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SOCIAL WORK WITH MIGRANTS – ILLUSION OR REALITY: THE CASE OF SARAJEVO CANTON

Abstract

The first decades of the 21st century were marked by crises that brought numerous negative changes. The migrant crisis is just one of many such crises in this period, and it escalated during the so-called coronavirus crisis. The difficult position of the people on the move and the need to engage important actors in the migrant crisis response are just some of the aspects examined in this text. It also theoretically describes potential approaches for experts, particularly regarding social work with migrants. The challenges and difficulties faced by experts in working with this socially excluded group were identified by means of a qualitative analysis.

Keywords: *migrations; crises; social work; professional approach; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Sarajevo Canton*

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Introduction

Today's society is marked by the phenomenon of "new migrations", sparked four decades ago by the globalization process.[3] Contemporary sociology is trying to theoretically explain the so-called "current" migrations for the purposes related to work, education or tourism, as well as the "violent migrations" we are now witnessing, which are caused by conflict, war, suffering and socio-economic circumstances.[4] The most recent migrant crisis and other crises that marked the 21st century (such as the global financial crisis in 2008 and the current health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic) have resulted in complex issues that have not been adequately addressed. Being forced to leave their homes, the uncertain journey and "running away" to a better world (developed Western countries) leaves deep scars on the individuals, women, children, families and groups on the move. In social sciences this raises the question of necessity of interdisciplinary thinking and concrete action by experts who can dampen the negative impacts on the lives of individuals and groups on the move and who happened to be in the given area at the given time.

The "2015 European migrant crisis"[5] is a result of continuous erosion of relationships between the Middle Eastern countries in the past, of old and new conflicts. Another cause of the migrant crisis are the worrisome levels of poverty in numerous Eastern and African countries, as well as authoritarian, regressive and violent political systems. The most recent migrant crisis was even more complex because it mostly involved attempts to illegally reach wealthy countries (EU member states, in 2015). Unable to reach their target destination, people on the move are forced to stay in transit countries which they have also entered illegally. For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina as a transit country with the longest border with Croatia (an EU member state) became an "unwanted waiting room", from which migrants go to the "game" and are violently "pushed back" many times, often severely injured. Many tragic stories of minors and children who have lost their parents, single mothers with small children, families traveling with ill relatives, individuals and groups exposed

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3 "More precisely, "new migrations" as Giddens (2003) calls them are linked to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of the socialist system, and the dissolution of the Soviet bloc." Valida Repovac Nikšić, Refugees, Migration and Trafficking in Humans in What is the Gender of Security, Ždralović Amila & Gavrić Saša & Rožajac-Zulčić Mirela (ed.) (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Open Center, 2020), p. 202.

4 Milan Mesić, Globalizacija migracija, Migracijske i etničke teme, 1: 7–22., 2002.

5 BBC, Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts, http://www.bbc.com/news/worldeurope-34131911 ., 2016.

to hunger and violence, are just some of the problems faced by people on the move in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[6] These problems became particularly accentuated during the COVID-19 pandemic. The health crisis has contributed to the complexity of the migrant situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and can potentially have new implications and create various social crises. Even much more developed societies and countries than Bosnia and Herzegovina have struggled with these challenges.

This resulted in the need to modify the existing and create new policies, programmes and measures for overcoming the migrant crisis, most prominently in several cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During a pandemic characterised by social exclusion and inequality, the concept of an appropriate and comprehensive approach in addressing the problems brought on by the migrant crisis remains unrecognized. This is especially the case with regard to improvements in the quality of life in migrant camps, which requires engagement of a greater number of various expert staff than is currently the case. From this we can conclude that support professions, and particularly social workers, play a crucial role in mitigating the problems migrants face on route to their target destination. In the broadest sense of the term, social work encompasses a set of measures and procedures carried out by professional social workers with the aim to provide assistance and support to individuals and/ or groups who find themselves in an unfavourable position.

