

*Violence against the elderly*  
*Challenges – Research – Action*



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European Association of Schools of Social Work

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## TREATMENT OF ADULT VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN SERBIA<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to examine the influence of choice of recipients, types of victims, offered services, activities and program offers, and ways of service delivery to practice of treatment of adult victims of violence in Serbia. Treatment of adult victims of violence has been discussed in literature in terms of legislatives, distribution, development and history of providers. This article focuses on a specific andragogical aspects of practice of treatment of adult victims of violence in Serbia and its relations to patterns of practice in different organizations determinate to give support to victims and context in which they operate. Adopted descriptive multiple–case study approach designed to explore issues within each region of Serbia (Central Serbia, Vojvodina, and Belgrade) is based on data gathered on the sample of 108 Serbian organizations aimed to give support to adult victims of violence. The findings indicate importance of: professional preparation of staff engaged in organizations who deliver treatment to different groups of adult victims, organizational structure, and ways of funding, social trends and main characteristics of social context, as key factors which influence performance of those organizations.

**Key words:** adult victims of violence, treatment of adult victims of violence, organizations which give support to adult victims of violence, organizational structure, ways of funding, andragogues

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## Introduction

The body of literature on the treatment of adult victims of violence in Serbia is comprehensive, spanning a few disciplinary fields (victimology, law, sociology, psychology, andragogy). Recent literature published in Serbia concerned different types of victims. Most papers about domestic violence and about female victims have been written from judicial perspective (Jovanović, 2012). Only a few authors researched adult male victims of domestic violence and maltreatment of men from holistic standpoint (Knežić, 2010). Problem of mobbing is researched regard to the issue of psychological abuse at the work place (Tripković, 2009) and explained from managerial (Baltezarević, 2009), and judicial perspective (Šaljić, 2013).

Few authors (Vidaković, 2002) describe characteristics of the emotional reactions and recovery process of both the victim and his/her surrounding. Vidaković (2002) emphasized that “many victims lose the sense of interior control over the things that happen to them, lose self-respect, faith in other people and the community” and, concluded that the process of victim’s recovery and restitution depends on whole community, while Spasić (2007) in her research pointed out cause-and-consequence relationship between depression and different forms of victimization.

Treatment of adult victims of violence in different organizations has been in focus of few researches (Ćopić, 2007; **Milivojević and Mihić, 2003**). Ćopić (2007, p. 28) used survey on organizations in Serbia which offer support to victims of crime. Purpose of her study was “to identify organizations that are supporting victims of crime either within state institutions and non-governmental organizations; to collect and analyze the data that might be useful for victims, and also to make a directory of victim support services in Serbia. The sample encompassed 188 organizations from 55 towns in Serbia.” Directory of victim support services in Serbia, developed by researchers engaged in Victimology Society of Serbia (VDS info..., 2007) was one of the main data sources for our research. Ćopić identifies a few categories of victims, supported by different providers: domestic violence victims, workplace crime victims, victims of „out of workplace“ crime, victims of threatening, victims of fraud, victims of burglary or robbery, victims of violation, victims of human trafficking, victims of torture, state and institutional violence. As recipients of support, she identifies six categories: women, children, men, women and children, women,

children and men, women and men. In comparison to our research, list of activities provided to victims are reduced: information, emotional support, transfer to other institutions/organizations, legal support, psychological support, legal representation, psychotherapy, practical support, crisis and emergency accommodation, crisis intervention, medical support, and support in contact with other institutions. As a main reason for such a situation, the author emphasizes a lack of material support provided by the state, and a lack of material resources.

Research performed by Milivojević and Mihić (2003, p. 38) had similar design of methodology – they used a survey sample of 24 NGOs from Belgrade “assisting victims of crime in Belgrade”. They identify four types of victims among adults: victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual violence, victims of human trafficking, and victims of torture (violation of human rights).

### **Recent trends in treatment of adult victims of violence in Serbia**

Treatment of adult victims of violence is a reflection of many different factors in a society. Among them, of main importance are: tradition, social, economic, and legal characteristics, development of social sciences, and educational potentials of society to cope with these issues. Serbia, as a state in transition, with proclivity to join the EU, recently brought a few laws or annexes to laws which follow current European standards and international conventions to regulate this area: family law (NSRS, 2015a), which emphasizes protection against domestic violence, labor law (NSRS, 2014b), which allows employees to protect themselves against various kinds of mobbing, law for protection of human rights and basic freedoms (2015b), a few laws related to criminal behavior (NSRS, 2014a), law about elimination of all kinds of female discrimination (NSRS, 2014c), etc. and have a few laws related to this topic in the process of creation (for example, freedom from fear law).

