategic skills** related to decision-making, planning of interventions and evaluations of practice, the general knowledge about the case management cycle.

On several occasions it was mentioned that professionals had problems with operationalising in direct practice their knowledge about children's needs, so they face unpleasantness and a feeling of incompetence, even being "afraid to talk to children" (FGEf5).

The knowledge and skills of child protection professionals in focus groups were discussed within the

group activity of **consensus building**. Participants received instruction to write on their own 3-5 knowledge or skills required for child protection. Replies were collected, sorted out during the group discussion and followed with a debate about the ten most important qualities. Upon the full adjustment of the list of 10 top qualities, the group participants discussed their order per importance, until reaching a consensus.

Consensus building had its specificities in different focus groups. Two groups with professionals on several occasions insisted that it was about "artificial" and "unnatural" choice, so that facilitators had to make additional efforts to motivate them. In the other two groups with professionals, the problem of choice was verbalised, and the starting position was that all knowledge and skills on the free list were equally important. However, these two groups in their own opinion reached the consensus and the final list "surprisingly fast".

Table 8. Crossed data from final lists of consensus building in 8 focus groups

Quality	Present on lists	Who included it on the list*	Position on the list
Communication skills, particularly with children. Negotiating, active listening, conducting of guiding interview	8	4P; M; E; 2S;	I-III
Legal framework, procedures and right of a child	8	4P; M; E; 2S;	I-X
Empathy	4	2S; 2P;	I-III
Formal SW education and knowledge of developmental characteristics of children and specific groups of children in social protection	7	3P; M; E; 2S;	I-IV
Team work	4	1P; E; 2S;	VI
Relations building and association	2	2P;	II -III
Continuous learning	4	1P; E; 2S;	V-X
Participation of children and autonomy of users	2	2S;	V-VII
Counselling and knowledge of psycho-therapeutical techniques	3	3P	VI-IX
Supervision	3	E; 2S	VIII

*P- practitioners; M – managers; E- educators; S - students

The focus group with educators was the first to reach consensus, even verbalising that “For so long we are all in this, our experiences are almost the same so we started to think the same” (FGEf3). The least creative (in forming the free list), however very ready to elaborate every item considered important, were the members of the manager group. In the two student groups the argumentation was mostly based on the attitude “if you don’t have one, then other won’t mean a lot”.

Analysis of results of the work on consensus building in focus groups pointed to several specificities:

- Participants on several occasions nominated **personal characteristics** as necessary knowledge and skills. Upon facilitators’ intervention, these characteristics did not enter the final list (except for empathy, which is a characteristic, but also a skill). Among the replies were patience, altruism, creativity, persistence, diligence, commitment to work, openness for improvement and assertiveness. This shows that respondents consider personal characteristics an integral part of competences required for work in child protection and that they are hardly divisible from other qualities.
- Only two categories appeared on **all eight final lists** of required knowledge and skills. These are communication skills and knowledge of laws, procedures and rights of users. The rights of a child were explicitly nominated for the final list by the two student groups. It is interesting that knowledge of laws, procedures and rights was ranked almost evenly from the 1st to the 10th place.
- Two categories which appeared three times each at the **first place** in the 8 analysed lists were communication and empathy skills. Communication skills were nominated to the first place by 2 groups of professionals and the manager focus groups, and the skills of empathy by both student groups and one group of professionals.
- Formal education in social work and knowledge of developmental characteristics and the needs of specific groups of children in social protection received a somewhat **higher rank** by educators and students (the first and second place) than workers in direct practice and managers (from 3rd to 5th place). Skills of counselling and psychotherapy so far emerged on lists of three out of four exam-

ined focus groups of practitioners (posed on 6th to 9th place per importance). In contrast to **other groups**, both groups of students and the group of educators recognised the importance of supervision, which in all three cases was ranked at the 8th place. Such choice is probably a result of **different understanding of needs of practitioners** deriving from different positions and experience.

- Although the need for **continuous learning** was discussed on several occasions in all focus groups, it was positioned on the final rank list in four groups – in one of the four groups of practitioners, in educators’ group (5th and 7th place) and in both student groups (9th and 10th place); as stated by a female participant: “Today we keep talking about continual learning all the time, and now we put it at the end” (FS2f6).
- **Perspective, autonomy and participation of users** were mentioned in both student groups (however not in other focus groups), where it took the 5th and the 7th place.
- **Issues of power** were discussed in four out of eight focus groups within different formulations (e.g. “resistance to paternalistic and omniscient I”), however as “balancing of power” appearing only on the list agreed about by the managers.

Interviews with practitioners included also the issues related to description of a recent child protection case, so that researcher and practitioner could co-create a step-by-step outline of the case management process. The questions were posed also about the manner of decision-making and consideration of possible options; whether the practitioner remembered any part of his/her training, both prior to starting professional work and through in-service and continuing education that prepared him/her to make this decision; as well as about the professionals’ view on the satisfaction of the child and family with the rendered services.

In this manner 3 **case stories** were collected, and all were related to cases in which children were endangered or under the risk of abuse and neglect, which dealt with families with multiple and complex problems.

Table 9. Overview of case stories

<p>CASE STORY I</p> <p>Case manager: Pedagogue, 20 years of experience</p> <p>Who reported the case: Father claiming that the mother, due to mental illness, does not adequately care about the child; he is present in the household only occasionally.</p> <p>Presented and initially assessed problem/s: Mother a psychiatric patient, irregularly treated, poverty, neglected household, domestic violence. Father has two children from the previous marriage, takes care of his mentally ill sister. Child younger than 3, another girl born later.</p> <p>Interventions taken in the beginning of work: Focus on parents' conflict and violence between intimate partners. Assessment is that the mother functions excellently when taking the medicines. Material support, guiding and monitoring was provided.</p> <p>Results of the initial activities and taking of the further ones: Child separated from the family "it was traumatic, we practically kidnapped her from them", and when the second child was born it was separated immediately. Then the intensive work with mother started (treatment) and father (overcoming of violent patterns towards his wife), and then with both (communication between partners). Court procedure initiated for limitation of the parental right.</p> <p>Who made decision/s? Case manager and supervisor.</p> <p>Training/obtained knowledge which helped making the decisions: Primarily the "wisdom of practice" and organizational culture in the institution with "low tolerance for situations of endangering children in service".</p> <p>Satisfaction of child and family: Extreme dissatisfaction of parents in the beginning. Later, "it seems that they understood that they were really not capable and that we made them a service to rest and recollect themselves".</p> <p>Contact with child/children and family and actual situation: Permanent contact with mother and father and with children in the foster family. Contacts between parents and children maintained all the time. Contacts assessed as constructive, mother takes medicines regularly, settled relations between the partners. Return of children to the family was proposed. Meanwhile the court decided to return the children to their parents (after almost 3 years). Children returned to the parents, family regularly monitored, given the financial support, family outreach worker included as family support.</p>	<p>CASE STORY II</p> <p>Case manager: Social worker, 3 years of experience</p> <p>Who reported the case: Newspapers during humanitarian action found a poor family with children which the CSW did not know about.</p> <p>Presented and initially assessed problem/s: Poverty, mother left the house after the birth, father with sensory handicap, alcohol abuse, excessive use of physical punishment transforming to physical abuse of children. School-age children with endangered health and development. Children frightened, linked to their father and grandmother and grandfather.</p> <p>Interventions taken in the beginning of work: Attempts to establish contact and cooperation with the family. Cooperation with the school was realised. Monitoring of children and attempts of case manager to approach children during the course of time. Father and grandmother and grandfather denied everything, hunger strike. Father got assignment to take child to the doctor in order to prevent sensory (visual) loss, which he didn't do in spite of the offered assistance.</p> <p>Results of the initial activities and taking of the further ones: Rapid aggravation of health condition of one child occurred, and the father did not take the required measures. Upon separation of children from the family, family plan was made with the father, grandmother and grandfather. Father sent to treatment. Establishment of closer cooperation with grandmother and grandfather.</p> <p>Who made decision/s? Case manager, lawyer, psychologist and pedagogue.</p> <p>Training/obtained knowledge which helped making the decisions: Training during the studies and case management training, as well as the manner of work of the institution.</p> <p>Satisfaction of child and family: Extremely dissatisfied family, children also dissatisfied in the beginning. Later children doing well in the foster family, refusing contacts with family members. Case manager thinks that father is still dissatisfied, while grandmother and grandfather "felt relief and were happy that children went to a better family".</p> <p>Contact with child/children and family and actual situation: Children are much better, overcoming certain health problems in development, gradually contacting family members over the phone. Regular contacts of case manager with the children's family. "I think that the relation with the family shall improve in the future".</p>	<p>CASE STORY III</p> <p>Case manager: Psychologist, 14 years of experience</p> <p>Who reported the case: Child's grandmother claimed that the child was endangered and that she cannot deal with the circumstances.</p> <p>Presented and initially assessed problem/s: Three-year child with developmental delay, mother abusing substances, wandering, as well as the children's uncle, mother's brother. Grandmother powerless, all living from her modest pension; poverty and unemployment in the family.</p> <p>Interventions taken in the beginning of work: Partner-based involvement of the family in creation of the family service plan. The unsatisfied needs of the family and the priorities have been stated. One-time financial assistance given, together with information, guiding and advocacy. Family outreach worker involved from the beginning, all in agreement with the family.</p> <p>Results of the initial activities and taking of the further ones: Five-day care (with over-night stay) and rehabilitation provided for the child; child spends weekends with family. Family outreach worker engaged in various aspects of family work, from improvement of family dynamics and parental skills to linking of family with other services.</p> <p>Who made decision/s? Case manager in full cooperation with all family members, in consultancies with the supervisor.</p> <p>Training/obtained knowledge which helped making the decisions: Training for case management based on "family strengths and community resources." Training for family conference, prevention of institutionalisation, preservation of family relations and the like.</p> <p>Satisfaction of child and family: Family expressed its gratitude openly on several occasions. "Mother was extremely engaged. Child improved, emotionally and in complete development". Everybody concluded that "in a way they were disabled to function and the child, which was quite endangered in that context, was everybody's excuse".</p> <p>Contact with child/children and family and actual situation: Revision will be soon; probably the child and the family will be offered a usual daily child care.</p>
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Overviews of the cases given in the Table 9 point to some of the present challenges for the functioning of the child protection system and its impact on the professional conduct of social workers. There are tensions between the protectionist “child rescue” models compared to the child and family participation and support approach. There are notable difficulties in balancing the position of power in acting as the authority (“I know that whenever we decided to take the children we were always late because first we give the second chance, we hope for something better, to succeed with our help”, IP2f), while from another perspective there is the need to recognize the family’s strengths and to observe children and family as competent associates.