Theoretical and methodological approaches to social work with migrants

Having in mind the interdisciplinary approach used in this research, the theoretical starting point of the paper can be found in contemporary sociological theories, primarily those of the sociologist Anthony Giddens and his collaborators.[7] These authors have spent decades researching modern globalisation processes which have, inter alia, spurred global migrations. Globalization processes integrating the world since the early 1980s rest primarily on the neoliberal ideology. That predatory capitalism has deepened inequality (the gap between the poor majority and the wealthy few) and is causing mass economic

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6 "New migrations" to and on the European soil reached maximum intensity in 2015. They mostly took place via the so-called Balkan route (from Turkey through Greece and Italy, Balkan countries, to the European Union)." Valida Repovac Nikšić, *op. cit.* p. 205

7 See more: Anthony Giddens & Mitchell Duneier & Richard P. Appelbaum & Deborah Carr, Introduction to Sociology (Seagull Twelfth Edition), W. W. Norton & Company, Kindle Edition, 2021

migrations. Unfavourable economic circumstances pave the way for political instability, conflict and war, and turned population movements into forced or violent migrations.[8] The manner in which people on the move (refugees, economic migrants and others) were forced to move and the testimonies (personal, media and others) about the circumstances along the way are a sufficient argument in favour of encouraging social and institutional responsibility and provision of both humanitarian and professional support to people in need.

Social work should be an essential component of expert support because, by its global definition, it is a practice-based profession and academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and empowerment and liberation of people. Social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for differences are listed as the cornerstones of social work.[9] Social work includes responding to critical and urgent situations as well as everyday personal and social problems by means of numerous interventions which vary from those focused on psychosocial processes of a single individual to those aimed at inclusion in social policies, social planning and social development.[10] The main role of social work is to provide help to those in need[11] and its main purpose is to set the foundations for social development, which, in the broadest sense of the term, represents a process of quantitative growth and qualitative changes which occur in the sphere of living, working, and social conditions of all people in a specific area.[12]

It is not difficult to see that social development measures focused on improved quality of life cover the entire population of a state, without regard for the reasons why certain persons found themselves on the territory of that state. In creating social development measures, special attention should be paid to socially excluded groups. According to data published in *Social Inclusion in B&H*[13]*, these groups include the elderly, youth, people with disabilities, displaced persons and the Roma. Migrants are not recognized as a distinct socially excluded group that requires the involvement of social workers and other support experts (such as psychotherapists, sociologists, pedagogues, etc.) in the development of measures aimed at preserving the dignity of life. This may be explained*

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8 See more about the types of migration in: Silva Mežnarić, Migracijske aktualnosti: stanje, problemi, perspektive paradigmi istraživanja u: Migracijske i etničke teme 19 (2003), 4: 323–341

9 Global definition of the profession of social work - EASSW

10 Ivan Vidanović, Rečnik socijalnog rada (Beograd: Autorsko izdanje, 2006), str. 374.

11 Sabira Gadžo-Šašić, Socijalni rad s osobama s invaliditetom (Sarajevo: Fakultet političkih nauka, 2020), str. 18.

12 Mira Lakićević & Ana Gavrilović, Socijalni razvoj i planiranje (Banja Luka: Biblioteka udžbenici, 2009), str. 8.

13 UNDP. Socijalna uključenost. Izvještaj o humanom razvoju. 2007. str. 33.

by the fact that the migrant issue was not prominent at the time when the study of socially excluded groups in B&H was conducted.

Therefore, the approach to social work with migrants became a topic of interest only in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century (2015) due to significant migrations stirred by armed conflicts, human rights violations and persecution in war-torn Syria, Afghanistan and other affected countries. Since then, experts of various profiles have been striving to address the migrant crisis. Work with migrants is challenging because they have different cultures, languages and customs. Working with these people requires special professional approaches and social workers must be able to adapt to different types of people and assist them in accordance with applicable national regulations, while also investing superhuman efforts to help them in the true sense of the word, especially during the pandemic when the economic crisis has reached unpredictable proportions and directly affects the quality of work with the migrants.