Moreover, in Serbia there operate different independent bodies, institutions, GOs, NGOs, and different groups aimed to give support to victims of domestic violence, breaking of human rights, human trafficking, mobbing, to victims of violence against people with disabilities. Among them, according to Ćopić (2007) and **Milivojević and Mihić (2003)**, the most prominent are:

- *independent bodies* (Ombudsman of RS, The Protector of Citizens – Ombudsman of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Commissioner for Protection of Equality, etc.),
- *institutions in system of social welfare* (Secretariats for Social Welfare, Centers for Social Work, established in all communities in Serbia, Institutes of Gerontology, Gerontology Centers, Shelters for Homeless Adult Persons),
- *services for victims of violence* (VDS victim support service which operate under Victimology Society of Serbia, Safe House, Autonomous Female Center, Out of Circle, etc.),
- *association of citizens* which operates on voluntary basis (SOS telefon, established in many communities in Serbia, network Woman Against Violence, etc.)
- *media services* (Media Center Belgrade, TVB92, TVPink, Radio Odžaci, etc.),
- *association of citizens* which operates through *social networks* (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

## Methodology

Our aim in this article is to contribute to the understanding of practice of treatment of adult victims of violence in Serbia by exploring patterns of practice in different organizations determinate to give support to victims and context in which they operate.

The approach which we used is descriptive case study (Yin, 2003, p. 3-15) designed to explore issues within each region of Serbia (Central Serbia, Vojvodina and Belgrade) drawing on data gathered on a sample of 108 Serbian organizations aimed to give support to adult victims of violence, during the summer of 2015. We selected 108 organizations aimed to give support to adult victims of violence. Our case selection was driven by pragmatic concerns and availability of data necessary for triangulation. Main strategy we adopted were archival and qualitative content analysis, based on Yin's suggestion (Yin, 2003, pp. 3-15 Yin, 2003, pp. 3-15) and our decision to try to give answers to the questions:

- Who gives support and treatment to adult victims of violence in Serbia?
- Where is this support and treatment available?
- Who are the recipients of this support and treatment in Serbia?

- What kind of services of different organizations determinate to give support and treatment may offer to adult victims of violence in Serbia?
- How many activities and program offers are available to adult victims of violence in Serbia?
- Which ways of delivery these organizations use for their services?

For obtaining necessary data we used a few sources – different archival records:

- Available documents and reports of: Government of Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, authorities of the City of Belgrade, Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia, different institutions of social welfare, ombudsman of Republic of Serbia, and other relevant sources,
- Internal policy drafts from providers of support and treatment to adult victims of violence in Serbia,
- Directory of NGOs (<http://www.crnps.org.rs/direktorijum-nvo?lang=rs>),
- Periodicals based on empirical researches with detailed data about: providers of support and treatment to adult victims of violence in Serbia based on research performed by Victimology Society of Serbia (2007a), about development of victim support in Serbia based on research performed by Victimology Society of Serbia (2007b),
- Web pages of providers of support and treatment to adult victims of violence in Serbia,
- Facebook pages of providers of support and treatment to adult victims of violence in Serbia, including records of correspondence between providers and clients of their services,
- Empirical researches published in relevant, scientific publications.

For this case study we developed a protocol with a set of substantive questions about:

- recipients,
- types of victims,
- offered services, activities and program offers, and
- ways of service delivery.

In case study protocol we emphasized procedures, and major tasks in collecting data, as well as a plan for ways of coding and interpreting data. Based on it, in analyzing data obtained from aforementioned different sources, after coding, we used archival and qualitative content analysis.



For generalizations we additionally used basic descriptive statistics (frequencies), while for comparison of data we used independent samples t-tests and nonparametric tests for k related samples which is suitable for small samples.

## Findings and analysis

### Differentiation of services by recipients

Based on performed archival and qualitative content analysis (Table 1), we found that most of independent bodies, institutions, GOs, NGOs, and different groups concentrate efforts to give support to all citizens, who were victimized. From 108 organizations in Serbia which give support to adult victims, 62.96% provides services to all citizens, who were victimized.

Table 1. *Recipients of service support*

	Belgrade	Vojvodina	Central Serbia	Serbia
Population in risk, refugees, Roma, other ethnic groups, migrants, assailants, mentally disabled and handicapped people, etc.	8.33%	15.79%	18.87%	14.81%
All citizens, who were victimized	61.11%	73.68%	60.38%	62.96%
Women, lesbian, transgender, bisexual and gay population	2.78%	0.00%	1.89%	1.85%
Women, who were victimized	22.22%	5.26%	16.98%	16.67%
Women with handicap	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Lesbian and bisexual women	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Refugees, other citizens affected by war	0.00%	5.26%	1.89%	1.85%

In Central Serbia, from 53 organizations which give support to adult victims, 60.38% provides services to all citizens who were victimized, while in Belgrade, from 36 organizations which give support to adult victims, 61.11% provides services to all citizens who were victimized. Such a trend is especially present in Vojvodina, where from 19 organizations which give support to adult victims, even 73.68% provides services to all citizens who were victimized. Such results could indicate that Serbia does not have a developed and specialized networks of organizations for differentiated

group of victimized adults, and that Centers for Social Work, situated in almost all towns, provides most services to adult victims of violence.

Differentiation of services are provided for women, who were victimized (16.98% in Central Serbia, 22.22% in Belgrade and only 5.26% in Vojvodina), and different vulnerable groups -- population in risk, refugees, Roma, other ethnic groups, migrants, assailants, mentally disabled and handicapped people, etc. (18.87% in Central Serbia, 15.79% in Vojvodina, and 8.33% in Belgrade). Just few organizations are specialized to support women in risk, lesbian, transgender, bisexual and gay population (1.89% in Central Serbia, and 2.78% in Belgrade), and refugees and other citizens affected by war (1.89% in Central Serbia, and 5.26% in Vojvodina). Services specialized to support women with handicaps who were victimized (2.78%) and to support lesbian and bisexual women who were victimized and exposed to different kinds of violence (2.78%) are available only in Belgrade. Factors directly related to such a situation are: shortage of specialized professionals, unfavorable economic conditions, and unsupportive social climate in smaller communities.