All three presented cases show visible efforts of case workers to comprehend their work on the case and the family’s needs from the developmental and dynamic aspects. The community resources were engaged according to their availability, simultaneously and successively. Recognition of the values of maintenance of family contacts is present in the narratives related to the two presented cases, while in one of them there is a choice for (*currently*) “less evil”, so that interruption of contacts between children and family members is elaborated with “children now have everything they need” and “they refuse contact with the family”, without entering deeper into the meaning and implications of such a situation. Additionally, it seems that the foundation for decisions and interventions is primarily seen in procedural knowledge, organisational culture and the practice wisdom.

5.5. Obstacles to high-quality child protection practice

The respondents perceive **overload** of professional workers as the main obstacle to high-quality practice in child protection. There is a general agreement that case leaders and the foster care advisers are in charge of a large number of cases, which disturbs adequate commitment to cases:

“Here we have a parody of case management. If a professional in this moment empties his drawer, you will find about 60 cases, so that today he will complete five, tomorrow he will get five, then he will complete none and receive three more. I didn’t learn to do like that, I perceive this like we are still developing the system”.

IP1f

This is understood as a serious problem, particularly in the context of a **relatively older workforce** (between 1/5 and 1/4 of employees in the CSW should retire in the next year, according to Džamonja Ignjatovic & Zegarac, 2015). As an implication of such a situation, the prevailing attitude is that “it is hard for older colleagues, changes are hard” (FGMf5), so that they have a kind of “spare”, while a disproportional load falls on other practitioners. At the same time, inadequate allocation of tasks to interns and new employees, without an opportunity for gradual learning and mastering of skills, can seriously damage the quality of work. It is considered that the load is not the same everywhere, and that Belgrade as a large urban centre with complex problems and big systems is the most burdened.

There are also numerous observations that **poor organisational solutions** contribute to the overload of workers (inadequate allocation of tasks, frequent changes of case managers in some units, lack of co-operation and synchronisation with other services: “a colleague waited for 10 hours to emergency to accommodate a child from another place in a psychiatric ward”, FGMf3), uneven practice, lack of communication among organisational units, lack of links with local authorities and the like. A notable portion of respondents consider such situation an “external force” beyond their power, which sometimes even leads to the attitudes that the labour force is “highly qualified” and that many “would certainly know how to work if they would have time” (FGP1f1). On the other hand, there are opinions that there is no planned approach and allocation of resources, so that many useful initiatives died out. Besides the above mentioned options, mechanisms for the promotion and obtaining of professional titles have not been developed. Often after their internship is completed, professionals remain at the same position until retirement. The reforms introduced the positions of supervisor, foster care educator and head of the child service, as a kind of professional promotion for more experienced and

competent workers. However, in practice it already happens that a worker is returned from these positions to the previous position (case manager of foster case advisor). The policy of recruitment and maintenance of labour force in public services, including social services, is underdeveloped. The safety of a working place in the public sector is much appreciated because the unemployment is high (about 18%), while the savings planned in the public sector halted new employments.

The **acceleration of court proceedings** has both good and bad consequences, because “since we are pressed by court threats, we are doing some things regardless the order” (FGP3f2), so that some children do not receive enough attention because priorities are dictated by the court.

There are also opinions that child protection professionals in recent years have dealt with much **more complex problems and phenomena**, that the level of

violence in society is extremely high, and that there is increasing need for complex and urgent interventions. With expanded poverty and high employment, this situation creates additional pressure on social services which now undoubtedly have less resources available. A portion of respondents see these circumstances as a challenge for social services (“We ourselves should be professionals. We are not working with perfumes, but with problems”, FGMf5), however they recognise the need for services and units to faster and more completely adjust to contemporary needs of children and families, because it is obvious that “services requested 10-15 years ago are not requested now”, (FGP1f6).

The opinion is that “the common referential framework is still missing” (IM3f), and orientation towards the child should be the common goal of work, so that better linkages and integrated performance of the system, services and units in the community can significantly contribute to child protection.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Implications

Research was carried out at a time when Serbia is seeing the first results of legal changes dealing with improvement of quality of child protection workforce. The results can therefore contribute to further development of the system and improvement of its state and position. Besides, they can provide for useful insights to the countries in the region about the process of building the child protection system, standardisation of services and mechanisms for quality control in the field of workforce improvement.

Social workers and other child protection professionals are facing new demands to meet the needs of clients and communities and these change some of the fundamental values and philosophies upon which social work in Serbia was being built during the 20th century. A paradigm shift to a child rights and strengths-based approach is occurring and this change in ideology brings along new theoretical approaches and models of practice as a consequence of economic and social globalization.

To overcome the social heritage of large residential institutions, Serbia has developed important policies and introduced specific measures aimed at ensuring that service users can remain living in families/communities wherever possible. Such shifts demand changes in a range of different levels including professional attitudes, practice procedures and funding schemes, and innovative solutions with diverse effect on child rights as well as professional conducts of social workers. Comprehensive efforts in child protection reform **create tensions and conflicting approaches** in different aspect of social work practice:

- Protectionism and “child rescue” models versus child and family participation and support approach;
- Traditional “experts” and medical approaches against rights based model and empowerment approach;
- European model of social cohesion and neo-liberalist approach in social service provision;

- Aspirations for quality standards and actual economic constraints on social welfare spending;
- The commendable right for choice of service comparing to the relatively small number of community services that are available;

In addition to the above, the **highly centralised administrative structure** of the state and aspiration for decentralisation and development of local community services in the circumstances of world financial crisis is an additional challenge for practice, as well as the accepted inclusive approach and a lack of knowledge and resources for development of child-centred, family-focused and culturally sensitive services and practices.

Results show that the child protection practice in Serbia is led by professionals who mostly have the **appropriate educational background**, which generally enabled the successful introduction of big changes into the child protection system during the last decade. The system has largely been restructured, modernised and in numerous aspects adjusted to international and European standards in the field, contemporary knowledge of social work and changed needs of the users. Numerous, previously unavailable resources for improvement of professionals’ work have been developed. There are various trainings, research results and practical instructions available at the moment. Also, **supervision** in Serbia is in the period of early development (it can be said that according to the well-known Erikson’s (1997) division it overcame “the phase of obtaining elementary trust” and that currently it is in the “phase of obtaining autonomy”), and it is recognised as an important resource for development of and care about social service workforce.

The essence of the system is composed of professionals who with their knowledge and skills attempt to respond to the needs of children and families in a complex context of policies that are not always clear, frequent changes of laws, changeable priorities and insufficient resources and grown expectations of public and users. Despite commitment to the children’s needs, it is notable that there is only **rudimentary knowledge of the rights of the child**, non-recognition

of the child as a competent collocutor and actor and a lack of skills for direct work of children.

Particular challenges have been posed to the social service workforce due to obviously **insufficient number of employees** and the lack of educated social workers. An important challenge is the generational misbalance, a predominantly elderly workforce, as well as rapid “generation change” which has already begun and which is expected to peak in the next three to five years.

Procedural knowledge and organisational culture, associated with “practice wisdom”, are dominant sources for acting of professionals in direct practice, whereas the link with theoretical bases and particularly with empirical knowledge obtained from the research is hardly recognisable. It is explicitly seen and its importance is recognised by educators (which, in this research, are very advanced, experienced professionals) and students.

Certainly, the **organisational context** can encourage, enable, promote or, to the contrary, constrain or restrict particular knowledge-using practices. It seems that the actual environment of the practice in Serbia does not stimulate or appreciate the search for knowledge, the linking of theoretical and research knowledge with direct practice, or a meaningful continuing professional education. Besides, it is also obvious that it does not recognise the value of practice research projects or critical reconsideration of the direct practice.

Professionals **rate as low their capacities to influence creation of policies** and improve the knowledge in the field. Such a passive position is to a certain extent extorted and it derives from the direct experiences and partially from the bureaucratic culture of maintenance of the hierarchical status quo, where communication lines reflect the positions of power. In such circumstances, it seems that workers in relations with superiors and policy makers behave in a similar manner which in social work traditionally was a conceptualised role of client as passive receiver of services by the professionals taking the “expert” position.

The findings indicate that the child protection professionals attempt to **recognise themselves as a part of the integral child protection system**, although the

lack of multisector cooperation is defined as one of the key flaws. This is a systemic problem reflecting the relations of power, considering that social protection as a system significantly weaker regarding resources (budget, number of institutions, number of employees etc.) attempts to initiate cooperation in child protection with much powerful health service, education, judiciary and police.

6.2. Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it used exclusively qualitative data collection methods. Thus it reached a deeper insight into the variety of views about the state and needs of the child protection practice; however, the reliability of conclusions is to a large extent under the influence of the analytical capacities of the researchers. Higher reliability of findings would certainly be provided by a mixed method study, although the analysis of available documents, triangulation of various views and the long experience of the researchers in the field corroborate the validity of the findings.

Additionally, the data were collected from an appropriate, non-representative sample. The used sampling strategies provided higher reliability of data (chain-referral system), while the research involved professionals from various cities, services and child protection institutions, having diverse positions in the system (educator, manager, different types of practitioners, student).

Finally, the data were collected during one round of interviews and focus groups with respondents who take various positions in the system, so the full saturation was avoided, while on the other hand still providing a variety of views and positions which resulted with fresh insights into the state and needs of the practice.