The obstacle in working with migrants is the lack of knowledge of the language and their different social and cultural backgrounds. However, this does not affect the importance of each state's obligation to provide each migrant with a dignified existence while in its territory, despite such obstacles. Therefore, all migrants are entitled to social benefits while in the territory of any state. Professionals, such as social workers but also pedagogues, psychologists, teachers and others involved in providing services to migrants, face multiple problems[14] on account of the language barrier and differences in cultural heritage. In fact, professionals of all profiles have an obligation to provide support and assistance to migrants. However, language and cultural barriers, as well as budgetary limitations, prevent them from using the traditional approaches in their work with migrants.

The example of Germany, which has faced the migrant crisis much earlier, can serve as an example of dealing with migrants. Germany continuously strives to design projects that contain a widely accepted operating model, primarily for social workers but also for other supporting professions. According to available sources[15], training projects for professionals working with migrants have the following objectives:

1. Addressing the language barrier (primarily with migrant children);
2. Changing attitudes (both in the migrant population and in the local population);

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14 Klaudija Kreger, Multikulturalni socijalni rad s migrantima - iskustva Njemačke U: Studijski centar socijalnog rada (Zagreb: Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1999), str. 99.

15 Klaudija Kreger. *op. cit.*

3. Creative use of free time (such as creating opportunities for locals and foreigners to meet and socialise).

Accomplishing these goals requires certain activities. Some of these activities are:

a) Arrange additional language lessons in both schools and camps in order to overcome the language barrier;

b) Design measures to overcome mutual cultural prejudices;

c) Open youth centres which, importantly, provide for socializing with youth from different cultural backgrounds.

In addition to these goals, various other activities can be designed at the local level, including group work/activities. Professional social workers can use traditional approaches in their work with migrants as well. The first approach, individual work, involves providing assistance to people when they find themselves in difficult circumstances and when they are not able to solve their problems on their own. In applying this approach, professionals should pay special attention to the client's personality and the environment in which they live. Therefore, in working with migrants it is of particular importance to study the circumstances in which the person lived previously and to consider and design the assistance accordingly, while also taking into account the resources that are available. Professionals should also try to identify the causes of disharmony between the individual and his/her environment, but also to consider the option of mobilizing other stakeholders to provide help and support. It is particularly important to develop relationships based on cooperation between the professional and the client.

In working with migrants and other socially excluded groups, individual support is just one approach for providing assistance and support to people who find themselves at a disadvantage. That is why group work, focused on working with a group, is an irreplaceable component of social work and is therefore often considered more efficient because it facilitates faster problem-solving and identification of actions focused on a common goal. Certainly, in addition to social work with individuals and groups, the approach based on social work in the community is of special importance. This implies the need for involvement of various local community stakeholders in the design of actions aimed at improving the lives of migrants, along with all those in a disadvantaged position[16]. The above demonstrates that the key to addressing the migrant crisis lies in involving the representatives of the centres for social work, non-governmental organisations and the local communities hosting the

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16 Muhamed Dervišbegović, Socijalni rad: teorija i praksa (Zonex: Sarajevo, 2003)

migrant centres, as well as the representatives of nearby local communities.

In order to mitigate the impact of many crises that shook the world, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the first decades of the 21st century, all stakeholders in power must engage in internal development through adequate foreign policy. As pointed out by some authors[17], this is the path that makes it possible to maintain social order, harmony and rapid and stable economic development, which, by all appearances, seems crucial for overcoming the impacts of numerous crises and thus also the impact of the migrant crisis. Namely, although the majority of migrants in B&H are here only temporarily, we must not neglect the need to provide them with well-designed support, primarily professional, because this is the only way to solve the accumulated problems that will continue to escalate if not addressed in due course.