### Differentiation of services by type of victims

Qualitative archival and content analysis of differentiation of service support offers by type of victims revealed interesting discrepancies between regions (Table 2). All organizations in our sample offer multiple services. When we analyzed them by type of victims to whom they offer their services results are very interesting. In Serbia, most organizations offer their services to: domestic violence victims (89.81%), sexual violence victims (89.81%), physical violence victims (50.00%), victims of mobbing (39.81%), victims of threatening (37.50%), and victims of war (35.19%).

Table 2. *Differentiation of service support offers by type of victims*

<b>organizations offer their service support to:</b>	<b>Belgrade</b>	<b>Vojvodina</b>	<b>Central Serbia</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
domestic violence victims	77.78%	94.74%	96.23%	89.81%
sexual violence victims	47.22%	36.84%	58.49%	50.93%
sexual exploitation victims	11.11%	0.00%	1.89%	4.63%
physical violence victims	47.22%	36.84%	56.60%	50.00%

victims of burglary or robbery	19.44%	0.00%	11.32%	12.04%
victims of violation	22.22%	0.00%	13.21%	13.89%
victims of mobbing	41.67%	42.11%	37.74%	39.81%
workplace bullying victims	5.56%	0.00%	3.77%	3.70%
victims of threatening	40.28%	31.58%	37.74%	37.50%
victims of fraud	25.00%	5.26%	20.75%	19.44%
victims of war	41.67%	21.05%	35.85%	35.19%
victims of brutal prison bullying	27.78%	10.53%	18.87%	20.37%
former convicts as victims of violence	30.56%	21.05%	20.75%	24.07%
victims of human trafficking	19.44%	0.00%	5.66%	9.26%
victims of police brutality and corruption	11.11%	0.00%	5.66%	6.48%
forcibly mobilized refugees	11.11%	10.53%	5.66%	8.33%
victims of racial/ethnic discrimination	8.33%	0.00%	3.77%	4.63%
victims of torture from official rehabilitation institutions/centers	2.78%	0.00%	3.77%	2.78%
people who are vulnerable to human trafficking	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Migrants	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Unemployed	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
people who want to report someone missing	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%

Some organizations are focused to offer their support to: former convicts as victims of violence (24.07%), victims of brutal prison bullying (20.37%), victims of fraud (19.44%), victims of violation (13.89%), victims of burglary or robbery (12.04%), victims of human trafficking (9.26%), to forcibly mobilized refugees (8.33%), and to victims of police brutality and corruption (6.48%). Just a few organizations offer their support to: sexual exploitation victims and victims of racial/ethnic discrimination (4.63%), workplace bullying victims (3.70%), victims of torture from official rehabilitation institutions/centers (2.78%), to people who are vulnerable to

human trafficking (0.93%), migrants (0.93%), unemployed (0.93%), and to people who want to report someone missing (0.93%).

Based on deeper statistical analysis, appropriate for small samples, nonparametric tests for k related samples (Table 3) revealed that service support offers by type of violence in Belgrade and Central Serbia are statistically significantly different from each other and from offers by type of violence in Serbia and Vojvodina.

Table 3. *Nonparametric tests for k related samples for differentiation of service support offers by type of victims*

Test Statistics			Kendall's W Test	
N			22	<b>Ranks</b>
Kendall's W <sup>a</sup>			.847	Mean Rank
Chi-Square			55.880	VAR00001 2.66
Df			3	VAR00002 1.09
Asymp. Sig.			.000	VAR00003 2.34
Monte Carlo Sig.	Sig.		.000	VAR00004 3.91
	99%	Lower Bound	0.000	
		Confidence Interval		
		Upper Bound	.000	

In Vojvodina, service support offers by type of victims is similar. The most frequent are support to victims of: domestic violence (94.74%), mobbing (42.11%), sexual violence (36.84%), physical violence (36.84%) and threatening (31.58%). Support to victims of: war (21.05%), former convicts as victims of violence (21.05%), victims of brutal prison bullying (10.53%), to forcibly mobilized refugees (10.53%), and to victims of fraud are seldom (5.26%).

In offer of service by type of victims, organizations in Central Serbia are most frequently supporting victims in case of: domestic violence (96.23%), sexual violence (58.49%), physical violence (56.60%), mobbing (37.74%), threatening (37.74%), war (35.85%), fraud (20.75%), former convicts as victims of violence (20.75%) and victims of brutal prison bullying (18.87%). Just a few organizations offer their support to victims of: violation (13.21%), burglary or robbery (11.32%), human trafficking (5.66%), police brutality and corruption (5.66%), forcibly mobilized refugees (5.66%), workplace bullying (3.77%), racial/ethnic discrimination

(3.77%), torture from official rehabilitation institutions/centers (3.77%), and sexual exploitation (1.89%).