6.3. Recommendations

Significant steps have been taken to strengthen the professionals in Serbia in recent years. It is important to continue in this direction with child protection workforce and to improve higher education and professional conduct in the field. The existing accredited training programmes, publications and practical guidelines are a significant resource for professionals both in Serbia and in the region, where they can

reach a wider circle of users. The observed gaps and flaws in knowledge, skills and capacities of workforce can be remedied with the following strategies:

1. *Building of a constructive organisational environment where staff prosper and children and families are well-served:*

- a. Strengthen management at all levels through improved selection and training procedures to establish a learning organisation in child protection services, where workplace is also considered as a place for learning;
- b. Quality supervision, provided by adequate recruitment, continuous trainings and supports for supervisors. Particularly important is consistent implementation of efficient models of supervision and training of supervisors in evidence-informed practice, critical thinking and reflective practice skills;
- c. To develop and appreciate the system of mentorship improving the knowledge of practitioners and preparing both students and interns for quality practice;
- d. Develop on-job training programs for self-care, wellness, avoiding burn-out and dealing with stress and vicarious trauma;
- e. Training of managers to recognise, appreciate and reward staff and to focus on positive performance;
- f. Development of training and policy in public relation to respond quickly and professionally on partial media and public accounts;
- g. At the organisational level, to establish ways in which staff from different generations shall learn about and engage each other;
- h. Enable manageable caseloads, among else through better management (including the skills of prioritisation), development of links and services in the community, good paper and electronic documentation, etc.;
- i. Incentivising and appreciation of research and evaluation of the organisational practice.

2. *Improvement of workforce competences particularly in the field of evidence based and reflective child-centred practice, implying accessible trainings of different levels (basic, intermediate and advance) in the fields such are:*

- a. Communication skills with various users' groups, especially skills for communication with children, including communication with other services in the community and written expression skills;
- b. Motivational and engagement skills in direct practice with children and families;
- c. Knowledge of trauma, losses and resilience;
- d. Rights of a child, particularly participation of children in social service practice;
- e. Intervention approaches to the work with different vulnerable groups of children, particularly work with children victims of sexual violence, with children in cases of intimate partners violence and with children with anti-social behaviour and conduct disorders;
- f. Family preservation and family reunification skills and practice;
- g. Knowledge and skills about cultural competent practice in work with children and families;
- h. Knowledge and skills for evaluation of own practice and use of research results;
- i. Knowledge and skills of representation and self-representation, organizing of social action and organising the community.

3. *Further development and improvement of accreditation, licensing and quality assurance systems:*

- a. Development of clear criteria for professional advancement and obtaining of professional knowledge;
- b. Reconsideration of criteria for licensing and renewal of licenses for the professionals, in

accordance with the existing experiences from the process;

- c. Definition of mandatory competences for child protection practitioners and training which had to be passed for obtaining and renewal of license;

Resources of the Child Protection Hub can be an important platform for exchange of knowledge, experience and contemporary findings. Therefore the following activities can be useful:

- Offer of webinars of different capacities from the relevant fields for students, practitioners, managers and educators; Accreditation of these trainings by adequate body in Serbia can significantly contribute development and use of these resources;
- Clear information about trainings, projects and initiatives in the field of children protection in the region;
- Creation of various booklets with the results of relevant research presented in a friendly manner to the professionals who lack time for reading of voluminous researches;
- Formulation of an accessible “corner” for presentation of good regional practice, as a framework for exchange of experience among professionals in the region.
- Development of resources for on-line supervision which can be used by practitioners and development of on-line resources for supervisors for overview and improvement of their direct practice;
- Development of resources for improvement of knowledge and skills of managers in child protection services.

After years of systematic changes, the opportunities for helping families to cope are better than 15 years ago. Knowledge and skills of numerous professionals have also been improved and numerous quality control mechanisms have been introduced. However, often the links between child protection system and various assistance measures are missing. Despite

all efforts, services to troubled children and families are still fragmented, inconsistent, insufficient and non-existent, especially in certain under-developed regions of the country. Addressing such challenges, calls for social work action in advocacy, mobilization of local communities and civil society organisations with the clear aim: to enhance social cohesion, interdependence, reciprocity, citizenship, and social justice for children and families.

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ANNEX 1. LIST OF IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Document Title	1. Violence on Children
Author (individual or agency)	Milosavljević, M. (ed.) Belgrade: Faculty of Political Sciences
Date	1998
Description of Document	Research Monograph,
Intended Audience	Child protection (CP) professionals, Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law, medicine)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Covers topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The social context of violence against children – Research methodology – Definition of terms – Violence on children in schools – Violence on children in residential institutions – Sexual abuse of children – Center for Social Welfare and the role of Guardianship authority in prevention and protection of child abuse and neglect – Criminal law approach to violence against children and the role of judicial authorities – NGO role in the prevention and protection of children from violence
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	First comprehensive research with good theoretical background in Serbia with 10 associates from different disciplines and sectors (academic and professionals from social welfare, health, education, legal system, mental health)
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> comprehensive approach serves as a foundation for further development of child protection system
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	2. From Group to Team - Multidisciplinary Training of Professionals in the System of Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect
Author (individual or agency)	Srna, J. (ed.) Center for Marriage and Family, Belgrade
Date	2001
Description of Document	Comprehensive handbook
Intended Audience	CP professionals, Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution, Volunteers, Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Covers topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Professionals in child protection, – Research on attitudes of professionals – Multidisciplinary approach in education of professionals – Theoretical approaches on child abuse and neglect – Consequences of violence against children – Treatment – Prevention – Child protection in: education, health system, social welfare system, legal system
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Research with 12 associates from different disciplines and sectors (academic and professionals from social welfare, health, education, legal system, mental health)
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> comprehensive approach serves as a foundation for further development of child protection system, especially regarding training of different professionals
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	3. Children without parental care ,
Author (individual or agency)	Kuzmanovic, B, (ed.) Institute for psychology and Save the Children, Belgrade
Date	2002
Description of Document	Comprehensive handbook
Intended Audience	CP professionals, Community-level child protection workers form health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution, Volunteers, Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>The first comprehensive research about children on residential and foster care. The results showed that in 2000 from about 4000 children without parental care accommodated in Serbia about 50% of them are on the foster and about 50% on institutional care (as many as 17% of children in institutions of age from 0 to 3 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Capacities for foster care and short-term and critical caring for children are underdeveloped; – Parents scarcely participate in making decisions on planning and rendering the services, they are not informed on their own rights nor about the duties of the centers for social welfare; – There is no work with family on prevention of singling out the children; – Planning of contacts of children with parents and generally planning of services for children on care is extremely underdeveloped; – Knowledge of professionals dealing with children is old-fashioned and obsolete; – Social protection system has failures in functioning of all three key moments of protection of children without parental care: in preparation for placement, monitoring the course of protection and preparation for release.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Research with more than 20 associates from different disciplines (academic and professionals from social welfare, health, education, legal system, mental health)
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u> Information about scope of the phenomena of children on alternative care in Serbia, serves as a foundation for further development of child protection system especially regarding deinstitutionalization.</p> <p><u>Gaps:</u> Perspectives of children are not well recognized in research approach.</p>
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	4. Protecting the Child from Abuse and Neglect – Handbook for Centers for Social Welfare and Other Community Services
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N. et al Belgrade: Yugoslav Child Rights Center
Date	2001 2004 2 nd ed.
Description of Document	Practical guideline Handbook
Intended Audience	Child protection (CP) professionals, Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecutions
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	First steps in development of model of community based, multi sectoral child protection in Serbia
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Cooperation between health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	Strengths: Very popular easy to use handbook for different professionals and services in community
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	5. Children who are Waiting –Challenges and Trends of Child Protection Practice
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N. Belgrade: Save the children UK, and Childs Rights Center
Date	2004
Description of Document	Research Monograph,
Intended Audience	CP professionals, Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law, medicine)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Covers topics such as: From filicide to child's rights Problems and challenges in definitions of CAN Causes and consequences of CAN Contemporary models of child protection Direct child protection practice: values, ethical dilemmas, culturally competent practice, Social work interventions in CP (assessment, planning, implementation) Research on current practice of Center for Social Welfare in CP Conclusions and recommendations
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Deep insight in CP practice in basic social and child protection service in Serbia Identified gaps in CP approach and procedures in Center for Social Welfare (CSW)
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	Strengths: Practical instructions and theoretical background for professionals, serves as an empowerment tool for capacity building in Social Welfare particularly
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	6. General Protocol on Protection Children from Abuse and Neglect
Author (individual or agency)	Government of Republic of Serbia
Date	2005
Description of Document	Policy document: Practice guidance
Intended Audience	Child protection (CP) professionals, Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	General Protocol applies to all children whose welfare is compromised, or children in immediate danger, children who are victims or alleged victims of abuse and neglect, and children that are considered to be at risk of abuse and neglect. The General Protocol was developed by Ministries with jurisdiction in Education, Health, Justice, Interior and Social Affairs and they are responsible for details in the Special protocols and in internal procedures within each system, in accordance with the basic principles and objectives of the General Protocol.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The General Protocol contributes to improved reporting and registration of all forms of abuse and neglect. All reports of suspected medium and high risk child abuse and neglect are directed towards Centers for Social Welfare which organize the rapid assessment of reports of suspected abuse and neglect of the child and organise appropriate intervention.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sensitivity to children's rights – Clear idea about common goal – Definition of child abuse and neglect accepted by all – Clearly defined roles, responsibilities and ways of cooperation of all participants in the process. <p><u>Gaps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The protocol does not recognize the suitable extent of the personal responsibility of professionals, there is a possibility of "hiding" behind the team or organization. – Nobody knows what is going on with "recognized cases of low and medium risk of abuse and neglect that institutions alone can solve"!
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.minrzs.gov.rs/files/doc/porodica/zlostavljanje/Opsti%20protokol%20zlostavljanje%20i%20zanemarivanje%20deca.pdf

Document Title	7. Manual for Implementation of General Protocol for Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect
Author (individual or agency)	Ispanovic Radojkovic, V., Ignjatovic, T., Vujovic, R., Stevanovic, I., Srna, J. i Žegarac, N. Beograd: Centar za prava deteta
Date	2006
Description of Document	Practice guidance; Comprehensive handbook
Intended Audience	Child protection (CP) professionals, Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	
Main Findings	First edition of the Manual for the implementation of the General Protocol for the protection of children from abuse and neglect
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Protection of children from abuse and neglect is a complex process involving institutions, organizations and individuals from different systems (social protection, education, health, police, justice, etc.)
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – First manual with multi sectoral child protection procedures in community – Instructions for General Protocol application for all participants in the process of child protection
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	8. Protection of Children from Child Abuse and Neglect: Implementation of General Protocol for Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect
Author (individual or agency)	Ignjatović, T., Vignjević Kalezić, A., Stevanovic, I., Srna, J., Vujovic, R., i Žegarac, N)
Date	2011
Description of Document	Practice guidance; Comprehensive handbook
Intended Audience	Child protection (CP) professionals, Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community- level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law, medicine)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Handbook represents a revised and expanded edition of the Manual for the implementation of the General Protocol for the protection of children from abuse and neglect, which was published in 2006, shortly after the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the General Protocol in August 2005.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	This foregrounds the challenge of effective cooperation and coordinated actions of all involved in this process. This means that all who work with children and families need to be fully confident that they know how to act in CAN
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The manual provides a broader framework for understanding the process of child protection and provides detailed instructions for General Protocol application for all participants in the process of child protection. - Multidisciplinary approach - Tools for professionals - Excerpts from relevant laws
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.minrzs.gov.rs/files/doc/podrobnosti/zlostavljanje/PRIKUPNIK%20OPSTI%20PROTOKOL.pdf