The migrant crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina - the Sarajevo Canton context

After the closure of the official route in March 2016 and the closing of the European Union's borders, the only available route for irregular migration and abuse in the form of smuggling and trafficking is the transit through Bosnia and Herzegovina, named "the Bosnian Route" by the sociology professor Dželal Ibraković (2019). To make the situation even more complex, people on the move who cross the border on the Drina River primarily see Bosnia and Herzegovina as a "fast" transit through the territory and a passage to Croatia, as their goal is to reach the planned destinations in the European Union and the promise of a better life. Due to the closed and well-guarded border and many migrants' multiple failed attempts to get across to Slovenia, over 20,000 of them are "passing" through Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most of them stay in the country longer, mostly in the winter when it is impossible to leave, i.e. to participate in the so-called "game" - which is how they call the many dangerous and difficult attempts to cross the border to Croatia.[18]

So, it is obvious that Bosnia and Herzegovina was unprepared for the migrant crisis. About six years ago, tens of thousands of refugees and migrants were on the move across Southeast Europe with the goal to reach Western Europe.[19] Most of the Balkan route is now closed, but this has exacerbated the

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17　Meho Bašić, Makroekonomska efikasnost kao faktor ekonomskog razvoja Bosne i Hercegovine u: Pregled br. 4. 2006. str. 17.

18　Valida Repovac Nikšić, *op. cit.* str. 205.

19　BBC, Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts, http://www.bbc.com/news/worldeurope-34131911., 2016.

humanitarian crisis because vulnerable groups are not able to move on. For the last five years this has placed a burden on Bosnia and Herzegovina as it must deal with the wave of migrants that fluctuates in size and intensity (depending on the season), but remains active to this day. According to available data from the competent institutions and estimates made by international organisations, about 60,000 migrants and refugees have passed through B&H from 2018 to date. Some liberal estimates indicate that as many as 100,000 people on the move have passed through B&H in recent years and gone on to EU countries. In 2019, the number of migrants and asylum seekers in the territory of B&H was 29,302. The Service for Foreigners' Affairs of B&H has registered 15,311 migrants since the beginning of 2020. The European Union's report for 2020 indicates that B&H currently hosts 6,155 migrants residing in seven EU-financed temporary reception centres in Una-Sana Canton (USK) and Sarajevo Canton. Estimates indicate that close to 3,000 migrants remain outside the registered reception centres, mainly in the Una-Sana Canton, and that they live in highly inhumane conditions.

The migrants' country of origin and the reasons why they migrate have changed since the start of the transit through B&H. For example, arrivals recorded in 2018 primarily originated from war-torn areas of Syria, followed by Iraq and Afghanistan. Next to young men fleeing from military drafts, there was a significant number of families with elderly members and/or children. In 2019 the number of refugees fell, but there was a notable increase in the number of economic migrants, primarily young men from North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), Pakistan and Bangladesh, who as their reason for migration mainly point to poor socioeconomic circumstances in their country of origin along with other issues related to discrimination based on politics, economy or identity (gender, sexual preference, etc.). As already noted, the common feature of these migrations is that they are illegal. Even today, in 2021, if you travel east to the border between B&H and Serbia you may see young men swimming across the river Drina and, still wet, travel along the roads in the direction of Sarajevo. Unless they remain in one of the two reception centres (Ušivak and Blažuj) in Sarajevo Canton, migrants take trains or buses to the border with Croatia, usually to the Krajina region in the northwest of B&H. According to 2019 data, other than two reception centres in Sarajevo Canton and a reception centre in Salakovac in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, the majority are located in the Una-Sana Canton (Bira, Miral, Borići, Sedra). It should be noted that, besides these temporary reception centres, B&H has reception centres for foreigners located in East

Sarajevo and in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.[20]

The Vučjak camp was closed in late 2019 due to the living conditions in it, which Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, called "shameful for BiH". Besides the low standard of living conditions in the reception centres, where the provision of humanitarian aid is mainly coordinated by international organisation such as the IOM (and financed by the European Union), large numbers of migrants are literally living in the streets and sleeping on bus and railway stations. Thanks to the volunteer efforts of some citizens and certain non-governmental organisations they have access to warm clothes and food right there on the street. But with such a large and prolonged influx of people on the move, volunteers and non-governmental organisations are facing major obstacles in their efforts to provide adequate assistance. The response of the state at all levels is far from adequate. Due to the lack of coordination and cooperation between different levels, the biggest burden of the migrant crisis falls on the local communities. The lack of institutional strategic planning and organisation also hinders the deployment of funds made available to Bosnia and Herzegovina by the European Union for effective management of the migrant crisis and humanitarian crisis prevention.[21]