In Belgrade, representation of support to victims of: domestic violence (77.78%), sexual violence (47.22%), physical violence (47.22%), mobbing (41.67%), war (41.67%), threatening (40.28%), to former convicts as victims of violence (30.56%), and to victims of brutal prison bullying (27.78%) are noticeable. Some organizations offer support to victims of: fraud (25.00%), violation (22.22%), burglary or robbery (19.44%), and human trafficking (19.44%), while organizations offer sporadically support to victims of: sexual exploitation (11.11%), police brutality and corruption (11.11%), forcible mobilization of refugees (11.11%), racial/ethnic discrimination (8.33%), workplace bullying (5.56%), torture from official rehabilitation institutions/centers (2.78%), to people who are vulnerable to human trafficking (2.78%), to migrants (2.78%), unemployed (2.78%), and to people who want to report someone missing (2.78%).

The service support offers by type of victims in Serbia are not related to real needs of victims. In Central Serbia and Vojvodina there live many people who are vulnerable to human trafficking, victims of human trafficking, victims of police brutality and corruption. Sexual violence and physical exploitation are not less prevalent in Belgrade than in Central Serbia or Vojvodina. Moreover, it seems that offer of Serbian organizations mostly depend on professional preparation and specialization of human resources engaged in organizations, to unfavorable economic conditions, and to unsupportive social climate instead to the needs of victims. Ćopić (2007, p. 18), based on a survey carried out on 115 organizations which offer support to victims of crime, claims that even if some organizations in Central Serbia and Vojvodina listed different offers by type of violence, it does not mean that they are capable to perform them. Often, as Ćopić explained, these organizations are capable only to recognize a problem, to classify it, and to offer support of some other institution or organization to the victim.

### **Services, activities and programs offered to victims of violence**

Furthermore, as our analysis revealed, most of these organizations have neither programs to cope with all the problems listed, nor possibilities to treat them in an appropriate way (Table 4).

Table 4. *Services, activities and programs offered to victims of violence*

	<b>Belgrade</b>	<b>Vojvodina</b>	<b>Central Serbia</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
Information	100.00%	94.74%	100.00%	99.07%
Emotional support	86.11%	13.28%	90.57%	88.89%
Legal support	69.44%	13.28%	84.91%	80.56%
Legal consultations	11.11%	0.00%	1.89%	4.63%
Legal representation	34.72%	3.91%	35.85%	33.80%
Support to victims and witnesses of crime who are required to testify at court	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%
Psychological consultations	80.56%	12.50%	75.47%	78.70%
Psychotherapy	33.33%	4.69%	24.53%	28.70%
Medical support	19.44%	1.56%	13.21%	14.81%
Practical support	44.44%	8.59%	58.49%	53.70%
Crisis and emergency accommodation	36.11%	7.03%	41.51%	40.74%
Crisis intervention	52.78%	7.03%	41.51%	46.30%
Transfer to other institutions/ organizations	88.89%	14.06%	88.68%	89.81%
Temporary accommodation	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%
Support for obtaining residency status and special humanitarian concern	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Support group/workshops	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Trauma and critical care education	2.78%	0.00%	5.66%	3.70%
Education about human trafficking and prevention	2.78%	0.00%	1.89%	1.85%
Education on safe migration procedures	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Education and legal assistance for job application	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Women's rights information, counseling, and services	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%

Monitoring human trafficking victims in court proceedings	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%
Monitoring human trafficking victims in process of resocialization	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Educational programs for prevention and resocialization in day-care center	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%
Support and monitoring through institutional procedures	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Support to family and friends of human trafficking victims	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Searching for missing persons	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Immediate cash help	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%
Material family support	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Other kind of legal and social family protection	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Psycho-social support	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	0.93%
Employment mediation services	5.56%	0.00%	0.00%	1.85%

In general, most organizations in Serbia to victims of different kinds of violence offer: information (99.07%), transfer to other institutions/organizations (89.81%), emotional support (88.89%), legal support (80.56%) and psychological counselling (78.70%). A fair amount of them offer to victims of violence: different kinds of practical support (53.70%), crisis intervention (46.30%), crisis and emergency accommodation (40.74%), legal representation (33.80%), psychotherapy (28.70%), and medical support (14.81%). Just a few of them in their offer have: legal counselling (4.63%), support to victims and witnesses of crime who are required to testify at court (1.85%), temporary accommodation (1.85%), monitoring human trafficking victims in court proceedings (1.85%), immediate cash help (1.85%), support for obtaining residency status and special humanitarian concern (0.93%), monitoring human trafficking victims in process of resocialization (0.93%), support and monitoring through institutional procedures (0.93%), support to family and friends of human trafficking victims (0.93%), searching for missing persons (0.93%), material family support (0.93%), psycho-social support (0.93%), and other kinds of legal and social family protection (0.93%). Offer of andragogical

support to victims of violence is very rare: trauma and critical care education (3.70%), education about human trafficking and prevention (1.85%), educational programs for prevention and resocialization in day-care centers (1.85%), employment mediation services (1.85%), support group/workshops (0.93%), education on safe migration procedures (0.93%), education and legal assistance for job application (0.93%), women's rights information and counseling (0.93%).

Nonparametric tests for k related samples (Table 5) revealed that program offers in Belgrade, Vojvodina and Central Serbia are statistically significantly different from each other and from program offers in Serbia.