Document Title	9 Special Health Service Protocol for the Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Health
Date	2009
Description of Document	Policy document Practice guidance
Intended Audience	Health Workers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>The Special Health Protocol defines the obligation of all healthcare institutions to form a team of experts with a task to detect, register and intervene in cases of abuse and neglect. This protocol for healthcare workers was implemented in 2009 with the precisely defined roles and tasks of all institutions within the healthcare system, as well as all health professionals.</p> <p>The Protocol foresees the establishment and training of teams for the protection of children against abuse and neglect within healthcare institutions, at all levels of health care.</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<p>Health care professionals are in a position to recognize abused children in pediatric settings. The Protocol recognized the importance of improving the physician's ability to recognize different forms of child abuse and other forms of family violence.</p> <p>The Special Protocol establishes provisions for health care providers for mechanisms and procedures for recognition, documentation, and reporting on cases of child abuse and neglect, cooperation with other institutions and professionals, as well as for their legal and ethical obligations and responsibilities</p>
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>Recognition that it is the professional, legal and moral duty of health professionals to react to child abuse and neglect. The role of the health care system in the protection of children is to make sure that every health professional, governmental agency, or service user (child or parent) take their share of the responsibility, in order to create an environment where each child is protected from abuse or neglect.</p> <p><u>Gaps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A mechanism for monitoring the extent of usage of protocol is not clear. - Four years were necessary to pass to bring the handbook.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.zdravlje.gov.rs/downloads/2012/Maj/ZastitaDeceFinalnaverzijaprotokola.pdf

Document Title	10. Handbook for the Application of a Special Health Service Protocol for the Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Health, Institute of Mental Health
Date	2012
Description of Document	Practice guidance; Comprehensive handbook
Intended Audience	Health workers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The manual provides a theoretical and practical framework for improving clinical practice of the health system in the field of protection of children from all forms of abuse. In the theoretical aspect, the Manual precisely defines the forms of abuse and neglect, the consequences for child development and risk factors, providing a reliable guidance for the recognition of abuse and neglect in daily work of health workers with children, which contributes to increasing sensitivity and competence of health workers.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	A significant contribution to the Manual are clearly defined steps in treatment, especially in cases of high risks, exhaustively exposed. Every health institution is obliged to establish an expert team within the institution and guidelines for engagement of the team with other services in the community. Through a precisely defined procedure the Manual can contribute improving the effectiveness not only of health system but also of the intersectional networks to protect children from abuse and neglect.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance for immediate work in cases of suspicion of abuse and neglect. - The Manual gives recommendations on how to talk with children and how, through discussions with parents, to initiate positive change in the treatment of the child. - Most common barriers in child protection work are defined, with appropriate recommendations. <p><u>Gaps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsibility of individual health worker is not recognized enough
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.zdravlje.gov.rs/downloads/2012/Maj/ZastitaDecePrirucnikzaprimenuposebnog-protokola.pdf

Document Title	11. Special Protocol for the Protection of Children and Students From Violence, Abuse and Neglect in Educational Institutions
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Education
Date	2007
Description of Document	Policy document; Practice guidance
Intended Audience	Teachers and other workers in education
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The Special Educational Protocol presents preventive activities and defined procedures in the protection of children from violence, precising the roles of all involved in the life and work of educational institutions.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The Special Protocol elaborates details of internal procedures in schools in situations of doubt or when violence, abuse and neglect occur.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A framework for prevention activities and leads to improvement of standards for the protection of school children / students <p><u>Gaps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The main attention is on peer violence - Procedures are not child-friendly enough
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.unicef.org/serbia/Posebni_protokol_-_obrazovanje%281%29.pdf

Document Title	12. Special Protocol of the Judicial Authorities in the Protection of Minors from Abuse and Neglect
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Justice
Date	2009
Description of Document	Policy document Practice guidance
Intended Audience	Prosecutors, judges
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The Special Judicial Protocol aims to improve the practice of legal protection of children according to international norms and standards. The document defines the mostly effective procedures for judicial authorities with an aim for further improvement of cooperation with other services. The Special Judicial Protocol also provides a framework for good practice in legal protection of children according to the existing legal framework.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A Special Protocol – provides professional and efficient help of judicial authorities to other public authorities in the protection of minors from abuse and neglect; – contributes to the process of improvement of work of judicial authorities in order to have urgent and humane treatment of children; – contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the General Protocol, facilitates work of other services in community
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Focused on specific measures and actions of authorized representatives of the judicial authorities in child abuse and neglect cases; – Continues education and specialization for protection of children for judicial worker is predicted. – Excerpts from relevant laws are meaningfully connected
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.unicef.org/serbia/Posebni_protokol_-_pravosudje.pdf

Document Title	13. Special Protocol for the Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect in Institutions of Social Protection
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy
Date	2006
Description of Document	Policy document Practice guidance
Intended Audience	CP professionals and associates
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The Special Protocol for social care institutions elaborates the internal procedure when there is a situation of risk, doubt, or in a situation of child abuse and neglect of residents.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The Protocol should improve the process of detection and intervention for child abuse cases in residential social care institutions
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Protocol represents a binding document for all employees' professionals and associates in residential social care institutions. <p><u>Gaps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Internal team for child protection is not an efficient remedy for "totalitarian institutions", since colleagues tend to protect each other's.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.minrzs.gov.rs/files/doc/porodica/zlostavljanje/Psebni%20protokol%20socijalna%20zastita.pdf

Document Title	14. Special Protocol on the Conduct of Police Officers in the Protection of Minors From Abuse and Neglect
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of the Interior
Date	2012
Description of Document	Policy document Practice guidance
Intended Audience	Police officers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The Special Police Protocol was adopted in order to improve police procedures in the field of prevention and protection of children from violence
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The Protocol provides guidance to the police to do the job efficiently, professionally and legally, while at the same time, in each case of violence against a child, regulations of Convention on the Rights of the Child and the General Protocol are respected.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Protocol is a binding internal act for all police officers. - Provides an efficient procedure
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.minrzs.gov.rs/files/doc/podrobnosti/zlostavljanje/Posebni%20protokol%20policija.pdf

Document Title	15. Nobody's Children - Child Trafficking in Serbia and Montenegro
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N., Baucal, A. Gvozdenovic, U. Belgrade: CETI and Save the children
Date	2005
Description of Document	Monograph, Research
Intended Audience	Child protection (CP) professionals, Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law)
Geographical Area	Serbia and Montenegro
Main Findings	Covers topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Methodological framework - Trafficking in children: the notion and the mechanisms of social response - Recognizing and understanding trafficking in children - Legal instruments and standards in the protection of child victims of trafficking in children - National teams for fighting trafficking in human beings in Serbia and Montenegro - Research results and Recommendations
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Provides a comprehensive insight in child trafficking phenomena
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the first research conducted in the region of South-Eastern Europe focusing on children as a particularly vulnerable group.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	16. Children Speak Out: Trafficking Risk and Resilience in Southeast Europe – Serbia Report
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N, Childs Rights Center and Save the Children, Belgrade
Date	2007
Description of Document	Monograph, Research
Intended Audience	CP professionals, Paraprofessionals Community level child protection workers Policymakers
Geographical Area	Southeast Europe, Serbia
Main Findings	The experiences and knowledge of children living or working on the street indicate that exposure to trafficking and exploitation risks is high, that they are often confronted with the immediate danger of being involved in trafficking and that some of them are acquainted with children who ended up in the human trafficking chain. In order to protect themselves from trafficking and exploitation, children apply a variety of survival and protection strategies that rest on their particular daily experiences of living on the street.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Qualitative field research addresses the experiences, views, needs and decision-making method of children living and working in the streets of Belgrade and other towns of Serbia within the trafficking and exploitation context. The purpose of the paper is to identify and systematize the risk and protection factors and their relationship with child trafficking mechanisms so as to improve the protection system in accordance with the needs and perspectives of children.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An insight of experiences, coping strategies, decision-making process, risk, resilience, hopes and dreams of street involved children from their perspectives; - Child focused research; - Practice and policy implication and recommendations.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	17. Confident Steps to Foster Care: Guide for Foster Carers
Author (individual or agency)	Grujic, D. Ivanisevic, Lj., Tekic, V. I Hadzovic, Lj., Belgrade: Centar za porodicni smestaj i usvojenje
Date	2009
Description of Document	Handbook
Intended Audience	CP professionals Foster parents
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Handbook for foster parents which follows the basic training program and shows in a simple way the themes and dilemmas regarding the foster care. Covers topics such as: the reasons why children need foster home, the developmental needs of the child, trauma, loss, separation; child rights; how to involve child in new family system; procedures and law regarding foster care, cooperation with professionals; etc.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The first manual in Serbia which particularly addresses the need for foster parents and children in foster care. Goes behind with the training for foster carers as an important auxiliary material.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> – Source of important information for professionals and foster parents <u>Gaps:</u> – Same as strengths: too simplified for professionals, too complicated for foster carers
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.unicef.org/serbia/Prirucnik_za_hranitelje_za_web%281%29.pdf