Besides the very bad conditions in the reception centres that resulted in closures of certain camps, such as the Vučjak camp in late 2019 following the statement of the Council of Europe that such inhumane accommodation constitutes a direct violation of human rights, there is also a range of other problems. It should be noted that considerable confusion exists with respect to the statistics/official data on the number of people on the move and especially on the number of unaccompanied minors, children who lost their parents along the way, the sick, migrants belonging to the LGBT population, single mothers, etc. What is very worrying is the fact that this situation is further complicated by the often incorrect/discriminatory media reporting that contributes to misunderstandings and lack of acceptance by the local population, which considers "the guests/Others" undesirable and a danger to their lives and community. In this whole intricate picture that can be considered to constitute a humanitarian crisis, the role of the international organizations which coordinate the provision of support to migrants and the incoming financial assistance for these purposes, is quite non-transparent.

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20 Sead Turčalo, Sigurnosni aspekti migrantske krize u BiH (Sarajevo: Neobjavljeni istraživački rad, 2019)

21 Valida Repovac Nikšić, *op. cit.* str. 206-207.

It is only through migrants' testimonies and media statements, as well as testimonies given by volunteers and independent journalists, that we can learn about the difficult conditions in the camps in Sarajevo Canton which are filled to maximum capacity. For this reason, a significant number of people on the move remain outside these reception centres and survive with the help of dedicated volunteers and independent journalist activists. Another worrying aspect is that the citizens of Sarajevo Canton committed to helping these unfortunate people are often exposed to hate speech, violence and police brutality. Unfortunately, these incidents are not often publicized or openly discussed in government institutions. On the contrary, sessions dedicated to the migrant crisis and the security situation in Sarajevo Canton have demonstrated the lack of understanding of this crisis by the politicians who use this difficult situation to populist ends, i.e. to "protect" the local population, especially in parts of the canton with higher concentrations of migrants (for example, around the reception centres in the Hadžići municipality). The above picture was the motivation for this research, especially after learning about the existence of severe psycho-social cases and the absence of a systematic approach to helping these people.[22]

The research procedure

The main goal of this research was to gain insight into the (dis)use of professional approaches in the work with migrants housed in migrant centres in Sarajevo Canton, as well as social workers' (lack of) access to these centres.

The research covers professionals directly or indirectly involved in migrant crisis mitigation and provision of assistance to migrants in the Sarajevo Canton. The research included a total of six (6) respondents who wished to remain anonymous, so their names, positions and organizations will not be disclosed in line with the Bosnian Sociologists' Code of Ethics which emphasizes the obligation to protect the participants in the research process.[23] The participants were selected by contacting specific NGOs that provide expert support and assistance to migrants and the public institutions involved in the development of measures to mitigate the effects of the migrant crisis, and requesting that they each nominate a social worker or a professional from a relevant line of work who is involved in the development of migrant crisis mitigation measures. The

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22 Excerpts from interviews conducted with citizen activists, volunteers and independent journalists.
23 See part sociological research work A) integrity and objectivity in the Code of Ethics of Bosnian sociologists.

majority of respondents have a university degree or some form of additional specialization, and most of them (66.7%) were involved in the migrant crisis mitigation process since the very beginning of this crisis in B&H.

The research was conducted in the period March-April 2021. Data were collected using survey questionnaires with predominantly open-ended questions. In the introductory part of the survey, participants were introduced to the purpose and goal of the research. Full data confidentiality was guaranteed, as this was prerequisite for participation of some respondents.