Table 5. *Nonparametric tests for k related samples for activities and program offers*

Test Statistics			Kendall's W Test	
N			32	<b>Ranks</b>
Kendall's W <sup>a</sup>			0.749	Mean Rank
Chi-Square			71.915	VAR00005 2.91
df			3	VAR00006 1.28
Asymp. Sig.			.000	VAR00007 2.09
Monte Carlo Sig.	99%	Lower Bound	.000	VAR00008 3.72
		Confidence Interval		
		Upper Bound	.000	

In Vojvodina, most organizations aimed to give support to victims of different kind of violence offer information (94.74%). Few of them offer: transfer to other institutions/organizations (14.06%), emotional support (13.28%), legal support (13.28%), and psychological consultations (12.50%). Rarely, these organizations in their offer have: practical support (8.59%), crisis and emergency accommodation (7.03%), crisis intervention (7.03%), psychotherapy (4.69%), legal representation (3.91%), and medical support (1.56%).

The offer in Central Serbia is broader to some extent. All organizations to victims of different kinds of violence offer information (100.00%). Many of them offer: emotional support (90.57%), transfer to other institutions/organizations (88.68%), legal support (84.91%), and psychological consultations (75.47%). Among less common offers are: practical support (58.49%), crisis and emergency accommodation (41.51%), crisis



intervention (41.51%), legal representation (35.85%), and psychotherapy (24.53%). Rarely, these organizations in their offer have: medical support (13.21%), trauma and critical care education (5.66%), legal consultations (1.89%) and education about human trafficking and prevention (1.89%).

In Belgrade, the situation is in some way brighter. All organizations to victims of different kind of violence offer information (100.00%), while transfer to other institutions/organizations (88.89%), emotional support (86.11%), and psychological consultations (80.56) are a very frequent offer, too. Many organizations offer legal support (69.44%), and crisis intervention (52.78%), and to some extent: practical support (44.44%), crisis and emergency accommodation (36.11%), legal representation (34.72%), and psychotherapy (33.33%). Offer of: medical support (19.44%), legal consultations (11.11%), support to victims and witnesses of crime who are required to testify at court (5.56), temporary accommodation (5.56%), monitoring human trafficking victims in court proceedings (5.56%), immediate cash help (5.56%), support for obtaining residency status and special humanitarian concern (2.78%), monitoring human trafficking victims in process of resocialization (2.78%), support and monitoring through institutional procedures (2.78%), support to family and friends of human trafficking victims (2.78%), searching for missing persons (2.78%), material family support (2.78%), psycho-social support (2.78%), and other kind of legal and social family protection (2.78%) is occasional. Still, andragogical offer is limited: educational programs for prevention and resocialization in day-care centers (5.56%), employment mediation services (5.56%), support group/workshops (2.78%), trauma and critical care education (2.78%), education about human trafficking and prevention (2.78%), education on safe migration procedures (2.78%), education and legal assistance for job application (2.78%), and women's rights information, and counseling (2.78%).

Impact of professional profiles of employees, and unfavorable economic conditions in Serbian organizations which offer support to adult victims of different kind of violence is more visible from program offer than from any other data. Many staff engaged in such organizations (with the exception of employees in Centers for Social Work) are volunteers, without adequate professional preparation, and any relevant andragogical knowledge. Many of them operate only on the basis of skills developed through short trainings, which is a reflection on the offer of information, as a main activity, and to the provision of emotional support (through activities of

listening, understanding and support) which does not require adequate psychological knowledge or professional preparation. On the one hand, due to fact that our sample encompass 45.37% Centers for Social Work in Serbia (respectively: 57.89% in Vojvodina, 47.11% in Central Serbia, and 36.11% in Belgrade) which are obligated to employ lawyers, psychologists and social workers with adequate professional preparation, it is not surprising that the core of activities offered to victims are psychological consultations, legal support and transfer to other institutions/organizations. On the other hand, previous lack of regulations for obligatory professional engagement of andragogues in Centers for Social Work in Serbia in the field of protection of adults and elderly directly reflected to un-proportional representation of activities of andragogical support or educational programs for victims of different kinds of violence. Serbia recently adopted legal regulative about professional structure of employees in the system of social care (Ministarstvo za rad..., 2012, p. 2) which will prospectively have impact to offer of activities and programs of Centers for Social Work.

The findings for ways of support delivery to adult victims of different kinds of violence are very interesting, too (Table 6). Most programs in Serbian organizations which offer support to adult victims of different kinds of violence are delivered by direct communication (94.44%), and by telephone (65.74%). Occasionally, organizations communicate with adult victims through letters (28.70%) or e-mail (27.78%), while they sporadically use: visits (6.48%), process of mediation (4.63%), legally regulated activities, in cooperation with relevant institutions (3.70%), group work/workshops (2.78%), support (1.85%), social interventions (1.85%), observations (0.93%), and evaluation (0.93%). Additionally, 59.26% of organizations which offer support to adult victims of different kinds of violence use Facebook (or have open profile at Facebook), while 32.41% of them have web pages.