Document Title	18. Juvenile Delinquency: Risks, Trends and Outcomes.
Author (individual or agency)	Hrncic, J. Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade
Date	2009
Description of Document	Monograph, Research
Intended Audience	CP Professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Covers topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of terms from different perspectives - Theories of delinquency - Summary of risk factors in antisocial behaviour among young people - Protective factors - Outcomes of delinquency - The life paths of juvenile delinquents
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	It can significantly improve the quality of knowledge of the professionals working with this population of youth, as well as with the general population of children and youth.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Comprehensive, transparent, multi-disciplinary, systematic and creative insight into the latest scientific knowledge about the origins and dynamics of development of delinquent and antisocial behaviour, and behavioural disorders in young people
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	19. Assessment Instruments in Social Welfare: Questioners, Scales and Technics
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N. i Džamonja Ignjatović, T., Belgrade: Center for Applied Psychology
Date	2009
Description of Document	Practice guidance
Intended Audience	CP professionals Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The publication is the product of several years of work on the development of service standards in social protection, in particular the standards governing the practice of Centers for Social Welfare. The intention was to contribute to the professional empowerment of professionals with basic tools for performing contemporary practice. The choices of questionnaires, scales and technique were developed in order to provide a comprehensive assessment as a foundation for the planning and delivery of services. Special attention is paid to the inclusion of the questionnaire and techniques that contribute to the activation and participation of service users and family members in the assessment implying their participation in the planning of individualized services.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Concepts related to different theories and approaches such as the attachment theory, cognitive stress theory, the approach focuses on the crisis and the like, are of great importance in the understanding and interpretation of the results obtained on the basis of selected instruments. These approaches also have wide application in working with certain groups of beneficiaries of social protection. Instruments themselves usually do not represent a direct operationalization of a specific theory, but are primarily the product of empiricism, created from practice and for practice.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The questionnaires, scales and techniques are designed to assess performance, power and user needs, then to evaluate the capacity of family, risks and relationships, as well as the assessment of environmental conditions and family interaction with the environment. – In the selection of specific instruments, starting criteria were the relevance and appropriateness of the particular area of assessment, linkage to the needs of practice, ease of use, and cultural sensitivity.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	20. The Development of Community Services: To the Quality Standards
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N., Brkić, M., The Social Innovation Fund and UNDP, Belgrade
Date	2007
Description of Document	Research document, Handbook
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The subjects of analysis are community services under the jurisdiction of local governments. The survey was conducted in six cities in Serbia in the middle stage of social welfare reform, and it covered a total of 13 organizations and departments of government and non-government sectors- service-providers. The aim of the research is to gain a better insight into the current situation and needs of local governments, agencies and organizations that provide services to local level to identify the potential for development and improvement of service quality regarding functional and structural standards and quality of services.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The first publication in Serbia for defining process of development of standard for social services. Provides overview of quality of current local social services, good and promising practice, gaps and obstacles, and step-by step procedure for development of standards
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Transparent and analytical reading, based on empirical and theoretical assumptions. <u>Gaps:</u> Publication was focused to encourage the development and standardization of community based services, according to the moment of editing. Many things has changed in Serbia since then.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.sif.minrzs.gov.rs/upload/documents//Razvoj%20lokalnih%20usluga%20u%20socijalnoj%20zastiti-verzija%20iz%20stamparije.pdf

Document Title	21. Operational Planning in the Centers for Social Welfare
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N., Brkić, M. i Džamonja Ignjatović, T., Republic Institute for Social Protection and UNDP, Belgrade
Date	2010
Description of Document	Practice guidance; Handbook
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The introduction of new service standards requires an improvement of planning and development - one of the vital functions arising from the position of the center for social welfare in system and its role in local community. This publication defines the theoretical assumptions and displays empirical and practical solutions in the process of centers for social welfare community planning activity.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The guide can facilitate practical preparation of operational annual plans. Systematic approach forms the basis for proactive performance of CSW according to the needs and concerns of citizens in the community, to strengthen the position of organization and further development of social welfare activities. Flexible way of defining the field, steps, methods, techniques and procedures for the operational plan, keeping in focus the different needs and different capabilities of CSW.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Manual for the preparation of the annual operating plan is a guide for the practitioners in CSW in order to assess their work in previous year and to plan it in the next ones. - Improvement of planning and development functions of CSW in the building of an integrated system of community services.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://rs.one.un.org/organizations/12/OPERATIVNO%20PLANIRANJE%20U%20CSR_FINAL_PRINTED.pdf

Document Title	22. Children and Young People with Behavioral Problems: Services and Treatments in the Community
Author (individual or agency)	Hrncic, J. Džamonja Ignjatovic, T. Despotović Stanarević, V. (eds.) Belgrade, Institute of Social Protection
Date	2010
Description of Document	Practice guidance; Handbook
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Covers the topics such as: Theoretical and contextual framework concerning treatments and services for children and young people in conflict with the community Presentation of four programs that are specifically designed for this population. Daily care programs for children and youth with behavioural programs section, Overview of the three accredited training programs for professionals were applied to services and treatment.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Includes 22 authors The monograph provides a significant contribution to the science and practice because it provides a comprehensive, systematic, checked and rounded presentation of treatments and services in the community for children and young people with problems that can be efficiently and purposefully applied in Serbia.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	Strengths: – Comprehensive overview of approaches, services and treatments – Solid tool for professionals
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	23. Depression and delinquency
Author (individual or agency)	Hrncic, J Belgrade, Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research.
Date	2011
Description of Document	Research monograph
Intended Audience	CP professionals Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law. medicine)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Covers topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depression and antisocial behaviour - Empirical evidence - The study of comorbidity of depression and delinquency in Serbia - Explanations comorbidity - Model of unipolar depression - Depression and the restrictiveness of the institution - Depression and social relations
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The Monograph improves understanding of the etiological mechanisms, course and outcome of depression, antisocial behaviour and their comorbidity.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strength</u> ; Since both disorders are highly present in the general youth population, this study has a notable practical importance for the planning and implementation of comprehensive prevention programs
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	24. Children with Disability – Needs and Support (ROD)
Author (individual or agency)	Mitić, M., Radojević, B., Hrnjica, S., Žegarac, N., Stefanovic, M., Veljkovic, L, Rajović, V., Piper, B., Radović-Županski, M. Belgrade: Republic Institute for Social Protection
Date	2011
Description of Document	Practice guidance; Handbook
Intended Audience	CP professionals Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The publication is the result of nearly two years of extensive experience gained in the research, conceiving and reflections of a model for assessing the needs of children with disabilities, the design and pilot implementation of instruments, as well as the training of fifty experts on social protection. Lessons are learned during the execution of the project From individual needs to a variety of support - the assessment, methodology and practice.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Tools for assessment for children with disabilities and their integration into the existing regulations and documentation relating to the assessment process in Centers for social welfare and building of professional capacity of Case Managers for the implementation of holistic, child oriented methodology for children with disabilities
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Support for children with developmental disabilities at every stage of their development and socialization / inclusion. Comprehensive instruments and clearly elaborated guidelines and indicators for assessing. Useful for training <u>Gaps:</u> It is rather a comprehensive inventory than an assessment tool. Too extensive, not user friendly.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.unicef.org/serbia/The_assessment_of_needs_of_chilidren_with_disability_-_Manual_for_professionals_SER.pdf Part of the project “Transformation of residential institutions for children and developing sustainable alternatives”, UNICEF and MoLESP, with support of the EU

Document Title	25. Analysis of the Situation and Capacity of the National System of Prevention and Protection of Children Involved in the Life or Work on The Streets from Exploitation and Abuse
Author (individual or agency)	Stevanovic, I., Golić, M., Zečević, O., Child Rights Center Belgrade
Date	2013
Description of Document	Analysis of the situation
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>The Analysis is the basic document with the aim of making the Model National Strategy for prevention and protection of children involved in the life and work on the streets from exploitation and abuse.</p> <p>The subject of this analysis are the terminological definition of the observed phenomena, the analysis of available relevant research in this area in the Republic of Serbia, risk factors, and collecting data on children involved in the life and work on the streets. Selected international documents, relevant legislative and policy framework are presented in the section analyzing the national context. The Analysis offers the key actors and sector protection mechanisms involving children working on the streets from exploitation and abuse.</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct application of ratified international treaties and the improvement of relevant legislative framework; - The definition and use of terms - Strengthening the social responsibility of the relevant actors - Establishing indicators, systems for data collection, analysis and reporting - Area of intersectoral cooperation and availability of services at local level - Greater involvement of children in matters that directly affect them
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <p>Areas for priority action were established:</p> <p>The definition of the basic concepts used and their delimitation;</p> <p>Tools for development and implementation of comprehensive prevention measures for children involved in the life and work on the streets;</p> <p>Recommendation for improvement of the legislative framework; Promotion of cooperation at all levels (local, national, regional and international);</p> <p>Recommendation for continuous monitoring of the phenomenon and evaluation of results, development of educational programs for different actors in community</p>
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.cpd.org.rs/Data/Files/analiza_stanja.pdf

Document Title	26. Place for Me – Children on Foster Care in Serbia
Author (individual or agency)	Stevanovic, I., Jugovic, A., Pejaković, Lj.. Ministry for Social Policy; Child Rights Center; Belgrade and Republic Institute for Social Protection,
Date	2013
Description of Document	Monograph, Analysis of the situation
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The Monograph is the result of research to answer the current status and comprehend the challenges faced by professionals, foster parents or the children themselves in foster care.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Recommendations for improving foster care are focused on the changes in the normative framework, as well as in relation to the quality of foster care service for children.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> The connection between social protection and juvenile justice - the situation of children with problems in the functioning in the foster care and promotion of specific social services as a possibility for application of specific criminal penalties – the so call “increased supervision in another family”.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.cpd.org.rs/Data/Files/mesto_za_mene.pdf

Document Title	27. In the Labyrinth of Social Protection – Lessons Learnt from Research on Children in Care
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N. ed., Faculty for Political Science. Center for Research in Social Policy and Social Work of the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. Serbia
Date	2014
Description of Document	Research document
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>Trends of entry in and exit from the alternative care and children characteristics were analyzed on the whole population on alternative care between mid 2006 – mid 2011, as well as the results of research on a stratified, random and representative sample of children.</p> <p>The reasons for the first contact with the system social protection, the characteristics of parents and children, interventions that preceded the separation of the child from the family, interventions taken during placement, as well as the situation of children according to the latest assessment are presented.</p> <p>Specific parts of the publication are dedicated to Roma children in alternative care and quality of documentation centers for social welfare regarding children on alternative care.</p> <p>Qualitative part of the research is about the manner in which the Case Managers assess the strength of the child, family and community, then the perception of</p> <p>Case Managers on the effect of accommodation on the child, the factors that influence decision-making, as well as the perspective of young residents, their care givers and case managers.</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<p>Research on the factors that contribute to children being separated from parents' families and sent to family or residential accommodation, decision-making process before, during and after the accommodation, as well as some of the outcomes of accommodation for children.</p> <p>Consideration of the effects of social welfare and child protection reforms, especially in children who are separated from their families, is an important task that can contribute to highlighting and celebrating achievement, recognizing the failures and difficulties and routing of further guidelines to protect children.</p> <p>Research findings inform practitioners and policy makers about results of reform and future steps in developing more child friendly care system</p>
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Factors related to the placement of children in Serbia in the period of intensive reforms of the system (2006-2011) – Consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of interventions and services for prevention of child separation from their biological families, as well as those that encourage family reunification. – Information on particular outcomes of child protection in housing and showing how it can improve the quality of care for these children. – Some results of research are implemented in policy and programs even after the presentation of the first findings.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	<p>http://www.unicef.org/serbia/U_lavirintu_socijalne_zastite.pdf</p> <p>The research is a part of the project entitled "Developing Community Based Services for Children with Disabilities and their Families" implemented by the UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy, and financed by the EU.</p>