Data processing was based on qualitative analysis – analysis of answers to open-ended questions. Empirical content was collated by summarizing and paraphrasing the participants' answers, sentences were then refined into coding units, and then an open coding procedure was implemented in several steps: a) Assigning codes to empirical material; b) Grouping of related codes into categories; and c) Analysing the meaning of terms and categories.[24]

Research results

The responses given by professionals, especially social workers working directly with migrants in migrant camps in the Sarajevo Canton, were subjected to qualitative analysis by analysing the content of survey questions the responses were categorized into thematic areas: 1. Difficulties and 3. Challenges.

24 Hsieh Hsiu Fang & Sarah Shannon, Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. Qualitative Health Research. in Sage journal 15(9), 1277-1288. doi: 10.1177/104973230527668. 2005.

Table 1: Analysis of limitations/difficulties and challenges in working with migrants in migrant centres in Sarajevo Canton

Thematic area	Topics	Categories
Difficulties/limitations in working with migrants	1. Lack of professional social work	1. Absence of a targeted need for ongoing social work services 2. Occasional engagement through NGOs
	2. Undefined scope of work	1. Social stakeholders' lack of interest in assessing the need for professional social work 2. Social workers involved in the implementation of activities that have no points of contact with professional social work
	3. Social workers' status in camps	1. Inadequate status of occasionally engaged social workers 2. Generally insufficient presence of social workers
Challenges in the work with migrants	1. The need to develop standards	1. Standards/regulations for engagement of social workers in migrant centres 2. Social workers need to have a defined scope of work in migrant camps
	2. Additional training needs	1. Organization of additional training to familiarise social workers with migrants' specific cultures and customs 2. Training on migrant issues and approaches used in other countries to address the migrant crisis

Difficulties in working with migrants

Response analysis has identified three areas of particular concern in working with migrants. The first and perhaps the most serious *is the lack of professional social work* in migrant centres in the Sarajevo Canton. Other important issues include: *undefined scope of work of social workers and their inadequate status in camps.*

The importance of deployment of social workers to support the migrants accommodated in migrant centres is unquestionable, as confirmed by survey results and the fact that all respondents believe that social workers should constitute an indispensable part of professional support teams that should be continuously available to the migrants accommodated in camps. But the devastating finding is that a large number of respondents stated that in certain camps in Sarajevo Canton social workers are engaged only occasionally, through non-governmental organizations (33.3%), or that they are unfamiliar with how these professionals are engaged (16.7%). Another devastating finding based on survey results is that as many as 33.3% of respondents answered that social workers do not get involved through other organizations either. The results indicate that the situation regarding the provision of professional support is not uniform across all camps and that migrants housed in camps do not have access to ongoing support from professional social workers, i.e. that such support is occasional and spurious. Consequently, it is not surprising that as many as 66.7% of respondents indicate that the social workers' scope of work with this socially excluded group is not regulated. Only one respondent (33.3%) answered that he was not familiar with the state of regulation of social workers' duties.

This approach certainly contributes to the fact that in-camp services are not provided professionally, and that on-site social workers are often overwhelmed by tasks that have little or nothing to do with professional social work. There is no doubt that social workers should be involved in other migrant-related tasks in camps, but the problem arises when the work of professionals is not adequately structured or when social workers are preoccupied with other tasks much more than those dictated by their primary role. Precisely for this reason, social workers should be engaged in the camps and be available to migrants on a daily basis by making this their primary professional role in order to improve the migrants' quality of life during their stay in the camps. Social workers should also develop cooperation with the relevant stakeholders in order to overcome the migrant crisis. More precisely, they should act as a bridge in the process of identification of appropriate solutions.

According to the Law on the Fundamentals of Social Protection, Protection of Civilian Victims of War and Protection of Families with Children of FB&H, one of the rights from the field of social protection is the right to "professional and other social work services" (Art. 19). It is precisely this right that should be regulated to extend the services to cover the migrants housed in camps. Individual work with migrants is of special importance, as well as group work where appropriate approaches would cover specific groups of migrants who share the same or similar difficulties that require professional support.