### **Ways of support delivery to adult victims**

We found similar ways of support delivery to adult victims of different kinds of violence in Central Serbia and in Belgrade, while they are different and to some extent reduced in the case of Vojvodina. Particularly, in Vojvodina, support to adult victims of different kinds of violence is usually delivered by direct communication (89.47%), by telephone (84.21%), through Facebook (63.16%) and through web pages (31.58%). Rarely,

organizations communicate with adult victims through letters or via e-mails (15.79%), and infrequently organize visits (10.53%) or group work/workshops (5.26%).

Table 6. *Ways of support delivery to adult victims*

	<b>Belgrade</b>	<b>Vojvodina</b>	<b>Central Serbia</b>	<b>Serbia</b>
by telephone	72.22	84.21	54.72	65.74
by direct communication	97.22	89.47	94.34	94.44
through letters	47.22	15.79	20.75	28.70
via e-mails	44.44	15.79	20.75	27.78
through group work/workshops	5.56	5.26	0.00	2.78
through observation	2.78	0.00	0.00	0.93
through support	5.56	0.00	0.00	1.85
through evaluation	2.78	0.00	0.00	0.93
through legally regulated activities, in cooperation with relevant institutions	8.33	0.00	1.89	3.70
by visits	8.33	10.53	3.77	6.48
by social interventions	5.56	0.00	0.00	1.85
by process of mediation	5.56	0.00	5.66	4.63
through web pages	41.67	31.58	26.42	32.41
through Facebook	58.33	63.16	58.49	59.26

In Central Serbia support to adult victims of different kinds of violence are usually delivered by direct communication (94.34%), by Facebook (59.26%) and by telephone (54.72%), while organizations in Belgrade use more frequently direct communication (97.22%), telephone (72.22%) and Facebook (58.33%).

To some extent the common ways for communication with adult victims of violence in Central Serbia are: process of mediation (32.41%), letters (28.70%), and e-mails (27.78%), while in Belgrade organizations occasionally use letters (47.22%), e-mails (44.44%), and web pages (41.67%). Legally regulated way of communication, in cooperation with

relevant institutions is rare in Central Serbia (6.48%) and in Belgrade (8.33%), as well as: social interventions (4.63% in Central Serbia, 5.56% in Belgrade), evaluation (3.70% in Central Serbia, 2.78% in Belgrade). Organizations which offer support to adult victims of different kinds of violence in Belgrade rarely use mediation (5.56%), while in Central Serbia they almost never use web pages (2.78%). We found seldom usage of observation (1.85% in Central Serbia, 2.78% in Belgrade), visits (1.85% in Central Serbia, 8.33% in Belgrade), group work/workshops (0.93% in Central Serbia, 5.56% in Belgrade), and support (0.93% in Central Serbia, 5.56% in Belgrade).

Besides, these results imply lack of andragogical support to victims. While direct communication is suitable for delivery of information, emotional and legal support and psychological consultations, and communication by telephone is proper for information delivery and eventually for emotional and legal support, more complex ways of support delivery to adult victims (through: group work/workshops, observation, support, evaluation, process of mediation, etc.) are rarely present in practice of organizations which offer support to adult victims of different kinds of violence.

## **Discussion**

### **Who are recipients of offered services?**

Differentiation of recipients of services offered by analyzed organizations reflects their ownership, mission and policy, and organizational structure. State owned organizations/institutions (Centers for Social Work, People's Offices, etc.) in their mission usually state that their services are aimed to all citizens of Serbia. Recipients of services offered by private owned providers (NGOs), stated in their missions, are very heterogeneous (women, victims of domestic violence, victims of human trafficking, victims of mobbing, victims of sexual violence, Roma, etc.). Furthermore, formally stated missions of Serbian NGOs, follows current social trends. During 1990s most NGOs stated that their mission is to provide different kind of support to victims of war (refugees, forcibly mobilized citizens, other citizens affected by war, etc.); during last decade most of them stated that their mission is to protect and to support victims of domestic violence (children and women, and in case of few NGOs, elderly victims).

Recently, stated missions of NGOs followed trends directed by current projects supported by EU and other major providers; thus most of them

as recipients of their offer distinguished population in risk, refugees, Roma, other ethnic groups, migrants, assailants, mentally disabled and handicapped people, etc., while in last few years as recipients that dominate: women, who were victimized, women with handicap, lesbian and bisexual women, or women, lesbian, transgender, bisexual and gay population. Patterns of following current social trends are especially present in the case of Belgrade.

Otherwise, in Vojvodina and Central Serbia patterns of stated missions are more based on the current needs of the community, then on current social trends (which have a far-reaching influence on them, too). Due to the fact that substantial numbers of refugees from 1990s wars are situated in these two regions, many NGOs in their mission statements still have refugees as main recipients. Broadly speaking, domestic violence influences many NGOs in Vojvodina and Central Serbia to state that their recipients are women, who were victimized, while the presence of divergent victimized population had impact to some of NGOs to state in their mission the provision of activities for broad groups of victimized: population in risk, refugees, Roma, other ethnic groups, migrants, assailants, mentally disabled and handicapped people, etc.

Such “mission drifts” have been noticed by other researchers, too. Thus, as Dees and Anderson wrote, examples that NGOs encompass in their mission as recipients “individuals who are somewhat less disadvantaged because it is cheaper to fund those programs than find grants for helping the extreme poor” (Dees and Anderson, 2003, as in: Lewis, 2005).