Document Title	28. The Child's Right to Quality Care: Analysis of the Implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in the Western Balkans
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N., Save the Children, Sarajevo
Date	2014
Description of Document	Analysis of situation
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law)
Geographical Area	West Balkan Region Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro
Main Findings	<p>The intent of this publication is to review existing practices and highlight the necessity of proactive versus reactive affirmation measures primarily aimed at supporting families to overcome the current situation and ensure the optimal conditions for the full development of the child in family environment.</p> <p>Child care is "in the progress" (or "under reconstruction") in region regarding deinstitutionalization, but prevention of family separation as well as family reunification services are still underdeveloped.</p> <p>Children are not in the center of system.</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<p>First time that child protection in western Balkan region is analysed from UN Guideline standards perspective.</p> <p>Recently, a dramatic shift in the reform of social protection systems was made, especially in the process of deinstitutionalization, expansion of foster care (especially in Serbia) the development of social services, access to service users, and making the minimum service standards.</p> <p>However, there are fears that the existing capacities of countries do not affirm enough to act proactively and procedures of reunification of children with the family. This brings these children into special state of vulnerability, and increases the risk of further abuse and exploitation.</p>
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u> Information on the capacities and efforts of the Republic of Serbia, Montenegro and BiH to ensure the standards of care according to UN Guidelines.</p> <p><u>Gaps:</u> Children were not consulted during preparation of document.</p>
Other Questions or Comments About Document	<p>http://www.ombudsmen.gov.ba/documents/obmudsmen_doc2014112413234437eng.pdf</p> <p>http://www.ombudsmen.gov.ba/documents/obmudsmen_doc2014112413234437ser.pdf</p>

Document Title	29. When Wednesdays Become Sundays – Community Based Services for Children with Disability and Their Families
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N. Džamonja Ignjatović T. and Milanović, M., Faculty for Political Science Serbia, Research Center for Social Policy and Social Work of the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade
Date	2014
Description of Document	Research document
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>Community based services for children with disabilities and their families were evaluated from the perspective of service users. Sample of 41 municipalities with newly established local services: (Day Care, Home Assistance and Respite Care services).</p> <p>Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The services have covered the children and families that really needed them – Effects of the services on the quality of family life (improved in some points) – Effect of the services to parental stress (decreased in some aspects) – Parents got from the service more than expected, particularly regarding children wellbeing and development – Parents' satisfaction with the services (satisfied with service not with own participation). – Children perception of services: children created their own space (agency).
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<p>The main aim of the research is gaining more detailed knowledge on how children with disabilities and their families use the community based services developed and supported by the project, as well as on the circumstances in which they live, in order to improve the practices of social protection according with the social inclusion policy.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Secure sustainability of community based services for children with disabilities and their families. – Support further development and profiling of services' contents in line with the needs of children and families. – Develop participation of parents and children in service design and individualization, as a basis for the adjustment of contents and more flexible organization of services
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Evaluation from clients perspective; – Children perspective; – Recommendations for continuum of community based services, especially a) establishment of services for the families of small children, with an access to early intervention measures; b) development of services for youth and adults with disabilities; c) accessibility of counselling and therapy to the parents of children with disabilities, who need such support, as well as of stress reduction interventions
Other Questions or Comments About Document	<p>http://www.fpn.bg.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/Kada-nam-nedelja-dolazi-sredom-ver-06-12-13.pdf</p> <p>The research is a part of the project entitled "Developing Community Based Services for Children with Disabilities and their Families" implemented by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, and financed by the EU</p>

Document Title	30. The Right Solution for Children: Practical Guide to Programming Based on the Best Interests of the Child
Author (individual or agency)	Velev, G. Ed., Group 484, Belgrade
Date	2013
Description of Document	Practical guideline
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Practical step-by step guideline about programming, procedures for analysis of child rights, consultation issues with different actors, cycles of planning and programming, partnerships, programming in emergency situations, development of rights-based organization, etc.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Practical tool for different NGO and social services, strong child rights ethos
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy for use step-by step guideline. - Lots of practical instruments for analysis and planning - Link to resource for further reading.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	The project “The reform for child-friendly social protection systems”

Document Title	31. Guide to the Rights of Children with Disabilities and Their Families (fourth edition)
Author (individual or agency)	Beker, K. i Janjić, B. Initiative for Inclusion Veliki Mali
Date	2011
Description of Document	Practice guidance
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Parents of children with disabilities
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The guide includes an overview of the mechanisms of realization of the right to health care, social protection, education, and the possibility of association and providing support in the realization of rights in practice. Moreover, some important strategies, national plans, as well as the reform of the country and the region are presented
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Towards equalizing the rights of children with disabilities and to improving the participation in community life, the participation of all: parents, professionals / activists, institutions, media, civil society organizations, and especially decision makers at local national level, is necessary
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Empowerment of parents of children with disabilities and involved professionals. – Child's right and Human rights approach
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://inkluzivno-obrazovanje.rs/files/Vodic%20kroz%20prava%20dece%20sa%20smetn-jama%20u%20razvoju.pdf The publication was created within the project "Network for the promotion of the rights of children with disabilities in Serbia" with the support of the Swedish Helsinki Committee for Human Rights

Document Title	32. Analysis of the Centers for Social Welfare of Child Sexual Abuse in AP Vojvodina in the Period 2006-2010
Author (individual or agency)	Vukotić, M., Đolović, A. Koprivica, I., Provincial Institute for Social Protection, Novi Sad
Date	2011
Description of Document	Analysis of situation
Intended Audience	CP professionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Vojvodina, Serbia
Main Findings	<p>Research about the sexual abuse and child abuse cases which have been recorded in the centers for social welfare in the territory of AP Vojvodina for five years. For the purposes of this research, a questionnaire was created and distributed to all centers for social work (41) on the territory of AP Vojvodina, since they have the leading role in identification and needs and risk assessment of children who are victims of abuse and neglect.</p> <p>Results indicate increase of the number of sexual abuse in previous years, especially of female victims aged 6-14 years</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<p>Problems faced by the CSW regarding of sexual assault and child abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of multispectral approach at the local level; - Insufficient knowledge about the General Protocol for the Protection of Children from abuse and neglect, as well as the Special Protocols; - Lengthy court procedures and lack of feedback on the outcomes procedures; - Difficulty in proving the commission of the offense; - Repeated interview of child victims; - Confrontation of victim and the perpetrator in court; - Fear of recognition and the problems of gaining confidence in the CSW professionals; - Insufficient knowledge of CSW professionals work with children victims; - Fear and shame of children to talk about it; - Non-cooperation of parents; - False accusations during divorce and separation; - Secondary victimization of children
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief secondary data analysis; - Clearly identify a problems and deficits in system.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	<p>http://pandorasbox.rs/sr/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Socijalna-za%C5%A1tita.pdf</p> <p>Publication from the project against child sexual abuse, "Pandora's box", which is implemented by the School of Journalism, with financial support of the European Commission</p>

Document Title	33. Happiness and Families with Children in Serbia - How to Shape Public Policy for the Benefit of Families
Author (individual or agency)	Milanović, M., Anđelković, B., Center for Public Policy Research UNICEF
Date	2014
Description of Document	Research document
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution General public
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The main purpose of the project is to provide support to the family and parenting, while the objective of this research is to provide initial information about the family characteristics that are important for their happiness, and the importance of every individual characteristic. Happy families are the families in which parents and children are happy, and in which children participate in the activities that develop their skills and resources.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The main objective of this research is to provide knowledge about families with children in Serbia, and especially about families with small children. The Study explores happiness in the family, and the factors that are associated with happiness, as well as characteristics of the family which is a good environment for children's development The aim is to strengthen parenting and create the environment in which children have the opportunity to develop optimally and be protected from violence, abuse and neglect,
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Communicating with broader public, families, media, policy makers... The aim of the project which includes this research is to strengthen parenting and create the environment in which children have the opportunity to develop optimally and be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, with initial belief that through increased investment in family and parenting, this goal can be achieved.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.publicpolicy.rs/publikacije/c3806c6859ba12660ebed40f9314a9390303f197.pdf The study is a part of the parenting support project developed through the partnership between the Hemofarm Foundation and UNICEF.