Challenges in the work with migrants

The fact that migrants are scattered outside the reception centres, along with non-transparent camp management, poor conditions in the camps and cultural barriers, are the obstacles to a systemic approach in addressing this crisis. It must be noted that not all migrants are covered by health and social services. There is also a lack of various forms of professional support that should be provided by experts/social workers in the camps. In fact, if social workers were involved, this would mean that they would share in the responsibility together with all other camp staff responsible for meeting the most basic needs of the migrants, namely food and basic hygiene. The largest share of camp staff comprises the so-called Migrant Assistants, who distribute meals to migrants, keep records of meals on a daily basis and maintain hygiene within the camp. Activities that involve organised provision of social services to migrants, such as providing support, working with age groups, empowering migrants, are clearly absent. There is also the lack of effort aimed at developing a cooperative relationship with the camp surroundings and with the relevant institutions important for joint identification of concepts for crisis mitigation. To create the necessary conditions and improve all of the above, standards for working with migrants must be developed. Also, social workers may face specific issues that require training, so short training courses should be designed and delivered to professionals working in camps.

Majority of survey respondents (66.7%) indicate this as a requirement. In this regard, they specifically stated that (although the scope of work for social workers is not specifically regulated) the professionals in this field should be engaged on: Facilitating the integration of migrants into the new community through interpersonal/community work and other areas; Psycho-social support to young migrants in line with the social situation and status of migrants; Creation of records with social characteristics; Cooperation with authorities in charge of reception centres. Respondents also stated that social workers should

participate in activities focused on improving the quality of life of migrants and unaccompanied children in order to protect their best interests and human rights, while also helping to prevent any violations of migrant rights. It seems that all of the above is a challenge for social workers because at this time we cannot talk about proactive development of measures that would accomplish these objectives, bearing in mind that the camps do not employ social workers dedicated solely to these activities. Also, there are no activities focused on development of standards for the support these professionals provide to migrants as a socially excluded group.

Conclusion and recommendations

"New migrations" are nothing new. For this reason, when analysing the recent migrant crisis that has shaken Europe and still persists in the transit countries of the Western Balkans, it should be borne in mind that migrations from poorer countries to the richer ones are continuous and have always existed, and that drivers such as wars and economic crises only intensify such migrations.[25]

The need for a serious and humane approach to the current migrant crisis stems in particular from the Excerpt from the Final Act of the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons that adopted the recommendations for the treatment of refugees/migrants and, inter alia, states that refugees are entitled to moral, legal and material support, appropriate social protection services and, in particular, assistance from appropriate non-governmental organisations. This points to the need for a systemic approach in terms of engagement of experts through "qualified" organisations, as stated in the document, but also through the establishment of migrant support services in the camps where migrants are residing. Of course, the number of engaged experts should be harmonized with the number of migrants in the camps. The basic responsibilities of expert teams would be to ensure the use of traditional approaches in the provision of support to migrants, including individual work and group work, as well as continuous work on developing cooperation with all relevant social stakeholders. This should contribute to the quality of life of people in migrant centres while also ensuring the safety of the surrounding population.

According to survey respondents, mitigation of migrant crisis impacts

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25 Anthony Giddens & Mitchell Duneier & Richard P. Appelbaum & Deborah Carr , *op. cit.* p. 512

requires efforts to build mechanisms that would connect migrants with the institutions and civil society organisations that can significantly contribute to the provision of support to the people on the move. They also pointed out that it would be good to strengthen the capacities of the local institutions that provide services to migrants and to work on improving the quality of migrant accommodation. The importance of creating a single registry of migrants as well as a work program was also noted.

As can be concluded from research results, it is necessary to develop on-going training courses for staff that works with migrants in the fields of social protection, psychology, law and security. Although the pandemic may have affected the quality of the development of approaches to providing assistance and support to people on the move, we must not forget that they are still there, that the relevant institutions must create appropriate operating plans as soon as possible and that experts must contribute to the development of a systemic approach to the provision of support to the migrant population. Simply put, a unified migration policy is required, and, considering that this research covers the territory of the Sarajevo Canton, all indicators point to the need to establish a custom trained team of experts from the fields of social protection, human rights, security and law to actively address this issue while it is still current.

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