Furthermore, organizational structures are in some extent congruent to formulation of mission statements, as Andrews and Light (Andrews, 2010, Light, 2002, in: Lewis, 2005) founded in their studies. In accordance to this, results of our study imply that specialized services for distinctive groups of recipients are offered only in NGOs with employees who obtained specific professional training (for example: Atina, ATC, IAN, Nemeza, VDS Info).

### **What types of victims are recognized?**

Differentiation of service support offers by type of victims put additional light on trends in treatment of victims of violence against the adult population. Based on obtained data, it seems that domestic violence victims are far more represented in offer, no matter of ownership of organization. Their representation corresponds to missions and organizational structure

of Centers for Social Work, and for some NGOs. Deeper analysis revealed that some NGOs, especially those who are supported by Government or who follows their recommendations ensure same procedures in provision of their services as aforementioned Centers (i.e. Counseling against domestic violence, Amity). Concurrently, many NGOs, whose services are aimed to victims of domestic violence, have different visions. Some of them as a goal have empowerment of women – victims of domestic violence (... Out Of Circle, Autonomous Women's Center), material support and education (Self-Supporting Mothers), political and legislative enlightenment of women (Juca), etc.

Sexual and physical violence victims are very often listed as recipients of different kind of support. In treatment for those recipients, Centers for Social Work and different People's Offices follow legal procedures, and emphasize legislative and psychological counseling. Visions of many NGOs in treatment of sexual and physical violence victims are aimed toward their empowerment and education (Anti Trafficking Center), legislative support, mediation, counseling (Atina, YUCOM), information and support (SOS Telephone), emancipation (Anna). While Centers for Social Work offer their services (mainly legislative) to victims of mobbing, some NGOs added educational support to their offer (Committee for Human Rights – Leskovac). Such findings indicate a trend of increased organizations specialized in the treatment of differentiated violence victims, especially women. While, according to Nikolić-Ristanović (2007, p. 7), only 10 organizations in 2007 have been specialized in treatment of female victims of sexual and physical violence, in our research over 50.00% (31 in Central Serbia, 7 in Vojvodina and 17 in Belgrade) of organizations in our sample have such specialization. Moreover, many specialized treatments from our sample are offered to victims of mobbing (43 organizations in Serbia, 20 in Central Serbia, 8 in Vojvodina and 15 in Belgrade), victims of threatening (40 organizations in Serbia, 20 in Central Serbia, 6 in Vojvodina and 14 in Belgrade), and victims of war (38 organizations in Serbia, 19 in Central Serbia, 4 in Vojvodina and 15 in Belgrade), which is opposite to findings of research performed by Milivojević and Mihić (2003, p. 40), who found that in Belgrade not one NGO offered any specialized treatment to victims of fraud, physical violence or threatening (different than as component of domestic violence).

Increase in specialized treatment is noticed for former convicts as victims of violence, and for victims of brutal prison bullying. While

according to Nikolić-Ristanović in 2007 only one organization – VDS Info, which operates under umbrella of Victimology Society of Serbia offered treatment to “female victims of violence who killed the violator or committed any other criminal act related to suffered violation” (Milivojević and Mihić, 2003), in 2015 even 22 organizations from our sample in Serbia have such offer (10 organizations in Central Serbia, 2 in Vojvodina and 10 in Belgrade). Although similar increase of offered treatment is evident in last 10 years for victims of: fraud, human trafficking, burglary or robbery, violation, and racial or ethnic discrimination, we could not find any organization in our sample which offer any kind of activities to elderly people as victims, to adult victims of cybercrime or to adult victims of children as perpetrators of violence, although these issues are well explained in analyzed literature (Kostić and Đorđević, 2000; Lepojević and Kovačević-Lepojević, 2007; Opsenica Kostić, Panić and Cakić, 2015; Petrušić, Todorović and Vračević, 2012; Popadić and Plut, 2007, etc.).

### **Services, activities and programs offered to adult victims of violence**

Next step in our analysis was to distinguish services, activities and programs offered to adult victims of violence by different providers in Serbia. Most state owned organizations from our sample, i.e. Centers for Social Work offer: information, emotional support, legal support, psychological consultations, practical support, crisis and emergency accommodation, crisis intervention, and transfer to other institutions/organizations. In comparison, offer of People's Offices is limited to: information, psychosocial support, legal support, psychological consultations, and transfer to other institutions/organizations. Although by recently adopted legal regulative about professional structure of employees in the system of social care (Ivanović and Jovanović, 2013; Ministarstvo za rad..., 2012, p. 2) Centers for Social Work could hire andragogues – well prepared professionals, able to design, organize and perform differentiated programs for education and learning of adults (including category of adult victims of violence), according to our data, only few of them (Jagodina, Novi Pazar, Zrenjanin) have andragogues as associates. Such practice has direct impact on a narrow offer of activities provided by these organizations.