Document Title	34. The Report on the Realization of the Application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Serbia
Author (individual or agency)	Petrović, M. Banić, M., Golić, M. Ružić, Golić, M. Ivanović, J. Čolić, G. Center for children rights, Save the Children
Date	2013
Description of Document	Analysis of the situation
Intended Audience	Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The Report presents the general measures for implementation of the CRC. Moreover, it includes the general picture of child rights in the Republic of Serbia, the last reporting period of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the concluding observations of the Child's Rights Committee.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The report includes ten chapters: Inclusion of the CRC into the national legislation; Development of the national action plans; Coordination of the implementation of the CRC; Monitoring of the implementation of the CRC; Collection of the data and indicators; Making the children visible in budgets; Cooperation with civil society; International cooperation; Independent human rights institutions; Informing and raising awareness of child rights.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Description and analysis of the situation at the state and local level are provided, together with conclusions and recommendations. On-going monitoring tool for child's rights affairs.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.cpd.org.rs/Data/Files/izvestaj_o_ostvarivanju_opstih_mera_primene_konven-cije_2013.pdf

Document Title	35. Mapping Social Protection Services Under the Jurisdiction of Local Governments
Author (individual or agency)	Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies
Date	2013
Description of Document	Analysis of the situation
Intended Audience	Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The primary goal of this study was to collect data about the existing community social services within the mandate of local governments in Serbia. In addition , some dilemmas are discussed and some recommendations are given.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Mapping is organized: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to enable better overview of the social services in the Local government mandate from the aspects of accessibility, efficiency and quality of the services • to gain a better insight into development, distribution and sustainability of services – to collect the data that would enable future analysis, and that would provide suggestions for improving the service delivery – to serve as a basis for setting up a regular system for collecting and tracking the data about local social services – to highlight the potential challenges for further improvement of social welfare and local services.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Good overview of current local social services and recommendations regarding problems in accessibility, efficiency, sustainability and quality of services.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.csp.org.rs/oblasti-rada/usluge-socijalne-zastite/publikacije/mapiranje-usluga-socijalne-zastite-u-nadleznosti-lokalnih-samouprava/ Report done by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Team for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction

Document Title	36. Instructions for Determining the Criteria for Acceptance and Prioritization Users of Social Protection of the Mandate of the Local Government for Children with Disabilities
Author (individual or agency)	Vlaović, D., Kovačević, V. UNICEF and Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies
Date	2012
Description of Document	Analysis of the situation; Recommendation
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Model for prioritization of the users of community social services in the mandate of local government. Given that the the focuses on children with disabilities, it is an analysis in the area of determining the admission criteria and prioritization of reception of users is done
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Instruction for determining the criteria for admission and prioritization for intake of users of local social services for children with disabilities is created in order to support local governments and other relevant stakeholders at the local level. Instructions are based on the embodiments defined primarily by the Law on Social Protection and the Regulations on minimum standards for providing social protection.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Clear criteria for local government and service providers
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.csp.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Uputstvo-prioritizacija-finalno-12-jun-2012.pdf The report is a part of the project “Developing Community Based Services for Children with Disabilities and their Families” implemented by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy, and financed by the EU.

Document Title	37. Children on the Move – Position, Support Programs and Protection of Children on the Move in the Republic of Serbia
Author (individual or agency)	Aleksandra Galonja ... et al., Belgrade: Citizens Association for the Fight against trafficking and all forms of violence against women – Athens
Date	2013
Description of Document	Situation analysis
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>This publication is dealing with children in the move who are exposed to various risks and are vulnerable; they are not treated in the same way in the protection system in Serbia, nor are recognized as a special group by practitioners, experts and decision-makers.</p> <p>It is the lack of knowledge and documented experience on this group of children and non-compliance of practices related to them that were the causes of the research representing the first attempt to operationalize the term “children on the move” and contextualize this phenomenon in Serbia.</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Aim was to enable access to adequate system of social protection services based on the child rights, to children on the move in the Republic of Serbia. The first step in achieving this goal is determining the characteristics of children on the move in the Republic of Serbia and the international standards in this area, and assessing the adequacy and adaptability of the existing protection systems for a dynamic phenomenon of transnational dimension. The analysis will continue to serve as a basis for improvement of the system of protection and service for child-bearing, having in mind the specificity and complexity of the situation of children on the move in Serbia.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased visibility on children on the move, child friendly approach, participatory research with children – Policy recommendations
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://atina.org.rs/biblioteka/deca%20u%20pokretu.pdf The project “The reform for child-friendly social protection systems”, which was, in 2012, launched by an international organization Save the Children in cooperation with national civil society organizations, NGOs Athens and the Group of 484, with the financial support of the European Commission, the Open Society Fund in Serbia and Save the Children Norway.

Document Title	38. When we Asked, not Inquired: Consultation with Children on the Move
Author (individual or agency)	Avramovic, M., Belgrade: Save the Children, NGO Atina, Group 484
Date	2014
Description of Document	Practical guideline
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution Educators Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy)
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The author's basic approach is that listening of children and incorporating children's perspectives should become part of the culture of institutions and organizations dealing with children, with constant dialogue on open issues and exchange of good practices. The monograph presents the specific situation of children in movement, and challenges faced by these children and those working with them or advocating for exercising their rights face.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Principles and specifics of consultation with children on the move, as well as practical examples that can instruct and inspire future activities in this field. Preconditions for achieving child participation are profoundly explained, as well as plenty of practical tools and tips.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Excellent tools and inspiring guide for many professionals, even for a next generation
Other Questions or Comments About Document	The project "The reform for child-friendly social protection systems"

Document Title	39.Keeping Children Safe From Violence: Strengthening Child Protection Systems in Their Accountability to Identify, Refer and Respond to Cases of Violence Against Children
Author (individual or agency)	UNICEF
Date	2013
Description of Document	Analysis of the situation, Recommendations
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey
Main Findings	<p>Results from a study in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey on how to improve the responsiveness of service providers in identifying, reporting and referring cases of violence against children – carried out with European Union and UNICEF support. The Study solicited opinions from professionals involved in the issue of violence against children. Participants included professionals from the education, health, justice and social services/child protection sectors.</p> <p>For many countries, (not for Serbia) the absence of a comprehensive child protection policy is a fundamental challenge to the development of a mechanism for accountability. The findings emphasize a family support orientation of service providers towards intervening in cases of violence against children, rather than a more punitive approach, evidenced by the focus on education and counselling versus punishment. This suggests that emphasis should be put on resources for prevention and amelioration (such as public education, public health home visiting programs and counselling services) instead of models based on reactive or remedial interventions that focus on punishment of the perpetrator, removal of the child, etc.</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<p>Child protection system can serve as a vehicle for development as well as social well-being. Models that emphasize family support offer an opportunity to protect children (and their families) from violence before it happens.</p>
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – exploratory study, action research project <p><u>Gaps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recommendations are too general
Other Questions or Comments About Document	<p>Project: “Protecting children from violence in Southeast Europe”</p> <p>http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/EU_UNICEF_study_on_systems_response_on_violence_against_children_in_SE_Europe.pdf</p>

Document Title	40. Violence on Children in Serbia: How to Improve the Response of Service Providers in Identification, Reporting and Referral of Cases of Violence Against Children
Author (individual or agency)	UNICEF
Date	2013
Description of Document	Analysis of the situation, Recommendations
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>Results from a study in Serbia on how to improve the responsiveness of service providers in identifying, reporting and referring cases of violence against children – carried out with European Union and UNICEF support (Serbian national report from research “Keeping Children Safe From Violence: Strengthening child protection systems in their accountability to identify, refer and respond to cases of violence against children”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The central institution in charge of running and managing the implementation of the National Plan of Action does not exist. 2. Poor cooperation and coordination between services, in particular between governmental and nongovernmental organizations. 3. Cooperation between departments is required by law, and mechanisms for cooperation exist only in 15-20% municipalities. 4. Insufficient and underdeveloped services, such as preventive counselling and specialized support services for vulnerable children and their families, especially in rural areas. 5. The unresolved issue of financing the development of preventive counselling and specialized support services for pediatric protection as well as training for employees. 6. Undeveloped monitoring. 7. Poorly developed mechanisms for complaints - internal complaint mechanisms do not exist in more than half of cases (54.5%). 8. Lack of comparable systems for recording cases of violence in different sectors present an obstacle to the joint work of different institutions. 9. Lack of awareness (knowledge and sensitivity) public / community (especially the media) about the problem of violence against children, particularly about corporal punishment and protection of the privacy of victims. 10. Insufficient training of multisystem teams for the protection of children. Training is conducted only in 15-20% of local communities, mainly in urban areas, while in rural areas was even rarer. <p>The study also determined the following major strength of the current system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improved reporting system within the CSW can lead to improved response. – Introduction of case management and internal professional supervision in CSW, which has the potential to strengthen cooperation in each specific case. – Program “School without violence” was conducted in 271 primary schools and 9 secondary schools, with some positive results. – Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is developing a new program for the monitoring of social support and services that will enable a better response system. – The training launched in various sectors, which yielded some results. – It seems that the teams in charge of the issues of violence against children in some schools represent a good internal practice.

Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Implication for further development of system of protection of children from violence.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	
Other Questions or Comments About Document	Project: "Protecting children from violence in Southeast Europe"

Document Title	41. Children in the Social Welfare System 2013
Author (individual or agency)	Republic Institute for Social Protection
Date	2014
Description of Document	The report is based on data on procedures, measures and services provided to children in social welfare/protection in 2013. Data about children population in Serbia, about children service users, e.g. children without parental care (on alternative care), children victims of family violence, children with problems in behaviour, children from families in crises, children who live in poverty, and children with disabilities, as well as data about expenses for child protection from the state budget.
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>The data show declination and aging of population. According to the census from 2002 to 2011 the number of children in Serbia is less by about 205,000. At the same time, the increasing number of children is covered by the social protection system. Of the total number of children in Serbia, some form of social protection comprised 14.76% of children. Children make up 28.48% of the total number of users in the system of social protection.</p> <p>Number of socio-materially disadvantaged children is on the rise, but there is an obvious trend of reduction of number of children in residential institutions. Particularly, the favorable trend of reducing the number of children up to 3 years placed in residential institutions.</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Report can serve as a basis for national child protection policy making. Clearly presented comprehensive data on children in social welfare/ protection.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	Document provides important data, but not analysis and recommendations.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.zavodsz.gov.rs/PDF/decaasz2013.pdf

Document Title	42. Guidelines for the Development of Urgent Foster Care
Author (individual or agency)	Grujić, D., Milenković, S., Sorak, S., Blagojević, V., Aničić, V., Petrović, Ž., Rakić, I., Šilić, V. Novi Sad: Provincial Institute for Social Protection
Date	2014
Description of Document	Analysis of the situation, Recommendations
Intended Audience	CP professionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	The publication provides practical procedures and explanations of key concepts related to foster care, child, and family, focusing on the urgent foster care and standards of professional treatment
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Tool for development of urgent foster care service
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Clear guidelines for professionals about specific characteristics of urgent foster care, needs for urgent foster families, recruitment, selection, education and support for urgent foster families and children in need
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.pzs.gov.rs/multimedia/dodaci/Urgentno%20hraniteljstvo.pdf Part of the project “Development of urgent foster care and preparation of establishment of the Centers for foster care and adoption in AP Vojvodina”, realized by the Provincial Institute for Social Protection in partnership with UNICEF and with the financial support of the Novak Djokovic foundation.