Concurrently, most NGOs (from our sample) perform a very broad spectrum of educational activities for adult victims of violence. For example,

Committee for Human Rights – Leskovac among other activities aimed as support to adult victims of violence have Summer school of human rights, Educational programs about human rights, police brutality and torture, torture and brutal prison bullying, etc. NGO Atina which is engaged in the field of combating trafficking in human beings and, specifically, comprehensive social inclusion of victims of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation realized a number of very differentiated activities: “In addition to direct assistance to victims of human trafficking, Atina, as a separate program, organizes trainings and education for professionals from different fields in order to build capacities of institutions and organizations to provide adequate support to victims of human trafficking. (...) The program of sustainable social inclusion of victims of human trafficking, and other forms of exploitation aims at full social inclusion and economic empowerment of victims of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation, in the conditions of economic crisis and reduced state intervention.” (<http://atina.org.rs/en/index.html>). NGO Atina’s direct assistance activities are carried out through three sections: Transition house, Open club–Reintegration center, and Field support team. Additionally, Atina provide programs for prevention of human trafficking and exploitation developing anti discriminative standards while working with the vulnerable groups. Apart from information, legal and psychological support, and other common activities, NGO “Iz kruga” offer basic training package for the SOS line for women with disabilities who have the experience of violence; NGO Roma Female Center provide programs for women empowerment, and literacy programs, while NGO Autonomous Women’s Center, which have a vision to empower women in overcoming trauma caused by domestic violence, partnership violence and/or sexual violence, to sensitize and educate professionals engaged in different institutions about issues related to violence against women, women’s human rights and institutional procedures for protection from domestic violence perform preventive, informative and educational activities for women and the public in general, consultative activities for women with trauma of male violence, interventions in situations of crisis, psychological support for overcoming the trauma of violence and legal support for enjoying the right of life without violence, independent representation of beneficiaries in institutions and judicial and administrative proceedings, independent monitoring and evaluation of public services intervention, implementation of the laws, implementation of the public policies, making reports on violence against women and



domestic violence (“shadow reports”), education of representatives from nongovernmental organizations and institutions, advocacy, analytical and research activities, publishing, etc.

### **Ways of support delivery to adult victims**

Core of activities in both public and private funded organizations included in our research are performed through direct “face-to-face” communication. Two thirds of them communicate with recipients by telephone, which is related to fact that most organizations perform informative activities, and that many of them have SOS telephone services. Communication with recipients through Facebook is surprisingly frequent, due to fact that on the whole sample only about 30.00% use e-mails, or delivery relevant information through web pages. Realization of activities through group work/workshops, observation, evaluation, legally regulated activities, in cooperation with relevant institutions, by visits, through social interventions or by process of mediation is sporadic. Based on analyzed data, we can conclude that ways of support delivery to adult victims are still very conservative and limited; they reflect insufficient andragogical professionals engaged in this field.

### **Conclusion**

With regard to the first posed research question, our findings indicate that in missions stated by public funded organizations as recipients are usually addressed to all citizens of Serbia, while the addressed recipients in NGOs represent very heterogeneous population, shaped by current: social trends, projects funded by external providers and community needs. Different kinds of “mission drifts” related to recipients in both public and private funded organizations could be performed only regarding to major changes in professional structure of these organizations.

As main groups of adult victims in Serbia both public and private funded organizations emphasized women as victims of domestic, sexual and physical violence. Our findings revealed that in last few years, more often than it was found in previous researches, organizations indicate very heterogeneous types of victims: victims of mobbing, victims of threatening, victims of war, victims of fraud, physical violence or threatening (different than as component of domestic violence). In Serbia nowadays there operate few NGOs which offer specialized treatment for former convicts as victims

of: violence, brutal prison bullying, fraud, human trafficking, burglary or robbery, violation, and racial or ethnic discrimination. List of recognized recipients – adult victims of violence, offered by different organizations are congruent to list offered by Serbian researchers, with the exception of groups of elderly people as victims, adult victims of cybercrime or adult victims of children as perpetrators of violence.

With reference to our third research question, we concluded that most public funded organizations, and a substantial number of NGOs in Serbia which provide different activities and programs to adult victims of violence still base their performance on limited services – delivery of information, emotional support, legal support, psychological consultations, practical support, crisis and emergency accommodation, crisis intervention, and transfer to other institutions/organizations. Hiring andragogues could result in more adequate, appropriate, and differentiated programs for adult victims of violence

In accordance with lack of professionally engaged andragogues and selection of activities and programs are findings that most organizations, encompassed by our research, perform their activities through “face-to-face” communication. Traditionalistic approach to selection of communication channels is partially enriched with Facebook, e-mails, and web pages as a sort of progressive substitutes, which provide fast responses, possibility of evaluation and wide range of information. Still, group work (supportive groups), workshops, pair learning, etc. still remains unknown to most Serbian practitioners engaged in treatment of adult victims of violence.

Although we were interested in the practice of treatment of adult victims of violence in Serbia by exploring patterns of practice in different organizations determinate to give support to victims and context in which they operate, future studies should examine this problem from different perspective. Limitation of case study approach with archival and qualitative content analysis adopted as the main research strategy could be reduced in combination with different sources of data (qualitative semi-structured interviews) or by different research methodology (meta-analysis of qualitative studies) or by adoption different (quantitative) research methods. Attention has to be given to professional preparation of staff engaged in organizations who deliver treatment to different groups of adult victims, to organizational structure, tradition and characteristics of social context, and to ways of funding, as main factors which influence performance of those organizations.

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