Document Title	43. How to Prevent Violence in Adolescent Intimate Partner Relationships? A Guide for Teenagers and Adults who Care for Them: Manual for Use in the Curriculum Primary and Secondary schools.
Author (individual or agency)	Bogavac, Lj. i Popadić, D., Belgrade: Incest Trauma Centar
Date	2014
Description of Document	Popular practical guidance
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Teachers Adolescents and their parents
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Explain adolescence, gender, intimate partnership and violence among teens
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Inspiring
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> Excellent guide for teens and adults who takes care of them for communication about violence among teens in intimate partners relationship
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.crnps.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/Yes-I-am-mart-2014.pdf

Document Title	44. Family Law
Author (individual or agency)	Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 18/2005
Date	2005
Description of Document	Law
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	In the Republic of Serbia legally effective act is the Family Law which regulates the following: conclusion of marriage, dissolution of marriage (annulment and divorce), relations between parents and children, motherhood and fatherhood, parental custody of children, exercising parental rights, suspension of parental rights, extension and termination of parental rights, child adoption, foster parenthood, guardianship, spousal maintenance, property relations between spouses and common-law spouses, property relations between parents and children, protection against domestic violence.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The Family Law enables a child that is capable of forming his/her opinion to freely express that opinion and the right to timely receive all information necessary to form his/her opinion. The Family Law generally recognizes all of the principles of the Convention and they are the principles on which the law is based. The Family Law prohibits violence within the family (art. 197 FL), but does not explicitly prohibit corporal punishment of children. Measures are taken against the parent that abuses or neglects the child. Measures are pronounced by judicial decision, in a special proceeding which is urgent, but unfortunately there is still no good solution for the case when simultaneous reaction of the system to the violence is necessary, because in that case it is only possible to remove the child from its environment if it is necessary in order to protect his/her life or physical integrity.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This law represents a milestone in the field of child rights because the notion of child rights and a series of specific principles and rights were introduced for the first time into domestic legislation. – The Family Law constitutes the basis for furthering the rights of the child related to the family environment and providing support for children without parental care. Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some confusing norms about child participation in administrative and court procedures. – When decision making in the family is concerned, respect of child's view is not clearly emphasized – No independent representative of child – Underdeveloped and double role of guardianship authority (CSW) leads to conflict of interest and poor protection of children and families – Not completely agreed with UN Guidelines for Alternative care of children
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/porodicni_zakon.html

Document Title	45. Law on Social Welfare
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Social Affairs Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 24/11
Date	2011
Description of Document	Law
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community-level child protection workers from health, education, social welfare, police, prosecution
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	<p>The umbrella law in the field of social protection.</p> <p>The Law fully supports the reform of implementation of the integral social welfare concept and achievement of two specific objectives: (1) improvement of protection of the poorest, ensuring minimum subsistence level and more efficient system of benefits, and (2) development of a network of community services by implementing an integral assessment and planning in the community, system quality, and territorially and functionally available services.</p> <p>The Law also encourages an increase in social service capacities in the NGO and private sector.</p>
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	<p>The Law also implements strategic objectives related to the reform of social services, regulates rights, types of services, institutions and service providers, user groups, quality control mechanisms, establishment and financing competencies.</p> <p>The social welfare reform aims at ensuring deinstitutionalization, development of new services and alternative forms of social protection in the community and inclusion of different participants in the field of provision of services. The Law has established a system based on pluralism and licensing of service providers and professional workers.</p> <p>The Law promotes development of various and introduction of new social services in the community and involvement different participants in the field of service provision.</p>
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Law promotes development of various and introduction of new social services in the community and involvement of different participants in the field of service provision. – The competent level of the government provides services within its jurisdiction by establishing a service, and also by the public procurement of services. – Quality system (definitions of basic standards of services, application of the system for accreditation of training programs and programs for treatment and licensing of professionals and service providers) <p><u>Gaps :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Law is not fully implemented, still a lot of obstacles for involvement of civil society service providers – New wave of centralisation and possible institutionalization due to economic crisis and budget restriction.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.minrz.s.gov.rs/files/doc/porodica/Zakon%20o%20socijalnoj%20zastiti.pdf

Document Title	46. The Rulebook on the Organization, Norms and Standards of Centers for Social Welfare
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Social Affairs Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no: 59/2008, 37/2010, 39/2011 (amended by other Rulebook), 1/2012 (amended by other Rulebook)
Date	2008
Description of Document	By law
Intended Audience	CP professionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Introduction of case management method in basic social service in Serbia in the field of systematic approach in assessment, arranging access to services, planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of services. Method and standardized procedures were introduced to enhance the level of responsibility, protection of client rights and supervision. Regular monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the quality of Center for Social Welfare performance is a prerequisite for successful work and service users' satisfaction.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The Center for Social Welfare, 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. Rulebook and standardized procedures of case management changed a lot in professional practice and treatment of client. Some professionals complains a lot about expectations form them (accountability is visible now), but many of them appreciate new approach, and there is a lot of evidence that quality of service visibly increased.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clear procedures, time frame for interventions, client-centered, child-and family focused and individually tailored services, strength perspective, participation of service users, accountability, etc. <u>Gaps:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Even after training, some professionals need continuous support and more training on skills; – Low quality of management in organization, remains of bureaucratic organizational culture; – Lack of quality supervision; – Lack of staff, extensive case load.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/pravilnik_o_organizaciji_normativima_i_standardima_rada.html

Document Title	47. The Regulation on the Network of Social Welfare Institutions
Author (individual or agency)	The Government of Serbia Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 16/2012
Date	2012
Description of Document	Bylaw
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Network of state-run social welfare institutions around the country is regulated.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.zavodsz.gov.rs/PDF/podzak/uredbaomreziustanova10.pdf

Document Title	48. The Rulebook on Prohibited Behavior of Employees in the Field of Social Protection
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Social Affairs Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 8/2012
Date	2012
Description of Document	Bylaw
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Regulates prohibited behaviour of social welfare and child protection staff (i.e. abuse, neglect, exploitation, corporal punishment, isolation, restrictive measures, etc.)
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Staff in social welfare have clearer pictures about prohibited behaviors
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<u>Strengths:</u> – Possibility for disciplinary and legal measures
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.zavodsz.gov.rs/PDF/podzak/Pravilnik%20o%20zabranjenim%20postupanjima%20zaposlenih%20u%20socijalnoj%20zastiti.pdf

Document Title	49. The Rulebook on Detailed Conditions and Standards for the Provision Of Social Care Services
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Social Affairs Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No.
Date	2013
Description of Document	Bylaw
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Minimum standards for different services
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Possibility for licensing of service providers
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	<p>Strengths:</p> <p>Definition of different structural and functional service standards.</p> <p>Much higher and demanding standards for residential care</p> <p>Different completely new standards for local community based services</p> <p>Gaps</p> <p>Rigid structure, poor organization of document,</p> <p>Not user-friendly document,</p> <p>Lack of soft, client –centered and value-oriented functional standards, so it is easy to slip into bureaucracy.</p> <p>One group of standards: for psycho-social and socio-educational services (i.e. counseling, family therapy, family outreach, mediation) is missing, so NGOs which mostly provide those services are unable to be licensed as a service providers</p>
Other Questions or Comments About Document	

Document Title	50. The Rulebook on Licensing Social Protection Organizations
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Social Affairs Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No
Date	2013
Description of Document	Bylaw
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Rules for licensing of service providers.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	/
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	/
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	51. The Rulebook on Licensing Professional Workers in Social Care
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Social Affairs Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No.
Date	2013
Description of Document	Bylaw
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	Rules for licensing of professionals in Social Welfare
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	Regulation of very important area regarding licensing of child care staff.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	/
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/

Document Title	52. The Rulebook of Professional Jobs in the Social Protection
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Social Affairs Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 1/122.
Date	Bylaw
Description of Document	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers
Intended Audience	Serbia
Geographical Area	Defines circle of professionals in social welfare for basic, specialized, supervision (social workers, psychologists, pedagogues) law (lawyers) and planning and development jobs (all above plus sociologists) in social welfare
Main Findings	Helps in recruiting appropriate staffs in social welfare.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	/
Other Questions or Comments About Document	

Document Title	53. The Rulebook on Standards and Accreditation Process for Vocational Training Programs for Professionals and Associates in Social Protection
Author (individual or agency)	Ministry of Social Affairs Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No. 31/2014
Date	2014
Description of Document	Bylaw
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community based child protection workers
Geographical Area	Serbia
Main Findings	This ordinance regulates the standards for accreditation of training programs, the way of implementation of the accreditation process , and the conduct and content of the Register of accreditation, the Register of accredited training programs and implemented programs Registry training, as well as the content and appearance of the certificate of completion of training at an accredited training program.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	The accreditation of the training program should provide versatility, availability, comparability and competency of the training program, to enable monitoring and evaluation of program implementation training, and continuous improvement of the quality of the training program. The accreditation should provide and ensure the quality system programs professional training and harmonize offer and demand in the field of vocational training and professional development of staff.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	Strengths – The accreditation of the training program ensures minimum quality of staff training in social welfare, which allows the development of their competencies
Other Questions or Comments About Document	http://www.zavodsz.gov.rs/PDF/Pravilnik%20o%20akreditaciji%20programa%20obuke.pdf

Document Title	54. From Problems to Potentials in Case Management: Handbook for Practitioners
Author (individual or agency)	Žegarac, N. UNICEF: Belgrade and UNDP: Podgorica
Date	Comprehensive handbook
Description of Document	Bylaw
Intended Audience	CP professionals Paraprofessionals Policymakers Community based child protection workers Students (social work, psychology, pedagogy,)
Geographical Area	Serbia; Montenegro (two separate editions)
Main Findings	Cover topic such as a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cycles of case management; Intake; Assessment – Participation of child and family in assessment – Specific area of assessment (such as attachment, child's best interests in parental disputes, assessment of caregivers needs; assessment of motivation for change; – Risk and protective factors and strength assessment; – Documentation in case management; – Planning; Review, monitoring, evaluation and case closing.
Implications for Child Protection and/or Social Service Systems Strengthening	First comprehensive handbook for Case management in this part of Europe, designed for professionals, with instructions, tools, case presentations, detailed description of relevant concepts and procedures.
Strengths and/or Gaps of Document	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It is a new handbook, so far very welcomed among professionals and students.
Other Questions or Comments About Document	/



